

Brussels, 20th March 2009

Results of the first European inquiry among citizens about their holiday plans 2009

Over 27,000 randomly selected citizens aged 15 and over, were interviewed in February 2009 in the 27 EU Member States. For the first time the Commission has done such an extensive survey, which offers to all tourism stakeholders a wealth of information, presented analytically by country and demographic categories. At least 50% of EU citizens travel each year, in the majority of the EU countries this percentage is even higher, and nearly three-quarters of citizens take at least one trip per annum.

Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen, responsible for Enterprise and Industry, said: *"The results are very encouraging and confirm the robustness of the European tourism industry. I am happy that most citizens can afford holidays and will enjoy the deserved rest."*

The most important findings are:

- **Discovering the home country is the trend:** In 2009, 48 % of Europeans intend to spend their holidays in their own country, while in 2008 only 43 % did so.
- **Most can finance holidays:** About 4 in 10 citizens who are planning to take a holiday in 2009 felt they will have sufficient funds (41 %), while almost as many (40 %) said that they would need to prioritize in their expenditures, but could still afford to go. 1 in 10 (11 %) said, they have serious financial problems that could have an impact on their holiday plans.
- **Insist on quality:** 33% of Europeans are geared towards quality and prefer value for money over "low price" (16 %).
- **And will go on holidays:** Only 19% were almost certain that they will not travel in 2009, which is significantly below the proportion of non-travellers in 2008 (32 %).
- **Perhaps last minute?** 28 % of EU citizens are still undecided about their type of vacation (both duration and destination).
- **Individually!** The number of persons who organise their main holiday themselves in 2009 increases to 56% where internet is an often used method.
- **But we like what we know...** Europeans prefer to spend their holidays in traditional tourist destinations (54 %), while 28 % would rather go "off the beaten track" to emerging destinations.
- **Which are** Spain, Italy, France and Greece. Spain, which was chosen by 14%, was already most popular in 2008 and dominates also the current plans made for 2009. It is closely followed by Italy (11.9%) and France (11.1%)

- **Why?** 31 % of the EU citizens indicate that local attractiveness is the major reason when choosing holiday destinations, followed by cultural heritage (24 %) and entertainment possibilities (15 %).
- **However, the weather also seems to play a role** since half of the EU citizens take holidays in July and August, and 42% indicate that they would first give up winter holidays if their finances were not sufficient to meet their total holiday plans. 23% said they would save money by travelling during the low season.

The results of this survey as well as further research carried out by the European Travel Commission and the UNWTO in third-country markets will be used to feed-in a study on the competitiveness of the European tourism industry. In autumn the Commission will present its assessment of the situation to all tourism stakeholders.

More information:

The full report on the Eurobarometer survey on 'the attitudes of Europeans towards tourism' is published at:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tourism/index_en.htm