

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Wednesday, January 6th 2021

### **Ostend-Bruges Airport cargo results more than doubled in 2020**

**Ostend Airport ends 2020 with excellent cargo results. The traded volume increased by 112.7% last year to 52,659 tonnes. The number of passengers decreased by 75.6% to 111,499 due to the effects of the coronavirus. The airport looks optimistically at the new year and is convinced that the regional airport can create a safe environment for its passengers.**

#### **Passenger figures**

2020 started promisingly for Ostend Airport. With 42,000 passengers in the first two months of the year, our airport did 11% better than in the same period the year before. However, in March we were confronted with a different reality. The coronavirus caused all passenger flights to be temporarily suspended between mid-March and early July. After a good preparation and strict precautions, the first flight to Palma De Mallorca in Spain departed on July 3th. The restart of the flights led to a modest recovery due to a limited summer program. Just under 40,000 passengers travelled via Ostend Airport in July and August to top destinations in Spain, the Canary Islands and Greece. In addition, there were flights to Turkey that were only available for passengers with Turkish passports.

From August onwards, the number of travel restrictions increased again, which again had an impact on the flight schedule. TUI Fly therefore decided to suspend flights from September 10<sup>th</sup> until the autumn holidays. During this holiday, flights were temporarily offered again to the top destination Alicante.

On an annual basis, the airport ends 2020 with 111,499 passengers. This is 75.6% less than the 457,423 passengers our airport welcomed in 2019. Despite the corona crisis, the occupancy rate for destinations such as Alicante, Malaga and Tenerife was very high.

#### **Safe travel environment**

We are ready as an airport and are convinced that travelers can travel safely and relaxed via our airport. The airport has invested heavily in safe and efficient procedures in the recent months. The regional nature of our airport ensures that only few flights depart at the same time. In this way, there are a limited number of passengers in the airport building and the distance can be ensured at any time. This allows the airport to create an extra safe environment for its passengers.

#### **Freight/Cargo**

Freight transport via Ostend Airport ended 2020 with a strong result. The traded volume increased by 112.7% to 52,659 tonnes. (24,757 in 2019) This is the best result since 2013. We also saw the number of flights increase by 133% compared to 2019.

During the first lockdown there was a lot of demand for extra cargo flights. Part of the worldwide increase in cargo flights also found its way to Ostend Airport. For example, Magma and Qatar Airways operated flights on Ostend and fixed value Egyptair significantly expanded its flights. The goods transported related to medical equipment, food and e-commerce. In the months that followed the first lockdown, some airlines such as Qatar Airways decided to continue flying on Ostend. This allowed growth to continue and made that the annual figures more than doubled compared to 2019.

### **Cargo assets**

The proximity of our airport to two seaports, the easy accessible mobility network around the airport and our good location for distribution within northern Europe but also the UK are great assets. On top of that, there is sufficient available capacity for hands at our airport, we are open 24/7 and there are no slots or restrictions. One by one assets that make our airport an extremely attractive airport.

The airport continues to invest in the cargo segment. For this purpose, the airport has an agreement with the Belgian construction company Versluys group to further develop the cargo infrastructure at Apron 1. These works will normally start in 2021 and should support further growth.

### **Business Flights**

The business flights through our General Aviation Terminal, operated by North Sea Aviation Center (NSAC), held up well despite the corona crisis. We note a 7% decrease in the number of movements compared to 2019. We note that the business flights via NSAC have quickly resumed and are again approaching the level of 2019.

### **2021**

The airport looks optimistically towards 2021. For example, we expect TUI Fly to resume this spring. The destination Murcia will also be launched. Furthermore, we are also looking to restart the successful connection with Moscow in the summer season. Furthermore, we hope to develop freight transport and the associated infrastructure in 2021. In addition, we expect further growth and development of general aviation through NSAC.

Pictures: <https://we.tl/t-T2ra4UItVM>