

**THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
IN RUSSIA**

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PETER REINHARDT: I see we have standing room only. We'll try to get a few more chairs in here to redress that situation. It's only indicative of the amount of interest that this topic continues to give rise to amongst our membership in the broader foreign investment community. Welcome, everyone. Just by way of brief introduction, Andrew Somers could not, unfortunately, be here this morning. So he has asked Evgeiny Reytzman and myself, Peter Reinhardt, as the co-chairs of the HR committee, to help moderate this morning's event.

As you know, we will be talking this morning about immigration, a subject matter that continues to bring continual change. And last month alone, we had two very important government decrees, which is what we're all here this morning to learn more about. It's my pleasure to introduce our two speakers this morning, from two different ministries involved in this process. We have with us Aleksy Klimov from the ministry of foreign affairs, which is really on the front lines in the visa issuance process. We also have with us this morning Alexander Aksenov from the federal migration service, which is, as you know, very deeply involved both in the visa side of things as well as work permits and other immigration compliance pieces. But the focus this morning is going to be on the visa side of things.

Our speakers have indicated to us that they know there are a lot of questions. And to maximize the amount of time to ask them, they aren't going to make presentations, as such, but rather open it up immediately to whatever questions the audience has. And I believe we have about an hour and a half in total this morning for that. With that, I'd like to turn it over to Evgeiny Reytzman to also say a couple of words of introduction. And then, we'll go right into the meat of this morning's event.

EVGEINY REYTZMAN: (In Russian) – Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for joining us today at this extraordinary meeting. And as Peter Reinhardt said, we are opening this meeting, on instructions from Andrew Somers, chairman of AmCham in Russia. And today, we're going to talk about the immigration rules. This is a topic that, fortunately or unfortunately, is very topical today. So let me introduce our guests, Alex, Mr. Alexander Aksenov, head of the visa and registration department at the federal migration service and Mr. Aleksy Klimov, deputy director of the consular department, ministry of foreign affairs.

As Peter said before, we are not going to have any special presentations. We are here to listen to your questions. Therefore, we have organized ourselves so that, to maximize the time over the hour and a half that we have allocated to us. Thank you very much.

ALEXANDER AKSENOV: We are ready for your questions. Well, that was my concern. I'm sure there is going to be a storm of questions in three minutes.

Q: James Firestone from Firestone Duncan – recently, we've read that the regime for delovaya (business) or commercial visas has changed. In the past, somebody could get a one-year multi-entry delovaya (business) visa or commercial visa and effectively stay in Russia all 365 days. I'd like to understand what the regime is now. How many days a year can somebody stay in Russia on a delovaya (business) visa or a commercial visa? And how often do they have to leave the country and how much time must they be outside of Russia on that visa even if it's – (inaudible)?

MR. AKSENOV: Well, it is true that under government resolution 355, which doctored the visa regime; foreign nationals were allowed to stay in Russia for 180 days without interruption. So those ex-pats who were coming to the Russian Federation were registered with the territorial agencies of the federal migration services for up to half a year. And upon the expiry of the six-month period, they were obligated to leave Russia and they could leave Russia for a day or two and come back for another 180 days. Well, the idea of the amendment that was introduced in October, well, I wouldn't say it's tightening of the visa regime; it's just putting our house in order in term of ex-pats' presence in the Russia Federation.

Because in most countries of the world, people holding multiple-entry visas issued for short-term visits, such citations are not allowed. Foreign nationals are not allowed to spend a year working in the country. Well, I can say that multi-entry delovaya (business) commercial visas as well as humanitarian visits for those traveling with the purposes of sports, politics, whatever, these visas were also used very actively for work in the Russian Federation. For example, the professional players in sports clubs, they used to obtain multi-entry visas. And with leading sports clubs traveling across the world, they were actually working on the basis of these visas. And also this issue has tax implications because if someone works in Russia, then he or she is subject to taxation. But there were a lot of violations involving people using these kinds of visas.

And I must say that this loophole was used not only by people from countries of migration threat, which were a migration threat to the Russian Federation, but also by Europeans and Americans. And this step is in no way directed against any other country specifically. It's just bringing the legislation in conformity with the presidential instructions about bringing the situation here to order and the globally accepted rules and procedures. If you take a look at the European Union countries, we will see that they have exactly the same system. A foreign national holding a multiple-entry visa may not spend more than 90 days in the country during each 180-days period. And this is the situation that we are reflecting in this visa agreement between Russia and the EU as regards long-term stays in the Russian Federation. For this, we have different instruments, rabochnaya (work) visas, training visas, temporary residence permits, all kinds of instruments used in most countries of the world.

As regards to your specific questions, starting from the 18th of June of this year, all multiple-entry visas issued by Russian consular institutions abroad, I mean delovaya (business) visas and humanitarian visas, will be good to stay for no more than 90 days during each of the 180 days period. Every period is started to count from the very first

day of arrival. So if you arrive three months after the visa issue, the 180 days start to be counted as of the day that that person crosses the border of Russia.

Q: Just to clarify quickly. I understand that the rule is that you can spend 90 days in the country of any period of 180 days, starting from your first entry into the country. Two quick questions – if somebody has a multi-entry visa that is issued on July 1st, that is 365 days before your regulation goes into effect, will it be subject to rule regulation? That's the first question.

The second question is just a question of counting. For instance, if somebody receives the visa after the new regulation, the days are actually counted? In other words, there is a computer system out there and it's actually keeping track of whether somebody's been in the country more than 90 days and they are stopped at the border if they come in? Or it's just a visa violation if you break it?

