

Senators Back Language Bill for Migrant Workers

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Federation Council passed a bill Wednesday that would introduce compulsory Russian-language tests for foreigners working in certain sectors.

Under the legislation, migrants working in residential housing and utilities, and retail and services, would be required to pass the language test from Dec. 1, Interfax reported. Proof of secondary education would also become compulsory.

The bill, which still needs to be signed into law by President Vladimir Putin, affects migrants who don't need a visa to enter Russia and apparently targets workers from Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Alexander Zuyev, a permanent UN representative to Tajikistan, advised Tajik officials to provide training to those destined for work abroad during a conference in Dushanbe on Wednesday.

He said that almost half the country's working-age population is employed abroad and that migrants working in Russia sent a total of \$1.3 billion home between January and June 2012.

That figure equaled more than 40 percent of Tajikistan's gross domestic product, he said.

"Language training is crucial for migrants' ability to communicate with the authorities and to ensure awareness of their rights," Zuyev said, according to the news agency.

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