

*Data extracted in April 2025.
Planned article update: April 2026.*

Highlights

" 65% of EU residents made at least one personal tourism trip in 2023. "

" Almost half of EU residents' trips in 2023 were short domestic trips. "

" In 2023, Spain was again the most visited tourism destination in the EU for tourists (people travelling outside their country), with 302 million nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments. "

This article presents a general introduction to statistics on [tourism](#) in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) . The data shown here are discussed in more detail in [several other articles](#) . Tourism plays an important role in the EU because of its economic and employment potential, as well as its social and environmental implications. [Tourism statistics](#) are not only used to monitor the EU's tourism policies but also its regional and [sustainable development](#) policies.

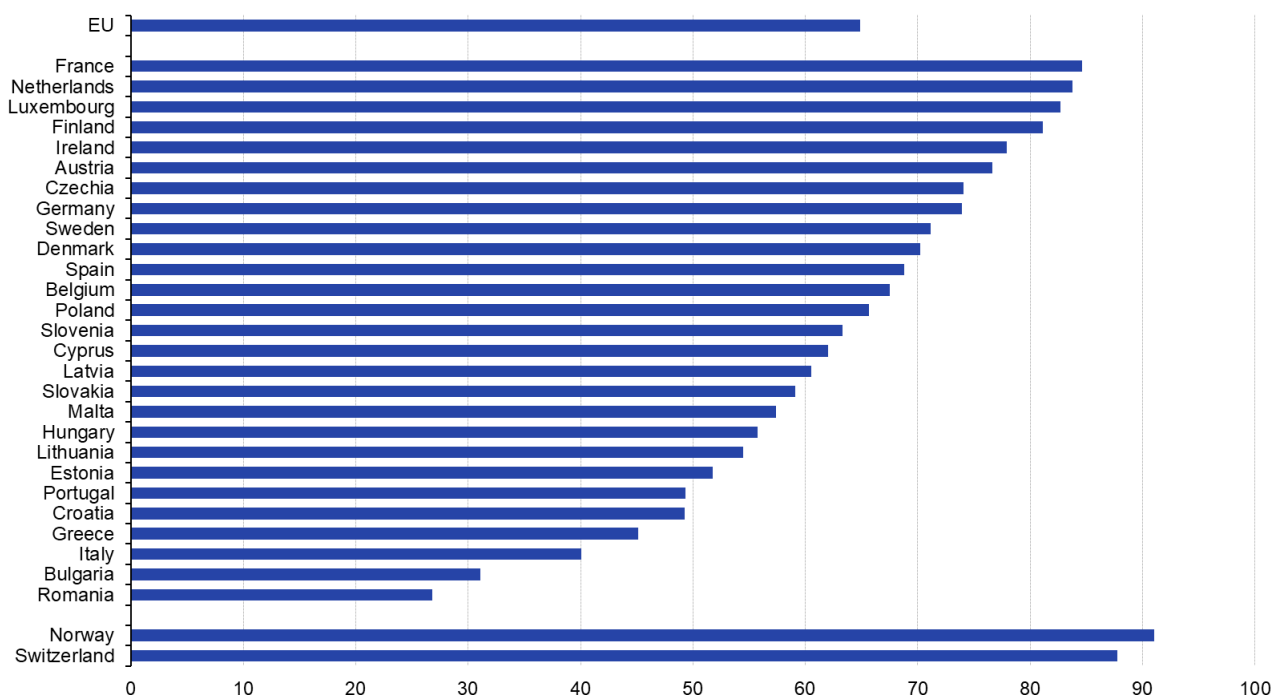
More than 3 out of 4 residents of France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Finland, Ireland and Austria participated in tourism

Tourism participation: 65% of EU residents made at least one personal trip in 2023

It is estimated that 65% of the EU population aged 15 or over took part in tourism for personal purposes in 2023, in other words they made at least one tourism trip for personal purposes with at least one overnight stay during the year (such as holidays, leisure, visiting friends and relatives). However, large differences can be observed between the [EU Member States](#) , as this participation rate ranged from 26.8% in Romania to 84.6% in France (see Figure 1 and Table 1). The participation rate of 65% was higher than in 2020, the first year affected by the pandemic (52%), 2021 (56%) and 2022 (62%), and reached for the first time the pre-pandemic level of 2019 (65%).

Share of population participating in tourism, 2023

(% of population aged 15 years or more)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_totot)

eurostat 

Figure 1: Share of population participating in tourism, 2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_totot)

More information can be found in the following article:

- [Tourism statistics - participation in tourism](#)

Tourism trips: Residents of Luxembourg, Belgium, Malta, Slovenia and the Netherlands made more foreign than domestic trips

73% of all trips made by EU residents were inside their own country

EU residents (aged 15 and above) made over 1.1 billion tourism trips in 2023, for personal or business purposes. The number of trips increased by 60% compared with 2020 and by 6% compared with 2022, and slightly surpassed the pre-pandemic year 2019 by 0.4%. More than half (56.5%) of these trips were [short trips](#) of 1 to 3 nights (see Table 1). 72.8% of all trips made were to domestic destinations, while 27.2% to destinations abroad.

