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Russian Airlines Cancel Czech Flights Over Route Dispute

July 02, 2019



Moskva News Agency

At least three Russian airlines have canceled most of their Tuesday flights to the Czech Republic over what they said was the country's decision to revoke flight permissions to and from Prague.

The flagship carrier Aeroflot and Ural Airlines are the only Russian airlines that perform direct flights to and from Prague. Czech Airlines performs return flights to and from Moscow twice a day.

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Aeroflot said that, despite its "technical capacity to operate flights," the Czech aviation authorities revoked its flight permission. In response, Aeroflot canceled four flights to and from Prague on Tuesday, July 2, and left two flights operating that day.

Ural Airlines also “indefinitely” canceled flights to Prague from Moscow and Yekaterinburg on Tuesday, then said its Yekaterinburg-Prague flights had been restored.

Aeroflot-owned Pobeda Airlines told Interfax that it was canceling flights from Moscow to the Czech spa town of Karlovy Vary.

The Czech Republic “used the parity rule” and revoked Russia’s permits because it was unhappy with terms offered to Czech Airlines for flights going over Siberia from Prague to Seoul, the country's transport ministry said.

Russia’s Transportation Ministry told Interfax that Czech authorities’ actions had violated the air communication agreement between the two countries, but that talks were underway to resolve the issue “as soon as possible.”

Up to 20,000 Russian tourists are currently in the Czech Republic, Russia’s Kommersant business daily reported.

Update: The Czech Republic's transport ministry said in a statement that it has restored Russian airlines' flight permissions to the country.

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