Air transport statistics

Data extracted in November 2023.
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"The number of passengers transported by air in 2022 more than doubled compared with 2021. "

" In 2022, 820 million people in the EU travelled by air. "

"In 2022, Paris Charles De Gaulle recorded the highest number of air passengers (57 million), followed by Amsterdam Schiphol (52 million)."

"In 2022, Frankfurt Main was the main European airport for freight and mail, with 2.0 million tonnes. "

This article analyses recent data on air transport in the European Union (EU) , both for passengers and freight and mail. It presents data on air passengers transported, showing the good recovery of the air traffic following the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions. The role of air transport in freight transport is less pronounced, as aircraft are an expensive transport mode in terms of tonne-kilometres and only competitive for longer distances and relatively light high-value or perishable goods. The article distinguishes national (domestic), intra- and extra-EU transport, and also takes a look at the relative significance and ranking of airports.

Number of passengers transported by air increased to 820 million in 2022

To prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries around the world put in place a variety of restrictive measures from the beginning of 2020. The air transport industry was severely hit but the first signs of recovery were observed in 2021. In 2022, the signs of recovery in the aviation sector became even more pronounced, indicating a more pronounced and promising rebound where the total number of passengers travelling by air in the EU was 820 million, a substantial increase of 119.3 % compared with 2021 (Figure 1). All Member States registered an increase in the number of passengers carried by air transport compared with 2021. The highest increase was observed for Ireland (+256.2 %), followed by Finland (+203.3 %) and Slovakia (+202.5 %). Among the remaining EU Member States, 20 recorded an increase of more than 100 % (more than doubled) over the same period. The four remaining Member States registered an increase of more than 60 %, with the lowest increase observed for Cyprus (+68.9 %).

Air passenger transport, 2022
(% change compared to previous year)
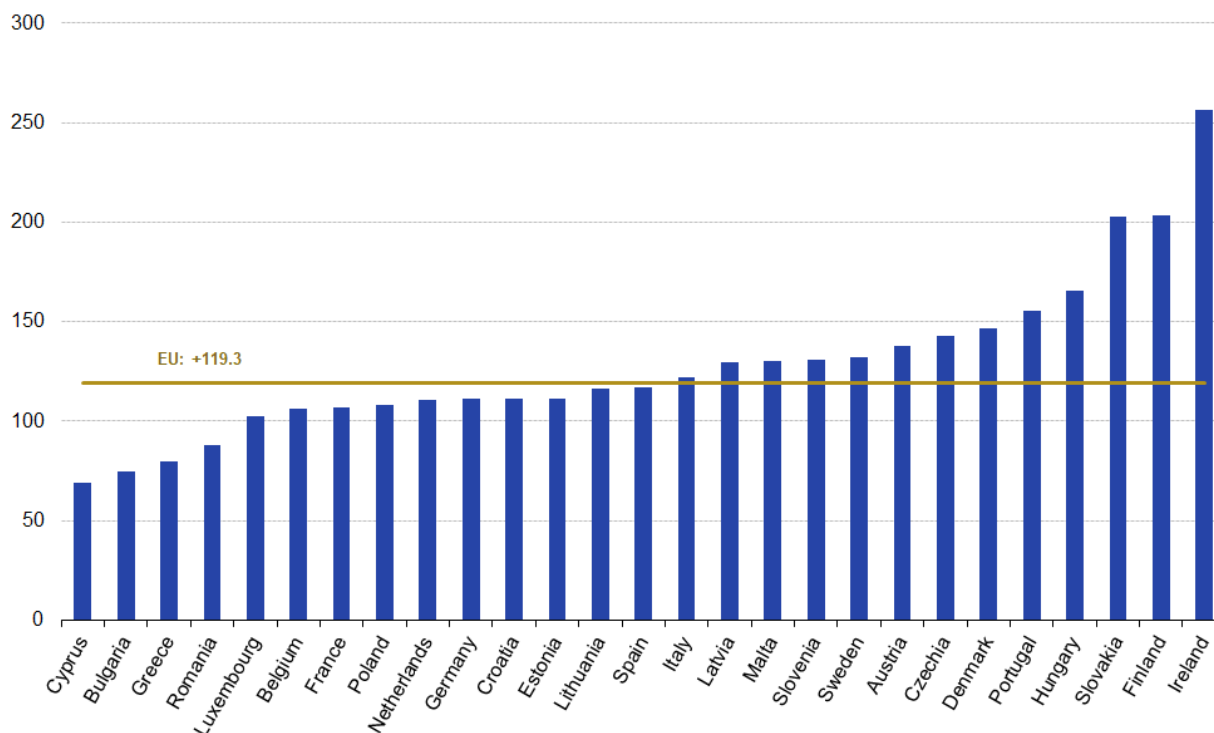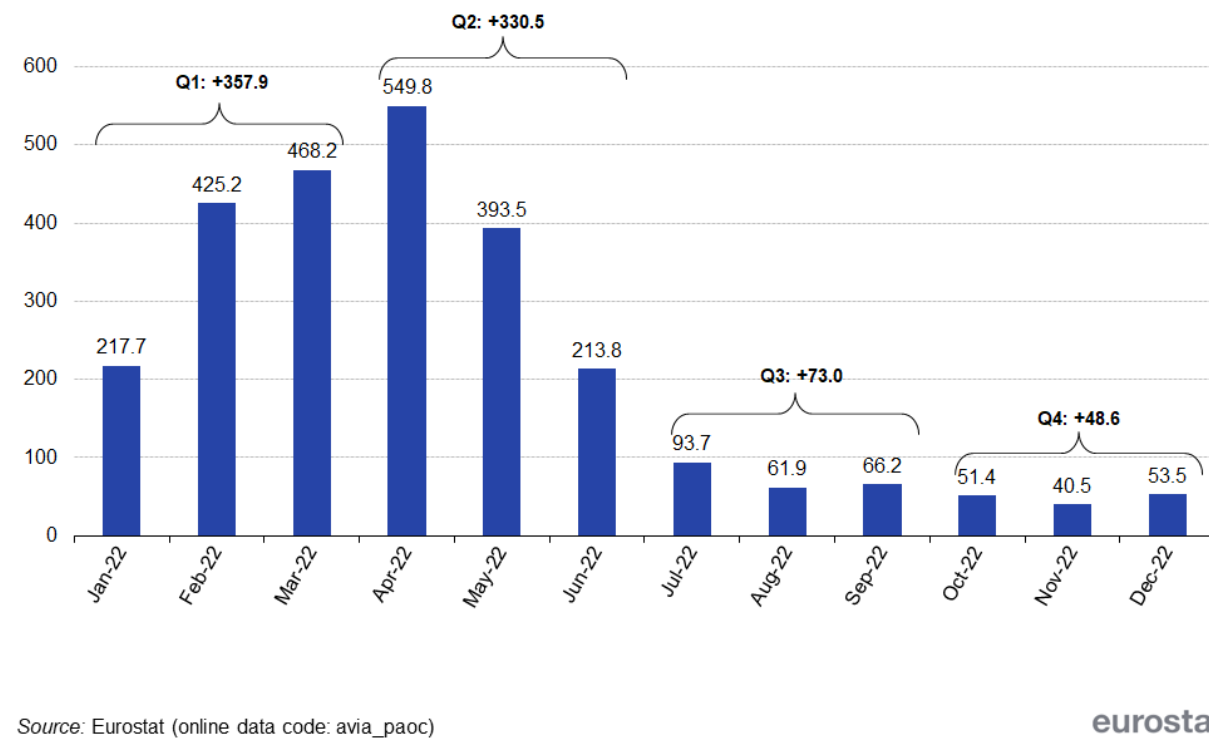