Tourism trips of Europeans (aged 15 years or more), 2023

Country of residence	Number of trips (thousands)			Breakdown of all trips by destination and duration (%)				Share of the population (aged 15+) taking part in tourism trips for personal purposes (%)
	All trips	Short trips (1–3 nights)	Long trips (4+ nights)	Short domestic trips (1–3 nights)	Long domestic trips (4+ nights)	Short foreign trips (1–3 nights)	Long foreign trips (4+ nights)	
EU	1 143 077 e	645 762 e	497 314 e	48.8 e	24.1 e	7.7 e	19.4 e	64.9 e
Belgium	19 278	8 272	11 006	18.4	6.2	24.5	50.9	67.5
Bulgaria	4 810	2 491	2 319	44.6	32.7	7.2	15.5	31.1
Czechia	28 132	15 481	12 650	47.7	24.5	7.3	20.5	74.1
Denmark	18 203	10 984	7 219	49.6	13.8	10.7	25.9	70.2
Germany	250 645	118 965	131 680	39.1	20.1	8.3	32.4	74.0
Estonia	4 744	3 553	1 191	61.6	6.5	13.3	18.6	51.8
Ireland	18 929	11 826	7 103	43.5	7.9	19.0	29.7	77.9
Greece	6 916	1 754	5 161	22.8	62.4	2.6	12.3	45.1
Spain	146 820	98 450	48 370	63.6	25.5	3.5	7.4	68.8
France	239 458	143 043	96 415	55.1	31.6	4.6	8.7	84.6
Croatia	5 691	3 067	2 624	34.0	29.8	19.9	16.3	49.3
Italy	45 197	19 667	25 530	38.5	40.1	5.0	16.4	40.1
Cyprus	3 239	1 733	1 506	39.5	8.8	14.0	37.7	62.1
Latvia	4 612	3 263	1 349	55.3	7.7	15.4	21.5	60.5
Lithuania	6 073	4 017	2 056	56.8	7.7	9.3	26.1	54.5
Luxembourg	3 281	1 414	1 867	4.8	1.2	38.3	55.7	82.7
Hungary	17 115	10 552	6 562	47.8	15.7	13.8	22.7	55.7
Malta	1 221	613	609	31.1	6.1	19.0	43.8	57.4
Netherlands	47 198	22 588	24 610	33.0	14.0	14.8	38.1	83.8
Austria	30 857	17 144	13 714	35.1	12.8	20.4	31.7	76.7
Poland	65 828	33 665	32 162	47.1	32.2	4.1	16.7	65.6
Portugal	20 040	13 624	6 416	63.0	22.9	4.9	9.1	49.3
Romania	21 384	12 981	8 403	59.7	31.4	1.0	7.9	26.8
Slovenia	7 834	5 047	2 787	38.9	7.0	25.6	28.6	63.3
Slovakia	11 858	7 226	4 631	46.2	17.0	14.8	22.1	59.1
Finland	31 303	20 699	10 603	56.0	20.7	10.1	13.2	81.1
Sweden	71.1

"." - data not available or very unreliable.

"e" - estimated.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_dem_tttot, tour_dem_totot)

eurostat 

Table 1: Tourism trips of Europeans, 2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttot), (tour_dem_totot)

In 2023, 94.0% of the total number of tourism trips made by residents of Luxembourg were to destinations abroad, followed by Belgians with 75.4%, residents of Malta (62.8%), Slovenia (54.1%) and the Netherlands (53.0%). However, less than 1 out of 10 trips taken by residents of Romania (8.8%) were abroad. These figures appear to be influenced by both the size of the EU countries and their geographical location (smaller and more northerly countries tended to report a higher propensity for their residents to travel abroad).

In 2023, EU residents showed a preference to travel in the summer months with one fourth of their trips made in July or August.

More information can be found in the following publication:

- [Tourism trips of Europeans \(online publication\)](#)

Nights spent abroad by EU residents: Luxembourg leads in nights per inhabitant

Residents of Germany and the Netherlands spent nearly half of the total number of nights spent abroad by EU residents in 2023

EU residents spent an estimated 2.4 billion nights abroad on tourism trips in 2023 (see Figure 2). German residents spent 877 million nights on trips outside of Germany in 2023, while residents of the Netherlands spent 234 million nights abroad; residents from these 2 EU countries accounted for nearly half (45.8%) of the total number of nights spent abroad by EU residents.

Nights spent during foreign trips of Europeans, share by country of residence of the tourist, 2023

(% of total nights spent abroad by residents of the EU)

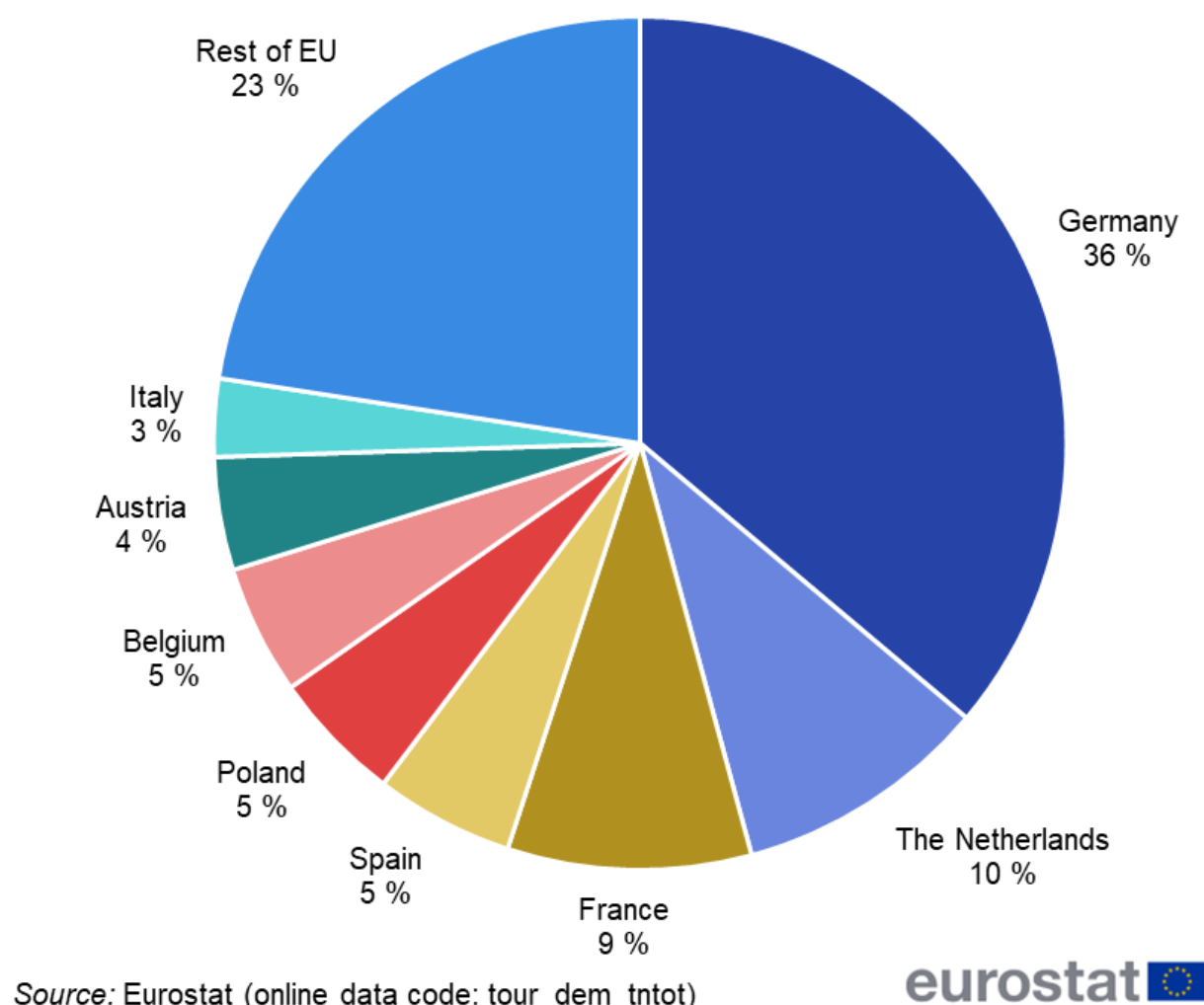
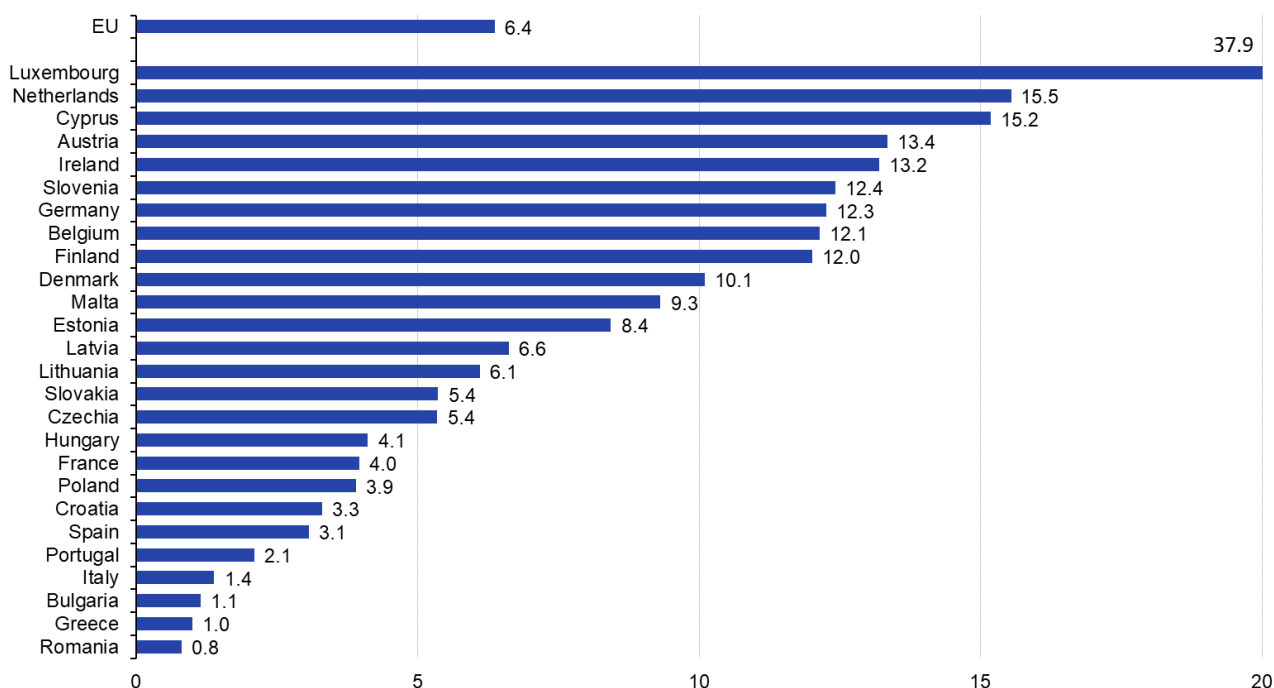


