

Camping holidays in the European Union: more than 350 million nights spent on campsites in 2008

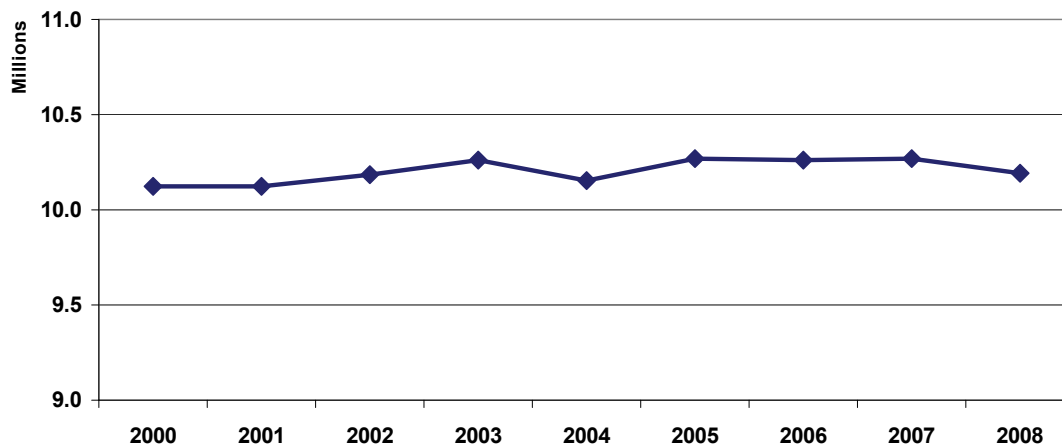
Camping is an important segment of the European tourism market. In 2008, over 15% of all tourist nights spent in collective accommodation establishments were spent on campsites, corresponding to an estimated 353 million nights. EU residents made more than 23 million holiday camping trips, of which nearly two thirds were spent in their own Member State.

Accommodation capacity on campsites in the European Union corresponded to more than 10 million bed places

Figure 1 gives an estimate of accommodation capacity on campsites in the EU. As a rule of thumb, the number of bed places on a campsite is calculated on the assumption that each pitch accounts on average for four bed places.

Over the period 2000-2008, the number of bed places available on campsites in the 27 Member States of the EU remained relatively stable at 10.2 million.

Figure 1: Accommodation capacity on campsites in the European Union, 2000-2008



Notes: EU 27: Excluding MT for all years, 2000: estimation for FR, 2000 and 2001: excluding EE, 2000 to 2005 estimation for UK.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_cap_nat](#))

The number of bed places on campsites in France and Italy accounted for nearly half of the total accommodation capacity on campsites in the EU-27.

Table 1: Number of campsites and accommodation capacity on campsites in European countries, 2008

| | Number of campsites | Accommodation capacity ¹ on campsites | | |
|--------------|---------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| | | Absolute figure ('000) | As share of EU-27 | As share of bed places in all collective accom. |
| EU-27 | 26 344 | 10 196 | 100.0% | 37.0% |
| BE | 519 | 100 | 1.0% | 27.5% |
| BG | 13 | 2 | 0.0% | 0.8% |
| CZ | 509 | 29 | 0.3% | 6.5% |
| DK | 416 | 271 | 2.7% | 71.8% |
| DE | 2 718 | 839 | 8.2% | 26.1% |
| EE | 104 | 5 | 0.0% | 10.6% |
| IE | 99 | 23 | 0.2% | 10.7% |
| EL | 321 | 89 | 0.9% | 11.2% |
| ES | 1 228 | 764 | 7.5% | 24.5% |
| FR | 7 981 | 3 689 | 36.2% | 64.3% |
| IT | 2 595 | 1 361 | 13.3% | 30.3% |
| CY | 4 | 3 | 0.0% | 3.0% |
| LV | 30 | 2 | 0.0% | 7.5% |
| LT | 11 | 1 | 0.0% | 4.5% |
| LU | 97 | 48 | 0.5% | 71.9% |
| HU | 249 | 88 | 0.9% | 27.9% |
| MT | : | : | : | : |
| NL | 2 358 | 736 | 7.2% | 60.7% |
| AT | 547 | 203 | 2.0% | 21.4% |
| PL | 125 | 24 | 0.2% | 4.1% |
| PT | 229 | 185 | 1.8% | 40.4% |
| RO | 59 | 27 | 0.3% | 9.5% |
| SI | 43 | 16 | 0.2% | 23.1% |
| SK | 70 | 39 | 0.4% | 24.0% |
| FI | 262 | 79 | 0.8% | 35.6% |
| SE | 1 056 | 477 | 4.7% | 63.4% |
| UK | 4 701 | 1 096 | 10.7% | 36.0% |
| HR | 232 | 212 | 2.1% | 43.9% |
| CH | : | : | : | : |
| IS | 132 | : | : | : |
| LI | 2 | : | : | : |
| NO | 797 | 323 | : | 64.9% |

