

will take more time and be slower than expected. Domestic markets may see the start of an upturn in demand in the third quarter. International markets, however, will be slower to resume as it appears likely that governments will retain these travel restrictions longer. The upward trend in the international market is expected to begin in the last quarter of the year at the earliest.

It was noted that airlines could burn through US\$ 61 billion in cash reserves in the second quarter alone and that puts 25 million jobs at risk that are dependent on aviation.

According to IATA, the crisis will lead to various consolidations on the airline side and will they have to layoff airline staff. Aircraft manufacturers will also seriously suffer from the crisis due to the order delays and cancellations.

The global airlines association also reiterated the call that governments should step in immediately, as the average airline has enough money to cover its fixed costs only for up to two months. With the emphasis that there is an increasing liquidity crisis in air transport, countries affected by COVID-19 now represent 94 percent of the global air transport market. With daily travel restrictions and the closing of borders, the market demand for air travel fell to critically low levels.

Alexandre de Juniac: “Like a war, COVID-19 has Brought Death and Economic Devastation.”



We have never seen a downturn this deep before. In our latest scenario, full year passenger revenues plummet 55% compared to 2019, while traffic falls 48%. In other words, half our business disappears. That’s catastrophic.

That impact is then amplified throughout the economy. If airlines lose one job, another 24 disappear somewhere in the value chain. That was behind our analysis last week when we said that some 25 million jobs are at risk.

That is also why we continue to ask governments to make the viability of airlines a priority. In the last week we have seen governments in Belgium and Sweden respond with relief measures. We know that several others are considering such steps. I encourage them to move quickly. This industry will run out of cash soon, so support of any kind will be a lifeline. These include:

- Direct financial aid
- Loans, loan guarantees and support for the corporate bond market by governments or central banks; and
- Tax relief

Turning to the lifting of mobility restrictions, there has been some positive news in Europe where a few governments have seen progress against the disease improve to the point where they are beginning to re-open their economies. We can all be encouraged by this.

I must point out, however, that the easing of lockdown measures, as far as we have seen, does not include a

re-start for aviation. And, individual country decisions cannot enable the restoration of international air services when other markets remain closed.

Furthermore, China and South Korea--countries which have been successful in controlling the disease within their own borders-- are now doubling down on international travel restrictions because they don’t want to risk importing a second outbreak.

Governments re-opening their economies must have confidence that the disease is also under control in the countries they do business with. Otherwise they are not going to make travel easy or convenient.

Passengers—business or leisure—will also need to have their confidence restored.

- They won’t return to travel until they feel personally safe in doing so.
- They will need to have confidence that their travel will not be interrupted by the disease or by quarantine restrictions,
- And they must have confidence in the economic situation.

I don’t underestimate the challenges that are ahead. The keys to success, however, are well-known in the aviation world—cooperation and harmonization.

Successive unilateral actions by states can shut down aviation as we have seen. But unilateral actions cannot restart aviation. Governments must work with each other and together with the industry.

I emphasized that in a presentation to the ICAO Council last week. And this is the main idea driving the regional meetings with governments and stakeholders that we are planning to begin next week.

There is much more to learn about COVID-19. So, we don’t expect to see immediate re-start solutions from our efforts. What is important, however, is that we have the best minds in the world focusing together on solving the challenges that COVID-19 has brought to the global air transport system.

This week we are reminded of the precedent for industry and government cooperation in the face of enormous challenges. The Chicago Convention was signed and ICAO was founded by governments in December 1944. With that, the regulatory framework for the post-war system for global air transport was created, even as World War II raged.

A few months later, airlines joined together to help governments in turning that framework into the industry that we have today. IATA was founded on 19 April 1945. That’s 75 years ago this week.

That’s very similar to the call to action we have today. Like a war, COVID-19 has brought death and economic devastation. And even though the end-game for COVID-19 is not yet clearly visible, it is absolutely clear that we must work and plan for it together.