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paoc)

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Figure 1: Air passenger transport, 2022 (% change compared with previous year) Source: Eurostat (avia_paoc)

Figure 2 shows the year-on-year monthly and quarterly growth in air passenger transport for 2022 in the EU. The impact of the COVID-19 restrictions in 2021 is still clearly visible in the first and second quarters 2022, with dramatic increases of +357.9 % and +330.5 % in the number of passengers in the EU compared with the first and second quarters of 2021.The highest increase was registered in April 2022 with +549.8 %. In the third and fourth quarters, the number of air passengers carried also increased every month at EU level. The largest increase was observed in July 2022 (+93.7 % compared with the same month in 2021) followed by September 2022 and August 2022 with +66.2 % and +61.9 % respectively. The least impacted month was November, but still with an increase of 40.5 %.

**Figure 2: Air passenger transport, EU, 2022 (% change compared with the same period of the previous year)
Source: Eurostat (avia_paoc)**

Intra-EU passenger transport was almost at the same level as extra-EU traffic in 2022

Figure 3 indicates that the extra-EU transport represented 47.0 % of the total air passenger transport. It was the main origin/destination slightly ahead of intra-EU transport (36.5 %) and domestic transport (16.5 %). Compared with 2021, the share of national and intra-EU transport lost 6.5 percentage points (pp) and 1.3 pp respectively in 2022 to the benefit of extra-EU, which gained 7.8 pp.

Air passenger transport by type of transport

(%, based on passengers carried, EU, 2022)
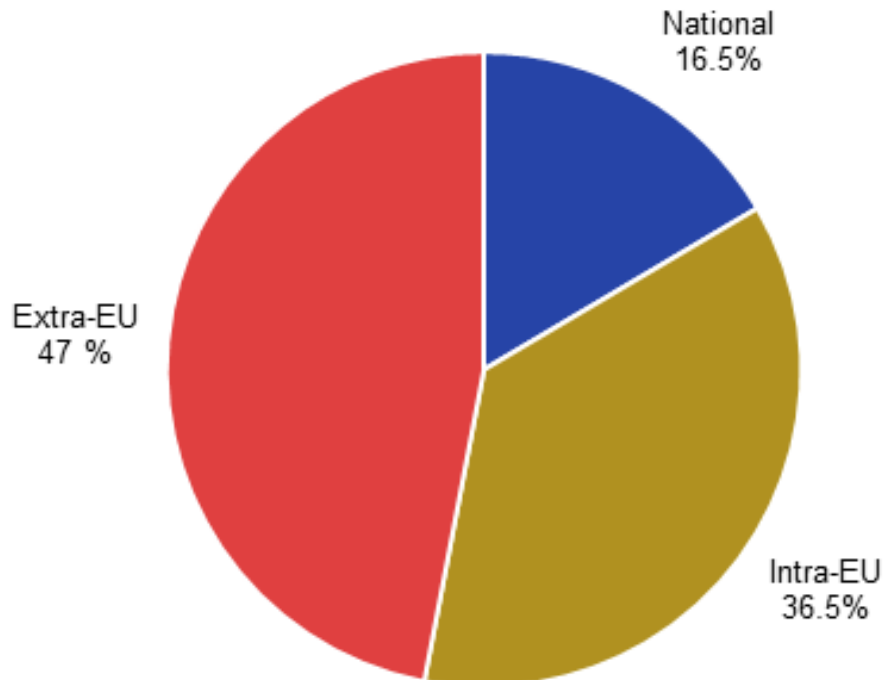
Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paoc)

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Figure 3: Air passenger transport by type of transport, EU, 2022 (%, based on passengers carried) Source: Eurostat (avia_paoc)

All EU Member States registered an increase in intra-EU and extra-EU transport of passengers. For intra-EU transport, Spain carried the highest number of passengers in 2022 with 94 million passengers, but Finland recorded the highest increase with +231.4 %, reaching 8.6 million passengers. For extra-EU transport, Germany carried the highest number of passengers in 2022 with 64.9 million passengers, but Ireland increased the most with +317.2 %, reaching 15.6 million passengers. Among the other EU Member States, the lowest increase was registered for Cyprus in terms of extra-EU with +51.6 %, while Greece recorded the least increase for intra-EU traffic (+64.6 %). 22 out of the 27 Member States more than doubled in terms of extra-EU traffic, 19 for intra-EU traffic. With an increase of 225.5 %, Ireland registered the most growth in terms of national transport of passengers, with 122 644 passengers. Only two countries registered a drop in the domestic transport of passengers in 2022 compared with 2021, Hungary and Belgium with -89.3 % and -38.1 % respectively.

Air passenger transport by type of transport, 2022

(passengers carried)

	Total		National		International intra-EU		International extra-EU	
	Thousands	Change 2022/2021 (%)	Thousands	Change 2022/2021 (%)	Thousands	Change 2022/2021 (%)	Thousands	Change 2022/2021 (%)
EU (¹)	819 838	119.3	135 380	57.5	299 323	111.5	385 135	163.2
Belgium	27 874	106.5	15	-38.1	18 904	98.1	8 956	127.7
Bulgaria	8 808	74.5	239	14.9	5 856	69.8	2 713	94.9
Czechia	11 533	142.5	13	36.1	7 001	128.8	4 519	168.1
Denmark	26 650	146.3	1 578	44.4	15 542	128.5	9 530	226.1
Germany	155 303	111.0	9 426	97.7	80 967	100.7	64 910	127.9
Estonia	2 731	111.3	49	27.8	2 061	130.1	621	73.2
Ireland	32 406	256.2	123	225.5	16 686	213.6	15 597	317.2
Greece	57 894	79.5	9 075	56.4	32 111	64.6	16 708	140.8
Spain	199 571	117.2	40 917	57.5	94 313	107.0	64 342	215.9
France	136 561	106.8	26 504	39.6	55 032	112.3	55 025	160.4
Croatia	9 415	111.2	358	49.7	6 385	105.4	2 673	140.7
Italy	132 426	121.8	32 179	52.8	66 798	136.1	33 449	222.9
Cyprus	8 613	68.9	0	-	4 366	90.0	4 247	51.6
Latvia	5 368	129.8	0	-	3 815	146.1	1 554	97.7
Lithuania	5 334	116.4	0n	27.4	3 155	125.3	2 179	104.8
Luxembourg	4 057	102.6	0	-	3 301	86.9	755	218.2
Hungary	12 394	165.6	0n	-89.3	7 933	155.6	4 460	186.0
Malta	5 862	130.1	0	-	4 293	129.1	1 569	132.6
Netherlands	61 290	110.7	4	85.8	32 749	87.3	28 537	146.1
Austria	26 381	137.5	222	93.9	17 190	137.3	8 970	139.3
Poland	39 348	108.3	1 603	116.5	21 618	111.5	16 126	103.3
Portugal	57 082	155.4	6 174	97.6	30 533	139.7	20 375	214.3
Romania	19 536	88.1	990	45.9	12 577	91.0	5 969	91.2
Slovenia	969	131.0	0	-	453	81.4	516	204.0
Slovakia	1 943	202.5	1	31.5	1 031	184.5	910	226.6
Finland	13 813	203.3	1 709	96.9	8 557	231.4	3 546	221.2
Sweden	25 039	131.9	4 200	89.9	14 459	132.2	6 380	170.5

(-) not applicable

(¹) Double counting is excluded in the intra-EU and total EU aggregates.

