



Ipsos / Europ Assistance barometer Intentions and Concerns of Europeans in relation to Holidays

Summary

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***Technical presentation of the Ipsos / Europ Assistance barometer
"Intentions and Concerns of Europeans in relation to Holidays"***

From February 16th to March 27th, on behalf of Europ Assistance, Ipsos conducted a study among a sample of 3,500 Europeans (French, German, British, Italian, Spanish, Belgian and Austrian). The study was conducted by telephone, at the home of the people interviewed, using the quota method (gender, age, profession of head of household, after stratification by region and by town size).

With the 2009 summer holidays approaching, the goal of the study was to find out about the holiday plans of people from the countries concerned, their motivations, destinations and the preferred types of stay. The Ipsos / Europ Assistance barometer "Intentions and Concerns of Europeans in relation to Holidays" also aimed to evaluate the risks perceived by tourists, and their impression of insurance coverage in relation to those risks.

Finally, this year, in order to take into account the particular context of the current economic crisis, specific questions were asked, aimed at determining the impact of the crisis on the way Europeans are planning their 2009 summer holidays.

The following document presents the key findings of that study. Throughout our analysis, we will attempt to identify the degree of influence the economic crisis has had in the findings of the 2009 barometer.

I. WHAT THE CRISIS IS INFLUENCING: PLANS TO GO ON HOLIDAY, HOLIDAY BUDGET AND TYPE OF HOLIDAY

Plans to go on holiday: Two thirds of Europeans plan to go on holiday this summer¹

Two thirds of Europeans (64%, i.e. a 3-point drop compared to 2008) **will go on holiday this summer**. This slight fall only concerns intentions to go on **multiple holidays: 21%** of Europeans (-3 points) plan to go on holiday several times this summer. These figures immediately demonstrate the impact the crisis has had on Europeans' holidays: in terms of plans to go on holiday, the slight increase noted in 2007 and that was confirmed in 2008 has been eliminated this year by the depressed economic context.

In all the countries covered by the study, plans to go on holiday have remained stable or decreased, with stability dominating. Italy, which is far above the average, is still the country in which claimed plans to go on holiday, although stable, were highest (76%, -1 point). France is the only country in which plans to go on holiday have fallen sharply (66%, -8 points). This regression is linked to a large reduction in plans to take several holidays (15%, -17 points), a drop which an increase in plans for a single holiday (51%, +9 points) is not enough to make up for. In spite of this, France maintains its second place behind Italy. Behind France comes Belgium (64%, +1 point) and the UK (64%, -3 points) which are at the same level and among the average, ahead of Austria (62%, stable) and Spain (61%, -4 points). In last place, Germany (56%, -1 point), as in 2008 and 2007, is the country in which claimed intentions to go on holiday are the least widespread.

Holiday plans by country for the period June to September 2009 inclusive²

	Yes, several times	Yes, once	S/T Yes	Evolution compared to 2008
All	21%	43%	64%	-3 points
Italy	23%	53%	76%	-1 point
France	15%	51%	66%	-8 points
UK	37%	27%	64%	-3 points
Belgium	18%	46%	64%	+1 point
Austria	18%	44%	62%	=
Spain	18%	43%	61%	-4 points
Germany	14%	42%	56%	-1 point

Budget : A "holiday budget" hit hard by choices made by Europeans within the current context of economic crisis

¹ "Holidaymakers" are defined as people who have stated they will at least once, spend more than four consecutive nights away from home, at least once, between June and September 2009 inclusive, for non-professional reasons.

The projected budget that Europeans will be allocating to their holidays is on average 2,066 € per household (compared to an average of 2,206 € in 2008, and an average of 2,235 € in 2006), with strong variations according to country. With the exception of Belgium, whose "holiday budget" remains stable at 2,228 €, all the countries have registered a fall in their budget, even those, such as France and Spain, that were already accustomed to spending less than their European counterparts. The British, with a budget of 2,230 € (-354 € i.e. -14%), have experienced the largest fall, and hence have lost their first place in terms of expenditure, while the Austrians move ahead of them with a budget that has also fallen (2,333 €, -93 €). These results need to be qualified however, given the variation in the exchange rate between the Pound sterling / Euro. Behind the UK, France is the second most affected by the depressed economic context in terms of budget. Remember that this year France is the country in which plans to go on holiday have fallen the most (66%, -8 points). Alongside this, France is, after the UK, one of the countries registering the largest fall in "holiday budget" (1,822 €, -112 € i.e. -6%). Fewer French people are going on holiday this summer, and those who are planning to go despite the crisis are sacrificing a part of their "holiday budget".

