

Russia

Business Guide

Compiled by:

Swiss Business Hub Russia

Moscow, February 2015

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

In order to enter Russia, a Swiss national needs a visa, which can be obtained by submitting the following documents to the [Russian visa service centre VHS](#) in Bern or Geneva:

- 1) passport valid 6 months beyond intended stay
- 2) visa application form
- 3) 1 photo
- 4) an original letter of invitation
- 5) copy of health insurance certificate

Details: <http://www.vhs-swiss.com/main.php?id=business&lang=en>

The above mentioned documents are needed if you are applying for a business visa. Other sets of documents may be required for other types of visas (private, tourist, student, work, humanitarian etc).

Make sure to plan ahead and apply for your visa well in advance. For assistance, you would be well-advised to consult an experienced travel agent or visa service that will help you to choose among different types of visas the one that would best suit your needs.

According to the Russian Law on Foreigners in the RF, every foreigner, not in the possession of a permit of temporary or permanent residence, shall have a 'migration card'. The migration card contains a number of personal details and specifies the bearer's period of stay in the RF. Cards can be obtained at all border posts. Each individual card is filled out in duplicate and one copy stays with the passport control authority at the point of entry while the second (stamped) one stays in the

bearer's possession and is to be kept with his/her passport. For more information please check the website of the Russian Federal Migration Service:

http://www.fms.gov.ru/foreign_national/novisas/index_eng.php

When entering the country with more than \$ 10'000, a customs declaration should be filled in. One-time export or import of cash and (or) traveler's checks as large as an equivalent of \$ 10'000 or under the sum can be declared in written form if the person wants it. For more information please check the website of the Russian Federal Customs Service:

http://eng.customs.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1687&Itemid=1909

Within seven working days of your arrival, you are required to register your visa. Hotels do this automatically; if you are not staying in a hotel, the inviting organisation is responsible for taking care of this. If your visa is not registered, you may be prevented from leaving the country or have to pay a large fine.

For a residence permit in Russia for work reasons, you must submit an application to the Russian Federal Migration Service.

For more information please check the website of the Russian Federal Migration Service:

http://www.fms.gov.ru/government_services/migrate/index_eng.php

For further information you can contact the Swiss Embassy in Russia and the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Bern and visit the following websites:

www.eda.admin.ch/moscow

www.switzerland.mid.ru

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

The official language is Russian. While many young people can speak English, German or French, most people do not speak any foreign languages so you cannot count on being understood easily as you make your way around town. Besides, street signs are mostly in Russian. In order to get around, it is thus very helpful to learn at least the Russian alphabet. Another useful advice might be to learn a few stock phrases and how to count from one to ten.

Fortunately, you will usually find people speaking English in the business community, department stores, hotels, restaurants, etc.

German or French are less spoken.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1, New Year
January 2, New Year's Holiday
January 5, New Year's Holiday
January 6, New Year's Holiday
January 7, Christmas
January 8, Holiday
January 9, Holiday
February 23, Homeland Defenders' Day
March 8, Women's Day
March 9, Holiday
May 1, Spring & Labour Day
May 4, Holiday
May 9, Victory Day
May 11, Holiday
June 12, Independence Day
November 4, Consent & Reconciliation Day

On those days offices and some of the shops are closed.

HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS

A valid medical insurance is a must to get a Russian visa. Still serious emergencies are best treated outside of Russia. For minor emergencies there are many pharmacies located throughout the country. There are several good, western-trained and managed health care clinics in Moscow.

Medicina (member of the Swiss Leading Hospitals)

2-i Tverskoi-Yamskoi Pereulok 10

Tel: +7 495 995 00 33

<http://en.medicina.ru/>

European Medical Center

Spiridonievski Pereulok 5

Tel: +7 495 933 66 55

Fax: +7 495 933 66 50

www.emcmos.ru/en

American Medical Center MEDSI

Prospekt Mira 26, build. 6

Tel: +7 (495) 290-93-87

Fax: +7 495 933 77 01

www.amcenter.ru/en

TIME ZONES

Russia has nine time zones.

TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND

Moscow and St. Petersburg are two hours ahead of Switzerland. As for other big Russian cities, please check <http://www.worldtimezone.com/time-russia24.php>.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Russia has the same 220 watt current and double round-pin sockets as Europe.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

The national currency is the Russian Rouble (rate: approx. CHF 1 = RUB 67, February 2015)

Credit cards: Visa, Master card, American Express, Diners are accepted in major department stores. In smaller shops, however, you may be required to pay cash only.

American dollars and Euro are converted in many exchange offices located throughout the city. Other currencies could be exchanged at major Russian banks. You should never change money on the street; there is usually little difference in rates and you will likely be cheated.

TRANSPORTATION

BY AIR

From Zurich, Swiss International Air Lines (www.swiss.ch) has two daily flights to Moscow (airport Domodedovo) and one to St. Petersburg. Aeroflot (www.aeroflot.ru) offers two daily flights to Moscow (airport Sheremetyevo).

From Geneva, Swiss International Airlines flies twice a day to Moscow (airport Domodedovo). Aeroflot operates two flights a day to Moscow (airport Sheremetyevo).

There are express trains from all airports to Moscow (30-40 min, CHF 6 economy ticket, CHF 15 business ticket). For checking the time schedule and buying a ticket please visit <http://aeroexpress.ru/en/>.

BY RAIL

For personal travel plan by train to Moscow (Belorusskaya train station) and for the detailed timetable, you can contact the Swiss Railways www.sbb.ch. There are also bus connections from Moscow to cities in Germany. However, in both cases Swiss and EU citizens need a Belarus transit visa.

