More Competition on Air Routes to Italy Expected

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A plane owned by airline Yakutia, one of 13 contenders to become the second designated carrier on flights to Rome and Milan. **Maxim Stulov**

A partial liberalization of the air routes between Russia and Italy has opened up opportunities for 13 additional carriers to compete for the business, which is now monopolized by Aeroflot, a source at Rosaviatsia told Vedomosti.

Competing for the right to be the second Russian carrier to fly between Russia and the Italian cities of Rome and Milan are Transaero, UTair, SibAir, Rossiya Airlines, Ural Airlines, IFly, Orenburg Airlines, Vim-Avia, Donavia, Nordwind, Nordavia, Yakutia and Taimyr. Aerflot also applied, in the hopes of increasing its existing number of flights to the Mediterranean country.

A total of 200 applications were made for flights from Moscow and the regions to Rome and Milan. Currently, only Aeroflot and Alitalia cover the routes between Moscow and the

Italian cities, with 35 flights per week. Another 21 flights are to be added.

According to Ato.ru, Wind Jet plans to compete with Alitalia for flights on the additional routes originating in Italy.

The applications will be reviewed on April 25.

Talks about liberalizing international routes have been going on since last year and are regulated by intergovernmental agreements based on parity and reciprocity. Usually, each side names one airline to be responsible for regular routes. However, under the new agreements a second airline will be added. Routes with Italy are some of the first to be addressed. The intergovernmental agreement was ratified at the end of February.

Aeroflot and Alitalia are partners in the SkyTeam alliance. As a result, tickets on these routes cost several times more than routes of similar lengths, according to calculations made this winter by the Region research company.

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