

WEEKLY REPORT

10 February 2023



ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

UK firefighters' strike postponed as union votes over new pay offer

Strike action by members of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has been put on hold following an increased pay offer by fire service employers. During talks that took place on Tuesday, employers put forward a revised offer including a 7% pay rise backdated to July last year and another 5% from this July. Since 2010, union members have experienced a 12% drop in real-terms earnings. Strike action was set to take place as more than 80% of members who voted in a ballot in December backed the strikes, which would have been the first UK-wide fire strikes over pay since 2003. Members must now decide whether or not they accept this offer, which general secretary of the FBU, Matt Wrack, says is a "testament to the power of collective action through the Fire Brigades Union".

UK economy narrowly avoided recession

New figures have shown that the UK economy narrowly avoided falling into recession last year after seeing zero growth between October and December, with strikes across health, transport and the postal service partly responsible for a sharp 0.5% fall in economic output in December. Chancellor Jeremy Hunt believes the figures show "underlying resilience". The UK is however still expected to enter a recession this year according to the Bank of England, though it is thought to be shorter and less severe than previously predicted. Inflation - the rate at which prices are rising - is slowing but remains close to a 40-year-high at 10.5%. Rachel Reeves, Labour's shadow chancellor, said the latest figures show the economy "is stuck in the slow lane".

Ukraine: No immediate transfer of UK fighter jets

The defence secretary Ben Wallace, has stated that there will be no immediate transfer of UK fighter jets to Ukraine, warning that supplying aircraft to use in the conflict would potentially take months. The UK's existing commitments to Ukraine, including air policing in the Baltic states and a squadron of Typhoons in Qatar, also means there are not many jets left to spare. Training pilots to use such jets also

comes with large practicality issues and would take a lot of time even for those with combat experience. Wallace did not completely rule out sending aircraft to Ukraine however, following a renewed call for jets from president Zelensky, affirming that alternative provisions for air cover in the country would be focused on, such as long-range missiles and drones to support moving troops.

TRADE UPDATE

Pandemic triggers change in holiday booking behaviour, Abta reveals

Consumers are giving more thought and consideration to those they are booking in a change in behaviour since the pandemic, according to Abta. Three-quarters of people say booking with a well-known name in the travel industry will be an important part of the booking process this year, up from 62% in pre-pandemic 2019. Latest figures from the travel association also show people are 36% more likely to book with a travel professional now than before the pandemic, with getting the security of a package holiday (45%), up-to-date advice (38%) and good value for money (31%) among the top reasons for doing so. The results came as Abta suggested a desire to get away this February school half-term reflects a wider demand for overseas travel with agents and operators reporting record-breaking sales in January for 2023 holidays.

Three new appointments for Abta's membership committee

Three industry figures have been appointed to Abta's membership committee, bringing the number to 11. Two are new appointments: Lisa Henning, Inspire Europe managing director, and Roshni Shah, EMEA finance shared services – finance director at Flight Centre. A recent reappointment is Nick Hughes, following his new role as sales director at Princess Cruises UK & Europe. Rachel Jordan, Abta's financial protection and membership director, said: "We're pleased to welcome them onto the committee and look forward to working with them – making the most of their knowledge and insight".

Second Travel Weekly People Summit to take place in July

Second Travel Weekly People Summit to take place in July Travel Weekly is to hold its second annual People Summit on Thursday 5 July. The conference will be hosted at the offices of Grant Thornton in central London and follows a highly successful inaugural event at the same venue in autumn 2022. The half-day summit will again focus on the industry's efforts and challenges around recruitment and retention and the perception of the sector as a career choice, and will feature a series of discussions, debates and presentations from a range of experts. Key subjects to be covered will include recruitment; training and development; the future of the workplace and working culture; the role of technology; and the importance of developing a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Gatwick steps up apprentice intake

Six apprenticeship vacancies across four different engineering and IT roles have been made available at Gatwick as part of an expanded work and learning scheme. Apprenticeships, which have been run at the airport since 1977, range from two to four-year programmes. They include studying at either East Surrey College in Redhill, Nescot College in Epsom or Langley College in Slough, alongside hands-on experience at the airport. Gatwick currently has 17 engineering apprentices across four cohorts, with an equal split of men and women for the first time two years ago.

