

IATA World Air Transport Statistics (WATS)

It was announced from Montreal on 3 August that the International Air Transport Association (IATA) had released the IATA World Air Transport Statistics (WATS) publication with performance figures for 2020 demonstrating the devastating effects on global air transport during that year of the COVID-19 crisis.

The documents indicated that:

- 1.8 billion passengers flew in 2020, a decrease of 60.2% compared to the 4.5 billion who flew in 2019.
- Industry-wide air travel demand (measured in revenue passenger-kilometres, or RPKs) dropped by 65.9% year-on-year.
- International passenger demand (RPKs) decreased by 75.6% compared to the year before.
- Domestic air passenger demand (RPKs) dropped by 48.8% compared to 2019.
- Air connectivity declined by more than half in 2020 with the number of routes connecting airports falling dramatically at the outset of the crisis and was down more than 60% year-on-year in April 2020.
- Total industry passenger revenues fell by 69% to \$189 billion in 2020, and net losses were \$126.4 billion in total.
- The decline in air passengers transported in 2020 was the largest recorded since global RPKs started being tracked around 1950.

Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General commented: *'2020 was a year that we'd all like to forget. But analyzing the performance statistics for the year reveals an amazing story of perseverance.'*

'At the depth of the crisis in April 2020, 66% of the world's commercial air transport fleet was grounded as governments closed borders or imposed strict quarantines. A million jobs disappeared. And industry losses for the year totaled \$126 billion.'

'Many governments recognized aviation's critical contributions and provided financial lifelines and other forms of support. But it was the rapid actions by airlines and the commitment of our people that saw the airline industry through the most difficult year in its history.'