MR AKSENOV.: Well, on your first question, well, I think we have a shared understanding with the – the new regulations will not apply to those who had entered the country before the 18th of October, when the new rules came into effect. So multiple-entry visa regime will remain the same for them, pending the visa expiry.

So if you enter Russia on the 1st of July, that person can stay 180 days in Russia, leave Russia, come back, and stay for another 180 days or however long it is until the expiry. And the new rules apply only to multi-entry visas issued after the new rules were effected.

Well, the answer to the second question is a bit more complicated. Well, let's say we don't, well, a comprehensive system to track the presence of all ex-pats in Russia is not yet in place. There are some fundamental elements, but we are not going to use it. At the same time, we are trying to register foreign nationals through the federal migration service; we have all the necessary databases from our consular institutions; the border-guard service can also take some measures to make sure that the exit and entry of foreign nationals is under control. So I think it will be a combined effort. And we are largely guided by the understanding that after the adoption of these new legal amendments, all foreign nationals staying in Russia will have to comply with the Russian legislation. So we believe that Russian foreign nationals themselves will be following these rules conscientiously.

Q: I have a couple of written questions. Two questions to you – what is the minimum time for the issue of multi-entry and student visas by consular institutions of Russia? And the second question is, is there a need to leave Russia once 180 days expires if you have a multiple-entry one-year visa for scientific and technological relations?

ALEKSY KLIMOV.: Well, the training visa, the student visa – well, the first question was about multi-entry student visas. Well, I can say that if you have an invitation and this invitation is duly processed by the ministry of foreign affairs, you can

get the visa fairly fast. And if a foreign national can submit an invitation duly executed under the national law, business visas can be issued on the same day. Well, that depends on the proposed time of the proposed stay and the time of the year. In the summer time, some consular offices are overworked and there are some short waiting lists. But generally, we are more efficient than other European countries, some other European countries.

As for students' visas, to get a student visa, you need an invitation from the federal migration service. And if you have the original copy with you, then no problem getting a visa. As regards humanitarian visas, everything that relates to business and humanitarian multi-entries, everything that had been issued before the 18th of October, everything is covered by the previous regime, both in terms of the presence and registration. As for the need to leave the country, yes you do. Yes you do need to leave the country because you will be registered. You are registered for a period of 180 days. So you are not going to have a new registration. So to be re-registered, you have to leave Russia and come back to Russia. You cannot spend 365 days, even if you have the old, multi-entry visa.

Q: My employer is a U.S. citizen with three small kids. I mean, it's very inhumane to force the whole family to leave the country and come back again. The question to Mr. Aksenov, have you made a determination on the quotas, because the quota system is an additional burden and businesses have to fill applications for.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, I am in charge of visas and registration at the ministry of foreign affairs. This involves all of the issues of legal entry into Russia: administration, registration, et cetera. I am not engaged in the issuance of work permits, unfortunately. So I can only say that, responding well, *dura lex sed lex*, I can say.

And as for the quoting system, I can only talk about the temporary residents quota. The government has made a determination and the total tripled compared to last year. It used to be 53,000; it is expected to be 150,000, but no final decision is yet in place.

MR KLIMOV : Well, this issue is in no way related to the new situation. So if a person has a multi-entry visa on the 1st of July of this year. Then, that person may leave the Russian Federation for any country. And he or she doesn't have to come back to his home country. So they can go and they can come back. And it doesn't have to be at the end of 180 days; many foreign nationals leave for the Christmas period. So if you want to leave in four months, you are very welcome to do so. You can come back and spend another six months. But practice has shown that people have to leave the country for a couple of times; I don't see any problems here. So this visa procedure about visa issuance in a non-residence country, well, there are some, if you read it attentively, if you read the government resolution attentively, you will have seen that there are some provisions enabling the issuance of a visa to a foreign national in case – well, a foreign national has to be, has to have a permit to stay for in the third country for more than 90 years; let me explain where it came from.

It came from the practice of most European countries and countries of the world. And these rules apply to Russian nationals traveling outside Russia. So the government resolution states it very clearly that resolutions can be issued based on a special decision of the ministry of foreign affairs and based on the principal of reciprocity. And let me assure you that we have inquired with all of our consular offices abroad for information about the issuance of visas to Russian nationals in third countries.

So we received a lot of feedback from all of our diplomatic missions outside the country. And based on that feedback, we carried out some analysis and came up with a table. In the table, there are two columns: countries that issue visas to Russians without any restrictions whatsoever and the second part of the table is countries that refuse to issue visas to Russians in third countries if they don't have a permit to stay there for more than 90 days. Such countries include most European countries and, strangely enough, 50 percent of Latin American countries, Japan, South Korea. Well, I think it's a list of 40 countries. And we were going to apply the same principal vis-à-vis those countries.

Let's take Great Britain, for example. The U.K. diplomatic missions issue visas to Russians, Russian nationals, in third countries only if they have residence permits or student or work visas in those third countries. But if someone comes to Great Britain for three months, then that person will not be able to get a visa in a third country. He will have to ask the British Consulate. The same situation, the same approach, is going to be applied to Britains applying for visas in third countries. If they can provide documentary evidence that they stay in the third country for more than 90 days, they will be issued the visas. If not, they will have to come back to Great Britain.

So in the first part of the table, we have a number of countries like the United States, who issue long-term visas to Russians. So if a Russian citizen in a third country applies to the U.S. Consulate, the supplication will be accepted. Then, it will be followed by a query with the State Department and a background check with the U.S. embassy in Moscow. So this procedure would normally take 10 to 14 days. And very often, it becomes pointless to obtain a visa. So if a Russian tourist goes to India and asks the U.S. embassy for a visa, they will have to wait up to two weeks to get the U.S. visa. So we don't have any restrictions with the United States, but if a U.S. citizen does not provide evidence, they will have to wait for 10 to 14 days to get the Russian visa.