Air Tahiti Nui - Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

The epidemic also brought out a truth about the industry: The high profitability situation in the industry over the past decade covered around 30 small airline groups and investor companies; It was once again seen that a majority of airlines were very fragile in structure.

Although the current decline in oil prices is expected to cushion the industry up to \$US 30 billion annually, revenue losses due to the crisis are much higher. It is thought that the protection steps taken to prevent the further spread of the pandemic, which is especially prominent in Europe, will further delay the positive effects that oil prices may provide.

EU261 changed

The European Commission decided to classify Covid-19 as "extraordinary conditions" under the EU passenger rights regulation EU261. This

means that airlines will not have to pay compensation for travel restrictions and canceled flights and delays due to coronavirus!

The European Commission announced that the temporary suspension date of 80-20 "use it or lose it" rule was postponed until the end of October 2020.

US bans all flights from Europe!

While the outbreak spread rapidly in Europe, especially in Italy and Spain, it raised anxiety within the US administration. US President Trump said that they have implemented very strict measures, citing the increase in the number of cases in European Union countries because of fact that they were late in implementing outbreak response measures.

Travel between 26 European countries and the US has been

suspended for 30 days. The US President's statement came after the WHO's official declaration of a global pandemic.

Within the scope of this restriction which entered into force on Friday, March 13th at 23:59pm, flights to the US from 26 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) were suspended. The UK and Turkey were excluded from the travel ban. In addition, cargo flights are exempt from the European ban.

Trump's ban changed the record for the longest flight!

Trump's decision to ban flights from the

European Union to the USA for 30 days due to the coronavirus caused the world's longest flight record to change.

Air Tahiti Nui operated flights between Papeete, the capital of French Polynesia and Paris, with a San Francisco transfer until last week. After the ban, the decision was made on March 15th to make the flight non-stop. The 15,715 km flight was carried out with a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft and took 16 hours and 20 minutes. The world's longest commercial flight record was broken on this flight. Moreover, since the departure and arrival points are French land, this is technically accepted as a domestic flight.

The maximum range of the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft is 13,950 km. During this record flight, the plane was below full load and passenger capacity. In addition, the dominant winds blowing in the east helped the flight to be completed successfully. Therefore, it is not possible to make the return of flight with the Dreamliner.

The current longest commercial flight in the world was the distance flown between Singapore and Newark, which I have had the chance to experience. This distance record has now been improved by 321 km.

Aircraft being grounded, leased aircraft being returned!

Airlines across the world are reducing or suspending their flights to minimize losses due to low demand. Airbus A380 and the Boeing 747 are likely to become the first aircraft casualties of the ongoing global crisis as the airline industry continues to shrink by the worldwide lockdown.

Airlines are expected to switch to flying fewer, smaller aircraft – with the infection said to have accelerated the demise of the world's largest passenger planes. These are the relatively new Airbus A380 and the Boeing 747-400. We probably will never see a passenger 747 flying again and see only A380s of Emirates in the near future.

On March,8, German flagship carrier Lufthansa grounded at least 150 aircraft and reduced flight operations by 50%. 14 Airbus A380s in the fleet are amongst those grounded. As from March 23, around 700 of Lufthansa Group's 763 Aircrafts are temporarily grounded.

The company management applied for Kurzarbeit, which involves the government offsetting wages lost when



Lufthansa Groups Aircrafts has temporarily grounded for a while.

companies are forced to temporarily halt activities.

One of the countries most affected by the outbreak has been South Korea. Korean Air, the national airline of South Korea, one of the top 5 countries where all airlines have stopped their flights completely (others are China, Italy, Iran and Iraq), grounded 90 aircraft in its fleet, including 10 Airbus A380s. Korean Air expects that the flights will become normalized soon. If the situation persists for a longer period, the company's senior management is concerned that they may reach the threshold where the airline cannot guarantee its survival. The airline runs its cargo operations with passenger aircraft to diversify cargo routes and reduce aircraft parking fees.