0n: less than 500 passengers carried

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paoc)

Table 1: Air passenger transport by type of transport, 2022 (passengers carried) Source: Eurostat (avia_paoc)

Table 2 presents the top ten Member State-to-Member State flows registered in 2022. Among the top ten routes, Spain is involved in five, the most significant one being the traffic between Spain and Germany which represented more than 20 % of the top ten passenger routes and 4.2 %
of all intra-EU transport. All routes showed a substantial increase between 2021 and 2022 from +45.8 % to +219.6 %.

Top ten intra-EU country pairs, 2021-2022
(passengers carried)

Rank	Country pairs		2021		2022	
			Thousands	Share in total intra-EU (%)	Thousands	Share in total intra-EU (%)
1	Spain	Germany	12 515	4.7	23 863	4.2
2	Spain	France	7 269	2.9	14 257	2.6
3	Spain	Italy	5 967	2.4	14 216	2.6
4	Italy	France	4 433	1.8	10 410	2.0
5	Germany	Italy	4 583	1.7	9 728	1.7
6	Greece	Germany	6 029	2.1	8 789	1.5
7	Netherlands	Spain	4 607	1.5	8 360	1.4
8	Portugal	France	3 788	1.3	8 021	1.3
9	Portugal	Spain	1 904	0.6	6 086	1.0
10	France	Germany	2 329	0.8	5 645	1.0

Note: Ranking is based on 2022 data. Double counting at country-to-country route level has been excluded.
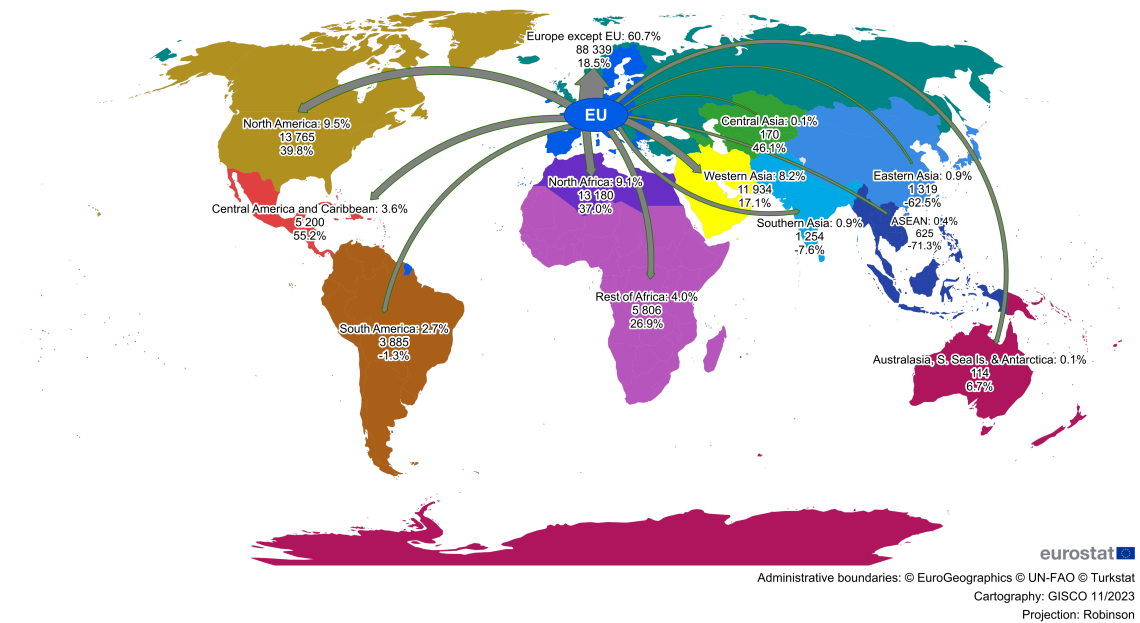
Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paocc)

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Table 2: Top ten intra-EU country pairs, 2021-2022 (passengers carried) Source: Eurostat (avia_paocc)

Map 1 gives an overall picture of the extra-EU market. Europe except EU was the main origin/destination of passengers travelling by air in 2022, with 59.1 % of the total extra-EU transport. The lowest shares were observed for Central Asia, and Australasia, S. Sea Is. & Antarctica (each at 0.1 %). Transport with all areas in the world increased substantially between 2021 and 2022. In relative terms, the highest increase was recorded for transport with South East Asian countries (ASEAN) (+612.4 %) while the lowest was for transport with Central America and Caribbean countries (+89.1 %).

Extra-EU-air transport of passengers, EU, 2022

Europe except EU: 60.7%
88 339
18.5%

North America: 9.5%
13 765
39.8%

Central America and Caribbean: 3.6%
5 200
55.2%

South America: 2.7%
3 885
-1.3%

North Africa: 9.1%
13 180
37.0%

Rest of Africa: 4.0%
5 806
26.9%

Central Asia: 0.1%
170
46.1%

Western Asia: 8.2%
11 934
17.1%

Southern Asia: 0.9%
1 254
-7.6%

Eastern Asia: 0.9%
1 319
-62.5%

ASEAN: 0.4%
625
-71.3%

Australasia, S. Sea Is. & Antarctica: 0.1%
114
6.7%

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Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: GISCO 11/2023
Projection: Robinson

World region and its share in extra-EU air transport (%)
Number of passengers carried - arrivals and departures (thousand)
Change 2022/2021 (%)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paexcc)

Map 1: Extra-EU air passenger transport, EU, 2022 Source: Eurostat (avia_paexcc)

Table 3 shows that Paris Charles de Gaulle predominated among EU airports, with the highest total of passengers transported by air in 2022 (57.5 million passengers). It was followed by Amsterdam Schiphol (52.5 million), Madrid Barajas (49.8 million),
Frankfurt Main (48.8 million), Barcelona El Prat (41.2 million), the only airports registering over 40 million passengers.