Q: Well, if a foreign national in a third country has a contract, an agreement between – a visa-free arrangement – there is a visa-free arrangement between his home country and the third country, does it fall under the 90 days rule?

MR. AKSENOV : Well, I haven't heard of some cases, frankly, with the exception of the Schengen area. But our restrictions do not apply to the Schengen zone. The people from Schengen states can get visas without any restrictions. A German can get a visa in Italy, but a German will be subject to restrictions if he applies for a visa in South Africa. Well, this restriction does not apply to holders of diplomatic passports and also, it does not apply to Schengen zone citizens. And if they apply for a transit visa –

and for your information I can say that – well, I am sure most participants represent foreign companies working in Russia. So we don't work with the ministry of foreign affairs.

But federal agencies who turn to us to execute invitations, we are checking these conditions at the stage when we get the first application to the consular department. So if you issue a visa, then the check would have been run in Moscow already. And one of the conditions specified in the government resolution, if the head of the consular office makes a decision or an ambassador takes a decision to issue visas, then the decision has to be honored. They have the authority to decide so.

Q: Oh, there are some questions coming in writing, question to both of our guests. What are the sanctions for the violation of the new period for presence in Russia under business visa?

MR. AKSENOV : It's article 1808, a fine of up to 5,000 rubles with expulsion with or without expulsion from Russia. So the sanctions did not change. Another question?

Q: Is it true that companies will be able to execute invitations for EU nationals on the company's letterhead? Will the Russian consular offices be accepting such invitations on par with the invitation executed through the migration service?

MR KLIMOV. : Well, this is all about the agreement between Russia and the EU, about the visa facilitation agreement. And this agreement, this agreement is between Russia, on the one hand, and 24 European countries on the other hand. Three EU members refused to sign this agreement. And there will be several separate agreements entered into wisdom – the recent agreement signed with Norway and waiting for ratification. Well, Switzerland is not a member of the European Union, but we are going to have a separate agreement. And the U.K. – and the U.K. is not a signatory to the new agreement. And there has been no progress towards a bilateral agreement with the U.K.

So under this agreement, companies may extend invitations on their own letterhead; you can use your stationary, the corporate stationary. You have to show the account's detail, account details and other contact information. So you can find the text of the agreement on the Internet. So look at article four, which describes the category of people who fall under this agreement. And you will also find a list of information that has to be reflected in the invitation.

What kind of information, what kind of data should be included in the invitation? It should be signed by the authorized official, company official, a member of the company's taxpayer name. Well, I am not going into details because I don't remember them, really. The agreement sets specific timeframe for consideration, 10 calendar days following application. And this regards single and multi-entry visits. This period of stay

may be reduced to three working days or less. And the fees are 35 euros for all European Union countries and 70 euros for visas issued within three years or less.

To get a multiple-entry visa, a foreign national has to have two previous visits to Russia or the European Union. In that case, he or she can apply for multiple-entry visa. No, if he used single-entry visa, then you can claim multiple entry. But if you used two-year multiple visas without any problems of the law, you can claim a five-year multiple-entry visa. And the five-year multiple visa for this will be issued on the basis of companies' invitations. So the companies will have to monitor their people's trips to the relevant countries.

So if a company applies for a single-entry visa, a single-entry visa will be granted. And it all depends on the host organization. Why? Because one company may cooperate with an ex-pat for one year and then terminate that cooperation. And this would naturally give rise to certain implications because you know that under the law, the host organization is responsible for the invited, for the foreign nationals that it invites. So I believe that five-year visits will take some time to become a practice because you need an experience of two two-year visas and one one-year visa. So realistically, we can expect the first five-year visas to be issued in four to five years from now.

Q: Some more written questions about the types of visas for family members – well, if we employ and get a work permit for himself and he has a spouse and children, what is the most comfortable visa to be executed.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, the same type of visa. If you have a work visa and to work as an employee, then your spouse and kids will be issued residence permits. They will be issued residence permits and visas, work visas of the same category. But the purpose of the trip will be accompanying family member. But in this case, they will have to leave the country every three months if they want a multiple-entry. So the second entry may be in three months time. And this will be a violation of the law because these people must have the same type of visa the adult member of the family has. Question from the floor, please.

Q: SC. Johnson, a follow up on your question about the accompanying family members. Where will these people be registered? Where do you want them to register? The company's registered in the Moscow oblast'.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, the migration registration that we have now makes it possible for a foreign national to be registered either at the place where he or she resides or where he or she works. And the landlord or the employee should provide for this registration. So it's either residence or work.

Q: My name is – (unintelligible) – first vice president of (unintelligible). I have the following question. What is the procedure now that we have business visa, multiple entry ready for one year, so from what I understand we can stay maximum 90 days within the period, but in reality I would have to be working here. What is the procedure to get

back in the country and – (unintelligible) –working visa because we cannot have two visas at the same time on passports.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, if I understand you correctly, you're referring to a case of a foreign national having a multi-entry business visa. What do you have to do to come back to work in Russia? But if you have a visa – if your visa had been issued before October 18th – after October 18th, so you have to – you have to obtain a work permit within three months, you need to get this plastic card and you need an invitation to work, doing this through the Federal Migration Service. It's a territorial department. If it's Moscow, it's Moscow. If it's Moscow – Far East, it's the Far East office.

So you have to reapply for – you won't be able to stay for – under multiple entry business visa. You don't have to stay here for three months. You may – you may have nine visits 10 days each, but the total number of days is 90.

