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Russia to Limit Flights With Europe From Monday

By AFP

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Andrei Samsonov / TASS

Russia is limiting flights with Europe from Monday to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, Moscow said Friday.

The state health regulator said the restrictions were being imposed "to ensure state security, protect public health and prevent the spread of new coronavirus infection in Russia," according to a statement online.

"The operational headquarters decided to temporarily limit passenger air traffic" from just after midnight Moscow time on March 16, it said.

The restrictions are "from the territory of the Russian Federation to the territory of the Member States of the European Union and in the opposite direction," it said without fully spelling out what the restrictions were.

Flights to and from non-EU countries Norway and Switzerland are included in the new limits.

But air services between EU capital cities and Moscow are exempt from the restrictions, as well as flights to and from Oslo and Geneva.

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Russian news agencies reported that air travel between Moscow and the United Kingdom, which has left the EU, would also not be impacted.

Russia has declared 45 cases of COVID-19 but no fatalities, according to official figures published Friday.

Earlier, Moscow closed its border with China and restricted travel from Iran and South Korea to help prevent the spread of the virus.

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