EUROCONTROL Data Snapshot

Flying further, heavier, and higher: What 2025 data reveals about Europe's average flight

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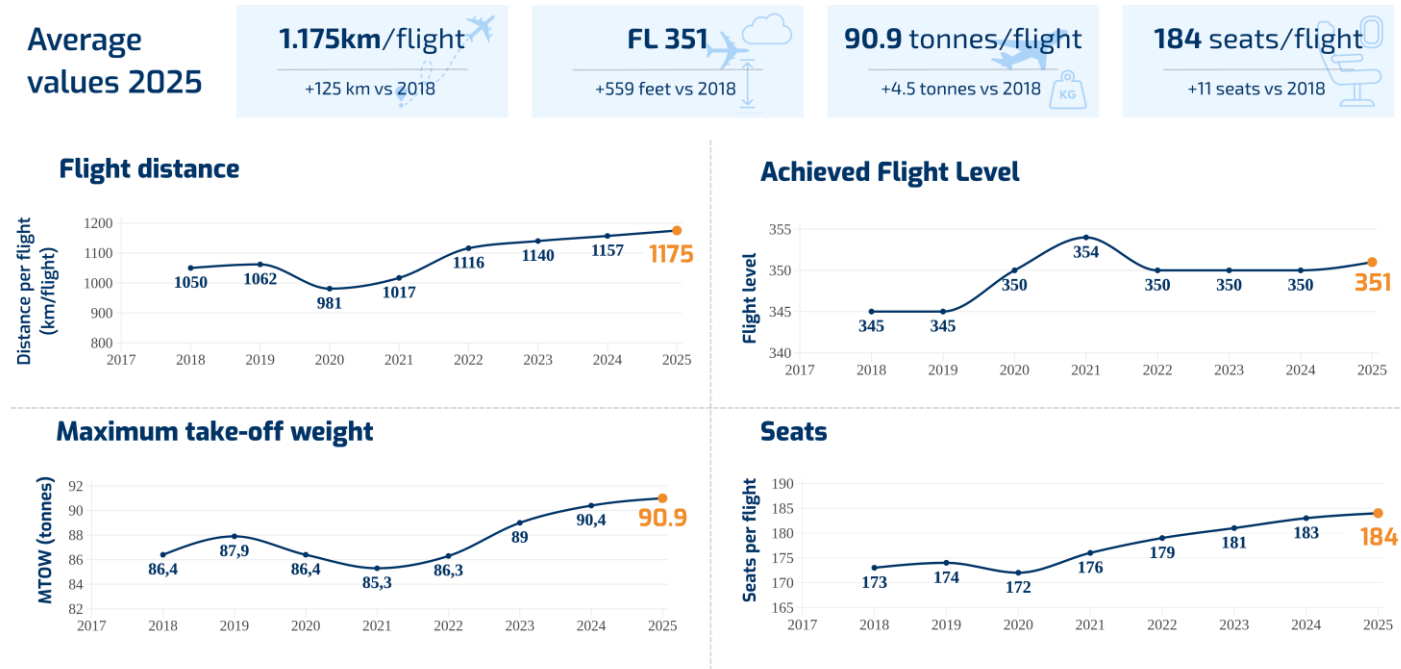

Last year's data snapshot #54 and 2024's data snapshot #46 provided insights into the average IFR flight in the EUROCONTROL area. With the addition of 2025 data, what new aviation trends can we discern?

The average distance per flight in the EUROCONTROL Network Manager (NM) area has risen by 18 km compared to 2024 – reaching **1,175 km** in 2025. Flights passed through an average of 3.7 countries in the NM area, with nearly one-third crossing French airspace. This continues the upward trend observed since 2018.

In terms of fleet mix, there has been a consistent decline in the share of regional jets (from 9% in 2018 to 6% in 2025), which reflects a reduction in regional and domestic (short-haul) flights. Environmental factors and the higher cost per available seat kilometre (CASK) for short-haul flights compared to medium/long-haul flights have contributed to this trend, with their share decreasing from 64% to 58% over the same period.

In 2025, the average maximum take-off weight (MTOW) was **90.9 tonnes**, an increase of 0.5 tonnes compared with 2024 and 4.5 tonnes compared with 2018. The two most common types of aircraft flown in the EUROCONTROL area throughout the 2018-2025 period have consistently been the Boeing 737-800 and the Airbus A320, both narrow-body aircraft with MTOWs between 70-80 tonnes.

The increase in average weight reflects a shift from commuter aircraft and regional jets (17% to 12% of traffic between 2018 and 2025) towards more efficient narrow and wide-body aircraft (69% to 74%). In 2025, the Airbus321neo (MTOW: 97 tonnes) was the fourth most common aircraft type, marking the first appearance of the highest MTOW aircraft in the top four over the eight-year period.

The average flight level (FL) has largely stabilised after 2021, when reduced traffic and fewer flow management measures led to the highest average FL. It is noticeable, however, that it slightly increased to **FL 351** in 2025. The slight change could be attributed to changes in the fleet mix, with commuter aircraft and regional jets typically reaching lower maximum altitudes than narrow-body and wide-body aircraft.

Unsurprisingly, the average number of seats per flight has also been increasing since 2018, reaching **184** seats per flight in 2025, up by one seat from 2024. With the increasing average MTOW and newer aircraft offering more cabin flexibility, airlines are able to provide more seats per aircraft more cost-effectively.

Technical bits: Average of the maximum flight level achieved in the month of July calculated considering only flights above FL200. Average seats calculated by excluding military, cargo, business aviation and 'other' market segments. The reported flight distance represents the distance flown within the NM area; the total flight distance is therefore greater than or equal to this value.

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