



GLOBAL AVIATION MONITOR May 2026

Statistical Report of Global, European and German Air Transport



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Note: Due to the Iran crisis, actual traffic in May 2026 is expected to differ from the planned figures, particularly in the Middle East region.



The DLR Global Aviation Monitor

The Global Aviation Monitor is a statistical report series from the DLR Institute of Air Transport of the German Aerospace Center, which serves as a supplement to various statistics, such as those from the Federal Statistical Office or the German Airports Association (ADV).

It provides monthly reports on the supply of flights in Germany, Europe, and worldwide. The development of flights over the last fifteen months is presented in the form of a time series. Additionally, there is a monthly ranking of the largest airports and airlines in Germany, Europe, and worldwide, which are compared to the values of the previous year. The data is released during each month and represents the planned data for the current month.

This report fills a gap that is of interest to both airports and airlines in assessing their position on a global scale. It is of interest to policy-makers, administrators, industry stakeholders, and tourism offices to gauge the performance of their region. In the event of significant changes, it is worthwhile to examine closely what has caused them. Due to its monthly updates, the report can serve as a leading indicator for trends and developments.

The Institute of Air Transport provides further advanced forecasting capabilities. Combining established statistical techniques with innovative modelling approaches and a broad dataset, it delivers short-, medium-, and long-term forecasts on passenger and cargo traffic, airport capacity, fleet development, and route networks. These insights support strategic decision-making for stakeholders across the sector, reinforcing the institute's role in shaping future air transport planning at regional and global levels.



The report is being developed at the Air Transport Development department of the DLR Institute of Air Transport.

Global air traffic and emissions are projected to rise in the coming decades, driving the need for sustainable technological advancements. The department researches forecasting methods to anticipate demand and supply across different regions and aircraft types. These forecasts support strategic planning for infrastructure, connectivity, and environmental measures. By combining ecological, economic, and social factors, the department assesses new technologies and develops scenarios and roadmaps to guide the aviation sector towards climate-compatible growth.



Number of Monthly Departures in May 2026

Ranking by Airports Globally, for Europe & Germany

Chicago Leads Worldwide Growth

At 13 of the world's 25 largest airports the number of departures increased in May 2026 compared to last year. The four largest airports are in North America, and the largest airport is Chicago with about 41,500 take-offs and increasing traffic. In 11th, 12th and 13th places are the European airports Istanbul, Amsterdam and London-Heathrow and in place 5, 7, 9 and 10 the Asian airports Guangzhou as well as Shanghai Pudong, Tokyo-Haneda and Delhi. Frankfurt is on 14th place in the world. Strong growth in Chicago is the result of an increase in capacity at American Airlines and United Airlines.

This figure shows the twenty-five largest **airports worldwide**, measured in passenger flights.

Europe's Busiest Airports Remain Above 17,000 Departures

Europe's largest airports by scheduled passenger departures in May 2026 are Istanbul, Amsterdam, London Heathrow, Frankfurt, Paris and Madrid, each recording more than 17,000 scheduled departures.

This table shows the twenty-five largest **European airports**, measured in passenger flights.

Tab. 1: Number of monthly departures at the largest airports in the world

Rank	Airport	05/2026	Growth rate
1	Chicago O'Hare International	41,529	16.7
2	Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Intl	34,690	1.5
3	Dallas/Fort Worth Intl	31,581	1.4
4	Denver Intl	29,367	1.6
5	Guangzhou	22,580	2.1
6	Charlotte	22,460	-3.7
7	Shanghai Pudong International	21,797	0.3
8	Los Angeles International	21,615	-3.7
9	Tokyo Haneda	21,381	4.7
10	Delhi	21,120	6.6
11	Istanbul	21,027	-2.5
12	Amsterdam	20,383	-1.9
13	London Heathrow	20,359	-2.4
14	Frankfurt	19,536	-1.1
15	Paris Charles de Gaulle	19,274	1.0
16	Phoenix Sky Harbor Intl	18,720	-0.2
17	Houston George Bush	18,693	0.6
18	Seattle/Tacoma International	18,404	-0.9
19	Beijing Capital	18,258	-2.6
20	New York J F Kennedy	18,002	-4.3
21	Shenzhen	17,857	0.7
22	Madrid Barajas	17,807	7.1
23	Las Vegas McCarran International	17,068	-8.7
24	Boston Logan International	16,998	1.3
25	San Francisco International	16,780	-0.3

