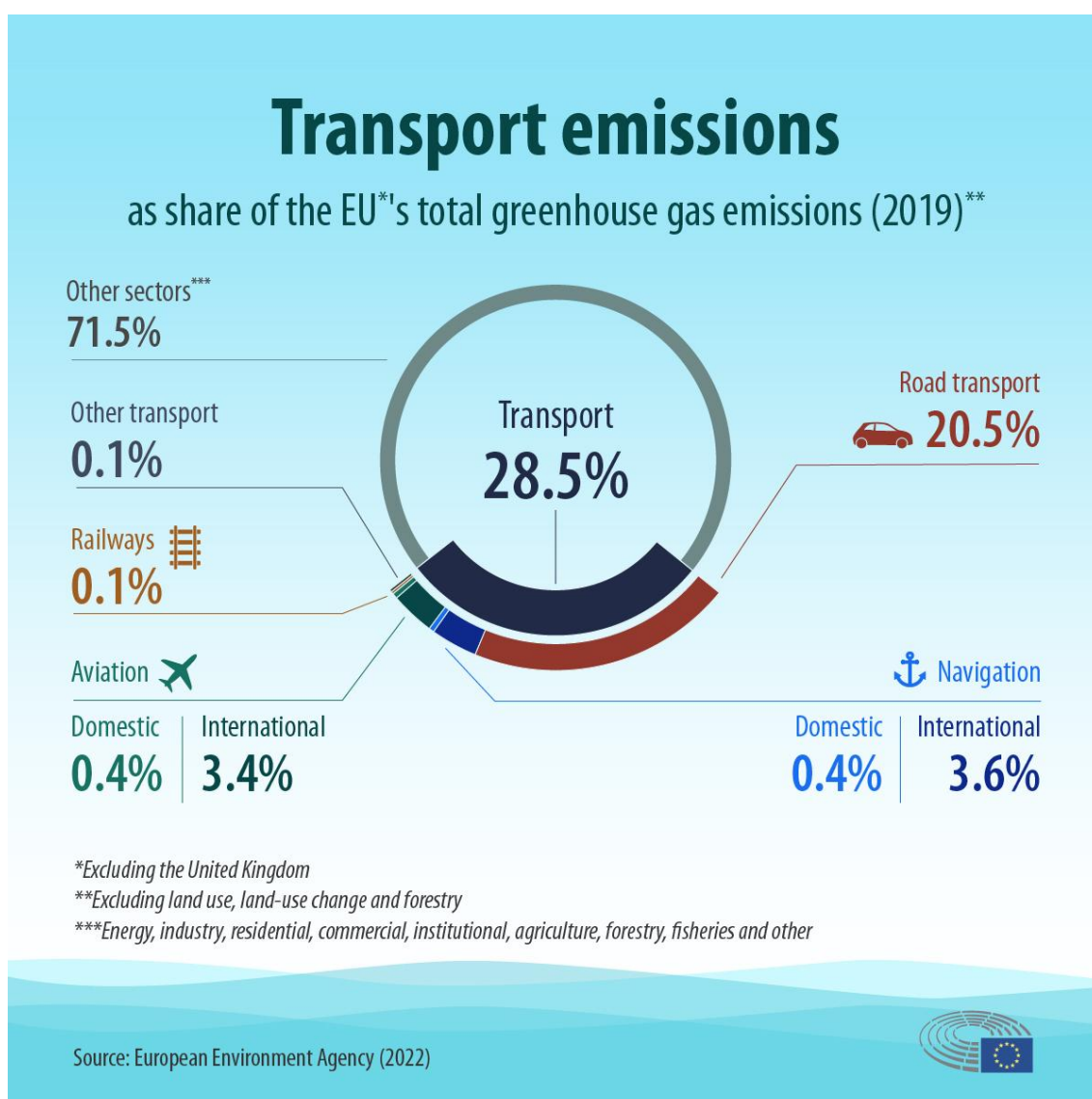# Emissions from planes and ships: facts and figures (infographic)

Greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation and shipping have grown rapidly over the past three decades. Check out our infographics.

Although aviation and shipping each account for only about 4% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, they have been the fastest growing sources of emissions that contribute to climate change.

This is mainly due to record traffic growth driven by increasing passenger numbers and trade volume. These sectors also only recently became part of efforts to cut greenhouse emissions, both at EU and global level.

