

RUSSIA-UKRAINE AIRLINE BAN TO BE LIFTED? CROSS-COUNTRY FLIGHTS STOPPED AMID SANCTIONS, CONFLICT

News / Airlines



Russian aviation authorities want to hold discussions with their Ukrainian counterparts aimed at lifting a ban on commercial flights between the two countries, Deputy Transport Minister Valery Okulov reportedly said Tuesday. Flights between the two countries had completely stopped in September as Moscow and Kiev sought to reinforce sanctions against each other over the conflict in East Ukraine.

"We have sent three proposals -- two from the Transport Ministry and one from the Federal Air Transport Agency -- on holding the consultations," Okulov said Tuesday while attending a Wings of Russia aviation forum, according to Russian news site Tass. "Ukraine has made its decision [to ban flights from Russian airlines] but has not held consultations. That is why the first thing we are proposing is that we should hold consultations."

The flight ban was another in the series of tit-for-tat sanctions that have been levied over the East Ukraine war, which began in April 2014 from Russian aggression in the region. In addition to targeting financial institutions, high-profile individuals have also been sanctioned. The flight ban came after it was discovered Russia was flying transport aircraft across Ukraine, down to the Black Sea and into Syria, where it has been arming the government military.

Various Ukrainian airlines had asked for permission to fly into Russia during the upcoming winter period, the Russian Transport Ministry said Monday. Atlasjet airlines had requested to operate flights on Kiev-Moscow, Odessa-Moscow and Kiev-St. Petersburg routes, while UTair Ukraine had asked permission for flights between Kiev and Moscow, Lviv and Moscow.

In turn, Moscow's aviation ministry, which represents Russian airlines that want to recommence flights into Ukraine, had called on Kiev to discuss the matter urgently. "There are shifts in this matter and it is becoming warmer because it is completely wrong to disrupt air communication," said Okulov.

Earlier this month, about 20 Russian airlines were included in the Ukrainian authorities' sanctions lists, which will go into effect Oct. 25.

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