

A Monthly Snapshot of International Arrivals to Sri Lanka from Immigration Statistics

February 2022

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority



#### Introduction

The following document provides a synthesis of the most recent February, 2022 international visitor arrivals data sourced from the Department of Immigration & Emigration. The data is current as of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, and subject to change. The data provides an overview of month-on-month and annual changes in visitor arrivals to Sri Lanka from international source markets. The data is meant to provide an overview of how travel and tourism is performing to Sri Lanka.

This report is developed by the Research & International Relations Division at Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), with the technical support from the Australian Government funded Market Development Facility (MDF Sri Lanka) and Twenty31 Consulting Inc. Questions, comments and feedback are welcome and will support the future amendment and enhancement of the report to ensure it meets the data and insights needs of Sri Lanka's Government and industry stakeholders.





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#### Summary

The total number of international tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka during February 2022 was 96,507. This significant improvement during the month of February follows the sharp contraction in arrivals after the month of April, 2021. This reflects the improvement in international arrivals potentially owing to factors such as vaccination advances around the world, softer restrictions for vaccinated travellers,

use of digital tools to facilitate safe travel, such as the EU COVID Certificate, and growing consumer confidence in some outbound source markets.

As of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 178,834 international tourists visited Sri Lanka this year. The largest source markets recorded for the month of February were Russia, India, the United Kingdom, Germany, followed by France.

Table 1. Monthly tourist arrivals, February 2022

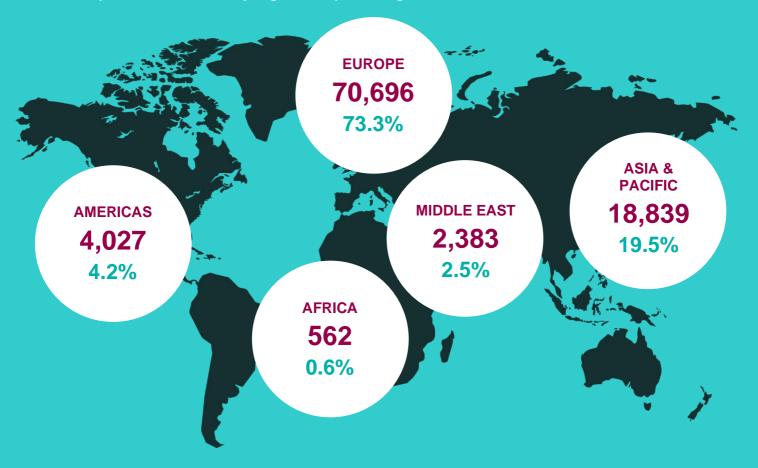
Month	2021	2022	% change 2022/21
January	1,682	82,327	4,794.6
February	3,366	96,507	2,767.1
March	4,581	-	
April	4,168	-	
May	1,497	-	
June	1,614	-	
July	2,429	-	
August	5,040	-	
September	13,547	-	
October	22,771	-	
November	44,294	-	
December	89,506	-	
TOTAL	194,495	178,834	





# Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share February 2022

Map 1. Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share



Europe became the largest source of tourist traffic to Sri Lanka with 73.3% of the total traffic received in February 2022. Pent up demand especially from countries such as Russia, India, the United Kingdom, Germany and France is likely to have driven this growth momentum. Asia and the Pacific accounted for 19.5% of total arrivals. The Middle East accounted for 2.5% of the total traffic while the Americas accounted for 4.2%.

February being a peak month for tourist arrivals in Sri lanka, it is anticipated that arrivals will continue to grow towards the month of March, expect for arrivals especially European While signs of recovery were evident until the end of February, market uncertainity continue to overshadow the tourism industry with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It is expected that the crisis in Ukraine will have far reaching implications on many source markets and will further dampen consumer confidence which was gradullay building after the devastating Omicron variant.



# Top primary markets and top potential markets February 2022

#### Top primary markets



Note: The top primary markets for Sri Lanka have been identified using a combination of historical visitor arrivals data, total outbound market size data, overall size of the economy, recent consumer sentiment data and other variables. The intention is to track these source markets on a go-forward basis to understand future performance for Sri Lanka's tourism economy, including during the projected international tourism recovery period, 2022-2025 (source: Pacific Asia Travel Association, January, 2021).

