



GLOBAL AVIATION MONITOR

September 2026

Statistical Report of Global, European and German Air Transport



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Note: Due to the Iran crisis, actual traffic in September 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 September 2026

Ranking by Airports

Globally, for Europe
& Germany

Chicago world's largest airport by departures

At most of the world's 25 largest airports, the number of departures increased in September 2026 compared with 2025. The four largest airports are in North America, with Chicago ranking first with around 38,700 departures and traffic continuing to grow. The European airports Istanbul, Amsterdam and London-Heathrow rank 7th, 9th and 10th, respectively, while the Asian airports Guangzhou, Shanghai Pudong and Tokyo-Haneda rank 5th, 6th and 11th. Frankfurt ranks 15th worldwide. The growth in Chicago is driven by increased capacity at American Airlines and United Airlines.

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

Istanbul leads Europe's largest airports by passenger flights

The European airports with the highest number of passenger flights in September 2026 are Istanbul, Amsterdam, London-Heathrow, Paris, Frankfurt and Madrid, all recording more than 18,000 scheduled departures. Most of these airports show stagnating or declining traffic.

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	09/2026	Growth rate
1	Chicago O'Hare International	38,671	9.5
2	Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Intl	31,342	-0.4
3	Dallas/Fort Worth Intl	29,665	2.9
4	Denver Intl	28,742	2.0
5	Guangzhou	23,695	9.3
6	Shanghai Pudong International	22,780	6.7
7	Istanbul	22,399	-0.8
8	Los Angeles International	20,445	-1.3
9	Amsterdam	20,110	-2.3
10	London Heathrow	19,860	-2.2
11	Tokyo Haneda	19,815	-3.9
12	Charlotte	19,744	-3.5
13	Beijing Capital	19,248	7.8
14	Paris Charles de Gaulle	19,074	0.7
15	Frankfurt	18,970	-3.7
16	Delhi	18,867	4.5
17	Seattle/Tacoma International	18,381	1.2
18	Madrid Barajas	18,123	8.9
19	Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta	17,490	8.6
20	New York J F Kennedy	17,002	-3.9
21	Boston Logan International	16,768	0.9
22	Seoul Incheon International	16,621	10.9
23	Houston George Bush	16,563	-3.4
24	San Francisco International	16,255	5.6
25	Shenzhen	16,163	-5.9

Source: DLR

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

Rank	Airport	09/2026	Growth rate
1	Istanbul	22,399	-0.8
2	Amsterdam	20,110	-2.3
3	London Heathrow	19,860	-2.2
4	Paris Charles de Gaulle	19,074	0.7
5	Frankfurt	18,970	-3.7
6	Madrid Barajas	18,123	8.9
7	Barcelona	15,933	3.9
8	Rome Fiumicino	14,919	-2.3
9	Munich	14,336	-4.7
10	Palma Mallorca	12,956	1.3
11	Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen	12,935	7.9
12	Athens Intl Eleftherios Venizelos	12,780	2.3
13	London Gatwick	12,371	0.1
14	Antalya	11,778	-2.9
15	Copenhagen	11,749	5.3
16	Moscow Sheremetyevo	11,564	8.6
17	Zurich	11,340	2.9
18	Dublin	11,106	-0.5
19	Vienna	10,314	-7.2
20	Lisbon	9,782	-0.7
21	Oslo	9,524	1.2
22	Manchester International	9,405	1.0
23	Milan Malpensa	9,330	3.4
24	Paris Orly	9,316	-8.0
25	Stockholm Arlanda	8,894	1.2

Source: DLR

Number of Monthly Departures in September 2026

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

Rank	Airport	09/2026	Growth rate
1	Frankfurt	18,970	-3.7
2	Munich	14,336	-4.7
3	Berlin	8,148	-2.0
4	Dusseldorf	7,361	-1.2
5	Hamburg	5,103	-1.2
6	Stuttgart	3,483	-9.1
7	Cologne/Bonn	3,460	1.3
8	Hanover	2,078	1.1
9	Nuremberg	1,649	1.0
10	Memmingen	980	-2.9
11	Dortmund	861	-0.5
12	Weeze	731	10.6
13	Karlsruhe/Baden Baden	681	8.1
14	Bremen	661	-21.5
15	Leipzig/Halle	572	-20.2
16	Hahn	544	-11.0
17	Munster	521	7.9
18	Dresden	393	-19.3
19	Paderborn	207	-35.1
20	Saarbrücken	168	26.3
21	Westerland	155	26.0
22	Erfurt	112	-10.4
23	Friedrichshafen	112	-9.7
24	Luebeck	39	-11.4
25	Augsburg	36	----

