



# TRAVELLING *in* EUROPE

THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION HELPS YOU PROMOTE  
THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE TOURIST DESTINATION

## AN INFORMATIVE TOOL

INFORMATION  
AND IDEAS FOR  
TRAVEL AND TOURISM  
PROFESSIONALS

## PLAN SMARTER

BETTER UNDERSTAND  
REGIONAL TRENDS  
AND OFFERINGS

## GET THE EDGE

FIND IDEAS TO HELP  
YOU DIFFERENTIATE  
YOUR OFFERING



3. **Europe as a Single Destination**  
Peter de Wilde, President ETC
4. **Fostering Competitiveness in Europe's Tourism Sector**  
Pedro Ortún, European Commission
6. **UNWTO on Europe: "An Impressive Performance"**  
Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO
7. **Accommodation in Europe**
8. **Air Travel in Europe**
10. **Rail Travel in Europe**
14. **Road Travel in Europe**
16. **Cruise Travel in Europe**
18. **Cycling in Europe**
19. **Youth Travel in Europe**
20. **European Cultural Routes**
22. **European Gastronomy**
23. **Wellness in Europe**
24. **LGBT Travel in Europe**
25. **Tourism for all in Europe**
26. **Schengen Area**
27. **Practical Information Useful Links**

# Europe's New Tourism Paradigm

For many decades, tourists from all corners of the globe have seen Europe as the "ultimate" destination. The fact of being able to see the many countries and cultures in what is the heart of the "Western" world, sometimes even several in a day, is a major draw card for Europe.

In the past, and to some extent still today, each European country does its own promotion on a global scale, and rightly so, as each has its own very solid identity and culture. But in the knowledge that foreign tourists see Europe as a "single destination", the ETC has been working over the past years to underline – or highlight – the actions and efforts being made by various receptive organisations to amalgamate and confederate services and offerings across the union in order to make life easier for visitors and indeed for travel professionals planning their itineraries.

Surreptitiously, but surely, many factors have been changing in such a way as to facilitate travel for foreigners, none the least which was the Schengen accord, but also including deregulation of air and rail routes, modernisation of infrastructure, and initiatives to promote such topics as culture, events, gastronomy and nature.

It is thus becoming increasingly essential for the European tourism industry to be "up to speed" in terms of giving the world's travel professionals the right



## Richard Barnes

Editor-in-Chief  
Cleverdis and ITB Berlin News

tools to assist them in their planning tasks. This SMARTguide, compiled as an initiative of the ETC, is one of a number of steps being made with this very aim. In this publication, we have attempted to bring together the key elements that may be used as planning support for you, the travel professional from anywhere around the globe. It aims to give you a firm overview of the ongoing evolution of Europe's transport infrastructure, as well as a number of new ideas and initiatives, which we believe will result in improved planning for better targeted, or more "intelligent" future itineraries.



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# Europe as a Single Destination

Peter De Wilde – President ETC – underlines importance of consolidating global marketing efforts



**Peter De Wilde**

President ETC

Europe is one of the strongest travel brands in the world. The ETC is working on reinforcing Europe's position as the number one travel destination by identifying and clearly defining the values of the brand Europe in order to translate them into pan-European themes and products that are attractive to certain target groups in key markets.

To explain more clearly why we are doing this, currently, half of all international arrivals to Europe are generated by only 8 markets – mainly intra-regional – with modest growth rates. This fact points to the potential to attract more visitors from a larger portfolio of markets, especially in the fast growing economies overseas. Some emerging origin markets, such as China and Russia, have recently become much more important due to their strong growth in household wealth and spending power. However, these two markets combined still only represented 7% of tourism arrivals in 2014. It is therefore vital today to develop a clear roadmap for the joint promotion of Destination Europe, capitalising on Europe's common values.

The "Destination Europe 2020" initiative, a joint program with the European Commission, aims to ensure Europe's visibility as a unique destination based on market intelligence, industry consultation and a greater use of technology. The programme started in 2012 and the activities focused, in particular, on a series of start-up actions, online consumer campaigns and a broad industry consultation. The programme now focuses on the development of high-quality audio visual pan-European content to be presented in an appealing and informative way to visitors from long-haul markets, mainly through online channels and social media and via participation in travel and tourism fairs.

**“ ETC IS WORKING ON REINFORCING EUROPE'S POSITION AS THE NUMBER ONE TRAVEL DESTINATION**

Europe is a marvellous destination to promote to your clients. As ETC, we work together with key industry representatives who share with us a common goal in promoting Europe. We want to be the primary partner of all relevant public and private tourism bodies when it comes to promote travel to Europe.

We are focusing on issues that are crucial for strengthening the European travel industry such as travel facilitation, competitiveness of the tourism industry and increasing awareness amongst political leaders that the tourism industry is a guarantee for sustainable economic and social growth.

Together, we can raise the profile of and promote Europe as a destination, particularly in overseas markets where there is growing demand and perception of Europe as a single destination and not as a collection of individual countries.

# Fostering Competitiveness in

The European Commission works towards visa facilitation and



© European Commission

## Pedro Ortún

European Commission

Director in the European Commission since 1988, since 1st January 2015 Pedro Ortún has taken the role of Director in charge of Tourism, of Textiles, Fashion, Design and Creative Industries and of Key Enabling Technologies and the Digital Economy in the new DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW).

Over the past few years, the European Commission has implemented a wide range of initiatives in the field of tourism meant at enhancing the competitiveness of the sector and preserving the position of Europe as the no.1 world tourist destination. We know tourism is important to Europe ... but just how important is it, and what are the Commission's plans in tourism field for the near future? We put the question to the Commission's Pedro Ortún ...

Europe is the first tourist destination in the world and has kept its number one position in the past years. The EU reached 456.6 million international tourist arrivals in 2014, which corresponds to a share of almost 40% of the worldwide total, and scored an excellent 5.3% increase in 2014.

In order to keep this competitive position in the future, the European Commission will continue focussing on initiatives which can foster the competitiveness of the sector and create a favourable environment

for tourism to grow in a sustainable and responsible manner. The Commission will focus on the following main challenges: the increasing competition from emerging markets, the need for better ICT uptake and innovation, as well as for a better promotion of our natural and cultural heritage, and the seasonality with its detrimental impacts on the quality of tourism jobs. In order to face these challenges, the Commission intends to propose a set of common actions to be implemented in close coordination with



# Europe's Tourism Sector

improved communication to bolster the industry

the Member States and in cooperation with the EU tourism industry and other private stakeholders.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, the Commission adopted a proposal amending the current visa provisions. What are the main features and objectives of the proposed reforms?

The basic ideas of this modernised visa policy were already laid out in a Commission Communication in November 2012 focusing on the "Implementation and development of the common visa policy to spur growth". The recast is very ambitious and is articulated around the objective of easing the entire process for both applicants and for consulates. One of the proposed improvements for visa applicants is shortening of the maximum deadlines from 15 to 10 days. But the major facilitation for visa applicants we are putting forward is the idea of differentiating the treatment of known, regular travellers and unknown, first time applicants on the basis of clear, objective criteria. This means, for instance, that frequent travellers will not have to present, again and again, the same documents and hence the visa application process will be lighter, faster and less expensive. Moreover, under the proposed changes, they will also have easier access to multiple-entry visas (MEVs). At the moment these proposals are being examined by both the Council, composed by EU Member States' governments, and the European Parliament.

**"Europe – Whenever you're ready" was the first international tourism communication campaign by the Commission. What's planned for the near future?**

Indeed, «Europe – whenever you're ready» was the Commission's first international communication campaign for the promotion of Europe as a top tourism destination. This communication was merely complementing the thrust

**“ ...THE MAJOR FACILITATION FOR VISA APPLICANTS WE ARE PUTTING FORWARD IS THE IDEA OF DIFFERENTIATING THE TREATMENT OF KNOWN, REGULAR TRAVELLERS AND UNKNOWN, FIRST TIME APPLICANTS...**

of promotional activities of the Member States and the European tourism industry. Most importantly, the campaign was carried out in close cooperation with the European Travel Commission (ETC).

Building up on the success of this first communication campaign, the Commission envisages conducting a similar 18-month initiative in 2015 and 2016. The aim will be to promote the image of Europe as a collection of diverse, sustainable and high quality tourist destinations and motivate tourists to take their holidays in the EU, possibly in more than one country. This time, the campaign will target mainly tourists from European states, but also, to a smaller extent, from selected third countries. The focus will be on a restricted and cost-effective number of target groups with the highest potential for increasing tourism flows within Europe, in particular during the medium and low season.

