

Banja Luka International Airport (IATA: **BNX**, ICAO: **LQBK**), also known as Mahovljani Airport, after the nearby village of the same name, is an airport located 18 km (11 mi) north northeast of the railway station[3] in the city of Banja Luka, the second largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The airport is managed by the government-owned company "Aerodromi Republike Srpske".

Contents

1 History

2 Airlines and destinations

3 Statistics

4 Ground transportation

5 See also

6 References

7 External links

History[edit]

The construction of the Banja Luka International Airport began in 1976. In accordance with the development plans, capacities were built defining Banja Luka as an airport of secondary importance, restricted to domestic air traffic on the territory of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. After the Bosnian War, Republika Srpska was established with Banja Luka as the de facto capital. That gave Banja Luka Airport new importance and a completely different role. Banja Luka International Airport was opened for civilian air traffic on 18 November 1997. From 1999 to 2003 the airport served as the main hub of Air Srpska, which was the official flag carrier of Republika Srpska. The company was founded by Jat Airways and Government of Republika Srpska. The company ceased all operations in 2003 after increasing debt, and the withdrawal of Jat Airways from the partnership. There were plans for Sky Srpska, a state-owned airline founded in 2007, to start flights, however, the airline, which never had any aircraft, was closed in 2013. The airport's facilities were greatly improved in 2002 and 2003, ahead of the visit by Pope John Paul II to Banja Luka in June 2003.

On 15 December 2010, to celebrate the abolition of visa requirements for Bosnian citizens traveling to the Schengen Area countries, a symbolic charter flight was organised from Banja Luka to Brussels. In 2011, Banja Luka airport handled 8,367 passengers, a rise of 74% compared to 2010. Over the years, the airport has had flights connecting Banja Luka to Athens, Belgrade, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Ljubljana, Salzburg, Tivat, and Vienna, partly thanks to Air Srpska which was an airline based at the airport. Austrian Airlines and Montenegro Airlines served Banja Luka during the late 1990s and early 2000s from their respective bases in Vienna and Tivat. Since Air Srpska stopped operations, the Government of Republika Srpska has tried to attract new airlines to fly to Banja Luka through various subsidies. Subsidised flights included Jat Airways flights to Belgrade between November 2007 and December 2009, operated with ATR 72, Austrojet flights to Salzburg and Tivat between July and December 2008, operated 3 times a week with Dash 8-100, and Adria Airways flights to Ljubljana between July 2010 and November 2011, operated 4 times a week with CRJ 200. B&H Airlines operated flights to Zürich for many years until airline went out of business in June 2015. BH Airlines operated seasonal charter flights to Tivat in

Montenegro.

Passenger numbers more than doubled in 2014, as Air Serbia restarted flights to Belgrade, but suffered in 2015 due to BH Airlines' bankruptcy and the suspension of the Zurich route. Banja Luka airport owner Government of RS subsidises Air Serbia flights to Belgrade.[4] In April 2018, Ryanair announced that it would start its first ever flight from Banja Luka (and Bosnia as a whole) with twice-weekly services to each of Brussels Charleroi and Memmingen, while in May, it added Stockholm Skavsta and, in December, Berlin-Schönefeld to its list of new routes. The flights began in October 2018. Overall, the airline expects 100,000 passengers in 2019.[5] In April 2021, Wizz Air announced its arrival and launch of five routes from Banja Luka to Dortmund, Basel/Mulhouse, Eindhoven, Malmö and Stockholm Skavsta.[6]

Airlines and destinations[edit]

The following airlines operate regular flights to and from Banja Luka:[7]

Airlines Destinations

Air Montenegro Seasonal: Tivat[8]

Air Serbia Belgrade

Freebird Airlines Seasonal charter: Antalya[9]

Ryanair[10] Bergamo (begins 1 November 2021),[11] Charleroi, Gothenburg, Hahn, Memmingen, Stockholm–Arlanda (begins 30 October 2021),[12] Vienna (begins 1 November 2021)[13]

Wizz Air[14] Basel/Mulhouse, Dortmund, Eindhoven, Hamburg (begins 18 December 2021),[15] Malmö, Stockholm–Skavsta[16]

Statistics[edit]

See source Wikidata query and sources.

Passenger statistics[17]

Year/Month Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Year total Change

2010 - - - - - 497 432 602 - 4,798

2011 560 422 640 719 680 536 1,209 942 707 830 545 577 8,367 74.4%

2012 791 424 178 408 402 377 589 688 610 642 550 765 6,424 23.2%

2013 518 448 400 431 601 530 844 893 713 824 434 2,201 8,837 37.6%

2014 1,522 1,352 1,566 1,942 2,201 2,797 3,457 4,011 2,633 2,503 1,661 1,991 27,636 212.7%

2015 1,830 1,154 1,327 2,090 2,353 2,085 2,554 2,591 2,185 1,782 1,078 1,771 22,800 17.5%

2016 1,484 875 1,368 1,581 2,298 2,094 2,835 2,807 1,905 1,905 n/a n/a 21,694 4.9%

2017 1,484 875 1,171 2,013 2,033 2,023 2,533 2,613 2,048 1,934 997 1,143 20,867 3.8%

2018 1,203 717 1,144 1,806 1,671 2,294 3,109 3,295 2,528 1,876 8,272 8,265 36,180 73.3%

2019 8,838 7,805 9,962 12,460 12,780 14,190 17,073 14,976 12,485 13,174 12,354 13,596 149,693 313.7%

2020 11,538 14,079 6,458 19 265 490 1,419 3,636 1,582 1,073 1,629 1,587 43,775 70.7%

2021 883 271 346 385 646 10,367 27,829 28,273 17,773 86,773 82.0%

Passengers (in thousands) 2010–2021

Updated: 12 October 2021

Ground transportation[edit]

The airport was built in the area of Laktaši and Gradiška municipalities, in a wide valley of the Vrbas expanding into Lijevče. It is connected to the new Banja Luka – Gradiška motorway.

See also[edit]

List of airports in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sarajevo International Airport

Tuzla International Airport

Mostar International Airport

List of busiest airports in the Former Yugoslav Republics

List of the busiest airports in the Balkans