

France switches to 'ATC by Notam' only

Mark Zee
17 February, 2020



In a move that industry analysts have declared 'revolutionary', France has flipped the table on the provision of Air Traffic Control services.

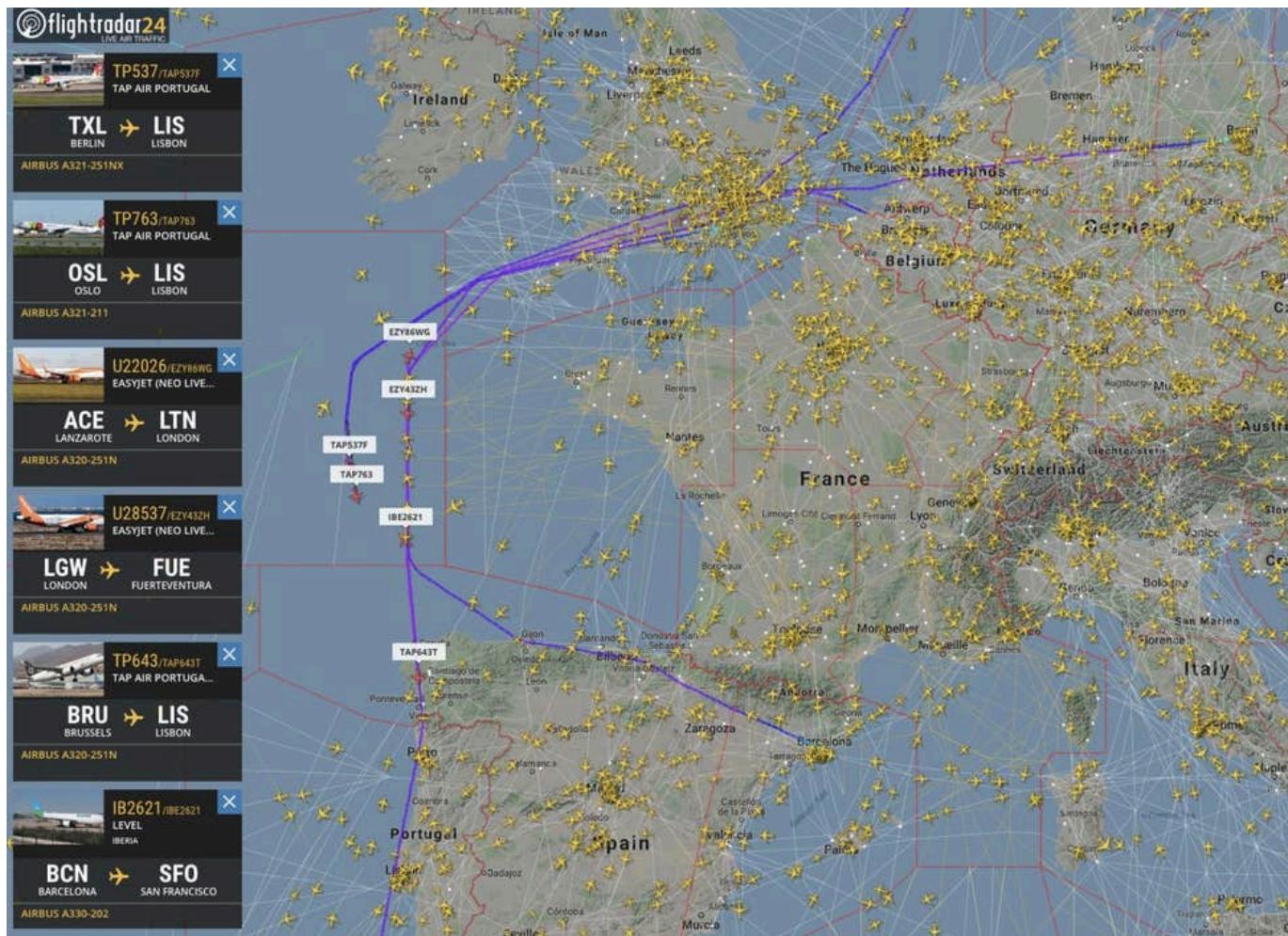
With a new guide published on the topic, instead of issuing Strike Notams, France will now **'activate ATC service' by Notam only**, on specific dates.