Generally speaking, "holiday budget" is directly related to the holiday destination: in countries in which the proportion of people claiming to holiday in their own country is highest (France, Spain, Italy), the budget is logically lower. Moreover, a preference this year by some countries (Spain, Italy notably) to holiday in the countries closest to them and therefore the least expensive destinations and the fall in "holiday budgets" are not two isolated facts.

2009 "Holiday budget"

	Intention to go on holiday (change compared to 2008)	Intention to stay in their own country (change compared to 2008)	Recap: Average budget 2008	Average budget 2009	Change in budget compared to 2008	Change in budget compared to 2008 (in %)
All	64% (-3 points)	46% (+1 point)	2 206 €	2 066 €	-140 €	-6%
Austria	62% (=)	27% (-1 point)	2 426 €	2 333 €	-93 €	-4%
UK	64% (-3 points)	24% (-4 points)	2 584 €	2 230 €	-354 €	-14%
Belgium	64% (+1 point)	12% (-1 point)	2 228 €	2 228 €	=	=
Italy	76% (-1 point)	68% (+10 points)	2 290 €	2 204 €	-86 €	-4%
Germany	56% (-1 point)	35% (+6 points)	2 235 €	2 150 €	-85 €	-4%
France	66% (-8 points)	54% (-9 points)	1 934 €	1 822 €	-112 €	-6%
Spain	61% (-4 points)	67% (+8 points)	1 764 €	1 659 €	-105 €	-6%

The influence of the current economic crisis on the various aspects of holidays was tested on the occasion of the 2009 barometer. The crisis is having an effect on the "holiday budget" of 44% of European holidaymakers.

Therefore, the crisis is not unrelated to the general fall in “holiday budget” in the various countries questioned. The two main components of holidays suffering from the repercussions of the crisis are the choice of destination and the holiday duration. For one third of respondents, the crisis will have a major influence on these aspects with regards to their 2009 summer holiday. The means of transport is clearly the aspect which is least affected by the crisis, with 24% of European holidaymakers planning to take the current economic crisis into account when choosing their means of transport.

While the impact of the crisis may be considerable, the indifference shown by the majority of respondents in relation to the crisis when planning holidays, notably in terms of the choice of means of transport, reflects the behaviour of Europeans in their everyday life outside of holidays. They tend to live with the crisis wherever that is still possible, rather than radically change their lifestyle.

In 2008, we tested the effect the increase in the price of oil was having on similar aspects. Note that while the same indifference was observed among a majority of respondents in 2008 in relation to oil prices, the influence of the crisis on the organisation of holidays has proved to be greater than the influence of the increase in oil prices (44% impact on budget for the crisis in 2009, vs 38% impact on budget with regards to the increase in oil prices in 2008).

The Spanish, and above all Italians, who tend to stay in their own country for their summer holiday, are clearly most susceptible to the economic context with regards to the organisation of their holiday. In contrast, the Germans, and above all the Belgians and Austrians, who have some of the highest “holiday budgets”, proved to be the least vulnerable in relation to the crisis.

Methods of arranging holidays: a preference for organising holidays themselves

Regarding the organisation of holidays, the trend observed in 2008 towards greater autonomy exercised by holidaymakers has increased since the majority of Europeans (70%, +5 points) claim to organise their trip themselves, buying separate services, as opposed to 28% (-1 point) who will buy an all-inclusive package, including transport and accommodation. Autonomy has risen sharply in the UK, Spain and Italy. These countries are thus moving closer to France and Austria, countries which, as was the case last year, have shown the greatest preference for independent purchases of separate services (France: 78%, +5 points; Austria: 74%, +2 points). In contrast, the Belgians, (34%, stable), British (32%, -5 points) and Italians (33%, -1 point) are more inclined than the average to opt for an all-inclusive package.

