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TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AIR TRANSPORTATION MARKET OF UKRAINE AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

Introduction. *Given the current complex realities of conducting aviation business in a pandemic, the application of large-scale measures to combat its spread, as well as taking into account the development of liberalization of the air market, analysis of the effectiveness of Ukrainian airlines and identify current trends in Ukraine's air transportation market is an important task.*

The purpose of the paper *is to investigate state of air transportation market in Ukraine in dynamics, to identify current trends and status of national airlines.*

Results. *After the recession of 2014-2015, the volume of international passenger traffic by domestic airlines increased during the period 2016-2019. In 2020, it decreased by 76 %. At the same time, passenger traffic of Ukrainian airlines decreased by 65 % compared to 2019. Over the past five years, Ukraine's air transportation market has evolved from highly concentrated to moderately concentrated. During this period, domestic airlines were more active in carrying out charter flights, while foreign airlines began to dominate in performing regular and scheduled flights with active participation of leading European low-cost airlines. Analysis of the market share of airlines with the largest volumes of passenger air traffic in air market of Ukraine showed that over past three years there has been a rapid decline in market shares of leading network airlines, both domestic and foreign. There was a rapid growth of market shares of foreign airlines – low-cost carriers.*

Conclusions. *The changes identified in the air transportation market of Ukraine can be explained not only by the consequences of the pandemic, but also by the consequences of air transportation market liberalization. The signing of the Agreement on the Common Aviation Area in September 2021 between Ukraine and the EU will have a direct impact on the development of air transportation market of Ukraine, both in terms of supply and demand. Domestic airlines will be able to benefit from market liberalization only if they increase their competitiveness.*

Keywords: *air transportation market, liberalization of air transportation market, common aviation space, airlines, regular transportation, charter transportation*

INTRODUCTION

For the first time, the world economy has faced a global challenge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the application of large-scale precautionary measures in the form of country lockdowns, along with local measures. The imposed restrictions have directly affected the aviation industry around the world, including Ukraine, whose air transportation market has been transformed over the past five years as a result of gradual liberalization. The signing of the Common Aviation Area Agreement with the European Union in September 2021 opened new prospects for the development of Ukraine's aviation industry and created new challenges for national airlines. This determines the feasibility of analyzing the current state of development of the aviation industry, the air transportation market and the current status of national airlines. The analysis of the state and structure of the air transportation market of Ukraine was carried out in the works of Y.F. Kulayev, V.I. Shchelkunov, T.I. Oleshko, I.O. Heyets, O.P. Ovsak, N.Yu. Liskovych, O.M. Kyrylenko, V.O. Novak, G.V. Zhavoronkova, I.P. Sadlovska, T.N. Skoda, et.al. However, given the current complex realities of conducting aviation business in a pandemic, the application of large-scale measures to combat its spread, as well as the consequences of liberalization of the air market, analysis of the effectiveness of Ukrainian airlines and identify current trends in Ukraine's air transport market is an urgent task.

The **PURPOSE** of the study is to investigate state of air transportation market in Ukraine in dynamics, to identify current trends and status of national airlines.

RESEARCH METHODS

During this research the general and specific scientific research methods were used, in particular: analysis and synthesis, logical and structural, economic and content analysis.

RESULTS

In the air transportation market of Ukraine for the last four years before the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in the volume of passenger traffic carried out by both domestic and foreign airlines. However, according to the results of 2019, growth in the segments of passenger and freight transport slowed down – a total of 103.3 thousand commercial flights were performed, which is only 3% more than in 2018, also decreased freight and mail, as well as total freight turnover compared to the previous year. In general, during the period 2016-2019 there was an increase in the growth rate of all volume indicators of domestic airlines, in particular, passenger turnover - increased almost 2 times, 67% more passengers were transported, as well as cargo in regular traffic [1]. However, in 2020, they have declined sharply due to global measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, based on both local restrictions and country lockdowns. In general, in 2020 the number of passengers who used the services of domestic airlines decreased compared to 2019 by 65 percent and amounted to 4797.5 thousand people. At the same time, the volume of passenger transportation by air of Ukraine returned to approximately the level of 2006-2007, when the value of this indicator was less than 5 million people.

