

Agreement between Korea and China to Restore International Flights to the Condition of pre-COVID-19

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Increase of international flights from March 3rd in accordance with the Korea-China Air Transport Agreement

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT, Minister WON Hee-ryong) announced that it had agreed on a plan to increase the number of flights between Korea and China in accordance with the number of traffic rights* in the Air Transport Agreement signed between the governments of Korea and China before COVID-19 from 3 March.

* (Traffic rights under Air Transport Agreement) 608 flights per week between both countries, being free for Shandong and Hainan provinces
(Korea-China routes operated 1,100 flights a week before the spread of COVID-19, accounting for 24% of international flights)

This agreement to increase flights is a follow-up measure to the lifting of restrictions on Korea-China routes (CDSCHQ*, 17 Feb.), and the MOLIT has been closely discussing with the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) since February to restore Korea-China international routes.

* CDSCHQ: Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters

Reflecting the trend of increasing flights demand due to the recent easing of quarantine regulations between the two countries, it was agreed to increase flights according to the Air Transport Agreement signed between the two countries without any restrictions on the number of flights separately due to quarantine regulations.

First of all, in March, more flights are expected, focusing on major routes such as Incheon-Beijing, Incheon-Shanghai, Incheon-Qingdao, Incheon-Yanji, and Jeju-Shanghai.

For other routes, it is expected that the number of flights will be increased gradually during the summer period of 2023 (26 March – 28 October).

International flights between domestic regional airports and China, which were restricted from 2 Jan. to 28 Feb. due to the unification of domestic arrival airport (Incheon) for flights departing from China, are expected to resume operations sequentially as well.

* The Busan-Yanji route (Air Busan), which had been suspended, resumed operations from March 1st, and the Jeju-Xian (Jin Air) and Daegu-Yanji (T'way Airlines) routes are planned to resume operations from March 16th

In the future, specific flight schedules will be implemented sequentially* in consideration of the demand for each airline and preparations such as handling personnel at local airports in China, etc.

* Expected increase in number in March: (End of February) 62 times → (2nd week of March) 80 times → (3rd & 4th week) 110 times → (5th week) 200 times or more

Detailed flight schedules for each airline can be sequentially noted through the websites of each airline operating Korea-China international routes.

KIM Yeong-guk, Director General of Aviation Policy in MOLIT, said, “We expect that this agreement will help resolve the accumulated passenger demand from the citizens of both countries and business demand between companies during the COVID-19 period.”

Adding, “Through the seamless increase in international flights between Korea and China, we will be able to revitalize the recently stagnant domestic market.”