

Russian Post Says Package Volume From Abroad Doubled

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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As New Year's Day approaches, Russian Post says the number of packages arriving from abroad is double what it was last year, a development neither it nor its counterparts abroad were expecting.

Russian Post said 70 percent of incoming international mail consists of packages from foreign online retailers. So far this holiday season, 21.6 million small packages and express shipments have arrived in Russia.

Russian Post had expected between 40 and 60 percent growth in the number of small packages from abroad, but the rate is now approaching 100 percent. Express shipments via foreign mail companies to Russia were expected to grow by 40 percent but are now above 60 percent.

Online retailers abroad and their local mail services were not expecting such a boom

from Russian shoppers. As a result, delivery times from certain countries have grown.

Britain's Royal Mail couldn't find adequate air transportation for package delivery to Moscow, so it is shipping the overflow to Kiev and then on to Bryansk. This will extend delivery times by almost two weeks.

The Chinese postal service is also being overwhelmed by the heavy demand. Shipments that left China in November arrived in Russia on Dec. 22, a spokesman for Russian Post said.

The postal services of the United States, Italy and Greece are shipping to Russia via Istanbul, where the packages are put on charter flights.

The leading online retail suppliers from abroad to Russia are eBay, Shipito, Zappos, Yoox, Asos and TaoBao, said Alexander Ivanov, the head of the National Association of Distance Selling.

About 80 percent of foreign packages are coming from China, the United States, Germany, Britain, Hong Kong and Ukraine, but the share of Asian suppliers has been growing in recent years, the Russian Post spokesman said.

Local online retailers are also adding to Russian Post's burden. Russian Internet stores shipped about 108 million packages to their customers this year, Ivanov said.

The long journey for orders arriving from abroad is not a deterrent for local buyers. They are ready to wait because prices of foreign online retailers are lower, he added.

For example, Ugg boots cost \$190 (5,812 rubles) at one Australian online retailer but are selling for 12,290 rubles at Lamoda.ru

But domestic Internet stores have an advantage over foreign ones, not in pricing but in the level of service, the ability to communicate with customers, and clarity on sizing and returns, Ivanov said.

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