

# SHORT-HAUL FLIGHTS IN FRANCE ARE DEFINITELY BANNED



With the publication of the decree in the Official Newspaper, France has formally banned very short-haul flights in the country if there is a railway trip alternative under two and a half hours for the same connection.

As reported, the ban cannot be applied to so-called connecting flights. In addition, the train alternative must serve the same cities as the affected airports. In the case of Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle, the high-speed train station serving the airport is considered. And also, the frequencies must be sufficient and the timetables adequate, taking into account the transport needs of passengers using this connection, particularly in terms of connectivity and intramodality, as well as the traffic transfers that the ban would cause.

Therefore, the number of routes that fall within the scope of the decree is minimal: only the Paris-Orly-Nantes, Orly-Lyon, and Orly-Bordeaux lines do. In reality, this law ratifies what already defacto exists. The government forced Air France to close these connections in May 2020, in exchange for financial support, during the pandemic. It also banned competing companies from operating on the affected routes.

According to the government, the closure of the three routes "results in a total reduction of air transport CO2 emissions of 55,000 tones," based on 2019 traffic data. For the European Commission, again, this measure "can contribute to short-term to reducing emissions in the aviation sector and combating climate change."

On the other hand, the trade associations are clearly opposed to the government's position. According to calculations by the French Airport Union (UAF) and ACI Europe, the routes in question represent only 0.24% of CO2 emissions from national air transport in France or 0.04% of emissions from the overall transport sector in France. Therefore, eliminating short-haul flights "doesn't make much sense," according to Olivier Jankovic, director general of ACI Europe, who underlines how the law on climate and resilience requires domestic flights to offset 50% of their CO2 emissions by 2022 and 100% by 2024. Experts, consequently, favor strengthening this type of compensation and the obligations to use SAF (sustainable aviation fuels).

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