Source: DLR

German low-cost airports show growth

Frankfurt is Germany's largest airport, with around 19,000 departures. Most major German airports recorded lower figures than in the previous year. Airports where low-cost carriers are particularly active, such as Weeze and Karlsruhe, recorded positive growth rates. Ryanair is increasing its offering at Weeze by adding frequencies, for example to Málaga and Alicante. At Saarbrücken, Ryanair has introduced new services to destinations including Alicante and Trapani. At Westerland/Sylt, FlexFlight/Air Uniqueon is offering a new service to Berlin.

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	09/2026	Growth rate
1	American Airlines	185,444	5.3
2	United Airlines	149,829	4.0
3	Delta Air Lines	149,510	0.5
4	Southwest Airlines	112,124	0.2
5	Ryanair	108,281	4.5
6	China Eastern Airlines	73,884	3.0
7	China Southern Airlines	70,227	-0.9
8	IndiGo Air	58,312	-7.7
9	easyJet	56,300	1.8
10	Air China	53,944	2.5
11	LATAM Airlines	51,056	4.1
12	Alaska Airlines	45,946	22.3
13	Turkish Airlines	37,735	-0.1
14	Air Canada	33,546	2.1
15	Lufthansa German Airlines	31,688	-10.6
16	Aeroflot Russian Airlines	26,509	-4.7
17	British Airways	26,480	-1.0
18	Japan Airlines International	25,598	-0.7
19	All Nippon Airways	25,089	-20.9
20	Azul	24,300	-1.0
21	SAS Scandinavian Airlines	24,230	2.5
22	JetBlue Airways Corporation	24,229	11.2
23	Qantas Airways	23,362	-0.6
24	Air France	23,038	-7.6
25	KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	22,571	-0.2

Source: DLR

Ranking by Airlines Globally, for Europe & Germany

American Airlines leads global airline departures

Most of the major airlines worldwide increased their number of scheduled passenger flights in September 2026. American Airlines offered the largest number of flights, with around 185,400 departures, followed by United Airlines. Lufthansa ranked 15th, with around 31,700 departures and a downward trend. Airlines from the Middle East, such as Emirates and Qatar Airways, reported declines due to the war in Iran. School and public holidays can affect comparisons with the previous year.

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

Number of Monthly Departures in September 2026

Ranking by Airlines Globally, for Europe & Germany

Ryanair Europe's largest airline by departures

Ryanair offered the largest number of flights in Europe in September 2026, with almost 105,800 departures, representing growth of 4.5% compared with the previous year. This is almost twice as many flights as easyJet, which ranked second with around 54,400 departures.

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

Lufthansa leads Germany but shifts capacity to City Airlines

Lufthansa was the airline with the largest number of departures in Germany in September 2026, with around 18,600 departures, followed by Eurowings with almost 9,400 and Ryanair with around 4,800. Lufthansa and Eurowings both showed downward trends. The decline at Lufthansa can partly be explained by a shift of capacity to its new subsidiary, Lufthansa City Airlines. While Lufthansa is significantly reducing the number of flights it offers, including domestic services on feeder routes such as Frankfurt–Berlin and Munich–Frankfurt, the number of flights offered by subsidiaries such as City Airlines is increasing significantly. Condor is increasing its number of departures in Frankfurt.

