

TO BAN OR NOT TO BAN THE SHORT-HAUL FLIGHTS



With the climate debate becoming ever more urgent, short-haul flights are increasingly being criticized. Flights of less than 500 kilometers are not ecological. Politicians like to use the issue to make their mark. France has even banned short-haul flights. It's estimated that about half of the EU population would also welcome their ban. And they're not wrong - there are good alternatives of train, bus or car.

However, eliminating the short-haul flights does little for the climate. A new study by researchers from Belgium, Germany and Great Britain shows **that 28 percent of all takeoffs in Europe involve short-haul flights, but these only account for 5.9 percent of the kerosene consumed.**

In contrast, 6.2 percent of takeoffs are to long-haul destinations further than 4,000 kilometers. However, these require 47 percent of the kerosene.

The study thus draws attention to flights from Central Europe to Dubai, New York or Bangkok, for example. Such flights in particular should be questioned, the study concludes. On flights of more than 4,000 kilometers, the climate effect is significantly higher, as study leader Giulio Mattioli of the Technical University of Dortmund notes. Gases are also emitted at higher altitudes, where they have a greater impact on the climate.

In the analysis, the researchers come to the conclusion that a ban on short-haul flights could even have negative effects on the climate. This surprising statement is based on the issue of slots: Airports allocate their take-off times anyway, and in many places these are booked up to the last slot and fiercely contested.

If short-haul flights are now cancelled, the airlines will have to fill their slots with other flights or they will lose them. **If more medium- and long-haul flights are then launched instead of the banned short-haul flights, the damage to the climate would be much greater.**

A ban on short-haul flights only makes sense if the available slots are also limited, thus preventing the expansion of medium- and long-haul flights.

Another point mentioned in the study is: should short-haul flights be banned, an increase in climate-damaging car trips would be expected.

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