

SURVEY SHOWS INCREASE IN INTRA-EUROPEAN TOURISM



A study carried out for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry has revealed key statistics about the holiday habits of European travellers in 2013. The experiences of 31,122 respondents from across the EU make up these findings and they prove to be very interesting as they highlight some important trends of European tourism in the past year and some factors that may have been influential in causing them.

The key statistics for European travellers in 2013.

2013 saw seven out of ten Europeans travelling away from home, the majority of which were employed people aged between 15 and 39 who had a good education and hailed from large towns, but most of these holiday-makers did not leave the EU. While the number of people having a holiday in their own country fell slightly from 47% to 42%, they generally stayed within the countries that make up a block referred to as the EU28. This figure rose from 33% to 38% and only 19% travelled outside of the EU. The five countries that received the most visitors from other European nations, in descending order, were Spain, France, Italy, Germany and Austria, which is the same top 5 as the previous year, and each saw a slight increase in numbers.

Why are we seeing these results?

Why is this trend for European tourism occurring, particularly when 46% of those asked claimed that sunshine and beaches were the most important reason for choosing a destination, a factor that should be sending them to hotter, tropical climates? This trend could be partly due to the suggested need to stay close to relations, but there are other potential factors at work such as civil unrest in non-EU destinations like the Middle East, the power of the personal recommendation and the current economic climate.

Statistics from the Eurobarometer survey showed that 56% relied on recommendations from relatives and friends when choosing a destination and that customer satisfaction was closely linked with the safety of the accommodation and the way that tourists were welcomed; all of which could potentially influence the choice between familiar European destinations and the Middle East. As for economics, 44% of those that didn't travel in 2013 made that choice because of financial restraints and Greece is a great example of a country under this pressure. Greeks were the most likely to holiday in their own country (87%) and 74% of those that did not go away cited money problems as the main reason.

Will this trend continue for 2014?

Early indications from questions about the participants' current plans show that the number of travellers staying in the EU and European tourism in the top 5 nations will stay roughly the same. The reason for this continuation could be down to a number of influences: the lack of resolutions in the Middle East and a desire for return visits to enjoyable resorts or relatives could play their part, but it seems that economics is having a surprisingly minimal impact on 2014 plans, with only 11% deciding to stay at home because of costs and 44% making no changes to their plans at all.

In short, whatever the personal reasons for doing so, this Eurobarometer survey shows that

Europeans have a strong, clear desire to stay within the EU rather than travel to other nations like the neighbouring Middle East and there seems to be little chance of this pattern changing in the immediate future.

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