Source: DLR

Tab. 2: Number of monthly departures at the largest airports in Europe

Rank	Airport	05/2026	Growth rate
1	Istanbul	21,027	-2.5
2	Amsterdam	20,383	-1.9
3	London Heathrow	20,359	-2.4
4	Frankfurt	19,536	-1.1
5	Paris Charles de Gaulle	19,274	1.0
6	Madrid Barajas	17,807	7.1
7	Barcelona	16,376	5.3
8	Rome Fiumicino	15,629	4.8
9	Munich	12,745	-14.3
10	Palma Mallorca	12,531	1.5
11	London Gatwick	11,986	0.0
12	Copenhagen	11,776	8.2
13	Athens Intl Eleftherios Venizelos	11,772	1.5
14	Zurich	11,518	4.9
15	Dublin	11,504	1.7
16	Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen	11,344	2.8
17	Vienna	10,043	-6.4
18	Paris Orly	9,971	-1.3
19	Lisbon	9,851	0.0
20	Moscow Sheremetyevo	9,784	-2.2
21	Oslo	9,439	5.1
22	Manchester International	9,126	2.7
23	Antalya	9,070	-1.5
24	Stockholm Arlanda	8,806	3.5
25	London Stansted	8,559	4.1

Source: DLR

Number of Monthly Departures in May 2026

Tab. 3: Number of monthly departures at the largest airports in Germany

Rank	Airport	05/2026	Growth rate
1	Frankfurt	19,536	-1.1
2	Munich	12,745	-14.3
3	Berlin	7,931	-2.8
4	Dusseldorf	6,799	-5.7
5	Hamburg	5,054	-1.3
6	Stuttgart	3,318	-6.6
7	Cologne/Bonn	2,978	-7.3
8	Hanover	1,908	0.7
9	Nuremberg	1,544	6.9
10	Memmingen	1,012	3.8
11	Dortmund	852	12.0
12	Bremen	718	-14.9
13	Weeze	707	4.9
14	Karlsruhe/Baden Baden	681	6.1
15	Leipzig/Halle	567	-19.2
16	Hahn	537	-9.9
17	Munster	460	-0.6
18	Dresden	396	-7.3
19	Paderborn	235	1.7
20	Saarbrücken	144	10.8
21	Westerland	134	-0.7
22	Friedrichshafen	109	87.9
23	Erfurt	83	-17.0
24	Luebeck	55	34.1
25	Augsburg	28	----

Source: DLR

Large German Airports Record Declines

Germany's largest airport is Frankfurt, with around 19,500 departures. The seven largest German airports — Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin, Dusseldorf, Hamburg, Stuttgart and Cologne — all recorded declines compared with the previous year. In contrast, airports with a strong low-cost focus, including Dortmund, Weeze, Karlsruhe and Memmingen, are developing positively. Ryanair is expanding services in Weeze, for example to Málaga and Palma de Mallorca. Friedrichshafen has gained new domestic routes to Dusseldorf, Berlin and Hamburg operated by Flex Flight and marketed by Air Uniqon, while Saarbrücken has added new Ryanair services, including Alicante.

Here, the twenty-five largest **German airports** are listed, measured in passenger flights.

