

Virus prompts Air France-KLM to ditch A380s

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Air France-KLM said it was halting all flights of the A80, the world's biggest commercial aircraft as the coronavirus brings air travel to a virtual halt

Air France-KLM announced Wednesday the "definitive end" of operations of the world's biggest commercial airliner, the A380, owing

to the devastating coronavirus impact on air travel.

As the pandemic has slashed all travel and eliminated demand for huge planes, the airline said it would switch to a newer generation of aircraft that included smaller Airbus A350 and Boeing 787 jets.

"In the context of the current COVID-19 crisis and its impact on anticipated activity levels, the Air France-KLM Group announces today the definitive end of Air France Airbus A380 operations," a statement said.

"Initially scheduled by the end of 2022," the move should make the group's fleet of planes "more competitive, by continuing its transformation with more modern, high-performance aircraft with a significantly reduced environmental footprint," it added.

The "phase-out" is expected to cost Air France-KLM 500 million euros (\$550 million), it added.

Air France-KLM posted a net loss of 1.8 billion euros in the first quarter of the year and the near-term outlook is distinctly gloomy.

The A380 costs more to operate than other jets and produces more pollution. Airbus announced in February that it was stopping production.

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