<sup>\*</sup> A prolonged absence of Ukrainian and Russian tourists is anticipated due to the current conflict and its longterm implications. Accordingly, Russia is not likely to be a primary market for Sri Lanka from February onwards.



#### Top potential markets



Note: The top potential markets for Sri Lanka have been identified using a combination of historical visitor arrivals data, total outbound market size data, overall size of the economy, recent consumer sentiment data and other variables. The intention is to track these source markets on a go-forward basis to understand future performance for Sri Lanka's tourism economy, including during the projected international tourism recovery period, 2022-2025 (source: Pacific Asia Travel Association, January, 2021).



#### The impact of the Ukraine crisis on Sri Lanka Tourism

The travel industry that has been battered by COVID -9 and related conditions in the last two years, has gradually started to recover anticipating a boom, and is again faced with another shock and uncertainty with the crisis in Ukraine. This will result in serious implications for destinations including Sri Lanka, that heavily rely on Eastern European markets for their inbound tourism.

Russians and Ukrainians are known and valued for their resilient nature in terms of travel behaviour and longer duration of stay. In 2019, Russian travellers took more than 40 million international outbound trips, becoming one of the fastest growing outbound markets. They were also the sixth highest international visitor spending market (Grima, 2022). The expenditure per day (non-package, excluding air fare) of a Russian tourist in Sri Lanka was about \$USD162.94 in 2018, while an expenditure per day of \$USD164.24 was recorded for an average Ukrainian tourist (The survey on Departing Foreign Tourists, 2018).

Ukrainians were the first batch of tourists to arrive in Sri Lanka during the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2020, and Russia was among the top ten source markets for Sri Lanka. According to Forwardkeys, prior to the invasion, Russian outbound flight bookings for March to May 2022 had recovered to 32% of pre-pandemic levels, with some holiday hotspots doing exceptionally well. Sri Lanka had occupied the 10<sup>th</sup> position (with a share of 7%) among the top 20 most booked destinations by Russians for the period of March to May 2022 (Hamdi, 2022). Russian tourist arrivals recorded for the year 2020 and 2021 are 49,397 and 16,894 respectively. While 17,169 and 7,037 Ukrainian tourist arrivals had been recorded for the consecutive years of 2020 and 2021 respectively. This growth momentum continued to 2022, with 28,818 total Russian arrivals and 13,062 Ukrainian arrivals recorded from 1st of January to 28th February, exceeding pre pandemic levels. The tourism reopening time in Sri Lanka in comparison to other similar destinations such as Thailand, promotion initiatives with Russia and initiation of direct flights could be attributed as the main factors behind this growth since October 2021.

Given the importance of especially the Russian market, the implications of this crisis will be far reaching for Sri Lanka tourism, likely for a prolonged period of time. As voiced by several major travel agents in Sri Lanka, they are already getting cancellations from Russian tourists and no new bookings had been received. Accordingly, the following factors can be pointed out as major impediments in relation to outbound travel and prolonged absence of tourists especially from Russia and Ukraine that in turn will likely affect Sri Lanka tourism.

- The devaluation of the Rouble which has plunged by 30 percent against the US dollar. This will greatly crimp the spending power of Russian travelers.
- The impact of declared sanctions against Russia and the adverse impact on the economy.
   Western democratic governments are already pushing international companies to halt sales, cut ties, and dump tens of billions of dollars' worth of investments in Russia.
- The removal of Russia's central bank and other Russian banks from the SWIFT global payments system
- Disrupted flights

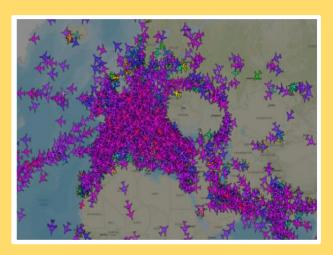


Russia's airspace is the popular overflight for EU flights en route to Asia. As highlighted by Bloomberg and CNN, the European Union have closed all airspace across its 27 countries to Russian airplanes and Russia has reciprocated with its own bans, causing airlines to fly circuitous intercontinental routes. This will have implications for other European markets as well. European carriers going in the other direction face delays and higher fuel expense, after Russia, a key pathway to Asia, began blocking access.