**Do you feel tourism can also play a role in developing closer cultural ties, with, say the Chinese people?**

I am absolutely convinced that this is the case. The very essence of the concept of «people-to-people» contacts is getting to know, understand, and ultimately respect each other. Obviously the Chinese tourists

have very different needs compared to other visitors, and it is essential to bear this in mind.

**How do you see the role of the ETC evolving over time? Will it become more important?**

ETC as the organisation which regroups the National Tourism Offices of most European countries should have a crucial role to play in the promotion of Europe as a tourist destination in the future.

The high-level discussions on the occasion of the European Tourism Forum and European Tourism Day in 2014 highlighted that it is important that European tourism industry organisations and enterprises at all levels continue to strengthen their collaboration under the umbrella of a common European approach and positioning. I do believe that this would be best done through a joint initiative of public-private promotion of Europe as a tourist destination, through pan-European/transnational tourism products. ETC could therefore be the best placed organisation to lead on the implementation of such an initiative in close cooperation with the European Commission and the Member States and their NTOs.

# UNWTO on Europe: “An Impressive Performance”

Secretary-General Taleb Rifai outlines current tourism scenario in Europe



## Taleb Rifai

Secretary-General, UNWTO

Europe continues to be the world’s most visited region. In 2014, Europe’s international tourist arrivals grew 4% with an additional 22 million visitors – an impressive performance in spite of the persisting economic challenges in the region. We asked Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) to tell us more about his organisation’s research.

Among subregions, Northern Europe and Southern and Mediterranean Europe led with 7% growth. With the region’s consistent growth, tourism continues to be a key sector supporting Europe’s still fragile economic recovery and create so much needed jobs.

### What are the trends in terms of source markets for Europe?

Globally, traditional source markets such as France, Italy and the United Kingdom have been rebounding, which compensates for the slowdown in the emerging source markets that have been driving growth in previous years, such as the Russian Federation that declined by 6% last year, and Brazil which slowed down to 2% growth. China is still the world’s largest outbound market and spender since it topped the world rankings in 2012 and we expect this marketing to be increasingly

“ AMONG SUBREGIONS, NORTHERN EUROPE AND SOUTHERN AND MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE LED WITH 7% GROWTH

important globally and to Europe. That said, we must always remember that 80% of all international tourists in Europe come from the region itself and that it is thus fundamental to promote intraregional tourism.

### How is the industry changing to adapt to new requirements of these new Chinese visitors?

Chinese outbound travel is indeed a global phenomenon – growing from 10 million tourists in 2000 to 109 million in 2014. China is also the world’s highest spender, with a record US\$129 billion in international tourism in 2013, increasing eightfold since 2000.

In response to this, many destinations around the world have taken proactive measures to attract more Chinese tourists by easing visa procedures for Chinese nationals, while hotels and luxury shops are facilitating the language barrier by introducing Mandarin-speaking staff. Mature tourism destinations worldwide have responded by improving their visa facilitation schemes, including Australia, the UK and most recently, the United States. UNWTO welcomes these measures as they are vital to ensuring destinations can benefit from such an important and rapidly growing source market.

### Which kinds of tourism are evolving the fastest and why?

Cultural tourism has been growing over recent years, particularly as this corresponds to tourists’ increasing quest for authenticity over traditional travel itineraries. This kind of tourism embraces a wide range of attractions, including gastronomy, the arts, architecture, heritage, traditions and music – elements that distinguish the tourism experience.





## Harmonising Classification

### Streamlining the accommodation market in Europe

With more than 200,000 hotels in Europe, the past decade has seen major changes across the continent and UK with regard to the streamlining of classification systems.

Since 2004, HOTREC<sup>1</sup> and its associations have been working on bringing the hotel classification systems in various European countries closer to one another. Under the patronage of HOTREC – Hospitality Europe, the hotels associations of Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland thus created the Hotelstars Union. Since then, the following countries joined the star family: Estonia (2011), Latvia (2011), Lithuania (2011), Luxembourg (2011), Malta (2012), Belgium (2013), Denmark (2013) and Greece (2013). 15 countries are now participating. The joint hotel classification is a dynamic system. Its criteria and procedures are checked regularly and developed further according to the expectations of the guests. For example, as customer needs and technologies develop, aspects such as internet accessibility are becoming increasingly important alongside the more traditional ones, e.g. comfort of sleep. The revised and tested criteria for hotels in all categories are gradually being implemented in the individual Hotelstars Union member countries from 2015 onwards.

#### STARS ARE IMPORTANT

According to a recent survey on behalf of the DEHOGA (German) national association on the relevancy of varied sources of information for choosing a hotel, 47% of private travellers surveyed orientate themselves towards the official star classification, a rise of more than 6 percentage points compared to the TNS survey of 2008. In the same period, online reviews expectably rose to the second most popular source of information for hotel guests following personal recommendations of friends and acquaintances.

More information on Hotelstars Union:  
[www.hotelstars.eu](http://www.hotelstars.eu)

1. HOTREC represents the hotel, restaurant and café industry at European level, bringing together 42 national associations representing the sector in 27 different European countries.

## ETOA - YOUR UNIQUE NETWORKING PLATFORM

ETOA, the European tourism association, is the leading trade association for tour operators and suppliers with business in European destinations. Over 700 members contribute more than €12bn of business within Europe and include tour and online operators, intermediaries and wholesalers; European tourist boards, hotels, attractions and other tourism suppliers.

ETOA aim to be the most influential driver for growth in European tourism and a trusted resource for policy makers and businesses. They want to improve the regulatory environment for European tourism; provide valuable services and expertise to their members & partners and design and deliver market-leading trade events and seminars.

ETOA offers an unparalleled networking/contracting platform for tourism professionals organising B2B events.

Their flagship workshops include:

- **HEM** – Hoteliers European Marketplace. This is a one day workshop at which European hotels and hotel chains meet contractors from around the world.
- **MAMA** – March Marketplace consists of two days of business meetings dedicated to selling the British and Irish product.
- **City Fair** – gives European destinations and suppliers the opportunity to meet selected travel buyers in a productive business environment.
- **Showcase**. Travel Digital – brings technology buyers from tourism business to meet technology providers.
- **GEM** – Global European Marketplace brings together international travel buyers and European suppliers for one day of pre-scheduled appointments. Last year 700 delegates attended with over 14,000 meetings scheduled across the day.

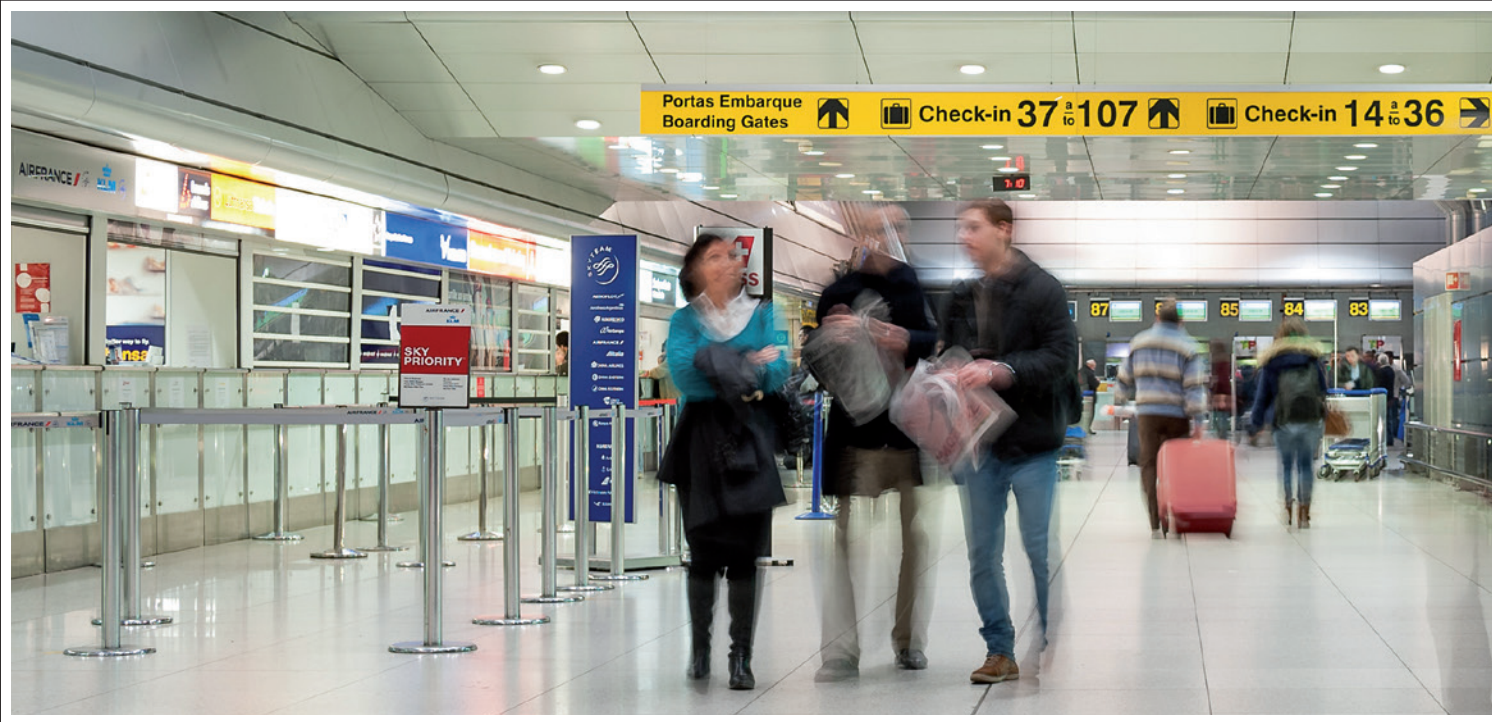
The organisation also provides:

