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Lufthansa overhaul to impact former Yugoslav markets.

Lufthansa is preparing a significant overhaul of its European network through 2028, with plans to reduce short-haul capacity in a move expected to have further repercussions for markets across the former Yugoslavia. The restructuring will result in fewer aircraft and thousands of fewer flights. The airline's latest strategy was outlined by CEO Carsten Spohr during an internal employee event. As part of the plan, Lufthansa intends to remove up to fifteen aircraft from its short- and medium-haul fleet in 2027, while thousands of European flights are expected to be eliminated by 2028. The carrier has already begun implementing the strategy. It is operating with 25 fewer aircraft this summer than originally planned, which has resulted in the discontinuation of flights between Frankfurt and Skopje, with operations between Munich and Ljubljana to be downgraded to summer seasonal flights. Despite the closure of its CityLine subsidiary in April, which has had an impact on Lufthansa's Munich operations, Mr Spohr has said that the airport will play an increasingly important role in its network in the coming years, as operating costs per passenger are significantly lower at the Bavarian hub than at Frankfurt, making it more attractive for future expansion. Passengers will also face fewer scheduling options as Lufthansa plans to eliminate so-called "duplicate connections", reducing multiple flights operating at similar times between the same cities and hubs. Many of the airline's flights from the former Yugoslavia to Frankfurt and Munich are currently scheduled to depart at similar times, a pattern that could change over the next two years as Lufthansa reshapes its European network. The airline also intends to transfer a growing number of services to other airlines within the Lufthansa Group. Lufthansa has indicated that its core "Lufthansa Classic" operation could be reduced further across Europe as more routes are transferred to lower-cost subsidiaries within the group. According to Lufthansa's management, the restructuring is necessary because the airline continues to lose money on its European and short-haul network, with those losses reducing the profitability of its long-haul operations. The airline aims to improve efficiency by eliminating unprofitable routes, reducing overlap between hubs, lowering operating costs and increasing employee productivity. Lufthansa is the seventh-largest airline in the former Yugoslav markets by scheduled seat capacity in 2026, behind Wizz Air, Ryanair, Air Serbia, Croatia Airlines, easyJet and Turkish Airlines. Twenty years ago, in 2006, it ranked fourth, behind Croatia Airlines, Jat Airways, Adria Airways and Austrian Airlines.

