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Moscow Hosts Opponents of EU Carbon Rules

By The Moscow Times

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BRUSSELS — Nations opposing a European Union law that forces all airlines to pay for their carbon emissions will meet this week in Moscow to debate an array of countermeasures, raising the risk of an aviation trade war.

China, the United States, India and Russia are among those to have expressed vehement opposition to the EU legislation requiring carriers using EU airports to acquire allowances under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, or ETS.

The so-called "coalition of the unwilling" — bringing together 26 nations — has held a series of meetings.

At a two-day Moscow gathering beginning on Tuesday, Russian Transportation Minister Igor Levitin is expected to open the "follow-up international conference" on coordinating activities opposing the inclusion of aviation in the EU ETS.

According to the draft seen by Reuters, the meeting will go on to debate an unspecified "basket of countermeasures."

Other agenda items refer to a letter to EU member states and "aspects of Article 84 of the Chicago Convention," again without explanation.

Article 84 covers a formal dispute procedure at the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization, or ICAO.

Airline representatives and analysts have said it would be unwise to opt for the extremely lengthy formal dispute procedure before the ICAO has had another chance to find a global market-based solution to airline emissions.

The EU has said it only acted to include all airlines in its scheme because more than a decade of talks at the ICAO failed to find an answer to curbing rising carbon emissions from aviation.

But progress at the ICAO has accelerated since the EU began including all airlines in its ETS from the start of this year.

While the EU has said it will stand firm, it has also said it is very much in favor of global action and would adapt its law if the ICAO comes up with a worldwide scheme.

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