Q: (Unintelligible.) When someone in violation of the visa regime without non-premeditated violation, how can the situation be remedied?

MR. AKSENOV: But what do you mean? What do you mean?

Q: Well, for example, if a person was sick or had some family situations that prevented him or her from –

MR. AKSENOV: Well, the amendments to the government resolution enable three organizations to extend the foreign national's stay in the Russian Federation. If we talk about three days, this can be done at the border checkpoint, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offices, or the FSB and – or the border guard service can do that. Anything that exceeds three days has to be addressed by the Migration Service. And if you need to extend the visa for up to 10 days, you refer to ourselves, and if you have valid reasons your visas will be extended. Well, there may be force majeure circumstances where people could not leave the country due to some nationwide strikes or natural calamities.

Well, we don't have a practice because it's very short time since October 18th, but I'm sure these issues can always be addressed. In excess of 10 days, you have to – we have to think whether a visa can be extended automatically, and we have a number of cases whereby people announce their stay in Russia after a month or six months. Of course, there is an administrative procedure for expulsions based on court orders. In some – in some cases courts would agree with us. In others, they will throw our claims away. So talk to us. Inside the country, you ought to talk to us. And actually nothing was changed. It's either the place of your registration or the place of your residence. Come to us and we will address this.

Q: (Off mike) – work permit and the appropriate visa, how many days do you have to stay before you leave? How many days – is there 180 days, 90 days? What's the system if you have a work arrangement?

MR. AKSENOV: Well, if you read the – if you read the amendments to the government resolution you will have noticed that the business and humanitarian visas – there is a footnote saying that the period of stay is determined in another – in another part of the legislation. So you don't have to leave the country after 90 days. You have a work permit for a year. The multiple entry one also allows you to stay for one year, and the same applies to multiple entry student visas. And so you don't have to leave the country and interrupt your stay. So you have the right potentially to come back to the country, but you don't have to leave the country after 90 days.

Q: (Off mike.) If you have an – if – okay, I am an American rep office – (unintelligible). If I have an employee from Azerbaijan, that individual is on an Azerbaijani passport, what sort of visa does that person have to have, and what sort of work permit requirements are there? That's the first two questions.

MR. KLIMOV : We have a visa free regime with Azerbaijan, so an Azerbaijani citizen doesn't need a visa to enter Russia. And the only person – the only person that – document that person needs would be the foreign travel passport of Azerbaijan. And when that person comes to Russia, he or she may obtain a work permit in accordance with the simplified procedure as a citizen of a CIS country.

Q: (Off mike) – a foreign citizen is married to a Russian citizen and could you elaborate on separate families – (unintelligible) – and what are the implications for the countries that – (inaudible). Thank you.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, I don't really understand the question because if you have a – what does the spouse want? Well, simply to enter into this country, stay here, work in Russia, what do –

Q: (Off mike) – working here analysis – (unintelligible) – staying because I guess on – (inaudible) – residential or limited residential. What are basically their options in those two scenarios, either working or – (inaudible)?

MR. AKSENOV: So if you need a work permit, then it's the general procedure that applies. And if the spouse wants to stay in Russia for a long time, the first step would be to get the invitation from the other spouse and obtain all the necessary documents for temporary residence in Russia on the basis of one spouse being a citizen of the Russian Federation and the other spouse will not be covered by the quota. The terms – the time period for issue of all documentations will vary depending on the country.

MR. : We'll take a question now from the other side.

Q: (Off mike) – what are possible penalties that you have – sorts of happen if you miscalculate. If we within a 180 period he stays in the country for 45 days leaves and comes back to 47, if he were at the airport, would he be stopped to get a fine? What are the foreseeable penalties if you were to miscalculate?

MR. AKSENOV: Well, if that person comes to a Russian airport to leave the country and if that person has overstayed – overstayed in Russia for more than – for three days, well he will be reprimanded let's say. If the overstay is a little bit – is a little bit longer, that person is not going to be penalized then anyway if he or she has a valid reasons. If not, he or she may have a penalty under Article 18, up to 5,000 rubles, I guess, either with or without expulsion from Russia. So you can – you pay a penalty and you leave. And the results of Article 26 of the entry and exit legislation, I think it's Article 23, part two or part six: a foreign national can be denied entry into Russia if – if that person violate – committed administrative violations twice over the past year.

And I would like to add that if a person is expelled from the Russian Federation, they are prohibited from coming back to Russia for five years. And if you have two administrative violations over three years, then you are not forbidden entry, but you may be refused the visas in the consular office or the invitation can be turned down by the migration service. So we use different instruments here.

And I would like to add that this 90-day issue – what happens if you have to stay a little bit longer? We discussed this issue in September at the Russia-U.S. Agreement Compliance Committee and we have the same question of our European colleagues. Say a Russian national stays 90 days under a multi-entry visa, so the next time he can come is 90 days after. So what happens if that person needs to stay just a couple of days more? Well, God forbids, someone dies – a relative of his or her dies and what happens? And they said, “you have to go and with no penalties.” Well, if you go to that country for a valid reason and you have documentary evidence of these reasons, then there is no problem, but this of course only applies to extraordinary cases. This is the understanding that we have with the European countries.

Q: So we have two questions, quite interesting questions. One question is about children, children of foreign – foreign nationals born in Russia. What kind of documents do they need for the entry of these children into Russia? Do they have to be taken outside Russia to get their visas? So once again – well, children who are not citizens of the Russian Federation, but who were born in the Russian Federation.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, you – well if a child is born in Russia and the parents – well if the parents want the child to become a citizen of Russia and once the parents make this decision, the child will have an ID and he will – the child will be given a visa in accordance with the status of their parents in Russia. So if – well the child is most likely to be registered as an accompanying family member. Of course, there will be no sanctions whatsoever with regard to children, and I don't think foreign nationals have any problems with children from its marriages. Unfortunately, Russian citizens face much – many more problems.