1) Imputed number of bed places assuming that one pitch on a campsite has on average four bed places.

Note: EU-27 excluding MT.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_cap_nat](#))

In 2008 there were 26 344 campsites in total in EU-27 (Table 1). The largest number of campsites was recorded in France with 7 981, followed by the United Kingdom with 4 701, Germany (2 718), Italy (2 595) and the Netherlands (2 358).

From the point of view of accommodation capacity (i.e. the number of bed places on campsites) this ranking was slightly different. France still came first with about 3.7 million (36.2% of the EU-27 total) bed places, followed by Italy (almost 1.4 million, corresponding to 13.3%), the UK (about 1.1 million, corresponding to 10.7%) followed by Germany (about 0.8 million, corresponding to 8.2%). These four countries accounted for more than two-thirds of accommodation capacity on campsites in the European Union in 2008.

The share of campsite accommodation capacity in relation to total accommodation capacity gives an idea of the relative importance of camping in total tourism accommodation. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that campsite capacity is generally used over a shorter period than other types of collective accommodation, which tend to receive guests all year round.

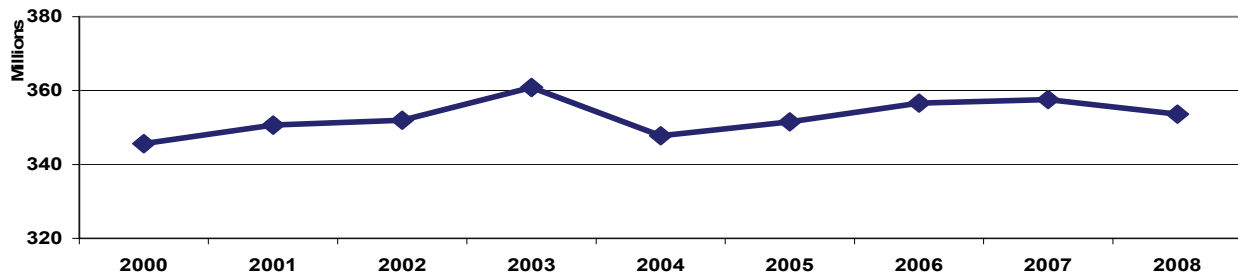
In 2008, campsite capacity represented 37.0% of total accommodation capacity in the European Union. However, the relative importance of camping in relation to total accommodation capacity varies significantly from country to country. The countries with the most camping facilities (i.e. highest shares of campsite capacity in relation to the country's total accommodation capacity) recorded more than 50% of total bed places on campsites. Luxembourg came first with 71.9% followed by Denmark with 71.8%, and France, Sweden and the Netherlands (64.3%, 63.4%, and 60.7% respectively). Portugal, the United Kingdom, Finland and Italy are in the group with between 30% and 40% of their accommodation capacity on campsites. For countries like Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Latvia or Romania on the other hand, camping is of minor importance with a campsite accommodation capacity of less than 10%.