AIRLINE UPDATE

Etihad - A recruitment open day is being held by Etihad Airways in London next week for “exceptional people” to become cabin crew. The event being held by the national airline of the UAE is part of a drive to recruit new team members globally. Successful applicants will undergo comprehensive training in Abu Dhabi, which includes all aspects of cabin safety and service delivery.

EasyJet - EasyJet has become the latest travel company to launch an appeal to help charities working in regions hit by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. From Saturday (11 February), easyJet will make emergency onboard collections to raise funds for Unicef’s Turkey and Syria emergency earthquake appeal. Donations will go directly towards the emergency appeal supporting children and their families in the region who need it the most. Airlines are offering free evacuation flights for survivors of Monday’s earthquakes in Turkey and operators such as Intrepid Travel have set up appeals.

Ryanair - Budget carrier Ryanair has announced its biggest ever Cardiff schedule for summer 2023, with more than 25 weekly flights across four routes. They include a new Belfast International service and increased frequencies on its popular Dublin link, plus flights to Faro and Malaga. The additions mean that the airline will see capacity grow by 63% compared to summer 2022. Ryanair has also announced details of its summer schedules from Exeter, Teesside and Derry airports. Exeter will have 12 weekly flights, offering Alicante, Malaga and the new Faro route, while Teesside’s schedule features 14 weekly flights, to Alicante, Corfu, Faro and Palma.

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES, OTA UPDATE

Royal Caribbean - The boss of Royal Caribbean International says the three-storey suite debuting on the incoming Icon of the Seas ship is already 55% sold for 2024. Speaking during a quarterly financial results call on Tuesday (7 February), president and chief executive Michael Bayley said the 7,600-passenger vessel, which is slated to launch in January 2024, was the “best-selling product” in the line’s history. The

average selling price for the Ultimate Family Townhouse, which can sleep up to eight people, was \$75,000 per week, Bayley confirmed.

Jet2holidays - Jet2holidays is to directly support aid efforts in Turkey by donating £50,000 to buy emergency supplies. The operator is also sending 100 transfer coaches into earthquake affected areas to deliver provisions, as well as to help evacuate people out of the disaster zone. The relief initiative reflects a move by Tui to send a fleet of coaches into areas of southeastern Turkey left devastated by Monday's earthquakes in the region and northern Syria, which has seen the death toll top 21,000.

Audley - Audley Travel achieved its highest ever trade sales in January and ended the month more than 60% above target. A quarter of the bookings with the tailor-made operator were for the US, with half of these for California. A further quarter was for Australia. The average booking value was 17% higher than for bookings taken in the same month in 2022. Trade sales manager Greg Thurston said: "Not only has this January been our best turn-of-year trade sales period ever, but it has seen us exceed our monthly target by more than in any other month".

SOCIAL UPDATE

Twitter Blue subscribers now able to post tweets up to 4,000 characters

U.S Twitter Blue subscribers can now publish tweets that are up to 4,000 characters, compared to the standard 280. These longer tweets will appear as a standard length in the main feed with a 'show more' option to read the full caption. This move is intended to encourage big voices to post more on the app. There are currently 300,000 Twitter Blue subscribers from a total of 250 million users, therefore this functionality can only be used by a small percentage of the platform's users.

Pinterest reaches 450 million active users

Pinterest has released its earnings for Q4 and full year earnings for 2022 which reveal consistent increases in revenue and users. In Q4, the platform added 5 million new active users. This is an encouraging sign after its reduction in users after the COVID-19-induced boom of early 2021. One of the factors contributing to Pinterest's success is Idea Pins, which is a stories-like feature that has especially appealed to Gen Z. Revenue wise, the platform saw a 4% year-over-year increase with the North America region being its highest earnings generator.

MICE UPDATE

Isla targets growth of carbon measurement platform

In response to growing awareness of events sustainability, events industry body isla

has appointed Malcolm Leach as its first chief technical officer (CTO). Leach's main task will be to develop TRACE – the measurement platform designed to help businesses measure and minimise carbon emissions at live, hybrid and digital events. He will provide technical leadership and help develop and grow the TRACE team to ensure the platform continues to meet the needs of the industry and the wider net-zero landscape. As CTO, he will also spearhead new data-driven product features to enable adopters to seamlessly measure, manage and minimise carbon emissions for events of all sizes, engaging their value chain and brand partners along the way.

LIGHTER NOTE

'Naughty' beavers steal wildlife webcam for their lodge. Read more [here](#).