



ПАСОЛЬСТВА РЭСПУБЛІКІ БЕЛАРУСЬ
У ЗЛУЧАНЫМ КАРАЛЕЎСТВЕ
ВЯЛІКАБРЫТАНІІ І ПАЎНОЧНАЙ
ІРЛАНДЫІ

Кенсінгтон Корт 6, Лондан, W8 5DL
тэл. + 44 207 937 32 88
факс + 44 207 938 59 85
e-mail: uk.london@mfa.gov.by
сайт: www.uk.mfa.gov.by

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN
IRELAND

6 Kensington Court, London, W8 5DL
tel. + 44 207 937 32 88
fax + 44 207 938 59 85
e-mail: uk.london@mfa.gov.by
website: www.uk.mfa.gov.by

№ 02-03/486

Mr Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Transport Committee
House of Commons
UK Parliament

London, 9 June 2021

Dear Mr Merriman,

Following your invitation to the session of the Transport Committee, I would like to inform you that all relevant information regarding the emergency landing of Ryanair aircraft in Minsk provided by the Department of Aviation of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Belarus was conveyed by the Embassy to the British aviation authorities and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office right after the incident.

This information includes explanation of the sequence of events that led to the emergency landing, audio recording and transcription of radio traffic between the plane's crew and air controller. These materials prove that the authorities of Belarus took all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the passengers of flight FR4978 in full compliance with the international aviation law.

The Belarusian side is concerned about the unfortunate decision of the British authorities to suspend Belavia's permit to operate commercial services from and to the UK. Sanctions against the air company go far beyond the spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance. Unlike most airlines, Belavia kept operating flights between Minsk and London even amid the coronavirus pandemic in complete accordance with the highest international standards bringing British nationals back to the UK safely. For many of them this was the only way to return home.

In July 2020, Ms Wendy Morton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas, expressed her words of

gratitude to Belavia for organising commercial flights to the United Kingdom in those difficult circumstances.

This arbitrary act of pressure on the trusted airline, which was in no way involved in the incident with the Ryanair plane, results in a direct punishment of ordinary people in both Belarus and the UK. Dozens of Belarusian and British nationals have contacted the Embassy asking for assistance in finding a way to travel between London and Minsk. In fact, thousands of passengers could have flown in both directions by 1 July 2021.

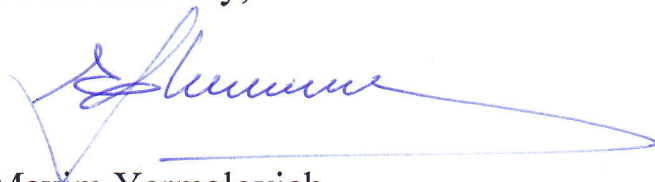
Each year, during summer holidays, British citizens and charity associations organised health-improving visits of Belarusian children from the regions affected by the Chernobyl disaster to the UK. In order to support these rehabilitation activities Belavia operated fast, safe and direct regular flights for thousands of children, increasing their frequency at this period. The current ban on air flights is detrimental to the long-standing humanitarian contacts between the two countries and deprives Belarusian children of the opportunity to improve their health in the UK.

Belarus stands for an objective and non-politicized examination of the case by aviation experts. In this connection, I would like to call on the Transport Committee to give a careful and impartial consideration to the aforementioned materials with the involvement of competent specialists.

In case the Committee has further questions regarding the details of the incident, the Embassy will be ready to request additional information from relevant institutions of Belarus.

I hope that the UK Parliament will make a wise assessment of the matter, which will result in lifting restrictions on flights between Belarus and the United Kingdom.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maxim Yermalovich', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maxim Yermalovich
Ambassador of Belarus to the UK