LOT Polish Airlines, the national airline of Poland, announced in January that it will buy Condor Airlines

prior to the outbreak spread in Europe. However, it is said that the outbreak will also negatively affect this acquisition and that the Polish Airline will withdraw from this process. The parties will come together for the last time and announce the final decision.

Airlines are taking additional supportive decisions other than canceling flights and grounding aircraft to proceed with less damage. For example, they are returning leased aircraft in their fleet even while the lease period was still active. In addition, projects for fleet renewal and aircraft retirement, which are planned to be realized in the long term, are being brought forward. For example, American Airlines will retire 16 Boeing 767s in its fleet by the end of May and 34 Boeing 757s in the fleet will be retired by the end of the 2021 summer season.

Irish-based budget airline Ryanair has decided to ground the majority of the 450 Boeing 737-800 aircraft in its fleet and largely suspend their flights.

The three global alliances - StarAlliance, SkyTeam and OneWorld – jointly called for government aid to support this extraordinary situation.

Air France-KLM Group has decided to reduce flight operations by 70-90% and ground all Boeing 747 and Airbus A380 aircraft in the fleet.

American Airlines suspended nearly all long-haul international flights after Trump's flight ban decision.

The Singapore Airlines Group canceled 96% of its full capacity by the end of April. 138 of 147 aircraft in the Singapore Airlines and Silkair fleet have been grounded. Of the group's low-cost brand Scoot, only 2 of the 49 planes are

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flying! Singapore Airlines canceled all Singapore-Istanbul flights in April 2020.

Singapore Changi Airport, which is one of the most important transfer centers, closed its doors to all transit passengers on Tuesday, March 24.

In line with the new decision taken by the UAE administration, the country's 4 airlines, Emirates, Etihad, FlyDubai and Air Arabia have grounded all aircraft in their fleet and stopped all flights, including transit, for at least 2 weeks. It was the first time in the history of this country!

Australia's flagship carrier, Qantas, have attempted to "survive" like all airlines because of the negative impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the global economy. The airline postponed the decisions to be announced for the "Sunrise Project" until the end of March 2020 and 12 orders planned for the Airbus A350-1000 for the project.

Australian Qantas and the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines conducted their last commercial flights with the iconic jumbo jet Boeing 747-400 also known as the Queen of the Skies. Both airlines had included the first 747 to their fleet in 1971. Both airlines were planning to retire Boeing 747s from their fleets in 2021.

József Váradi, CEO of Budapest-based Wizz Air, one of Europe's largest low-cost airlines, stated that they would like to turn the crisis into an opportunity by expressing its commitment to stand by the aircraft delivery programs. It was announced that in 2020, the delivery of 15 new Airbus aircraft would be taken over and would be included in the fleet as per the order schedule.

Vietnamese airline VietJet has taken an interesting step: They decided to pay £7,300 to passengers if they catch coronavirus after flying with them between 23 March and 30 June 2020. Domestic flights will also be covered.

Qatar Airways, unlike other airlines, has announced that it will add 10,000 extra seats to its flight network.

Having decided to make extra flights from Doha to Paris, Perth and Dublin, it flies the A380 aircraft in its fleet to Frankfurt, London Heathrow and Perth. It also provides charter flight services from the US and Asia to Europe. The airline has also started flying to Brisbane for the first time in its history. Unlike other airlines in the world, Qatar Airways still flies to 75 destinations, with a daily average of 150 flights, including the US. On 6 May, according to the latest official statement of Qatar Airways that plans to grow its network back to over 50 destinations resuming services to cities such as Manila, Amman, and Nairobi in end of May. A further number of destinations are planned to be added by the end of June.

Doha has become an important transit hub after the major hubs such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Singapore Changi and Hong Kong closed their doors to all transit passengers.

