

Budget Carrier Wizz Air Intensifying its Interest in Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Europe's fourth largest budget airline, Wizz Air, is planning to launch a subsidiary in Russia, according to news reports on Tuesday.

The Hungarian airline now mostly flies in Central and Eastern Europe and wants to create the company Wizz Air Russia, which would fly on 15 to 20 Russian routes, Vedomosti reported. These plans were outlined in the requests that the airline sent to several Russian airports. The airline is looking to start flights in April 2014 using an initial pool of three airplanes.

Wizz Air is half owned by Indigo Partners investment fund, which was a co-investor in creating the Russian discount airline Avianova. The airline went bankrupt in 2011.

Experts say that one of the key barriers to launching a low-cost airline in Russian now would be a lack of airports that can service budget carriers at reasonable rates.

"First of all, there is no necessary infrastructure of alternative, cheaper airports," said Gediminas Ziemelis, board chairman of Avia Solutions Group. "Secondly, the sales of tickets and airplane fuel in Russia are taxed, in contrast to Europe where the airline carriers don't have the same costs."

Domodedovo Airport recently welcomed flights from Russia's first European low-cost airline EasyJet and its representatives said that they are continuing discussions to partner with Wizz Air .

"This is not the first year that Domodedovo Airport is in discussions with Wizz Air, the same as with other potential partners," the airport's spokesperson Evgeny Konoplev told The Moscow Times.

Wizz Air representatives did not reply to questions about the company's plans for Russia.

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