

Avram Iancu Cluj International Airport[4] (IATA: CLJ, ICAO: LRCL) is an airport serving the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Initially known as Someșeni Airport, it is located 9 km (5.6 mi) east of the city centre, in the Someșeni area, which is now within the Cluj-Napoca city limits.[2] The airport is named in honour of Romanian revolutionary Avram Iancu. In terms of passenger traffic, Cluj Airport is the second busiest airport in Romania, after Bucharest Henri Coandă, handling 2.9 million passengers in 2019. Its size and location (on the European route E576 and close to A3 Transylvania Motorway) make it the most important airport in the historical region of Transylvania.

Contents

1 History

2 Airlines and destinations

3 Statistics

4 Ground transportation

5 Accidents and incidents

6 See also

7 References

8 External links

History[edit]

On 15 December 1917, the County Council of Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca) gave land in the settlement of Szamosfalva (today the Someșeni district of Cluj-Napoca) in order to develop a military airport.[5] The first passenger plane landed on 2 August 1928.[6] Respectively, the Cluj Airport was founded on 1 April 1932 by the Romanian Ministry of Industry and Trade. Until the civil airport was built, the first operations used the Someșeni Military Aerodrome that was founded by the Romanian National Service of Air Navigation (Romanian: Serviciul Național de Navigație Aeriană SNNA) in 1928. The SNNA was set up by the Romanian Ministry of War for opening an air transportation line between Cluj and Bucharest. The first aircraft used was the Farman-Goliath aircraft, a twin-engine plane with space for ten passengers built by the Farman Aviation Works.[citation needed]

In 1933, Cluj Airport was declared an International Airport by the Romanian Government. The first international flight, a CSA Czech Airlines Prague-Cluj-Bucharest flight, took place on 11 September 1933. The aircraft used on this route were eight-seat Avia-Fokker aircraft. In the following years, several new routes were opened, such as the Aeroflot Moscow-Cluj-Prague flight, opened on 15 November 1935, which was operated with 14-seat McDonnell Douglas DC-2 twin-engine aircraft, registered as USSR-M25 and USSR-M26. Internal flights were also operated in this period, such as Cluj-Satu-Mare and Cernăuți-Cluj-Arad using Lockheed Model 10 Electra ten-passenger aircraft and de Havilland Dragon Rapide aircraft. In the late 1930s, the airport recorded steady growth and the employees' number rose from 6 in 1934 to 16 in 1939. The passenger terminal was also built in this period, being inaugurated in 1939.[citation needed]

During World War II, the airport became again a military airport, as it was considered to be the most important in Transylvania. In 1940, as a result of the Second Vienna Award, Northern Transylvania (including Cluj) was ceded to Hungary and thus the airport was used by the Hungarian Air Force and German Luftwaffe. Malert airline also operated flights to

Budapest during these years. In October 1944, the Hungarian forces in the city were defeated by the Romanian and Soviet armies. By the time of the reconquest of the airport by the Romanian No. 4 Fighting Squadron Focșani, in late September 1944, the airport was completely destroyed.

After the war, the airport's operations were resumed with TAROM internal flights connecting Cluj to other major Romanian cities. The aircraft used were the Lisunov Li-2 / Douglas DC-3 and Ilyushin Il-14 aircraft.

In the 1960s, an extensive modernization of the airport began. In 1969, a new passenger terminal was opened. By 1970, the airport was fully equipped with all of the safety facilities. The airport remained a domestic airport until September 1996, when it was once again opened to both international passenger and cargo traffic. The extension of the terminal building was also started in 1996 and since August 1997, it is run by the Cluj County Council. By 2001, the extension of the airport building was finished, the runway lighting system was modernized, and an Instrument Landing System (ILS) CAT I equipment was implemented.

In 2007 and 2008, the airport posted year-over-year growth of 60% and 93% respectively, reaching over 750,000 passengers in 2008.[7]

The construction of a new terminal, capable of handling 2 million passengers annually, started on 26 June 2007. The 10,812 m² (116,380 sq ft) arrivals hall was inaugurated on May 22, 2008,[8] followed by the new departures hall, with a total area of 16,000 m² (170,000 sq ft), inaugurated in May 2009.[9] The connecting building between the two terminals was inaugurated in November 2009. The total project cost was an estimated €40 million.[9][10] In February 2009, the ILS equipment was upgraded to CAT II.