II. WHAT THE CRISIS IS NOT INFLUENCING: ASPIRATIONS, DESTINATIONS, DURATION, AND PLANNING

Aspirations: Once again, Europeans give priority to rest, over discovery

The crisis clearly has no impact on Europeans' expectations of their summer holidays. The majority of people questioned (59%, -1 point) make looking for "rest" their key motivation, clearly ahead of the notion of "discovery" (38%, -1 point). This hierarchy, consistent with that registered ever since the barometer was created, is generally common to all the European countries interviewed. The vast majority of Germans (68%, +3 points) and Austrians (65%, -1 point) in particular give priority to rest.

The French confirmed their interest in "discovery" (44%, stable) and are thus neck and neck with the British (43%, -1 point) in relation to this aspect. Of all the things included in this notion of "discovery", the French seem particularly attracted to the "discovery of new cultures", "change of scenery", (36%, -1 point) and in that respect also confirm the trend observed last year.

In relation to the idea of "discovery" from a general point of view, France and the UK are followed closely by Spain and Belgium. Interest among the Spanish (42%, +1 point) and Belgians (41%, -2 points) in this area of holidays has also stabilised, with the "discovery of new cultures" and "change of scenery" still the factors that attract them the most (respectively 36%, +1 point and 35%, +3 points).

Concerning the intended holiday destinations (seaside, countryside, mountains, town or touring), no notable change can be pinpointed. The seaside is still most popular with Europeans (64%, stable), far ahead of the other locations. As was the case in previous years, the seaside mainly attracts Italians (75%, -4 points). The British seem more interested in "touring" (32%, +4 points). This confirms the aspirations to discovery observed when the British respondents were asked to imagine their ideal summer holiday and questioned about what they would like to do most. The mountains were of more interest to the Belgians (27%, stable). Finally, plans to leave for the country, which dropped in 2008, have stabilised this year at the same level as last year (15%, stable). The Belgians and Austrians were most in favour of holidays in the country.

Factors in choosing destinations remain unchanged

Budget (82%, stable), climate (77%, -2 points), quality of tourist infrastructures (72%, -1 point), the possibility of taking part in leisure or cultural activities (69%, -1 point), health risk (68%, -5 points), and the risk of a terrorist attack (62%, -2 points) are key criteria, as they were last year. The risk of social unrest (52%, -3 points) is less of a concern, as is the time it takes to travel to the holiday destination (50%, +1 point) and the risk of a natural disaster (49%, -3 points). The factors involved in choice of destination are therefore still relatively stable, except for health risks, a factor that is clearly very much linked to current affairs (there has been no recent health crisis, which explains the lack of sensitivity to the subject). Note in this respect that the fact of taking the budget aspect into account is a constant, already verified over previous years.

While the order of importance of factors remains relatively stable over time, we observed that the importance of decision factors varies greatly every year according to countries. The table below illustrates this distinction. The budget is situated in the front line in 3 countries out of 7: in the UK and Italy (a factor already at the top of the list in 2008) and in France (to the detriment of the climate, a factor that came out in first place in 2008). For the Germans, Belgians and Austrians, the climate factor prevails. The notion of health risk only came out top in Spain (a factor that was already crucial in this country in 2008).

More generally, note that, as in 2007 and 2008, elements relating to tourist attractions strictly speaking came out behind these 3 types of factor in all countries, taking second position (as in France), or even third position, in most cases.

Order of importance of factors according to country ("essential" answers)

	1 st factor	2 nd factor	3 rd factor
All	The budget you intend to allocate	The climate	Risk of a terrorist attack
France	The budget you intend to allocate / The climate	The possibility of taking part in leisure or cultural activities	Health risk
Germany	The climate	The budget you intend to allocate / Risk of a terrorist attack	The possibility of taking part in leisure or cultural activities
UK	The budget you intend to allocate	The climate	Risk of a terrorist attack
Spain	The health risk	Risk of a terrorist attack	The risk of a natural disaster
Italy	The budget you intend to allocate	The climate	The quality of the tourist infrastructures on-site
Belgium	The climate	Risk of a terrorist attack	The possibility of taking part in leisure or cultural activities
Austria	The climate	Risk of a terrorist attack	The possibility of taking part in leisure or cultural activities

Destinations: Europeans continue to make Europe their preferred location

Europe, which is the subject of 78% of holiday intentions (+2 points), will once again, in summer 2009, be the favoured destination of Europeans. This year the French are neglecting their own country (54%, -9 points), Western Europe (58%, -7 points) and more broadly Europe (72%, -6 points), in favour of Africa (11%, +4 points). In contrast, the Spanish (83%, +7 points) and Italians (81%, +10 points), among whom holiday plans tend to be stable, are more inclined than last year to stay in Europe for their summer holiday, and notably in Southern Europe (Spanish: 74%, + 9 points; Italians: 75%, +10 points) or in their own country. Hence, within the current economic context, they give priority to the closest and therefore least expensive destinations.

