

## EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION AND IGLTA FOUNDATION PUBLISH HANDBOOK ON LGBTQ TRAVEL IN EUROPE

The European Travel Commission (ETC), in collaboration with the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association Foundation (IGLTAF), has published its first study on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer travel segment.

*Brussels, 26 July 2018* – The aim of the *Handbook on the LGBTQ Travel Segment*, authored by Peter Jordan of Gen C Traveller, is to help European destinations to understand the potential of the LGBTQ travel market and how European NTOs can provide a more welcoming environment for LGBTQ travelers from all around the world, in order to improve Europe’s overall competitiveness as a destination.

First-hand consumer research for the Handbook was facilitated by Hornet Networks through an online survey of LGBTQ consumers in five long-haul markets: Brazil, China, Japan, Russia and the United States. Additionally, the Handbook includes insights from 16 experts who gave their perspective on the cultural factors that shape demand for travel among LGBTQ consumers.

Research results found that overall Europe has a strong competitive position, being viewed widely by LGBTQ consumers in its major long-haul markets as “the most liberal, socially progressive destination”, however, weaknesses prevail as some parts of Europe are perceived to offer a less safe environment for their own LGBTQ citizens, and by extension, travellers.

- LGBTQ travellers in Europe’s long-haul markets have a high affinity with Europe and a strong desire to visit in the near future. 80% of survey respondents expected to visit Europe in the next three years, with 92% of those who had visited before expecting to make a repeat visit.
- LGBTQ travellers to Europe are highly sensitive to how local LGBTQ people are accepted in society. Most of all, they value an open-minded and forward-thinking culture, as well as a history of acceptance, and local laws allowing same-sex marriage or civil partnerships. LGBTQ events and nightlife are also major attractions, especially for travellers from Russia or China where these are less prevalent.
- LGBTQ events and festivals are high on travellers’ wish lists when visiting Europe, as well as the opportunity to discover the nightlife. However, the research highlights that a significant number of travellers are looking for a more cultural experience, such as visiting specific sites and monuments, socialising with local people and enjoying luxury experiences. In destination marketing, LGBTQ consumers value authenticity in the marketing message and images, and consistency between the marketing promise and in-destination experience.

“While we at ETC believe that a ‘separate’ approach for the LGBTQ traveller could seem incongruous with our beliefs in equality and inclusion, we cannot ignore the fact that also within Europe, the hospitality business, like no other, has its work cut out to ensure that we remain committed to our core values of freedom, equality and brotherhood. Fostering support for LGBTQ inclusion also is an opportunity for economic growth and cultural development for tourism destinations. Destinations, governments are thus called to join efforts to create the conditions for LGBTQ residents to live in safety and comfort,” said Visit Flanders CEO and ETC President Peter de Wilde.

“When it comes to LGBTQ rights, most of us consider European countries to be among the world’s most progressive;

however, there remains room for improvement in both established LGBTQ-friendly destinations and in many European nations still striving for greater equality. This is why, through our philanthropic IGLTA Foundation, we gave our support to this project. By sharing data and resources on the LGBTQ segment with the travel industry as a whole we can create greater understanding of our diverse community,” said IGLTA President/CEO John Tanzella.

The Handbook is free of charge, and can be downloaded through the websites of the [European Travel Commission](#) and the [International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association](#). With 75 pages of analysis, forecasts and consumer insights, the Handbook is expected to be a valuable resource to those seeking to understand the dynamics of the LGBTQ travel segment today. A 41-page supplement that includes case studies on LGBTQ destination marketing and transcripts from the expert interviews is available upon request. Please email [info@visiteurope.com](mailto:info@visiteurope.com) or [iglta@iglta.org](mailto:iglta@iglta.org).

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#### [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 33 member NTOs, including 8 from outside the European Union. Europe is the world's no. 1 tourist destination with 671 million international arrivals in 2017 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>.

#### **About IGLTA & the IGLTA Foundation**

The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) is the global leader in advancing LGBTQ travel. The mission of IGLTA is to provide information and resources for LGBTQ travelers and expand LGBTQ tourism globally by demonstrating its significant social and economic impact. IGLTA member businesses represent all travel sectors and are located in more than 80 countries. The IGLTA Foundation supports the mission of IGLTA and its membership with a focus on education, research and developing future leaders in LGBTQ tourism. For more information: [iglta.org](http://iglta.org) or [iglta.org/foundation](http://iglta.org/foundation) and follow us on Facebook at IGLTA, IGLTABusiness and IGLTAFoundation or Twitter and Instagram @iglta.