Figure 2: Nights spent during foreign trips of Europeans, share by country of residence of the tourist, 2023
Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tntot)

When taking into account a country's size in terms of its population, Luxembourg was the EU country whose residents spent the most nights abroad per inhabitant (an average of 38 nights in 2023), followed by the Netherlands (with nearly 16 nights spent abroad per inhabitant) and Cyprus (with 15 nights spent abroad per inhabitant). At the other end of the spectrum, residents of Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy and Portugal spent, on average, less than three nights abroad in 2023 (see Figure 3).

Country of origin for foreign tourism trips, 2023

(average nights spent abroad per inhabitant aged 15 years or more)



Note: Sweden: data not available

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_dem_tntot, demo_pjanbroad)

eurostat

Figure 3: Country of origin for foreign tourism trips, 2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tntot), (demo_pjanbroad)

More information can be found in the following publication:

- [Tourism trips of Europeans \(online publication\)](#)

Tourism accommodation establishments in the EU: Italy and Croatia predominate

In 2023, 55% of all establishments in the EU were concentrated in Italy and Croatia

It is estimated that there were more than 636 000 [tourist accommodation establishments](#) active within the EU in 2023 and together these provided 29.2 million [bed places](#) (see Table 2). More than one third (35.3%) of all the bed places in the EU were concentrated in just 2 of the EU countries, namely Italy (5.2 million) and France (5.1 million), while more than a half (54.5%) of all the establishments in the EU were concentrated in Italy (230 000), and Croatia (117 000). Note that comparability of the number of establishments may be affected by differences in registration schemes or obligations across Europe.

Tourist accommodation establishments, 2023

Note that comparability of the number of establishments may be affected by differences in registration schemes or obligations across Europe.

	Number of establishments (units)	Number of bed places (thousands)	Total nights spent (millions)
EU	636,308	29,205	2,943.2
Belgium	10,685	473	44.7
Bulgaria	4,019	360	26.9
Czechia	10,293	759	55.8
Denmark	1,237	452	38.9
Germany	48,275	3,665	431.4
Estonia	1,307	62	6.4
Ireland	2,459	246	40.6
Greece	28,854	1,238	147.2
Spain	57,492	3,821	485.0
France	29,375	5,095	460.3
Croatia	117,476	1,149	92.3
Italy	229,531	5,207	447.2
Cyprus	771	85	15.6
Latvia	1,182	52	4.4
Lithuania	4,793	122	8.5
Luxembourg	363	58	3.5
Hungary	3,959	362	30.5
Malta	335	51	9.9
Netherlands	9,122	1,400	142.3
Austria	25,097	1,138	127.8
Poland	9,809	793	92.8
Portugal	8,141	710	84.9
Romania	11,547	420	29.2
Slovenia	10,860	189	16.1
Slovakia	3,648	203	14.4
Finland	1,367	256	22.8
Sweden	4,311	840	63.9
Iceland	:	:	9.5
Liechtenstein	99	2	0.2
Norway	3,040	609	37.0
Switzerland	35,696	644	59.3
Montenegro ^(*)	453	54	5.1
North Macedonia	518	49	2.1
Albania	:	:	6.0 e
Serbia	24,242	173 e	12.4
Türkiye ^(*)	:	:	203.2
Kosovo ^(*)	:	:	1.5

(*) Nights spent by residents and non-residents estimated using 2023 monthly data.

