

# EU Will Not Be Pressured Into Visa Deal, Envoy Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Though Russian officials hope to reach an agreement in time for the Sochi Olympics, it seems unlikely. **Andrei Mahonin**

Russia and the European Union are pushing ahead towards an agreement on visa-free travel, but the negotiations are complex and cannot be rushed, the recently appointed EU envoy to Russia said.

"It is good to have ambitious partners, but for us the main thing is not the time frame ... We must make fully considered decisions and not throw words to the wind, promising fast results," said Vugaudas Usackas in an interview with Kommersant published Tuesday, Interfax reported.

The protection of human rights in Russia is of "crucial importance" to the European parliament and the parliaments of member states, who will decide whether to ratify the agreement, Usackas added.

Russian officials have pushed for an agreement to be reached in time for the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, with the Foreign Ministry threatening “retaliation” should the deal not be accomplished by Russia's deadline.

Negotiations for simplified visa regulations also continue, despite delays following Moscow's eleventh hour request to institute visa-free travel for holders of service passports, a move which has not gone down well with European lawmakers.

The new regulations would offer long-term multiple-entry visas to businesspeople, NGO workers, scientists, students and journalists, encouraging collaboration across borders.

"The EU was ready to sign the relevant documents a year ago. If there had not been additional demands, the agreement would most likely already have gone into force," Usackas said.

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