

# A DIFFICULT RELAUNCH FOR THE PASSENGER AIR TRANSPORT IN EUROPE



In the air transport sector, efficient low-cost carriers such as Ryanair and Wizz Air are gearing up for an ever-intensive competition in Europe's skies. Both airlines have ordered hundreds of additional jets for the coming years, which they will also fill at knockdown prices starting at 5 euros per ticket if demand is lacking.

Wizz CEO József Váradi definitely has his sights set on long-haul routes, where smaller jets such as the Airbus A321XLR, with a flight time of up to eleven hours, will be able to handle considerably more routes than before in the coming years. **This will also make overseas flights from smaller airports possible and could create serious competition for network carriers such as Lufthansa, British Airways and Air France.**

They are in the process of making up for the Corona dip and increasing flight capacity from 60 percent now to 80 percent on average of pre-crisis levels. One of the active companies in Europe during the crisis has been the ambitious Turkish Airlines, which has expanded its offer via the new hub near Istanbul. Initially, the opening of the USA to EU citizens was helpful for everyone, while on the other hand, no one knows when the important destinations in Asia will reopen.

The airline association IATA is becoming increasingly vocal in its doubts about the effectiveness of travel restrictions, which have failed to prevent new waves of infections in recent months but have caused lasting major damage to the passenger air transport industry. "The risk is not from air travel, the risk is in the community," said IATA President Willie Walsh.

## Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

For flyers and tourism operators, the mega-issue of climate change is infinitely more complex. Flights, cruises and car trips all contribute to the rise in harmful emissions.

Among other things, the association proposes: to provide all trips with a traceable CO2 footprint so that vacationers know before booking what ecological footprint their trip will cause. Customers are to be advised on how to minimize the emission of greenhouse gases and what compensation options are available.

Antje Monshausen from Tourism Watch at Bread for the World, however, believes that tour operators have a duty above all when it comes to designing their offers. "Stating the CO2 footprint of a trip is correct, but the decisive factor is a significant reduction in harmful emissions." To achieve this, tour operators would also have to offer other products on the medium-haul route in Europe, for example, increased travel by train.

## Sustainable Aviation Fuel

The passenger air transport industry is in a dilemma because there is a lack of technological alternatives to the giant engines that can lift takeoff weights of up to 350 tons into the air, as is the case with the new Boeing 777X. While Airbus has announced a short-haul jet with a fuel cell by 2035, Boeing is relying solely on internal combustion engines and sustainably produced aviation fuel

(SAF).

Already, major airlines around the world are scrambling for the small production volumes because more and more (business) customers are demanding climate-neutral flights. Lufthansa, for example, has secured SAF worth 250 million euros for three years, but this is only enough for around 100 transatlantic flights. That is equivalent to the Group's performance on these routes on a single day.

**Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is currently produced mainly from biomass such as unused vegetables and cooking oils.** Such biofuels are intended to significantly reduce CO2 emissions but are currently considerably more expensive than normal kerosene.

Monshausen's efforts with new, more fuel-efficient aircraft and SAF are not enough. "We realize at the same time that all the savings are being eaten up by the growth in air traffic. We need technological solutions and at the same time a reduction in flights." In addition to CO2, cloud formation from flying also plays a major role, he said, because it reduces the heat radiation from the earth.

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