

---

## Press Release

# Europe ranks as the safest global destination, while cost pressures shape long-haul travel plans

- Long-haul travel intentions have softened again this summer, but Europe performs better than wider overseas demand.
- Affordability remains the main barrier to visiting Europe, although its influence is easing, while geopolitical concerns remain secondary.
- Travellers show rising interest in rail, multi-country itineraries and experience-led trips.

**Brussels, 18 June 2026:** The European Travel Commission (ETC) and Eurail have published the latest *Long-Haul Travel Barometer 2/2026*, providing forward-looking insights into summer travel intentions, preferences and barriers among travellers from seven key overseas markets to Europe: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, South Korea and the United States.

The findings show that global appetite for long-haul travel has cooled again this summer, with overall long-haul intent falling by five points to 52%. Europe has also seen a decline, but to a lesser extent, with intent to visit the region down three points to 36%. The data points to a more cautious travel environment, driven primarily by affordability and value considerations.

### Europe holds up better than wider long-haul demand

Intentions to visit Europe vary significantly across markets. China remains the strongest market, with 63% of respondents intending to visit Europe this summer, followed by Brazil at 47%. Canada remains comparatively stable at 40%, while Japan improves slightly from a low base, reaching 14%.

Interest continues to soften in the United States and South Korea, where 28% of respondents plan a European trip, marking a third consecutive summer of decline in both markets. Australia also records a notable seven-point decrease, with travel intent falling to 33%.

### Affordability remains the defining pressure

Cost remains the main reason travellers opt against Europe, although its influence continues to ease year-on-year. Among those planning a long-haul trip but not considering Europe, nearly 40% cite travel costs they cannot afford, down nine percentage points compared with last year. Still, costs remain far ahead of other barriers, including plans to visit other destinations (16%) and limited vacation time (11%).

Geopolitical concerns are becoming more visible but remain secondary. Among travellers who have ruled out Europe, 15% cite a geopolitical factor, including tensions in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine. In Australia, Japan and South Korea, where routes to Europe are among those most affected by Middle Eastern airspace

---

Europe ranks as the safest global destination, while cost pressures shape long-haul travel plans

**EUROPEAN  
TRAVEL  
COMMISSION**

disruption, concerns about higher airfares or longer journey times are present but relatively limited. Around 12% of Australians, 14% of Japanese and 7% of Koreans identify these factors as a barrier to travel.

### **Safety reinforces Europe's global appeal**

Despite global uncertainty, Europe continues to be perceived as the safest region worldwide. It ranks highest across all five safety dimensions measured, including political stability, personal safety, tourist-local tensions and natural hazards.

Safety is also the leading criterion when choosing a European destination, cited by 44% of travellers. This is followed by renowned attractions and strong tourism infrastructure. Europe's safety advantage therefore remains a key strength at a time when travellers are weighing cost, reliability and confidence more carefully.

### **Rail and multi-country travel gain ground**

For those planning to visit Europe, travel remains primarily leisure-driven, accounting for 71% of journeys. Most travellers still plan to stay for one to two weeks (60%) and spend €100–200 per person per day (36%). However, there are signs of growing budget awareness, with more travellers (+5%) expecting to spend €50–100 per day (23%) and shorter stays becoming more common.

Good train connections between destinations now influence destination choice for 23% of travellers, up three points from last summer. Three in four long-haul visitors intend to visit more than one country during their trip, close to four on average. While low-cost air remains the most common cross-border option (47%), intentions to use rail passes (42%) and point-to-point train tickets (40%) have both increased significantly (+4%) from last year.

### **Travellers look beyond traditional hotspots**

Europe's established destinations continue to lead travellers' wish lists, with France (39%), Italy (29%), Germany (25%), the United Kingdom (22%) and Spain (21%) remaining the top choices.

At the same time, interest is shifting beyond traditional hotspots. Central and Eastern Europe recorded a significant year-on-year increase, including growing interest in Poland, Slovakia, Croatia and Bulgaria. As travel costs remain a key consideration, more travellers appear willing to explore alternative destinations offering strong value and different experiences.

Culture and history remain the leading activities for long-haul travellers, followed by city life, gastronomy and nature. Spending intentions also show a shift in priorities: food and drink remain the top category (67%), while planned spending on shopping (40%) and accommodation (27%) has fallen, and wellness has increased to 20% (+2%).

Commenting on the findings, **Miguel Sanz, President of the European Travel Commission**, said:

***“Despite economic pressures and geopolitical uncertainty, Europe remains the top destination choice for long-haul travellers worldwide. Safety is a key consideration for travellers, and Europe continues to hold a clear advantage in this regard. Travellers are also becoming more selective, seeking good value, authentic***

---

*experiences and easier ways to explore multiple destinations. This is an opportunity for Europe to strengthen connectivity, diversify visitor flows and respond to changing expectations.”*

The full report can be downloaded from: <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/long-haul-travel-barometer-2-2026/>

**ENDS**

Europe ranks as the safest global destination, while  
cost pressures shape long-haul travel plans

**EUROPEAN  
TRAVEL  
COMMISSION**

## 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 practices, market intelligence and promotion. For more information, visit [etc-corporate.org](http://etc-corporate.org).

**Eurail BV** is the organisation dedicated to the management of Eurail and Interrail Passes. Eurail gives travellers from all over the world the opportunity to experience flexible, borderless travel across Europe. Eurail BV has over 100 travel partners across Europe, including accommodation providers, transport operators and attractions, offering additional special benefits to all Pass holders. The company is owned by over 35 European railway and shipping companies. For more information, visit [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com) and follow [@Eurail](https://twitter.com/Eurail).

## Media contact

---

Aicha Sakhi  
Penta Group  
[etc@pentagroup.co](mailto:etc@pentagroup.co)  
Ph: +32 (0)490 16 06 92

### European Travel Commission

Rue du Marché aux Herbes  
61, 1000 - Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: +32 2548 90 00  
[www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org)

**EUROPEAN  
TRAVEL  
COMMISSION**