": - data not available or very unreliable.

"e" - estimated.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_cap_nat, tour_occ_ninat, tour_occ_nim)

Table 2: Tourist accommodation establishments, 2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_cap_nat), (tour_occ_ninat), (tour_occ_nim)

More information can be found in the following article:

- [Tourism statistics - annual results for the accommodation sector](#)

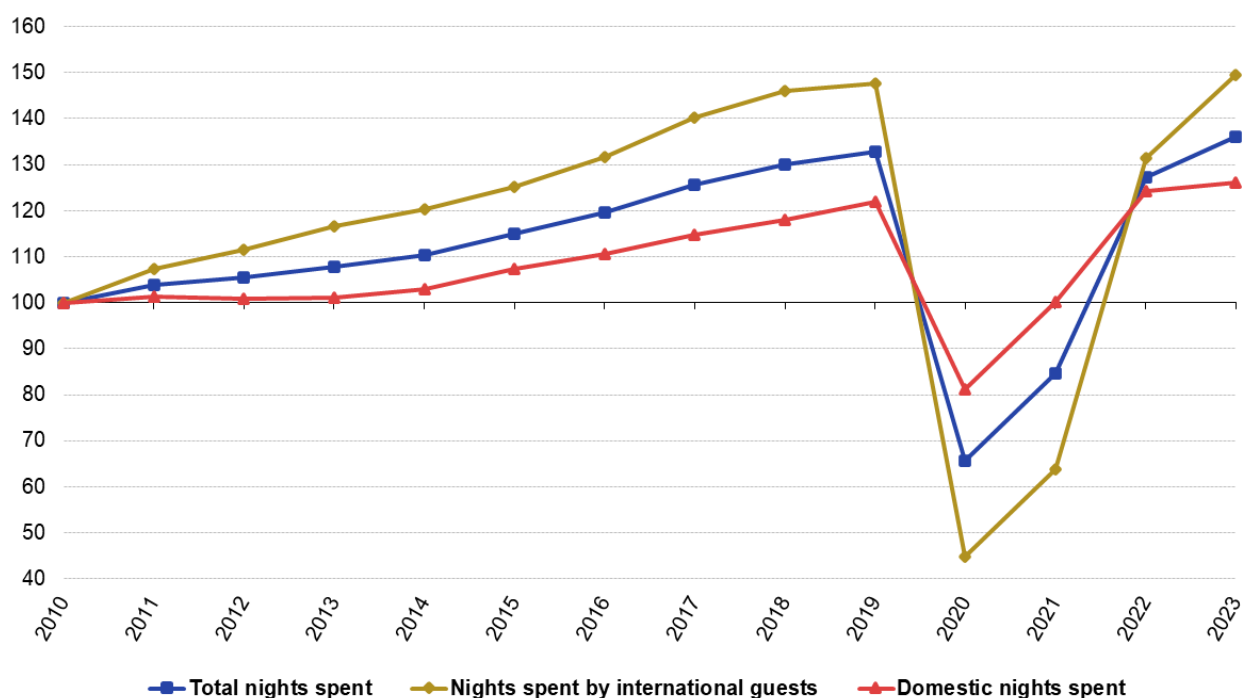
Nights spent by international guests in the EU: Spain on top

Nearly half of nights spent by international guests in the EU were spent in Spain, Italy and France

In 2023, the number of [nights spent](#) at EU tourist accommodation establishments was 6.8% higher than in the same period last year and 2.4% higher than before the pandemic. The number of nights spent by foreign tourists increased more significantly (+49.4%) than domestic tourists (+26.1%) from the base year 2010 (see Figure 4), this pattern of tourist flow was typical in the pre-pandemic period (see [Tourism statistics - nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments](#)).

Trends in nights spent at EU tourist accommodation establishments, 2010-2023

(index 2010=100)



Note: Because of methodological improvements for some Member States, data from 2012 onwards are not entirely comparable with previous years (this can affect the estimation of the EU aggregate).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_occ_ninat)

eurostat 

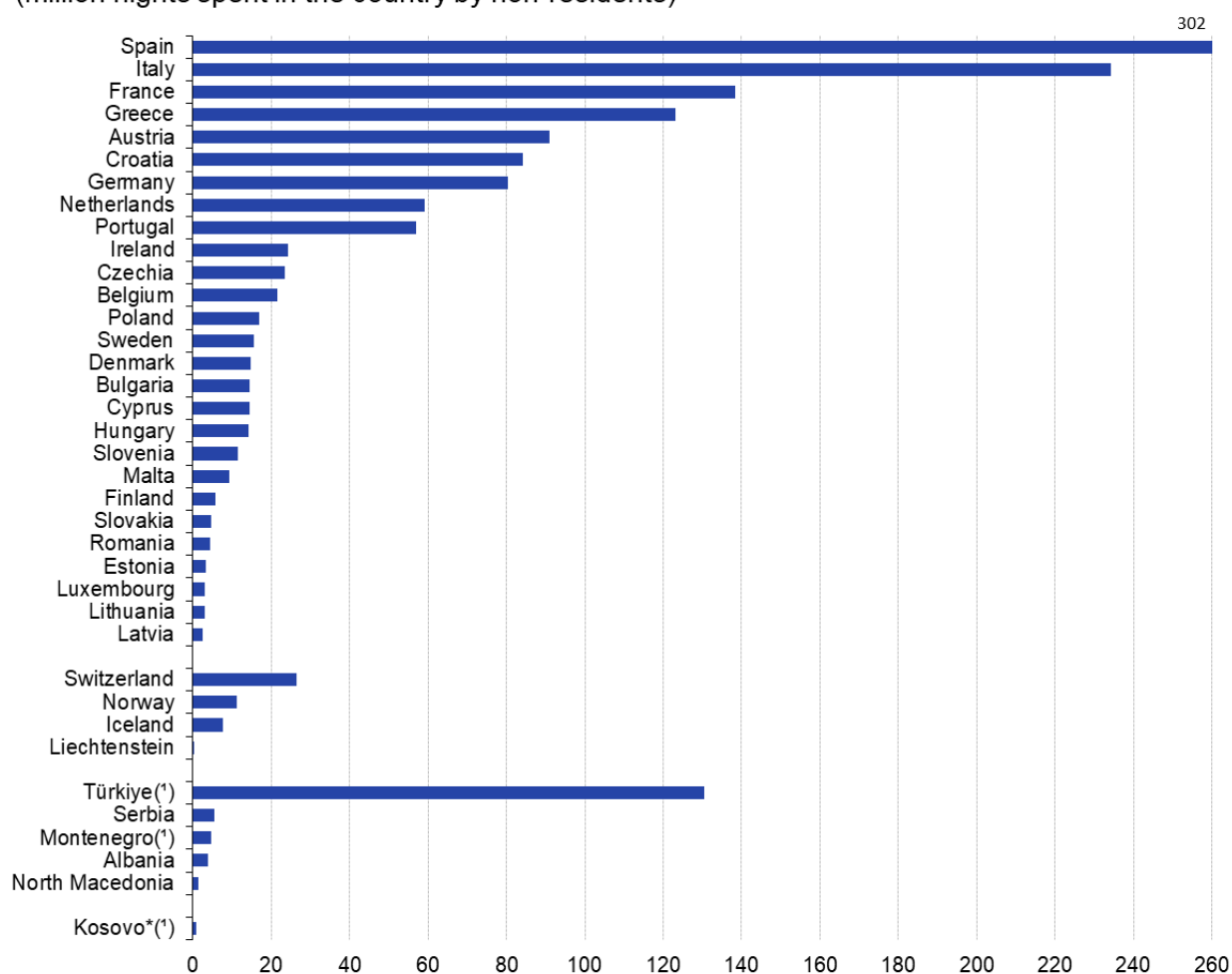
Figure 4: Trends in nights spent at EU tourist accommodation establishments, 2010-2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_occ_ninat)