354 million nights spent on campsites in EU countries

During the period 2000-2008 the number of nights spent on campsites was relatively stable at around 350 million nights, with a peak of 361 million in 2003 (see Figure 2). In 2008, the

most recent year for which complete data is available, tourists spent almost 354 million nights on campsites in the European Union.

Figure 2: Nights spent on campsites in the European Union, 2000-2008



Notes: EU-27 data excluding MT for all years and based on estimations for 2000 (EE, CY and UK), 2001 (IE (residents), EE and UK), 2002 (CY and UK), 2003 to 2005 (UK) and 2008 (UK).

Source: Eurostat ([tour_occ_ninat](#))

Table 2: Nights spent on campsites, 2008

| | Number of nights spent on campsites ('000) | As % of nights spent in all collective accommodation | As % of all campsite nights in the EU-27 |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| EU-27 | 353 604 | 15.4% | 100.0% |
| BE | 2 796 | 9.3% | 0.8% |
| BG | 68 | 0.4% | 0.0% |
| CZ | 2 418 | 6.2% | 0.7% |
| DK | 12 169 | 43.4% | 3.4% |
| DE | 23 008 | 7.1% | 6.5% |
| EE | 189 | 4.1% | 0.1% |
| IE | 2 708 | 7.8% | 0.8% |
| EL | 1 551 | 2.4% | 0.4% |
| ES | 31 070 | 8.3% | 8.8% |
| FR | 98 762 | 32.8% | 27.9% |
| IT | 65 223 | 17.5% | 18.4% |
| CY | 18 | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| LV | 246 | 7.0% | 0.1% |
| LT | 70 | 2.2% | 0.0% |
| LU | 807 | 33.2% | 0.2% |
| HU | 1 582 | 7.9% | 0.4% |
| MT | : | : | : |
| NL | 18 811 | 22.3% | 5.3% |
| AT | 5 028 | 4.8% | 1.4% |
| PL | 695 | 1.2% | 0.2% |
| PT | 6 747 | 14.3% | 1.9% |
| RO | 283 | 1.4% | 0.1% |
| SI | 1 163 | 14.2% | 0.3% |
| SK | 348 | 2.8% | 0.1% |
| FI | 2 144 | 11.0% | 0.6% |
| SE | 14 338 | 30.8% | 4.1% |
| UK | 61 363 | 23.4% | 17.4% |
| HR | 13 349 | 34.6% | 3.8% |
| IS | 442 | 16.5% | 0.1% |
| LI | 15 | 7.8% | 0.0% |
| NO | 8 627 | 30.2% | 2.4% |

Notes: EU-27 excluding MT. 2007 data for UK.

IE: estimated data.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_occ_ninat](#))

It is not surprising that the number of tourism nights spent on campsites varied significantly across the European Union (see Table 2).

France was the country with the highest number of nights spent on campsites, where 98.8 million nights were recorded in 2008. Italy and the United Kingdom followed with 65.2 and 61.4 million overnight stays respectively. Spain came well behind these three leading countries with 31.1 million nights, less than a third of the number of nights spent in France and about half the number of nights spent on campsites in the United Kingdom or Italy.

