FRANKFURT AIRPORT - PASSENGER NUMBERS FALL TO HISTORIC LOW DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

News / Airports / Routes

Frankfurt Airport (FRA) welcomed some 18.8 million passengers in 2020, representing a decrease of 73.4 percent compared to 2019. With the outbreak of the Covid-19 global pandemic, Frankfurt Airport started to experience a major decline in passenger traffic in mid-March 2020. Between April and June, traffic almost came to a complete standstill – with weekly passenger figures plummeting by up to 98 percent year-on-year. Following a slight traffic recovery in the third quarter of 2020, a new rise in coronavirus infection rates led to intensified travel restrictions. This resulted in passenger numbers falling sharply once again in September and remaining low for the rest of the year.

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Fraport AG's executive board chairman, Dr. Stefan Schulte, commented: "The year 2020 brought extreme challenges to the entire aviation industry. In Frankfurt, passenger volumes dropped to a level last seen in 1984. Cargo traffic was one of the few bright spots, reaching almost the same level as in 2019 – despite the loss of "belly freight" capacity on passenger aircraft. Aviation played a vital role in ensuring the supply of essential medical goods to the world's population, particularly during the first lockdown."

Aircraft movements at Frankfurt Airport contracted by 58.7 percent year-on-year to 212,235 takeoffs and landings in 2020. Accumulated maximum takeoff weights (MTOWs) shrank by 53.3 percent to about 14.9 million metric tons. In comparison, cargo throughput (airfreight + airmail) registered a relatively minor dip of only 8.3 percent year-on-year to just under 2.0 million metric tons.

In December 2020, FRA's passenger traffic slumped by 81.7 percent to 891,925 travelers. With 13,627 takeoffs and landings, aircraft movements declined by 62.8 percent compared to December 2019. MTOWs were down 53.6 percent to about 1.1 million metric tons. Cargo throughput grew by 9.0 percent to 185,687 metric tons in December 2020, rising for the third consecutive month.

Looking forward, CEO Schulte said: "Because of the recent launch of vaccination programs throughout many countries, we are optimistic that travel restrictions will be gradually lifted beginning in the spring. Therefore, we expect Frankfurt'spassenger traffic to rebound noticeably in the second half of 2021. Nevertheless, we have to realize that a difficult year lies ahead of us. While we are confident passenger traffic will exceed last year's level, we still expect Frankfurt to reach only 35 to 45 percent of the 2019 level."

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