
Russia halts Ukraine transit flights, considers US and EU restrictions

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"Russia will cancel all transit flights for Ukrainian airlines through its airspace into Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey," Medvedev said during a government meeting on Thursday.

Russia is considering closing its airspace to EU and US airlines as a part of the countermeasures to Western sanctions which affected Aeroflot subsidiary Dobrolet, Prime Minister confirmed.

"The measures include a ban on transit flights by European and US air carriers to Southeast Asia, and to the Asia-Pacific Region," ITAR-TASS quotes Medvedev.

"We are looking at changing the so-called points of entry and exit from our airspace for scheduled European air carrier and charter flights," Medvedev said, adding that this would have an effect on flight costs and hence impact the prices of tickets sold by Western companies.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday [said](#) Russia's plans to impose restrictions on flights of foreign commercial aircraft over Siberia are rumors.

"I don't want to comment on rumors, but everybody knows how actively Russian airspace is used by foreign airlines, including those from Europe, the United States and Asia," the minister stressed.

At the same time, Lavrov said the Russian government is considering a number of retaliatory steps.

The government is also “*potentially ready*” to introduce protective measures in a number of industrial sectors including the automobile industry, shipbuilding and aircraft production, Medvedev said, however stressing that Russia will “*perform them meaningfully*.”

However the final decision to apply the measures has not been confirmed.

European 'tit for tat'

In an interview with Deutsche Welle published Wednesday Richard Kuhnel, the European Commission representative in Germany, said Europe was ready for a “*tit for tat*” action against Russia, and could close its airspace to Russian airlines if Moscow decided to block flights to Asia over Siberia

Air routes are arranged internationally and Russia is obliged to follow the rules the same way it follows the rules of organizations like the WTO. It means that Russia can't unilaterally apply measures without violating international law, Kuhnel emphasized.

Another option for the EU would be applying to the relevant international bodies.

The European Commission said it was not commenting on moves until they become official.

On August 4 Dobrolet [suspended](#) flights, citing the EU sanctions. The move came after European contractors terminated the leases on aircraft, technical maintenance, insurance and navigation contracts because of the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia.
