

EUROPEAN TOURISM LOOKS SET FOR SOLID GROWTH IN 2017

Appetite for European Tourism remains strong, highlighting the continued attractiveness of its destinations

Brussels, 8 May 2017. Europe welcomed 615 million international tourist arrivals in 2016, a moderate 2% increase compared to 2015¹. Although recent events do not seem to have affected demand significantly early this year, perceptions of safety remain of utmost importance for continued growth. The outlook for 2017 is upbeat despite expected headwinds from safety concerns, uncertainty surrounding “Brexit” and potential policy changes from the new US administration.

According to the [European Travel Commission](#)’s latest report, “[European Tourism – Trends & Prospects](#)”, almost one in two reporting destinations saw double-digit arrivals growth during the first months of 2017. Iceland (+54%) enjoyed the fastest growth supported by an ongoing surge in air capacity on transatlantic routes while Cyprus (+26%), Portugal (+25%) and Malta (+23%) proved their success in battling seasonality. Other top performers were Bulgaria (+19%), Finland (+18%) and Estonia (+13%) which were not impacted by security concerns that exist with other European destinations. While Switzerland (+3%) reversed its past trend by taking advantage of its key position as a winter destination, Turkey (-8%) is still seeing a downward trend that began in 2015.

“At times of dwindling market share and increased competition, European leaders must cooperate to collectively formulate appropriate policies and actions aimed at fostering Europe’s image as a tourism destination” said Eduardo Santander, Executive Director of ETC.

INTRA-EUROPEAN TRAVEL REMAINS CRITICAL FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Most reporting destinations saw substantial growth from Europe’s largest source markets-Germany and France-fuelled by the ongoing recovery of the Eurozone. Despite uncertainty around the potential implications of UK’s withdrawal from the European Union, tourist arrivals from this market remained solid.

Several destinations already report a rebound in arrivals from Russia -Iceland (+157%) Cyprus (+122%) and Turkey (+88%)-. Overall, outbound travel from this market is projected to improve alongside the rouble’s expected recovery in 2017.

Following a boost in US tourist arrivals in 2016 (+6%), prospects for further growth looks high in 2017. Encouraging economic conditions and a strong US dollar against European currencies are expected to entice more American travellers across the Atlantic. An earlier-than-usual Chinese New Year boosted arrivals growth from China so far in 2017, however, this strong performance is expected to return to more typical trends towards peak seasons.

¹ World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

The full report can be downloaded from ETC's corporate website under the following link: www.etc-corporate.org under the category "Trends Watch in Research".

Note to editors

About the European Travel Commission

The European Travel Commission is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourist destination to the long-haul markets outside of Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 32 member NTOs, including 8 from outside the European Union. Europe is the world's no. 1 tourist destination with 615 million international arrivals in 2016 and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism.

For further information: ETC's corporate website <http://www.etc-corporate.org> is aimed at industry, government and educational personnel interested in tourism to Europe. Tourists seeking travel-specific information and ideas are directed to ETC's consumer portal <http://www.visiteurope.com>.