Top EU airports for passenger transport, 2022

Rank	Country	Airports	Passengers carried					Passenger flights	
			Total	National	International intra-EU	International extra-EU	Total	Thousands	Change 2022/2021 (%)
			Thousands				Change 2022/2021 (%)		
1	FR	PARIS-CHARLES DE GAULLE	57 461	6 938	19 379	31 144	119.4	360	71.8
2	NL	AMSTERDAM/SCHIPHOL	52 471	3	25 499	26 968	105.8	377	56.4
3	ES	ADOLFO SUAREZ MADRID-BARAJAS	49 825	14 218	17 897	17 711	114.8	326	73.4
4	DE	FRANKFURT/MAIN	48 792	4 021	19 971	24 801	97.0	346	56.1
5	ES	BARCELONA/EL PRAT	41 241	12 052	19 222	9 968	123.2	269	85.8
6	PT	LISBOA	34 559	4 707	17 223	12 629	184.3	195	79.9
7	DE	MUENCHEN	31 613	4 789	16 011	10 814	153.4	266	95.0
8	FR	PARIS-ORLY	29 185	10 025	12 215	6 945	85.7	196	65.3
9	IT	ROMA/FIUMICINO	29 173	7 042	13 262	8 869	151.8	208	90.2
10	ES	PALMA DE MALLORCA	28 544	7 853	14 709	5 982	97.2	209	63.0
11	IE	DUBLIN	27 786	123	14 855	12 807	236.3	193	156.9
12	EL	ATHINAI/ELEFTHERIOS VENIZELOS	24 363	8 110	9 540	6 713	82.4	201	34.4
13	AT	WIEN-SCHWECHAT	23 788	221	15 422	8 145	127.3	182	73.8
14	DK	KØBENHAVN/KASTRUP	22 064	1 473	12 143	8 447	141.2	187	92.7
15	IT	MILANO/MALPENSA	21 220	5 755	8 386	7 079	121.5	153	81.8
16	DE	BERLIN-BRANDENBURG	19 832	2 537	10 779	6 516	99.7	151	63.2
17	BE	BRUSSELS	18 876	2	11 502	7 373	102.3	146	70.8
18	SE	STOCKHOLM/ARLANDA	18 369	3 165	10 322	4 882	145.1	144	81.5
19	ES	MALAGA/COSTA DEL SOL	18 321	3 310	8 690	6 321	109.5	132	66.3
20	DE	DUESSELDORF	16 049	1 306	8 470	6 273	102.2	132	76.9
21	PL	WARSZAWA/CHOPINA	14 376	1 281	7 376	5 719	93.2	130	62.3
22	ES	ALICANTE	13 172	1 951	5 410	5 811	126.6	88	80.1
23	IT	BERGAMO/ORIO AL SERIO	13 154	3 356	7 567	2 232	103.5	85	78.7
24	FI	HELSINKI-VANTAA	12 977	1 700	8 013	3 264	202.1	122	106.2
25	RO	BUCURESTI/HENRI COANDA	12 589	979	7 656	3 954	82.8	91	44.9
26	PT	PORTO	12 584	1 762	8 187	2 635	117.4	86	77.3
27	ES	GRAN CANARIA	12 275	5 761	4 170	2 343	80.8	111	49.2
28	HU	BUDAPEST/LISZT FERENC INTERNATIO	12 145	0n	7 809	4 336	164.6	82	116.0
29	FR	NICE-CÔTE D'AZUR	12 100	4 609	4 116	3 376	85.3	124	50.8
30	DE	HAMBURG	11 090	2 371	5 353	3 366	108.7	91	72.9
32	CZ	PRAHA/RUZYNE	10 713	2	6 666	4 045	145.1	82	88.3
55	BG	SOFIA	5 945	232	3 835	1 878	83.2	43	43.7
57	MT	LUQA	5 862	0	4 293	1 569	130.1	42	63.2
62	CY	LARNAKA/INTL	5 439	0	3 003	2 436	51.8	41	34.6
63	LV	RIGA	5 368	0	3 815	1 554	129.8	48	68.9
72	LU	LUXEMBOURG	4 056	0	3 301	755	102.5	48	87.5
74	LT	VILNIUS/INTERNATIONAL	3 910	0	2 354	1 556	106.3	33	65.7
86	HR	ZAGREB/FRANJO TUDJMAN	3 102	342	1 935	825	123.4	34	58.5
93	EE	LENNART MERI TALLINN	2 731	49	2 061	621	111.3	28	72.4
122	SK	BRATISLAVA/M.R.STEFANIK	1 403	1	764	638	194.8	23	36.5
137	SI	LJUBLJANA/BRNIK	969	0	453	516	131.0	10	93.3

0n: less than 500 passengers carried
Note: Ranking is based on number of passengers carried in 2022.
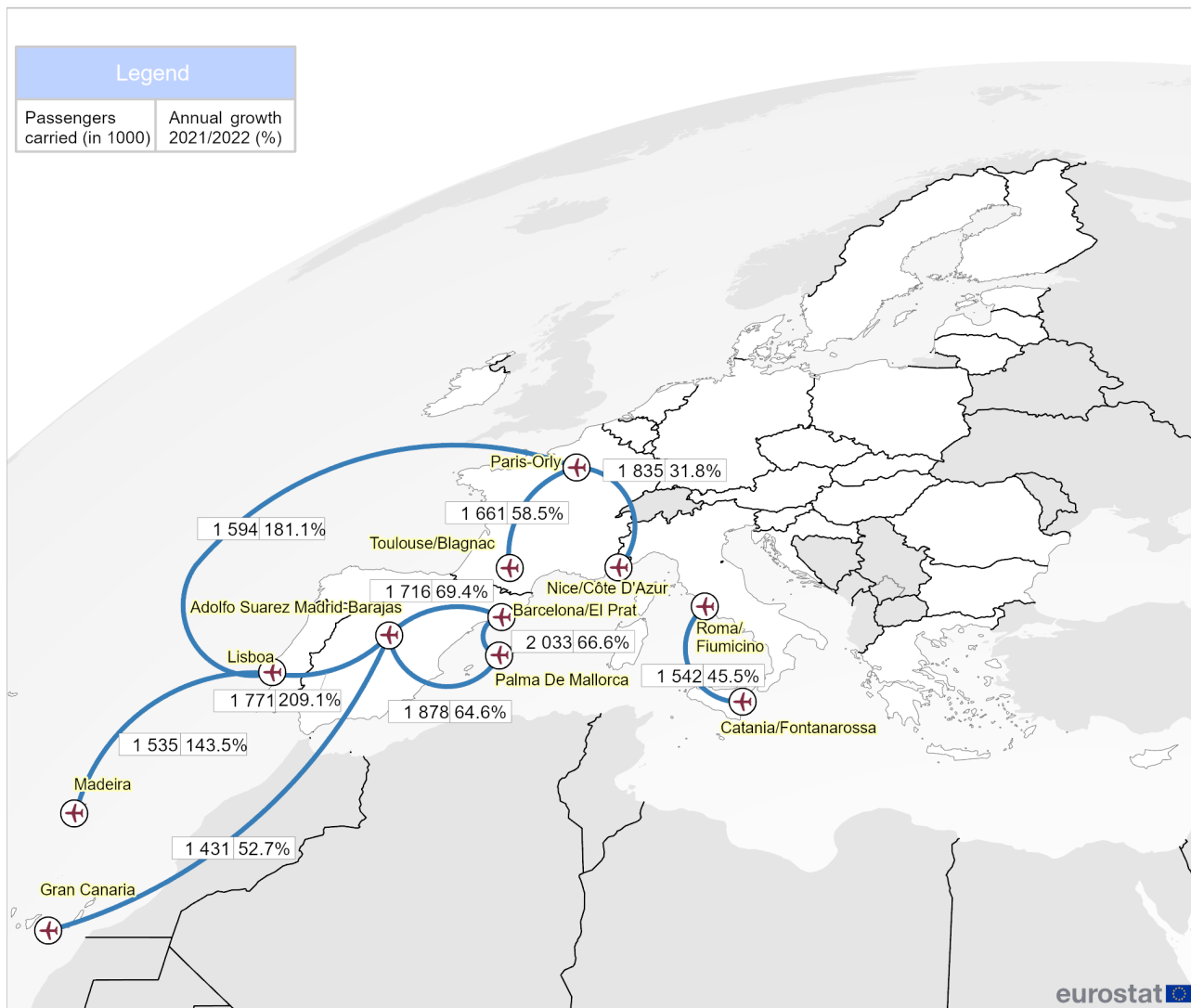Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paoa)

