

Wizz Air reducing capacity at its Cardiff Airport base

Wizz Air is reducing summer flights to the Greek resort of Heraklion from Cardiff Airport as part of a reduction in its overall capacity.

The Hungarian airline, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange, said it is trimming capacity by another 5% as part of efforts to avoid flight cancellations and delays.

Mounting disruption in the sector has been caused by staffing shortages at airports, with operations struggling to match soaring demand from holidaymakers now that Covid restrictions have been lifted.

At Cardiff Airport, where it launched a base with nine routes in April, it is reducing the number of flights to Heraklion from three days a week to two – removing the Friday service and maintaining flights on Mondays and Wednesdays for its summer schedule.

Cardiff Airport, which is owned by the Welsh Government, said: “We can confirm that selected flights to Heraklion have been removed from Wizz Air’s flying programme to improve its overall schedule resilience.

“Any affected passengers will have been contacted by the airline to rearrange their flights. Cardiff Airport is disappointed for the disruption caused to our passengers’ summer holidays.”

For the summer season Wizz Air had put into the market 203,000 seats on its new Cardiff routes. The aim is to achieve around 75% capacity.

Its base in Cardiff has created 40 pilot and cabin crew roles

at Cardiff, with a further 250-plus jobs generated through the supply chain.

The investment was made by the airline without financial backing from the Welsh Government, with its chief executive Marion Geoffroy saying once its becomes established the aim is to increase capacity and destinations, including the potential for new routes from Cardiff to central and eastern Europe.

Wizz Air said: “To be able to avoid cancellations and secure a more punctual operation to our customers, we have further improved the agility and resilience of our network including adjusting schedules where we have seen a higher occurrence of issues. In total for the peak summer period we expect to reduce utilisation a further 5% versus the plan outlined at the full year results to reduce the impact of ongoing external disruptions.”

Despite this, Wizz Air said it was set for a boost in demand over the summer and is forecasting a “material” operating profit in its July to September quarter.

This comes after it reported an operating loss of £241m in its first quarter due to rising fuel costs and a strengthening US dollar.

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