Q: Well, if a child born of a Russian spouse abroad, then it's a problem because – but – kids will be kids and more questions about the relationship with – relationships with near abroad with the visa free countries. If a foreign national works in a country on the

basis of a residence permit and that person is from Ukraine, his family members have to leave the country for – every 90 days. Are there any legal grounds to protect the interests of such workers?

MR. AKSENOV: So the worker comes from a visa free country. Well, I think it's probably a mistake on the part of our officials and the employers because we are creating some discomfort for people from the near abroad. I think in this case you need to have a letter confirming that you have your family with you and your family will be registered for the same period of time as yourself.

Q: So you need to apply specially for a permission to stay?

MR. AKSENOV: Yes, if you have a permit to stay for year then why leave in three months?

Q: What are the restrictions applying to exit of foreign nationals from the Russian Federation if they have temporary residence permits? Any restrictions on exit?

MR. AKSENOV: Well, the enforcement practice is such that a foreign national from a visa country who has temporary residence permit in the Russian Federation is issued a single entry visa. This visa is good for as long as the residence permit holds. You can come – you can leave Russia. You can come back, apply for another visa which would be issued within a shorter timeframe and gradually – and gradually that person will be – will obtain residence permit. So you need a temporary residence permit for three years, but if you leave at least one year, you can get permanent residence permit. And if you have a permanent residence permit, you have the same rights as any Russian citizen.

Well, it's six months – six months and the time – the time living outside the Russian Federation is six months. You may not exceed six months. If you live for more than six months outside Russia, then your residence permit will be out.

MR. REINHARDT : (Inaudible) – you submitted something in writing. I encourage you to raise your hand. We don't want people to feel like they have to submit in writing just to be able to ask your question. So we'll take one from the center here, please.

Q: Well, my question about work permits how can – how can U.S. citizens get work permits to work in Russia and what are the timeframe?

MR. AKSENOV: Well, I won't be able to answer unfortunately. I think it takes a month to review the application and – well but – you have to refer to alone on foreign nationals visiting Russia. I don't think there have been any changes compared to that law. One month for consideration. There is a list of documents available, including medical certificates.

Q: (Off mike) – I've got a couple of small questions. One, do the new regulations apply only to multi entry visas? What therefore is the status of one or two entry business visas with regards to the number of days, 90 days or whatever, 180 days/? Secondly, I think we see all the questions coming up and everybody has their special situations. Is it possible for your ministries to provide a sort of a phone number, like a hotline or something on the website that will responded to because these are very serious questions and everybody – everybody wants to – wants to comply and a lot of times it's difficult to find the answers. And so I'm just wondering if that's – if that's something that can be – can be done. Thank you very much.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, on your first question, the government resolution says – says it very clearly that the 90 days period is set by authorized executive agency in issuing multi entry visa. This means that single entry visas are not covered by this rule, but you understand that if a person keeps coming and going, that will involve huge expenses on air travel and relocation. But this relocation applies to multi entry visas only because previously foreign nationals could spend a year in the Russian Federation without any restrictions whatsoever. But if you get a single entry visa, you use it up. You can go back, get another single entry visa, go back, use it again.

And the second question was about the hotline or website. Well, after this – well after this resolution took effect, we sent a note to all the diplomatic missions accredited in Moscow and the consular department has a – has an information center. I'm not sure we can set up a hotline, but I'm sure that we will be answering questions in a normal fashion. As for our consular offices outside the country, they have been given all the information and all the clarifications, and we advise them to post all the necessary documents on their websites and in their – on the information stands within their premises.

As regards – no, we have a website. I'm not ready to – in fact, we are trying to maintain an open dialogue where you can access us electronically by the e-mail. Well, I will check it when they come back to the office.

Q: One clarification. We discussed the scenario where people want to stay in Russian Federation. But what about the people who are coming and going on short term visits – people in the financial sector, for example? How are these days counted? Some of my colleagues believe that only the days of actual work in Russia are counted. So the question is how do you count these days?

MR.KLIMOV : Well, I know that the arrival and departure time is taken as one day in the European practice. We are going to stick to this practice as well. So you're question is about a financial officer who spends a lot of time traveling. Well, if that person exhausts his or her quota, he will probably need to find himself a replacement for six months, but this is a general rule applying to all foreign nationals without exception.

MR. REINHARDT : (Inaudible) – one to the right?

Q: Well, I have one question and one clarification. Well, the first question concerns the accompanying family members of whose foreign nationals who come under work visits. The question is can foreign national bring their spouse? What about grandparents? They are not accompanying family members, obviously, but what if you need to bring a granny with you? And I need a clarification about this.

MR.KLIMOV : No. Well, grand parents, grand parents – well, frankly – well, I can tell you how we address issues like this with diplomatic visits. We have similar issues with diplomatic staff, people – diplomats accredited in the Russian Federation. So in this case we – well if it's – well, there are certain age limits. Sometimes an embassy would ask us to accredit somebody's son, age 38. Well, if that person is sick and cannot work and if he is dependant, then he would be registered as a family member. And the same applies to grandchildren – grandchildren whose parents work on the North Pole and they don't have parental support.