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Table 3: Top EU airports for passenger transport, 2022 Source: Eurostat (avia_paoa)

The number of passengers increased in all top EU airports in 2022 compared with 2021, ranging between +51.8 % in Larnaka and +236.3 % in Dublin. Of the 41 top EU airports, 31 more than doubled their number of passengers carried between 2021 and 2022. The same trend is observed in terms of the number of passenger flights that also increased in all airports in 2022 compared with 2021, ranging between +34.4 % in Athinai Elefetherios-Venizelos and +156.9 % in Dublin.

Map 2 presents the top ten airport pairs within the EU. It is worth noting that eight routes out of ten were domestic ones. The connection with the highest number of passengers in 2022 was between the airports of Barcelona El Prat and Palma de Mallorca, with 2 033 205 passengers (+66.6 % compared with 2021). All routes registered substantial increases between 2021 and 2022, ranging between +31.8 % for the connection Paris-Orly and Nice-Côte d'Azur and +209.1 % for Lisboa and Madrid-Barajas.

Top ten intra-EU airport pairs, 2022

Legend	
Passengers carried (in 1000)	Annual growth 2021/2022 (%)

Paris-Orly — 1 835 | 31.8%
1 661 | 58.5%
Toulouse/Blagnac
1 594 | 181.1%
1 716 | 69.4%
Nice/Côte D'Azur
Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas
Barcelona/El Prat — 2 033 | 66.6%
Roma/Fiumicino
Lisboa
1 771 | 209.1%
Palma De Mallorca — 1 878 | 64.6%
1 542 | 45.5%
Catania/Fontanarossa
1 535 | 143.5%
Madeira
1 431 | 52.7%
Gran Canaria

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_par)

Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, 12/2023
Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat

Map 2: Top ten intra-EU airport pairs, 2022 Source: Eurostat (avia_par)

Air freight and mail transport in the EU decreased by -7.9 % between 2021 and 2022

Total freight and mail transport in the EU increased by -7.9 % in 2022 compared with 2021 (Table 4). Domestic, intra and extra-EU transport all decreased, with increases of -7.4 %, -7.7 % and -7.9 %, respectively.

The evolution of freight and mail transport by air between 2021 and 2022 varies significantly at country level. It increased in 15 of the Member States, ranging from +1.1 % in Ireland to +40.81 % in Poland. By contrast, the highest decrease was registered by Latvia (-25.6 %), followed by Czechia (-20.9 %) and Belgium (-17.0 %). Six Member States recorded a decrease of more than 10 % while four recorded an increase of more than 10 %.

Air freight and mail transport by type of transport, 2022
(tonnes)

	Total		National		International intra-EU		International extra-EU	
	Tonnes	Change 2022/2021 (%)	Tonnes	Change 2022/2021 (%)	Tonnes	Change 2022/2021 (%)	Tonnes	Change 2022/2021 (%)
EU (¹)	13 861 593	-7.9	437 448	-7.4	2 070 487	-7.7	11 353 658	-7.9
Belgium	1 729 332	-17.0	665	-46.5	255 080	-30.7	1 473 587	-14.0
Bulgaria	26 457	3.0	40	162.7	21 988	22.1	4 429	-42.2
Czechia	73 301	-20.9	340	-77.0	43 771	-7.9	29 189	-33.2
Denmark	265 889	7.7	917	11.7	111 530	8.1	153 442	7.3
Germany	4 938 859	-6.6	145 598	-2.6	1 041 036	-1.3	3 752 226	-8.2
Estonia	10 789	2.4	0	-50.0	9 982	3.1	807	-5.4
Ireland	156 941	1.1	5 141	-36.7	46 692	-6.5	105 109	8.2
Greece	116 793	7.3	4 454	2.8	44 576	-11.3	67 763	24.9
Spain	844 756	7.9	50 903	3.7	224 371	4.9	569 483	9.6
France	2 139 178	-6.1	139 012	-20.3	516 590	6.4	1 483 576	-8.4
Croatia	9 723	10.8	74	42.3	7 072	5.8	2 577	26.5
Italy	1 033 956	1.7	62 588	9.1	374 735	4.1	596 633	-0.4
Cyprus	22 749	-9.5	0	-	15 480	-7.3	7 269	-14.1
Latvia	20 123	-25.6	0	-	15 212	13.2	4 911	-64.0
Lithuania	20 740	4.6	0	-	15 166	2.7	5 575	10.0
Luxembourg	969 105	-10.9	0	-	39 478	5.1	929 627	-11.5
Hungary	133 832	6.3	0	-	50 131	-3.4	83 701	13.1
Malta	17 552	9.7	0	-	12 287	8.8	5 264	12.0
Netherlands	1 553 482	-14.1	268	-	57 978	12.3	1 495 236	-14.9
Austria	188 182	-3.4	4	-80.3	48 790	12.1	139 388	-7.9
Poland	201 957	40.8	385	51.6	88 918	17.7	112 654	66.7
Portugal	206 167	17.8	16 777	3.1	52 402	2.9	136 988	27.1
Romania	47 636	22.0	1 204	16.9	32 459	21.1	13 973	24.8
Slovenia	12 468	9.5	0	-	10 521	6.0	1 947	34.1
Slovakia	18 061	-8.1	0	-	17 768	-5.3	293	-66.9
Finland	160 727	-10.0	1 242	-4.0	47 952	4.6	111 533	-15.2
Sweden	146 499	-5.2	7 837	11.6	72 185	-18.8	66 477	13.2

(-) not applicable

(¹) Double counting is excluded in the intra-EU and total EU aggregates.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_gooc)

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Table 4: Air freight and mail transport by type of transport, 2022 (tonnes) Source: Eurostat (avia_gooc)

In 2022, Frankfurt Main was the main EU airport in terms of tonnes of freight and mail loaded/unloaded, with 2.0 million tonnes (Table 5). Paris Charles de Gaulle, which is the largest EU airport in terms of passenger transport, came second with 1.9 million tonnes. Among the top 20 airports, only seven registered a growth between 2021 and 2022 in terms of total freight and mail loaded/unloaded. Muenchen recorded the highest increase (+53.9 %), followed by Roma Fiumicino (+39.0 %), Barcelona El Prat (+29.9 %) and Lisboa (+23.1 %). By contrast, Liège recorded the highest decrease (-20.6 %) between 2021
and 2022. The number of freight and mail flights increased in only two of the top 20 airports between 2021 and 2022.

