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Russian Fans to Fly Free to Ukraine

By The Moscow Times

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Russian football fans will be able to fly to the European Football Championship in Ukraine and Poland for free, Aeroflot and Transaero have said.

The commitment came after Prime Minister Vladimir Putin told reporters that he couldn't see how making “a couple of planes available” to fly fans to the tournament would hurt the airlines, Russia's largest.

Transaero said Friday it was “ready to offer special discount fares to organized groups of fans” traveling on its regular flights to Ukraine during this summer's tournament, Interfax reported.

Several hours later Aeroflot, which operates routes to Poland, where Russia will play all its group-stage games, announced it too would look into offering free or heavily discounted fares.

Vladimir Putin made the suggestion during a meeting with football supporters' groups

Thursday evening.

“I don't think Aeroflot and Transaero would lose money if we asked them to give you free planes for advertising reasons,” Putin said at a meeting with representatives of football supporters' organizations Thursday evening.

Details of the arrangement are still hazy, but Transaero said Friday that it has already approached its main fuel supplier, Gazprom Aero, with a mutual promotional plan under which the oil firm would not charge for fuel, while the airline would fly fans for free.

Repeated calls to both airlines went unanswered Friday.

Russia's Euro 2012 campaign kicks off on June 8, when Russia will face the Czech Republic in Wroclaw.

The tournament's final will be held in Kiev on July 1.

Russian airlines will be barred from paying European Union greenhouse gas emission quotas under draft legislation, Bloomberg reported Friday, citing Vedomosti.

Carriers are to be required to pay the EU quotas from 2013, according to the paper. Aeroflot’s annual liabilities would rise to $800 million by 2025 from $40 million currently under the EU scheme, it said, citing the airline.

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