The Moscow Times
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# Erdogan Announces August Trip to Russia in Bid to 'Improve Relations'

July 26, 2016




Turkish President Recep Erdogan is to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg on Aug. 9, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

The country's Deputy Prime Minister, Mehmet Simsek, told journalists that Turkey wants to "make relations with Russia even better than they were before November 24." The date marks the downing of a Russian aircraft by Turkish forces last year along the country's border with Syria. The incident sparked a sharp decline in ties between the two nations, with Russia imposing a number of sanctions on Ankara until an official apology was received last month.

Simsek also announced that Turkey had presented Russia with a report on heightened safety measures taken to ensure the resumption of charter flights between the two countries, which have been banned since December.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich said there were "very good opportunities" for the two countries to improve trade, investment cooperation and even resume tourism, but

warned, “it’s essential to create conditions which guarantee [the] safety [of tourists],” Interfax reported.

Turkey is currently reeling from an attempted military coup on July 15, sparking a government-orchestrated crackdown targeting over 60,000 teachers, journalists, military and government officials. The Russian government had agreed to normalize relations just two weeks before the putsch, after Erdogan apologized to Russia for the downing of the Russian military plane.

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