

Aeroflot Sees Common Problems for Airline Alliances

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The three main global airline alliances face common problems and should work together to try to resolve them, the chief executive of Aeroflot said Monday.

Vitaly Savelyev distanced himself from reports that Aeroflot planned to quit the SkyTeam alliance of 19 global airlines.

Daily newspaper Kommersant reported last month that Aeroflot was considering leaving SkyTeam because of unfavorable agreements with other members, in particular U.S. carrier Delta Air Lines

A source close to the Aeroflot board said that the company saw no benefit from its membership, but that a decision to leave was not for management to take. Aeroflot's main shareholder is the Russian state.

"If we look at the three current major alliances, SkyTeam, OneWorld and Star, all three are facing similar problems," Savelyev said.

"One being the fight with terrorism and the overall security and safety issues. Another is the price of fuel, and the third is competition with other modes of transport like high-speed trains and cars," he added as the company announced a sponsorship of English soccer club Manchester United, the team's first Russian sponsor.

Aeroflot replaces Turkish Airlines as United's partner in a five-year deal unveiled at the club's Old Trafford stadium.

Regarding the work of the airline alliances, Savelyev said it would be logical to work closely together to address their common problems. "Maybe it was some of these ideas that we voiced that gave somebody the belief that we may be considering leaving the alliance," he added.

The agreement to join SkyTeam in 2004 was signed in the Kremlin, a political stamp of approval largely due to close ties with France. Air France-KLM is a leading member of the group.

Kommersant cited sources close to Aeroflot's board of directors as saying the company was not happy with the development of its routes in the United States, where Delta Air Lines charges relatively high fares.

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