

Russia Not Among EU's Sanctions Targets for Belarus Migrant Crisis – Brussels

November 12, 2021



Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia is not among the countries the European Union is considering sanctioning over the migrant crisis on the Poland-Belarus border, a senior EU official [said](#) Thursday after reports suggested Brussels could punish Russia's flagship carrier Aeroflot for what it called "human trafficking."

Bloomberg previously reported that the European Commission was considering sanctioning Aeroflot alongside Belarus' Belavia, Turkish Airlines, FlyDubai and other officials for allegedly helping move people mainly from the Middle East to the EU borders.

Related article: [Russia's Aeroflot Denies Transporting Migrants to Belarus](#)

Peter Stano, the EU's lead spokesman for external affairs, told Russian media that the bloc is

in talks with 10 countries that conduct and advertise direct flights to Minsk for them to use their “influence” and stop the migrant surge.

“Russia is not on this list,” Stano told the Ekho Moskvy radio station.

Stano added that the EU is monitoring a total of 30 countries “suspected of possible involvement in this illegal scheme of luring and transporting people” led by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

The West accuses Lukashenko of encouraging the migrants to travel Belarus to send them across the border in revenge for last year’s EU sanctions that punished Minsk for its harsh post-election crackdown on the opposition.

Aeroflot issued a firm [denial](#) of helping migrants and refugees travel to Belarus, threatening to go to court after the Bloomberg report saw its shares fall during trading.

Lukashenko also threatened to cut off gas supplies to Europe if it imposes sanctions for the migrant standoff, while Russian officials threatened to cut off key air routes for Western airlines if Brussels followed through with its reported plan to sanction Aeroflot.

Iraq and Kurdish representatives have meanwhile announced plans to send evacuation flights to return their stranded citizens from Belarus, though the migrants themselves have told international and Russian news organizations that they seek to gain access to the EU at all costs.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/11/12/russia-not-among-eus-sanctions-targets-for-belarus-migrant-crisis-brussels-a75539>