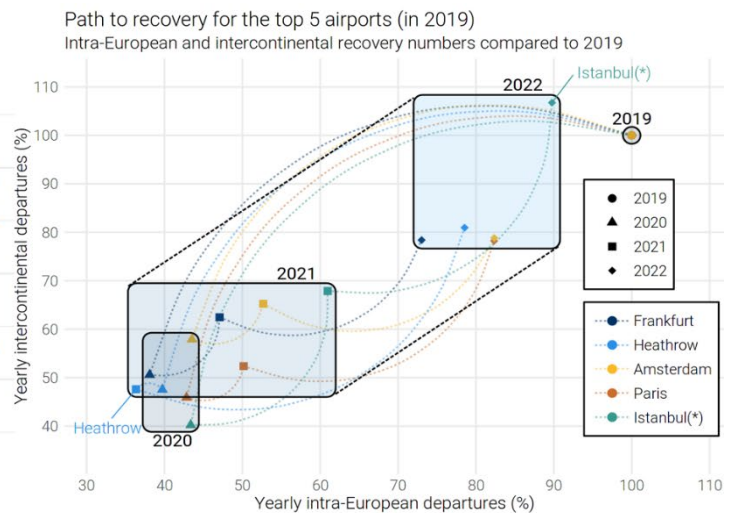
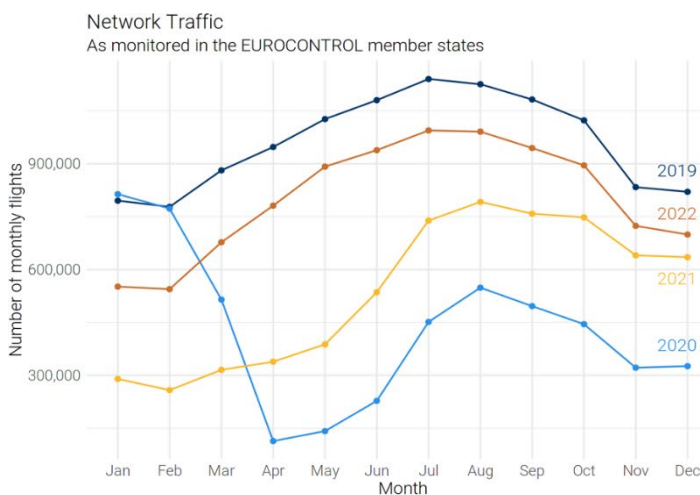


# EUROCONTROL Data Snapshot

The path to recovery for intra-European and intercontinental flights



18 January 2022



The aviation industry has faced huge challenges in recovering from the impact of COVID-19, including disruptions to travel and changes in health and safety protocols. Despite these challenges, data from EUROCONTROL show that the industry is overall steadily recovering, with flights at most airports progressively returning to pre-pandemic levels.

This data snapshot analyses the path to recovery within the EUROCONTROL network. The graphic on the left shows the traffic evolution from 2019 to 2022. It comprises both intra-European and intercontinental flights. Following the significant decrease in traffic during 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, the subsequent years show a steady increase of traffic in Europe. By the end of 2022, the overall all-year recovery rate had reached 83% of pre-pandemic levels.

The second image on the right shows how intra-European and intercontinental departures have evolved at five of the busiest major European airports from 2019 to 2022. During the first year of the pandemic, the share of intra-European and intercontinental flights decreased sharply. COVID-19 in Türkiye had a significant effect on Istanbul Airport (note data from the new Istanbul iGA and predecessor Atatürk have been combined), causing the biggest drop in intercontinental flights among the major hubs (to about 40% of pre-pandemic levels).

In 2021, connectivity recovered to a certain extent except at London Heathrow, where traffic recovery was slower, reflecting *inter alia* the delayed relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in the United Kingdom. By contrast, a major recovery in both intra-European and intercontinental flights is noticeable for Istanbul Airport in 2021. The wide variation of observed shares of intra-European and intercontinental departures in 2021 for the five airports shows the impact of differing approaches to dealing with the crisis in the various Member States.

In 2022, Heathrow's recovery caught up with the other airports, while Istanbul Airport continued to lead the field, with traffic exceeding 2019 levels for much of the second half of the year. The other airports all reached about 75-82% of pre-pandemic levels at the end of 2022, with the recovery in intercontinental flights weaker than that for intra-European flights (affected by developments in Russia and China). This consistency in their recovery reflects the broadly similar approach and circumstances among countries and across the European aviation sector.

**Note:** This Data Snapshot was updated on 19 January 2023 to reflect corrected 2022 airport data.

**Technical Bits:** The data for this snapshot is obtained from the EUROCONTROL Network Manager. The analysis is based on flights departing from or arriving at the 41 EUROCONTROL Member States. Intra-European departures are flights departing from and arriving at any of these 41 Member States, intercontinental departures are flights departing from within Europe and arriving in a country which is not a EUROCONTROL Member State. Istanbul (\*): The annual flight numbers for Istanbul Airport account for the change over from Atatürk to the new Istanbul Airport iGA.

For more information, please also visit the AIU portal @ [www.ansperformance.eu](http://www.ansperformance.eu) or contact [pru-support@eurocontrol.int](mailto:pru-support@eurocontrol.int).

© EUROCONTROL 2023