

Russia Said to Be Ready to Sign Pact on Resuming Cairo Flights

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Vladimir Putin and Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi / Kremlin Press Service

Bloomberg — Russia may restore flights to Cairo in the wake of a visit Monday to Egypt by President Vladimir Putin, two years after it suspended air connections over terrorism fears, a senior Russian official and an industry representative in Moscow said.

The agreement on restoring flights to the Egyptian capital could be signed Monday, the official said, declining to be identified because the matter is confidential.

The pact would mark the first easing of Moscow's ban on air travel between the two countries since it was imposed in 2015 after terrorists blew up a Russian passenger jet over the Sinai Peninsula, killing all 224 people on board.

A ban will remain on Russian charter flights to the Red Sea resorts of Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh, though the Russian side may offer assurances on restarting those services in 2018, said the industry representative, who asked not to be identified.

As many as 3 million Russians visited Egypt a year before the halt to air connections, which deprived the economically struggling Middle East nation of 70 percent of its tourist arrivals.

Aeroflot spokesman Andrei Sogrin declined to comment on any decision, saying only that the company is ready to resume flights as soon as approval is given. The Russian Transport Ministry couldn't immediately be reached for a response. Egypt's Civil Aviation Ministry didn't respond to calls or texts.

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