

Airlines Might Have to Buy Domestic Planes

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Rogozin's comments counter former President Medvedev's instructions to ditch Soviet-built aircraft, including the Tu-134, pictured, after a series of fatal crashes last summer.

Russian airlines may be obliged to undertake commitments to buy domestic aircraft under proposals outlined by Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin.

The move was one of several suggestions Rogozin made as he laid out a plan to reboot the domestic aviation industry.

“Our main task is to displace imported aircraft from the domestic market. What do you need for that? You need to gather everyone together; operators need to set targets for producers: what planes they need, what distances they should work on, what passenger parameters,” he said at an event in Nizhny Tagil.

In turn, plane builders should commit to deadlines, and the government should support the

industry with financial guarantees, Rogozin said.

He added that he had already agreed with Arkady Dvorkovich to organize such a summit of operators and manufacturers.

Policymakers have been struggling for several years to find a balance between helping domestic carriers replace aging and often dangerous Soviet-built fleets and supporting domestic plane builders.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev instructed the Industry and Trade Ministry and United Aircraft Corp. to consult with carriers on creating a new regional aircraft.

Industry and Trade Minister Denis Manturov has said he wants the country to start producing a series of small planes with nine to 40 seats over the next five years.

But in July, Medvedev proposed abolishing import duties on aircraft for up to 72 seats to help domestic airlines re-equip.

Medvedev ordered domestic carriers to ditch Soviet-built aircraft after a series of fatal crashes last summer.

But the practicalities of grounding all An-24 turboprop and Tu-134 twin-engine jets, which provide the only links to the outside world for hundreds of communities in Siberia, led many experts to dismiss the plans as impossible.

Efforts to rejuvenate the aviation industry suffered a blow when a Sukhoi Superjet 100 crashed in Indonesia in May, killing all 45 people on board.

The Superjet, which can carry 78 to 95 passengers, depending on configuration, is the first commercial airliner to be designed and built in Russia since the Soviet Union's collapse.

It finally entered service with Armenian national carrier Armavia in 2011.

Aeroflot, which was the second airline to adopt the jets, said in March that it was seeking compensation from Sukhoi because the planes it operates were flying only four hours a day on average due to frequent repairs.

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