

**For immediate release, 26 January 2009**

## **2008: Growth in flights comes to a halt, reflecting financial crisis**

Brussels, Belgium – In 2008, the total number of flights in Europe was 10 million – an increase of only 0.1% compared to 2007. This is the first time in 5 years that the increase in the number of flights has been so low.

Average daily traffic in Europe in 2008 was up on average by just 200 flights a day – from 27,470 in 2007 to 27,676 in 2008. Major European markets, in particular Italy, the UK and Spain saw significant declines in traffic (respectively -2.7, -1.7% and -2.1%). Eastern Europe, particularly Turkey and Poland continued to see overall growth in traffic (Turkey: 8.3% and Poland: 9.8%).

These annual figures mask a strong downturn in the last two months of the year. In December, traffic overall fell by 7% and three-quarters of States saw declines.

Low-cost traffic saw its first drop in 15 years, with 4,600 flights a day in November 2008 compared to 4,900 in November 2007. After 3 years of strong growth, business aviation traffic has gradually fallen since July. In December 2008 there were 1,450 business flights a day, compared to 1,730 in December 2007 – a 16% fall.

In 2008, air traffic flow management delays which are caused by air traffic control capacity, staffing, weather and aerodrome capacity increased by 10%, to 2.3 minutes in 2008 compared to 2.1 in 2007. 53% of all delays were attributed to airlines, with 17% coming from airports, 13% from en-route and 10% from weather.

European  
Organisation for the  
Safety of  
Air Navigation

Organisation  
européenne pour la  
sécurité de la  
navigation aérienne

Rue de la Fusée, 96  
B-1130 Bruxelles  
Tel: +32.2.729.90.11  
Fax: +32.2.729.90.44

After 6 years when growth averaged 3%, EUROCONTROL forecasts predict a decrease of 3% in the number of flights in 2009. This fall is expected to cover mainly the West and Centre of Europe.

“2008 was a difficult year for air transport, and 2009 is set to be even tougher. However, demand in the longer term is still set to rise substantially with traffic surging to 18 million in 2030. This is no time to lose sight of the long-term challenges and goals, because the challenges ahead continue to require decisions and actions today,” says David McMillan, Director General of EUROCONTROL.

***For further information, please contact:***

Kyla Evans, Tel: +32 2 729 50 95 Email: [press@eurocontrol.int](mailto:press@eurocontrol.int)

Lucia Pasquini, Tel: +32 2 729 34 20 Email: [press@eurocontrol.int](mailto:press@eurocontrol.int)

For more information via the website: [www.eurocontrol.int](http://www.eurocontrol.int)

**Note to Editors:**

*EUROCONTROL, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation, has as its primary objective to develop a seamless, pan-European air traffic management (ATM) system that fully copes with the growth in air traffic, while maintaining a high level of safety, reducing costs and respecting the environment. EUROCONTROL has 38 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On 8 October 2002, the Member States and the European Community signed a Protocol on the Accession of the European Community to the revised EUROCONTROL Convention. Pending its entry into force after ratification by all Parties, certain provisions of the Protocol are already being provisionally applied.*