In an effort to cut the EU's emissions 55% by 2030 and to reach net zero emissions by 2050, the European Parliament is currently working on proposals that aim to reduce emissions from planes and ships. These include adding maritime transport to the emissions trading scheme (ETS), revision of the scheme for aviation and proposals on more sustainable fuels for planes and ships.
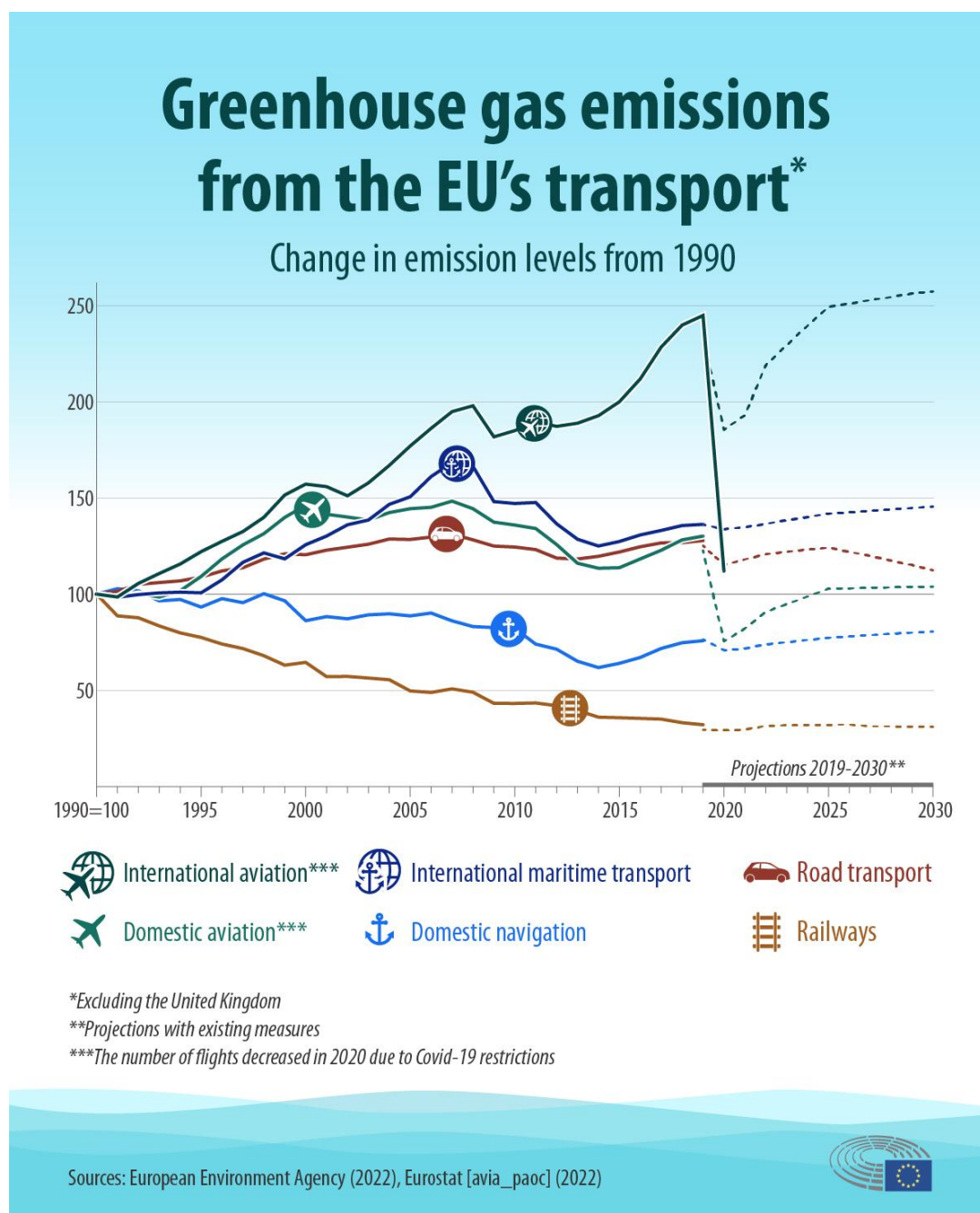
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Share of transport emissions in the EU in 2019

The fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions

By 2019, emissions from international aviation and shipping had increased by 146% and 34% respectively compared with 1990. This was the fastest growth in the whole transport sector - the only sector in which emissions have risen since 1990.

