

Medvedev Looks to Ease Life for Expats in Moscow

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Medvedev underscored that Moscow needs highly skilled professionals and that visa rules should be eased to increase the city's attractiveness. **Andrei Makhonin**

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev promised on Wednesday to seek new ways to simplify bureaucracy for foreign professors, scientists and doctors and make their stay in Moscow more comfortable.

Medvedev, speaking at a meeting on plans to turn Moscow into a leading international financial center, underscored that the city needs highly skilled professionals and indicated that rules on visas, work permits and the like should be eased to increase its attractiveness.

"We need to proceed in the direction of facilitating the arrival of foreigners into our country, especially professionals who come to us from other countries to work in highly skilled areas," he said, according to Interfax.

He singled out foreigners who teach in universities and work at scientific, cultural and medical organizations as especially important to Russia.

"We must try to make life easier for foreigners in Moscow, I mean to create a comfortable environment," he said.

The government has been working for several years to make Moscow a top international financial center. But as it has courted foreigners, it has made clear that it wants highly educated professionals, not low-paid migrant workers from other former Soviet republics and parts of Asia who have flocked to the city since the Soviet collapse.

On Tuesday, the State Duma took a step toward raising a new hurdle to block the less-desired foreigners from working here. Lawmakers approved legislation in a second reading that would require foreigners who work in low-paid jobs in some sectors to pass a basic Russian-language test if they want to stay in the country.

Konstantin Romodanovsky, the head of the Federal Migration Service, has rejected the idea that the measure — which would introduce the tests for workers in residential housing and utilities, as well as the retail trade and services sectors — was discriminatory. "Knowledge of the official state language is necessary to ensure that migrants are comfortable living in the country and that they have legal literacy and can defend their rights," he said Tuesday.

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