A strong PR strategy such as creating a positive perception of the global consumer and increasing passenger loyalty during the pandemic period is also thought to be a strategy behind the decision of Qatar Airways to continue its flights. The airline's activities on social media with hashtags like #takingyouhome are considered as the most important sign of this strategy during this process. Qatari flag carrier Qatar Airways has carried over one million people home since mid-February as part of the repatriation flights during ongoing



Pandemic crisis. The airline has also transported over 70,000 tons of medical equipment and aid relief worldwide.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought back an earlier practice in the aviation industry. The UK announced that it is preparing to deploy flight attendants who have medical training in hospitals to be built for the fight against Covid-19 outbreak. Then, similar practices started to be implemented in many countries and airlines. These were the first flight attendants in history who were also nurses!

British Airways has suspended work for 36,000 of its workers as unpaid leave. An application was made to fund 80 percent of wages by the government's job retention scheme.

The UK-based easyJet, one of the world's largest low-cost airlines, has decided to ground its entire fleet of aircraft due to unprecedented travel restrictions.

Lufthansa, the flag carrier of Germany has decided to downsize its fleet due to the ongoing Coronavirus crisis. The airline removed 6 x Airbus A380; 7 x Airbus A340-600; 5 x Boeing 747-400; 11 x A320 at Lufthansa; and 10 x A320 at Eurowings. Also, it was decided to close Germanwings, one of the subsidiaries of the group.

Etihad started testing the new technological



self-service device called Elenium at Abu Dhabi Airport, which can monitor passengers' temperature, heart rate and respiratory rate. Thanks to the new technology, passengers with potential symptoms of illness, especially Coronavirus, can be identified at the beginning of travel.

Dubai-based Emirates, by breaking new ground among airline companies, started testing passengers for Covid-19 before flights. Blood tests are conducted in coordination with the Dubai Health Authority and results are available within 10 minutes.

Canadian WestJet, which has grounded three-quarters of its fleet, announced that it would lay off 1,700 pilots due to Covid-19.

The British low-cost airline easyJet CEO said that they would keep middle seats empty to follow

physical distancing rules once Coronavirus travel restrictions are lifted. Ryanair CEO stated that the airline would not fly if it was forced to keep middle seats empty.

Russian national flagship carrier Aeroflot announced that it has suspended all international flights until August.

Portuguese charter airline Hi Fly flew 12,338 kilometers in 16 hours with the Airbus A340-300 between Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, and Melbourne, Australia, and broke the A340's longest flight record. 128 of the 217 passengers in the record flight were Corona positive.

The funding request of South African Airways (SAA) at an amount of R10 billion was rejected at the beginning of the month and SAA announced that it had to liquidate most of its assets for debts and severance payments.

The company, which has taken action to terminate the contracts of all its employees by the end of the month, is expected to go bankrupt.

Emirates announced that scheduled flights would not resume until the beginning of July.

Norwegian Air announced that 4,700 pilots and crew members were laid off and its Swedish and Danish subsidiaries filed for bankruptcy.

Airbus and Boeing take position for the crisis

Airbus management announced some measures to support its financial position in the light of the economic difficulties caused by the global outbreak on March 23. The measures included a loan mechanism of 15 billion Euros (\$ 16.1 billion), the withdrawal of

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the 2019 dividend offer and the suspension of pension funds. Airbus has also announced that the previously set targets for 2020 will be revised. Production continues partially due to the fact that personnel have to maintain social distance and work programs have been loosened in all Airbus plants in France and Spain.

American manufacturer Boeing negotiated with the US administration for a \$ 60 billion financial aid package to secure itself and its suppliers. A liquidity injection is believed to help the group survive and to keep the supply chain afloat if airline companies delay or cancel aircraft deliveries.

The delay in deliveries of airline orders are occurring because airline companies want to maintain their own cash balance, and this has increased pressure on Boeing, which is already in a deadlock due to the 737 MAX crisis. Boeing also joined the US airlines' call

to Congress and the White House to save themselves. Boeing made a \$ 60 billion request from the U.S. government. This was said to be requested in the form of government-backed loans, but it is also said that they want some grants that do not need to be repaid.

