

AIRLINE PASSENGER CAPACITY TO INCREASE BY 47% IN 2022



The data analysis company Cirium, which specializes in aviation, released its forecast regarding the comeback of aviation in the coming year. Despite considerable growth, the airline passenger capacity is expected to reach only the level of 2015.

In its second annual Airline Insights Review, aviation analytics provider Cirium has predicted a recovery for the industry and projected a 47% increase in airline passenger capacity (in terms of the number of seats used) in 2022. **This significant increase signals that capacity could at least return to 2015 levels by the end of next year.**

The Corona pandemic and its aftermath have wiped out 15 years of global passenger capacity growth over the past 20 months, reducing 2020 air capacity to levels last seen in 2005. Despite a mixed recovery in 2021, global capacity is only expected to return to 2006 levels by the end of the year.

However, in regions with strong domestic markets, the recovery already accelerated significantly this year, particularly in the US and China. There was even a 6% increase in domestic flights in China compared to pre-pandemic 2019 levels. Of the flights recorded globally between January and the end of October 2021, 78% were domestic. International air travel saw a slow recovery against the backdrop of restrictions in place (or still in place) until the fourth quarter of 2021 and saw a 6% growth on balance in 2021 compared to the same period in 2020.

It is forecasted that 2022 is to be a year of acceleration. As air passenger numbers rebound, global domestic traffic (measured in passenger numbers) is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2022. International passenger traffic is expected to reach two-thirds of 2019 levels. The data further show that the global passenger fleet in service will increase to 20,700 aircraft by the end of 2022 - just a few hundred fewer than pre-pandemic levels at the end of 2019.

Airlines will rely more on partnerships to transport passengers to their partners' home markets in 2022. Airlines will therefore serve fewer secondary markets post-pandemic and instead use their airline partners to transport passengers to secondary cities.

The slow recovery in business travel recorded to date is also expected to change in 2022, with the industry forecasting a 36% year-on-year increase in business travel. Business events registered online are already on the rise for the next year.

With more planes taking off again, it is no surprise that CO2 emissions will rise next year. CO2 emissions from flights were 40% lower in 2021 than before the pandemic. However, airlines are now deploying more fuel-efficient fleets and sustainability is now being given central importance in aviation, with many looking at the issue of fuel consumption and how to meet the targets with a view to net-zero by 2050.

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