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	09/2026	Growth rate
1	Ryanair	105,782	4.5
2	easyJet	54,412	1.3
3	Turkish Airlines	32,099	0.5
4	Lufthansa German Airlines	29,135	-11.3
5	SAS Scandinavian Airlines	23,834	2.4
6	British Airways	23,346	-0.8
7	Pegasus Airlines	20,911	7.2
8	KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	20,690	-0.1
9	Aeroflot Russian Airlines	20,303	-5.5
10	Vueling Airlines	19,854	-4.0
11	Air France	19,662	-8.5
12	Iberia	18,076	4.5
13	Eurowings	17,849	-1.7
14	Wizz Air	17,067	31.9
15	Wizz Air Malta	16,096	18.3
16	Jet2.com	15,212	5.9
17	Ajet	14,463	9.2
18	Swiss	12,100	-0.6
19	SunExpress	11,486	-2.1
20	Austrian Airlines AG	11,444	-0.4
21	Wideroe's Flyveselskap	11,242	0.4
22	Aegean Airlines	10,842	0.1
23	Aer Lingus	10,214	6.2
24	Finnair	10,143	9.5
25	ITA Airways	9,934	-5.4

Source: DLR

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

Rank	Airline	09/2026	Growth rate
1	Lufthansa German Airlines	18,622	-13.1
2	Eurowings	9,355	-1.5
3	Ryanair	4,745	2.2
4	Condor Flugdienst	3,734	19.2
5	SunExpress	3,092	0.4
6	Lufthansa City Airlines	1,950	70.5
7	easyJet	1,786	-1.1
8	Air Dolomiti	1,482	-38.9
9	Pegasus Airlines	1,435	-5.0
10	Eurowings Discover	1,375	16.2
11	KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines	1,261	-7.6
12	TUIfly	1,244	2.5
13	Austrian Airlines AG	1,213	-10.5
14	Wizz Air	1,128	21.4
15	Turkish Airlines	1,075	-5.1
16	Swiss	1,044	-19.8
17	Wizz Air Malta	890	4.0
18	Air France	879	-6.1
19	SAS Scandinavian Airlines	730	5.3
20	British Airways	685	-29.0
21	Corendon Europe	584	73.3
22	Marabu Airlines	574	-0.9
23	Aegean Airlines	562	0.2
24	Ajet	546	5.8
25	Brussels Airlines	539	3.5

Source: DLR

Air Transport Development in September 2026

Development and Changes Globally and for Germany

Global and German Air Traffic Trends in September 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 flights increase slightly**

In September 2026, the number of scheduled passenger flights worldwide increased slightly by around 1.2% compared with the previous year, reaching 3.3 million departures. The regions with the highest volumes are Asia, North America and Europe. Traffic growth varies considerably between regions, with the Middle East recording a decrease of around 7.3%, while Africa saw an increase of 10.5%.

Fig. 3-4: **Germany's flight offer declines by 3.3%**

In Germany, around 71,400 scheduled passenger departures are offered in September 2026. This corresponds to a decrease of 3.3% compared with the previous year. While the number of flights to Africa and South America is increasing in September, there are decreases in the flight offer to Europe. The Middle East has returned to near-normal levels, with only a small decrease. Around 63,000 flights are operated to European airports.