Countries such as Turkey, United Kingdom, Japan, Poland have suspended their flights to Russia and Russia has reciprocated with its own bans.

Aeroflot, Rossiya and Pobeda operate a fleet of more than 300 mostly Boeing and Airbus aircraft. Sanctions announced by European Commission, specifically banning the sale of European aircraft to Russia, imperiling further Airbus deliveries to them will have serious implications that will hinder the air connectivity for Russians in the long run. Further U.S. sanctions announced by President Joe Biden also include export controls, prohibiting the sale of U.S. technologies that can be used by aerospace companies. This may extend to technologies used in Boeing aircraft (Unnikrishnan, 2022)





Aircraft tracker ADS-B Exchange, February 24<sup>th</sup>, Empty air space over Ukraine and its border with Russia

Closure of airspace; Source: CNN

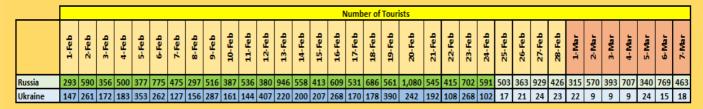
- The surge in aviation fuel that will be reflected through the increase in airfares. Oil prices have surged above \$USD100 a barrel for the first time in seven years.
- Low travel sentiment owing to the above factors and fears of not been able to return.
- The devastating impact of the war on the Ukrainian economy, society and its inhabitants will have lasting effects on their lives, making travel a least requirement/priority.

The impact on other European source markets of Sri Lanka:

- The surge in air fares and longer travel duration due to overflight restrictions.
- Due to the economic ties with Eastern Europe, especially Russia, the repercussions of the war will adversely affect the spending power of travellers.
- Air connectivity issues.



Accordingly, a protracted absence of Eastern European travellers, especially from Russia and Ukraine is to be anticipated given the nature of the crisis in Ukraine and its current and future implications. The market share of Russia and Ukraine out of total arrivals for 2019 was 6.3% while the market share for 2021 was 12.2%. Now is the time to diversify the markets and concentrate on new primary and potential markets with larger economies, large outbound populations and higher yield.





A closer look at the tourist arrivals from Russia throughout the month of February till the first week of March depicts an optimistic trend as it reveals that Russians still continue to travel to Sri Lanka. It can be assumed that these are pre booked visits given the current situation of the crisis. However, with the current air accessibility between Russia and Sri Lanka and other favourable factors, Sri Lanka will remain as a favourite destination for Russians though the numbers will definitely decline.

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#### Top ten source markets

#### February 2022

The Russian Federation, India, the United Kingdom, Germany and France were Sri Lanka's top five international tourist generating markets for the month of February this year. Russia was the largest source of tourist visits to Sri Lanka with 16% of the total traffic received in February. An analysis of Russian arrivals in the consecutive years reveals that it has almost exceeded the pre pandemic levels and and reached an increase of more than two fold as compared to February 2019. This could be likely due to increased interest by Russian tour operators in alternative destinations to Thailand and Goa with strict public health measures in place and the launching of direct flights to Russia. According to Forwardkeys, Sri Lanka had occupied the 10th position (with a share of 7%) among the top 20 most booked destinations by Russians for the period of March to May 2022. However, the continuity of this growth momentum will be stalled for a prolonged period of time due to the current crisis in Ukraine. India and the United Kingdom accounted for 13% and 11% of the total traffic respectively. The on arrival visa facility introduced for the Indian tourists could have partly contributed for the increased arrivals from India. The growth in arrivals from countries in Asia and the Pacific, Western, Central & Eastern Europe, suggests a revitalization of leisure tourism, potentially enabled by factors such as the gradual improvement of traveller confidence, the lifting of travel restrictions, the gradual shrinking cases of the Omicron varient and the gradual containment of the pandemic in Sri Lanka.

