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Budget Airline EasyJet Cancels London-Moscow Flights

By The Moscow Times

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Airlines have been hit hard by the sharp devaluation of the ruble, which last year lost 40 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar.

British low-coster easyJet is suspending flights between Moscow and London, the airline said in a statement last week.

"The decision has been taken in response to the significant and sustained reduction in demand for travel between Moscow and London in recent months which has been driven by a number of factors including the weakness of the Russian economy together with the tightening of the visa approval process," the statement said.

The flights will stop from March 21, 2016, the company said, adding that "easyJet will keep the potential reintroduction of the route under review."

The airline said in May it was scrapping its Moscow-Manchester flights from Oct. 23 due

to falling demand, having previously cut the number of its flights to both British cities. It later moved forward the date of the last flight from Manchester to Sept. 10.

Airlines have been hit hard by the sharp devaluation of the ruble, which last year lost 40 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar on the back of plunging oil prices.

This has made tickets priced in foreign currencies more expensive compared to those offered by Russian airlines, as well as making traveling abroad more expensive for Russians. When combined with falling incomes, the result has been a significant drop in the number of Russians traveling abroad.

British tourists to Russia, on the other hand, now face an extra hurdle when obtaining a Russian visa: They have to visit the visa center in London in person to provide their fingerprints, a measure that has put off some would-be tourists who live outside the capital.

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