

## EUROPEANS MORE CONFIDENT AND RELAXED TOWARDS TRAVEL IN NEXT MONTHS

- 2 in 3 Europeans plan to travel in the next six months, building on the confidence restored over the summer
- Intra-European trips overtake domestic travelling: 55% of short-term travellers prefer to visit another European country
- Air travel is on the rise, with over 50% of respondents stating they feel comfortable taking a plane again

Brussels, 28 October 2021: Although the peak summer season has been left behind, the desire for travel remains strong across Europe. 66% of Europeans plan trips through March 2022, while increased confidence on when, where and how to travel indicates a positive tourism outlook for the coming months. This is according to the latest research on "[Monitoring Sentiment for Domestic and Intra-European Travel – Wave 9](#)"<sup>1</sup> by the European Travel Commission (ETC), which provides timely insights on Europeans'<sup>2</sup> short-term travel intentions and preferences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Eager travellers are more open to short-term trips

For the first time since October 2020, Europeans' travel plans are spread evenly over the next six months: 26% are opting for trips between October and November, 28% between December 2021 and January 2022, and 25% will travel in February and March 2022. These results indicate that an increasing number of Europeans are no longer in a "waiting mode" to travel and feel much more confident to embark on spontaneous trips.

As travel sentiment continues to improve and pandemic restrictions become the new normal, 'travel-ready'**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Europeans are more determined to adhere to their travel plans (up 39% over the previous survey), rather than wait or postpone.

### European city breaks are a top last-minute getaway

Intra-European getaways are now at the forefront, indicating enhanced comfort to travel internationally: more than 1 in 2 Europeans with short-term travel plans will head to other European countries, a 41% surge since September 2020. Meanwhile, preferences for domestic trips (32%) decreased by 18% over the past twelve months. Mediterranean destinations rank highest on travellers' destination wish list, with Spain and Italy (both 9%), France (8%) and Greece (7%) as the top preferences.

Desire for city breaks (18%) has now reached a peak for 2021 with a 43% rise since summer 2021, though the appeal of a holiday at the coast also remains strong. At the same time, trip planning is becoming more last-minute, since only 29% of Europeans with travel plans for October or November have fully booked their trip. This drops further, to 15%, among those travelling later in 2021. Higher interest in city breaks and last-minute bookings is another indicator of the gradual return to normality and towards more spontaneous trips in the near future.

More city breaks come along with the increased popularity of shorter trips of up to 3 nights (30% of city break travellers). Shortening trip length also affects budgets, as the share of travellers intending to spend up to 500 euros on their trip grows by 20% compared to the previous survey, to the detriment of higher expenditure levels (1,000+ euros).

### Preference for air travel increases, though health and safety concerns remain strong

<sup>1</sup> Wave 9 features data collected in September 2021

<sup>2</sup> Germany, United Kingdom, France, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Poland, and Austria

Despite a lingering hesitancy towards air travel, over 50% of ‘travel-ready’<sup>3</sup> Europeans are now eager to switch to air transport (a 13% increase over the previous survey). This is another sign of improved consumer confidence towards using commercial flights to optimise travel times.

Despite their increased eagerness to travel in the next six months, 63% of ‘early bird’<sup>3</sup> travellers still rely on health and safety protocols at the destination as it makes them feel more comfortable and likely to enjoy their trip. Destinations and tourism businesses should reassure travellers through effective COVID-19 measures, particularly in relation to the areas of most concern: air travel, in-destination transportation, and local attractions.

*The full summary report can be downloaded from: <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-9/>*

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#### Note to editors

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 33 member NTOs, including 7 from outside the European Union. For more information, please visit [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org).

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Early-bird’ travellers and ‘travel-ready’ Europeans refer to survey respondents who are planning to travel in the next 6 months