Boeing management said that most of this money will be transferred to the supply chain. The commercial aviation industry employs about 536,000 workers in the US. To prevent some

small suppliers from having to leave the system, President Donald Trump said, "We have to help Boeing."

However, if Boeing is given the amount demanded as a loan, it is expected that the company's total debt will reach 100 billion dollars. In the short term, the company has a liquidity concern; How to deal with such a huge debt burden is a big question mark.

Boeing also announced that production in the Puget

Sound region in Washington State was stopped for 14 days. (March 25th.)

Boeing closed its South Carolina plants where the 787 Dreamliner is produced, until further notice. The employees were given paid leave for 10 days, but the next stage is uncertain for now.

European manufacturer Airbus partially restarted production and assembly activities in France and Spain on March 23rd after a four-day shutdown for health concerns over Coronavirus. The production activities in the wing plants at Filton and Broughton in the UK and at Bremen in Germany were suspended for 3 weeks.

On March 29th the Spanish Government decided to halt activities that are not fundamental throughout the country. For this reason, the European manufacturer Airbus stopped most of the



production at its plants in Spain. However, Airbus produces face shields that provide personal protection to healthcare personnel in the fight against Covid-19 with more than 20 3D printers in its plants. The German side of Airbus announced that they have also become involved in this project.

Production activities at the facility in Mobile, Alabama in the US, where Airbus manufactures the A220 and A320, have been temporarily paused.

Due to airlines seeking to defer deliveries, it was decided to significantly reduce production in the A320 family and A350 aircraft. Negotiations with the suppliers continue. There will be delays also in the A321XLR program. It will produce forty A320s, two A330s and six A350s per month.

Airbus has shelved plans to establish a new production line in Toulouse for the final assembly of the A321neo aircraft due to reduced demand caused by the pandemic. This means that the production growth that has been going on for 8 years for Airbus' best-selling narrow body aircraft family has reversed.

Airbus has also postponed its plan to ramp up of its A220 production from four to ten planes per month in Canada's Mirabel facilities until mid-2021.



The first victim of the outbreak is Flybe

For giant global airlines with sound financial standing, reducing capacity and grounding aircraft is a strategy used in order to cope with such a crucial crisis. However, this and other similar crises will not hesitate to polish off airlines with vulnerabilities.

Founded in 1979, the UK-based and Europe's largest independent regional airline, Flybe canceled all its flights and filed for bankruptcy. The airline, which has been striving to overcome its financial problems for a long time, was faced with a dramatic end after the UK government refused to lend £100 million.

The airline, which was unable to overcome funding challenges, became the first airline to terminate operations as a result of the severe impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, which also continues to affect the entire world.

Financial incentive decision from the Chinese government to airlines

The Chinese Ministry of Finance and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) have taken action to provide financial support to airlines that have suffered greatly because of the COVID-19 outbreak affecting the entire world. Direct cash incentives will be applied until June 30, 2020 in order to enable domestic and foreign airlines to continue their operations to or from China.

The amount of incentives to be given to airlines that do not halt or have resumed their international flights to China during the epidemic was as follows: 0.0176 yuan per seat kilometer for the co-operated air routes, and 0.0528 yuan per seat kilometer if the route is covered by a sole airline.

Rules for stopping ghost flights are loosened

With the Coronavirus/ COVID-19 outbreak that has paralyzed and brought air traffic to a halt all over the world, a new concept has emerged: "Ghost Flight".

In order not to lose slots on certain routes, the flights of airline companies that do not have even a single passenger onboard are called ghost flights. Airlines face the risk of losing their 'slots' at airports if they fail to perform their operations, adhering to 80% of the scheduled and determined flight schedules within a flight year.

One of the most noteworthy examples was the British Airways flight between London and Cardiff in the past few days, which had no passengers. As the airline

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did not want to risk losing the slot worth nearly £ 2 million at Heathrow Airport, it conducted the flight, albeit empty!

