

EUROPEAN AIR TRAFFIC GENERALLY ON THE UP



The general news for airlines in Europe is good, though low consumer confidence remains in the freight business, meaning that freight traffic is down despite a newfound optimism.

In the aftermath of difficult global economic circumstances of 2009, European airports were a perfect place to see the effects firsthand. Airlines suffered greatly and people stopped flying.

Rising fuel prices and necessary saving led to people skipping holidays and businesses seriously cutting down on the amounts of business trips for its employees. The outlook is nowhere near as bleak as it was not too long ago, as passengers have come back. There is, however, one great exception: freight traffic.

Whereas passenger traffic in Europe is up 4.7% on average compared to this quarter last year, freight traffic is down by 2.5%. The reason is that holidaymakers have been making their way back on board, whereas there is still a lack of customer confidence in Europe due to business being weak.

General growth in Europe is being hindered by aviation taxes imposed by certain nations. Germany, the UK and Austria are the biggest culprits and do not realize they are shooting themselves in the foot with such policies. This is why growth in passenger traffic in the EU (+3.5%) is quite different from the growth at non-EU airports (+9.6%).

Out of the category 1 airports, Barcelona, Istanbul and Amsterdam have seen the crowds coming back the most. Even Europe's smaller airports are beginning to notice the pleasant difference.

The aim of airline companies now must be to improve their situation in the freight area of business for them to improve quicker and at a greater rate. Reductions in aviation taxes would help a great deal too.

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