

## EUROPEANS ADJUST TRAVEL PLANS DUE TO COST WORRIES

- **Travel intent in Europe has seen a 4% decrease compared to the previous year but remains strong.**
- **More tourists (+5% vs 2022) opt to travel in the 'off-peak' months of October and November.**
- **Travelling for an event (10%) or for business (9%) are both on the rise.**

**Brussels, 5 July 2023:** The number of Europeans planning to take trips from June to November 2023 decreased by 4% compared to last year but still remains high at 69%. Austrians, Swiss, and Germans stand out as the most hesitant holidaymakers, with 45%, 56%, and 62% of respondents respectively having travel plans in the next months. In contrast, the French (80%), the Belgians (79%) and the British (75%) are most eager to travel over the same period.

Although the slump in European travel intentions can be explained by a slowdown in the pent-up demand after Covid-19, the Monitoring Sentiment for Domestic and Intra-European Travel – Wave 16 study<sup>1</sup> by the European Travel Commission (ETC) suggests financial pressures are also influencing holidaymakers.

Commenting on the findings, **Miguel Sanz, President of ETC**, stated: *“Our latest data shows that concerns over inflation and personal finances persist among European travellers. Nevertheless, Europeans are still eager to travel in the upcoming months. Many are hunting for alternative travel choices, looking for more affordable experiences or considering off-season travel to stretch their budgets. We advise destinations and businesses to capitalise on these trends and assist travellers in going off the beaten track and travelling in the less busy months”.*

### Europeans opt for off-season travel and more affordable destinations

Nearly a quarter (24%) of European travellers are worried about the overall rise of trip costs (up by 6% vs 2022), while 17% are concerned with the economic situation and their finances.

To cope with the rising travel expenses, Europeans are adapting behaviours prior to reaching their destination and upon arrival. 17% aim to travel off-season to get better prices, and 14% plan to take vacations in destinations they perceive as more affordable. European travellers are also seeking cheaper airfares, with 13% aiming to book flights earlier than usual to get the best deal and 12% planning to fly low-cost airlines.

Meanwhile, Europeans also continue to adapt their in-destination behaviour to fit in the available budgets: 17% will cut shopping expenses, 15% will search out cheaper restaurants, and 15% will choose less expensive accommodation establishments.

Other factors causing worries among European travellers are Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine (12%), overcrowded tourist destinations (9%), booking and cancellation policies (9%) and possible extreme weather conditions (8%).

### Pleasant weather and attractive deals shape Europeans' travel itineraries

Europe remains the first choice of respondents, with 59% planning to embark on a holiday within the region, while 12% aim to take a trip outside of Europe (up by 3% since 2022). Meanwhile, the popularity of domestic travel has dropped by 6%, with just 26% of travellers opting for a "staycation" in the next months.

Spain remains the most popular destination for travellers, with 8% planning a vacation there, followed by France (7%), Italy (7%), Greece (5%) and Croatia (5%). Still, Mediterranean destinations have seen a 10% drop in visitors aiming to travel there from last year. On the contrary, destinations like the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Ireland, and

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<sup>1</sup> Wave 16 features data collected in May 2023. The survey is conducted in: Germany, United Kingdom, France, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Poland, and Austria

Denmark are experiencing a surge in popularity. This can be attributed to travellers seeking out less crowded destinations, and milder temperatures.

### **Events and business travel regain ground**

Despite rising costs of living, European travellers are planning multiple trips, with 33% aiming to travel twice and 26% at least three times this summer and autumn. Another 30% of respondents are thinking of taking only one trip (4% lower than last year). In terms of duration, most European travellers (36%) are choosing to spend less than a week (four-six nights) in their destination, while 27% aim to stay seven-nine nights.

Travelling to a destination for an event is rising in popularity, with 10% of European travellers planning to do this between June and November 2023, up from 4% in 2022. Additionally, there has been a 4% increase in business travel, with 9% of respondents intending to embark on a work-related trip. Despite a 6% decline from the same period in 2022, travelling for leisure remains the top choice for 68% of Europeans.

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

**ENDS**

### **Note to editors**

The **European Travel Commission (ETC)** represents the national tourism organisations of Europe. Established in 1948, ETC's mission is to strengthen the sustainable development of Europe as a tourist destination and to promote Europe in third markets. Its 35-member tourism boards work together to build the value of tourism for all the diverse European destinations through cooperation in sharing best practice, market intelligence and promotion. For more information, visit [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org) and follow [@ETC\\_Corporate](https://twitter.com/ETC_Corporate).

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