When ATC is available in French airspace, and when airports are running normally, France will issue an A-series Notam with the specific wording '*Warning: Full ATC service available*'. Officials have been tight-lipped on when the first day of routine French service can be expected in 2020.

Speaking after the decision made in Paris earlier this month, a DGAC spokeswoman told us "We're unhappy that France is only responsible for about 30% of the delays in European airspace over the last 15 years. Although commendable, **we can only be truly proud** of a number in excess of 50%, to ensure we retain the #1 spot for years to come."

Adjoining ATC Centers have applauded the move, saying that the new system will bring an end to the endless Eurocontrol NOP warnings about French strikes. "It's a much more sensible system", said a Eurocontrol Network Manager staffer in Brussels. "With this new method, we only have to occasionally highlight a Notam that is issued when French airspace is operating normally. We anticipate this being a rare occurrence, so the workload for us is much lower and more manageable."

Airlines too have welcomed the new plan. "**We really enjoy the banana routes**", said a pilot at Easyjet. "Too often these days we get long, straight, direct clearances from these boring, efficient controllers in Shannon, London, Maastricht, and Madrid. That means you're just following a magenta line several hundred miles into the distance, and it's so dull. With the French closures, we get to see parts of Europe we normally don't. Extreme Flight Planning is fun. And there's much more time to relax in the cockpit."



Extreme Flight Paths – The Independent

Shanwick, too, are enjoying the extra traffic on the Tango Routes between Ireland, the UK, and Spain. A controller in the Oceanic Center at Prestwick told us, “It’s not like the North Atlantic is busy these days. Year on year we’ve seen declining traffic, there’s so few aircraft crossing east to west, so this additional boost from the French shutdowns is really a positive for Shanwick. The Tango routes are keeping us nice and busy, and the controllers here are thrilled.”

Speaking during a fuel stop in South Sudan, a Ryanair First Officer highlighted the positives of the French reroutes. “I mean, this is Africa, it’s wonderful! Who would have thought that a Stansted – Zurich flight could be such an adventure. Everyone here in Juba has been so welcoming.”

Algerian and Tunisian tourism agencies have also added to the support for the new French move, seeing an increase in travel to their countries, after passengers have experienced the beauty of their coastlines from FL350 during the reroutes around France.

Others however, are more cautious.

