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Finland, Denmark to Close Airspace to Russian Planes

By AFP

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Already a number of other countries — such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany and Poland — have closed their airspace to Russian flights. **Sergei Malgavko / TASS**

Finland and Denmark on Sunday said they would close their airspace to Russian planes, joining other European countries in ramping up sanctions against Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine.

Finland, which shares a 1,300-kilometer (800-mile) border with Russia, "is preparing to close its airspace to Russian air traffic," Transport Minister Timo Harakka wrote in an overnight tweet.

He did not state when the measure would take effect.

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Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod said on Twitter his country too would "be closing its airspace for Russian aircraft."

"At today's meeting of EU ministers of foreign affairs we will push for an EU-wide ban," Kofod said.

Already a number of other countries — such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany and Poland — have closed their airspace to Russian flights, forcing westbound Russian planes to make enormous diversions.

Moscow, for its part, has also banned planes from those countries from flying over its territory.

Finland's flag carrier, Finnair, specialises in flights between Europe and Asia that fly over Russia, but its services are currently limited because of Asian entry restrictions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Finland is also scheduled to approve the dispatch of a consignment of bullet-proof vests, helmets and a mobile hospital to Ukraine.

Helsinki has also approved the shipment of around 40 artillery guns to Ukraine.

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