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Audio – Russian Costa Brava - Transcript

(Spanish Costa Brava welcomes Russians

The local community in Platja D'Aro, north of Barcelona in Spain, welcome Russian tourists who are buying up second homes there. The rich visitors are providing a much needed boost to the local economy. Duration: 01:35)

Sergey and Larisa are Russian. They've come from Siberia searching for a dream home on the Spanish Costa Brava, north of Barcelona.

This one's on sale for 3.5 million euros. Spread over 700 square meters, it has a big living room and six bedrooms.

We're from Novosibirsk, in Siberia. In winter it is very cold and it's very harsh from November to March. It's horrible, with temperatures as cold as minus 40. You have much better weather here, that's why we are looking for a house.

Spain is very popular with Russian tourists. In 2012 for the first time more than a million came to visit up 40 percent in a year.

Like Sergey and Larisa, more and more are deciding to buy a second home here. In Platja d'Aro, a resort of 10,000 people, the number of Russians has tripled since 2004 and now stand at 575.

Right now 90 percent of the sales in and around Platja d'Aro are to Russian-speakers. The good thing is they don't need a bodyguard or chauffeur. They can go for a walk alone. It's totally safe.

It may be safe but a recent money-laundering scandal involving the Russian mafia and a local politician caused shockwaves in the neighbouring district of Lloret del Mar.

Nevertheless, these new neighbours with seemingly unlimited spending power are more than welcome in a country where the property market is flat and the unemployment rate is over 26 percent.

It has a big impact on our town's economy because they boost business. And of course the property market. As long as there's money coming into our town it's good, it's good for the economy.

All the ones I know are very friendly, they don't cause any problems. I wish there were more coming to invest here in the town.