

Summary:

Commuting by air

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Since 2003, commuter trips by air have increased significantly more than other work-related air traffic. All in all, just under three million commuter trips by air are made per year (aggregate of domestic and foreign trips). Norwegians account for just under two-thirds of this traffic. The oil industry is the driver in this market and accounts for half of the growth in the commuting traffic by air during the last 10 years. As a result, there is considerable commuting into municipalities with a high level of oil industry activity. When it comes to outgoing commuting, the residents of less centralised municipalities are the ones who, relatively speaking, commute most by air. Nearness to friends and family and the fact that they have grown up in the area are the reasons that are given most often for why they commute instead of moving closer to their workplace. Economic conditions are an important driving force inducing people to assume the burden of commuting rather than taking a job in their local community – almost 60 per cent mention a better paid job as a reason why they have chosen to work in a place other than where they live.

Background and methodology

The aim of this project has been to analyse the structure and the geographical distribution of commuter trips by air and to gain more knowledge about the importance of air travel for recruiting manpower and for the pattern of settlement.

This report is based partly on data that has already been gathered and partly on new data:

1. Avinor's survey of air travel behaviour: as a basis for analysing the trend in the commuter market and geographical travel flows, we have made use of data from Avinor's surveys of air travel behaviour in 2003 and 2011.
2. Commuter survey: the issues related to residential and working conditions are explained in a separate commuter survey. This survey was conducted in two parts: an airport survey and a follow-up Internet survey.

Trend in domestic commuting by air

- In 2011, 1.6 million domestic trips were made "to/from the workplace", compared with about 900,000 in 2003. This growth between 2003 and 2011 amounted to 6.1 per cent per year.
- The oil and gas industry is the driving force in the commuting by air market – nearly half of the trips are made by employees in the oil and gas sector. The volume of oil- and gas-related commuter trips makes Hordaland and Rogaland the biggest commuter counties, with regard to both generated and attracted traffic.

- Møre og Romsdal stands out as the county with the biggest growth in commuter traffic. Employees in the oil and gas industry account for 70 per cent of this growth.
- The commuter traffic is distributed throughout the whole country, but the biggest flows go to and from Eastern Norway. Eastern Norway is the departure or arrival location for 41 per cent of the traffic. Three out of four trips to Eastern Norway (attracted traffic) have Oslo as their destination.
- Just over half of the commuter trips end up in a regional centre (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, Kristiansand or Tromsø), whereas only 28 per cent of the trips are generated there. Especially Bergen and Stavanger, which both have much oil-related traffic, boost the amount of commuting in to the regional centres.
- The dependence of business and industry and/or the employees on commuting by air, measured by the ratio of commuter traffic to the number of employees in the region is greatest in Western Norway, in Møre og Romsdal County and in Northern Norway.
- There is considerable commuting in to municipalities with a high level of activity in the oil industry or a public-sector presence (primarily the military). When it comes to outgoing commuting, the least and/or less centralised municipalities are the ones that, relatively speaking, have the greatest dependence on air travel.

Commuting by air between Norway and international destinations

- In 2011, 1.1 million trips were made "to/from the workplace" between Norway and international destinations. This growth between 2003 and 2011 amounted to 8.4 per cent per year.
- Incoming commuting (foreigners who travel to a workplace in Norway) has increased substantially more than outgoing commuting (Norwegians who travel to a workplace abroad) during the last ten years (10.3 per cent vs. 5.4 per cent).
- For both incoming and outgoing commuting, Sweden, Great Britain and Denmark are the biggest "markets".
- Oslo was the destination for one out of every three commuter trips in to Norway. Taken together, Rogaland and Hordaland counties received an equivalent share.
- Relatively speaking (measured against employment), the national centres have the highest level of both commuting in and commuting out. The differences are significant for commuting in.

Importance for residential and working conditions

- There are clear differences between centre and periphery with regard to the structure of the commuting by air. For residents of less centralised regions, commuting is linked to a much greater extent to permanent employment and travel to a primary workplace. For residents of centralised regions, the commuter traffic is more complex. For example, a significant percentage of the commuter

trips are to customers and to the branch offices of the company for which an employee works.

- The commuting of residents in less centralised regions is more related to the oil industry than for residents of centralised regions, where there is a significantly greater percentage of the private provision of services and other private-sector activities (though oil and gas industry employees are also the most numerous for residents of centralised regions).
- Most of the commuters by air have a degree at the university college and/or university level. In general, commuters by air have important competence in/for the enterprises for which they work.
- Four out of five of those who live in less centralised regions say that the possibility of commuting by air means that they can live where they want. Nearness to friends and family and the fact that they have grown up in the area are the reasons that are most frequently given for why they live where they live and not closer to their workplace.
- Economic factors ("better paid job") are an important driving forces inducing people to commute rather than take a job in their local community.
- A clear majority state that the possibility of commuting by air is crucial to their being able to have a job that they enjoy. Also inherent in this is the fact that the commuters by air are highly educated manpower and that many would have difficulty finding relevant jobs in the local community where they live.