According to the information of the State Aviation Service of Ukraine (SASU) on the results of the aviation industry of Ukraine for 9 months of 2021, there is a positive trend of rapid revival of the Ukrainian aviation industry, despite the continuing impact of negative factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Tables 1 and 2 present information on changes in the performance of Ukrainian airlines, including in international traffic for 2018-2021 as of October 1 of each year.

It should be noted that after declining in 2014-2015, the volume of international passenger traffic by domestic airlines increased: in 2017 – by 28.6 %, and in 2018 and 2019 growth slowed to 19.5 % and 9.6 %, respectively, and in 2020 year - decreased by 76 %. As shown in Table 2, in 2019 the volumes of international cargo and mail transportation decreased, as well as on regular flights, freight turnover also decreased by 14 %. In general, for the period 2016-2019 there was an increase in growth rate of all volume indicators of domestic airlines, in particular, passenger traffic in international traffic increased almost 2 times, passengers were transported by 67 % more, as well as cargo by 38 % more in regular international traffic. Thus, since the international transportation of passengers and cargo by volume provided the lion's share of the volume indicators of domestic airlines, changes in their volumes essentially determined the resulting performance of Ukrainian airlines.

Thus, more than half of all passenger traffic of domestic airlines were international regular flights. In 2018, domestic and foreign airlines performed 300 thousand flights, which was 18.5 % more than in 2017. Simultaneously with the increase in the number of flights in many directions, the network of routes of domestic airlines developed. Thus, during 2018 and 2019, Ukrainian airlines opened 17 new scheduled routes. At the same time, there was an expansion of activities in the Ukrainian market of foreign airlines, 5 new foreign airlines started regular flights to Ukraine. 2018 was also marked by the development of the route network of foreign airlines, which launched 27 international airlines. In total, during 2018, 38 foreign airlines from 37 countries flew to Ukraine. 37.8 % more passengers used their services than in 2017. In terms of the number of passengers carried in 2018, foreign airlines carried half of the total volume of regular passenger traffic between Ukraine and the countries of the world, as systematically presented in Table 3. During the period 2016-2020 the share of regular passenger flights in the total number of flights of Ukrainian airlines has been gradually decreased: from 69.4 % in 2016 to 64.5 % in 2019, and 39 % by the end of 2020. In turn, the share of international regular traffic in the total passenger traffic of domestic airlines gradually decreased – from almost 60 % in 2016 to 52 % in 2019 and 26,6 % by the end of 2020.

At the same time, in the market for the period 2016-2019 there was an expansion of foreign airlines. In 2019, their services were used by 37.4 % more passengers than in 2018. Share of foreign airlines in the total volume of regular passenger traffic between Ukraine and the world gradually increased and reached 72 %. The number of new air routes of foreign airlines to the airports of Ukraine grew faster than the Ukrainian ones to foreign airports, as can be seen from the table 3 data.

Table 1 – **Volumes of passenger transportation by national airlines of Ukraine**
[*compiled by the authors on the basis of systematization [1; 2]*]

Indicators	Volume indicators by years				The rate of change		
	9 months 2018	9 months 2019	9 months 2020	9 months 2021	2019 /2018	2020/ 2019	2021/ 2020
Passengers transported, thousand pass.	9677,6	10664,5	3770,8	7277,8	110,2	35,4	193,0
Including regular flights	6031,6	6508,2	1509,3	2493,1	107,9	23,2	165,2
Passenger turnover, billion pass.km	19,7	23,2	7,9	14,2	117,8	34,1	179,7
Including regular flights	11,9	13,8	2,7	4,0	116,0	19,6	148,1
Cargo and mail transported, Thousand tons	70,1	68,4	62,0	60,8	97,3	90,6	98,1
Including regular flights	16,1	15,0	4,2	6,4	93,2	28,0	152,4
Cargo turnover, thousand t.km	245,8	222,8	217,6	236,7	90,6	97,7	108,8
Including regular flights	69,3	72,6	15,2	29,6	104,8	20,9	194,7
Commercial flights performed, thousand flights	77,1	79,7	34,2	56,4	103,4	42,9	164,9
Including regular flights	51,3	52,0	15,6	25,3	101,4	30,0	162,2