Chart 1.Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, February 2022

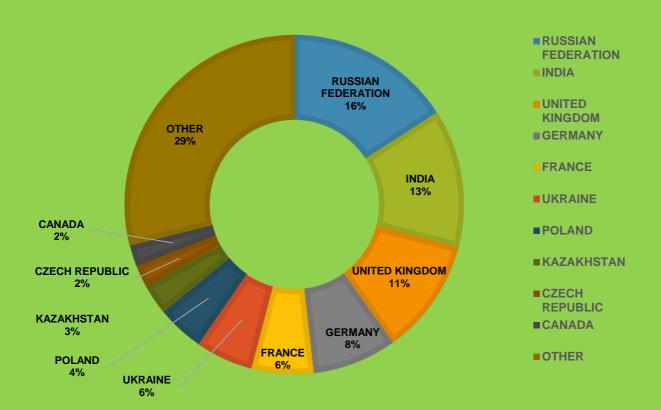




Table 2. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, February 2022

Rank	Country of Residence -	Tourist Arriv	Tourist Arrivals		
	Residence -	By Air	By Sea	Total	( February 2021)
1	Russian Federation	15,340	-	15,340	119
2	India	12,744		12,744	79
3	United Kingdom	10,642	-	10,642	79
4	Germany	7,780	-	7,780	245
5	France	5,699	-	5,699	40
6	Ukraine	5,288	-	5,288	845
7	Poland	4,315	-	4,315	11
8	Kazakhstan	2,821	-	2,821	1,231
9	Czech Republic	2,055	-	2,055	17
10	Canada	1,958	-	1,958	71

Chart 2. Comparison of arrivals from top ten markets to Sri Lanka, Feb 2022/ Jan 2021



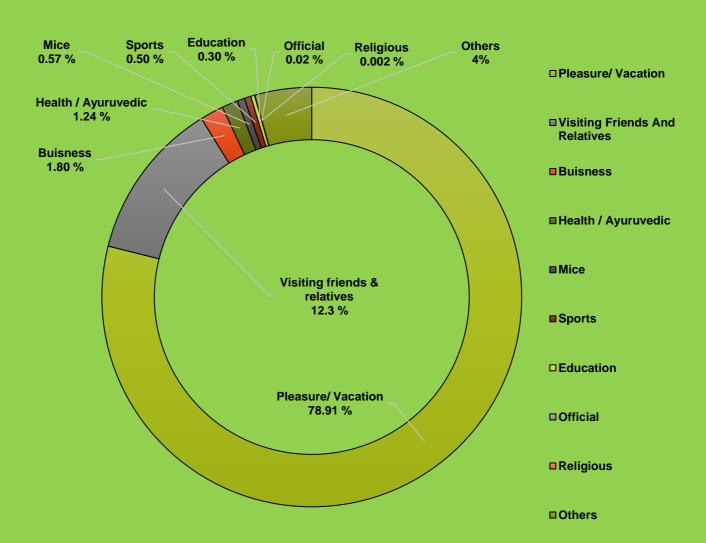


### Tourist arrivals by purpose of visit

#### February 2022

An analysis of tourist arrivals by purpose of visit reveals that a majority (79%) of tourists had visited Sri Lanka for pleasure/vacation, while for 12% of tourists the main purpose was visiting friends and relatives. Only 2% of tourists had visited for business related purposes. 1.2% had visited for health related purposes, while 0.8% had visited for purposes such as sports and education.

