

EUROPEAN AIRPORTS WILL RETURN TO FULL TRAFFIC IN 2024



European airport managers have provided an updated estimate that they will return to their pre-health crisis passenger volume in 2024. According to the leading association of airport managers, the Airports Council International (European branch - ACI Europe), this is a year earlier than previously expected.

The association predicts that the volume of passengers passing through European airports will reach 95.5% of 2019 levels this year. **ACI Europe initially expected 91% passenger volume this year.**

The association further predicts that passenger traffic will recover completely in 2024, compared to previous forecasts for 2025. The volume of passengers passing through airport facilities in Europe is expected to reach 101.4% of the volumes achieved before the Covid-19 outbreak. Notably, the pandemic caused a massive 70% reduction in passengers over one year in 2020, with only 728 million passengers compared to 2.4 billion in 2019.

In 2022, a new epidemic wave began, and European airports received 79% of their usual number of travelers. ACI Europe remained optimistic, and the good 2023 summer season saw attendance levels of 97% in July and 96.6% in August compared to the same months in 2019.

ACI Europe predicts that passenger traffic will reach 109.2% of 2019 levels by 2027 despite inflationary pressure, high air ticket prices, and increasing geopolitical tensions. The organization, however, cautioned that the recovery would be uneven across countries, airports, and airlines.

In the past, when airports faced systemic shocks such as 9/11 or the global financial crisis, they recovered at the same pace. However, in the current scenario, this is different.

European airports serving tourist destinations or places with large diasporas are among the winners. **"Ultra-low-cost" carriers like Ryanair or Wizz Air have benefited more from the recovery, which favors regional or secondary airports and has a negative impact on large connecting platforms.** Among the "hubs," Istanbul's main airport is an exception. It saw 112.4% of the passenger volume of the same month of 2019 pass through in August.

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