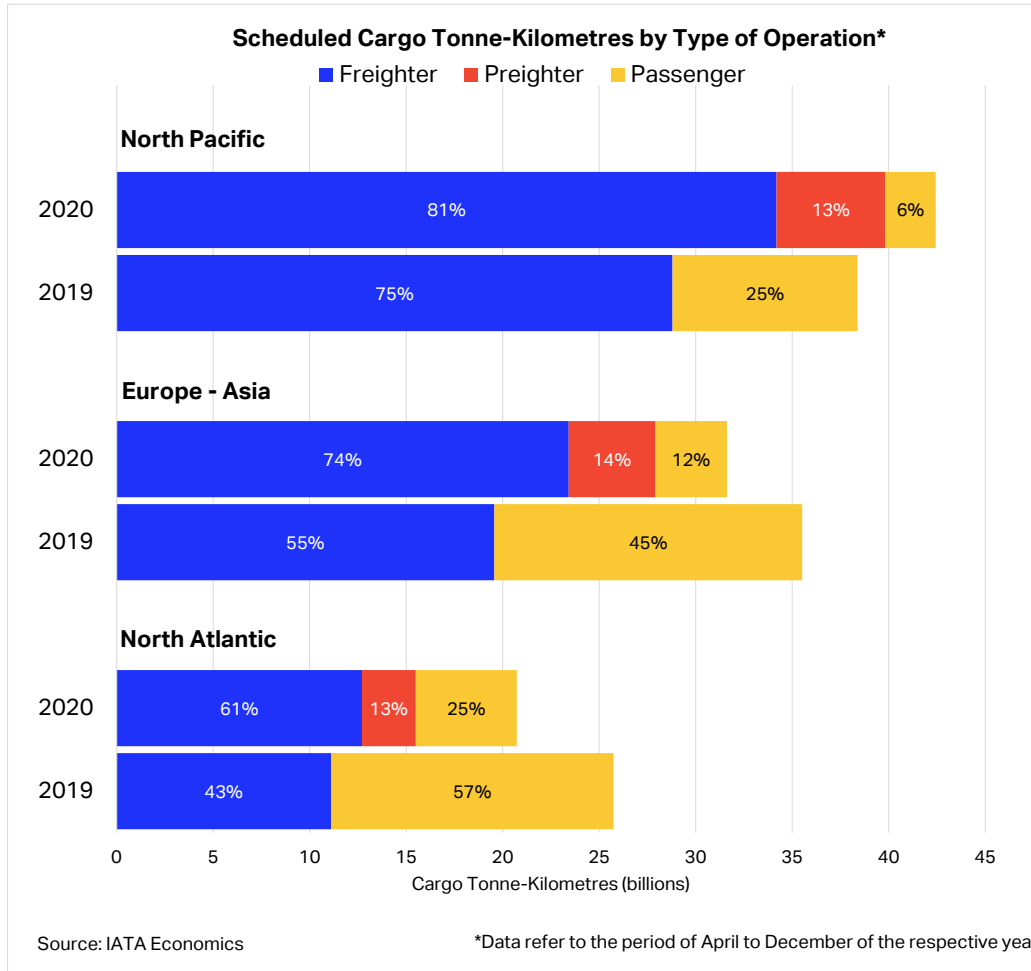




IATA Economics' Chart of the Week

1 April 2021

Freighters and Preighters – The Agility of Airline Cargo Operations



- Since the outbreak of Covid-19, while airline passenger traffic has plummeted, cargo traffic has been proven to be quite resilient serving commerce and industries reliant on the deliveries of critical supplies. Due to the massive drop of cargo belly hold capacity of passenger operations, overall cargo capacity has become a constraint, and cargo yields have been rising accordingly.
- In a response to these cargo capacity constraints, a substantial number of airlines have been able to make use of the otherwise spare capacity of passenger aircraft, using them for cargo-only operations, also referred to as 'preighters'. The majority of preighters have operated with cargo in the belly hold, where the passenger cabin has remained empty, but several airlines even have used the passenger cabin for additional cargo capacity.
- While the largest share of cargo traffic is indeed carried by freighters, which traffic has grown significantly albeit constraint due to lack of additional aircraft, one can observe the welcome additional capacity that the preighters have provided.

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