Table 2 – **Volumes of passenger transportation by international flights of national airlines of Ukraine**
[compiled by the authors on the basis of systematization [1; 2]]

Indicators	Volume indicators by years				The rate of change		
	9 months 2018	9 months 2019	9 months 2020	9 months 2021	2019/ 2018	2020/ 2019	2021/ 2020
Passengers transported, thousand pass.	8859,4	9781,0	3380,6	6737,9	110,4	34,6	199,3
Including regular flights	5221,0	5632,6	1124,4	1961,2	107,9	20,0	174,4
Passenger turnover, billion pass.km	19,3	22,8	7,7	13,9	118,1	33,8	180,5
Including regular flights	11,5	13,4	2,5	3,7	116,5	18,7	148,0
Cargo and mail transported, Thousand tonns	69,9	68,1	61,8	60,8	97,1	90,7	98,4
Including regular flights	15,9	14,9	4,1	6,4	93,7	27,5	156,1
Cargo turnover, thousand t.km	245,7	222,6	217,5	236,7	90,5	97,7	108,8
Including regular flights	69,2	72,5	15,1	29,6	104,9	20,8	196,0
Commercial flights performed, thousand flights	64,8	67,0	27,2	46,0	103,4	40,6	169,1
Including regular flights	40,3	40,6	9,6	16,1	100,7	23,6	167,7

Table 3 – **Regular passenger traffic in the air transport market of Ukraine**
[compiled by the authors on the basis of systematization [1; 2]]

Indicators	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Share of regular passenger flights in the total number of flights of Ukrainian airlines,%	69,28%	64,11%	62,7%	60,2%	39%
The average passenger load ratio of Ukrainian airlines	78,2%	77,5%	78,8%	80,9%	69%
Number of Ukrainian airlines operating international regular services / Number of foreign airlines operating international regular services	10/28	10/29	10/38	10/40	8/31
Share of international regular traffic in the total volume of passenger flights operated by domestic airlines	59,72%	55,3%	54,22%	51,9%	26,7%
Number of countries in the world operated by Ukrainian regular flights / Number of countries from which regular flights were operated by foreign airlines	42/27	43/27	46/37	46/37	48/34
Number of international air routes started by Ukrainian airlines on a regular basis / Number of international air routes to Ukraine started by foreign airlines on a regular basis in the reporting year	4/3	10/10	17/27	17/29	6/24
Share of foreign airlines in the total volume of regular passenger traffic between Ukraine and the world, %	43,8%	46,1%	50,2%	57,0%	72%

During the whole period, the share of passengers carried by regular flights of domestic airlines decreased by almost a third, and the decrease occurred almost twice in 2020. At the same time, the number of scheduled flights of domestic airlines this year decreased by 20%, and for the period 2016-2019 – by 10%. The number of international air routes, operation of which began on a regular basis, increased: from 4 routes in 2016, to 10 in 2017, to 27 and 29 routes in 2018 and 2019 respectively. According to the results of 2020, only 6 new routes were opened. According to the results of 2019, 21 routes from 29 new routes of foreign airlines, were opened by low-cost airlines Ryanair and Wizz Air Hungary. Accordingly, the share of foreign airlines in the total volume of regular passenger traffic between Ukraine and the world grew: from 43.8 % in 2016 to 57 % in 2019 and 72 % by the end of 2020. It is from 2016 that the number of flights of foreign low-cost airlines to Ukraine began to grow, as noted in their studies by researchers [2; 4; 5]. Analysis of statistical reporting on the activities of the aviation industry of Ukraine showed that from 2017 to 2020, four domestic airlines: Ukraine International Airlines (UIA), Wind Rose, SkyUp Airlines LLC, Azur Air Ukraine can be called leading national airlines, given their contribution to industry volumes. According to a study [7], these airlines were rated as airlines with a "strong" market position. Table 4 presents a comparative description of the dynamics of changes in the number of flights of the top four domestic airlines (UIA, Wind Rose, SkyUp Airlines LLC, Azur Air Ukraine), their market share, the number of flights of all domestic airlines, their market shares, as well as the number of foreign airlines in the air transportation market of Ukraine.

