Emirates and Greece

Emirates has been serving Greece for over 22 years since the launch of flights to Athens from Dubai in June 1996 and is currently the only carrier serving daily non-stop flights between Greece and Dubai. Since 1996, over 3 million passengers have travelled to and from Athens on Emirates.

In March 2017, Emirates extended its Dubai-Athens flights to Newark in the United States and from May 2017, doubled its capacity on the Dubai-Athens route by introducing a second daily frequency.

Impact on employment and GDP in Greece

A 2015 study by Frontier Economics found that Emirates’ daily flights to Athens had a GDP impact of €79 million and supported more than 1,650 direct, indirect and induced jobs in Greece. This number not only takes into account Emirates’ staff in Greece, but also the employment across the supply chain such as ground-handling or catering jobs as well as induced employment through the economic activity generated by these direct and indirect employees.

Emirates’ unique connectivity

Connectivity plays an important role in enabling tourism, international business relationships, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and international trade. In Europe, connectivity is mainly provided by a few large hub airports such as Frankfurt and Paris, as a result of which intercontinental connections from other cities in Europe often require an additional stopover. This creates a connectivity gap. Emirates helps bridge that gap by serving more non-hub centres through its global network.

In fact, Emirates is the only carrier offering daily flights between Athens and Dubai. Hence without Emirates’ flights to Athens, passengers bound for Dubai would need to use at least a one-stop connection. According to Frontier Economics, this unique connectivity created a catalytic GDP impact of €4 million for the Greek economy in 2013-14. Furthermore, Emirates’ unique connections had an annual catalytic impact of €4 million on FDI and supported €7 million in trade.

Emirates contributes to Greece’s connectivity needs in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australasia

Emirates’ Dubai-Athens-Newark route


Emirates’ Economic Impact in Europe

- 22 years since Dubai-Athens launched in 1996
- 3 million passengers on Emirates’ flights to and from Athens since 1996
- 60 thousand tonnes of cargo on Emirates’ flights to and from Athens since 1996
- €79 million direct, indirect and induced GDP impact*
- 1,650 jobs direct, indirect and induced, supported through Emirates’ operations*
- €312 million bilateral trade between Greece and the UAE in 2017
- 459 Greek nationals employed by the Emirates Group
- 1,500 Greek nationals living in the UAE

*Frontier Economics (2015): Emirates’ Economic Impact in Europe
in response to requests from the Greek Government and Athens International Airport to help meet a strong consumer need that was long neglected by other airlines, considering the US is home to the largest Greek diaspora of around 1.3 million.

Emirates’ Dubai-Athens-Newark flight offers the only year-round non-stop daily service between Greece and the US – a market which had been connected by at least a daily service for 70 years till 2012. Such fifth freedom flights extending from Europe to the US are not unusual and several carriers exercise the same traffic rights, particularly via Europe to New York. In fact, Emirates’ share of the total capacity between Europe and the US is less than one percent.

The importance of tourism for Greece

According to the Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE), Greece received 27.2 million tourists in 2017 (30.5 million including cruise arrivals), an increase of 9.7% compared to 2016; and nearly €14.2 billion in tourism receipts averaging €522.3 per visitor. The Ministry of Tourism estimates foreign visitor arrivals to Greece in 2018 to be at least an additional 1.5 million visitors over 2017. One of the key growth segments identified was American tourists, with over a million visitors arriving in 2017, along with the need to establish Greece as a year-round tourist destination and improve direct connectivity.

Emirates supports all of these objectives by connecting the US and Greece with non-stop daily flights throughout the year. Moreover, the number of tourists from the UAE and the wider MENA region has grown by 55% in 2017 over the previous year.

Greece-UAE trade relations

Greece and the UAE have shared a sound political, economic and cultural relationship for many years which has potential for further development in the future. Bilateral trade between Greece and the UAE reached €312 million in 2017, having grown by 69.5 percent from €39 million in 1996 when Emirates first commenced flights to Athens. In 2017-18, Emirates transported over 11,600 tonnes of cargo into and out of Athens, an increase of 22% over the previous year, thereby facilitating the trade of goods between Greece and the UAE, as well as other countries across its global network.

With the increase in capacity since May 2017, Emirates will stimulate further development in Greek business and tourism.

Open Skies for a stronger Europe

International aviation competition is currently high on the European Union (EU) agenda. Opening markets with main trading partners is an urgent necessity if the EU is to bridge its connectivity gap with the rest of the world. Liberalised aviation markets create new routes for people to travel, work and goods to be exchanged. It is not surprising that key representative bodies, including Airports Council International (ACI Europe) with 17 Greek airports among its members and the European Travel Commission which is supported by the Greek National Tourist Organisation, recently called on policymakers to prioritise free aviation market access, including with Gulf countries. Some European legacy carriers in France and Germany disagree with this. But why should valuable direct international air links, which are so important for business and tourism, be limited to a few European airlines and a few European hubs with higher ticket prices, longer travel times and passenger inconvenience as consequences?

About Emirates

Emirates is the largest airline in the world in terms of international passenger and freight carriage. Established in 1985, the company’s growth has been measured in line with the demand for air travel. With 267 efficient aircraft in service today, Emirates operates a global network of over 160 destinations in 86 countries across six continents, independently of the three global airline alliances. Emirates launched passenger services to three new destinations in 2017 – Newark in the US, Phnom Penh in Cambodia and Zagreb in Croatia and launches services to London Stansted, Santiago de Chile and Edinburgh in 2018.

Myth vs. Fact: Setting the record straight

**Myth:** Emirates receives free fuel and does not pay to use infrastructure in Dubai.

**Fact:** In the 2017-18 financial year, Emirates’ fuel costs totalled US$6.7 billion and comprised 28% of operating costs, wholly comparable with other large long-haul carriers. Shell, one of Emirates’ main fuel suppliers in Dubai and abroad, recently confirmed that it does not give Emirates preferential treatment. Emirates also pays the full published landing charges at Dubai International Airport – as do the 100 other airlines that fly to and from this airport. Similarly, Emirates pays the same airport handling fees to the ground-handling agent as would a similar high volume airline customer.

**Myth:** The social conditions in which some of Emirates’ employees work are unacceptable.

**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. Emirates currently employs over 62,000 staff of over 170 nationalities worldwide. The Emirates Group’s status as an excellent employer is shown by its high staff retention rates with more than 17,000 staff having worked for the company for 10 years or longer, of which 3,200 have worked for over 20 years.

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Please visit www.emirates.com to read more on “Airlines and Subsidy: Our position”