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Immigration and
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Commission de l'immigration
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Russia: Requirements and procedures to obtain internal and foreign travel passports; whether biometric passports have been used; if so, information on the biometric passport, including stored biometric data and its appearance; requirements and procedures to obtain a biometric passport within Russia; whether it can be replaced and renewed from abroad, including requirements and procedures (2014-January 2016)

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1. Internal Passports

According to the website of Russia's Federal Migration Service (FMS), an internal passport is the primary document that confirms the identity of a Russian citizen in the territory of the Russian Federation (Russia n.d.a). All Russian citizens over 14 years of age who reside in the territory of the Russian Federation are required to have an internal passport (ibid.). The passports must be renewed at 20 and 45 years of age (ibid.). The internal passports are issued and renewed by the FMS branch in the area in which the citizen's residence has been registered (ibid.; ibid. n.d.b). According to the website of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa, Russian consular missions abroad issue only foreign travel passports (ibid.). A copy of the internal passport is attached to this Response (Attachment 1).

1.1 Obtaining an Internal Passport

The FMS website further indicates that in order to obtain a new internal passport, individuals must submit the following documents:

A statement requesting a passport;

Birth certificate;

Two photographs (3.5 x 4.5 cm);

Confirmation of payment; and

Documents to indicate the status of certain information in the passport (confirmation of military service, marital status, birth certificates of children under 14 years of age, among others) (Russia n.d.a).

The same source indicates that if a passport is lost or stolen, an individual must submit a written statement explaining when and how the incident occurred (ibid.).

2. Foreign Travel Passports

According to the Federal Law of 1996 on the Procedures for Exiting and Entering the Russian Federation, Russian citizens enter and exit Russia with documents that confirm their Russian citizenship such as a foreign travel passport, a diplomatic passport, a service passport or a seamen passport (Russia n.d.c). Sources indicate that Russia issues two types of foreign travel passports:

A foreign travel passport that is valid for 5 years; and

A biometric passport (also referred to as the "passport for the new generation" (ibid.)) that is valid for 10 years (ibid. n.d.b).

According to the Keesing Reference Systems' Document Checker, a foreign travel passport valid for 5 years has 38 pages and contains a contactless chip in the biodata, a metallic and windowed security strip on page 37 which changes colour when tilted, and red fibres in the paper of all the pages (Keesing n.d.b). The same source indicates that biometric passports have 46 pages and enhanced security features, such as iridescent ink, microprint, holographic laminate and multitone watermarks, among others (ibid. n.d.a). The biometric passports contain a contactless chip in the biodata card and all pages contain red fibres in the paper (ibid.). Copies of the biometric passport (valid for 10 years) and the foreign travel passport (valid for 5 years) are attached to this Response (Attachments 2 and 3).

2.1 Obtaining Foreign Travel Passports from Abroad

The website of the Russian Consulate General in Toronto indicates that in order to obtain a foreign travel passport from abroad, an individual must have a valid foreign travel passport or an internal passport (Russia n.d.f). If both internal and foreign travel passports have expired, the applicant must submit additional documents in order to confirm Russian citizenship (ibid.), such as a statement requesting confirmation of Russian citizenship to be addressed to the head of the Consular Division, an application form with a photograph, copies of the internal and foreign travel passports and a confirmation of payment (ibid. n.d.h). Only after this confirmation can a Russian citizen obtain a new foreign travel passport (ibid. n.d.f).

2.1.1 Foreign Travel Passport Valid for 5 Years

According to the website of the Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Toronto, an individual should provide the following documents in order to obtain a foreign travel passport (valid for 5 years):

An electronic application form, plus two copies of the form;

Four black-and-white or colour photographs (3.5 x 4.5 cm);

A photocopy of the valid foreign travel passport and the internal passport (if available); and

A money order for \$C39 (ibid. n.d.e).

