



EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION

COMMISSION EUROPEENNE DU TOURISME

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PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN TOURISM IN 2011 - TRENDS & PROSPECTS (Q4/2011)

Brussels, 30 January 2012. The European Travel Commission (ETC) has just published its fourth quarterly report on ***European Tourism in 2011 - Trends & Prospects***.

The following gives a brief overview of the report for the fourth quarter of 2011.

The full report can be downloaded from ETC's corporate website under the link below.

- Travel to European destinations in 2011 has exceeded the prior peak set in 2008.
- Impressively, 22 of 23 reporting countries show international visitor growth in 2011, ranging from 3% in the UK to more than 20% in Latvia and Lithuania. And 24 of 26 countries show gains in hotel occupancy in 2011.
- Total international visits are estimated to have surged 6% last year, while hotel occupancy rates rose 3.2%, indicating that domestic demand lagged behind international demand.
- While the travel recovery has been quite robust, signs of eroding gains began to appear, as expected, in the second half of 2011.
- Data on visitation and nights from TourMIS (http://www.tourmis.info/index_e.html) as well as hotel and airline industry data provide a consistent picture of the pullback on growth in recent months.
- Three forces converged to bring about this late-year trend: reversion to the mean from the ash cloud rebound in the first half of the year; the second half of 2010 was relatively stronger than the first half so comparisons in 2011 were to a higher base; and the Eurozone debt crisis began to affect both consumer and business behaviour.
- The financial crisis in the Eurozone has continued to worsen in recent months. Problems in sovereign debt markets have spread from Greece, Ireland and Portugal to Spain and Italy - posing a much more severe threat of global financial contagion.
- If the Eurozone authorities fail to arrest the alarming slide in financial and business confidence, the consequences would be severe. In the event of a Eurozone break-up, GDP could initially fall by around 10% in the exiting countries and the attendant financial disruption would plunge much of the world, including the United States, back into recession.

The full report can be downloaded from ETC's corporate website under the following link:

<http://www.etc-corporate.org/market-intelligence/reports-and-studies.html>

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 tourism destination to the long-haul markets outside Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 33 member NTOs, including 9 from outside the European Union. ETC is an independent body which is financed entirely by annual membership contributions and partnership funding.

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Press Releases: <http://www.etc-corporate.org/press/current-press-releases.html>

For further information: ETC's corporate website 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 www.visiteurope.com