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Russian Official Says Crimea to Get Its Own Airline in 2016

By The Moscow Times

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Crimea will get its own airline this year, the RIA Novosti news agency reported Thursday, citing the first deputy chairman of the State Duma Committee for Transport Mikhail Bryachak.

“Creating a Crimean airline is a necessary task. It should happen this year. We have to overcome bureaucratic barriers, but this is only a temporary problem that we will surely overcome,” Bryachak said in an interview with the Sputnik v Krymu radio station.

According to Bryachak, the creation of the airline has already been coordinated with the head of Crimea, Sergei Aksyonov. The plans were also approved by Russia's Rosaviatsia aviation watchdog.

The air carrier will be created with taxpayer money, he said. The airline's fleet will consist of modernized Tu-154 aircrafts.

Bryachak said the airline is a necessity because other airlines that fly to the peninsula often cancel or reduce the number of flights, especially during the low season.

Tourism on the peninsula suffers as a result, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Moscow annexed Crimea in March 2014 following a disputed referendum which was not recognized by the international community. The Kremlin's move was widely condemned by the West and was followed by a package of economic sanctions against Russia.

European airlines currently do not fly to Crimea.

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