

FLIGHT BAN IN RUSSIA REDUCES THE NUMBER OF CHINESE IN FRANCE



The tourism sector of the Paris region is complaining about the lack of flight connections between China and the French capital, resulting in a lack of visitors and declining revenues. The head of the capital region Île-de-France, Valérie Pécresse, called on the state and the airline Air France to allow more flights to China. The Accor hotel chain, the Galeries Lafayette department store, the Club Med tourism group, and the Paris airport managers had previously approached President Emmanuel Macron.

The limited number of flights was caused by the war in Ukraine and the following ban on European airlines on flying over Russia. Instead of 32 weekly flights to China before the Covid pandemic, Air France will only increase the number of connections to 14 in July. As an Air France spokesman said, the ban on Russian airspace would lead to a time-consuming and costly diversion of flights. Such a ban does not apply to Chinese airlines. For more Chinese to be able to fly to France, the principle that the airlines of both countries offer the same number of flights, and Chinese companies would have to be allowed to fly more often, would have to be deviated from.

Tourists from China are known to be particularly willing to spend more in France and Paris. They accounted for up to 30% of sales, especially in hotels and shops in the luxury segment. Before the Covid crisis, the Chinese accounted for 32% of sales in the shops at Paris Airport, spending ten times as much as American guests. According to Atout France, the French tourism promotion agency abroad, Chinese tourists accounted for only 3% percent of stays in 2019, but their contribution to sales was 7%.

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