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## Airfreight demand up 12 per cent

Global air cargo demand up 12 per cent in April compared to pre-Covid levels, says IATA



**T**he International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released April 2021 data for global air cargo markets showing that air cargo demand continued to outperform pre-Covid levels (April 2019) with demand up 12 per cent.

Global demand, measured in cargo tonne-kilometers (CTKs), was up 12 per cent compared to April 2019 and 7.8 per cent compared to March 2021. Seasonally adjusted demand is now 5 per cent higher than the pre-crisis August 2018 peak, IATA said.

The strong performance was led by North American carriers contributing 7.5 percentage points to the 12 per cent growth rate in April. Airlines in all other regions except for Latin America also supported the growth.

Capacity remains 9.7 per cent below pre-Covid-19 levels (April 2019) due to the ongoing grounding

of passenger aircraft. Airlines continue to use dedicated freighters to plug the lack of available belly capacity, IATA said.

International capacity from dedicated freighters rose 26.2 per cent in April 2021 compared to the same month in 2019, while belly-cargo capacity dropped by 38.5 per cent.

Underlying economic conditions and favourable supply chain dynamics remain supportive for air cargo, according to IATA: global trade rose 4.2 per cent in March; and competitiveness against sea shipping has improved.

Air cargo rates have stabilised since reaching a peak in April 2020, while shipping container rates have remain relatively high in comparison, the association said. Meanwhile, longer supplier delivery times as economic activity ramps up make the speed of air cargo an advantage by recovering

some of the time lost in the production process.

“Air cargo continues to be the good news story for the air transport sector,” said Willie Walsh, IATA’s director general. “Demand is up 12 per cent on pre-crisis levels and yields are solid. Some regions are outperforming the global trend, most notably carriers in North America, the Middle East and Africa. Strong air cargo performance, however, is not universal. The recovery for carriers in the Latin American region, for example, is stalled.”

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