But we need some documentary evidence that at the particular point in time, a child cannot live with his or her parents. But of course we cannot allow this practice to become a system, because we have to turn down and motivate the applications. Because grandparents – grandchildren have parents in the first place. So children have to stay with their parents, not their grandparents. Well, if someone wants to dodge parental responsibility, then of course we won't make a positive decision.

As for the working visas, I have a problem answering that. Well, I think we approach it in the same way. Spouses and children, there are general rules, but there is no rule without an exception. So I had military servicemen coming to Russia, just several of them but their family members counted 180 people, because it was parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Well, we had to refuse, but they were diplomats – accredited diplomats and we were told that the national legislation of their home country obligated people to actually support their older parents.

Q: Does this apply to non-relatives – well, if there is domestic help they cannot live without?

MR. AKSENOV : Well, if there is a housekeeper, then he or she needs a work permit. It's work in Russia pure and simple.

Q: How does it go – how does –

MR. AKSENOV : Well, unfortunately – well, today we are here to talk about a slightly different thing. We never expected you to ask questions about work visas. So we are talking about the visa amendments. It's not work visas. We have two people who are engages in visit work and work permits and rules of stay, and – I think you have to arrange a separate meeting with the Federal Migration Service – with the people who deal exactly with these issues.

Q: Well, once again, about the time. Some multi-entry can be issued for 180 days and then you have to leave Russia –

MR. KLIMOV: No, no. The visa is good for 90 days. Ninety days within each 180 day period. So you will see the number 90 in the visa. So it's 90 days within each 180 days period.

Q: Well, a EU national with a multi-entry visa, business visa, wishes to be issued for 360 – no it was 180. Now, what happens now? Does that person have to leave the country every 90 days and to the persons accredited with the ministry – what do you mean accredited with the ministry of foreign affairs?

MR. KLIMOV: The ministry of foreign affairs accreditation applies to diplomatic and consular missions and offices of international organizations. So the staff of these missions hold diplomatic passports and the new rules don't cover holders of diplomatic passports. And similarly does not apply to a student.

Are you talking about a journalist? Journalists have work visas like everybody else and the accreditation gives you the right to a work visa. So people don't have to leave – well, people don't have to leave the country, so they can spend 365 days. So initially they get a visa – a single-entry visa for three months and within that three months, he or she has to execute all the visit permit formalities. But he or she can come back with these three days – three months, but if the work permit is in place, then it is the multi-entry visa for one year. It will be good for one year. It may be extended every year following contract extension. So you can sit in Russia for 365 days without leaving it. If you want to go anywhere you can travel every day with –

MR. REINHARDT: (Inaudible) – and then go to a couple of written ones please.

Q: Well, my question may go beyond your mandate, but I'm sure it will be interesting. Well, it's about international organizations operating in Russia via the rep-offices. Under the new – under the old rules, rep-offices could not apply to the federal migration services for invitations. Under the new regulations such opportunities are available. So when are you going to have a clear procedure and lists of documents and lists of grounds for refusals, et cetera, so that rep-offices can apply for invitations?

MR. KLIMOV: Well, by the New Year, we are going to have a new procedure for invitation. So have some patience. We have already looked at this new procedure on the preliminary basis and this is one of the regulations that is going to become effective by the end of the year. Yes, there will be an opportunity to do so.

MR. REYTMAN : Some written questions. Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, I am sort of filtering through the questions and I am not asking repetitive questions. And I am not asking questions that obviously go beyond the mandate of our guests.

An employee is a Russian national. His spouse and children are French citizens. The wife is not going to work and what is the most comfortable procedure in this case?

MR. AKSENOV: I'm sure we have addressed it already. Well, it's just private invitations – private invitation or temporary residence. In that case the person is not losing the original citizenship.

MR. REYTMAN : And another interesting question. You've mentioned the lists of countries in two categories. Are you going to have these lists published so that others could navigate?

MR. AKSENOV: Well, I'm not really prepared to answer this question because countries which are unwilling to extend visas to Russia – we all know what these countries are. So as soon as we get to note from such countries that they have removed restrictions with – (unintelligible) – Russians, we will remove our restrictions on the basis of reciprocity. Palpably there will be a list published shortly, but I have to check with my colleagues.

MR. AKSENOV : Well, I can tell you that – well, it's Austria, Albania, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Hungary, Venezuela, Greece, Egypt, Ireland, Iceland, Spain, Libya, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Macedonia, Mali, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sierra Leone, Finland, Germany, Croatia, Switzerland, Estonia, South Africa and Japan. So this is the list of countries whose citizens will get visas in – (unintelligible) – countries only if they have a permit to stay for more than 90 days on the various grounds.

For example, in the U.K., U.S. citizens get their passports stamped upon entry and a U.S. citizen can get a visa in the UK without waiting for too long. So this is an – (unintelligible) – list that I've said to you. We've had a visit from the council of South Africa. The foreign ministry of South Korea also provided some written questions. And we told them, if you don't have any restrictions against us, then we will immediately lift all our restrictions against you. And the same applies to all the countries that are on my list.

Some of these countries continue – we'll, do issue visas, but in humanitarian cases such as death of relative or some illness, in this situation when Russian citizens are given the visas. Otherwise, Russian citizens are referred to Moscow or to St. Petersburg.

As for the long time needed to obtain the visas, well, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States, Turkmenistan, strangely and France. Well, there are no restrictions but it will take a couple of weeks to get the visa, up to two months.

Q: Vladimir Shapavalov (sp), Washington Group. This regards multiple entry work visas. Is it necessary to have a work permit for a foreign employee because the rep-office – the rep-office employees are not exactly employees in the sense stipulated by the Russian law? So is it enough to have the accreditation?