**Tour Guide ID** cards to its member's guides to support the freedom of tour guides working in Europe to deliver cultural commentary to tourists in public places without interference.

**Advocacy** support on a European level, high profile industry Campaigns and B2B marketing representation opportunities; all in order to promote Europe as the world's number one tourism destination.

For more information: [www.etoa.org](http://www.etoa.org)





# Removing the Bottlenecks

Air Transport in Europe evolves – with new efficiencies and

The liberalisation of the air transport industry in Europe in the early 1990s created a boom in air connectivity as new airlines entered the market and traditional players increased their efficiency. That boom has continued: travellers now have unprecedented options for business, leisure, and meeting family and friends. The number of city-pair connections is double that of 20 years ago – more than 16,000.

New Distribution Capability (NDC) is now transforming the way air products are retailed to corporations, leisure and business travellers. IATA has announced collaboration with a coalition of national travel agent associations on a study to look at options that could benefit the travel agents as NDC is now widely accepted

across the industry communities. At time of writing, in Europe there are 4 airlines officially engaged in NDC pilots: Aer Lingus, British Airways, HeliAir Monaco and SWISS.

Rafael Schwartzman, IATA Regional Vice President, Europe explains that “New Distribution Capability will facilitate more efficient and comprehensive airline distribution in the travel agent channel through the development and market adoption of an XML-based data transmission standard for communications between airlines and travel agents.”

**SMART SECURITY** is another factor that will influence transits through European airports. Schiphol and Heathrow airports are running trials combining technological advances with process improvements and a risk-based regulatory approach. Using

new techniques, passenger throughput can be increased back to the levels that were achieved prior to 9/11 and the subsequent tightening of regulations. Mr Schwartzman says results are highly encouraging: “It is about future-proofing the system so that if new regulations and checks are required, the system can cope without the bottlenecks of the past. In time, we also hope that new Smart Security technologies will be able to mean passengers no longer have to remove laptops, divest clothes, and other such inconveniences.”

Meanwhile, Europe’s “Fast Travel” program responds to passenger demand for a more seamless travel experience and more control through six time saving, self-service initiatives. They are:

- Check in: allowing passengers to receive their boarding pass via self-service channels (web, kiosk, mobile phone or





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# Europe's Airports

...Adding new value for the traveller

Air transport in Europe continues to boom – in pace with tourism growth, with a rise in traffic in 2014 of around 5%. Olivier Jankovec – Director General – Airports Council International (ACI), says Europe is, together with Asia, the most advanced region in the world when it comes to working on the “passenger experience”.

He says now the experience is being customised to give it a local flavour: “Examples include Amsterdam Schiphol airport, where one can find an annex of the Rijksmuseum; Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris has an annex of the Rodin museum; while Athens airport is presenting Greek antiquities in the terminal. Other initiatives include Munich airport with its on site brewery, Helsinki with a book-swap centre for passengers, Charles de Gaulle airport is developing signage and services in Chinese, London Heathrow is developing ‘personal shoppers’ who accompany passengers through their visit.”

**“...DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ARE HELPING AIRPORTS BE MORE “IN TOUCH” WITH PASSENGERS...**

“Airports have moved from being mere infrastructure providers to fully-fledged and diversified businesses,” says Mr Jankovec.

In a recent report, the ACI outlined the fact that digital technologies are helping airports be more “in touch” with passengers. “Of course with all the social applications like Facebook and Instagram, and how airports are using these to establish direct connections with the passengers, this is something that didn’t – or couldn’t – exist five to ten years ago. It places the airport-passenger relationship on another level.”

## MAJOR NEW TERMINAL OPENINGS / EXPANSION

- A new Terminal 2 satellite is opening in Munich in 2015;
- A connector-building linking the two terminals in Brussels is a major change to the passenger experience there;
- Terminal expansion is under way at Riga airport;
- There is major ongoing refurbishing at Paris Orly;
- Paris Charles de Gaulle is investing heavily in the quality of its facilities;
- In Oslo, there is 1.7 billion Euro investment, with a new Terminal 2 under construction – due to open in 2017;
- ... and Helsinki is investing around 800-million Euros into upgrading its airport facility.

“We have seen in recent years a shift from spending money on developing capacity, to spending money on improving the quality,” underlines Mr Jankovec.

# necks

higher levels of comfort

- automated), avoiding long lines at check-in
- Bags ready-to-go: enabling passengers to deliver their bags tagged and ready for acceptance to an airline representative or a self-service bag-drop
- Document scanning: allowing passengers to scan their travel documents at kiosks for data verification and compliance with destination and transit requirements
- Flight rebooking: allowing passengers to get proactively rebooked and obtain their new boarding pass via a self-service channel such as kiosks in case of delays or cancellations and so avoiding long lines
- Self-boarding: allowing passengers to self-scan their boarding token to gain entry to the aircraft, potentially using automated boarding gates similar to a train or metro station
- Bag recovery: enabling passengers to report a missing bag via a self-service channel instead of waiting in line at a baggage claim service counter

# European Rail Travel –

## Europe’s high-speed train services “go international” –



**Rail infrastructure has been developed in Europe since the 19th century and still prevails as one of the safest and most important modes of communication across the continent from north to south and east to west.**

There are more than 350,000 km of railway lines in Europe today. In the 37 countries of Europe there are 120 railway operators – with 8-billion passengers carried annually. Many investments are being carried out to create new infrastructure, new links and renovate the rolling stock, both for intra-city and inter-city services, and there is a growing number of international links... which can be very interesting for visitors from outside Europe. The European Commission is working hard to increase the market share of rail, shifting from road and air transport. Advantages include safety and sustainability, but in addition to this, visitors are better able to discover the landscape and cities at their leisure.

An important factor is the high-speed network, which is now becoming a

veritable “European system”. This is because all the domestic networks, which have been developed since the first TGV service began in 1980 between Lyon and Paris, have now become an international network. Today, high-speed trains run across France, the UK, Italy, Spain, Germany, Benelux and others. High-speed services now run for example from London to Madrid, from Paris to cities in Germany and Italy, and even further afield, with good connections to Poland or the southeastern countries of Europe.

Thanks to efficient connections between the networks, high-speed train links run virtually from one side of Europe to the other. One such union, which was launched in 2014, was the link between the Spanish high-speed and French high-speed services, with the Barcelona

– Figueras – Perpignan link, which gives passengers the possibility to travel from Paris to Barcelona in four hours.

According to Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director-General of the International Union of Railways (UIC), this has changed the transport paradigm in Europe: “This would probably not amount to more time than travelling from central Paris to one of its airports, queuing to check in, going through security, flying to Barcelona, waiting for one’s baggage, then taking transport into the city. The Milan-Paris link is much the same, as are links to Geneva or Zurich, Brussels or Amsterdam. From Germany, many services now continue on the Poland, Austria and other destinations.”

