

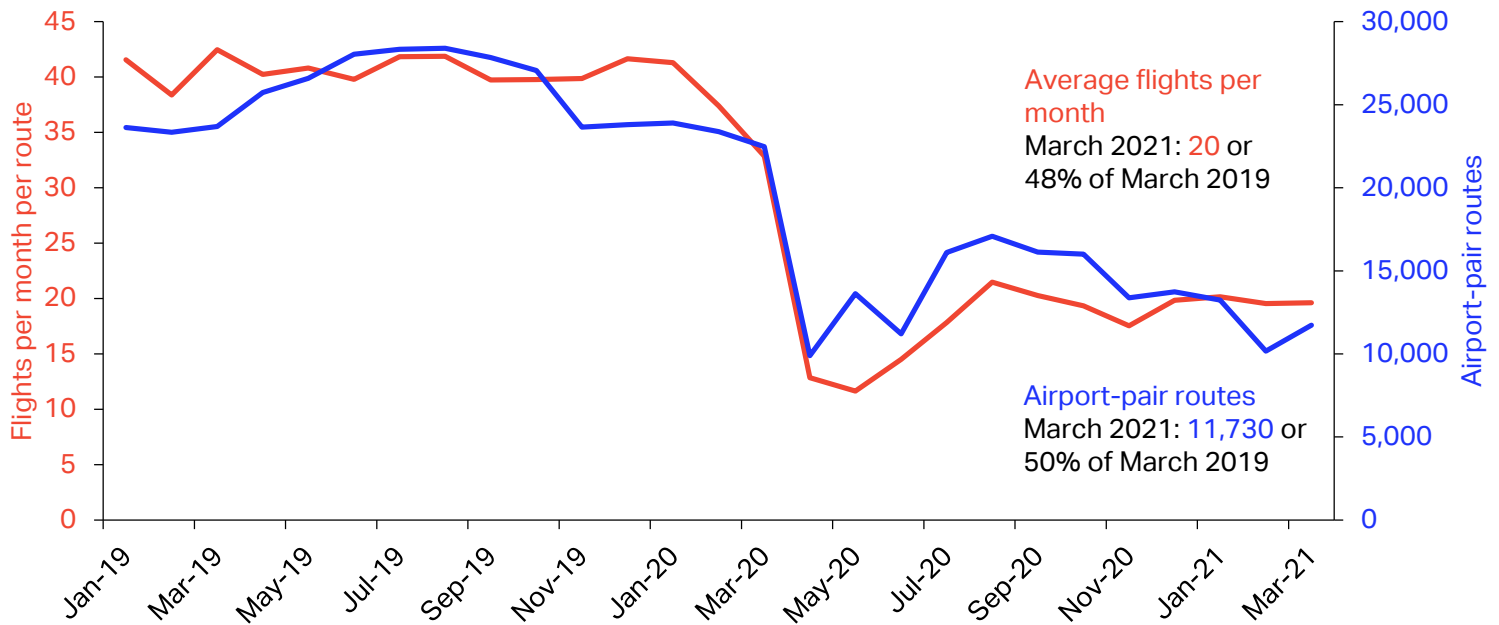


IATA Economics' Chart of the Week

26 March 2021

Lack of air connectivity hampering economic recovery

International airport-pair routes, average flights per month



Source: IATA Economics analysis based on data from SRS Analyzer

- The COVID-19 pandemic has decimated over a decade of gains in air connectivity globally. The number of airport pairs in March was only 50% of the connections existing pre-pandemic in March 2019. The frequency of those services – so important for business travel – was only 48% of pre-pandemic levels. Since these air services connecting cities are the virtual bridges across which flow business travellers, workers and tourists, as well as the supply chain components and international trade carried in the holds of passenger aircraft, the lack of air connectivity will hamper the economic recovery.
- Last summer's partial recovery stagnated after new waves of COVID-19 cases started in October 2020 with variations across regions. Europe went through a dramatic fall in number of routes in February 2021 following the emergence of new COVID19 variants and the ensuing new travel restrictions. Governments in Asia also reacted strongly to the new virus variants where routes continue to remain suppressed. A slight improvement in North America's international air connectivity is driven by a partial recovery of connections to Latin America. Globally, international short haul travel was impacted less and is recovering faster than long-haul in terms of both frequency and number of routes.
- Our previous analysis shows that ingredients to support a strong recovery are there once travel restrictions are lifted: [pent-up demand](#), [vaccination](#) and economic optimism. Restoring [air connectivity](#) facilitates the flow of people, ideas, goods and investment which will be vital for the recovery of modern economies from the effects of the pandemic. The safe lifting of travel restrictions by governments will play a key role in enabling this.

Terms and Conditions for the use of this IATA Economics Report and its contents can be found here: www.iata.org/economics-terms
By using this IATA Economics Report and its contents in any manner, you agree that the IATA Economics Report Terms and Conditions apply to you and agree to abide by them. If you do not accept these Terms and Conditions, do not use this report.

IATA Economics
economics@iata.org