The European Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) decided to waive rules that led airlines to make `ghost flights` in order to ease the impact of the outbreak on the economy. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that the rule described as `use it or lose it` will be temporarily waived. Airlines felt relieved on this decision. Flight rules were previously suspended during the September 11 attacks, the SARS outbreak and the 2008 financial crisis. Underneath the `use it or lose it` rule, there lies a fairness objective which



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provides a chance for relatively smaller airlines to have equal operating conditions when operating alongside major airlines at the most demanded giant airports.

What is the latest status in Turkey?

The Turkish aviation industry has also suffered greatly from the devastating effects of the outbreak.

In addition to the suspension of flights to/from China as of February 3, 2020, flights to/from Iran on February 24 and South Korea, Iraq and Italy on March 1 were suspended. Following the spread of virus in mainland Europe, all flights to a total of 9 more European countries (Germany, France, Spain, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Sweden and the Netherlands) were also suspended. Minister Turhan (former Minister) announced that flights to were suspended until April 17 beginning from March 14, 2020, 08:00am. It was also stated that this period could be extended or brought forward.

On March 16, flights to Switzerland, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates were also suspended.

Another Turkish company, Corendon, has decided to stop its flights until April 17.

Turkish Airlines has delayed the delivery of the first Airbus A350 to be added to its fleet.

Turkish Airlines announced that it will stop all international flights as of March 27th apart from the Hong Kong, Moscow, New York, Washington and Addis Ababa.

Turkey added 46 more flights to countries to the



list of stopped flights on March 21st as a protective measure against the effects of the virus. The current list of countries where flights are stopped: Kuwait, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, Ukraine, Kosovo, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Oman, Slovenia, Moldova, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Canada, India, Hungary, Guatemala, Poland, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Philippines, Latvia, Taiwan, Peru, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Niger, Tunisia, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Finland, Angola, Czechia, Dominican, Cameroon, Montenegro, Colombia, North Macedonia, Mauritania, Nepal, Portugal and Panama.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that all scheduled international flights have been stopped effective as from midnight on March 27, 2020. Domestic flights were subject to the local authorities' approval. Cargo flights were excluded.

It was decided upon to conduct domestic flights to Samsun, Trabzon, Erzurum, Van, Diyarbakır, Malatya, Gaziantep, Kayseri, Konya, Adana, Antalya and Izmir over Istanbul and Ankara only by Turkish Airlines. The first flight after the decision was made from Istanbul to Ankara and Samsun. All flights were conducted with half the passenger capacity, at most, to maintain social distance. Passengers were seated by leaving at least one empty seat between them.

After the first announcement made by the President, Turkish Airlines announced that ticket sales and online check-in via its website and mobile application were suspended until April 17, 2020. However, with a new statement, it was announced that the period was extended to May 1st.

Such a decision has resulted in the grounding of all aircraft in the fleets of airlines conducting scheduled flights such as Pegasus, Sun Express, Onur Air



viruses through a passenger in the cabin was simulated.

Are aircraft infected?

Airline companies claim that they are continually disinfecting their aircraft and 99.97% of all viruses have been neutralized through HEPA filters in ventilation systems. Therefore, they all agree that the risk of virus infection on the plane is much lower than in any other indoor environment.

However, the situation does not seem as innocent as the airlines claim! The humidity of the air we breathe in the aircraft is around 10%. This causes mucus in our throat and nose, which is our body's first line of defense, to dry out. In a sense, our defense system becomes weakened in this type of environment. It creates an ideal breeding ground for microbes to take hold of our bodies and to spread.

Planes contain thousands of microbes not only because of the dry, unhealthy circulating air in the cabin, but also due to the surfaces such as tray tables and lavatory fixtures that we touch.

Researchers from Emory University, Georgia Institute of Technology and Boeing conducted 10 different test flights, ranging between 3.5 and 5 hours, to analyze the risks of infection that can be transmitted directly by droplets.