Of course new projects are seeing the light of day on a regular basis, and over the next years, many more links will be added – with projects including Budapest, Vienna, Bucharest and Warsaw.

For travel professionals, it’s important to note that profound changes have



# Arrive Relaxed

as “modal interfacing” becomes the order of the day



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occurred in the European rail transport scene in recent times that will no doubt play out and have an affect on travel planning.

“We are seeing the arrival of much more of what we call ‘modal interfacing’, explains Mr Loubinoux. “The vision of rail as a sole mode of transport belongs to the last century. Today, rail is a backbone of transportation, taking you quickly and comfortably to a number of places, where of course there is a lot of complementarity with other modes. If you want to visit the small villages in the Lubéron, or in Slovenia, in the Baltic countries or Spain or the UK, of course, you may need buses, coaches, cars and bikes. This is actually an advantage that rail has understood, in equipping stations more and more in complementarity with other modes such as car rentals, intra-city subways or coaches, or even bikes, which makes access much easier for all travellers.”

This modal complementarity in Europe’s railway stations is something, which,

says Mr Loubinoux, along with the proper information in all languages, will give visitors from outside Europe very easy access to all modes of transportation for their visit. The easy interface between modes is increasingly being implemented in Europe’s train stations – just like in Europe’s airports.

#### **E-TICKETING FOR TRAINS: CHANGING THE WAY PEOPLE ORGANISE THEIR TRAVEL PLANS...**

It started with the airline business in the 80s with the Global Distribution Systems, but now European railways have similar systems for reservations for ticketing and information, which are to some extent interconnected thanks to European partnerships, such as a recent one in which Russia is able to transmit information and ticketing via the French system and vice-versa. There are many such bi-lateral and multi-lateral partnerships that give outside visitors, through web interfaces, the possibility to prepare their travel in advance.

“  
THE VISION OF  
RAIL AS A  
“SOLE” MODE  
OF TRANSPORT  
BELONGS TO  
THE LAST  
CENTURY

# Eurail. All of Europe in One

Eurail Passes are the best and most environmentally



## SEVEN REASONS TO TRAVEL WITH EURAIL

**1) FREEDOM:** Eurail Passes are synonymous with borderless travel. Passholders can travel whenever they want, wherever they want, throughout 28 European countries.

**2) FLEXIBILITY:** Passholders can create their own itinerary and they make multiple train journeys in a travel day.

**3) VARIETY:** Eurail is a gateway to exploring the geographical, historical and cultural richness of Europe first-hand.

**4) ENVIRONMENTAL-FRIENDLINESS:** Trains are often seen as one of the most environmentally friendly means of transport

**5) AUTHENTICITY:** Travelling by train instantly immerses the traveller in the cultural fabric of Europe.

**6) EXTRA BENEFITS:** Travellers are entitled to an array of exciting Pass benefits including a variety of discounted and free transportation services, ferry crossings, accommodation, attractions and city tours.

**7) MEETING NEW PEOPLE:** Trains are the perfect way to meet new people, travellers and residents alike, from all over the world - a great additional dimension to the overall travel experience.

## DISCOVER EUROPE WITH EURAIL

Eurail has become a symbol of unlimited rail travel throughout Europe. Providing access to more than 230,000 km of interconnected railways, Eurail now offers its customers the opportunity to travel in 28 different countries with an even greater number of transport organisations. Eurail Passes are used by over 300,000 non-European residents of all ages every year, and are available as a Global Pass, Select Pass, Regional Pass and One Country Pass.

## INTERRAIL - PASSES FOR EUROPEAN RESIDENTS

Interrail Passes are aimed at European residents of all ages and are available as a Global or One Country Pass. Interrail Passes are sold by local European railways and at [www.interrail.eu](http://www.interrail.eu). For further information about Interrail Passes please visit: [www.eurailgroup.org/interrail](http://www.eurailgroup.org/interrail)

## TYPES OF EURAIL PASS

Offering unlimited travel in 28 different countries, the Global Pass provides an extensive amount of choice to any traveller. The Pass is available as a 'Continuous' Pass or a 'Flexi' Pass. Continuous Passes

offer unlimited travel for 15 days, 21 days, one month, two months or three months and are suitable for people who wish to travel a lot with maximum flexibility.

Flexi Passes, on the other hand, offer unlimited travel for 5 days within 10 days, 10 or 15 days within a 2-month period and are ideal for travellers who have already planned their trip. The Eurail Select Pass allows the traveller to discover four bordering countries of their choice, while Regional Passes allow rail travel in two bordering countries (or country combinations) and the One Country Pass gives unlimited travel in a single chosen country.

## WHAT'S NEW IN 2015?

### EURAIL GLOBAL PASS ADDS NEW COUNTRIES

Four new countries join Eurail's Global Pass offer in 2015. The additions of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Poland and Serbia bring the total to 28 countries that can be explored with the rail Pass. The border connections created by this expansion add even more possibilities to the already vast itinerary options.



# Pass

friendly way to see Europe



### NEW EURAIL GLOBAL PASS: FIVE DAYS WITHIN TEN DAYS

Eurail has added a new pass validity as well. Catering to the fact that not all travellers have an abundance of vacation days to explore 28 countries, the 5 in 10 Days Global Pass option gives travellers five travel days anywhere within a ten-day span to visit non-bordering countries of their choice.

### CHILDREN TRAVEL FREE

With the new Children Travel Free initiative, children aged four to eleven can ride for free with a family member or friend travelling on an Adult Eurail Pass. Up to two children per adult can travel for free.

### 1<sup>ST</sup> CLASS YOUTH PASS

Travelling with children or friends in the 12-to-25 age group has become easier

with the introduction of the 1<sup>st</sup>-class Youth Pass. This pass which, was only available in second class prior to 2015, is now for sale at a 20% less than the cost of the Adult 1<sup>st</sup> Class Pass. So everyone can enjoy the journey together in 1<sup>st</sup>-class comfort.

### ATTICA PASS: A GREEK ISLAND HOPPING PASS

Another way Eurail is giving customers more options is with the Attica Pass, a new One Country Pass to the Greek islands by ferry. With two international trips, travellers can use Italy as a jumping-off point.

It offers six ferry crossings within one month: two international trips between Italy and Greece and four domestic trips for island hopping, and takes care of travellers with a transfer from

the international port of Patras to the domestic port of Piraeus.

### RAIL PLANNER APP - DESIGNED TO ASSIST RAIL TRAVELLERS ON THE MOVE



The Rail Planner is a free and convenient app that provides offline access to European train timetables while avoiding expensive roaming costs. With the app, travellers can use the «Trip Planner» feature to organise their travel in advance, or in Europe at the train station, or even in the train itself. Passholders can find the nearest train stations using a built-in augmented reality feature and see extra discounts and benefits such as boat and ferry trips, hotels and museums.

## EURAIL GLOBAL PASS PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

- Valid for Global Pass
- Valid for Global Pass from 2015



# Coach Travel in Europe

Safe, reliable and efficient, it's a highly economical form of getting around...

Travelling by coach in Europe is a way of combining all the benefits of car-pooling with comfort, safety and access to a professional service.

The lower cost of bus fares means travellers can cross Europe even on the tightest of budgets... and seeing Europe by coach gives them a freedom and flexibility often not offered other forms of travel.

The largest regular coach network in Europe is known as Eurolines. Created in 1985, the Brand name Eurolines in fact groups 29 independent coach companies into Europe's largest regular coach network. This network connects over 600 destinations, covering the whole continent. Every year, the Eurolines network transports 3.5 million of passengers to more than 600 destinations across Europe.

Importantly, Eurolines hosts a website dedicated to travel agents that allows them to book, print and send by email a Eurolines ticket, manage their bookings, get a free quotation for a group, or download timetables as well as General Terms and Conditions of Sale.

The "Eurolines pass" allows for unlimited coach travel between 41 destinations in 21 countries on the Eurolines network. It is only valid on international journeys and travellers are not allowed to repeat any route while using the pass.

"Busabout", meanwhile, is Europe-wide hop-on hop-off bus network designed for backpackers. The network comprises a number of interconnecting bus routes connecting the major cities with a few out-of-the-way destinations thrown in. The network comprises travel to around 30 destinations in nine countries.

