

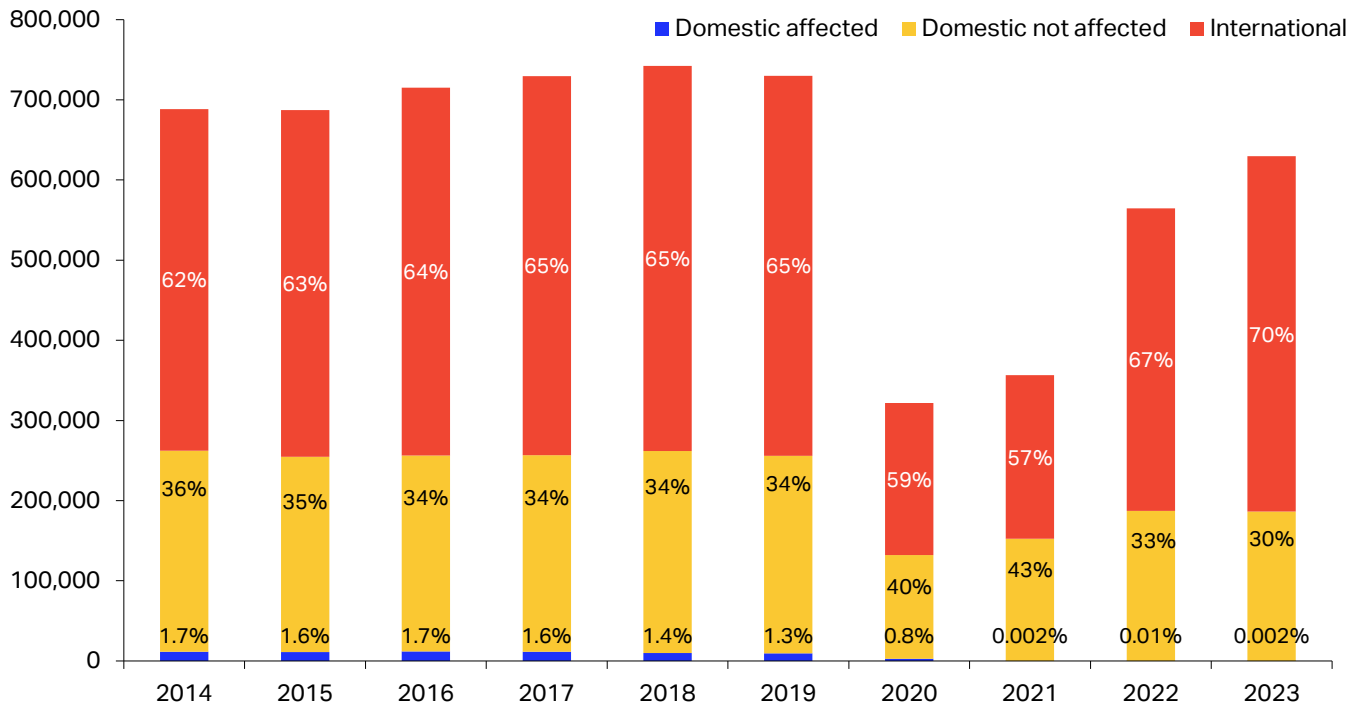


# Chart of the Week

19 January 2024

## French domestic flight bans and carbon emissions reductions

**Number of scheduled flights in France by route (2014-2023)**



Source: IATA Sustainability and Economics, OAG

- In June 2023, France formally introduced a ban on direct domestic flights that could be replaced by a train ride lasting no more than 2 ½ hours. Other countries and many employers have since followed suit. Employers have the freedom to run their companies as they see fit. However, it is a radical departure from the liberal and market-driven economic policies that are usually associated with the free and democratic world for states to determine consumer choice in this way.
- This fact did not escape the scrutiny of the European Commission (EC), which argued it constituted a departure from the right of European air carriers to freely operate intra-EU air services. After further consideration, the EC decided that the measure was appropriate, and France could introduce the ban.
- Before more countries follow suit, the climate impact of the French ban must be understood. The ban concerns only three routes, from Paris-Orly airport to Nantes, Bordeaux, and Lyon. According to the French government, total domestic flights in France generate no more than 4% of the country's CO2 emissions from transportation. As seen in the chart, until the ban was proposed in 2021, the three affected routes accounted for a mere 0.002% of all flights and about 4% of domestic flights in France. Operations were cut already from that year, although the ban was not implemented until 2023. [Le Monde](#) estimated that the ban reduced CO2 emissions from transport in France by 0.12% if fully replaced by zero-emission transportation. However, should passengers instead travel by coach or car, the reduction in net CO2 emissions would be even smaller.
- This contribution to combating climate change and building resilience, the stated objective of the ban, is unjustifiably small with respect to the inconvenience imposed upon travelers on those routes.

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