

THE WAR IN UKRAINE TO WEAKEN THE TOURISM RECOVERY IN EUROPE



Air traffic in Europe will not return to the levels it recorded in 2019 until after the year 2024, according to a new seven-year air traffic forecast published by Eurocontrol, the European organization in charge of safety and air navigation on the continent.

This forecast, which updates and extends the one made last June before the summer season, sets out three possible scenarios, **the most optimistic showing a tourism recovery during the year 2023 and the most pessimistic with an expected recovery that would last until after the year 2028.**

The most likely baseline scenario for the European organization predicts that the recovery of air traffic on the continent will not happen until 2025, when 11.2 million flights would be reached.

"We saw strong demand this summer, but it was dampened, both by the industry's inability to manage rapid growth and by the impact of the war in Ukraine," said Eurocontrol CEO Eamonn Brennan.

The organization expects to record about 9.3 million flights this year, 49 percent more than in 2021, but still 16 percent less than in 2019, when 11.1 million were reached.

"We are optimistic that the traffic will recover to about 92% of 2019 levels next year. But there are still significant downside risks that could affect the recovery for years to come," Brennan cautioned.

The agency considers three possible scenarios. The most positive scenario foresees moderate GDP growth, limited impact of inflation on demand, good passenger confidence and limited capacity constraints in 2023 at airports and airlines.

The baseline scenario calls for low GDP, inflation (including jet fuel prices) impacting demand, and a decline in passenger confidence in flying.

The worst-case scenario anticipates several risks to European air traffic, including several states in recession, travel demand fairly affected by inflation, the return of Covid or environmental concerns, and capacity or staffing issues at both airlines and airports in 2023.

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