



PRESS RELEASE

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The regional airports of Ostend-Bruges and Antwerp are on the rise!

In Ostend, breaking monthly passenger records has become the trend for 2019. Aside from March and April, each month a new record was set. A total of 457 423 passengers made their way through the Ostend airport, a rise of 8.9% from 2018 (419 865 passengers). Antwerp's summer proved to be the busiest one yet, passing the 300 000 passenger mark in 2019 (306 330). Despite a laborious start to the year, due to a 35% capacity loss from VLM Airlines, we were able to turn the tide. The result is a slight growth from 2018: 2.6% or 289 403 passengers.

Ostend-Bruges Airport

The considerable rise in passenger numbers from the past few years has continued on.

One of the reasons for another record year was the launch of the successful Ostend-Moscow connection on March 7th. A high number of bookings proved its popularity. Unfortunately, the connection was temporarily suspended just before summer. The ongoing global issues with the B-737 Max aircraft in the fleet of Pobeda, subsidiary of Aeroflot, are the cause for this abrupt shutdown. Although they presently lack the aircraft to reach their entire network, a resumption of this service has not been ruled out.

Another boost in passenger numbers results from the European competitions in which top Belgian football clubs compete.

Furthermore, 'general aviation' (business air travel) has increased as well. It made up for 9% of all flights, a 3% rise from 2018. The brand new NSAC business terminal allows the airport to handle more flights and more passengers. Through a beautiful infrastructure and an excellent array of services the NSAC is able to live up to the high expectations of its clientele. The airport projects further growth in this section, along with passenger flights and cargo business.

The cargo transport volume has been under great pressure, not only in Ostend but on a worldwide scale.

A 10.7% dip in volume from 2018 brought us to a total of 24 757 tons.

Ostend airport thusly follows the general trend of the cargo sector. However, we hope to carry over the positive uptick that was registered in the last few weeks of the year. A total of 5 630 tons in December is 13.8% better than last year, and stands as the highest number since 2013; a welcome boost to end the cargo year.

Ostend has added the Italian BCUBE as their third cargo handler, after Aviapartner and Fenair, to optimize the service of its cargo clients.



With the arrival of BCUBE, along with the recent inauguration of the spectacular dismantling hall of the Aerocircular company, the long-awaited reopening of 'apron 1' at the airport is a new milestone. Aerocircular professionally dismantles passenger aircraft. Each part, down to the last screw, is recycled. Each part is repurposed: as a spare part in aviation, as a new application of an existing part or as a secondary raw material. In doing so, Aerocircular not only distinguishes itself in the economic aspect of the business model, it also strives for sustainability. Its activities lie within the circular economy

Marcel Buelens, CEO of International Airport Ostend-Bruges:

“Not only have we stunned our owners, the Egis group, we have recorded our best year since 1966 with these 457 423 passengers. Nearly 5000 more, 53 years later. Only 1965 (466 427) and 1964 (485 534) are to be outdone, a great challenge! We must continue to work with our partners on this economic engine for the region and for Flanders. We would like to give special thanks to our people for their hard work, dedication and continued belief in a beautiful future for the Ostend airport. A thank you also goes out to the LOM board of directors and the city council of Ostend and Middelkerke for their support and positive approach to the cabinet of Mobility led by Minister Lydia Peeters.”

Antwerp Airport

Since April 2019, two new ethnic destinations were put in place by TUI fly: Lublin (Poland) and Enfidha (Tunisia). Other routes such as Tangier, Alicante and Malaga underwent a capacity increase. This additional capacity was able to mitigate the downfall of VLM Airlines.

Never before in Antwerp Airport history had there been such a notable summer! Through July, August and September, a whopping 101 069 travelers passed through the airport, as opposed to 92 043 the previous year. This is an increase of nearly 10% (9.8%).

On September 9th the brand new airline company Air Antwerp and codeshare partner KLM reopened the historic business route Antwerp – London City – Antwerp. Business travelers enjoyed 16 return flights per week, with considerable flexibility. Many business people found their way back to London, as evidenced by the high occupancy rate. The results have proven to be better than anticipated. The general aviation segment also performed very well. It accounts for 40% of all flights. This allows us to jump into 2020 with plans for infrastructural investments of the two main players in the business travel section of the airport, ASL and Flying Group.

Marcel Buelens, CEO of International Airport Antwerp:

“With 306 330 passengers in 2019, we have already reached our goal for 2024. The best year to date in 'Deurne' airport history. 306 330 people who have rewarded us for the many efforts of our staff and who have faith in us and in the fact that Antwerp deserves its own airport. Thank you to everyone on and around the airfield who has made an effort to come here. Thank you to each entrepreneur that has kept believing and investing in the Antwerp Airport. The end is not yet in sight, requests have not ceased to come in.



We would also like to thank the LOM board of directors and the city council of greater Antwerp for their support and positive approach to the cabinet of Mobility led by Minister Lydia Peeters.”

Despite the higher occupancy, both airports succeeded in delivering an excellent 'on time performance' (OTP), the punctuality with which aircraft take off. An average of 98.3% of flights departed from Antwerp in a timely fashion. Ostend registered an OTP of 95.8%. On a European scale, both airports finish top off the class. Furthermore, travelers enjoy a fluency in procedures, resulting in shorter waiting times at the security check and baggage reclaim.

Marcel Buelens:

“I am proud and grateful for everyone's hard work and I want to thank all the people who mean well for our Flemish airports. We will keep building, at least until the end of 2039 and probably beyond that.

This is a perfect opportunity to deliver on a coast tram that stops at Ostend Airport and on a train that no longer passes over Antwerp Airport.”

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