

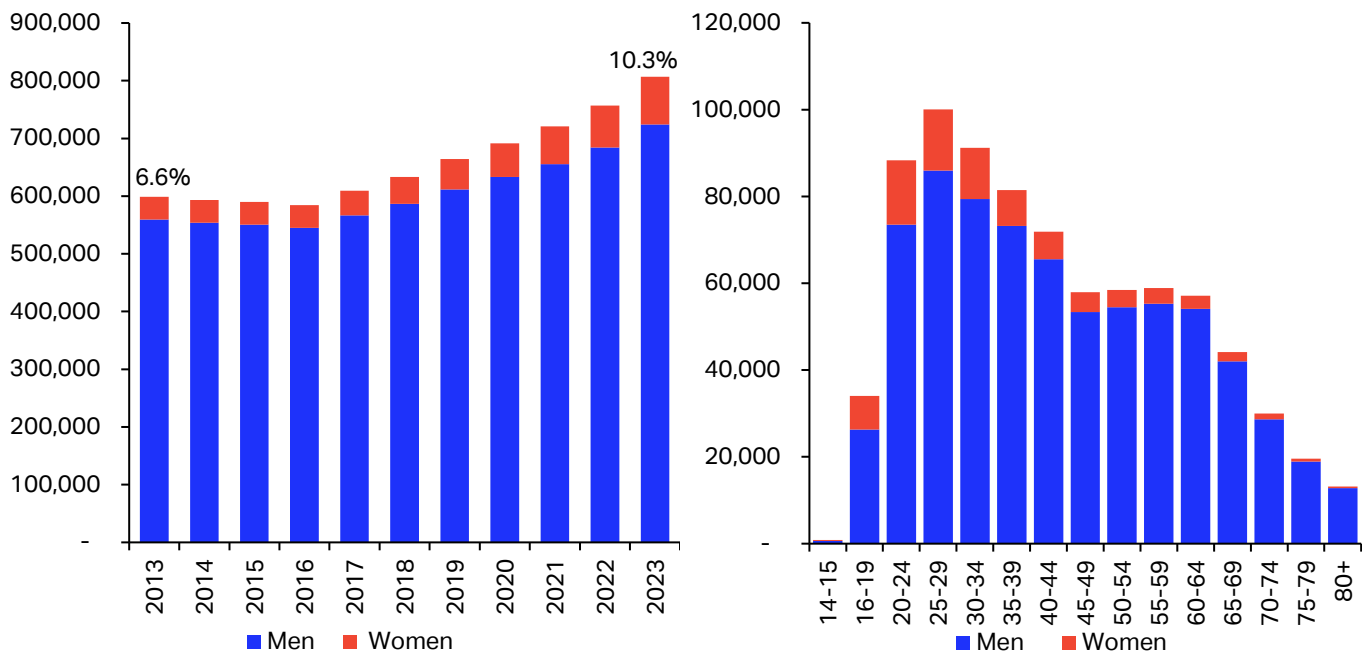


Chart of the Week

8 March 2024

Gender diversity in aviation improving – but more to be done

Number of pilots in the US per year (left), and per age group (2023, right)



Source: IATA Sustainability and Economics, FAA

- The industry’s commitment to improving the gender balance is starting to deliver results. The percentage of active pilot licenses (including student, private, and commercial licenses) held by women in the US increased from 6.6% in 2013 to 10.3% in 2023 (left chart). Importantly, the share has been rising steadily, by up to almost 1.0 percentage point each year, and the overall number of female pilots has doubled over the decade shown, from around 39,000 to nearly 83,000.
- Though low in absolute numbers, the female proportion of the total number of pilots is greatest in the early age cohorts of 14-15 years and 16-19 years (right chart), representing nearly a quarter of the (mostly trainee) pilots in 2023.
- However, the female share of the total steadily declines thereafter, particularly in the prime working years. This includes a significant 6.1 percentage point decline in the share (to 16.8%) in the 20-24 age cohort. The share falls to single-digit levels by 40-44 years (8.9% of the total) and is just 3.5% and 2.7% respectively in the 75-79 and 80 and over age categories.
- Gender representation in other aviation professions lags even further behind. In fact, in 2023 only 3% of all aircraft mechanics certified in the US were female; only 6% of repair staff and just 4% of flight engineers. A slightly better gender balance has already been achieved within the dispatcher category, where 20% in 2023 were female.
- While the progress is encouraging, the airline industry clearly remains a heavily male-dominated sector. More needs to be done to make it an attractive and viable career option for women throughout their working life. Although there is no simple solution to this issue, any such initiatives must span the industry and be undertaken in a conscious and coordinated manner.

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