

ACI reveals catastrophic impact of pandemic on global traffic



AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL

According to the ACI, while domestic markets show signs of improvement, the recovery process remains uncertain.

Airports Council International (ACI) world data has revealed that global passenger traffic declined by -91.3% year-over-year in May, as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This is slightly above the worst decline of global passenger numbers in the history of the aviation industry of -94.4%, which was recorded the previous month in April.

Falling more than 10 percentage points, global passenger traffic continued its dramatic decline compared to the prior month to -52.5% for the first five months of 2020. Recording -19.3% by the end of May, the 12-month rolling average for the global industry is also continuing with the downward trend.

As in earlier months, the impact of the COVID-19 on the air freight industry wasn't as significant in May, when compared to the passenger market. With a decline of -17.9% in April compared to -12.8% in May, global air freight volumes experienced slightly better results in the later month.

The global 12-month rolling average continued to move further into negative territory at -6.7% by the end of the month.

"After a devastating month of April for the aviation industry when global air travel came to a virtual halt, data for May revealed a tiny sign of a recovery driven by the domestic markets in China and the United States.

In the Asia-Pacific and North American regions, there were signs for optimism with the data showing some early improvement in domestic passenger traffic, but international traffic continued to be practically non-existent in May.

As in previous months, global air freight volumes have not been affected to the same extent as passenger traffic and showed signs of a slight upward curve but, with most of the passenger fleet still grounded, capacity was dramatically reduced.

Airports are important engines of growth and the recovery of this sector will be a significant driver of the global economic recovery. but this will only be sustained if passengers, staff and the public have confidence in air travel.

ACI's recently launched Airport Health Accreditation programme will help to restore this passenger confidence, assisting airports by assessing new health measures and procedures introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Luis Felipe de Oliveira, ACI World Director General.

ACI collects and analyses data from a significant sample of airports that provide regular reports on monthly passenger and air freight statistics, forming part of the world's most comprehensive source for airport data.

Passenger traffic

Besides North America and Asia-Pacific, all other regional markets posted a decline greater than -95% of their global passenger traffic. The start of a slow recovery of the domestic traffic helped North America and Asia-Pacific to post slightly better figures with a decrease of -90.3% and -82.5%, respectively. International passenger traffic continues to be virtually halted with all regions, recording a decline above -98% for a second consecutive month.

Global international and domestic markets posted unprecedented declines for a second month in a row, falling by -98.6% and -85.3%, respectively. The 12-month rolling average for the international segment was recorded at -20.2% and the domestic segment at -18.5%.

Domestic passenger markets remain severely affected by the ongoing crisis, but North America and Asia-Pacific have displayed signs of a slow recovery. However, the general downward trend is still significant. North America posted a -88.8% decline, while Asia-Pacific recorded a -73.2% drop in domestic passengers. Other regions all recorded a decline above -90% in May.

Air freight

The outbreak continues to heavily impact all major freight markets except for North America, but small gains started to emerge in May when compared to the previous month. Globally, air freight volumes reduced by almost a fifth in May, with a drop of -17.9% compared to May 2019.

Substantial losses were recorded in Africa (-38.3%), Latin America-Caribbean (-34.6%) and Middle East (-38.2%), while Asia-Pacific (-21.5%) and Europe (-18.7%) recorded lesser, but still sizeable volume losses. North America, recorded a less significant drop of - 4.6% in total freight volumes alleviated by a robust domestic freight market that recorded an increase of +0.1% compared to a substantial loss of -11% for its International freight market.

The international air freight market's negative trend has calmed in May, with a loss of -19.6% compared to the previous month's decrease of -26.4%. Following a similar route, domestic freight volumes posted a slight improvement of -13.6% in May compared to -13.8% in April.

As well as the 12-month rolling average, year-to-date air freight figures for May continued their negative trend and are now at -12.3% and - 6.7%, respectively.