In 2023, Spain was the most visited tourism destination in the EU for international tourists (people travelling outside their country), with 302 million nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments, or 21.9% of the EU total (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). In 2023 the TOP 5 **NUTS 3 regions** in the EU were Mallorca, Tenerife, Barcelona, Venezia, and Paris, in these regions 12% of nights spent by foreign tourists in the EU were registered.

The second most popular EU destination for international tourists in 2023 was Italy (234 million nights), followed by France (138 million nights), Greece (123 million nights) and Austria (91 million nights). These 5 countries together accounted for nearly two thirds (64.5%) of the total nights spent by non-residents in the EU. On the other hand, the least common EU destinations in terms of nights spent, were Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Estonia, with less than 4 million nights spent by international tourists in each of these countries.

Tourism destinations - nights spent by international guests at tourist accommodation, 2023

(million nights spent in the country by non-residents)



(*) Estimated using 2023 monthly data.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

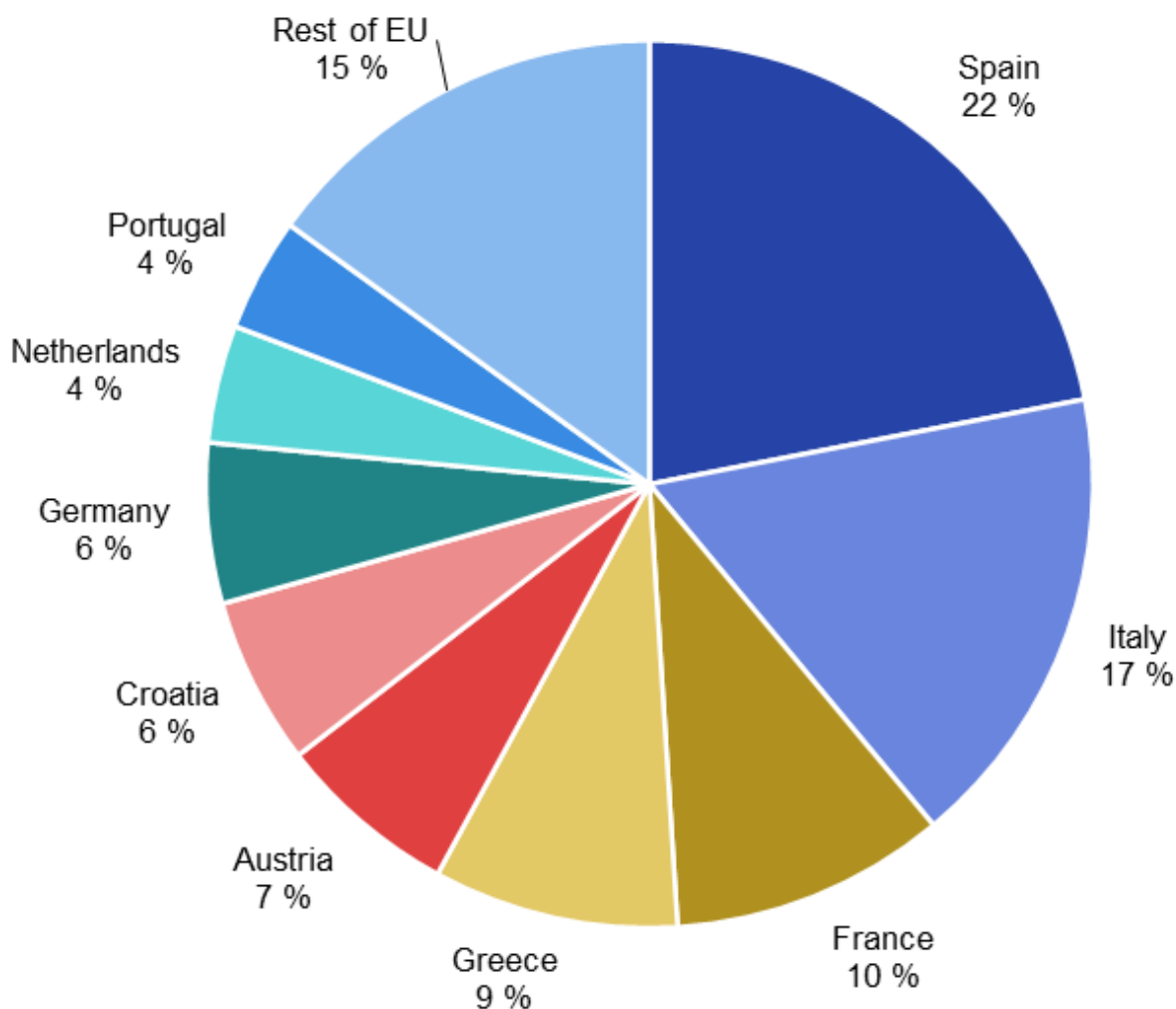
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_occ_ninat, tour_occ_nim)

eurostat 

Figure 5: Tourism destinations - nights spent by international guests at tourist accommodation, 2023
Source: Eurostat (tour_occ_ninat), (tour_occ_nim)