Cluj Airport exceeded the 1,000,000 passenger mark in 2010.[11] On 8 September 2011, the construction works for building a new runway of 2,100 m (6,890 ft) began. The works represented the first phase of the investment that aims at a take-off/landing runway of 3,500 m (11,483 ft).[12] The new runway 07/25 officially went into operation on 26 October 2013.[13] The old runway 08/26 became a taxiway, after the new runway opened.[1]

In 2014, ROMATSA held a competition for the creation of a new control tower for Cluj-Napoca Airport. Of the 22 projects that were submitted in the competition,[14] as winner the project of Outline Architecture Office was chosen,[15] an architectural design office based in Bucharest. The tower resembles a tulnic and will have a height of 42 m. The costs for the construction of the new control tower will be borne by ROMATSA.[16]

Airlines and destinations[edit]

The following airlines operate regular scheduled and charter flights to and from Cluj-Napoca:[17]

Airlines Destinations

Aegean Airlines Seasonal charter: Heraklion,[18] Rhodes

Air Bucharest[19] Seasonal charter: Antalya, Enfidha, Hurghada

Animawings[20] Hurghada

Seasonal: Antalya, Bucharest,[20] Enfidha, Zakynthos, Zanzibar[21]

Seasonal charter: Phuket (begins 2 November 2021)[22]

Blue Air Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels,[23] Bucharest, Cologne/Bonn,[23] Dublin,
 Hamburg,[23] Larnaca, London–Heathrow, Madrid, Milan–Linate,[23] Paris–Charles de
 Gaulle, Rome–Fiumicino (begin 1 April 2022),[23] Stuttgart[23]
 Seasonal: Burgas, Constanța, Heraklion (begins 7 June 2022),[24] Rhodes (begins 8 June
 2022),[25] Zakynthos (begins 9 June 2022)[26]
 Seasonal charter: Antalya,[18] Hurghada[18]
 Ellinair Seasonal: Heraklion[27]
 flydubai Dubai–International[28]
 Freebird Airlines Seasonal charter: Antalya[18]
 HiSky[29] Dublin, Lisbon
 Seasonal charter: Agadir,[30] Antalya,[30] Hurghada,[30] Monastir,[30] Sharm El
 Sheikh[30]
 LOT Polish Airlines Warsaw–Chopin
 Lufthansa Frankfurt, Munich
 Ryanair London–Stansted
 Swiftair Seasonal charter: Budapest
 TAROM Bucharest
 Seasonal charter: Dubrovnik,[31] Skiathos
 Turkish Airlines Istanbul
 Wizz Air[32] Alicante, Barcelona, Bari, Basel/Mulhouse, Beauvais, Bergamo, Berlin, Billund
 (begins 31 October 2021),[33] Birmingham, Bologna, Catania,[34] Charleroi, Cologne/Bonn,
 Doncaster/Sheffield, Dortmund, Eindhoven, Hahn, Hamburg, Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden,
 Larnaca, Liverpool, London–Luton, Lyon, Madrid, Málaga, Malmö, Memmingen, Nuremberg,
 Rome–Ciampino, Tel Aviv, Treviso, Valencia, Vienna, Zaragoza
 Seasonal: Abu Dhabi, Barcelona, Chania,[35] Mykonos,[36] Zakynthos[37]
 Statistics[edit]
 See source Wikidata query and sources.
 Annual revenue passenger, aircraft movements and cargo statistics[3][38][39]
 Year Passengers (% change from prior year) Movements (% change from prior year) Tones
 (% change from prior year)
 2004
 162,668(+34.4%)
 6,697(+52.9%)
 138(+29.8%)
 2005
 202,556(+24.5%)
 8,018(+19.7%)
 213(+54.3%)
 2006
 244,366(+20.6%)
 8,904(+11.1%)
 187(−12.2%)
 2007

390,521(+59.8%)

9,206(+3.4%)

254(+35.8%)

2008

752,181(+92.6%)

12,025(+30.6%)

413(+62.6%)

2009

834,400(+10.9%)

13,489(+12.2%)

385(-6.8%)

2010

1,028,907(+23.3%)

16,352(+21.2%%)

354(-8.1%)

2011

1,004,855(-2.3%)

14,064(-13.9%)

744(+101.7%)

2012

931,999(-7.2%)

0(0)

885(+18.9%)

2013

1,036,438(+11.2%)

11,743

1,262(+42.6%)

2014

1,182,047(+14.0%)

12,710(+8.2%)

1,332(+5.5%)

2015

1,487,603(+25.8%)

14,667(+15.4%)

1,680(+26.1%)

2016

1,880,171(+26.5%)

19,152(+30.6%)

2,100(+25%)

2017

2,699,286(+43.6%)

24,476(+27.8%)

2,927(+39%)

2018

2,782,401(+3.1%)

23,880(-2.4%)

2,986(+2%)

2019

2,923,845(+4.9%)

24,450(+2.4%)

3,457(+15.8%)

