

Strong passenger traffic growth continues in April - ACI

By **Hibah Noor** on August, 7 2018 | Industry News



“Domestic traffic was the major contributor to global growth in April with international traffic slowing,” says ACI World Director General Angela Gittens

Global passenger traffic growth remained strong in April with a 6.1% increase on a year-over-year basis, just below its 12-months rolling average of 6.5%, Airports Council International (ACI) World has reported.

Although growth in passenger traffic remains robust, the month of April marked a slight departure from the recent months’ high growth levels mainly due to the timing of this year’s Easter period.

“While passenger traffic has continued to follow the strong growth trend already established in 2018, we have seen the growth of freight volumes showing some signs of recovery from earlier in the year,” said Angela Gittens, ACI World Director General.

“Breaking with a general trend observed over the last year, domestic traffic was the major contributor to global growth in April with international traffic slowing.

Passenger traffic analysis

The global figure for domestic traffic reached 7.1% year-over-year for the month, bringing its year-to-date to 6.2%.

International passenger traffic moderated to 4.9% for April, from 10.5% in March.

In terms of total passenger traffic, Asia Pacific and Africa both benefited from high growth, with 9.9% and 9.0%, respectively, on a year-on-year basis.

Most major Asia Pacific markets posted solid growth during the period, with India leading the group, growing by 20.4% year-on-year.

The country has recently been growing at a particularly fast rate, its 12-months rolling average now standing at 16%, from 14.3% in March.

New Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International Airport’s sustained growth brought its year-on-year figure to +16.8% in April.

Bangalore’s Kempegowda International Airport’s passenger traffic grew at 46.1% during the same period, with its year-to-date figure reaching more than 30.%.

The expansion was mostly driven by the airport’s domestic market, which represented 86.5% of its traffic in April.

Indonesia and China also reached double-digit growth in April, with 13.5% and 11.8%, respectively. Korea and Japan followed fairly closely, posting 9.2% and 7.0%, respectively.

In Africa, Nigeria continued the recovery started in the second half of 2017, posting 36% year-on-year growth in April. The country has been fast reclaiming the ground lost during its economic crisis, with its year-to-date reaching 33.% and 12-months rolling average at 10.7%, and increasing.

In Northern Africa, both Egypt and Morocco posted solid figures, reaching 13.3% and 9.6%, respectively. Also recovering from a period of crisis, Egypt's 12-months rolling average reached 16.0% in April.

Europe and North America's passenger markets both grew at 5.0% year-over-year in April. Unequal growth patterns re-emerged in Europe, with several major markets such as Spain (2.8%), France (0.8%) and Germany (0.4%) posting subdued figures.

These results were affected by the timing of Easter 2017, which came relatively late and boosted April figures last year. Following that trend, and against a backdrop of particularly difficult European Union exit negotiations, the UK posted -1.6% for the month on a year-over-year basis, with London Heathrow and Gatwick declining by 2.2% and 1.4%, respectively.

Europe's peripheral markets continued their expansion, however, with countries such as Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, and Finland all growing by double-digit figures on both a year-on-year basis and year-to-date basis.

Turkey and the Russian Federation also continued their recovery, with 14.2% and 11.6%, respectively, on a year-on-year basis.

North America's passenger market was supported by the US's robust domestic segment in April, which reached +5.5% from +4.4% in March on a year-on-year basis.

Latin America-Caribbean grew at 3.0% on a year-on-year basis during the period, with Mexico and Argentina experiencing relatively robust growth (8.8% and 6.9%, respectively) despite complex

internal situations.

Chile, although having benefited from a strong Q1 2018, saw a decline in April, posting -0.8%. The country's year-to-date numbers were still strong, standing at +12.0%.

The Middle East posted traffic declines for the month of April, reaching -2.4% on a year-on-year basis. The region's passenger traffic has been suffering from ongoing political crises affecting a number of countries, slowly bringing its growth trend downward.

The Qatar diplomatic crisis, which started on June 5, 2017, is still ongoing, dragging on the traffic flows of most countries on the Arabian Peninsula. The region's year-to-date figures for total passengers reached 0.3% in April, and the slowdown is set to continue through the end of Q2.