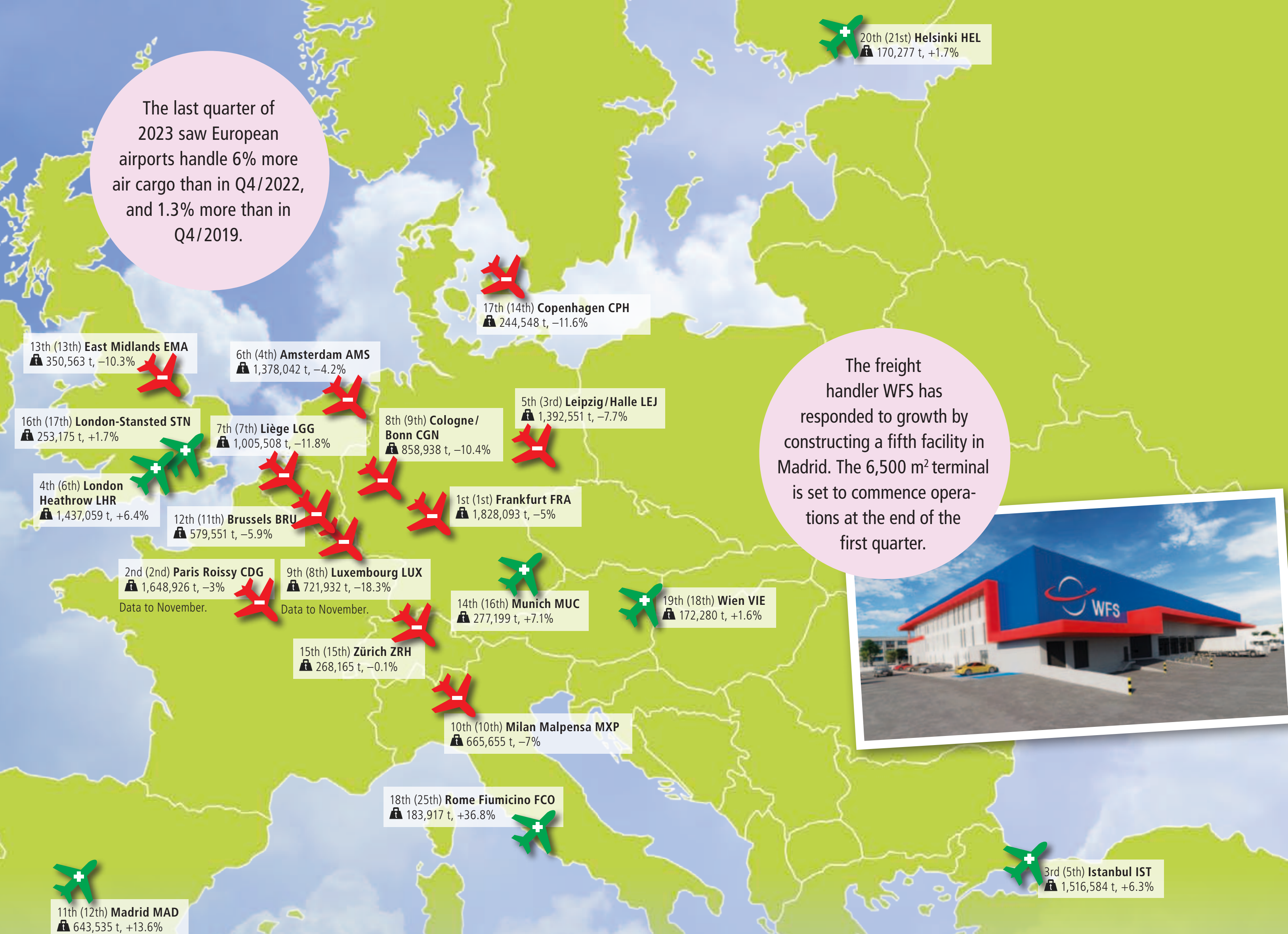
## European airports register almost 3% less freight than in 2022

# Leaving the trough behind

The 2023 traffic figures published in February by the airport association ACI Europe reveal some inconsistencies. After the record set in 2021 (see page 6 of *ITJ* 9-10/2022), volumes declined for the second year in a row. The total volume is nevertheless only slightly lower than in 2019. In the second half of the year the skies cleared up almost everywhere, and there were some winners all along the line.

The last quarter of 2023 saw European airports handle 6% more air cargo than in Q4/2022, and 1.3% more than in Q4/2019.




The freight handler WFS has responded to growth by constructing a fifth facility in Madrid. The 6,500 m² terminal is set to commence operations at the end of the first quarter.

In 2023 Europe's airports only handled 0.9% less cargo than in 2019. This means that although the cargo sector is doing worse than in 2021, it is still far better off than the passenger segment, which grew by 18.8% compared to 2022 but remains 5.3% below pre-pandemic levels.

The leading duo once again crossed the finishing line in the same order, despite some losses (the amount of which hasn't been determined yet at CDG). IST has moved up to third place; it swapped places with LEJ. LHR is also catching up. STN, London's second most important airport for freight, was also able to grow slightly. EMA, the third British representative amongst Europe's 20 leading cargo locations, on the other hand, was unfortunately back in decline again.

Smaller gateways amongst the top ten were hard hit, some in comparable dimensions, including CGN, LUX and LGG. The latter held the red lantern in the seven-strong club of millionaires, as was already the case last year (see page 11 of *ITJ* 9-10/2023).

The biggest positive developments were observed on the fringes of the continental landmass. MAD grew again in a double-digit percentage range, and narrowed the gap to MXP, while Italy's second-largest airport, FCO, gained the most volumes of all the gateways on the list.

Oslo also performed strongly again (+12.4% to 165,257 t), but it nevertheless remains behind HEL. Budapest gained 6.8% to register 141,649 t. And further east? No figures were reported from Moscow (Russia). *Andreas Haug*

Photo: WFS
Map: iStock/Matjeacock; ITJ