

Brussels Airport closes a strong first half of 2026 with 11.7 million passengers (+3.6%) and 420,000 tonnes of cargo handled (+8.3%)

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During the first half of 2026, Brussels Airport continued to grow in both passenger traffic and cargo activities. This growth was supported by the continued expansion of its route network, with eight new destinations launched, as well as by the ongoing development of its cargo network. These solid results were achieved despite a challenging operating environment. Throughout the first half of the year, Brussels Airport faced several external events, including social actions and the conflict in the Middle East, which affected passenger traffic at the airport.

Passenger traffic up 3.6% in the first half of the year

Despite a difficult context, Brussels Airport maintained its growth momentum throughout the first half of 2026, supported by sustained demand for air travel and the continued development of its route network. In total, 11,684,976 passengers travelled via Brussels Airport, representing an increase of 3.6% compared to the first half of 2025.

Eight new destinations were launched during the first six months of the year, including five long-haul routes. Brussels Airport notably strengthened its connectivity with Asia through the arrival of Air China and the launch of the new route to Chengdu. LATAM also inaugurated the first direct connection between Belgium and South America in more than 25 years with flights to São Paulo, while Brussels Airlines launched a new route to Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. These developments have further strengthened Brussels Airport's international connectivity.

These results were achieved in a particularly challenging environment. The first half of 2026 was marked by several external events that influenced activities at Brussels Airport. On the one hand, the conflict in the Middle East led to the suspension of flights to Tel Aviv, as well as a reduction in flights to the Gulf region. The conflict also affected belly cargo activities.

In addition, Brussels Airport was impacted by two national days of industrial action in March and May, which together affected around 55,000 passengers. The spontaneous strike organised by air traffic service provider skeyes on 2 June also led to the cancellation of all scheduled flights that day, impacting a further 25,000 passengers.

Cargo volumes continue to grow, up 8.3%

During the first half of 2026, Brussels Airport handled nearly 420,000 tonnes of cargo, representing an increase of 8.3% compared to the same period in 2025. This performance confirms Brussels Airport's position as one of Europe's leading cargo gateways and highlights the resilience of its development model, which is built on diversifying both the goods transported and the markets served.

The increase was driven by growth across several cargo segments. Total flown cargo volumes rose by 7%, while the full freighter segment recorded growth of 16.7%. Trucked cargo volumes increased by 16.2%. Belly cargo posted a slight increase of 0.1%. This segment remains the most affected by

the conflict in the Middle East due to the suspension of certain routes and reduced frequencies to several destinations in the region.

The growth in cargo volumes was supported by the continued expansion of the cargo network, as well as by increased frequencies and higher volumes on existing routes. Brussels Airport also continues to invest in the modernisation and optimisation of its cargo zone to sustainably support this growth and respond to the evolving needs of logistics operators.

June 2026: More than 2.2 million passengers (+1.7%)

In June, Brussels Airport welcomed 2,215,965 passengers, an increase of 1.7% compared to the same month last year. This growth was supported in particular by the resumption of flights to Doha from 15 June and the return to normal frequencies to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. June was also marked by the launch of new connections to São Paulo, Kilimanjaro and Halifax, new flights to Kayseri in Turkey operated by TUI fly and increased frequencies to Montréal with Air Transat.

The ten most popular destination countries last month remained broadly unchanged compared to the previous two months: Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, France, the United States and Switzerland. Outbound transfer passengers accounted for 15% of total traffic, an increase compared to June 2025, mainly towards Europe, Africa and North America.

June 2026: Cargo volumes continue their growth trajectory (+12.2%)

Total cargo volumes through Brussels Airport reached 70,895 tonnes in June, representing an increase of 12.2% compared to the same period last year. Flown cargo grew by 8%, driven in particular by continued growth in the full freighter segment (+16.5%), while trucked cargo volumes increased by 42.4%. After a slight decrease in May, belly cargo rose by 12.2%. Only the integrator segment recorded a slight decrease of 0.5%.

The main import regions remain Asia and North America, with North America recording the strongest growth. Africa saw a slight decline in imports. These three regions also remain the main export markets, with North America showing modest growth.

June 2026: Slight decrease in commercial flight movements (-0.1%)

Brussels Airport recorded a 0.1% decrease in the number of commercial flight movements compared to June 2025. While passenger flights increased by 1.9%, cargo flights declined by 4.9%. Passenger load factors remained stable, with an average of 146 passengers per flight.

<https://pressroom.brusselsairport.be/brussels-airport-closes-a-strong-first-half-of-2026-with-117-million-passengers-36-and-420000-tonnes-of-cargo-handled-83>