The Russian Consulate General provides four different application forms to be used based on the following criteria:

[translation]

Citizen (over 18), who has not been removed from the registrar in Russia (for temporary travel abroad);

Citizen (over 18), who has been removed from the registrar in Russia (for permanent stay abroad);

Underage citizen (under 18). The application is filled out in the name of a parent or guardian (for temporary travel abroad);

Underage citizen (under 18). The application is filled out in the name of a parent or guardian (for permanent stay abroad). (Russia n.d.d)

The documents must be submitted to a Consulate General of the Russian Federation in person (ibid. n.d.e). Processing is completed within approximately three months of the date of submission of all the required documents (ibid.).

2.1.2 Biometric Passport Valid for 10 Years

The website of the Russian Consulate General in Toronto indicates that in order to obtain a biometric passport from abroad, an individual must submit the following documents to the Consulate in person:

An electronic application form, plus one copy of the form;

A photocopy of the valid foreign travel passport and the internal passport (if available); and

A money order for \$C104 (ibid. n.d.f).

Photographs for biometric passports are taken in the Consulate (ibid.). The electronic application forms for biometric passports are the same as the application forms for the foreign travel passports (ibid. n.d.g). The processing time is approximately three months from the date of submission of all the required documents (ibid. n.d.f).

2.2 Obtaining a Foreign Travel Passport from Within Russia

2.2.1 Foreign Travel Passport Valid for Five Years

In order to obtain a new foreign travel passport valid for five years within Russia, the following documents should be provided:

A statement requesting a passport and a copy of the statement, as well as the accompanying appendix to the application form;

Internal Russian Federation passport of the applicant;

Confirmation of payment;

Three photographs;

Previously issued foreign travel passport if it has not expired; and

Additional documents confirming whether the applicant served in the army, among others (Russia n.d.g).

2.2.2 Biometric Passport Valid for Ten Years

According to the FMS, a citizen should provide the following documents to state authorities in order to receive a biometric passport:

The completed biometric passport application form (which can be submitted electronically through the Single Portal or in person at the branches of FMS);

A document confirming the individual's identity;

An electronic photograph, submitted with the application through the Single Portal;

A military service booklet for men between the ages of 18 and 27;

Previously issued passport if it has not expired; and

Additional documents such as a marriage certificate and birth certificate, among others (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Keesing Reference Systems. N.d.a. "P4 - Russia - National Passport." [Accessed 22 Dec. 2015]

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_____. N.d.e. Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Toronto, Canada. « Оформление заграничного паспорта сроком на 5 лет ». [Accessed 4 janv. 2016]

_____. N.d.f. Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Toronto, Canada. « Оформление биометрического загранпаспорта сроком на 10 лет ». [Accessed 4 janv. 2016]

_____. N.d.g. Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Toronto, Canada. « Паспорт гражданина Российской Федерации, удостоверяющий личность гражданина Российской Федерации за пределами Российской Федерации ». [Accessed 4 janv. 2016]

_____. N.d.h. Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Toronto, Canada. « Оформление биометрического загранпаспорта сроком на 10 лет ». [Accessed 7 janv. 2016]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Russia - Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa, Federal Migration Services, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Law Firms in Russia.

Internet sites, including: Argumenti i Fakty, ecoi.net; Factiva; Human Rights Watch; Interfax; Moscow Helsinki Group; Moscow News; Moscow Times; Ria Novosti; Rossiyskaya Gazeta; Russia - Embassy in Brussels, Gosuslugi.ru, Government Single Portal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs; United Nations - Refworld; United States - Department of State.

Attachments

1. Keessing Reference Systems. N.d. Internal Passport of the Russian Federation. [Accessed 22 Dec. 2015]

2. Keessing Reference Systems. N.d. Biometric Passport (valid for 10 years). [Accessed 22 Dec. 2015]

3. Keessing Reference Systems. N.d. Foreign Travel Passport (valid for 5 years). [Accessed 4 Jan. 2016]

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