Fig. 1: **Development** of the **global air transport supply**

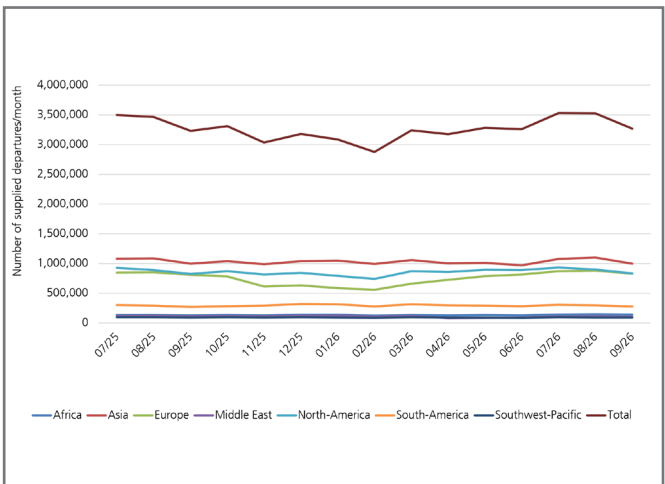


Fig. 2: **Changes** in the global air transport supply

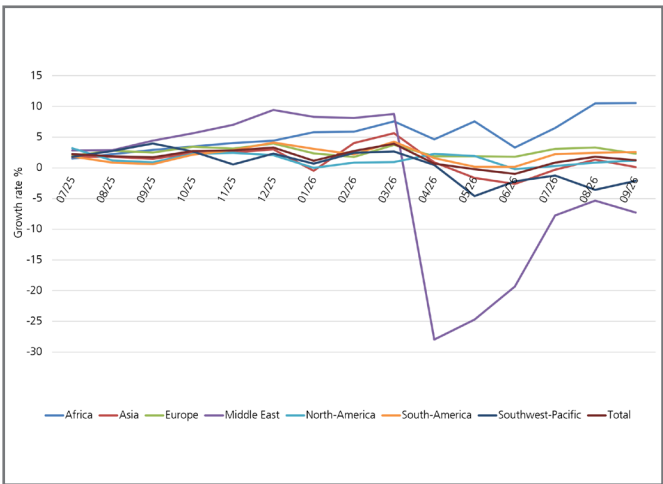


Fig. 3: **Development** of the **German air transport supply**

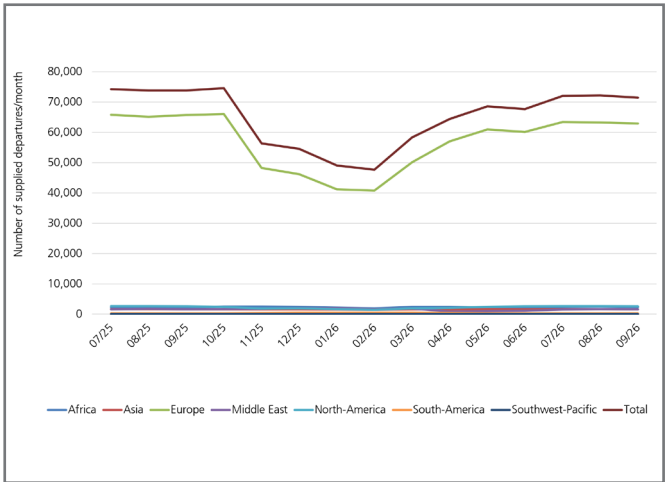
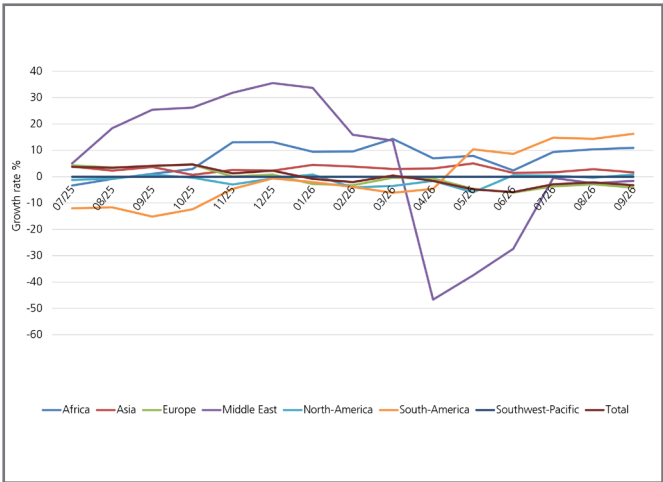


Fig. 4: **Changes** in the German air transport supply



Source: OAG 2025-2026, DLR 2025-2026

DLR Overview

DLR is the Federal Republic of Germany's research centre for aeronautics and space. We conduct research and development activities in the fields of aeronautics, space, energy, transport, security and digitalisation. The German Space Agency at DLR plans and implements the national space programme on behalf of the federal government. Two DLR project management agencies oversee funding programmes and support knowledge transfer.

Climate, mobility and technology are changing globally. DLR uses the expertise of its 51 research institutes and facilities to develop solutions to these challenges. Our more than 11,000 employees share a mission – to explore Earth and space and develop technologies for a sustainable future. In doing so, DLR contributes to strengthening Germany's position as a prime location for research and industry.

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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