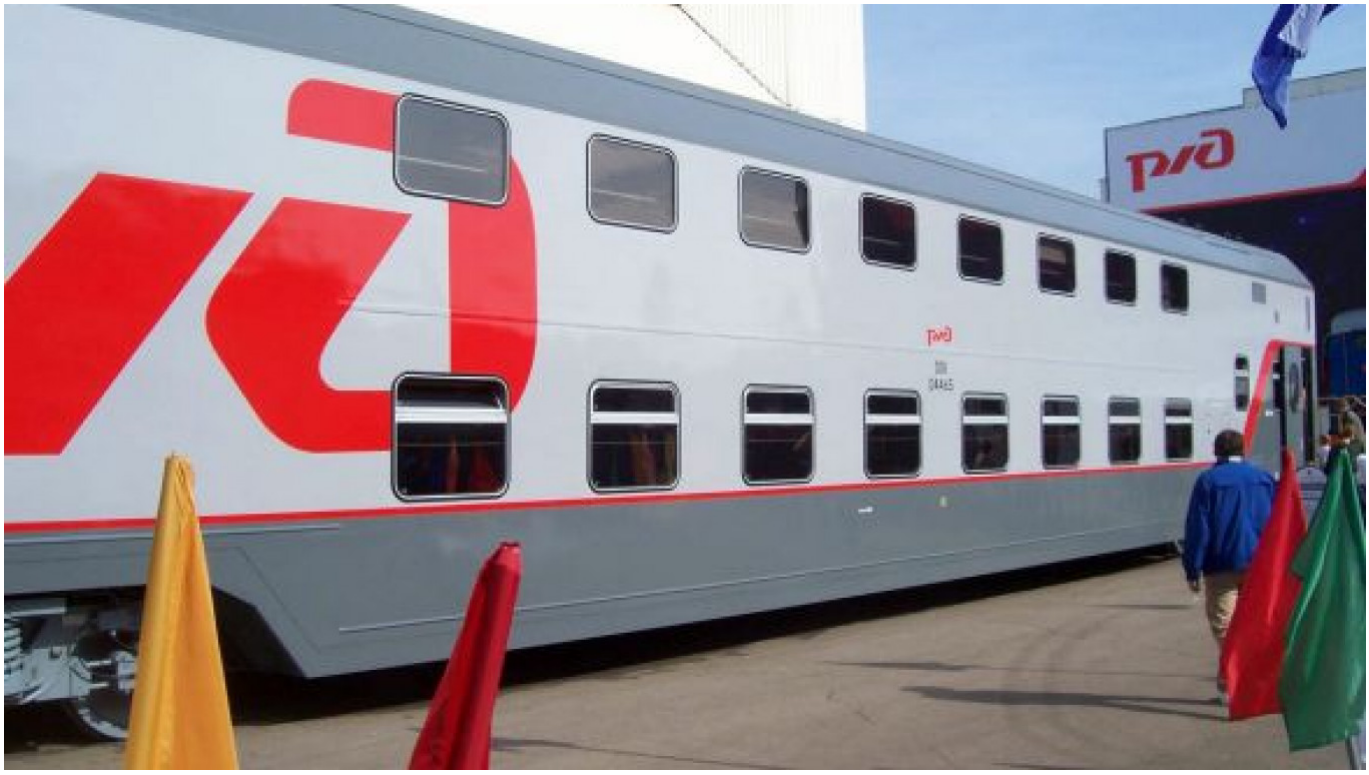
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Foreign Manufacturers Onboard for Aeroexpress Double-Decker

By Lena Smirnova

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Transmashholding is making double-decker railcars for Russian Railways.

Alstom, Siemens, Skoda and Stadler will compete to make double-decker railcars for Aeroexpress, the shuttle company announced last week.

The four foreign companies made it onto the short list of potential Aeroexpress suppliers, while three other bidders, including the biggest Russian company in the transport engineering industry, Transmashholding, failed to impress the judges with their applications.

Transmashholding, which submitted its bid through the Tver Railcar Plant, Korean Hyundai and Polish Pesa did not make it through the prequalification round of the tender.

The final winner of the tender, to be announced in January 2013, will supply 150 railcars as part of a deal worth 18 billion rubles ($564.3 million), Kommersant reported. The double-decker railcars could be put into commission as early as 2015.

The passenger flow on Aeroexpress airport shuttles has grown so much that double-deckers have become a necessity, company spokeswoman Nadezhda Dorzhiyeva said. The number of passengers who use Aeroexpress is expected to double by 2015, according to company estimates.

“In the last year alone, the number of passengers we serve jumped by 22.03 percent,” she said. Dorzhiyeva also said adding floors to railcars is the most efficient option to accommodate passengers, given the shuttles’ already full schedules.

The four companies that passed through the first round of the tender were chosen based on how adapted their proposals were to Russian climatic conditions and what their previous experience working with double-decker railcars was.

There is no front runner among the four companies, Dorzhiyeva said.

Although Transmashholding did not qualify, it is not unfamiliar with Russian weather or the idea of double-deckers. It signed a contract with Russian Railways in December 2010 under which the manufacturer agreed to supply double-decker railcars for long-distance and regional trains.

Transmashholding did not make it to the next round of the tender because it only has models for locomotive-powered double-deckers, while Aeroexpress is looking to buy electric railcars, Dorzhiyeva said.

However, Transmashholding spokesman Artyom Ledenyov said he was still confused about why the company’s application had not gone through, since it was not a prerequisite for companies to have ready-made double-deckers to qualify for the tender.

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