

BUSINESS TRIPS AROUND THE WORLD ON A RECOVERY COURSE



The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly restricted business travel around the world, but there are now increasing signs of recovery.

In Europe, the booking numbers for business trips are increasing again and in China, at least within the country, even more people are now traveling than before the pandemic. This was revealed by AirPlus International in their recent study.

Rise in Chinese Domestic Flights

Accordingly, **the number of flights made within China in the first five months of this year was 9.5 % higher than in the pre-corona year 2019.** Compared to 2020 there was more than a threefold increase.

The most popular were flights between Shanghai and Beijing, which together accounted for 7 % of domestic business trips, followed by connections between Shenzhen and Shanghai with a total of 6 %.

China was the first to be hit by the pandemic but was also the first to contain the spread of the virus last year. The number of cases there has been at a low level since then and travel at least within the country has normalized.

Nevertheless, there are differences compared to 2019. Bookings are still much more spontaneous than they were before the pandemic. While an average of 5.8 days passed between booking and departure in 2019, even for domestic flights, between January and May of this year it was only 3.8 days.

On the other hand, business trips currently take less time than they did in 2019. Whereas 4.3 days passed between departure and arrival back at the starting point two years ago for domestic flights, today it is only 3.8 days.

There are still strong restrictions on foreign travel, so despite the extraordinarily good development within the country, there are still hardly any trips to other countries. Nevertheless, the figures from China show that companies send their employees on trips again if possible.

General Trend in the World

And this seems to be a general trend, considering that 80 % of those surveyed view personal contact with customers and suppliers to be indispensable. The approval rate in China, at 80 %, was exactly the same as in Germany, Italy or France.

In the USA, 86 % agreed, while in Great Britain companies rely a little less on personal contact. Even there, however, just under three out of four business leaders consider face-to-face customer meetings to be necessary.

So, it is only logical that trips in Europe are picking up speed again. In May of this year, European customers alone made more than a third more trips by air than a month before, and the number has almost quintupled compared to the same month last year.

There was a disproportionately strong increase in intra-European flights, namely by almost 50 % compared to April.

Germany is a clear confirmation of this trend in Europe, as German business travelers flew 38.5 % more than in the previous month. Here, too, flights to other European countries were in demand, registering an increase of 52.3 %.

However, Europe is still a long way from the figures from before the pandemic. In May, the total number of flights by business travelers in Europe was around a tenth compared to 2019. Nevertheless, the booking figures suggest that demand will rise significantly again in the coming months.

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