

Sajtóközlemény / Press release

2023 one of the most successful years in Budapest Airport's history

22 January 2024. Despite the numerous challenges it had in store, 2023 was one of the most successful years in the history of Budapest Airport. Passenger traffic exceeded expectations last year, with 14.7 million passengers using Ferenc Liszt International Airport, which means a 91% recovery from the pre-pandemic level. Air cargo volumes reached an unprecedented record, with the BUD Cargo City handling more than 200,000 tons of cargo. Meanwhile, the industry confirmed the airport's progress by upgrading its rating to four stars, and passengers voted Budapest Airport the best airport in Europe and the best airport in Eastern Europe for the tenth time. While awards reflect international perceptions, research results reflect the opinions of Hungarians, but what they have in common is that they all reflect high quality and an outstanding passenger experience.

In the past four years, Budapest Airport has faced the biggest challenges in its history. Despite the global pandemic, international conflicts and the difficult economic situation, 2023 was a successful year for the airport operator in all respects, thanks to the experience, speedy and flexible decisions of management and the owners. Last year, almost all the "symptoms" of COVID were successfully eliminated from the airport's operations, as reflected, among other things, in passenger numbers. Passenger traffic exceeded one million every month since March, i.e. for 10 months; Budapest Airport thus recorded 14 701 080 passengers by the end of the year, and this year, it expects the full recovery of the record number of passengers registered in the year before the pandemic.

Last year, 131 direct flights by 39 airlines were available from Budapest, including four Chinese cities, Beijing, Shanghai, Ningbo and Chongqing, which led to an increase in business travelers, but leisure travelers continue to account for a significant share of traffic. Overall, the number of non-Schengen and Schengen passengers increased by 30% and 15% respectively in 2023. The most popular destinations last year were London and Istanbul. The company's airline development team is continuously working on securing new connections, with the main objectives being to connect South China and India and to re-launch flights to North America.

The volume of air cargo exceeded the previous dream threshold by the end of the year; the 201 306 tons registered represent an increase of 3.8% compared to 2022 and 48.5% compared to 2019. This dynamic development is an outstanding result at international level; the increase of nearly 50% compared to the year before the pandemic is particularly exceptional. Budapest Airport and the BUD Cargo City have thus been able to further strengthen their role as a regional hub, while at the same time, the number of cargo flights has not increased in the last 11 years. This result is due to Hungary's strategic location, Budapest Airport's exceptional cargo infrastructure and the work of the cargo community, as well as the steady growth in integrator traffic, dedicated cargo flights, the cargo transported on the lower decks of direct Chinese passenger flights, which returned last year, and the growth in e-commerce goods from China.

Thanks to the work of the airport community, the facility has been voted the best in Europe, and has won the "Best Airport in Eastern Europe" award for the tenth time. The industry has also acknowledged the development, by awarding the airport four stars for quality, and Budapest Airport has worked all year to maintain and improve this outstanding quality. The high quality of the passenger experience is confirmed by the airport's outstanding performance in international passenger satisfaction surveys in all quarters last year, with overall passenger satisfaction scores consistently above 4 out of 5. Out of the 20 airports surveyed, only three have managed to improve the quality of passenger services compared to 2019, including Budapest, where overall satisfaction increased by eleven percentage points, which is the highest ratio among the airports that took part in the survey. Budapest Airport was rated the best by passengers in the cleanliness of the restrooms, the quality of the Wi-Fi service and entertainment facilities and was ranked fifth in the overall ranking of 20 airports.

Last year, the value of the developments implemented by Budapest Airport in the past 4 years exceeded 100 billion HUF. In 2023, passengers experienced new developments such as the expansion of the self-service baggage drop-off system, the installation of quiet boxes in the terminals and the opening of a new observation and smoking terrace in Terminal 2B. Family-friendly services have been enhanced with new children's play areas, and security screening has been made even more seamless

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with the addition of a queue display system, now available on the website. The baggage reclaim area on the 2A side was expanded by 520 square meters and two new baggage carousels, Terminal Parking has opened with 586 parking spaces and 8 spaces for coaches and the construction of a new airport hotel has commenced. Work has also been going on behind the scenes, with 16 million EUR worth of new asphalt and concrete paving for several taxiways and the apron.

The first phase of the expansion of the BUD Cargo City has been completed as planned. The 30 million EUR investment has resulted in the construction of two new aircraft stands, which can now handle four cargo aircraft simultaneously, and the warehouse and office space of the cargo handling complex was expanded by 6500 square meters.

Budapest Airport pays particular attention to sustainability in both its developments and day-to-day operation, and remains fully committed to achieving net zero emissions 15 years earlier than the target date, by 2035 at the latest. According to the ESG audit carried out in 2023, the airport operator achieved a low risk rating, which confirms that the company pays particular attention to environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects in its investment decisions. The airport operator submitted its application for Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) level 4+ Transition at the end of 2023, with the highest level 5 rating expected to be achieved by 2035.

A huge advantage in recovering from the global pandemic was that the BUD Group was able to fill vacancies almost immediately after restrictions were lifted, partly by placing colleagues who had been reassigned to other jobs during the pandemic back in their original positions and partly by recruiting new staff - and thus ended 2023 with more than 1600 employees, 200 more than before COVID.

The “Stars at the Airport” show produced by Budapest Airport and MediaFactory, now in its second season on TV2, not only significantly increased the number of applicants to the company, but was also very popular in PR professional circles. Last year, the first season of the series won several Hungarian and international awards: the IPRA Golden World Awards in the Travel and Tourism category, gold at the PR News Platinum Awards in the Employee Relations category, silver at the StevieAwards in the Content Marketing category and, in December, it was named the best campaign in the Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria region at the European Excellence Awards; a fitting end to the year. On the domestic front, the show won the Content Marketing Award organized by Kreatív among branded TV shows and won the Bronze Blade at the Aranypenge (Gold Blade) awards, in the Employer Branding category.

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Notes to editors

Ferenc Liszt National Airport has been voted the best European airport in 2022 among airports with 15-25 million passengers, based on passenger feedback. Budapest Airport also holds the title of best airport in the region, as recognized by Skytrax in 10 consecutive years from 2014 to 2023, also based on passenger ratings. The international aviation research organization has also upgraded the airport's rating from three to four stars in 2023, based on a review of five hundred performance indicators covering all passenger services. Over the past years, Budapest Ferenc Liszt National Airport has emerged as a leader, becoming the fastest developing airport in the region. Together with its airline partners, it is a key contributor to the development of tourism in Hungary and Budapest. The BUD Cargo City is a focal point for import and export air cargo; Budapest Airport's aim is to become the cargo gateway for East-Central Europe.