# Major European airports face unprecedented delays after cyberattack on critical service provider



Several major European airports including London Heathrow, Brussels, and Berlin experienced significant delays and cancellations on September 20, 2025, due to a suspected cyberattack targeting a critical service provider for their check-in and boarding systems. The disruption was linked to Collins Aerospace, a company supplying MUSE software widely used by multiple airlines across several airports globally.

The incident primarily affected the electronic check-in and baggage processing systems, forcing airport staff to revert to slower manual procedures. At Brussels Airport, the impact was particularly severe, resulting in at least 14 flight cancellations and numerous delays. Heathrow and Berlin saw comparatively fewer cancellations but still faced notable delays, with passengers reporting long queues as online check-in became unavailable. Dublin and other European hubs were also affected but to a lesser extent.

According to reports, Collins Aerospace acknowledged encountering a cyber-related disruption but did not disclose further details about the attacker or the specific motives behind the incident. Authorities are investigating the event, with cybersecurity experts suggesting possibilities such as ransomware or sabotage given the sophistication of the attack. The incident highlights growing concerns over the vulnerability of interconnected digital systems within the aviation sector, especially those reliant on third-party service providers for critical operational functions.

Airlines like EasyJet, Delta, and United Airlines activated contingency plans. Still, passengers expressed frustration at limited communication during the delays. Heathrow Airport issued guidance advising travellers to arrive no more than three hours before long-haul flights or two hours ahead of domestic departures and urged them to check flight statuses before travelling to the airport.