Chart 3. Tourist arrivals by purpose of visit, February 2022





## International tourist arrivals by country of residence

	F	- ebruary		Tourist	%	Total Tourist	Total Tourist	% Change
	Tou	rist Arrivals		Arrivals February	Change February	Arrivals up to February	Arrivals up to February	up to February
	By Air	By Sea	Total	2021	(22/21)	2022	2021	(20/21)
AMERICAS	4,027	0	4,027	159		7,718	186	
North America	3,846	0	3,846	149	-	7,362	176	-
Canada	1,958	0	1,958	71	-	3,624	88	-
Mexico	33	0	33	3	-	54	3	-
United States	1,855	0	1,855	75	-	3,684	85	-
Carribean & Central America	40	0	40	4	-	64	4	-
Costa Rica	11	0	11	-		15	-	
Jamaica	0	0	0	-	-	2	-	-
Others	29	0	29	4	-	47	4	-
South America	141	0	141	6	-	292	6	-
Argentina	25	0	25	-		54	-	
Brazil	48	0	48	3	-	97	3	-
Chile	14	0	14	1	-	43	1	-
Colombia	28	0	28	2	-	48	2	-
Others	26	0	26	-	-	50	-	-
AFRICA	562	0	562	6	-	982	6	-
North Africa	272	0	272	2	-	484	2	-
Morocco	61	0	61	1	-	90	1	-
Sudan	151	0	151	1	-	298	1	-
Others	60	0	60	-	-	96	-	-
Sub-Saharan Africa	290	0	290	4	-	498	4	-
Kenya	19	0	19	-	-	38	-	-
Mauritius	14	0	14	1	-	21	1	-
Nigeria	3	0	3	-	-	8	-	-
South Africa	161	0	161	1	-	234	1	-
Others	93	0	93	2	-	197	2	-



		- ebruary		Tourist	%	Total Tourist	Total Tourist	% Change
	By Air	rist Arrivals  By Sea	Total	Arrivals February 2021	Change February (22/21)	Arrivals up to February 2022	Arrivals up to February 2021	up to February (20/21)
ASIA & PACIFIC	18,839	0	18,839	301	-	38,370	381	_
North East Asia	550	0	550	131	-	999	159	-
China	266	0	266	117	-	492	144	-
Japan	122	0	122	9	-	214	10	-
South Korea	117	0	117	5	-	221	5	-
Taiwan	23	0	23		-	36		
Others	22	0	22		-	36		
South East Asia	827	0	827	29	-	1,527	41	-
Cambodia	22	0	22	-	-	43	-	-
Indonesia	81	0	81	5	-	156	8	-
Malaysia	147	0	147	3	-	306	4	-
Myanmar	0	0	0	4	-	16	5	-
Philippines	157	0	157	15	-	266	21	-
Singapore	283	0	283	-	-	512	1	-
Thailand	86	0	86	2	-	158	2	-
Vietnam	40	0	40	-	-	57	-	-
Others	11	0	11	-	-	13	-	-
Oceania	1,823	0	1,823	29	-	4,751	35	-
Australia	1,688	0	1,688	24	-	4,502	27	-
New Zealand	131	0	131	5	-	243	8	-
Others	4	0	4	-	-	6	-	-
South Asia	15,639	0	15,639	112	-	31,093	146	-
Afghanistan	2	0	2	-	-	2	-	-
Bangladesh	259	0	259	6	-	561	6	-
Bhutan	11	0	11	-	-	41	-	-
India	12,744	0	12,744	79	-	24,495	96	-
Iran	303	0	303	-	-	563	-	-
Maldives	1,532	0	1,532	13	-	3,933	30	-
Nepal	97	0	97	1	-	197	1	-
Pakistan	691	0	691	13	-	1,301	13	-
EUROPE	70,696	0	70,696	2,886	-	127,301	4,461	-
Northern Europe	13,967	0	13,967	133	-	24,135	136	-
Denmark	1,217	0	1,217	11	-	2,230	11	-
Finland Norway	298 595	0	298 595	2 14	<u> </u>	569 1,116	14	<u> </u>
Sweden	818	0	818	9	-	1,501	9	-
						18,084		
United Kingdom	10,642	0	10,642	79	-	10,001	82	-