Meanwhile in 2012, the French (until then) rail operator SNCF launched out into road transport with iDBUS, as a



"seamless, cost effective and comfortable transport alternative to travel across Europe. Available in France, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Germany, iDBUS reaches 19 European destinations. iDBUS has been offering free Wi-Fi services to its passengers across its fleet thanks to a partnership with mobile operator Orange. It is reported that already 50% of iDBUS customers regularly connect to the internet during their trips.

According to Laurent Lenoir, Director of Information Systems at iDBUS, "Remaining connected while travelling has become a necessity, and Wi-Fi availability is among the top criteria for choosing our company". Electrical power sockets are also available for travellers in order to use their laptops or charge other mobile devices.

**“ THE “EUROLINES PASS” ALLOWS FOR UNLIMITED COACH TRAVEL BETWEEN 41 DESTINATIONS IN 21 COUNTRIES**

#### IMPORTANT:

When buying a bus or coach ticket, travellers may not be charged a higher price because of their nationality or the place in which they are buying the ticket. Passenger rights are firmly protected in Europe. Links to information can be found in the "Practical Information", page 27.





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# Travelling by Automobile in Europe

Making it to the “harder to get-to places”

European roads are for the most part of a very high, if not exemplary standard, with freeway systems criss-crossing the continent and the UK. Car rental is thus often an option chosen by travellers from overseas.

## CAR RENTAL IN EUROPE

Europe’s car rental infrastructure is excellent. Renting a car can be the best way to travel around the back-roads and sinuous coastal or mountain routes that may not otherwise be reached by public transport. While it may seem obvious, travellers are strongly recommended to reserve in advance. This assures not only a better price, but is also wise due to the fact that at various times of the year (not only in summer), rental agencies may be sold out. It is recommended to choose a company that has agencies in all areas that will be visited, as in case of breakdown it will be much more convenient to change vehicle.

In general, cars in Europe are smaller than in the US (as are the streets!) and generally come with manual transmission. Automatic cars are quite rare, and are rented at a premium.

It is very important for renters to remember to include their flight details on their reservation, as if their flight is delayed and they have not done this, they may find their reservation is no longer valid.

Renters will generally be asked for a valid international bankcard (even if they have prepaid) for the security deposit, which varies depending on the type of car and from whom they are renting. The deposit

is just “blocked” – not withdrawn from their account. Travellers should check before leaving home that their card limit is sufficient for this. The card must be in the name of the person driving the vehicle, who must also of course have a valid driver’s licence and passport. Even if travelling as a couple, it is not possible to use a credit card other than that of the driver for the deposit (even if the rental is prepaid). This often catches travellers unaware, and is important to remember.

## ROAD SAFETY

While Europe allows free passage between “Schengen” countries, the basic road rules in each European country differ in terms of speed limits, alcohol tolerance, accident reports, and so on. It is therefore essential for travellers to know and understand the rules before taking to the road. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse to break it, and local police will remind travellers of this in no uncertain terms. You will find a link in the “resources” section (Page 27) to Europe’s online “Road Safety” guide.

## ROAD SAFETY APP

What is the speed limit on Spanish motorways? Do I need to wear a helmet when I cycle in Sweden? Travellers are now able to download a free European Road Safety App that contains all important road safety rules and some fun games. It is recommended that tourists travelling to Europe download it before leaving home, in order to save on roaming charges.

# The European Cruise

Smaller ships get into new, undiscovered locations... while



While the Caribbean, according to the Cruise Lines Industry Association (CLIA), remains the world's premier cruise destination, with 37.3% of global share in 2014, the Mediterranean (18.9%) and Northern Europe (11.1%) together account for 30%.

For mainstream cruise lines, big ships have become the name of the game over the past years, luxury and niche lines are expanding their small-ship offerings. In 2015, Viking Cruises launches its new "Viking Oceans" division, debuting the 930-passenger Viking Star. France-based Ponant launches Le Lyrial, a 264-passenger ship. These ships will take travellers off the beaten track to smaller, less trafficked ports, such as those offered in the "Best of Croatia" tour with Le Lyrial, visiting ports such as Sibenik, Pula, and Hvar.

Other new cruise ships being launched in the Mediterranean include the 2500-passenger Mein Schiff (leds: My Ship) 4, which becomes the fourth ship in German-based TUI Cruises fleet. The line caters to Germans, with German the primary language spoken onboard all Tui ships.

P&O Cruises' new 3600-passenger Britannia will be the biggest ship ever built for the British market. The ship features "very British" interior design and features. Royal Caribbean Lines' massive Anthem of the Seas – a sister ship of Quantum of the Seas – will feature more activities than anyone could hope to do during a cruise, and another new factor that will please travellers is "no set dining times" – a departure from common cruise practice. Labelled a «smart ship», she will be equipped with true high-speed Internet, RFID wristbands to open cabin doors and to make purchases, and an entertainment space, called Two70, that seamlessly integrates technology with live performances from singers, dancers and acrobats.

## NEW CRUISE IDEAS IN EUROPE

**Arctic Wilderness Adventure:** For a more 'sub-zero' nature experience, Hurtigruten,

“...LUXURY AND NICHE LINES ARE EXPANDING THEIR SMALL-SHIP OFFERINGS...”

Compagnie du Ponant and Hapag-Lloyd Cruises all offer trips to the Arctic, passing through Spitsbergen, Iceland and Greenland to view the bright scenery, polar bears and walrus, to name but a few. Cruises include the Disko Bay area with giant icebergs, fjords, wildlife and spectacular landscapes and various excursions ashore with kayaking and hiking.

**Camping in the Arctic:** Travellers can grab a taste of real Arctic exploration and join members of the Hurtigruten



# Market

massive new vessels offer unmatched services



expedition team for a night camping ashore in Spitsbergen, the largest and only permanently populated island of the Svalbard archipelago in northern Norway. This cruise excursion offers passengers the chance to be part of a Polar Bear watch, help set up camp and listen to tales of daring experiences by the expedition team members.

**Glacier hike:** For those with an explorer spirit, experience an intense hike, venturing onto the glacier as part of a rope team, using crampons and a lot of teamwork for 1-2 hours. Participants will also be lectured on Glaciology in order to better understand the surrounding nature.

## RIVER CRUISING IN EUROPE

European river cruising is riding on the crest of a wave – and is now the fastest growing sector of the travel industry. Over the past few years, over 50 new river ships have taken to the water, and around 20 are being launched in 2015. The season runs from March to November – plus special festive-market and New Year's departures,

and destinations include the Danube, Rhine, Main, Moselle, Seine, Rhône and Saône rivers. Increasingly, passengers are able to arrive at their departure city by high-speed train, rather than flying, as trans-European rail links are constantly improved. For many European River Cruise lines, operators include a number of shore excursions in the price. These are typically guided walking tours or cycling tours.

Europe's largest River Cruise line, Viking River Cruises, set a new "Guinness Book" record in 2014, launching 16 new ships in one day, beating the company's previous record of 10. By the end of 2015, Viking will have a fleet of 50 vessels in Europe.

## NEW COMPANY ENTERS MARKET

For the first time in six years, a new river cruise company took to Europe's rivers in 2014. Emerald Waterways made its debut on the Danube and Rhine rivers. Ships boast an onboard heated swimming pool with retractable roof, which in the evening, transforms into a cinema.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CORE PORTS WITHIN THE EU

Work is underway within the EU to create more effective and uniform corridors for transport of freight and passengers. This is being implemented through the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) initiative, which will be completed by 2030.

As an element in TEN-T, 83 of the Union's 1,200 or so ports have been designated as Core Ports. These are ports, which, via their geographic location and modern infrastructure, have the greatest significance in the development of the new transport corridors.

Core ports will find it easier to obtain public support for investments and development projects, e.g. for interlinking rail and road communications or other infrastructure initiatives that will need to be implemented with more freight being handled in the company's facilities in the future.

# On Your Bike

## Experiencing Europe on two wheels – with 14 Eurovelo Routes

How about travelling across the continent under one's own steam? Thanks to EuroVelo, a project of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), co-financed by the European Union, cycling across Europe is now not only possible, but safe, attractive and comfortable too. With network of 14 transcontinental

routes, stretching from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, the Arctic to the Mediterranean, each one has something new to offer. In 2015, the ECF is particularly highlighting EuroVelo 8 – Mediterranean Route, EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail and EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Route.

