Emirates began operations to Paris Charles de Gaulle (CDG) in July 1992 and has since then progressively grown services to meet passenger and cargo demand.

In July 2018, the French government granted Emirates an additional three weekly flights. Emirates now operates 35 weekly passenger flights to three cities – three times daily to Paris, as well as daily to Nice and Lyon, fully utilising the current passenger frequency entitlements under the UAE - France bilateral agreement.

With 35 weekly flights, France remains comparatively underserved in terms of Emirates frequencies relative to its European peers. The UK has 140 weekly frequencies, Germany 70 weekly frequencies and Italy 49. In 2018-19, Emirates carried over 1.4 million passengers to and from France with a seat factor of 80%.

Lyon was introduced in December 2012, with five weekly flights, and has, since August 2018, been served daily. Emirates was the first international carrier to link Lyon with the UAE and the wider Middle East, East Africa and the South Asian subcontinent via Dubai. The route is performing strongly, and with the additional two weekly flights, demand continues to grow.

Emirates’ daily service to Lyon improves connectivity and helps support further Aéroports de Lyon’s €215 million strategic investment plan which targets 15 million passengers in 2020 with the aim of stimulating tourism, trade, investment and jobs in the wider Rhone-Alpes region. Atout France, France’s Tourism Development Agency stated that Emirates’ direct flight to Lyon led to a 30% increase in Middle East travellers to the French Alps in summer 2016, which is traditionally a winter destination. With daily flights, the number of travellers will increase further.

Emirates’ operations to Paris CDG and Nice echo the success of the Lyon route. Because of growing demand, Emirates introduced a second daily Airbus A380 service to Paris CDG in January 2013. With the additional flight, currently all 21 weekly flights to Paris are A380 operated. The extremely high load factors (88% in 2018-19) on the Paris CDG-Dubai route mean that passengers are being turned away.

Emirates contributes to French connectivity needs in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australasia

Middle East Network

Economic development has to be supported by efficient and direct air services from Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport to international markets. Such air services facilitate trade and thereby increase business productivity in our region. I also welcome that Emmanuel Macron has kept the promise he made as Minister of Economy regarding the increase in Lyon-Dubai flights.” - Emmanuel Imberton, President of the CCI Lyon Métropole Saint-Etienne Roanne

Emirates’ spend on French wines and spirits in 2018

Emirates passengers on Emirates’ flights to and from France in 2018-19

Emirates passenger flights to Paris Charles de Gaulle, Lyon and Nice

Emirates’ average seat factor to and from France in 2018-19

Emirates carried over 1.4 million passengers to and from France in 2018-19

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delivered to Emirates in 2013 alone created a GDP impact of €1.2 billion and supported 14,500 DII jobs in France.

In February 2019, Emirates signed a deal with Airbus worth US$21.4 billion at list prices, with an order for 40 A330-900 and 30 A350-900 aircraft. The A330neos and A350s will complement Emirates’ fleet mix, supporting network growth and flexibility.

A major investor in France

In addition to being a major Airbus customer and significant purchaser of, for example Michelin tyres, Sicma aero seats (Zodiac aerospace) and Thales avionics, Emirates contributes over €165 million to the economy each year through its direct operational expenditures such as fuel uplift, over-flight costs, aircraft landing and handling costs, crew layover costs and area overheads.

Emirates also spent €100 million on French wines and spirits in 2018 alone. With 85% of the total €120 million spent by Emirates last year, France is by far the top source market globally for the procurement of wines.

As Emirates has been a long-standing purchaser of French wines, the airline now has its own wine cellar in France, which currently houses 7 million bottles of wine. While most airlines purchase their wines through tenders, Emirates has, for many years, pursued direct relationships with producers in leading French wine regions.

Emirates’ sponsorships also illustrate its commitment to France. Emirates has been an Official Partner of the Roland Garros tennis tournament since 2013, a sponsorship deal worth €17.5 million. The partnership with the French Tennis Federation has since been extended until 2022, with Emirates being upgraded to Premium Partner status.

France-UAE relations

The UAE is France’s second most important trading partner in the Middle East as well as the second largest GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) investor in France. Bilateral trade between the UAE and France exceeded €4.6 billion in 2018, with exports from France to the UAE reaching €3.3 billion – amounting to a €2 billion trade surplus in favour of France. Emirates transports 44,000 tonnes of cargo annually between points in France and Dubai – carrying items such as wine and cheese, perfumes, garments and aircraft parts, among others.

The French Business Council of Dubai & Northern Emirates also recorded growth in its members, growing to more than 700. Dubai is also home to 500 of the 1,000 French companies registered in the UAE, and 75% of the 25,000 French nationals that reside in the UAE.

France figures in Dubai’s top 20 source markets, with over 348,000 French nationals visiting Dubai in 2018, an increase of 17% over 2017. Approximately 1 million tourists come from the Middle East region to France every year.

French tourism plan

In 2017 the French government set up an Intermunicipal Council for Tourism with the aim to attract 100 million international visitors by 2020 and increase the average length of stay in the country to increase tourism revenues. Achieving these objectives would also enable the creation of 300,000 additional jobs across Metropolitan and Overseas France. Currently, the French tourism sector accounts for close to 8% of national GDP, supporting 2 million direct and indirect jobs.

Additional passenger flights on Dubai-France routes

With 35 weekly flights, France is comparably underserved by Emirates in comparison to European countries such as Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. Any future increases in connectivity would help spur French economic growth, lead to an increase in global competitiveness for businesses, facilitate exports, create more jobs and provide for incoming tourism – all in all, creating more value for France.

Myth vs. Fact: Setting the record straight

In France, some stakeholders frequently point out that Emirates competes unfairly or negatively impacts the aviation market. Such misconceptions, when repeated often enough can ultimately be accepted as fact.

Fact: Since commencing operation to France in 1992, our services have been built up progressively and in line with increased demand. Emirates operates a mere 35 flights a week between Dubai and France. Our current presence in France supports more than 6,720 jobs within and around the airports we fly to, and through the Emirates share of the A380 programme, a further 14,500 jobs are sustained in France alone.

Myth: Emirates is heavily subsidised by the Dubai Government, with free infrastructure, reduced taxes and exceptional financing conditions.

Fact: Emirates is commercially managed, financially transparent and receives no government subsidies. Our funds are raised on a fully commercial basis through a wide range of sources including operating leases, commercial asset-backed debt and equity from investors.

Myth: Emirates steals passengers from the European market and harms Air France.

Fact: No airline owns passengers. At Paris CDG, Emirates accounts for only 0.5% of international flights and 1.4% of total intercontinental departures, in comparison to 47% of international flights and 44% of inter-continental departures for Air France. Rather than Emirates diverting traffic from Air France in Asia, Air France has actually grown its weekly seat capacity by 23% since 2009, by commencing services to new markets such as Wuhan, Haneda and Taipei, while adding frequencies to Seoul, Shanghai, and Guangzhou.

Myth: The social conditions in which some of the Emirates employees work are unacceptable and far removed from industry standards.

Fact: As a responsible multinational company, Emirates complies with the labour laws in each of the countries that we operate in. To attract and retain top talent Emirates offers competitive salaries and benefits. At the end of 2018-19, the Emirates Group employed 105,000 staff. The company’s status as an excellent employer is shown by its high staff retention rates with more than 13,000 staff having worked for 10 years or longer, of which 3,500 have worked for over 20 years.

Please visit our website to read more on “Airlines and Subsidy: Our position”