Tourism destinations - Share of nights spent by international guests, 2023

(% of all nights spent at EU tourist accommodation)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_occ_ninat)

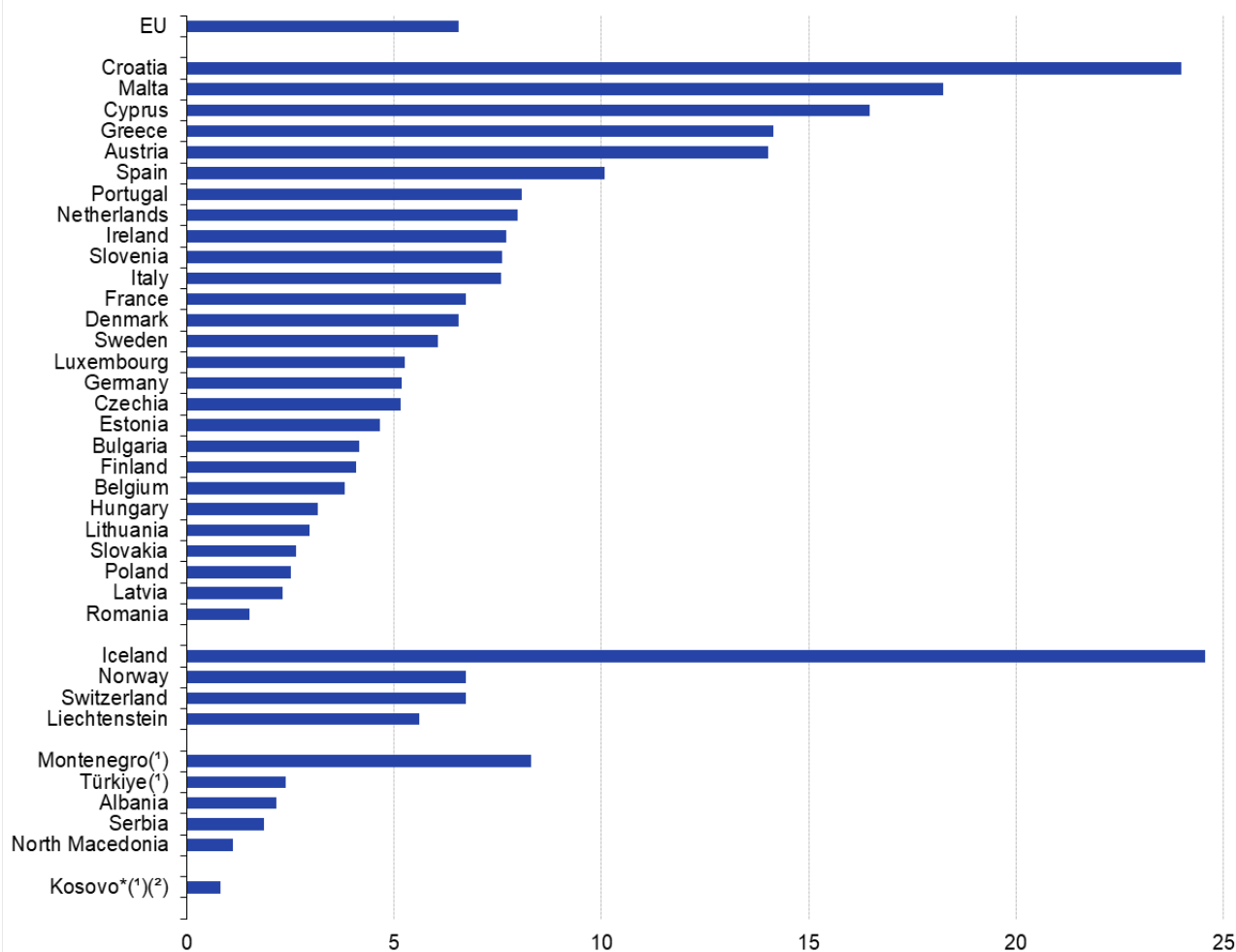
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Figure 6: Tourism destinations - Share of nights spent by international guests, 2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_occ_ninat)

The number of total nights spent (by domestic and international guests) can be put into perspective by making a comparison with the size of each country in population terms, providing an indicator of [tourism intensity](#). In 2023, using this measure, the Mediterranean destinations of Croatia (24 nights spent per inhabitant), Malta (18 nights spent per inhabitant) and Cyprus (17 nights spent per inhabitant) were on top (see Figure 7), followed by Greece and Austria (both with 14 nights spent per inhabitant).

Tourism intensity, 2023

(nights spent by domestic and international guests at tourist accommodation establishments per inhabitant)



(⁽¹⁾) Number of nights spent estimated using 2023 monthly data.

(⁽²⁾) Total population estimated using 2022 annual data.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_occ_ninat, demo_pjan)

eurostat

Figure 7: Tourism intensity, 2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_occ_ninat), (demo_pjan)

More information can be found in the following articles:

- [Tourism statistics - annual results for the accommodation sector](#)
- [Tourism statistics - nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments](#)
- [Tourism statistics - seasonality at regional level](#)
- [Seasonality in the tourist accommodation sector](#)

Tourism expenditure: highest spending by German residents

Germans were the biggest EU spenders on international travel, totalling € 106.8 billion in 2023

The economic importance of international tourism can be measured by looking at the ratio of international travel receipts relative to GDP; these data are from balance of payments statistics and include business travel, as well as travel for pleasure. In 2023, the ratio of travel receipts to GDP was highest, among the EU countries, in Croatia (18.7%), Cyprus (10.6%), Malta (9.6%), Portugal (9.5%) and Greece (9.1%), confirming the importance of tourism

to these countries (see Table 3). In absolute terms, the highest international travel receipts in 2023 were recorded in Spain (€ 85.1 billion), followed by France (€ 65.9 billion), Italy (€ 51.7 billion) and Germany (€ 35.0 billion).