The analysis of the data presented in Table 4 showed that there was a steady decline in the growth rate of the number of domestic flights, despite the fact that the growth rate of the number of flights of the leading airlines of Ukraine was higher. At the same time, the growth rate of the number of direct flights of foreign airlines significantly exceeded the growth rate of domestic ones. There was a decrease in the share of domestic airlines – from 60 % in 2017 to 51.6 % in 2020, although among the ten leading airlines, the share of four leading domestic airlines gradually decreased from 47 % to 41% for the period 2017-2019. However, according to the results of air transportation in 2020, the share of these leading airlines has grown to 77 %. During the study period, the share of foreign airlines in the total volume of regular passenger traffic between Ukraine and the world gradually increased: from 36 % to 65 %, and over the past 2 years, growth has occurred at a steady growth rate of 14 % per year. Table 5 presents the dynamics of indicators of the state of competition in the air market of Ukraine on the basis of a range of concentration indices of airlines, calculated on the basis of shares of key groups of airlines in terms of volume of traffic.

Table 4 – **Estimates of the presence of airlines in the air market of Ukraine** [compiled by the authors based on the analysis [1; 2]]

Indicators	2017	2018	The rate of change, 2018/2017	2019	The rate of change, 2019/2018	2020	The rate of change, 2020/2019
Number of flights of four leading domestic airlines	69 974	78 262	1,12	86 817	1,11	36014	0,41
Number of flights of domestic airlines	97252	106654	1,10	109777	1,03	49633	0,45
Number of direct flights of foreign airlines	54983	69054	1,26	83950	1,22	40239	0.48
Share of flights of top four domestic airlines from total number of flights of top ten airlines in the Ukrainian market	46,40%	43,41%	0,93	41,63%	0,95	77,5%	1,86
Share of domestic airline flights in the total number of direct flights	64,99%	60,70%	0,93	56,67%	0,93	51,6%	0,91
Share of foreign airlines in the total volume of regular passenger traffic between Ukraine and the world,%	46,1%	50,2%	1,08	57,0%	1,14	65,0%	1,14

Table 5 – **Assessment of the state of competition in the aviation market of Ukraine** [compiled by the authors based on the analysis [1; 2]]

Indicators of the state of competition in the air transportation market	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Concentration index of 5 major airlines in the market	0,82	0,80	0,77	0,72	0,67
Concentration index of 3 major airlines in the air market	0,7	0,66	0,6	0,53	0,46
Concentration index of the largest foreign low-cost companies in the aviation market of Ukraine	0,07	0,09	0,14	0,17	0,22
Concentration index of the largest domestic airlines	0,47	0,46	0,43	0,42	0,42

Thus, based on the absolute values of concentration indices, we can conclude that the air transportation market of Ukraine for 2016-2020 from highly concentrated to moderately concentrated. In addition, the concentration index of the largest domestic airlines decreased (based on the number of flights), with a stable value of 42% over the past two years (before the COVID-19 pandemic and during the pandemic). There has been a rapid increase in the concentration index of foreign low-cost airlines in the aviation market of Ukraine (three times over the period), while the share of foreign airlines in regular passenger traffic between Ukraine and the world has also increased from 46% to 65% over the past four years. The revealed state of competition in the aviation market of Ukraine, in fact, reflects results of gradual liberalization of terms of Ukraine's bilateral intergovernmental agreements with other countries.

The revealed state of competition in the aviation market of Ukraine, in fact, reflects results of gradual liberalization of terms of Ukraine's bilateral intergovernmental agreements with other countries. In particular, the source [5] details state of liberalization of bilateral agreements in Ukraine. In turn, growing presence of foreign low-cost airlines is a consequence of the regional integration processes development in the air transportation industry. Thus, European low-cost carriers in 2003 won the right to be designated carriers in bilateral agreements of EU member states with other countries, and therefore these agreements were amended [7]. These factors have a direct impact on the development of the air transportation market of Ukraine.