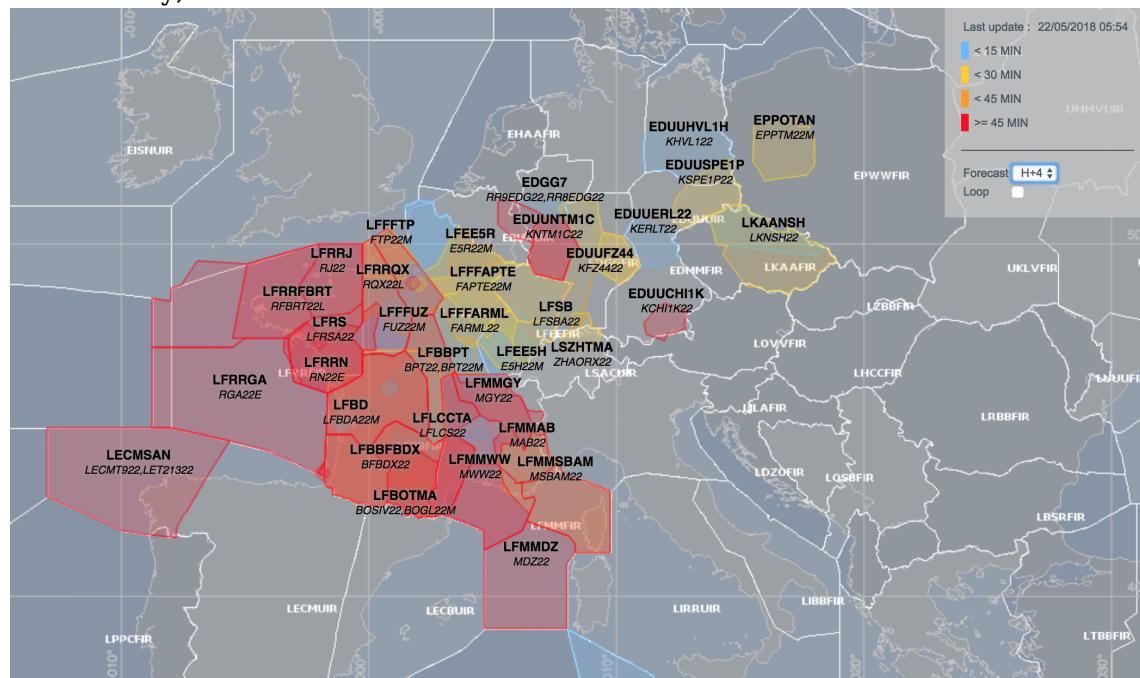
Representatives from Greece and Turkey are concerned about the additional strain on the Notam system, with the upcoming annual Notam Battle scheduled for late February. “Historically, we have reserved the right to use the Notam system for our border disputes. It’s essential that these can continue, and we would urge the French authorities to keep the text of these new Notams to a minimum, and keep the AFTN lines clear so we can use them.”

With so few days of routine French ATC service, we think Greece and Turkey don’t need to worry.

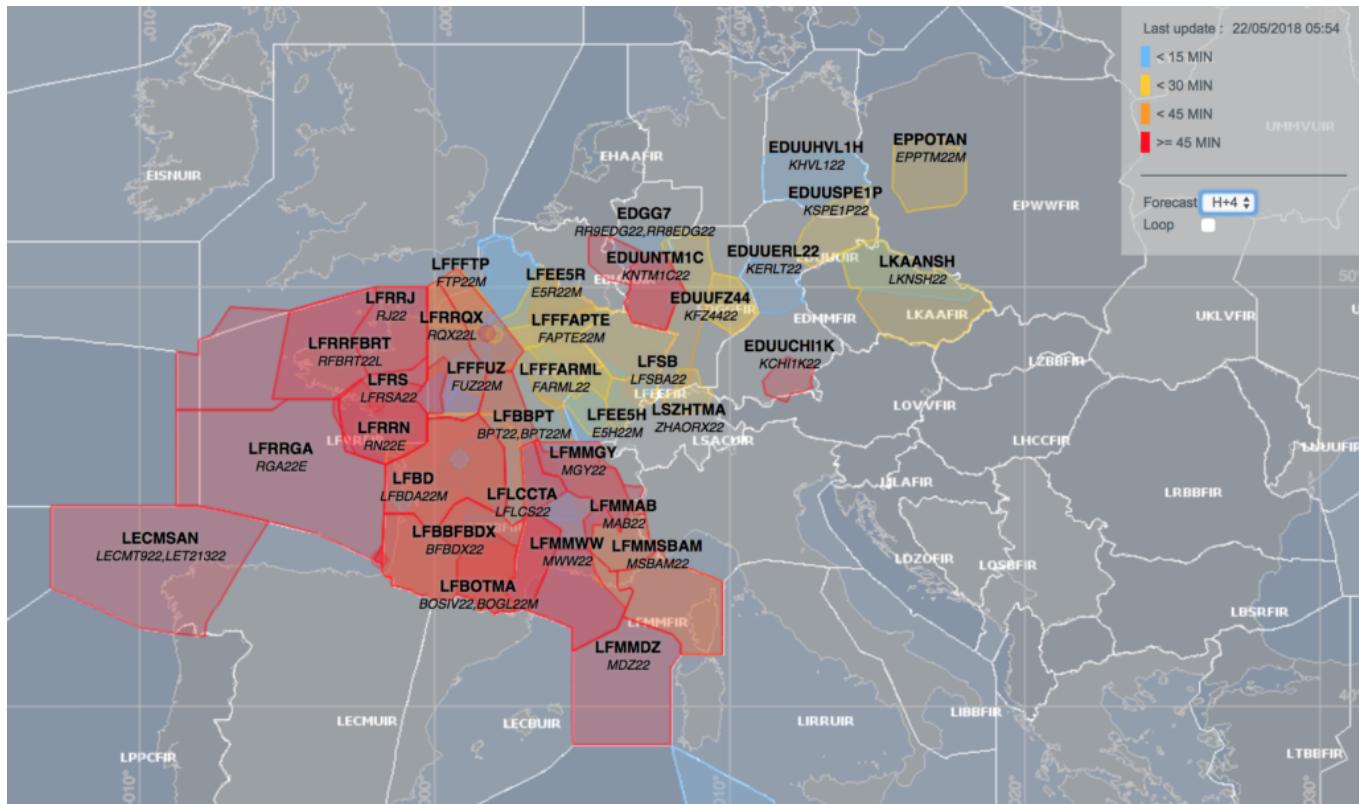
TL;DR: All joking aside, we're getting another French ATC strike on Thursday 20th Feb - this will be the tenth French ATC strike since they started having them pretty much every week at the start of Dec 2019. You probably know the drill by now, but if not, check out this post on how to survive a French ATC strike!

