EUROPE DOMINATES GLOBAL DIGITAL NOMAD RANKINGS



Europe is well represented in the top ten of the 2026 Global Digital Nomad Index. For the third year running, Spain has retained its number one position. The latest Global Intelligence Unit (GIU) report demonstrates that alongside the initial focus on enticing digital nomads with temporary visas, there has been a growing emphasis on enticing them to settle and become a part of a country in the longer term.

The GIU analyzed 56 countries and regions with respect to six areas – administration, nationality and movement, economic environment, taxation, quality of life, and technology and innovation. **Spain was top of the index with 85.36 points out of 100.** New Zealand was next with 80.35 and Uruguay was a close third with 80.34. Greece, Estonia and Portugal then followed. Completing Europe's top ten were Italy, Croatia, Andorra and Slovenia. Spain's continued top position is largely due to high marks for quality of life, freedom of movement and reasonably straightforward settlement procedures.

From Short-Term Visas to Lasting Opportunities

Whilst digital nomad temporary visa schemes were popularized in the wake of COVID-19, 91% of such schemes were actually introduced from 2020 onwards. There has been a transition from an initial, more ad-hoc approach to a more considered strategy. Some of the original schemes have even been withdrawn and newer schemes seek to encourage digital nomads to settle, participate in the local economy and assimilate into society.

In general, the facilities available to digital nomads have improved. Of those analyzed, 87.5% allow digital nomads to bring family members with them, 83.9% allow for visa renewal and 78.6% can be applied for from overseas. However, there is still room for improvement. Only 20 of the 56 schemes (35.7%) recognize periods spent on a digital nomad visa towards someone's route to permanent settlement or nationality.

Quality of Life Outweighs Low Costs

As noted above, 22 countries and regions were analyzed in Europe. In addition to high quality of life, ease of access to the Schengen Area and associated freedom of movement is also a key advantage. Interestingly, however, the top ten are by no means the most budget friendly. An average annual income of US$47,356 is needed – some 22% above the average for all analyzed schemes.

Whilst favorable taxation arrangements are advantageous, they alone are not enough to achieve a high index ranking. Five countries achieved the highest tax score but none were within the top ten. Certainly, ease of entry is still important but, in recent times, there has been increasing importance placed on legal security, settlement prospects, freedom of movement and family friendliness. The most successful locations are those which enable global professionals to both work remotely and envision themselves having a genuine long-term future in that country/region.

Top 10 Digital Nomad Destinations

Rank Country Region Overall Index 1 Spain Europe 85.36 2 New Zealand Oceania 80.35 3 Uruguay South America 80.34 4 Greece Europe 80.19 5 Estonia Europe 80.1 6 Portugal Europe 79.83 7 Italy Europe 79.59 8 Croatia Europe 79.19 9 Andorra Europe 79.16 10 Slovenia Europe 79.12

Source: Global Intelligence Unit / Global Citizen Solutions.

Date: 2026-11-30

Article link:
https://www.tourism-review.com/spain-remains-the-best-country-for-digital-nomads-news15738