

Estonia Considers New 5km Buffer Zone Along Russian Border

August 04, 2016

The  **Moscow Times**

Estonia could introduce a five kilometer security buffer along its border with Russia, the TASS news agency reported Thursday.

The bill outlining the new border zone has already been approved and will now be presented to Estonia's parliament, TASS reported.

"A border zone is being created to strengthen border control and the security and defense of the state border," a government statement said.

Estonian Foreign Minister Hanno Pevkur earlier said that Estonia plans to make its border with Russia the "most modern in the European Union," equipping border guards with tracking cameras and drones to monitor events in real time.

Police in the buffer zone will also have the power to deny people entry to the area, and any activity seen to be compromising border security will have to be agreed with authorities

beforehand, TASS reported.

Relations between Moscow and Tallinn are currently tense following last year's sentencing of an Estonian intelligence by a Russian court. The agent, [Eston Kohver](#), was found guilty on charges of spying on Russian territory, weapons possession and illegally crossing the border. Estonia claims that the man was abducted by Russia's security services in an audacious cross-border raid, calling the incident "a blatant breach of international law."

There is legally no formal border between Russian and Estonia, but border checks are in operation. A border agreement, signed by both countries in February 2014, is being ratified in both parliaments. Efforts to formalize the border have been hampered by allegations of state discrimination against Estonia's Russian-speaking minority, a claim which Tallinn denies.

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