French ATC strike 22 May - this one's looking bad

Declan Selleck
17 February, 2020



Impact from todays ATC French strike is looking worse than usual.



As things stand at 0600Z, there are a total of **400,000 delay minutes** attributed to ATC Industrial Action in the ATC system for Europe, an average of 20 minutes for every flight in Europe. That average is calculated for all 22,000 aircraft that will operate today in Europe, so assuming at most 2000 flights would operate through French airspace, it works out at around **220 minutes delay** for every aircraft. And yep, finishing off the maths, that's about **4 hours**.

Those figures are pretty fluid because the good people at NM (CFMU) work really hard to reroute flights around the worst of it, but it's safe to say, if you are operating in, over, near, or thinking about France today, you will have a pretty decent delay.

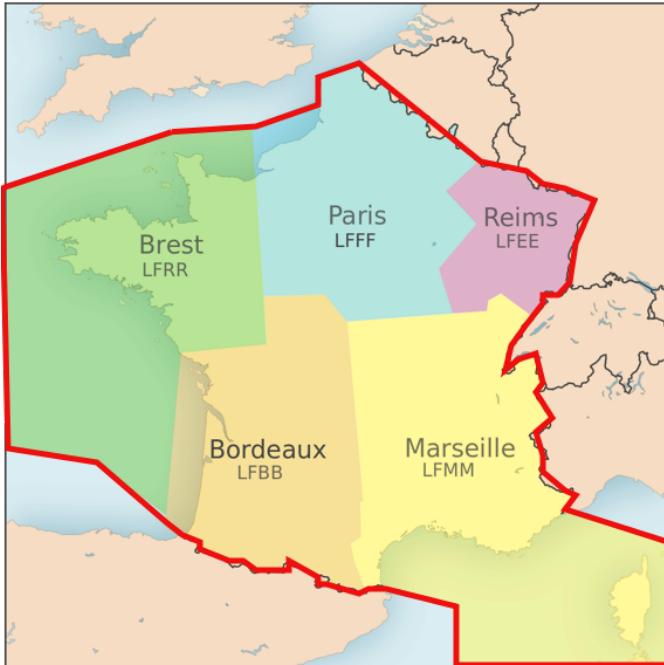
See below for the best places to get updates on todays strike.

Further reading:

- FSB: How to survive a French ATC strike
- Eurocontrol NOP
- French ATC page with updates
- Mitigation action document – specific to the May 22 strike.