Top 20 EU airports for freight and mail transport, 2022

Rank	Country	Airport	Freight and mail				Freight and mail flights	
			Total	Loaded	Unloaded	Total Change 2022/2021 (%)	Thousands	Change 2022/2021 (%)
			Tonnes					
1	DE	FRANKFURT/MAIN	1 967 261	1 027 194	940 067	-13.4	26 953	-20.8
2	FR	PARIS-CHARLES DE GAULLE	1 893 868	1 013 417	880 451	-7.9	34 035	8.7
3	DE	LEIPZIG/HALLE	1 507 924	776 959	730 965	-5.0	58 606	-3.8
4	NL	AMSTERDAM/SCHIPHOL	1 445 264	718 514	726 750	-14.0	16 034	-24.8
5	BE	LIEGE	1 051 490	495 664	555 826	-20.6	25 956	-28.2
6	LU	LUXEMBOURG	969 105	495 902	473 203	-10.9	13 101	-7.6
7	DE	KÖLN/BONN	957 803	498 619	459 184	-0.9	39 140	-2.5
8	IT	MILANO/MALPENSA	721 398	395 554	325 844	-3.4	31 531	-0.3
9	BE	BRUSSELS	621 146	328 127	293 019	-10.4	20 016	-8.3
10	ES	ADOLFO SUAREZ MADRID-BARA.	546 158	285 041	261 117	13.0	13 934	-7.4
11	DE	MUENCHEN	266 680	149 521	117 159	53.9	4 084	-6.7
12	DK	KØBENHAVN/KASTRUP	239 919	134 672	105 247	7.6	10 339	8.6
13	DE	FRANKFURT-HAHN	193 823	103 314	90 509	-17.1	2 772	-28.9
14	AT	WIEN-SCHWECHAT	176 057	70 646	105 411	-0.1	4 477	-15.6
15	PT	LISBOA	164 157	92 023	72 133	23.1	2 547	-38.1
16	FI	HELSINKI-VANTAA	159 842	88 157	71 685	-9.4	3 183	-45.2
17	IE	DUBLIN	142 382	67 417	74 965	-1.3	6 112	-15.9
18	ES	BARCELONA/EL PRAT	141 893	80 222	61 671	29.9	6 764	-10.5
19	IT	ROMA/FIUMICINO	140 456	90 175	50 281	39.0	4 049	-9.9
20	HU	BUDAPEST/LISZT FERENC INTER	133 813	57 886	75 927	6.4	4 611	-22.5

Note: Freight and mail loaded and unloaded presented in this table concern all commercial flights while the number of flights concern only freight and mail flights (i.e. flights where no passenger was transported).
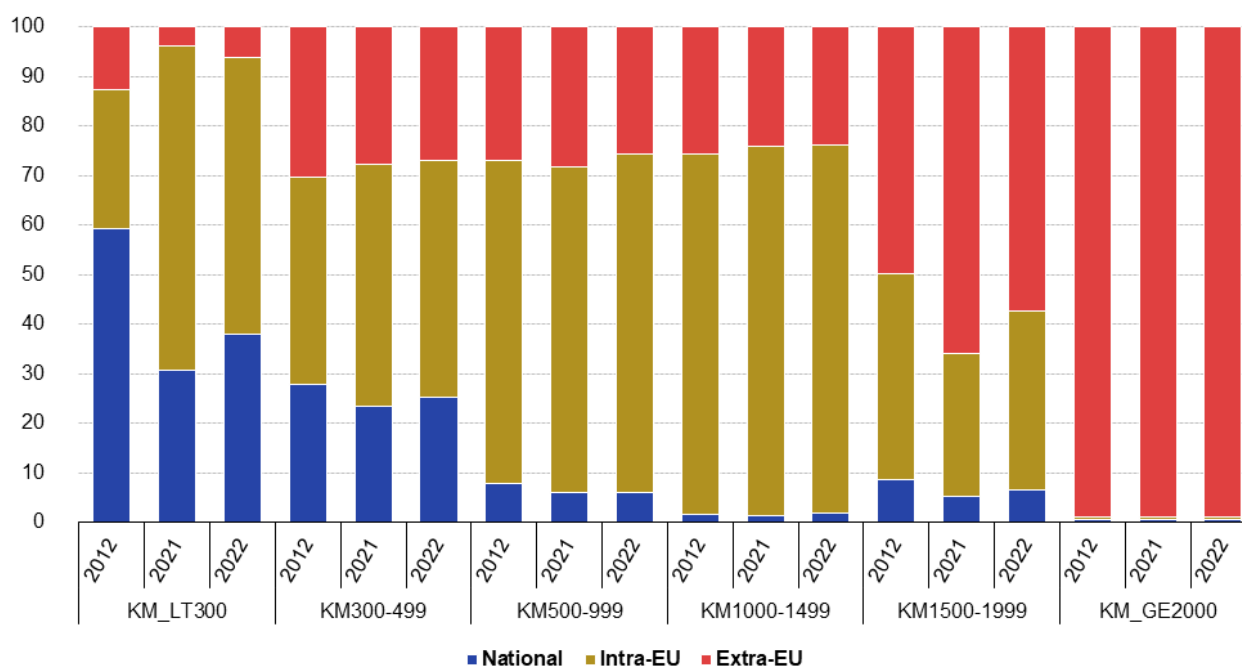
Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_gooa)

eurostat

Table 5: Top 20 EU airports for freight and mail transport, 2022 Source: Eurostat (avia_gooa)

For long distances over 2 000 km, 99 % of the total transport was extra-EU

Figure 4 presents freight and mail transport by type of transport and distance class. For long distances over 2 000 km, 99 % of the total transport was extra-EU in 2022, 2021 and 2012. For distances between 1 500 and 1 999 km, extra-EU transport represented 57 % of the total in 2022. In 2012, this share was 50 % and up to 66 % in 2021. Intra-EU transport of freight and mail was predominant in distances inferior to 1 500 km. In 2022, it represented 74 % of total transport in the 1 000 – 1 499 km distance class, 68 % in 500 – 999 km class and 48 % in 300 – 499 km class. When looking at distances lower than 300 km, intra-EU transport represented 56 % while national claimed 38 % of the total freight and mail on board.