46% of Europeans (+1 point) will stay in their own countries. As with previous years, this is notably the case for the Italians (68%, +10 points), Spanish (67%, +8 points), French (54%, -9 points). Moreover, as in previous years, three destinations are given particular priority in Europe: Italy (21%, +3 points), Spain (17%, +1 point) and France (16%, -2 points).

Holiday duration: no notable change in the distribution of short and long stays

In terms of total duration of summer holidays, this year we did not observe any change compared to last year: in most cases (41%, +2 points), holidays last two weeks. Short stays are still more appealing than longer stays: 36% (stable) will go away for one week or less, vs 29% (stable) for 3 weeks or more.

As in previous years, short stays mainly concern the Italians: 41% will go away for one week (-4 points) and the Austrians: 36% will go away for one week (-8 points). In contrast, the French are still the biggest fans of long holidays and stand out particularly from the other countries this year: 24% (stable, vs 16% on average) will go away for 3 weeks and 21% (+5 points, vs 13% on average) will go away for 4 weeks and more.

Total duration of summer holidays

	Less than one week	1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks and more
All	7%	29%	41%	16%	13%
France	4%	17%	34%	24%	21%
Germany	6%	29%	49%	17%	8%
UK	6%	25%	46%	13%	12%
Spain	7%	34%	30%	13%	16%
Italy	11%	41%	41%	11%	9%
Belgium	7%	27%	39%	16%	10%
Austria	16%	36%	39%	13%	7%

[Total adds up to over 100, since the respondent could give several answers]

As for the type of accommodation, rental (of a house, a hotel room or bed and breakfast) is preferred by Europeans as it was last year: 71% of them (+3 points) will choose this option, as opposed to 22% (stable) who will go to their own country house or stay with friends and 12% (-1 point) who will opt for camping-caravanning. Of all countries ,Austria still prefers rental the most (78%, -6 points). While still the most in favour of this type of accommodation, the French are less inclined to go camping-caravanning than in 2008 (17%, -5 points), this year opting increasingly for rental (58%, +8 points).

Means of organisation: Summer holidays are always planned ahead for the majority of Europeans

For most of the people questioned (69%, +1 point), holidays are planned well ahead. This is notably the case for Germans (78%, +1 point), Austrians (75%, stable) and Belgians (74%, stable). In contrast, less than one third of the people interviewed (30%, stable) claimed that they will decide on their destination at the last minute. As in 2008, the Italians in particular are still most likely to leave planning their holiday until later (37%, -7 points). Note however a change in behaviour this year among the Italians, with this population registering a strong progression in relation to the idea of early holiday preparation (62%, +9 points).

The Internet, a reservation channel showing a notable and continuous increase (50%, +3 points compared to 2008, +22 points compared to 2005), confirms its place as a preferred reservation tool. For the first time, this method of reservation is used by half of European holidaymakers. 29% (+2 points) of Europeans also give priority to the website of a service provider (airline company, hotel, etc.). The British are still the biggest fans of electronic reservation, and 60% of them (-3 points) will make their holiday purchases using this method. The French, in second position as they were last year, are considerably reducing the gap that separates them from the British (57%, +8 points).

With the exception of Germany, which is stabilising, but at a high level (46%, -1 point), the other countries covered by the study continue to progress. The strongest progression concerns Spain, which, within the average this year, has finally caught up with the other countries (47%, +11 points).

Note that 29% of Europeans (-4 points) will visit a travel agency or Tour Operator in person, with this attitude relating most to the Italians (41%, stable) and the Austrians (35%, -8 points).

III. PERCEIVED RISKS AND COVERAGE OF RISKS

A downward trend in the general level of concern among European travellers about the risks they run was confirmed

The level of concern among European holidaymakers continues to fall in relation to all types of risk tested, except in relation to the risk of a terrorist attack.