Tab. 4: Number of monthly departures by the largest airlines in the world

Rank	Airline	05/2026	Growth rate
1	American Airlines	204,307	4.1
2	Delta Air Lines	161,341	2.9
3	United Airlines	159,319	7.5
4	Southwest Airlines	123,353	0.6
5	Ryanair	110,920	5.1
6	China Eastern Airlines	71,387	-7.0
7	IndiGo Air	70,935	1.8
8	China Southern Airlines	67,502	-2.5
9	easyJet	54,315	0.3
10	Air China	52,131	-1.6
11	LATAM Airlines	49,646	4.7
12	Alaska Airlines	46,658	17.3
13	Turkish Airlines	35,141	-2.1
14	Air Canada	33,634	2.8
15	Lufthansa German Airlines	31,738	-14.0
16	All Nippon Airways	31,246	3.1
17	JetBlue Airways Corporation	26,482	1.6
18	British Airways	26,429	-3.1
19	Japan Airlines International	26,305	-0.8
20	Aeroflot Russian Airlines	25,250	-0.9
21	SAS Scandinavian Airlines	24,407	9.9
22	Air France	23,544	-6.1
23	Azul	23,442	-11.5
24	Qantas Airways	23,292	-1.4
25	KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	23,237	0.5

Source: DLR

Ranking by Airlines Globally, for Europe & Germany

Major Airlines Expand – Regional Declines

Most major airlines worldwide increased the number of scheduled flights in May 2026. American Airlines operates the largest number with around 204,300 departures, while Lufthansa ranks 15th globally with around 31,700 departures and a declining trend. Airlines in the Middle East are reporting lower figures due to the conflict involving Iran. Year-on-year comparisons should also consider factors such as holiday periods and public holidays, which can influence monthly flight volumes.

This figure shows the **world's** twenty-five **largest airlines**, measured in passenger flights.

Number of Monthly Departures in May 2026

Ranking by Airlines Globally, for Europe & Germany

Ryanair Strengthens Its Lead in Europe

Ryanair operates the largest number of flights in Europe in May 2026, with more than 108,200 departures, representing growth of 5.4% compared with the previous year. This is more than twice the number of departures operated by easyJet, which ranks second with around 52,500 departures.

The twenty-five **airlines in Europe** with the most passenger flights from European airports are listed here.

Lufthansa Remains Germany's Largest Airline Despite Declining Volumes

Lufthansa remains the airline with the highest number of departures in Germany, operating around 19,100 departures in May 2026, followed by Eurowings with almost 8,900 departures and Ryanair with around 4,700 departures. All three airlines recorded declining trends. The reduction at Lufthansa can partly be explained by a transfer of capacity to the subsidiary Lufthansa City Airlines. While Lufthansa is significantly reducing its own flight programme — including domestic feeder services such as Frankfurt–Hamburg — subsidiaries such as Lufthansa City Airlines are recording substantial growth. Condor is also expanding operations in Frankfurt and Munich.

This table ranks the twenty-five **airlines** that offer the most passenger flights in **Germany**.

Tab. 5: Number of monthly departures by the largest airlines in Europe from European airports

Rank	Airline	05/2026	Growth rate
1	Ryanair	108,245	5.4
2	easyJet	52,474	-0.3
3	Turkish Airlines	30,100	-0.5
4	Lufthansa German Airlines	29,387	-14.2
5	SAS Scandinavian Airlines	24,017	10.0
6	British Airways	23,146	-2.9
7	KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	21,343	0.4
8	Air France	20,120	-6.8
9	Vueling Airlines	19,784	-3.0
10	Aeroflot Russian Airlines	19,223	-2.4
11	Pegasus Airlines	18,616	3.2
12	Iberia	18,143	2.9
13	Eurowings	16,925	-4.9
14	Wizz Air	15,974	36.7
15	Wizz Air Malta	14,951	26.4
16	Jet2.com	14,214	5.4
17	Swiss	12,295	-1.6
18	Ajet	11,918	10.4
19	Austrian Airlines AG	10,909	-2.1
20	Wideroe's Flyveselskap	10,647	2.2
21	Aer Lingus	10,253	2.5
22	Finnair	10,053	1.6
23	SunExpress	10,008	4.4
24	Aegean Airlines	9,938	1.9
25	Transavia.com France	9,910	18.5

Source: DLR

Tab. 6: Number of monthly departures by the largest airlines in Germany from German airports