### NEW ROUTES OPENING – AND MORE PLANNED

Incorporating existing and planned national and regional cycle routes into a single European network, Eurovelo currently consists of well over 45,000 km of bike paths... and thousands of kilometres more are planned. When completed in 2020, it will total over 70,000 km. EuroVelo 13 – The Iron Curtain Trail – connects 20 countries, 3 seas and over ten thousand kilometres of formerly closed border. A lighthouse project of this scale has a clear international appeal. By captivating the imagination of an international audience it can bring people outside the typical cycle tourist profile around to cycle tourism and cycling more generally.

The project is not only an attempt to change people's habits but makes financial sense too. According to the study "The European cycle route network EuroVelo" commissioned by the European Parliament, the southern section of the Iron Curtain Trail (ICT) is expected to generate 1.5 million daytrips, more than 170,000 holiday trips and have a total economic

impact of 97.7 million Euro per year when it is fully developed. Bearing in mind that the cost of the core activities of the project are set to total 58.5 million Euro for the 2014 – 2020 period, it is an investment well worth making. Skirting the Mediterranean, Eurovelo8 passes by sparkling emerald seas, kilometres of golden sand, mysterious islands, wonderful food and ancient cities. Its opening was heralded by Christiano Radelli, the commissioner of Italy's tourism organisation ENIT: "Today sport tourism is highly demanded and it is a fast-growing sector of the global travel industry. Eurovelo8 is indeed a great opportunity for Italy to fascinate new cycling visitors with major artistic and historical attractions standing along the itinerary. We believe cyclers will come with high expectations as Turin, Pavia, Ferrara, Venice are only some of the marvellous cities crossed by EuroVelo8. To meet their expectations we will have to take good care of them providing high standard facilities and suitable services."

More info: [www.Eurovelo.org](http://www.Eurovelo.org)







© Eurail

# Youth Travel

## Why Europe continues to be the number one destination for young travellers

**Youth travellers (15-24 year-olds) are recognised as valuable visitors who seek novel and engaging experiences that go beyond leisure.**

Juliet Stevens, Marketing Manager, World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation recently declared, "Youth travel is no longer a niche sector; it's bigger than Facebook, bigger than McDonalds and bigger than the Argentinean budget. The global youth travel industry is now estimated to represent 200 million international trips a year, and the youth travel industry has grown faster than global travel overall. By 2020 the UNWTO estimates there will be almost 300 million international youth trips per year."

### EUROPEAN CITIES ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FAVOURITE DESTINATIONS

European Cities Marketing (ECM), a network of leading Tourist Offices and Conventions Bureaux in Europe has added youth travel into its strategy, considering the opportunity this group present for the leisure and meetings industry.

In the framework of the ECM annual meeting in 2014, ECM and TCI Research produced a joint study on the youth market. Olivier Henry-Biabaud, author of the report, commented: "Young travellers are enthusiastic with old city centres and historical and cultural diversity: 76% of visitors take time to explore historical monuments vs. only 56% in non European cities; they find it easy to explore thanks to accessible public transportation in cities offering safe and clean conditions for visiting and opportunities to enjoy days & night activities, interacting and engaging more with local people"

### EUROPE'S DIVERSITY ENCHANTS YOUTH TRAVELLERS

The European Travel Commission (ETC), identified that the beauty and cleanliness of Europe's landscape and the diversity of its offer especially thrill the overseas youth

traveller. Based on ETC's analysis of TCI Research data, overseas youth travellers are more satisfied with a trip to Europe than both the European and average youth traveller. Their positive impressions stem from Europe's attractions: its range of natural and urban sights, historic attractions and leisure activities.

Northern and Southern & Mediterranean Europe lead in providing the most satisfying experience in Europe. Although non-European youth travellers' satisfaction with their trips relate, Northern Europe trumps with the hospitality of locals, while Southern & Mediterranean Europe surprises with the range of leisure activities, accommodation and restaurant options.

### EUROPEAN YOUTH CARD

Supported by the Council of Europe, the European Youth Card offers discounts on culture, travel, accommodation, shopping and services in most European countries. The European Youth Card Association (EYCA) is a non-profit organisation that represents 41 youth card organisations in 38 countries across Europe.

Anyone under the age of 30 (or 26, depending on the country or region) can become a cardholder – they don't have to be a student or a resident of a European country. For people coming from outside Europe, they can buy the card (approx. 5 – 9 Euros) online through [www.eyca.org](http://www.eyca.org).

# European Cultural R

The soul... and the strongly beating heart of the western



The Route of Saint Olav Ways (Norway)

Cultural tourism accounts for around 40% of all European tourism, and while culture here dates back many decades, the concept of Cultural Routes was officially spawned by the Council of Europe in 1987.

## MANY ROUTES LEAD TO ROME

In addressing the spirit of a modern pilgrimage, the declaration invited Europeans – particularly the young – to “travel these routes to build a society founded on tolerance, liberty, solidarity and respect for others”. In this way, the routes leading to Rome, and from Rome to Jerusalem, the Michaelic pilgrimages and the pilgrimages dedicated to St Olav in northern Europe have progressively been added to the first route to create the most faithful and coherent image possible of the great land routes which have structured the towns and villages of Europe.

The Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe now comprises 29 certified Routes that cover 70 countries. France (10.4%) heads the list followed by Italy (9.7%),

Spain (8.4%), Portugal (5.8%), Germany (5.2%) and Great Britain (5.2%). The rest of the countries each comprise 2.6% or smaller percentages.

## THE WAYS OF PILGRIMAGE

From its beginnings, the concept of hospitable networks (the Order of Cluny, the Knights of Malta or St John) has led to the development of a network of small businesses, initially religious, which federated agricultural and medical “clusters” to feed and care for pilgrims. Today, with the renaissance of pilgrimages, this spirit of hospitality and welcome has spawned resting points, hostels and semi-tourist accommodation facilities, which contribute to the local development of the villages and rural spaces traversed, creating an entire “social economy” linked to a social, supportive and, ethical tourism.

“ THE MEANING OF MAN IN SOCIETY, IDEAS OF LIBERTY AND JUSTICE, AND TRUST IN PROGRESS

## MARITIME AND TRADE ROUTES

The Phoenicians’ routes, starting in the Mediterranean and stretching as far as the Isles of Scilly (United Kingdom), enable one to analyse the evolution of the concept of trading posts, and of the establishment of platforms for exchanges



# outes

world



The Hanse  
(Hamburg,  
Germany)



The Pyrenean Iron Route (Spain)

© Shutterstock

with local populations. It is equally clear that the towns of the Hansa are the first example of the creation of an economic network founded on mutual insurance and risk-sharing. The towns, particularly Bruges, also had links to the Medici Bank and the great central European markets. The Via Regia is also one of the oldest commercial exchange corridors in Europe. The Route enables one to interpret the geography and nature of these exchanges and the creation of small and medium businesses from the age of pedlars to transportation via articulated lorries on the new east-west motorways built since the last world war.

## THE CULTURAL ROUTES OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

The Iron Route in the Pyrenees, primarily designed to present and interpret a network of small historic crafts enterprises which employed a cross-border seasonal workforce, and the European Iron Trail in Central Europe, showcasing the great industries of the region, are at the heart of the concept

of evolution in the economic forms of work in Europe; not forgetting that they are also examples of a recent form of economic innovation: the reconversion of an industrial activity into a heritage activity.

## LANDSCAPES AND CIVILISATIONS

The Routes of the Olive Tree and the Iler Vitis Route are particularly relevant models for studying the economy and management of landscape as well as the economic structure of small agricultural businesses before the development of the food processing industries.

## THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF HISTORICAL THERMAL TOWNS

This Route is particularly suited to studying the evolution of the tourism economy, from spa treatments to the development of well-being tourism linked to the rediscovery of one of the great historic heritages of tourism.

More info: [www.coe.int/routes](http://www.coe.int/routes)

## EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE

Another excellent way to take in some culture in Europe is to enjoy the European Capitals of Culture.

This initiative by the European Commission is designed to highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe, celebrate the cultural features Europeans share, increase European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area and foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities.

The initiative was developed in 1985 and has, to date, been awarded to more than 50 cities across the European Union. The 2015 European Capitals of Culture are Mons (Belgium) and Pizen (Czech Republic).