Monthly traffic figures (2018, 2019 & 2020)[40][41]

Month 2018 2019 Change

(2019 vs. 2018) 2020 Change

(2020 vs. 2019) YTD (2020)

January 182,333 185,431 1.7% 190,848 2.9% 190,848

February 173,890 177,633 2.2% 180,148 1.4% 370,996

March 203,030 200,022 1.5%

April 231,369 234,610 1.4%

May 242,150 259,347 7.1%

June 266,085 280,557 5.4%

July 296,094 304,585 2.9%

August 296,242 312,214 5.4%

September 277,735 295,643 6.4%

October 245,972 262,055 6.5%

November 179,725 205,780 14.5%

December 187,776 205,967 7.5%

Busiest routes from Avram Iancu International Airport (2018)

Rank Airport Passengers Carriers

1 Bucharest 490,428 Blue Air, TAROM, Wizz Air

2 London - Luton 315,630 Blue Air, Wizz Air

3 Munich 163,917 Lufthansa

4 Bergamo 110,588 Wizz Air

5 Paris - Beauvais 101,013 Wizz Air

6 Barcelona 93,467 Vueling, Wizz Air

7 Bologna 77,194 Wizz Air

8 Rome - Ciampino Airport 69,914 Wizz Air

9 Charleroi 69,507 Wizz Air

10 Madrid 66,463 Wizz Air

11 Dortmund 66,453 Wizz Air

12 Tel Aviv - Ben Gurion Airport 65,944 Blue Air, Wizz Air

13 Eindhoven 50,554 Wizz Air

14 Dublin 48,930 Blue Air

15 Frankfurt am Main Airport 48,732 Lufthansa

16 Basel/Mulhouse Airport 45,367 Wizz Air

17 Valencia 43,355 Wizz Air

18 Zaragoza 43,198 Wizz Air

Source: Eurostat [1]

Busiest routes by country from Avram Iancu International Airport (2018)

Rank Country Passengers 2018 Carriers

1 Romania 506,783 Blue Air, TAROM, Wizz Air

2 Germany 443,020 Lufthansa, Wizz Air

3 United Kingdom 392,728 Wizz Air

4 Italy 314,457 Wizz Air

5 Spain 299,383 Wizz Air

6 France 115,383 Blue Air, Wizz Air

Source: Eurostat [2]

Ground transportation[edit]

The airport is located 8 km (5.0 mi) east of the city centre on the European route E576. The drive from the city centre takes about 20 minutes. CTP Cluj Napoca, the local public transport company, operates its Route No. 8 that connects the airport with the Mihai Viteazul Square in the City Center and trolleybus No. 5 to the Main Rail Station.

Accidents and incidents[edit]

On 5 September 1986 at about 19:45, a fully loaded Antonov An-24RV aircraft departed Bucharest Otopeni Airport, bound for Cluj-Napoca. When the landing procedure began, one of the flight attendants, Aurelia Grigore, realized that the aircraft was landing at higher than normal speed. When the main landing gear touched the ground, it bounced repeatedly until the aircraft stopped. The front of the aircraft was on fire. Grigore realized they had an emergency situation. With her flight attendant colleague, she decided to start deplaning passengers. She opened the emergency exit and she let the stairs down, but the stairs weren't touching the ground because the front gear was broken. She was helped by Emil Hossu, a famous actor. "He was one of the few people that didn't panic and helped us evacuate the aircraft in safety", said Grigore. After evacuating the passengers they returned to help the pilots who were trapped in the cockpit. "The cockpit was on fire and we lost any faith that we could save them". The next moments were horrible for all passengers and flight crew. The aircraft was destroyed by flames and with the pilots still on board. After 10 minutes, they saw one of the copilots trying to escape through a window. "He told us his foot was stuck and that he couldn't get it out. We tried to help him, but we couldn't. Finally, he managed to get out of the aircraft on fire. He was completely burned, you couldn't even look at him. It was terrible. The other 2 pilots burned alive as we watched them, helpless". The copilot died also. He was transported to the ER but died the next day because of the burns. The authorities said that the accident was due to an equipment malfunction. The 3 pilots were the only casualties.[42]

On 7 January 2016, a Blue Air Boeing 737-400, reg. YR-BAS, skidded off the runway after landing. No injuries were reported amongst the 116 passengers and crew. The accident's cause was the performance of an extended flare flight, followed by the runway touchdown at a distance of about 2300 ft. (approx. 700 m) measured from runway threshold 25. The wet snow layer present on the runway may have contributed to the accident.[43]

See also[edit]

List of the busiest airports in Romania

Airports in Romania

Aviation in Romania

Transport in Romania