Rank	Airline	05/2026	Growth rate
1	Lufthansa German Airlines	19,078	-14.7
2	Eurowings	8,860	-5.1
3	Ryanair	4,684	-2.7
4	Condor Flugdienst	3,301	17.1
5	SunExpress	2,650	9.5
6	easyJet	1,679	-7.4
7	Lufthansa City Airlines	1,608	88.1
8	Air Dolomiti	1,575	-36.2
9	KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	1,306	-6.8
10	Austrian Airlines AG	1,254	-6.7
11	Wizz Air	1,214	40.5
12	TUIfly	1,192	3.3
13	Eurowings Discover	1,148	5.7
14	Pegasus Airlines	1,086	-17.7
15	Swiss	1,075	-19.0
16	Wizz Air Malta	1,002	35.4
17	Turkish Airlines	1,000	-8.2
18	Air France	901	-5.3
19	SAS Scandinavian Airlines	739	16.9
20	British Airways	685	-28.0
21	Aegean Airlines	508	0.4
22	Brussels Airlines	506	0.8
23	United Airlines	496	-3.3
24	Marabu Airlines	493	-12.0
25	Corendon Europe	478	85.3

Source: DLR

Air Transport Development in May 2026

Development and Changes

Globally and for Germany

Global and German Air Traffic Trends in May 2026

The following diagrams show the development of global and German flight capacity over the last fifteen months, both worldwide and in the individual region.

Fig. 1-2: Global Passenger Flight Volumes Decline Slightly Amid Strong Regional Differences

In May 2026, the number of scheduled passenger flights worldwide declined slightly by around 0.2% compared with the previous year, totalling approximately 3.3 million departures. The regions with the highest traffic volumes are Asia, North America and Europe. Traffic development varies significantly by region, with the Middle East recording a decline of around 24.7%, while Africa achieved growth of 7.6%.

Fig. 3-4: German Market Declines Amid Regional Shifts in Demand

Around 68,600 scheduled passenger departures are planned in Germany in May 2026. This corresponds to a decline of 4.8% compared with the previous year. While capacity to Africa, South America and Asia is being expanded, services to Europe and North America are declining, with particularly sharp reductions to the Middle East. Around 61,000 departures are scheduled to European destinations.