In September 2021, the long-awaited signing of the Common Aviation Area Agreement between Ukraine and the EU took place. The consequences of the implementation of this Agreement will have a direct impact on the development of the air transportation market of Ukraine both on the supply side and on the demand side. The offer of air transport services on the market will be significantly expanded due to the simplified access of European airlines, which will negatively affect the sale of transporttation of Ukrainian airlines, which is well detailed in the paper [5]. At the same time, liberalization will help expand the list of routes and reduce fares, which is an advantage for consumers of air transport services – passengers and cargo owners. Domestic airlines will be able to benefit from market liberalization only if they increase their competitiveness. Below, given the availability of operational data only for the first 9 months of 2021, presents an analysis of the dynamics of the number of passengers carried by Ukrainian airlines for the period 9 months 2010 – 9 months 2021.

As shown in Figure 1, it can be argued that Ukrainian airlines, despite the continuing impact of negative factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, are steadily increasing passenger traffic. Following the results of 9 months of 2021, the passenger traffic of Ukrainian airlines increased by 93% compared to the same period in 2020 and amounted to 7277.8 thousand passengers, but it has not yet exaggerated the corresponding traffic of the "pre-pandemic" 2019. The current increasing in passenger traffic of domestic airlines for 9 months of 2021 can be explained by growth of demand for air transportation during active holiday periods: spring, summer, autumn, along with the gradual opening of borders by countries and the removal of restrictions on international flights. Therefore, the final conclusions can be made after receiving complete data for 2021. So far, based on the operational information of SASU on flights of domestic and foreign airlines performed in October 2021 in the airspace of Ukraine, it is known that the number of flights of new foreign airlines is growing, despite the fact that the share of domestic airlines is almost 60 %.

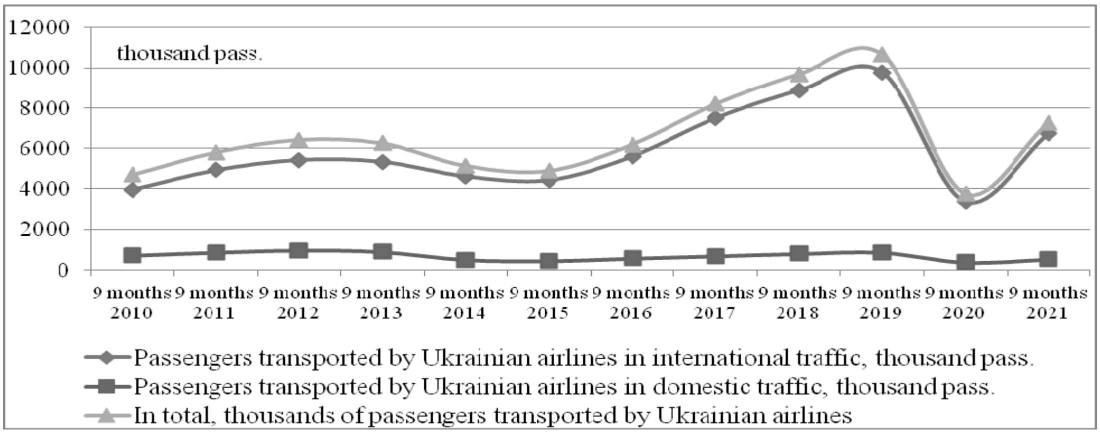

Fig. 1. Volumes of passenger transportation by Ukrainian airlines for the period 30 September 2010 – September 2021, thousand pass [calculated by the authors on the basis of data [1]]