In this case study the risk of infection via passenger movement was tracked through an iPad app. The spread of

As a result, it turned out that there are two main factors influencing the risk of infection on the plane: How often passengers interact with each other and how often they leave their seats.

Analyses showed that those who travel in the front and back seats of a diseased passenger on the plane are 80% more likely to become infected. Fortunately, the risk of infection for other passengers was observed to be only 3%.

The study also measured the possible effects of an infected flight attendant on board. The results were as predicted. It was seen that the presence of a sick flight attendant on board put many more passengers at risk, because the flight attendant continually moves on the aircraft and interacts with a lot of passengers. The flight attendant was, so to speak, disseminating the disease.

Another remarkable result derived from the study was that people sitting in window seats and not leaving their seats during the flight were less at risk. Therefore, if you are going to travel by plane these days, perhaps the first thing you need to do to protect yourself against virus exposure is to take a window seat and complete the flight without leaving your seat if it is a short distance flight.



and charter flights such as Corendon, Tailwind and Free Bird.

Sabiha Gökçen, Dalaman and Bodrum Airports were also closed.

Following the announcement made by President Erdogan on April 3rd regarding the entry and exit ban to/from 30 big cities and Zonguldak, domestic flights were completely stopped.

President Erdogan announced on April 6th that Atatürk Airport and Sancaktepe Military Airport will be converted into 1,000-bed hospitals.

Pegasus Airlines announced on April 13th that it has canceled all its flights between 1st of May 2020 and 15th of May 2020 in line with the additional precautions to combat Covid-19.

Turkish Airlines announced on April 14th that all domestic flights have been cancelled until May 1, 2020, and all international flights until May 20, 2020.

SunExpress started cargo operations with passenger aircraft. Passenger cabins of 18 Boeing 737-800s in the fleet have been arranged to maximize capacity. Planes are now able to carry a maximum load of up to 21,700 kg.

On the verge of recession, share buyback process started

The dramatic plunge continues in world stock markets and it is said that some stock markets may crash. While the crisis deepens, economies are on the verge of a global recession and new bankruptcies are likely to occur in the aviation industry, which is already in crisis, with a domino effect. Estimates signal that the World GNP will decline by 0.5 to 15%.

As of early March, the revenue loss anticipated in the aviation industry in Turkey is estimated to be US\$ 100-120 million and this amount is expected to

further increase with the persistence of the crisis. Losses are not limited to passenger transportation. Decrease in commercial activities also affects cargo airlines. As a result of a study conducted by the OECD on such negative developments, it has called on governments to delay tax debt payments and to provide liquidity to the markets.

On the other hand, after the sharp decline in the stock values of all companies operating in the aviation industry, it has been observed that the buyback process has started.

The Board of Directors of Turkish Airlines approved the 'Share Buyback Program' on March 9, 2020 to ensure the regain of its own shares. Accordingly, up to TL 1 billion 500 million worth of shares will be repurchased.

TAV Airports also decided to buy back shares on March 12, 2020 up to TL 200 million to demonstrate that they stand behind the company.

How to avoid a virus onboard

Keep your hands away from your eyes, face, and don't touch surfaces that all passengers can touch. Try not to touch seat armrests, tray tables, in-flight entertainment system screens, remote controls, overhead cabinets, toilet doors, in other words, if possible, anything on the plane. If you are sitting next to a sick passenger, try not to position yourself face to face with them, disinfect your hands with wet wipes and special solutions as much as possible. Always wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose during the flight. Never turn off the ventilation above your seat. Gargle with special fluids to help kill germs and keep your throat moist, especially on long flights. To strengthen your immune system, start taking a standard multi-vitamin a few days before your flight. Keep away from the pillows and blankets distributed by the flight attendants and if necessary, bring your own from home in a protective bag. And most importantly, drink plenty of water to make sure you are hydrated throughout the flight in order to boost your immune system.