		ebruary		Tourist		Total Tourist	Total	%
		rist Arrivals		Arrivals February 2021	Change February (22/21)	Arrivals up to February 2022	Tourist Arrivals up to February	Change up to February
	By Air	By Sea	Total			00.400	2021	(20/21)
Western Europe	17,915		17,915	367	-	30,493	416	-
Austria	1,054	0	1,054	19	-	1,842	24	-
Belgium	620	0	620	7	-	1,115	7	-
France	5,699	0	5,699	40	-	9,315	44	-
Germany	7,780	0	7,780	245	-	13,119	264	-
Netherlands	1,232	0	1,232	21	-	2,373	39	-
Switzerland	1,495	0	1,495	33	-	2,681	36	-
Others	35	0	35	2	-	48	2	-
Central/ Eastern Europe	34,950	0	34,950	2327	-	66,234	3,847	-
Belarus	823	0	823	44	-	1,559	74	-
Czech Republic	2,055	0	2,055	17	-	3,229	17	-
Estonia	285	0	285	3	-	470	3	-
Hungary	502	0	502	6	-	927	6	-
Kazakhstan	2,821	0	2,821	1,231	-	4,862	1,232	-
Lithuania	555	0	555	5	-	907	5	-
Poland	4,315	0	4,315	11	-	7,500	11	-
Romania	776	0	776	2	-	1,304	2	-
Russia	15,340	0	15,340	119	-	28,818	139	-
Slovakia	515	0	515	14	-	878	14	-
Ukraine	5,288	0	5,288	845	-	13,062	2,305	-
Others	1,675	0	1,675	30	-	2,718	39	-
Southern/ Mediterranea Europe	3,864	0	3,864	59	-	6,439	62	-
Greece	150	0	150	1	-	228	1	-
Italy	553	0	553	23	-	1,056	25	-
Portugal	206	0	206	4	-	363	4	-
Spain	744	0	744	18	-	1,341	18	-
Turkey	166	0	166	3	-	340	4	-
Israel	1,587	0	1,587	1	-	2,294	1	-
Others	458	0	458	9	-	817	9	-
MIDDLE EAST	2,383	0	2,383	14	-	4,463	14	_
Bahrain	49	0	49	-	-	108 670	-	-
Egypt Iraq	453 171	0	453 171	3	-	243	3	-
Jordan	230				<u> </u>	454	-	
		0	230 204	4	-	240	4	
Kuwait Lebanon	204 153	0	153	6	-	240	-	
Oman	127	0	127	-	-	228	-	
Qatar	17	0	17	1		21		
Saudi Arabia						2,028	1	
United Arab	861	0	861			117	-	
Emirates	53	0	53	-	-		-	-
Others	65	0	65	-	-	114	-	-
TOTAL	96,507	0	96,507	3,366		178,834	5,048	



### Main last departure airports and airlines to Sri Lanka February 2022

An analysis of the last departure airports to Sri Lanka reveals the vital importance of air connectivity in the tourism industry. As depicted in the below Chart 4, for around 54% of tourists the last airports had been Dubai, Doha and Chennai,. Further, in terms of airlines, Sri Lankan Airlines, Emirates and Qatar Airways were the top airlines, handling 58% of tourists to Sri Lanka.

Chart 4. Main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, February 2022

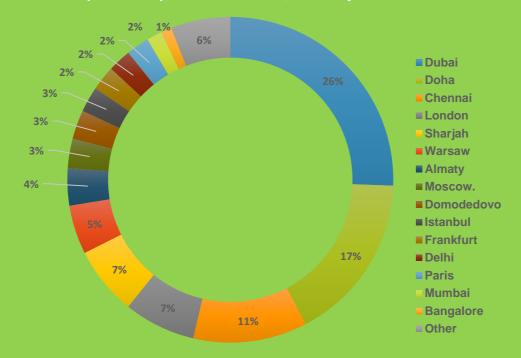
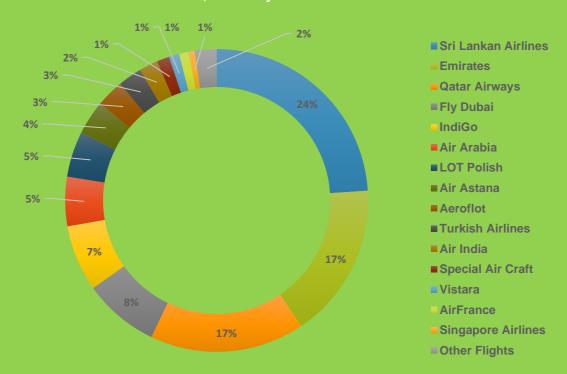


