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Malpensa sees growth, but Linate sees even more

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Both of Milan's airports saw growth in 2011, with an overall increase of 4.2% in the number of passengers. Malpensa saw a 2% increase in passengers, while Linate had a real boom, with +9.2%. The number of passengers through Linate exceeded 9 million, reaching 50% of Malpensa's passenger traffic.

This was a positive result in a "particularly complex year for the air transport industry, with clear signs of a new recessionary phase already on the horizon," explained SEA, the company that manages the two airports. Malpensa saw a 2% increase on the previous year, with a total of 19,087,069 passengers. The number of passengers on scheduled flights through Malpensa was even better, with a significant increase of 4%, SEA explained. The trend in Linate was also positive, with an increase of 9.2%, which meant 9,061,749 passengers. Overall, the two Milan airports had a total of 28,148,845 passengers, a growth of +4.2%.

Besides the general economic crisis, among the factors which affected 2011, SEA identified in particular the fall in traffic to North Africa, which was a side effect of the Arab Spring (which VareseNews reported also starting out from Tunisia); the ending of business by the airline company Livingston, which, in numbers, meant a fall of one million passengers for Malpensa (the company will be beginning operations again shortly, and has announced its intention to strengthen its presence in the airport near Varese); and finally, there was the decision by the Lufthansa Group to renounce the Lufthansa Italia project, which affected the last part of the year.

2011 in Linate

The growth in domestic traffic was 1.2%, while the traffic to Europe grew by 25%, particularly to Amsterdam, Paris and London. The Milan-Rome route was stable with respect to 2010, with 1,523,000 passengers carried. The new carriers Air Baltic and Air Malta, which started operating at the end of 2010, also grew, with increases of 68,000 and 60,000 passengers, respectively. In June, Blu Express began flying, five times a week, to Reggio Calabria, and in November Air Italy started flying to Bari.

2011 in Malpensa

In 2011, 8 new passenger and all cargo carriers chose Malpensa: Gulf Air, Ethiopian Airlines, Birman Bangladesh, Air Europa, Transavia, Silk Way, Jade Cargo and Africa West. Thus, the airport expanded its international links, also increasing the routes and frequency of carriers already flying from Milan Malpensa. During 2011, almost 180 additional flights were introduced, of which about thirty were seasonal.

The companies that grew most were Cathay Pacific (+81%) and Sri Lankan (+76%), and the Europeans Aerosvit (+131%), Aer Lingus (+72%) and Bulgaria Air (+66%). Of the Italian airlines, it was Wind Jet that saw the biggest growth in 2011 over 2010, with +103%.

Emirates was the best performing intercontinental carrier, in terms of the number of passengers carried (375,000), followed by Delta, with 234,000, and by TAM with 164,000.

In terms of the geographical areas, the traffic to North America grew by 10.5%, with 36 flights per week, to the Middle East, by 2.4%, with 66 flights, to the Far East, by 22.9%, with 55 flights, to Africa, by 9.7%, with 16 flights, and to the so-called BRIC countries, by 24%.

Cargo

Also in 2011, Malpensa was the top cargo airport in Italy, in terms of the amount of goods carried. However, the crisis was also felt in this sector, the real alarm bell of the state of health of an economy which is seeing decreases in imports and exports. As a result, the flights of the airline Cargo Italia were suspended. In any case, the cargo sector saw an increase of 4.2%, with 440,250 tonnes of goods. The significant growth in the number of airlines operating in Malpensa, which, in 2011, transported over 17,000 tons of goods more than in 2010, gave Malpensa an increase of 4.2% in cargo traffic, with good performance both in the “all cargo” segment (+2.3%), which represents over 71% of the airport’s goods traffic, and in the “mixed flights” segment (+9.3%). This good result, which confirms the interest of the most important international all cargo carriers in the airport, was sustained particularly by the growth in the export division (+10.6%).

In 2011, thanks to Malpensa’s attractiveness as a goods airport, the policy of developing new routes and frequencies implemented by the SEA Group, also in this business segment, as well as continuation of the activity of revising bilateral agreements, two new all cargo carriers, Jade Cargo and Silk Way were introduced, operating two flights, and one flight a week, respectively, to Shanghai (at the beginning of May) and one flight a week to Baku (at the end of May), the number of flights operated by Saudi Arabian per week on the Milan-Jeddah-Riad route was doubled, Cargolux Italia began operating a new flight to Sao Paulo, Brazil, and the new cargo giant of the skies, the 747-800 freighter, started operating, with its first trade flight in Europe taking off from Malpensa. At the end of the year, Malpensa lost Cargo Italia, which was put into voluntary liquidation by the shareholders.

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