Air freight and mail transport by type of transport and distance class

(%, based on freight and mail on board, EU, 2012, 2021 and 2022)
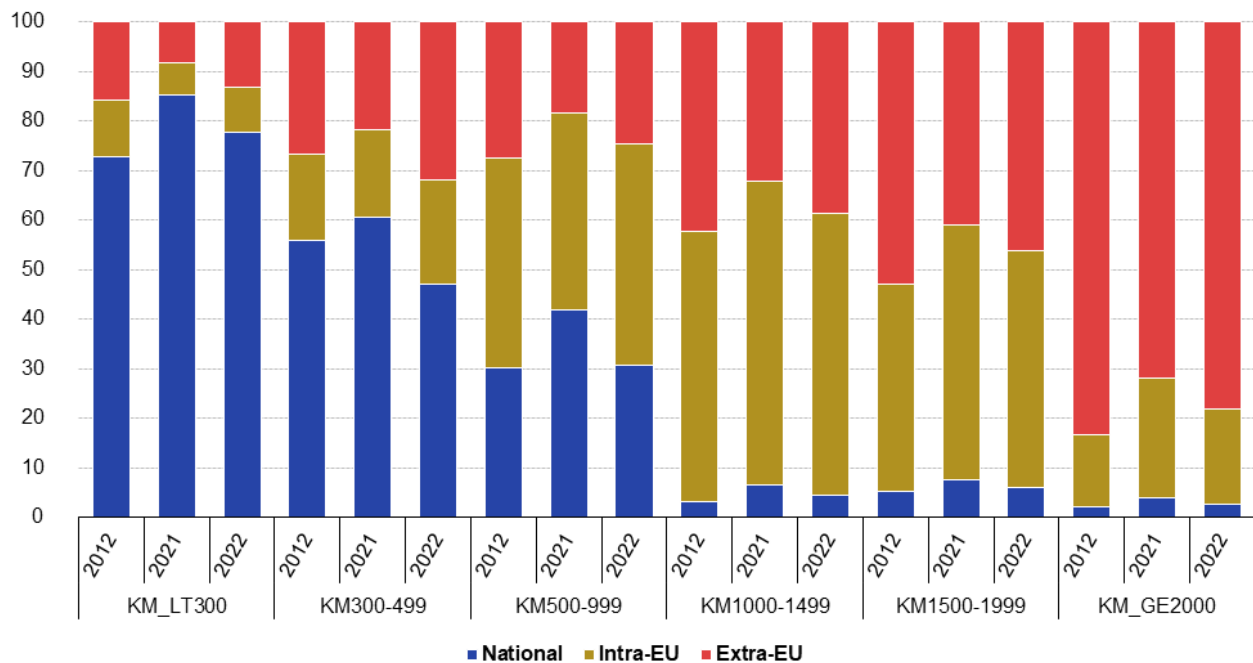

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_goodis)

eurostat

Figure 4: Air freight and mail transport by type of transport and distance class, EU, 2012, 2021 and 2022 (%, based on freight and mail on board) Source: Eurostat (avia_goodis)

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is visible for passenger transport in 2021, with the share of number of passengers on board to/from extra-EU countries being below the levels of 2012 and 2022 for all distance classes, but most significantly for long distances over 2 000 km, from 83 % in 2011, 78 % in 2019 but 72 % in 2021. The recovery from the COVID-19 crisis is visible as shares observed in 2022 tend to be close to the shares observed in 2012. The national and intra-EU traffic benefited from this fall in 2021, with an increase in the share of national traffic on distance bands inferior to 1 000 km. National traffic was much higher for all distance bands compared with 2012 and 2022, in particular for 500 – 999 km distance band, where it represented 42 % of the total traffic in 2021, against 30 % and 31 % in 2012 and 2022. The share of intra-EU traffic was more important in all distance bands greater than 1 000 km in 2021 compared with 2012 and 2022. The situation was similar when comparing 2022 with 2012, but with shares observed in 2022 that starts to be close to the ones observed in 2012.

Air passenger transport by type of transport and distance class
(%, based on passengers on board, EU, 2012, 2021 and 2022)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paodis)

eurostat

Figure 5: Air passenger transport by type of transport and distance class, EU, 2012, 2021 and 2022 (%, based on passengers on board) Source: Eurostat (avia_paodis)

Air transport in EFTA and candidate countries also increased substantially between 2020 and 2021

All EFTA and candidate countries recorded increases of at least +52.1 % in terms of passengers transported (Table 6). Iceland was the most impacted country with a 165.2 % increase. The evolution of freight and mail transport by air between 2021 and 2022 decreased in all
countries, with the exception of one, with changes ranking from -13.3 % in North Macedonia to +6.7 % in Switzerland.

Air passenger transport, EFTA and Candidate countries, 2022

	Passengers carried				Freight and mail			
	Total	National	International	Total	Total	National	International	Total
	Thousands			Change 2022/2021 (%)	Tonnes			Change 2022/2021 (%)
Iceland	6 463	321	6 142	165.2	55 877	643	55 235	-2.1
Norway	32 563	14 120	18 443	130.3	173 035	10 311	162 724	-11.0
Switzerland	42 424	342	42 082	122.0	364 305	2 237	362 068	6.7
Montenegro	1 909	0n	1 908	45.8	420	0	420	-10.1
North Macedonia	2 135	0	2 135	68.6	2 635	0	2 635	-13.3
Serbia	5 992	8	5 983	74.6	13 647	0	13 647	-8.1
Türkiye (¹)	143 124	39 529	103 595	52.1	1 694 475	:	:	-2.7

(:) not available

0n: less than 500 passengers carried

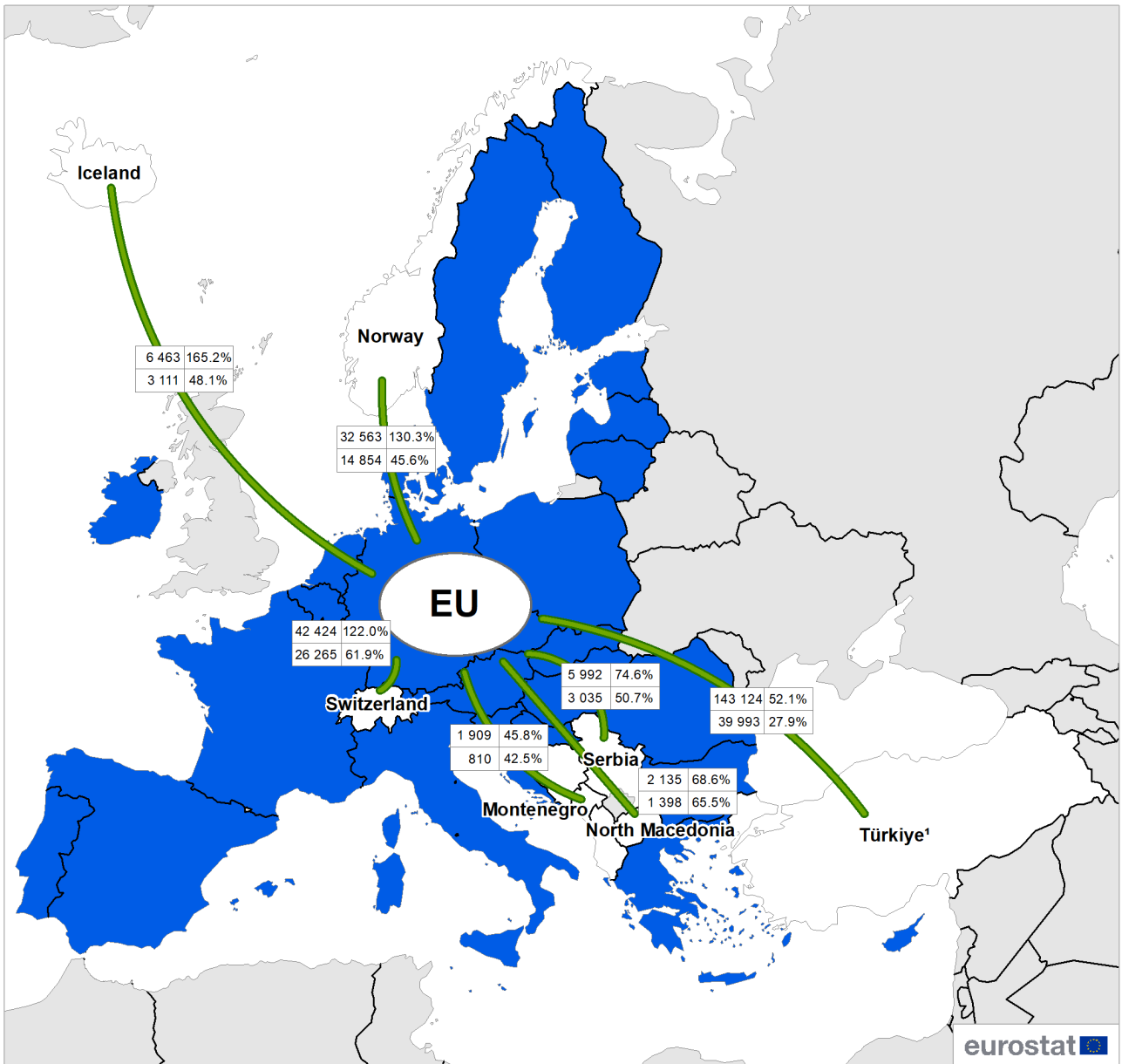(¹) Passengers: based on flight stage data; Freight and mail: total based on the addition of airport declarations.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paoc, avia_gooc and avia_apal)