This disruption is the latest in a series of cyberattacks globally targeting essential infrastructure, underscoring the heightened risks posed by the aviation industry's increasing dependence on digital platforms. The incident has prompted calls for more robust cybersecurity measures and better resilience planning within the sector to mitigate the effects of potential future attacks.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/tech/london-heathrow-airport-nats-berlin-stansted-airport-brussels-airport-b1248814.html), [[4]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-20/cyber-attack-on-major-european-airports-causes-flight-delays-and-cancellations), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/heathrow-among-major-airports-hit-by-delays-after-cyber-attack-13434669)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/29b6d890baf7ac3a22f0f2b2f169b890), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/en/cyberattack-causes-flight-delays-cancellations-brussels-airport-2025-09-20/), [[7]](https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/european-airports-hit-by-cyber-related-disruption-service-provider-213817)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/en/cyberattack-causes-flight-delays-cancellations-brussels-airport-2025-09-20/), [[7]](https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/european-airports-hit-by-cyber-related-disruption-service-provider-213817), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/29b6d890baf7ac3a22f0f2b2f169b890)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/en/cyberattack-causes-flight-delays-cancellations-brussels-airport-2025-09-20/), [[7]](https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/european-airports-hit-by-cyber-related-disruption-service-provider-213817), [[5]](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2025/09/20/london-europe-flights-cyberattack-delays/9531758381597/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/en/cyberattack-causes-flight-delays-cancellations-brussels-airport-2025-09-20/), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/29b6d890baf7ac3a22f0f2b2f169b890), [[7]](https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/european-airports-hit-by-cyber-related-disruption-service-provider-213817)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/tech/london-heathrow-airport-nats-berlin-stansted-airport-brussels-airport-b1248814.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/29b6d890baf7ac3a22f0f2b2f169b890> - A cyberattack on September 20, 2025, disrupted check-in and boarding systems at major European airports, including Heathrow, Berlin, and Brussels. The attack targeted Collins Aerospace's MUSE software, affecting multiple airlines' passenger check-ins and baggage processing. Brussels Airport experienced significant cancellations and delays, while Heathrow and Berlin faced minimal disruptions. Experts highlighted the vulnerabilities in the airline industry's reliance on centralized digital systems. The incident underscored the risks posed by third-party digital platforms in aviation operations. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/29b6d890baf7ac3a22f0f2b2f169b890?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.reuters.com/en/cyberattack-causes-flight-delays-cancellations-brussels-airport-2025-09-20/> - A cyberattack on September 20, 2025, compromised MUSE check-in and boarding software by Collins Aerospace, leading to disruptions at major European airports, including Heathrow, Brussels, Berlin, and Dublin. The incident caused flight cancellations and delays, particularly affecting electronic check-in and baggage drop systems. While manual check-in operations mitigated some impact, dozens of flights were cancelled or delayed. RTX, the parent company of Collins Aerospace, acknowledged a 'cyber-related disruption' but did not provide details on the attacker or motive. Authorities are investigating the event, though no signs of a widespread or severe attack have been confirmed. Experts suggest ransomware or sabotage could be the cause, emphasizing the vulnerability of interdependent digital infrastructures. Airlines like EasyJet and U.S. carriers Delta and United Airlines implemented contingencies to reduce the impact. Meanwhile, passenger frustration built due to limited communication. The disruption is the latest among a series of global cyberattacks targeting various sectors. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/en/cyberattack-causes-flight-delays-cancellations-brussels-airport-2025-09-20/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-20/cyber-attack-on-major-european-airports-causes-flight-delays-and-cancellations> - A cyberattack on September 20, 2025, targeted Collins Aerospace, a key provider of check-in and boarding systems, causing widespread disruption at several major European airports, including Heathrow, Brussels, and Berlin. The outage forced staff at affected airports to switch to manual procedures, significantly slowing down passenger processing. Heathrow Airport advised travellers not to arrive more than three hours before a long-haul flight or two hours before a domestic service and urged passengers to check their flight status before setting off. Brussels Airport confirmed the incident, stating that only manual check-in and boarding were possible and that the service provider was actively working on the issue. Berlin Airport reported longer waiting times at check-in due to a technical issue at a system provider operating across Europe. Airlines and airports across Europe are awaiting further updates as Collins Aerospace works to restore its systems. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-09-20/cyber-attack-on-major-european-airports-causes-flight-delays-and-cancellations?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2025/09/20/london-europe-flights-cyberattack-delays/9531758381597/> - On September 20, 2025, travellers departing from London's Heathrow Airport faced delays due to a cyberattack affecting electronic check-in systems. Heathrow Airport stated that Collins Aerospace, which provides check-in and boarding systems for several airlines across multiple airports globally, was experiencing a technical issue that may cause delays for departing passengers. The airport advised passengers to check their flight status with their airline before travelling and to arrive no earlier than three hours before a long-haul flight or two hours before a domestic flight. ([upi.com](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2025/09/20/london-europe-flights-cyberattack-delays/9531758381597/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/heathrow-among-major-airports-hit-by-delays-after-cyber-attack-13434669> - Heathrow was among several major airports across Europe affected by delays following a suspected cyberattack targeting a service provider for check-in and boarding systems. The technical issue affecting Collins Aerospace resulted in 14 flights being cancelled at Brussels Airport on Saturday, with several more being delayed at London Heathrow, Berlin, and Dublin. Passengers reported being unable to check in online, leading to long queues as staff had to process them manually. ([news.sky.com](https://news.sky.com/story/heathrow-among-major-airports-hit-by-delays-after-cyber-attack-13434669?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/european-airports-hit-by-cyber-related-disruption-service-provider-213817> - Major European airports, including Brussels, Berlin, and London's Heathrow, were hit by a cyberattack on September 20, 2025, affecting check-in systems and causing cancellations and long delays for many passengers. At least three busy European air hubs reported facing disruption and warned of flight delays and cancellations. Brussels Airport reported at least 10 flights cancelled and another 17 delayed by over an hour after the system was hit by a 'cyberattack' late Friday. Heathrow Airport said its check-in and boarding systems, also provided by Collins Aerospace, were hit by a 'technical issue' that 'may cause delays for departing passengers.' The impact was limited to electronic customer check-in and baggage drop and could be mitigated with manual check-in operations. ([hurriyetdailynews.com](https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/european-airports-hit-by-cyber-related-disruption-service-provider-213817?utm_source=openai))