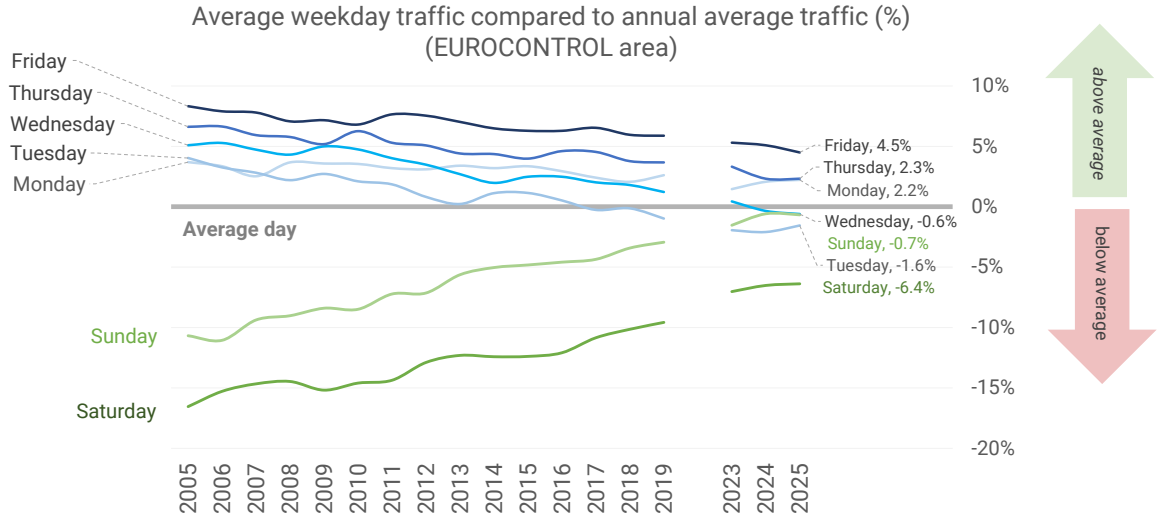
# EUROCONTROL Data Snapshot

*From business peaks to leisure balance: Shifting weekday flight patterns*

**17 November 2025**




Weekday vs. overall daily IFR flight averages in the EUROCONTROL area, based on January to October data each year.

An analysis of the average number of flights by day of the week reveals that Europe's air traffic patterns have undergone a notable structural shift over the past two decades: the gap between average daily flights on weekdays (blue lines) and on weekends (green lines) has narrowed notably over time.

Historically, weekday flight volumes were considerably higher, reflecting the traditional Monday-to-Friday business travel pattern, with Fridays typically recording the highest traffic levels. Over time, however, the gap between weekday and weekend activity has steadily narrowed - a trend that began even before the COVID-19 pandemic, and has continued in recent years.

Several interconnected factors have driven this shift. The rapid expansion of low-cost carriers during the 2010s, coupled with increasingly competitive fares, have made air travel accessible to a broader market and fuelled strong growth in short-haul and weekend travel. Travellers have also started to take more frequent, shorter leisure trips instead of the traditional long annual holiday, reflecting changing lifestyle preferences and varying disposable income levels.

The rise of online booking platforms has also played a role, as dynamic pricing and greater schedule transparency prompted passengers to travel on weekends when fares were lower or capacity was available. In response, airlines and airports enhanced weekend connectivity, optimised aircraft utilisation throughout the week, and expanded services targeting leisure-oriented demand.

By 2020, these factors had already begun to narrow the weekday-weekend gap, resulting in a more balanced weekly demand profile. The massive disruption to travel caused by the pandemic, along with the widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work, would further amplify this transformation, with travellers increasingly opting to travel on non-traditional days as travel recovered. At the same time, business travel has declined significantly, as the virtual meetings that replaced all in-person interactions during the pandemic continued to be heavily used as the pandemic receded, further eroding the sharp weekday peaks that once defined the traditional business travel cycle.

By 2025, Sundays were already showing higher traffic levels than Tuesdays, highlighting the continuing shift toward a more balanced weekly demand profile across Europe. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years. However, it should be underlined that weekly demand patterns do vary significantly by regions and per country, with traditional holiday destinations conversely experiencing markedly higher traffic on weekends than on weekdays.

Technical bits: *In this analysis, "traffic" or "flights" refer to flights operating under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). The analysis compares weekday IFR flight averages in the EUROCONTROL area with the overall daily average for each year, based on data from January to October for consistency.*

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