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In 2020, emissions from both sectors dropped significantly due to restrictions linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the drop will likely be temporary and emissions from both are projected to continue increasing.
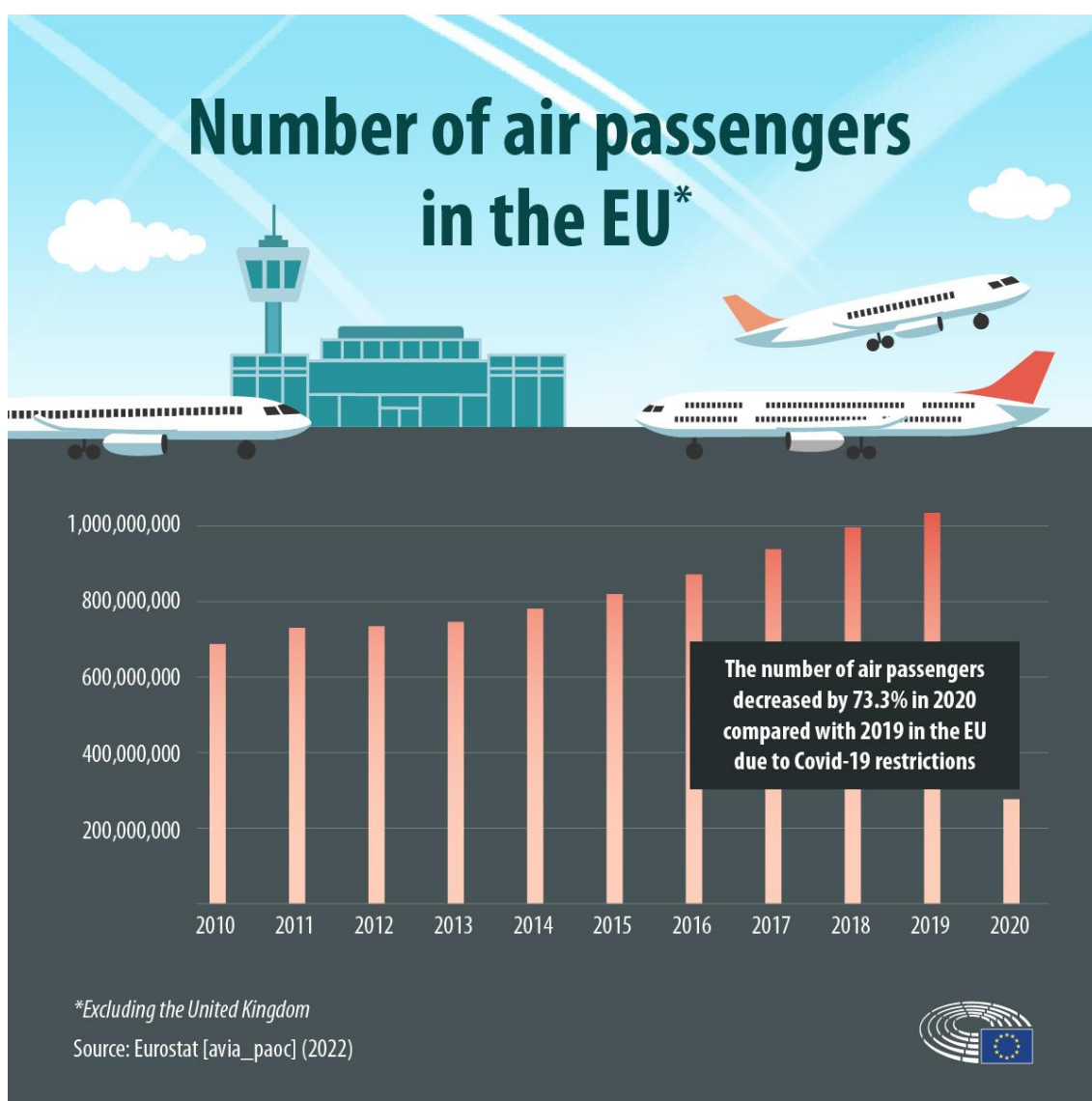

Greenhouse gas emissions from the EU's transport*

Change in emission levels from 1990

International aviation***
International maritime transport
Road transport
Domestic aviation***
Domestic navigation
Railways

*Excluding the United Kingdom
**Projections with existing measures
***The number of flights decreased in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions

Sources: European Environment Agency (2022), Eurostat [avia_paoc] (2022)

Change in the greenhouse gas emissions from the transport in the EU from 1990 to 2019, with projections from 2019 to 2030.

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Air and sea traffic on the rise

Greenhouse gas emissions from aviation and shipping have been largely driven by traffic growth. The number of air passengers in the EU has steadily grown since 1993 and the volume of international maritime trade has increased significantly over the last three decades.

The number of air passengers in 2020 decreased by 73% from 2019, but as Covid-19 restrictions are being lifted, the number is already increasing.

Growing environmental concerns could prompt more people to pay attention to the carbon footprint of their mode of transport. So far just over one in ten say they do so, according to a Eurobarometer survey. Find out how much CO2 your flight emits.

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Number of air passengers in the EU*

The number of air passengers decreased by 73.3% in 2020 compared with 2019 in the EU due to Covid-19 restrictions

*Excluding the United Kingdom
Source: Eurostat [avia_paoc] (2022)

Evolution of the number of air passengers in the EU from 2010 to 2020

Read more about reducing emissions

- CO2 emissions from cars: facts and figures (infographics)
- Reducing car emissions: new CO2 targets for cars and vans explained
- Reducing carbon emissions: EU targets and measures

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More on reducing emissions from transport

Reducing emissions from aviation
Reducing emissions from shipping
European Environment Agency: greenhouse gas emissions from transport in Europe

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