GETTING AROUND MOSCOW

Moscow is a huge city planned by a number of circles with the Kremlin at the centre. The inner ring-road is called the Boulevard Ring, the second ring is called the Garden Ring, there is a so called "Third Ring", and the outer city limits are marked by the ring road abbreviated as "MKAD."

There are many ways to move around Moscow. Most Muscovites travel by metro, which, with its over 200 stations, is the world's largest and most beautiful subway. Locals also take busses, trolley busses and trams. Over the past few years, automobile traffic has increased enormously, causing serious traffic jams, especially in the city centre. There are also taxi services available, which you can order in advance or take straight on the street. Please note that depending on the traffic, the taxi from/to the airports might take up to three hours. Reliable alternatives are the Aeroexpress trains (s. above).

If you are not able to find a street, you can visit the web page <http://maps.google.ch> or <http://maps.yandex.ru/> .

HOTELS

There are plenty of hotels in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but in some regions it could be difficult to find suitable accommodation outside the two major Russian cities.

To find the accommodation that would meet your requirements you can visit:

www.moscow-hotels-russia.com

www.st-petersburg-hotels-russia.com

www.besthotelsrussia.com

COMMUNICATION

The international code to call Russia is 007 (+ area code + phone number).

For instance, to call the SBH Russia from abroad you should dial 007 for Russia + 495 for Moscow + 225 88 41.

If you are looking for a phone number, you can try to find it in this directory web site: www.yellowpages.ru or www.mbtg.ru. Here you can find the phone numbers of companies, institutions, public offices, etc.

CELL PHONES

You can buy a local SIM card in the nearest mobile shop. The biggest Russian providers are MTS, Beeline and Megafon.

BUSINESS HOURS

Offices:

Usually, Monday through Friday, 9.00 – 18.00 or 10.00 - 19.00

Lunch break usually 13.00-14.00 or 14.00-15.00

Banks:

Monday through Friday, 9.00 – 13.00 and 14.00 – 18.00

You will find cashpoints at banks and commercial centres, providing cash 24 hours a day.

Shops:

Most shops are open 7 days per week and the opening hours are very flexible as there are no legal restrictions.

ADDRESSES AND OPENING HOURS OF THE EMBASSY OF THE COUNTRY IN SWITZERLAND

Embassy of the Russian Federation

Brunnadernrain 37

CH 3006 Berne

Tel +41 31 352 05 66

Fax + 41 31 352 55 95

E-mail: rusbotschaft@bluewin.ch

www.switzerland.mid.ru

Consulate General of the Russian Federation

Rue Schaub, 24

CH 1202 Geneva

Tel. +41 22 734 79 55

Fax. +41 22 740 34 70

E-mail: consulat.russie@bluewin.ch

<http://www.consulrussia.ch/>

ADDRESSES OF THE SWISS EMBASSY AND CONSULATES

Embassy of Switzerland

Serpov Per. 6

119121 Moscow

Tel. 007 495 258 38 30

Fax 007 495 580 75 34

E-mail mos.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

www.eda.admin.ch/moscow

Opening hours: 08:30 – 12:30, 13:30 – 16:30

Swiss Business Hub Russia

Kurovovoy Per. 7

119034 Moscow

Tel. 007 495 225 88 41

Fax. 007 495 225 88 42

E-mail: mot.sbhruussia@eda.admin.ch

Swiss Consulate in St. Petersburg:

Pr. Chernyshevskogo 17

191123 St. Petersburg

Tel. 007 812 327 08 17

Fax 007 812 327 08 29

E-mail: stp.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

Opening hours: Monday-Thursday: 09:00 – 12:30, 13:30 – 17:00; Friday: 09:00 – 13:30

TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS

For establishing initial business contacts with a Russian partner it would be advisable to have references from a company already known to him or her. The same would be very wise the other way round: make sure you obtain references of your new Russian partner company.

In Russia your personal contacts are of a particular significance and they influence business decisions a lot, therefore it is extremely important to try and establish such contacts through informal dining, going out together, etc.

For more details about the Russian business etiquette, see:

http://www.s-ge.com/de/filefield-private/files/720/field_blog_public_files/40063

BUSINESS PRACTICES

One of the very important conditions to your success in Russia is to find a reliable translator who would be trustworthy both professionally and in terms of his or her business awareness. The second step is finding a reliable partner who will be able to help you deal with the authorities and solve any other problems you might encounter. Years of knowledge of the market and its benefits and challenges can be more useful than a big budget. In practice, your initial choice of a right partner may turn out to be a much more important guarantee for fulfilling terms of contract than your framework agreement provisions.

It would be highly advisable when trading with Russia to be very careful in respect of payment conditions. Especially in time of crisis it is recommended to require full pre-payment every time you are not 100 percent sure in your partner's reliability. Besides there are institutions where Swiss companies can insure export business for political and commercial risks. We would recommend contacting the Swiss Export Risk Insurance, SERV (www.serv-ch.com).

It is preferable not to create a monopoly for your product distribution in Russia but rather co-operate with several agents or distributors.

SPECIAL FEATURES ON THE MARKET

To prevent any legal problems with Russian officials you should follow all the requirements demanded and it's strongly recommended to let imports and exports be handled by an experienced Russian customs broker or transport company.

For more information please check <http://www.s-ge.com/switzerland/export/en/country/Russia> (list of basic addresses, reports on major business sectors, detailed fairs reports, etc.) and the [Business Guide Russia, extended version](#) published on the website.

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