Fig. 1: Development of the global air transport supply

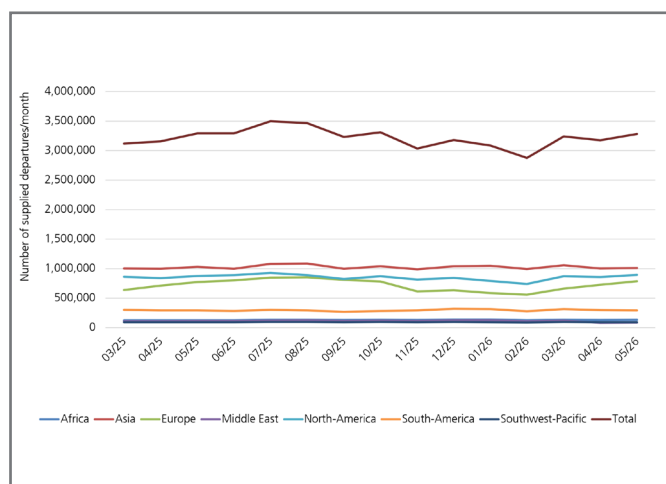


Fig. 2: Changes in the global air transport supply

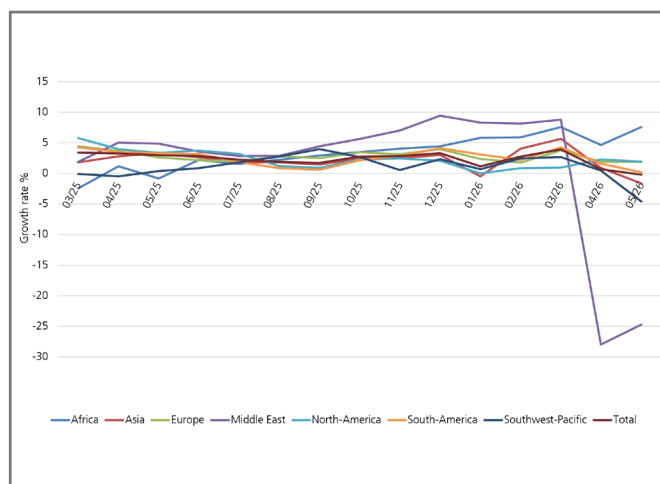


Fig. 3: Development of the German air transport supply

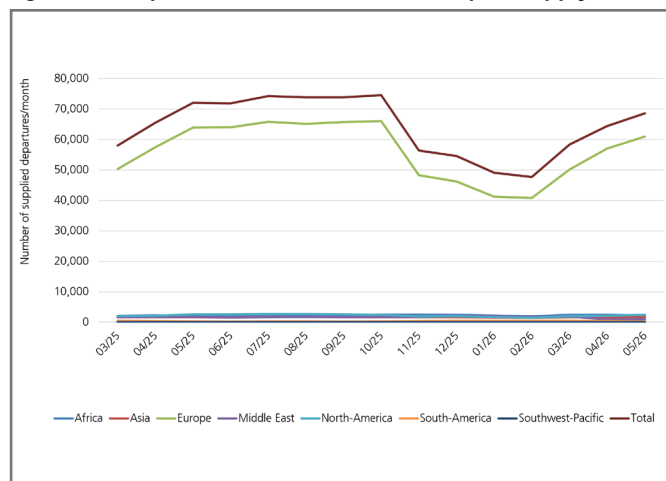
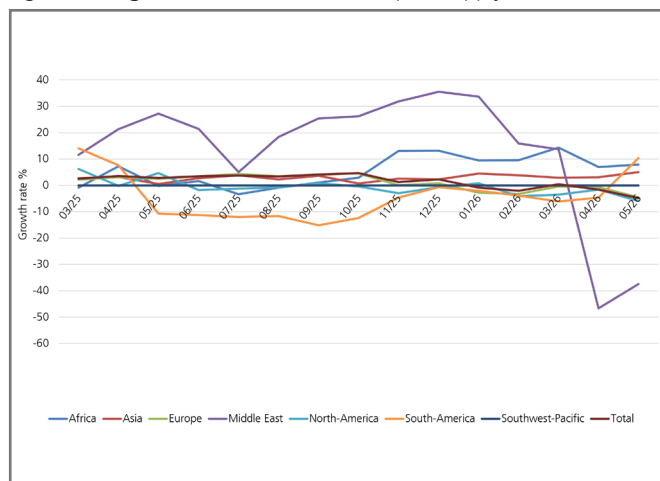


Fig. 4: Changes in the German air transport supply



Source: OAG 2025-2026, DLR 2025-2026

DLR Overview

The DLR is the research center of the Federal Republic of Germany for aerospace. We conduct research and development in aviation, space, energy, transportation, security, and digitalisation. The German Space Agency at DLR is responsible, on behalf of the Federal Government, for planning and implementing German space activities. Two DLR project agencies manage funding programmes and support knowledge transfer.

Climate, mobility, and technology are changing globally. The DLR utilises the expertise of its 58 institutes and facilities to develop solutions for these challenges. Our more than 11,000 employees have a common mission: we explore Earth and space and develop technologies for a sustainable future. In doing so, we contribute to strengthening Germany's knowledge and economic base.

DLR Institute of Air Transport

The DLR Institute of Air Transport researches the complex interactions within the air transport system. We develop future scenarios, conduct economic and business analyses, and model and simulate flight and fleet operations.

We forecast, shape, and evaluate air transport as part of the overall transport system to enhance climate compatibility and performance. To achieve this, we integrate ecological, economic, technological, and social aspects of air transport.

Within DLR, we consolidate expertise in analysing air transport markets and assessing the entire value chain. This positions us as a competent partner for industry, society, and policy makers.

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