eurostat ◼

Table 6: Air passenger transport, EFTA and Candidate countries, 2022 Source: Eurostat (avia_paoc) Eurostat (avia_gooc)

Map 3 gives a picture of the air passenger transport between EFTA/candidate countries and the EU. The air passenger transport between North Macedonia and the EU represented 65.5 % of the total air passenger transport of the country. This was the highest share recorded among the EFTA and candidate countries. The lowest share was observed for Türkiye (27.9 %).

Air passenger transport between EFTA/candidate countries and the EU, 2022

| 6 463 | 165.2% |
| 3 111 | 48.1% |

Iceland

Norway

| 32 563 | 130.3% |
| 14 854 | 45.6% |

EU

| 42 424 | 122.0% |
| 26 265 | 61.9% |

Switzerland

| 5 992 | 74.6% |
| 3 035 | 50.7% |

| 1 909 | 45.8% |
| 810 | 42.5% |

Serbia

| 143 124 | 52.1% |
| 39 993 | 27.9% |

Montenegro

North Macedonia

| 2 135 | 68.6% |
| 1 398 | 65.5% |

Türkiye[1]

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, 12/2023

Legend	
Passengers carried (in 1000)	Change 2022/2021 (%)
To/from EU Passengers carried (in 1000)	To/from EU Share of Total transport (%)

(¹) Flight stage data
Source: Eurostat (online data code: avia_paoc)
The designation of Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Map 3: Air passenger transport between EFTA/candidate countries and the EU, 2022 Source: Eurostat (avia_paoc)

Source data for tables and graphs

- Air transport statistics

Data sources

More recent passenger data are available in the Eurostat database for a number of countries, as due to the importance of aviation in measuring recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, Eurostat is encouraging reporting countries to provide statistics on passenger transported by air in advance of the regulatory deadline. For some countries the data are available already up to 3 months after the end of a reference month.

Main definitions

The definitions used for air transport statistics are included in Regulation (EC) No 1358/2003 of 31 July 2003 implementing Regulation (EC) No 437/2003 of 27 February 2003 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of passengers, freight and mail by air. The main definitions are the following:

- On Flight Origin and Destination (OFOD):

Traffic on a commercial air service identified by a unique flight number subdivided by airport pairs in accordance with the point of embarkation and point of disembarkation on that flight. This is linked to the definition of passengers carried.

- Passengers carried:

All passengers on a particular flight counted once only and not repeatedly on each individual stage of that flight. This excludes direct transit passengers.

- Freight and mail loaded/unloaded:

All freight and mail loaded onto or unloaded from an aircraft. This excludes direct transit freight and mail. In principle, information provided in this article is based on On Flight Origin/Destination (OFOD) data. Only when OFOD data have not been reported have airport declarations been used.

- Airport coverage:

In principle, this article covers air transport to and from any airports in the reporting countries with more than 150 000 passengers annually.

Notes on some reporting countries

- Türkiye: only provides flight stage data (Dataset A1) (in which there is no information on passenger carried and freight and mail loaded/unloaded) and airport declarations (Dataset C1) in which the partner airport is not provided. National and international transport cannot be calculated.

Double counting: the national aggregates and total intra-EU aggregates exclude any double counting. It includes all the departures figures reported plus "a part of" arrivals declarations, "a part of" including those arrivals declarations for which the corresponding departures declarations of the partner airport are missing.

Table 1: the figures (and related shares) for the country-country flows have been calculated by excluding the double counting at country-to-country route level. The figures are derived from table avia_paocc; the double counting for identical routes is excluded in order to obtain the correct total for country pairs. The data can be extracted from the aviation domain of the Eurostat on-line database or obtained upon request.

Map 1: the component countries comprising the world regions as defined for this map are based on the geonomenclature used by Eurostat for external trade statistics. The components of each world region can be extracted from the aviation domain of the Eurostat on-line database or obtained upon request. Some care should be taken in drawing conclusions as regards world regional shares due to the fact that passengers who either stop-over or change planes en-route will be allocated to the country in which they made their connections and not to the country of first origin or final destination.

Map 2: the total figures for each pair of airports have been calculated by adding together the 'Departures' declarations of the two airports concerned.

Map 3: the share of total transport represents, for each candidate country and each EFTA country, the share of total transport to/from EU countries. As indicated under the maps, transport to/from EU countries is sometimes estimated on the basis of mirror EU declarations.

In this article

- ":" means "not available"

- "-" means "not applicable"

- "0n" means "less than half the unit used"

- "0" means real zero

Context

All figures presented in this article have been extracted from the Eurostat aviation database. The database is available online from the Eurostat web page.

Other articles

- Air passenger transport - data by month

- Transport statistics at regional level - air transport

Tables

- Transport , see selected datasets:

 Air transport (t_avia)

    Air transport of passengers (ttr00012)
    Air transport of goods (ttr00011)

Database

- Transport , see detailed datasets:

 Air transport (avia)

    Air transport measurement - passengers (avia_pa)
      Detailed air passenger transport by reporting country and routes (avia_par)
    Air transport measurement - freight and mail (avia_go)

Dedicated section

- Transport

Publications

- Key figures on European transport – 2023 edition

- Key figures on Europe – 2023 edition

- Air passengers more than doubled in 2022

- Air passengers up 35% in 2021 following 2020 decline

- Energy, transport and environment indicators, Eurostat Statistical books – 2020 edition

Methodology

- Passenger and freight transport by air/Traffic data/Air transport at regional level (ESMS metadata file - avia_pa_esms)

- Reference Manual on Air Transport Statistics - Version 14 (Methodological manual)

- Illustrated Glossary for Transport Statistics 4th Edition

Legislation

- Regulation (EC) No 1358/2003 of 31 July 2003 implementing Regulation (EC) No 437/2003 of 27 February 2003 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of passengers, freight and mail by air.

External links

- Eurocontrol - Air Traffic Statistics and Forecasts

- European Commission - Transport - Air