

# Britain Gives Russian Airshow Officials Cold Shoulder Over Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Red, white and blue smoke billowing from the back of five jets at the Farnborough Airshow.

LONDON — Britain has delivered a calculated diplomatic snub to Russia by failing to invite any of its government officials to next week's Farnborough Airshow in protest over Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

The Farnborough International Airshow, or FIA, is a major event in the aviation calendar to which Russia usually sends a large contingent in search of foreign sales.

But in a statement on Saturday, the Foreign Office said it would not be offering Kremlin officials their usual invitations and was taking steps to tighten military export rules from Britain to Russia.

"It is a commercial matter for the organizers to whom they sell exhibition space," it said in a statement.

The government, it said, does invite representatives from certain foreign states to attend the show as guests.

"But due to Russian actions in Ukraine, no representatives from the Russian government have been issued [government] invitations to FIA 2014," it added.

The statement said it had also taken action to remove Russia from the list of those countries able to use Britain's most flexible type of strategic export license — the Open General Export License — to discourage Russian attendance at the July 14-20 show.

"No foreign government representatives attending FIA 2014 as guests of [the British government] will be escorted around the Russian pavilion by officials," it concluded.

No immediate comment was available from the Russian embassy in London.

Britain and its NATO partners accuse Russia of supporting pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine but Moscow denies that it has allowed fighters to cross the border, along with heavy weapons, to confront Ukrainian government forces.

Tensions over the crisis in Ukraine have already depleted this year's Farnborough show, with Russia adopting a scaled-down presence, focusing on civil displays and the space industry.

"It's obvious that because of tensions with Western governments over differences between Russia and Ukraine, the military presence is really scaled down at this year's Farnborough," said Alexander Velovich, sales representative for Russian and Ukrainian clients at the show.

Many Russian visitors have struggled to obtain British visas and on Friday more than 100 of the expected 450 delegates were yet to receive clearance, said Velovich.

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