Travel receipts and expenditure in balance of payments, 2010-2015-2023

	Receipts			Relative to GDP 2022 (%)	Expenditure			Relative to GDP 2022 (%)	Balance (million €) 2023
	(million €) 2010	(million €) 2015	(million €) 2023		(million €) 2010	(million €) 2015	(million €) 2023		
EU(*)	96 200	136 062	180 796	1.1	80 421	94 807	129 786	0.8	51 010
Belgium	8 620	7 090	8 233	1.4	14 313	12 311	21 372	3.6	-13 139
Bulgaria	2 574	2 815	3 820	4.0	626	1 016	1 635	1.7	2 185
Czechia	5 419	5 465	7 190	2.3	3 216	4 304	6 902	2.2	288
Denmark	4 420	6 068	9 022	2.4	6 674	8 065	9 847	2.6	-825
Germany	26 159	33 265	34 993	0.8	58 934	69 859	106 767	2.6	-71 774
Estonia	824	1 343	1 377	3.6	481	922	1 245	3.3	132
Ireland	3 106	5 018	6 981	1.4	5 358	5 340	12 219	2.4	-5 238
Greece	9 611	14 126	20 593	9.1	2 156	2 038	2 431	1.1	18 162
Spain	44 375	56 310	85 075	5.7	12 788	15 724	26 320	1.8	58 755
France	43 040	50 079	65 858	2.3	29 016	37 465	51 768	1.8	14 090
Croatia	5 576	7 219	14 598	18.7	629	681	1 798	2.3	12 801
Italy	29 257	35 555	51 687	2.4	20 415	22 013	31 586	1.5	20 102
Cyprus	1 636	2 279	3 323	10.6	999	973	1 690	5.4	1 633
Latvia	484	807	1 180	3.0	490	557	1 167	3.0	12
Lithuania	729	1 041	1 572	2.1	644	857	1 537	2.1	36
Luxembourg	4 286	5 049	6 128	7.6	1 847	2 056	4 694	5.8	1 434
Hungary	4 315	4 797	7 289	3.7	1 821	1 649	3 427	1.7	3 862
Malta	814	1 246	1 982	9.6	234	332	553	2.7	1 429
Netherlands	8 850	13 184	19 131	1.8	15 184	17 239	22 952	2.1	-3 821
Austria	14 027	16 435	22 836	4.8	7 717	8 408	14 084	3.0	8 752
Poland	7 146	9 277	13 900	1.9	6 345	6 949	9 563	1.3	4 337
Portugal	7 600	11 618	25 420	9.5	2 953	3 332	6 305	2.4	19 117
Romania	861	1 659	4 972	1.5	1 445	2 014	8 667	2.7	-3 694
Slovenia	1 991	2 162	3 271	5.1	1 125	1 109	2 435	3.8	837
Slovakia	1 684	2 192	1 480	1.2	1 471	1 917	2 147	1.7	-667
Finland	2 291	2 684	3 759	1.4	3 252	4 325	5 360	2.0	-1 601
Sweden	6 324	7 551	9 134	1.7	9 172	11 796	12 684	2.3	-3 550
Iceland	430	1 470	2 903	10.0	462	869	1 511	5.2	1 392
Norway	:	:	6 219	:	:	:	15 889	:	-9 670
Switzerland	11 197	15 251	18 959	4.2	8 940	15 518	20 828	4.7	-1 870
Montenegro	:	814	1 508	0.2	:	41	71	0.0	1 437
North Macedonia	:	239	552	4.3	:	144	390	3.0	162
Albania	:	1 352	4 166	23.2	:	1 116	2 333	13.0	1 833
Serbia	:	944	2 559	4.2	:	993	3 083	5.1	-524
Türkiye	17 202	29 890	45 694	5.3	3 923	5 365	7 310	0.8	38 384
Kosovo*	328	720	2 207	24.7	105	193	626	7.0	1 581

(*) Extra EU flows.

"-" - data not available or very unreliable.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: bop_c6_q, bop_eu6_q and nama_10_gdp)

eurostat

Table 3: Travel receipts and expenditure in balance of payments, 2010-2015-2023 Source: Eurostat (bop_c6_q), (bop_eu6_q), (nama_10_gdp)

Germany recorded the highest level of expenditure on international travel, totalling € 106.8 billion in 2023, followed by France (€ 51.8 billion). When analysing this expenditure relative to the population, Luxembourg's residents spent on average € 7 103 per inhabitant on travel abroad in 2023, far ahead of the second and third ranked countries, Ireland and Belgium (€ 2 318 and € 1 820 per inhabitant respectively), which were followed by Cyprus, Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Slovenia and Malta (all above € 1 000 per inhabitant).

Spain was the EU country with the highest level of net receipts from travel in 2023 (€ 58.8 billion), while Germany recorded the biggest deficit (-€ 71.8 billion).

More information can be found in the following article:

- [Tourism statistics - expenditure](#)

Tourism accounts for 4.5 % of the total gross value added in the EU economy

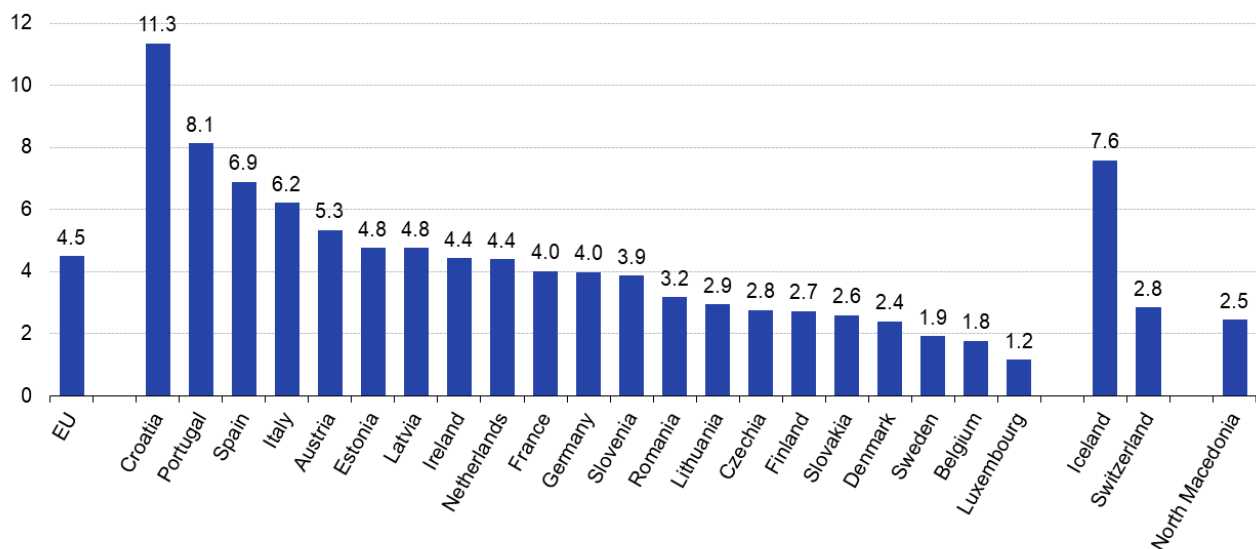
To understand the economic dimension of tourism and the sector's impact on the economy and on the labour market, the methodological framework of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) was developed. Currently, data on TSA for Europe are only available as experimental statistics (but in some Member States TSA are part of the regularly

produced tourism statistics).