MR. KLIMOV: This question is beyond my pay grade. When the law on the legal status of foreign nationals was approved it included the mandate list of foreign nationals who can stay in Russian and work without work permits. Well, the problem was there – I know that in the reprocess of preparing the regulatory acts as part of the Russia's accession to the WTO. We are taking all these steps, but they are not legally executed yet.

To get a visa you need a plastic card allowing you to work inside the country. So you come here for three months initially, you execute all the formalities, then you are good to stay.

Q: Just a clarification please. Does this – well, EU citizens – EU citizens can get visas from our consulate offices in – not the EU, but the Schengen Zone – 15 countries. But you mentioned an agreement with Switzerland being prepared. Do you think it will be possible?

MR. KLIMOV: Well, this will not – when Switzerland becomes a member of the Schengen Zone, probably. No, but they are not going to become EU members of Schengen Zone members. But by early 2008, there will be a large group of countries admitted to the Schengen Zone, putting the Baltic countries – Poland, Slovenia and therefore the rules will be automatically extended to cover these countries. So it will be basically all the European Union.

Q: What is the interruption between the first 180 days for holders of multi-entry visas and the next 180?

MR. AKSENOV: No interruption. Well, a person stays three months. So you come here for one month and you stay the fifth and sixth month, you stay outside of Russia at the end of the 180 days. So if you use up your quota at the end of 180 days you can leave the country and re-enter the country next day.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, the multi-entry visas for scientific and technical – well multiple visas will be issued for up to one year, but – well, as with the previous question – referring to the previous question I'd like to stress that 180 days is counted from the day of your first arrival. So it's not like you get a visa starting from the 1st of October. You don't stay in this country for three months, then you come for three months, you leave, come for another three months, and you get six months. No.

Like in Europe, we are going to start counting from the first day in Russia. If you don't use your multiple-entry visa for the full six months, then that time is lost for you, and that's sounds illogical. But – so when you come to Russia physically the days start to be counted. So if you come for a month, you are free to leave, and you come again for the next two months. (Downplaying?) on that, you may be able to stay in Russia for five

months in total, but certainly people will have a hard time to arrange for this. But if you work then you will be subject to penalties. You cannot work under this type of visa. This is a visa for short time stays in Russia. And the purposes of the trip do not include work. It's commercial or business visits for negotiations, business purposes, auctions, exhibitions, but not work.

Q: Well, the question is about the registration of short-term business visas. A Moscow organization has invited a group of presenters to a conference. They come here to Moscow. And the conference is outside Moscow for a week. So under the visa regime, the registration is not valid. What do we do in this situation? Because the passport authorities in the Moscow regions don't know what to do.

MR. AKSENOV: But these people are staying in some of the country hotels in outside Moscow? Well, nobody has the right to registration because there is no more permanent – temporary registration. Well, you should have sent a notification saying that we have certain foreign nationals with us, mail it, and wait for an answer. A country hotel or a camping, they act as the host organization because they provide housing, they provide shelter, and therefore they have applied for the registration supplying a Xerox copy of the passport and the Xerox copy of the immigration card. So you go to the post office, you pay 160 Rubles and that's it.

And Moscow and Moscow regions and Moscow oblast are taken collectively as the Moscow region. Of course, if you – if you live in the oblast, you have to be oblast registered.

Q: Another question. There are situations where a person had a visa, let's say on the 1st of November, so he goes by the rules which exist right now. However, he has work permit which goes far beyond, let's say till April of next year.

MR. : What does a work permit has to do –

Q: (Off mike) – because he has a work permit.

MR. AKSENOV: He may not work with business visa. If you have a work permit then the organization that issues the work permit has to change that person's status. The organization has to execute an invitation with the Federal Immigration Service. Based on this invitation he will be issued a three-month single (and for ?) business visas to complete work permit formalities, and then he will get the work visa, and he will be able to extend his stay in Russia without leaving the country.

Q: The way you gentlemen explain it, it's very logical, it's very clear. My nightmare is the people who are taking your ticket at British Air in London or at Aeroflot in New York, also the individuals who are making decisions at borders, not perhaps at Sheremetovo where the people are well trained. How are these details being communicated down the line? That's question number one. And are the – for instance, like BA. Will people be challenged at the BA counter in London by somebody who

doesn't read Russian but wants to see their visa? I in fact ten years ago was asked for a work permit before there were work permits issued in Russia, but this BA counter attendant insisted that we needed work permits because they have work permits in the U.K. Are these people going to be deciding entry?

Secondly, do you guys have a website – I know you don't have a hotline – but do you have something where normal individuals can get answers to questions without having to come to a forum like this?

MR. AKSENOV: Well, let me respond for the Federal Migration Service. We do have a website, and we try to answer all the incoming questions as quickly as possible, so I will give the – I will – (unintelligible) – to Peter. Well, as for the communications issue, I'm sure it's a problem and it will take some time to resolve. But the changes in the situation should be communicated to our own people, our own staff. As for the Immigration Service, the consular offices have already sent the relevant information letters to all levels. So we often meet with media representatives, business representatives, and sometimes it is impossible to apply reasonable judgment to Russia, and sometimes people confuse migration officers with police officers. In January or February or in March when the new immigration registration law was introduced, tourists were scared of leaving their hotels. And, well, it's impossible. I mean, well, now it's easier and the difficult times will pass. Of course there are problems in our work and our performance, but we are trying to be better, and we will be as good as our British colleagues.

Well, I don't really think I understand the first part of your question about the airports. What kind of decisions were you talking about?

Q: I mean is – when you are – for instance, I've had this happen at Heathrow. Every time you go through Heathrow through BA they examine your visa, okay? And they say, yeah, you know, whatever. When these – now that these new visas are going to have this 90 days printed on them, these individual – like the person taking your billet at the BA counter will be making decisions whether or not to let you on the plane.

