

Cargo, passengers and the rail link

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The EuroAirport handles passenger and cargo traffic. Before the COVID-19 pandemic it served about nine million passengers a year, a figure reached again after the recovery, which placed it third among Swiss airports after Zurich and Geneva.¹ Low-cost carriers, above all easyJet, have operated a base at the airport since the 2000s, which transformed the passenger structure. The airport now serves mainly European destinations, with a few long-haul connections operated by charter or holiday airlines.

Cargo traffic is of particular importance for Basel's economy. The airport handles express freight for international integrators, which use it as a hub for the region. It also handles pharmaceutical shipments that require temperature control, for which the airport and the logistics companies have invested in specialised facilities.² The pharmaceutical groups of Basel rely on these facilities for the export of high-value medicines, which complements the Rhine ports described in the preceding chapter.³ A large part of the airport's cargo is transported by road on trucks to or from other airports, a practice known as road feeder service.

The airport has long lacked a rail connection, an omission that grows more significant as passenger numbers rise. Most passengers arrive by road or by bus from the Basel SBB station. A rail link between the existing Basel–Mulhouse line and the airport has been planned for many years. France and Switzerland have agreed on its financing, which also involves the European Union. Commissioning is foreseen for the 2030s.⁴ The link would connect the airport to the regional rail networks of all three countries and strengthen its role as a trinational transport hub.

1 Notes

1. On the passenger numbers of the EuroAirport (about 9.1 million in 2019 and the recovery after 2020) and its ranking among Swiss and

Cargo, passengers and the rail link

French airports, see the annual reports of the EuroAirport. Figures to be verified. ↩

2. On the cargo traffic of the EuroAirport, including express freight and pharmaceutical shipments, and the certification of facilities for temperature-controlled goods (e.g. under the IATA CEIV Pharma programme), see the annual reports of the EuroAirport. Figures and certifications to be verified. ↩
3. See Part H, Chapter I, on the Rhine ports and the logistics of the pharmaceutical industry. ↩
4. On the planned rail link to the EuroAirport (Bahnanschluss EuroAirport / Nouvelle liaison ferroviaire EuroAirport), its financing and the timetable, see the publications of the EuroAirport, SNCF Réseau and the Federal Office of Transport. Status to be verified. ↩

For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/basel-cargo-passengers-and-the-rail-link