The TSA system consists of 10 tables, in which Table 6 consolidates the demand side and the supply side and makes it possible to estimate economic aggregates such as gross value added. Figure 8 shows the share of tourism direct gross value added in the total gross value added in the entire economy, giving an indication of macro-economic importance of tourism. On average for the EU, tourism accounted for 4.5 % of the gross value added created in the EU during 2019, with big variation across the EU: from 11.3 % in Croatia to 1.2 % in Luxembourg (note that data was not available for Malta and Cyprus).

In absolute value, tourism direct gross value added amounted to € 572 billion. The main contributors to this estimate at EU level, were the tourism sector from Germany (€ 124 billion), Italy (€ 100 billion), France (€ 87 billion) and Spain (€ 78 billion). Note that gross value added is not only created via trips spent in a country, but for instance also by resident service providers (such as airlines or tour operators) that provide tourism services to residents visiting destinations abroad.

Tourism direct gross value added, as share of total gross value added in the economy (%, 2019)



Note: EU aggregate estimated for this publication using available data.

eurostat 

Figure 8: Share of tourism direct gross value added in total gross value added in the economy, 2019 Source: Tourism Satellite Accounts in Europe – 2023 edition

More information can be found in the following article:

- [Tourism satellite accounts on Europe](#)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Tourism statistics: tables and figures](#)

Data sources

Tourism, in a statistical context, refers to the activity of visitors taking a trip to a destination outside their usual environment, for less than a year. It can be for any main purpose, including business, leisure or other personal

reasons other than to be employed by a resident person, [household](#) or [enterprise](#) in the place visited.

In July 2011, the [European Parliament](#) and the [Council of the European Union](#) adopted a new [Regulation \(EU\) No 692/2011](#) concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing [Council Directive 95/57/EC](#) ; this came into force for reference year 2012 and requires EU Member States to provide a regular set of comparable tourism statistics.

Tourism statistics in the EU consist of 2 main components: on the one hand, statistics relating to capacity and occupancy of collective tourist accommodation; on the other, statistics relating to tourism demand. In most EU Member States, the former are collected via surveys filled in by accommodation establishments, while the latter are mainly collected via traveller surveys at border crossings or through household surveys.

Statistics on the capacity of collective tourist accommodation include the number of establishments, the number of bedrooms and the number of bed places. These statistics are available by establishment type or by region and are compiled annually. Statistics on the occupancy of collective tourist accommodation refer to the number of arrivals (at accommodation establishments) and the number of [nights spent](#) by residents and non-residents, separated into establishment type or region; annual and monthly statistical series are available. In addition, statistics on the use of bedrooms and bed places ([occupancy rates](#)) are compiled.

Statistics on tourism demand are collected in relation to the number of tourism trips made (and the number of nights spent on those trips), separated by:

- destination country;
 - purpose;
 - length of stay;
 - accommodation type;
 - departure month;
 - transport mode;
 - expenditure.

The data are also analysed by the socio-demographic characteristics of the tourist:

- sex;
 - age group;
 - educational attainment level (optional);
 - household income (optional);
 - activity status (optional).

Up to 2013, tourism statistics were limited to at least one overnight stay; as of reference year 2014, foreign same-day visits are also covered by official European statistics.

Data from a range of other official sources may be used to study tourism. These statistics include:

- [structural business statistics \(SBS\)](#) and [short-term business statistics \(STS\)](#) which may be used to provide additional information on tourism flows and on the economic performance of certain tourism-related sectors;
- data on employment in the tourism accommodation sector from the [labour force survey \(LFS\)](#) , analysed by working time (full/part-time), working status, age, level of education, sex, permanency and seniority of work with the same employer (annual and quarterly data);
- data on personal travel receipts and expenditure from the [balance of payments](#) ;
- [transport statistics](#) (for example, air passenger transport).

Context

According to a UN Tourism (formerly UNWTO) publication titled ' [International Tourism Highlights](#) ', the EU is a major tourist destination, with 4 of its Member States among the world's top 10 destinations. Tourism has the potential to contribute towards employment and economic growth, as well as to development in rural, peripheral or less-developed areas. These characteristics drive the demand for reliable and harmonised statistics within this field, as well as within the wider context of regional policy and sustainable development policy areas.

Tourism can play a significant role in the development of European regions. Infrastructure created for tourism purposes contributes to local development, while jobs that are created or maintained can help counteract industrial or rural decline. Sustainable tourism involves the preservation and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage, ranging from the arts to local gastronomy or the preservation of [biodiversity](#) .

In 2006, the [European Commission](#) adopted a Communication titled ' [A renewed EU tourism policy: towards a stronger partnership for European tourism](#) ' (COM(2006) 134 final). It addressed a range of challenges that will shape tourism in the coming years, including Europe's ageing population, growing external competition, consumer demand for more specialised tourism, and the need to develop more sustainable and environmentally-friendly tourism practices. It argued that more competitive tourism supply and sustainable destinations would help raise tourist satisfaction and secure Europe's position as the world's leading tourist destination. It was followed in October 2007 by another Communication, titled ' [Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism](#) ' (COM(2007) 621 final), which proposed actions in relation to the sustainable management of destinations, the integration of sustainability concerns by businesses, and the awareness of sustainability issues among tourists.

The Lisbon Treaty acknowledged the importance of tourism — outlining a specific competence for the EU in this field and allowing for decisions to be taken by a qualified majority. An article within the Treaty specifies that the EU 'shall complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector'. ' [Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination — a new political framework for tourism in Europe](#) ' (COM(2010) 352 final) was adopted by the European Commission in June 2010. This Communication seeks to encourage a coordinated approach for initiatives linked to tourism and defined a new framework for actions to increase the competitiveness of tourism and its capacity for sustainable growth. It proposed a number of European or multinational initiatives — including a consolidation of the socioeconomic knowledge base for tourism — aimed at achieving these objectives.

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Selected datasets

- [Tourism \(t_tour\)](#)

Methodology

- [Trips of EU residents - annual data](#) (ESMS metadata file — tour_dem_esms)
- [Capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments](#) (ESMS metadata file — tour_occ_esms)
- [Methodological manual for tourism statistics](#)

External links

- [European Commission — Directorate-General \(DG\) for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs — Tourism](#)

Legislation

- [Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism](#) (Communication from the European Commission, October 2007)