

## **Passenger traffic increases by +3.2% in May**

### **ACI EUROPE**

Boulevard du Régent 37-  
40 (5th floor)  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
[www.aci-europe.org](http://www.aci-europe.org)

**Brussels, 10 July 2026:** European airport trade body, ACI EUROPE today released its traffic report for May 2026.

After turning negative for the first time since the post-COVID recovery in April (-0.7%), passenger traffic across the European airport network rebounded in May with an increase of **+3.2%** when compared to the same month last year.

**EU+ airports<sup>1</sup>** led the growth dynamic at **+3.4%**, with volumes expanding the fastest within the EU (+4.2%), whereas the **non-EU+ market<sup>2</sup>** lagged behind the European average at **+2%**.

### **NATIONAL MARKETS KEEP DIVERGING**

May saw continued disparities in national and individual airport markets performance – reflecting a mix of factors, with the externalities of the conflict in the Middle East adding to the primacy of leisure demand, Ultra-Low Cost Carriers' expansion, the damaging impact of aviation taxes, and generally increased airline market power.

Within the **EU+ market**, airports in Slovakia (+112.8%), Malta (+16.5%), Estonia (+13.1%) and Slovenia (+11.2%) recorded the highest growth. Bulgaria (+9.2%), Poland (+8.9%), Lithuania and Denmark (both at +8.5%) also showed strong gains.

At the other end of the spectrum, airports in Cyprus (-4.1%) continued to be affected by the impact of the war on destination perception, while Iceland (-6.2%), Austria (-5%) and Latvia (-2.3%) suffered airline capacity cuts. Switzerland (-5.3%) was affected by SWISS cutting flights due to crew shortages and aircraft groundings as well as runway refurbishment at Basel/Mulhouse EuroAirport.

Amongst the largest EU+ markets, airports in Italy (+5.1%) and Spain (+5%) went up head-to-head in May. Airports in France (+1.7%) and the UK (+0.9%) continued to underperform the European average while those in Germany (-0.6%) were dragged down by capacity reductions linked to the grounding of Lufthansa CityLine.

Within the **Non-EU+ market**, the highest passenger traffic increases came from airports in North Macedonia (+27.4%), Albania (+26%), Montenegro (+17.8%), Uzbekistan (+16.2%), and Armenia (+12.7%).

Meanwhile, airports in Israel (-17.2%), Azerbaijan (-6.1%), Georgia (-5.9%), and Kosovo (-4%) significantly underperformed. The major market of Türkiye reported a modest growth at +1.8%.

## MAJORS LED BY HEATHROW

**London Heathrow** (-1.2%) retained its position as the busiest European airport in May, welcoming 7.12 million passengers. Hot on its heels was **Istanbul** (+2%) – the two hubs were separated by just 3,012 passengers.

Spanish airports achieved the best performances amongst the top 10 busiest airports in May led by **Barcelona** (+6.5%) and followed by **Palma de Mallorca** (+4.9%) and **Madrid** (+4.8%). The Balearic airport welcomed more passengers than London Gatwick or Munich.

## SMALL AIRPORTS STILL BEHIND PRE-COVID RESULTS

Small airports (under 1 million passengers) delivered the most contrasted results again in May. While that segment achieved the best year-on-year performance overall with a +7.2% growth in passenger traffic, they kept faring the worst when compared to pre-pandemic (2019) volumes (-25.5%).

## FREIGHT AND MOVEMENTS

May 2026 saw an increase of **+2.5%** in freight volumes over the same month last year. Amongst the top 10 European airports for freight traffic, Leipzig (+14.1%), Brussels (+12.4%), and Amsterdam (+10.2%) saw double-digit growth. In absolute terms, Istanbul, Frankfurt and Paris-CDG shifted the biggest volumes of freight in May.

Aircraft movements remained largely flat (+0.8%) when compared to May 2025 – reflecting the impact of the war in the Middle East and tighter capacity management by airlines.

## DATA BY AIRPORT GROUPS

In May, airports welcoming more than 40 million passengers (Majors), airports welcoming between 25 and 40 million passengers (Mega), airports welcoming between 10 and 25 million passengers (Large), airports welcoming between 1 and 10 million passengers (Medium) and airports welcoming less than 1 million passengers (Small) reported an average change of +1.3%, +2.2%, +4.6%, +4.4% and +7.2% as compared to the preceding year.

The airports that reported the most dynamic growth in passenger traffic versus May 2025 are as follows:

**Majors:** Barcelona BCN (+6.5%), Madrid MAD (+4.8%), Amsterdam AMS (+3.3%), Istanbul SAW (+2.9%), Frankfurt FRA (+2.7%).

**Mega airports:** Zurich ZRH (+9.1%), Copenhagen CPH (+7.5%), Malaga AGP (+6.4%), Palma de Mallorca PMI (+4.9%), London STN (+4.5%).

**Large airports:** Tirana TIA (+26%), Tashkent TAS (+20.9%), Malta MLA (+16.5%) Krakow KRK (+16%), Izmir ADB (+13.3%).

**Medium airports:** Bratislava BTS (+131.1%), A Coruña LCG (+74.7%), Van VAN (+42%), Skopje SKP (+28.6%), Trapani TPS (+24.9%).

**Small airports:** Stockholm BMA (+927.9%), Kastoria KSO (+750.4%), Bucharest BBU (+204.6%), Hatay HTY (+190.8%), Syros Island JSY (+157%).

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<sup>1</sup> EU, EEA, Switzerland and the UK.

<sup>2</sup> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

**## ENDS ##**

### **Notes to editors**

ACI EUROPE Airport Traffic Reports are the only air transport reports to include all types of airline passenger flights to, from and within Europe: full service, low cost, charter and others. ACI EUROPE has recently expanded their monthly coverage to include over 450 airports, representing over 95% of European airport traffic.

The ACI EUROPE Airport Traffic Reports are a dedicated service for ACI EUROPE members and accredited journalists, available in the password protected sections of the 'Media Room' and the 'Members Room' on our website [www.aci-europe.org](http://www.aci-europe.org).

For your password to access these sections, please contact us by e-mail at: [corise.nel@aci-europe.org](mailto:corise.nel@aci-europe.org). Your request will be validated, and the password will be e-mailed to your work address.

The report presents data for ACI EUROPE Members and might not be representative of the total European airport traffic.

### **For more information, contact:**

Agata Lyznik  
Director of Communications, Media & Events  
Tel: +32 2 552 09 89  
Email: [agata.lyznik@aci-europe.org](mailto:agata.lyznik@aci-europe.org)

### **About ACI EUROPE**

**ACI EUROPE** is the European region of Airports Council International (ACI), the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents over 600 airports in 55 countries. Our members facilitate over 95% of commercial air traffic in Europe. Airports and air connectivity support 14 million jobs, generating €851 billion in European economic activity (5% of GDP). In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions for operations under their control by 2050, without offsetting.