CONCLUSIONS

After the decline in 2014-2015, the volume of international passenger traffic by domestic airlines increased in 2017 – by 28.6%, and in 2018 and 2019 growth slowed to 19.5 % and 9.6 %, respectively, and in 2020 – decreesed by 76 %. The number of passengers who used flight services of domestic airlines decreased compared to 2019 by 65 %. At the same time, based on the operational results of the aviation industry of Ukraine for 9 months of 2021, a positive trend was revealed for the rapid revival of Ukrainian airlines, despite the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The analysis of the state of competition in the air transportation market of Ukraine showed that in 2016-2020 it turned from highly concentrated to moderately concentrated. Over the past five years, domestic airlines have become more active in charter flights in the Ukrainian aviation market, while foreign airlines have begun to dominate regular and scheduled flights with the active participation of leading low-cost airlines. Analysis of the dynamics of the market share of airlines with the most significant volumes of transportation in the aviation market of Ukraine showed that in 2019-2021 there was a rapid decline in market shares of leading network airlines, both domestic and foreign. There was a rapid growth of market shares of foreign low-cost airlines: Ryanair, Wizz Air Hungary LLC and Pegasus Hava Tasimaciligi A.S.

These changes in the air transportation market of Ukraine can be explained not only by the consequences of the pandemic, but also by the consequences of the liberalization of the emerging air transportation market. The consequences of the signing of the Common Aviation Area Agreement between Ukraine and the EU in September 2021 will also have a direct impact on the development of the Ukrainian air transportation market, both in terms of supply and demand, which will be the direction of our further research. Offering of air transport services will be significantly expanded due to the simplified access of European airlines, which will negatively affect sales of transportation of Ukrainian airlines. At the same time, liberalization will help expand the list of routes and reduce fares, which is an advantage for consumers of air transport services – passengers and cargo owners. Domestic airlines will be able to benefit from market liberalization only if they increase their competitiveness.

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ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ РОЗВИТКУ РИНКУ АВІАЦІЙНИХ ПЕРЕВЕЗЕНЬ УКРАЇНИ ТА ЧИННИКИ ВПЛИВУ

Вступ. *Зважаючи на сучасні складні реалії ведення авіаційного бізнесу в умовах пандемії, застосування масштабних заходів боротьби з її поширенням, а також враховуючи розвиток лібералізації авіаринку, проведення аналізу ефективності діяльності авіакомпаній України та виявлення сучасних тенденцій розвитку ринку авіаційних перевезень України є важливою задачею.*

Метою *нашого дослідження є вивчення стану ринку авіаперевезень України у динаміці, виявлення сучасних тенденцій розвитку та статусу національних авіакомпаній.*

Результати. *Після спаду в період 2014-2015 рр. обсяги міжнародних перевезень пасажирів вітчизняними авіакомпаніями зростали за період 2016-2019 рр. У 2020 р. відбулось їх зниження на 76 %. Пасажирський трафік українських авіакомпаній зменшився порівняно з 2019 р. на 65 %. За останні п'ять років ринок авіаційних перевезень України з висококонцентрованого перетворився у помірно концентрований. За цей період вітчизняні авіакомпанії більш проявляли активність у здійсненні чартерних перевезень, тоді як іноземні авіакомпанії почали домінувати у здійсненні regular та scheduled рейсів за активної участі провідних лоукост – авіакомпаній. Аналіз динаміки ринкової частки авіакомпаній з найбільшими обсягами пасажирських авіаперевезень на авіаринку України показав, що за останні три роки мало місце стрімке зниження ринкових часток провідних мережевих авіакомпаній як вітчизняних, так й іноземних. Відбулось стрімке зростання ринкових часток іноземних авіакомпаній – лоукостерів.*

Висновки. *Виявлені зміни ринку авіаперевезень України можуть бути пояснені не лише наслідками пандемії, але й наслідками лібералізації ринку авіаперевезень, що набуває обертів. Підписання у вересні 2021 р. Угоди про спільний авіаційний простір між Україною та ЄС матиме безпосередній вплив на розвиток ринку авіаперевезень України як з боку пропозиції, так і з боку попиту. Вітчизняні авіакомпанії зможуть отримати переваги від лібералізації ринку лише за умов підвищення своєї конкурентоспроможності.*

Ключові слова: *ринок авіаперевезень, лібералізація ринку авіаперевезень, спільний авіаційний простір, авіакомпанії, регулярні перевезення, чартерні перевезення*