European Capitals of Culture have already been designated until 2018:

**2016** – Donostia-San Sebastián (Spain) and Wrocław (Poland)

**2017** – Aarhus (Denmark) and Paphos (Cyprus)

**2018** – Leeuwarden (Netherlands) and Valetta (Malta)

# Europe is... Delicious!

## Gastronomy: one of the most memorable aspects of a European tour

It goes without saying that the extraordinary variety of cuisines from one end of Europe to the other is one of the key attractions for foreign visitors.

But the way people learn about where to go is of course changing. Yes, social media plays a big part today in helping people decide which restaurant or bar may be to their liking in the city they're visiting, it is important for travel professionals to be aware of trends and food-related events in order to point tourists in the right direction. A recent study on food travellers<sup>1</sup> reveals that these people are most interested in local and authentic foods and culinary experiences that are different from those they can get at home. Gastronomic consumers are travellers seeking the authenticity of the places... They recognise the value of gastronomy as a means of socialising, as a space for sharing life with others... exchanging experiences.

It's thus fair to say that here is no more delicious way to experience the "soul of European culture, history and traditions" than through its food. As the traveller meanders through Europe, he or she will find numerous gastronomic fairs, festivals and trails to taste the unique local products and dishes. These events are becoming more prevalent, in particular in Europe.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION SOURCE

The European Travel Commission and the European Commission had very recently launched a website to give travellers and tourism professionals a glimpse of what fairs and festivals are coming up. Through [www.tastingeurope.com](http://www.tastingeurope.com), searches can be undertaken either geographically, by simply searching on a map, or chronologically, with a calendar. The new official website for gastronomy events in Europe offers extensive information on food fairs and



©Jakub Dorak - Trnava Tourism

festivals in 36 countries, and a vast range of unique travel experiences related to European cuisine and gastronomic traditions.

Routes are suggested, with users able to select countries and regions and a countless array of product categories, such as breads, beers, cheese, chocolate, fish, pasta, herbs & spices, wines, oils... the list goes on.

As an educational experience for the visitor, by knowing beforehand the traditional dishes of the regions they are visiting, and thus being able to seek them out actively, the enjoyment of the visit is greatly enhanced!

And once they've tested out these new culinary experiences, they are able to communicate through social media about just what they think about it, using the **#tastingeurope** hashtag.

“ AS THE TRAVELLER MEANDERS THROUGH EUROPE, HE OR SHE WILL FIND NUMEROUS GASTRONOMIC FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND TRAILS TO TASTE THE UNIQUE LOCAL PRODUCTS AND DISHES.

1. <http://www.worldfoodtravel.org/new-2013-research/>





Szechenyi Thermal Baths,  
Budapest

©Hungarian Tourism Plc.

# Just Relax!

Europe – home to the concepts of spa and wellness travel

In Europe, there are more than 12,000 resorts and facilities operating in health and wellness tourism, varying from wellness to medical spa services. Furthermore, there are more than 1,200 spas and health resorts, which are respected medical centres, forming a powerful economic unit generating significant proportions of the gross domestic product of European Community member countries.

## EUROPEAN PROJECT ON ROMAN THERMAL SPAS TAKES OFF

The Roman Thermal Spas project was officially kicked-off in Rome at the end of 2014. The project aims to explore the entire potential of the common heritage, to bring services to an even higher level and to draw interest of new guests from Europe and overseas to the unique combination of health and cultural tourism. During the kick-off meeting in Rome and Chianciano Terme, international travel packages for visitors from Europe and abroad are discussed and further developed. In

addition, the common communication activities are planned. These include - among others - a multi-lingual website, social media communication as well as print publications. The three main partners of "Roman Thermal Spas of Europe" are The European Spas Association (ESPA), FIT Reisen, a tour operator specialized in health and wellness tourism, and EuropeSpa, an international quality and certification system for medical spa and wellness. Including Chianciano Terme in Italy there are eight national spas, health resorts and associations from Bulgaria, France,

Germany, Greece, Hungary, Portugal and Romania. "Roman Thermal Spas of Europe" is thus the first project uniting a variety of spas and health resorts across Europe that share a common Roman heritage.

The project is co-funded by the European Union. After completion it will be transferred into a marketing cooperation open to other thermal spas with Roman heritage.

But more broadly, what constitutes a top quality spa programme? ESPA – the European Spas Association – has launched the international quality seals "EuropeSpa med" and "EuropeSpa wellness" in conjunction with leading experts to boost international transparency and fairness in competition. The EuropeSpa criteria focus on safety, hygiene and therapy infrastructure (EuropeSpa med – for medical spas) and safety, hygiene and wellness infrastructure plus service quality (EuropeSpa wellness – for wellness hotels, hotel spas, thermal spa or day spas).

The certificates give good spa facilities in the health- and wellness sector an international platform bringing them to the attention of tourists, tour operators and health insurance companies all over Europe via the EuropeSpa directory at "www.EuropeSpa.eu", which lists all the EuropeSpa med and EuropeSpa wellness certified spas.

[www.europeanspas.eu](http://www.europeanspas.eu)

# Lesbian and Gay Holidays

## LGBT – a “huge” travel market in Europe

**GETA - the Gay European Tourism Association** recently estimated the size of the Gay Travel market in Europe to be over € 50b. In truth, that may well be a conservative estimate, and in all likelihood the amount is growing - and growing fast.

As homophobia recedes in most of Western Europe, mainstream tourism offices and travel companies are waking up to the fact that gay travel is huge business in Europe - and a huge opportunity.

Are gay people travelling more? Probably not... but a larger proportion of their travel time is now “gay travel” time - in greater numbers and at a greater frequency. They’re increasingly tending to go on “gay holidays”, “gay cruises”, participating in “gay events”, and staying in “gay hotels”.

Catering for this, the Gay European Travel Association has developed a web-based information service<sup>1</sup>, including a number of Gay Hot Spot Guides, written by gay residents of each city or region, to help visitors get the most out of their trip. Why, for example, just travel to Barcelona, when one can travel to Barcelona to attend gay pride, stay in a gay hotel and meet up with lots of like-minded gay travellers in a gay bar?

### A FEW LGBT HOT SPOTS

**Amsterdam:** Petite, friendly and quirky - with a lively gay scene, vibrant cafés and impressive historical sights.

**Ibiza:** Spain’s clubbing mecca also offers golden beaches, excellent food and Europe’s best sunsets.

**Berlin:** I am gay, and that’s good the way it is! (‘Ich bin schwul, und das ist auch gut so!’) declared Berlin mayor Klaus Wowereit in 2001. Over a decade later, following Wowi’s term of office, Berlin’s reputation as one of the world’s most dynamic gay capitals thrives cheerfully.



**Mykonos:** The white-washed, laid-back alternative for gay travellers looking to get away from it all.

**Sitges:** Nowadays it is a popular destination for gay and lesbian travellers, as it has become one of the most gay-friendly places in the world.

**Prague:** The Czech Republic has become a much more liberal and gay-friendly destination in recent years and the Prague gay scene, mainly centred around the Vinohrady area (close to the city centre), is particularly vibrant and accessible.

**Stockholm:** Gay and lesbian life in Stockholm is like the city itself: easily accessible, hugely fun, highly varied and warm and welcoming.

**Vienna:** Not too many European cities have such a rich gay history as the Austrian capital.

Gay emperors, generals or composers of days gone by and all the gays and lesbians of today convert Vienna into a unique travel destination.

“ MAINSTREAM TOURISM OFFICES AND TRAVEL COMPANIES ARE WAKING UP TO THE FACT THAT GAY TRAVEL IS HUGE BUSINESS IN EUROPE - AND A HUGE OPPORTUNITY.

1. [www.gaywelcome.com/gay-travel-europe.php](http://www.gaywelcome.com/gay-travel-europe.php)



# Accessibility is Gaining Ground

The concept of “tourism for all” is growing fast in Europe

**Improving the accessibility of tourism services increases the quality of the visitor experience for all tourists. It also improves the quality of life in local communities.**

European destinations are committed to increasing accessibility in tourism through a number of actions, and the European Commission is supporting projects related to the design, implementation, and marketing of accessible tourism itineraries. ENAT – the European Network for Accessible Tourism, is a European and international stakeholder network with about 200 members in more than 50 countries. Its mission is to make European tourism destinations, products and services accessible to all travellers and to promote accessible tourism around the world. According to research organisation GfK, in

2012, people with access needs in the EU took approximately 783 million trips within the EU, and the demand was anticipated to grow to about 862 million trips per year by 2020, equivalent to an average growth rate of 1.2% annually.

