

Month with the highest likelihood of delayed or canceled flights revealed

While December is not the busiest month for aviation, it is the month in Europe with the highest likelihood of flights being delayed by 3+ hours or canceled.

VILNIUS, LITHUANIA, December 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While December is not the busiest month for aviation, it is the month in Europe with the highest likelihood of flights being delayed by more than three hours or canceled, data from the compensation management company [Skycop.com](https://www.skycop.com) shows.



December is the busiest month of the aviation winter season, but airlines must still compensate passengers for significant delays or cancellations."

Nerijus Zaleckas

Last December, there were 581,000 flights across the European Union, 2.6% of which experienced significant delays or cancellations, making passengers eligible for compensation under the EU261 scheme. By comparison, in July and August 2023—the busiest months for

aviation—only 1.9-2.1% of flights faced issues, despite 765,000 flights taking place during each.

Travelers in January (1.3% share of disrupted flights), April and May (1.4% each), as well as September and October (1.6% each), had the lowest likelihood of encountering significant delays or cancellations last year.

According to Skycop lawyer Nerijus Zaleckas, several factors contribute to more frequent disruptions in December, including adverse weather conditions, a reduced number of aircraft during the winter season combined with increased passenger volumes after November, the need for de-icing procedures, and even warmer clothing slowing down airport security checks.

"December is the busiest month of the aviation winter season, but airlines must still compensate passengers for significant delays or cancellations. While causes like severe weather or strikes may be considered extraordinary circumstances exempting them from compensation liability, our experience shows that disruptions are much more often caused by operational issues within airlines' control such as scheduling, delayed incoming flights, crew shortages, and aircraft rotations," says N. Zaleckas.

In December 2023, significant flight disruptions were most likely to occur when departing from airports in the Netherlands (9.3%), Iceland (6.6%), Germany (6%), as well as the United Kingdom

and Norway (2.8% each). Countries with the best December performance included Latvia (0.6%), Spain, Cyprus and Greece (0.7% each), as well as Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Finland and Bulgaria (around 1.1% each). France performed better than the European average, with 2% of flights disrupted.

Interestingly, in December 2023, Spain was not only the most active European aviation market, with nearly 145,000 departing flights, but it also managed to have the lowest share of disrupted flights—well below the other top-five markets: the UK, Germany, France, and Italy.

Notably, December 2022, with 2.8% share of disrupted flights, was not the month with the highest likelihood of disruptions. It was surpassed by June and July, which exceeded 3%. However, 2022, particularly its summer, is not considered a standard year due to the significant post-pandemic surge in travelers coinciding with aircraft supply chain issues.

Under EU261 regulation, passengers are entitled to compensation for significant delays when departing from EU airports (regardless of airline origin) and when arriving at EU airports with EU-registered airlines. If a departing flight arrives at its final destination more than three hours late, passengers are entitled to compensation ranging from €250 to €600, depending on the flight distance. Passengers may also claim compensation for canceled flights, unexpected transport or accommodation costs, lost baggage, and other scenarios.

Passengers who have faced long delays, cancellations, or other disruptions can request compensation directly from airlines via their websites or by contacting compensation management companies like Skycop. These companies typically have years of experience, a wide network of legal partners, and advanced IT systems to quickly determine eligibility and secure payouts. Most compensation management companies operate on a "success fee" basis, charging a commission only if the compensation is successfully obtained for the passenger.

Kostas Baubinas
Kिताip тарiant MB
[email us here](#)

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