

Germany-Russia Flights Resume After Tit-for-Tat Cancellations

By [AFP](#)

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Airline companies said flights between Germany and Russia had resumed Wednesday evening, after each country blocked the other's incoming flights as part of the fall-out from tensions over Belarus.

German airline Lufthansa told AFP that the Russian authorities had finally granted it clearance for passenger flights to Russia in June.

"That means Lufthansa flights to Moscow and St. Petersburg can be operated as planned," said a spokeswoman for the airline.

In Russia, Mikhail Poluboyarinov, chief executive of Aeroflot told the TASS news agency: "Everything is fine, we have received all the authorizations."

And another Russian airline, S7, said it too had received clearance for its flights to Germany, the RIA Novosti agency reported.

Earlier Wednesday, Germany's transport ministry said it had blocked flights operated by Russian airlines from arriving in its territory after Moscow failed to provide authorizations for Lufthansa.

Two Russia-bound Lufthansa flights due to depart earlier Wednesday from Germany had been canceled because Russian authorities did not provide the necessary permits for them in time, the ministry said.

"Due to the reciprocal practice, the Federal Aviation Authority also did not issue any further permits for flights operated by Russian airlines as long as authorizations are pending on the Russian side," it added.

Three Aeroflot flights were affected by the cancellations on Tuesday and another four on Wednesday, the ministry said.

"Once permits for Lufthansa flights are granted by the Russian side, the flights of Russian airlines will also be authorized," it added.

Previous cancellations

Neither the ministry nor the airlines concerned mentioned the reason for the flights being blocked.

But some flights operated by European airlines including Air France and Austrian Airlines — a subsidiary of Lufthansa — were canceled last week after Moscow rejected flight plans that would have skipped Belarusian airspace.

Lufthansa has confirmed that it is no longer flying over Belarus after the EU urged airlines to avoid the country's airspace.

The EU's advice came after the Belarusian regime forced the diversion of a Ryanair Athens-Vilnius plane to Minsk in order to arrest an opposition journalist on board.

Moscow last week said the cancellation of several European flights to Moscow was down to "technical reasons."

Eurocontrol, which coordinates air traffic control in the EU, said flights between Europe and Russia "have permission to use defined air corridors.

"If one company changes these routes, there has to be prior agreement between the company concerned and Russia."

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