Roughly two-thirds of the accessible tourism market is made up of seniors, while the rest includes families with small children and people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

A driving factor to respond to this market is the rapid growth in the next few years of an aging population. As the number of potential travellers with accessibility issues is rising, catering for these travellers could be viewed as a business opportunity.

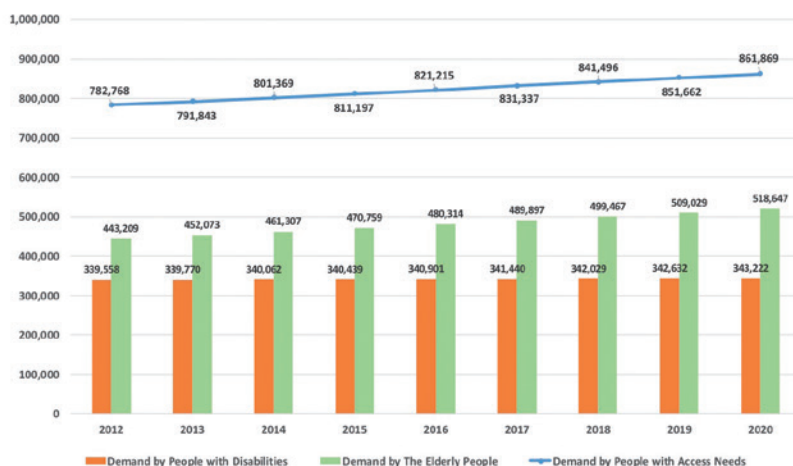
Many tourism and travel businesses are thus working towards gaining more customers in this market by adjusting their offers and providing information about access conditions.

Key findings of studies by ENAT:

- Customers with access needs tend to travel with 1.9 and 2.5 companions, on average.
- In mainstream tourism services investment in accessibility results in an increase in clients, longer stays, more spend and repeat visits.
- Destinations and businesses that take account of accessibility are usually focused on quality of service in general.
- Successful accessible destinations help to build accessible tourism supply chains by fostering cooperation among service providers and developing advisory and training services.
- Brands which focus on accessibility emphasise comfort, safety and treating all guests equally in their marketing..

## CURRENT DEMAND AND FORECASTING— KEY FINDINGS

Current and future demand for EU’s accessible tourism by EU27 countries (2012-2020)



## Pantou.org THE EUROPEAN ACCESSIBLE TOURISM DIRECTORY

Pantou.org is a comprehensive online directory developed by ENAT and the European Commission, where you can find suppliers providing accessible tourism services for Europe-inbound customers

For more information on accessible tourism in Europe:  
[www.accessibletourism.org](http://www.accessibletourism.org)

# Opening the Gates

Freedom and security for travellers in Europe

Today, most of the territory of the European continent is part of the border-free Schengen Area. The Schengen provisions abolish checks at the Union's internal borders in accordance with a single set of rules.

Any person, irrespective of nationality, may cross the internal borders without being subjected to border checks. For travellers coming from outside Europe, this means one visa, and one border control – when they enter the first Schengen country on their itinerary. Schengen Area encompasses most EU States, plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, with the notable exception of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The border-free Schengen Area functions efficiently thanks to a common visa policy which facilitates the entry of legal visitors into the EU, while strengthening internal security. The EU has set up a common visa policy for short stays, i.e. stays up to three months, which is applied through the delivery of so-called «Schengen visas». In 2011, the present 26 Schengen States issued around 12.6 million Schengen visas. Generally, a short-stay visa issued by one of the Schengen States entitles its holder to travel throughout the 26 Schengen States for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. Visas for visits exceeding that period remain subject to national procedures. If a non-EU national wishes to visit or travel within the EU, they will need a passport valid for at least 3 months after the date they intend to leave the EU country they are visiting, issued within the previous 10 years, and they may possibly require a visa.

## “ THE BORDER-FREE SCHENGEN AREA FUNCTIONS EFFICIENTLY THANKS TO A COMMON VISA POLICY

Visitors should apply for a visa from the consulate or embassy of the country they are visiting. If their visa is from a «Schengen area» country, it automatically allows them to travel to the other Schengen countries as well. For foreign nationals having a valid residence permit in a Schengen country, this is also equivalent to a visa. They may need a separate visa to visit non-Schengen countries in Europe. Border officials in EU countries may ask for other supporting documents such as an invitation letter, proof of lodging, return or round-trip ticket. For the precise requirements, it is best to contact the local consular services of the EU country in question.

There are a number of countries whose nationals do not need a visa to visit the EU for three months or less.



**SCHENGEN AREA 26**

|          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| Austria  | Liechtenstein |
| Belgium  | Lithuania     |
| Czech R. | Luxembourg    |
| Denmark  | Malta         |
| Estonia  | Netherlands   |
| Finland  | Norway        |
| France   | Poland        |
| Germany  | Portugal      |
| Greece   | Slovakia      |
| Hungary  | Slovenia      |
| Iceland  | Spain         |
| Italy    | Sweden        |
| Latvia   | Switzerland   |

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# New Tech at the Service of Tourism in Europe

## VisitEurope app earns UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Research and Technology

The 11<sup>th</sup> UNWTO Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism 2015 distinguished the VisitEurope iPad application with the prestigious Ulysses Award for Innovation in Research and Technology.

Designed as both a tablet app for iOS and a website optimized for any mobile device, the VisitEurope application uses innovative technology to provide travellers with a tool to obtain real-time access to information across the entire online travel planning experience; from the initial inspiration phase to the research, booking and sharing processes.

The application is available globally and has been optimised at an initial stage for the Americas, including the USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentina and Chile, where it is possible to compute the price of long-haul flights to Europe.

### NEW LOOK WEB PORTAL - VISITEUROPE.COM

The «visiteurope.com» portal has been renewed to enhance the user

experience and make it become a real inspirational tool for potential travellers to Europe, as well as on appropriate marketing and promotional platform.

The new website is a state of the art platform that engages a new generation of digitally sophisticated travellers and drive them to action. It guides them on a journey, beginning with inspirational imagery about a European holiday to planning the trip and sharing ideas. The journey is choreographed according to themes, to ensure users progressively discover more and more different experiences that are of real interest to them.



## USEFUL LINKS

### ETC - European Travel Commission

[www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org)

### Visit Europe

[www.visiteurope.com](http://www.visiteurope.com)

### European Gastronomy

[www.tastingeurope.com](http://www.tastingeurope.com)

### European Cultural Routes

[www.coe.int/routes](http://www.coe.int/routes)

### European Cities Marketing

[www.europeancitiesmarketing.com](http://www.europeancitiesmarketing.com)

### ETOA - European Tourism Association

[www.etoa.org](http://www.etoa.org)

### European hotel classification systems

[ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/docs/hotel\\_establishment\\_classification\\_EU\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/ecc/docs/hotel_establishment_classification_EU_en.pdf)

### Country holidays in Europe

[www.eurogites.org](http://www.eurogites.org)

### Passenger rights in Europe

[ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights)

### Road Safety Regulations

[europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/safety/road-safety/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/safety/road-safety/index_en.htm)

### Rail Planning

[www.InterRail.eu/plan-your-trip/InterRail-timetable](http://www.InterRail.eu/plan-your-trip/InterRail-timetable) and the InterRail Rail Planner App are useful sources for checking train schedules and obligatory reservation fees

### Listing of European coach line

[www.busweb.com/european\\_coach\\_companies.asp](http://www.busweb.com/european_coach_companies.asp)

### Eurolines professional web space

[www.eurolines.fr/en/travel-agencies](http://www.eurolines.fr/en/travel-agencies)

### European Ferry Lines

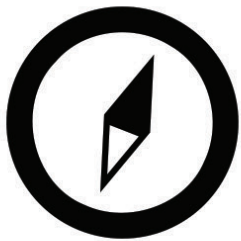
[www.ferrylines.com](http://www.ferrylines.com)

### European Accessible Tourism Directory

[www.pantou.org](http://www.pantou.org)



**ETC MEMBER**



**COUNTRIES**

