

AIRPORTS ARE OVERLOADED AS AIR TRAFFIC PICKS UP



The health crisis is receding, and travelers are back on planes. So much so that the airports are crowded.

The world's leading airline association appealed last week: there are too many queues in airports, queues that last for hours, and not enough staff to handle passengers and luggage.

After two years disrupted by health restrictions, many employees who worked in the airlines have left to do other things. **Absenteeism is also high because those who stayed have sometimes seen their salaries cut** - the short-time working system does not exist everywhere - and working conditions have deteriorated even though the air traffic is picking up again.

In the Netherlands, for example, there were strikes last month. All this is causing serious problems for air travel. Last weekend, because of the spring vacation rush, KLM was forced to cancel more than 70 flights in and out of Amsterdam. Same congestion in London, Brussels, etc.

However, we have not returned to pre-Covid air traffic levels yet, we are at about 60% of 2019 traffic, before the crisis. But this is a level that we have not seen since March 2020 when all the planes were grounded.

Above all, the activity is picking up very quickly. In Europe, it is spectacular, 425% increase last March, compared to March 2021. However, there is the war in Ukraine, which has caused the closure of some airspace, but also the increase in the price of air tickets, due to the surge in oil prices. Nevertheless, travelers are there, they want to travel.

Airports are in a hurry to recruit, but it is not that simple. For example, in Paris, there is a total shortage of 4,000 people at the two sites of Roissy and Orly. Screening officers, and maintenance technicians. **Given the sensitive nature of the air traffic, recruitment requires precautions and checks, especially to obtain the red badge that allows people to work in closed areas of the airports.** There are also stories of wages with inflation, companies like the Paris airports or its subcontractors are facing demands.

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