

# TRAFFIC AT FRENCH AIRPORTS IS STILL BELOW 2019 LEVELS



According to the aviation industry's annual report, traffic at French airports has not yet returned to levels before the crisis. In 2023, there were 198,680,952 commercial passengers, which is slightly lower by 7.3% than the numbers in 2019. However, compared to 2022, there was an increase in traffic by 14.2%, which is almost 25 million additional commercial passengers.

The report highlights some solid trends for 2023. The first trend is the increasing penetration of low-cost airlines in the French market. The second trend is a decline in domestic traffic; the results vary depending on the platforms.

**The significant growth of regional airports and air connectivity in recent times owes much to the development of low-cost airlines.** This trend has been further emphasized since the crisis, as Thomas Juin, President of the Union of French Airports (UAF), noted. The expansion of low-cost airlines has played a crucial role in making air travel more accessible and affordable to broader population segments. The UAF acknowledges that this development has helped improve regional connectivity, promoting economic growth and tourism. The UAF remains committed to working with low-cost airlines to ensure that they continue operating safely and efficiently while meeting the needs of passengers and communities.

## Low-cost to Save Traffic at French Airports

According to the UAF, in France, 43.2% of passengers who arrived at or departed from mainland airports flew with a low-cost airline in 2023, an increase from 35.1% in 2019. Last year, low-cost airlines transported 113.8% of their 2019 passenger volume, while traditional companies only transported 80.8%.

Ryanair, easyJet, Wizz Air, Vueling, Volotea, Transavia, Eurowings, and other low-cost airlines primarily offer short and medium-haul flights, targeting leisure customers or diasporas. According to Thomas Juin, these companies have seen their model establish itself in France and Europe, and French regional airports have significantly benefited from their presence.

Traffic at French airports specializing in low-cost reception has soared, with Beauvais (Oise), a Ryanair base, experiencing 41.6% growth (compared to 2019) and Tarbes-Lourdes Pyrénées experiencing 26.5% growth. Over 61.4% of passengers at large regional airports, which welcome over a million travelers annually, used these carriers.

## Some Airports Rejoice, Some Don't

Large regional airports account for over a third of metropolitan traffic and have shown varying results depending on their exposure to domestic and low-cost traffic. Paris-Beauvais airport passed the 5 million passenger mark for the first time this year. However, some airports, such as Breton airports (Brest and Rennes), Strasbourg, and Toulouse-Blagnac, have experienced a decline in traffic over the past four years due to competition from rail and a shift away from business travel.

**While international traffic has increased by 20.2% compared to 2022, it is still below 2019**

**(-2.8%).** On the other hand, domestic traffic decreased compared to 2022 (-1.7%) and remained 20.8% lower than in 2019. More than half of the metropolitan airports' traffic (53.6%) is represented by Parisian platforms, as in 2019. Due to disrupted long-haul markets, particularly in Asia, Paris-Charles de Gaulle airport's traffic is still down 11.5% compared to 2019. However, Paris-Orly, focusing more on short-haul and medium-haul flights, exceeded its 2019 traffic by 1.4%.

Date: 2024-03-18

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/low-cost-airlines-boost-the-traffic-at-french-airports-news14257>