Chart 5. Main airlines to Sri Lanka, February 2022





## Top ten markets versus main last departure airports and main airlines to Sri Lanka

#### February 2022

The below tables depict the main last departure airports and airlines analyzed by top markets to Sri Lanka. Emirates and Fly Dubai are the most popular airlines for Russians. It is noteworthy that Air Astana has been patronised by 86.5% of tourists from Kazakhstan while LOTPolish has been patronised by 63.3% of tourists from Poland thus highlighting the importance of destination accessibility in driving visitation. Sri Lankan Airlines and IndoGo are the most preferred airlines for Indians in travelling to Sri Lanka. For majority of travllers from Germany, the United Kingdom and France, Qatar Airways is the most preferable airline and Doha is the main last departure airport.

Table 4. Top ten markets vs. main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, February 2022

								Νι	ımber	of pa	sseng	ers									
Country	Dubai	Doha	Chennai	London	Sharjah	Warsaw	Almaty	Moscow	Domodedovo	Istanbul	Frankfurt	Delhi	Paris	Mumbai	Bangalore	Hyderabad	Singapore	Male	Bangkok	Abu Dhabi	Other
Russian Federation	7,346	1,100	59	12	2,056	17	67	2,003	1,965	422	12	21	4	2	2	0	14	69	23	23	123
India	380	127	7,503	13	14	4	0	1	0	3	3	1,487	0	1,020	677	511	60	45	6	16	874
United Kingdom	2,282	2,928	53	4,417	8	29	2	0		62	5	15	36	18	16	2	138	99	92	66	374
Germany	2,401	2,875	31	87	21	175	7	2		159	1,425		80	2	8		84	39	92	17	270
France	1,303	2,286	42	104	6	29	0	0		123	30	15	1,366	6	8	2	139	35	60	21	123
Ukraine	667	707	12	2	2,547	136	11	5		920			4	0	2		1	20	14	16	207
Poland	1,039	374	7	18	2	2,730	1	0	0	11	15	17	0	0	0	0	25	25	9	7	35
Kazakhstan	303	7	5	0	12	1	2,440	4		15			0	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	17
Czech Republic	1,300	290	5	38	9	206	0	4	0	17	139	0	13	0	0	0	12	2	3	4	13
Canada	538	821	42	193	0	11	1	0	0	14	42	13	58	13	2	2	28	6	11	63	100

Table 5. Top ten markets vs. main airlines to Sri Lanka, February 2022

								P	ercent	age sh	are of	the ai	rline									
Country	Sri Lankan Airlines	Emirates	Qatar Airways	Fly Dubai	IndiGo	Air Arabia	LOT Polish	Air Astana	Aeroflot	Turkish Airlines	Air India	Special Air Craft	Vistara	AirFrance	Singapore Airlines	SpiceJet	Air Asia Philippines	Gulf Air	Oman Air	Etihad Airways	Other Flights	Total
Russian Federation	14.5	25.8	7.1	21.6	0.2	13.4	0.1	0.4	13.1	2.8	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	15,340
India	40.1	2.0	0.6	0.3	37.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.5	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.5	2.8	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	12,744
United Kingdom	47.2	19.0	26.8	1.8	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.1	0.4	0.2	10,642
Germany	23.7	28.5	35.8	2.1	0.3	0.3	2.2	0.1	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.0	0.2	1.1	7,780
France	20.1	19.7	39.6	2.9	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	10.6	1.9	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.0	0.2	0.4	5,699
Ukraine	1.5	1.4	14.4	9.9	0.2	28.2	2.6	0.2	0.1	17.4	0.0	17.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	6.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	5,288
Poland	2.9	12.9	9.7	10.0	0.2	0.0	63.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.3	4,315
Kazakhstan	2.6	1.0	0.2	7.9	0.1	0.4	0.0	86.5	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,821
Czech Republic	9.7	38.8	14.7	23.5	0.1	0.4	10.0	0.0	0.2	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.2	2,055
Canada	32.4	18.8	40.2	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.5	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	1.9	0.8	1,958



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