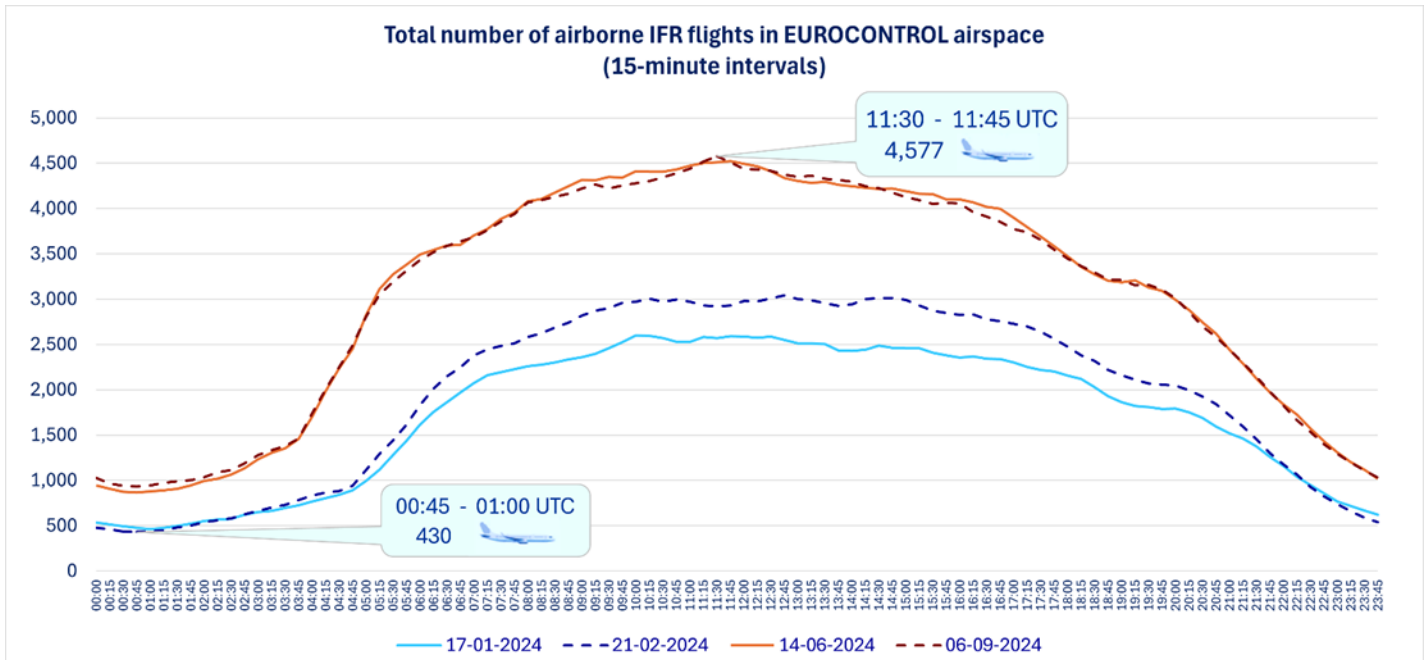


EUROCONTROL Data Snapshot

Did you know... how many aircraft are in the air at a given moment?



20 March 2025



The chart shows the variation in flights number for the days with the peak/minimum per 15-minute intervals versus the peak/lowest traffic days in 2024.

This data snapshot analyses the total number of aircraft in the air for any 15 minute interval in 2024. In other words, what was the maximum number of airborne IFR aircraft in the EUROCONTROL area at a given point in time? Let's have a closer look.

The highest number of aircraft airborne within a 15-minute interval in EUROCONTROL airspace in 2024 was recorded between 11:30 and 11:45 (UTC) on 6 September with **4,577** airborne flights – more than half a million people in the sky! It also marks the peak for the entire 2019-2024 period. Interestingly, the peak traffic day in 2024 was different – on 14 June 2024 there were **35,710** flights, around 440 flights more than on 6 September.

In 2024 the lowest number of airborne flights in the EUROCONTROL network was **412** (00:00-00:15, 1 January). If we set aside Christmas and New Year's days when many airlines do not fly, the fewest airborne flights were **430** (00:45 - 01:00, 21 February). This was still up on 2019 (**371** flights on 2 January, 00:45– 01:00), despite overall traffic in 2024 being below 2019.

However, the day in 2024 with the minimum number of flights (EUROCONTROL area) was different: 17 January with **19,928** flights. Unsurprisingly, the absolute minimum number of airborne flights during the 2019-2024 period happened during the early days of the COVID pandemic when, on several occasions between the 11 and 14 April 2020, there were as few as **72** flights in the air.

A large share of flights in the EUROCONTROL area are short/medium haul, passenger flights – which, in addition to European restrictions on night-time flights, result in the daily peak being typically 3-4 times higher than the daily low. This is not the case for global hubs such as Dubai and Singapore, where these differences are around 60-70%.

Worldwide, the maximum number of airborne flights within a 15-minute interval in 2024 was **14,913** flights on 11 July between 14:15 and 14:30, approximately three times more than in the EUROCONTROL area. The lowest number of aircraft in 2024 (worldwide) was on 3 November with **7,557** airborne flights between 04:45 and 05:00.

Technical bits: The data source for the global figures is Flight Radar 24 Flightradar24 Historical Global Utilisation and excludes general aviation. All times shown are UTC.