French ATC strike updates

Declan Selleck
17 February, 2020



Several ATC unions have called for a national strike, affecting French airports and airspace from Monday evening at 1700UTC (Oct 9) through Wednesday at 0400UTC (Oct 11).

All FIRs are experiencing high delays.

Impact expected to the FIR's per current (10OCT) information are as follows:

LFRR/Brest Experiencing high delays

LFFF/Paris All sectors experiencing delays with highest delays in the west. Situation is starting to show signs of improvement.

LFEE/Reims All sectors experiencing delays with highest delays in the East and North

LFBB/Bordeaux Some high delays and with no ease forseen

LFMM/Marseille High delays all around. Regulations will be in place until a least 2359UTC

The following routes are available:

Tango 9 Global and Tango 213 Global, UM30 and UZ180 are fully available.
T9 is still dealing with a lot of delays.

Airports:

LFPG/Paris DeGaulle and LFPO/Paris Orly are experiencing delays and there is a 30% capacity reduction in both airports plus at the following airports:

LFOB/Beauvais, LFLL/Lyon, LFML/Marseille, LFMN/Nice, LFBO/Toulouse and LFRS/Nantes
LFSB/Basel - unconfirmed as of yet but may be used as an alternate

LFPB /Paris-Le Bourget will not be affected.

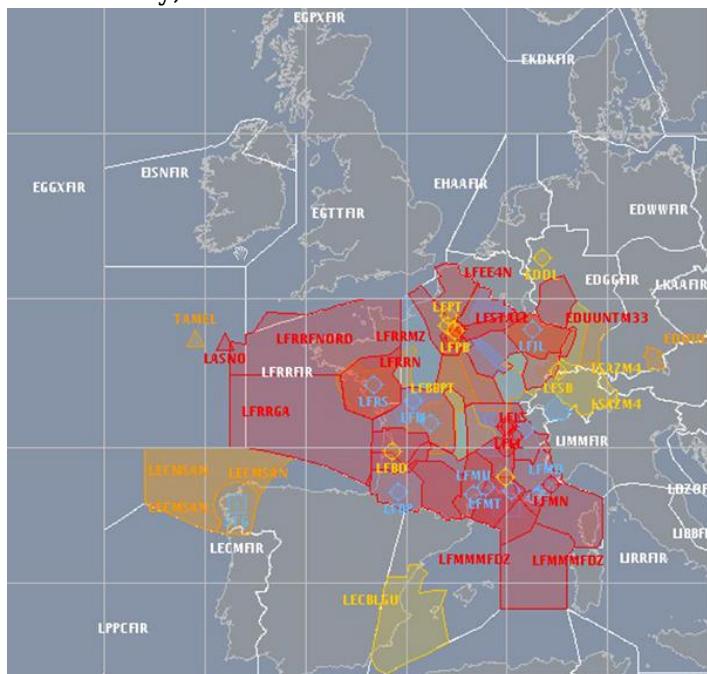
Expect high impact. Ops over or to France are best avoided today.

We will continue to post any further information here as soon as received.

French ATC strike this weekend - Number 8

Declan Selleck

17 February, 2020



Notification has been given by French ATC Unions of a **Three Day Strike** this coming weekend from Friday-Monday, starting at 0400Z Friday 03JUN. This is Strike number 8 this year, and if it goes ahead, promises to be a disruptive one.

As with all previous strikes, reroutes if you are overflying will be important.

Highlights:

Reroutes via Tunisia, Algeria

Tunisia and Algeria regularly open up their airspace to reroutes during French ATC action – and will likely do so again for this strike.

- Tunisia (DTTC FIR): Overflight permit **is** required (AFTN direct **DTTVYAYX**)
- Algeria (DAAA FIR): Overflight permit **not** required during this strike but copy FPL to DAAAZOZX and DTTCZOZX

Reroutes via Shanwick Airspace

Read our earlier post on this: <https://ops.group/blog/the-three-sisters-shanwicks-tango-routes/>