MR. AKSENOV: No, no. It is not up to the carrier to decide on anything regarding this 90 days. And please report any such cases to us and we will send an official inquiry. It's up to the visa carrier to decide. But the airport doesn't have anything to do with this. Well, if a person has overstayed its stay in Russia they will not be allowed into Russia, but Heathrow has nothing to do with it.

And we had some questions about the number of entries. (Unintelligible) – asked us to look into this issue because in the visas the multi or single entry is written in Russian, so in many cases people don't understand that – well, sometimes they believe that people have multi-entry visas and the border guards stamp on it people are not allowed on the plane. So now we are adding 1, 2, or the letter meeting on the visa so we can easily see whether it's a single entry, two entry or multiple entry. So you can inform all your counter-parties that there is this – there will be – these words will be

accompanied by the numbers 1, 2, or the letter M.

And in London it's mostly Gatwick. No? Is it Heathrow? Well, I thought we got to it but – when I came to London, I was asked to produce my passport and to carry it like this. I said, no need to show your photo. The most important thing is to show your passport.

MR. REINHARDT: So we have to finish by 11:00, so we have time for two more questions.

Q: Thank you very much. My question is about the time it takes to get business visas, no matter what, whether single or multi-entry. So our foreign colleagues, European colleagues and U.S. colleagues have to travel to and fro, and sometimes the decisions on the business trips are taking within two weeks, so we are not applying – in this case we don't apply for multi-entry visas. Previously we could send a telex invitation, and now it takes 15 working days or 14 working days, if I'm not mistaken. So I would like to know whether it will be possible to facilitate this process for business visas.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, of course it will be facilitated and expedited. We would like to be as efficient as our foreign ministry colleagues, but we don't have our officers outside Russia, and those who serve outside Russia have different authority. Well, the maximum time in fact is up to 30 days, and this was confirmed by the government resolution. On the other hand, we don't think we need so much time. Well, of course we will try and expedite – (unintelligible) – and under the regulations that we are working on now, we are trying to address that. We're involved in the issuance of multiple entry visas and we're dealing with invitations, and we have to ask other agents in agencies, but we will try to reduce the time. And of course I would say that multiple – single-entry visa should be issued – it shouldn't take more than seven days to have a single entry.

As for the European Union nations who have the visas – (unintelligible) – agreement, I would like to recall that visas can be issued on the basis of invitations from Russian companies in the regional (copies ?) of course. Of course, there will be time involved in the transmission of the originals, but we have an understanding with the European Commission that some categories of people will be issued visas based on fax copies. Well, it will be mostly sports and cultural and other humanitarian-related travel. So we're going to have another meeting with the European Commission soon, so if we get their approval for faxed copies for these categories of people, starting from that point people will be able to get the visas within not very short time frame but, well, I'd say – but fax copies will be used. So we have to wait for just a little bit.

MR. REINHARDT: (Off mike) – for their breakfast, it actually turns out to be the website for the Moscow division at least of the Federal Migration Service, www.fmsmoscow, —o-s-c-o-w, all one word, dot r-u. So presumably there would be some information there as well for those who were asking that question earlier.

We had a question down here in front I believe.

Any other questions? One from this side.

Q: My name is Robert Jones. I'm representing myself. I'd just like to ask – well, actually make a request more than as a question. It's not really today's concern, we're talking about visas, but I would just like to move on to temporary residence permits and clarification on certain aspects of it. I'm lucky enough to have a temporary residence permit, but after that I do not know what I'm supposed to do. I don't know whether I'm supposed to have a work permit. I don't know where I'm supposed to raise – to pay taxes. These are such questions, if this information could be placed on the website where I could download it and find out exactly what I'm supposed to do, it would be of a great help.

Also, now, because of the new rules, there are an awful lot of people applying for temporary residence. A lot of my American colleagues are having different problems because they're going to – (unintelligible) – or (foreign phrase), wherever they're going. And for example, to get your clearance, that you don't have a criminal record in your own country. One – (unintelligible) – is telling them that they should only get from their state police where another – (unintelligible) – is telling them they should get from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which is causing them a longer holdup. So what I'm basically asking for is can we have a list that we can print off, take it over here and say, "This is what the people asked us to get. This is what we are supplying. Nothing more." Thank you.

MR. AKSENOV: Well, your concern is very legitimate, and we will try to post this information unless it's already there.

MR. REINHARDT: One last question we'll take.

Q: We have many colleagues in countries that pose migration threats to Russia. And it's very difficult to find an agency that's – to assist us processing invitation for an Indian or Chinese citizen. Can you have any information how this could be helped?

MR. AKSENOV: No. We don't have this. We don't have any subsidiaries. One of the – well, it was mentioned today that we publish the invitations rights, and it's now both Russian and foreign firms which are allowed to operate in this market. I'm not sure this is an entirely correct decision because we have now lots and lots of the pseudo intermediaries who were just helping to bring people into Russia. So I think it's – the invitations should go through Russian legal entities, through rep offices, and that would reduce the flow of the – so but we don't have any subsidiary agencies.

MR. REINHARDT : It's coming up on 11 o'clock now. I think we'll close off this morning's session. I would just like, on behalf of the Chamber, to say thank you very much indeed to both of our guests today, Aleksy Klimov and Alexander Aksenov, for taking time from their very busy schedules to be with us and for introducing the clarity

that hopefully they have this morning on these rules and the latest decrees. Gentlemen,
thank you very, very much indeed.

(Applause.)

(END)