

Aeroflot Potential Belavia Buyer

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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After a spat, privatization could bring the carriers together forever. **Yekaterina Kuzmina**

Belarus is beginning to privatize Belavia, its national airline, with Aeroflot as a possible buyer.

Belarussian Transportation Minister Ivan Sherbo said the privatization of the airline would most likely happen in 2013, Gazeta.ru reported Tuesday.

"Airlines are included in the plan for privatization," he said. "The only thing we are planning to do is buy more aircraft to have a larger presence on the air carrier market."

An unidentified source at Belavia told Gazeta.ru that only Russian companies have expressed interest so far, and Aviaport analysts said Aeroflot is the most likely candidate.

This comes after a spat between Russian and Belarussian air authorities and airlines over which country should carry out more flights between Moscow and Minsk each day, in which Belavia threw particular vitriol at Aeroflot. Flights were briefly stopped between the cities in a standoff over the issue, and a Belavia spokesman criticized Aeroflot for trying to "eliminate"

Belavia as a competitor by taking its flights.

The dispute was eventually resolved April 11, with the countries deciding to have five flights each, although Belavia is not sure whether it will use its fifth flight, Gazeta.ru wrote Tuesday.

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