European ATC delays are up 133%

OPSGROUP Team
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> **In Short:** European ATC delays are on the increase, caused by staffing and capacity shortages. Monitor the **Network Operations Portal** and be flexible in your routing options if bad weather or capacity constraints are expected.

It’s been a great few days on a sun-soaked Mediterranean island. Your passengers are onboard, you are about to close the door, and then you get told your Calculated Take Off Time (CTOT) is an hour from now! Sound familiar? You’re not alone! ?

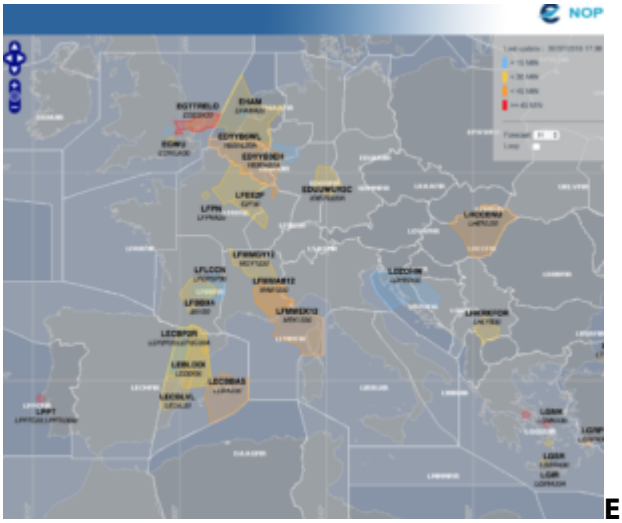
European air travel this summer is surging and about to hit maximum intensity. Problem is, the ATC system doesn’t seem to be coping, and the misery of long flight delays keeps getting worse.

Delays are up

IATA has **recently reported** the following:

*"Data from Eurocontrol shows that in the first half of 2018, Air Traffic Management (ATM) delays more than doubled to 47,000 minutes per day, **133%** more than in the same period last year. **Most of these delays are caused by staffing and capacity shortages** as well as other causes such as weather delays **and disruptive events such as strikes**. The average delay for flights delayed by air traffic control limitations reached 20 minutes in July, with the longest delay reaching 337 minutes."*

As an operator, you may be used to seeing alerts like these daily:



EDYY (Maastricht)

Several sectors regulated due to Airspace Management and ATC Staffing/Capacity.

Moderate to high delays.

LFMM (Marseille)

Several sectors regulated due to ATC Capacity/Staffing.

Moderate to high delays.

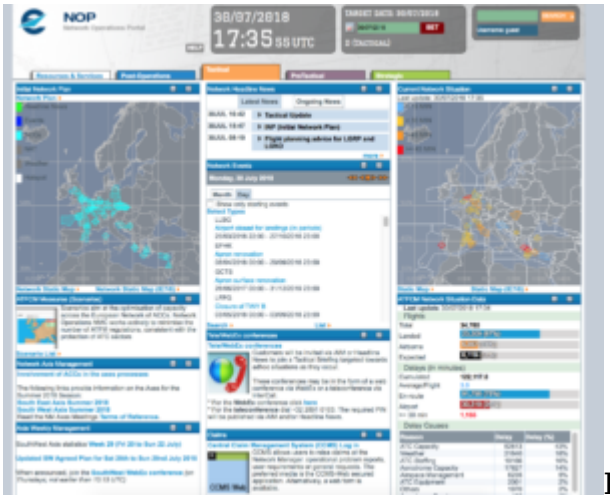
So is it a story of too many planes and not enough airspace (capacity) or just not enough

controllers (staffing)?

Local airlines are not impressed. **Ryanair took to twitter** this week calling the delays "unjustified".

In a unusually **aggressive statement** IATA commented that *"key ANSPs in Europe have not made needed investments in their businesses, preferring instead to make super-normal profits."*

Some of the things we recommend to keep on top of expected delays

- 

Review the **Network Operations Portal** regularly – This will assist in making operational planning decisions based on the current delays and capacity restrictions. Also keep an eye on the **NOC tactical briefing** for the following day which may also assist.
- **Avoid** the **early morning rush** of departures if you can (**0900z**).
- Be **flexible** in your **routing options** if bad weather or capacity constraints are expected.
- **Discuss** with **the local FBO** for latest on-ground situation to better plan arrival and departure.
- **Monitor Opsgroup** – members are always posting the latest information on recent airport and overflight experiences. Not yet a member? **Go here!**
- **Subscribe** to our **Daily Brief** to get all the latest info on ATC strikes, Airport closures, and everything else causing delays.

Got any tips or tricks on how to avoid or minimise most of these delays? Is there certain bit of airspace, airports or a time of day you've found that works best? **Let us know!**

Extra Reading:

- **European Air Traffic Control Delays Loom over Summer Air Travel** (IATA)
- **Europe's ATM Is Still Struggling With Capacity**
- **European airlines call on Brussels to prevent airspace 'meltdown'**
- **Flight delays in Europe are surging this year**