The list of concerns relating to risks is therefore almost identical to what was observed in 2008 and confirms the predominance of concerns about health, whether their own personal health or the health of someone close to them, whether or not that person is with them on the trip. The concerns expressed hence relate to a health problem, whether it involves the health of a family member or friend who is not accompanying the traveller (70%, -2 points compared to 2008, -5 points compared to 2007), or the health of the traveller(s) (69%, -5 compared to 2008, -7 points compared to 2007). The loss of personal belongings (luggage, clothing, money) is a worry for 62% of respondents (-6 points compared to 2008, -10 points compared to 2007). Next come concerns about transport accidents (54%, -6 points compared to 2008, -11 points compared to 2007), the home (water damage, fire, burglary...), a worry for 51% of European holidaymakers (-7 points compared to 2008, -9 points compared to 2007). 46% of the people interviewed (-1 point) are worried about the risk of a terrorist attack. Finally, at the bottom of the list, vehicle breakdowns are a concern for 40% of respondents (-9 points compared to 2008, -13 points compared to 2007). Likewise, the risk of a natural disaster (38%, -5 points compared to 2008, -8 points compared to 2007) and transport strikes or delays (38%, -5 points compared to 2008, -6 points compared to 2007) have also seen a fall in the level of anxiety.

Level of concern in relation to risks

	["A great deal" answers]	["A great deal + somewhat" answers]	2008 responses ["A great deal + somewhat" answers]
A health problem that concerns you or a person accompanying you	47%	69%	74%
A health problem concerning family or friends who are not with you on the trip	46%	70%	72%
A plane, train or car accident, etc.	36%	54%	60%
Loss of personal belongings (luggage, clothes, money)	35%	62%	68%
A problem concerning your home (water damage, fire, burglary, etc.)	32%	51%	58%
Risk of a terrorist attack	30%	46%	47%
Risk of a natural disaster (earthquake, volcanic eruption, flood etc.)	25%	38%	43%
A vehicle breakdown	20%	40%	49%
A transport strike or delay	14%	38%	43%

Note that in relation to all the above aspects, the Spanish were the most likely to claim that they worried them "a great deal". The Italians, who in 2008 registered an increase in levels of concern about the majority of risks, this year saw falls in relation to all the areas they were questioned on, returning for each one of them to a level of concern equal to, or even lower than, the 2007 level.

A weak level of perception of coverage, still often lacking compared to the level of concern

As with the previous waves of the Barometer, when we analyse, on the one hand, perceived risks, and on the other, the impression of being covered by an insurance or assistance policy, we find a large and persistent gap. Rather paradoxically, in relation to health problems concerning a family member or friend not present on the trip and in relation to the risk of a terrorist attack, European holidaymakers have high level of concern but are do not necessarily ensure that they have cover to reflect this. In contrast, they consider themselves much better covered in relation to risks that concern them less, such as a vehicle breakdown, problems relating to the home (water damage, fire, burglary, etc.), or a transport accident.

Concerns expressed and impression of being covered in relation to those concerns by an insurance or assistance policy

	Level of concern ["A great deal" answers]	Claim to be covered by an insurance or assistance policy	Gap between level of concern and Coverage by an insurance or assistance policy
A health problem concerning one of your family members or friends who are staying behind	46%	25%	[- 21]
Risk of a terrorist attack	30%	13%	[- 17]
Risk of a natural disaster (earthquake, volcanic eruption, fire, etc.)	25%	25%	[0]
A transport strike or delay	14%	20%	[+6]
A health problem concerning yourself or someone accompanying you	47%	62%	[+15]
Loss of your personal belongings (luggage, clothes, money)	35%	52%	[+17]
A plane, train or car accident, etc.	36%	57%	[+21]
A problem concerning your home (water damage, fire, burglary, etc.)	32%	67%	[+35]
A vehicle breakdown	20%	64%	[+ 44]

We did not observe any significant change in relation to the impression of coverage.

Moreover, the majority still think they are covered for the risks they were questioned on, either for a problem concerning the home (67% of European holidaymakers claim to be usually covered for this risk when they go on holiday, a stable result), a vehicle breakdown (64%, -1 point), a health problem concerning the traveller or someone accompanying them (62%, -1 point), a transport accident (57%, -2 points), and the loss of personal belongings (52%, -3 points). Germany and Italy are still the countries in which the impression of coverage is particularly low compared to the average.

Finally 58% (-2 points) of Europeans covered for one of the areas questioned on take out their policy with their usual insurance or assistance company. 26% of them (+2 points) take out a policy with their travel agency.

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