The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Rail Travel Between Russia and Estonia Suspended After 65 Years

By Anna Dolgov

May 18, 2015



Trains will no longer run from Tallinn's Baltic railway station to Russia. **Larsz**

Dozens of people, including one dressed as a popular Soviet-era cartoon character, came to see off the last train departing Estonia's capital Tallinn for Moscow, after the Baltic nation suspended railroad communication along the 65-year-old route, news reports said.

Estonia's Go Rail carrier sent off its last train to Moscow on Sunday, after suspending routes to St. Petersburg earlier this month, the company said on its website. Another train was to travel from Moscow to Tallinn overnight on Monday-Tuesday, before the route is fully suspended, Go Rail said.

The cancellations were prompted by a sharp drop in the number of passengers, Go Rail's director Alar Pinsel said in a statement.

The number of travelers from Russia to Estonia declined by 43 percent in March, compared to

the same period in 2014, Estonia's state statistics department said in a statement.

Several dozen people showed up at Tallinn's rail station to see off the last train on Sunday, Estonia's ERR television reported.

The onlookers included a person decked out in a costume of a Soviet-era animation film character, Gena the Crocodile — renowned, among other things, for his song titled "Blue Wagon" about traveling by train — the report said.

Trains between Tallinn and Moscow had been running for 65 years, and the suspension comes less than two weeks before the route's May 30 anniversary, Russia's RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Go Rail has no funds to operate the route after the passenger flow decline, the company's director said, adding that Estonia's state-run Eesti Raudtee railways was in talks with Russian Railroads about resuming rail travel between Moscow and Tallinn.

The sharp decline in the value of the ruble has meant that more Russians are spending their vacation time at home, prompting Russia's tour operators to lower prices for domestic travel in a battle for market shares, business daily Kommersant reported last week.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/05/18/rail-travel-between-russia-and-estonia-suspended-after-65-years-a46623