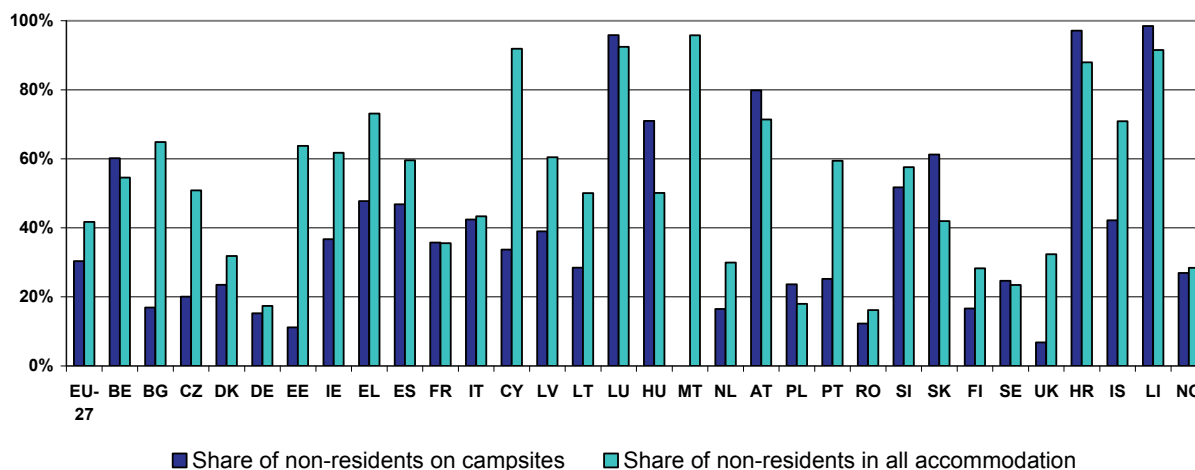
In relative terms, compared to the EU-27 total, 63.7% of all nights spent on campsites in the European Union were recorded in three countries: France (27.9%), Italy (18.4%) and the United Kingdom (17.4%). Spain (8.8%), Germany (6.5%) and the Netherlands (5.3%) each took a share of above 5.0% of the total nights spent on campsites in the EU.

As regards the relative proportion of nights spent on campsites in relation to the entire tourist accommodation sector, an average of 15.4% of all nights spent in collective accommodation was registered on campsites throughout the EU. As previously mentioned, campsite capacity is generally used during a shorter period compared with other types of collective accommodation. This shorter season partly explains why in 2008 campsites accounted for 37.0% of available accommodation capacity, but only for 15.4% of nights spent.

Again there were significant differences between one country and another. In Denmark (43.4%), Luxembourg (33.2%), France (32.8%) and Sweden (30.8%) over 30% of all nights spent in collective accommodation were registered on campsites. In the United Kingdom and the Netherlands it was over 20% (23.4% and 22.3% respectively). On the

other hand, in Cyprus, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Greece, Slovakia, Estonia and Austria the impact of camping on the whole tourism sector is of minor importance. The share of nights spent on campsites compared with nights spent in all accommodation establishments was less than 5% in these Member States.

Figure 3: Share of non-residents in nights spent on campsites and in all accommodation establishments (%), 2008



Note: EU-27 excluding MT for campsites. 2007 data for UK. 2006 data on campsites for IE.
Source: Eurostat ([tour_occ_ninat](#))

There are not so many foreign tourists on campsites as there are in all accommodation establishments in general. A total of 30.4% of all nights spent on campsites in EU-27 were registered for tourists coming from abroad, while in all accommodation establishments the share of foreign tourists in the total number of nights spent was 41.7%.

It goes without saying that the share of foreign tourists in all camping nights is generally higher in smaller countries than in countries covering a larger area. For all nights spent on campsites, Luxembourg (95.8%), Austria (79.9%), Hungary (71.0%), Slovakia (61.2%), Belgium (60.2%) and Slovenia (51.7%) recorded shares of foreign tourists of 50% or more. In the top five countries the share of foreign tourists on campsites was slightly higher than the share of foreign tourists in total collective accommodation, which contrasts with the conclusion set out above for the EU as a whole.

At the other end of the scale, the United Kingdom recorded the lowest share of foreign tourists in campsites with 6.8%. The other Member States with a share of foreign tourists in camping nights lower than 20%, are Estonia (11.2%), Romania (12.3%), Germany (15.3%), the Netherlands (16.5%), Finland (16.7%) and Bulgaria (16.9%). In the case of the United Kingdom the gap between the share of foreign tourist nights on campsites (6.8%) and in all accommodation establishments (32.3%) is significant. This is presumably because there was a large share of business travel in all inbound tourism into the UK. There was a similar situation in Estonia and Bulgaria, where the share of foreign tourists in relation to all nights on campsites was below the EU average. Moreover, their share of foreign tourist nights spent in all accommodation establishments was three times greater than the share for campsites.

20% of all holiday trips by Dutch residents were camping trips

Table 3: Camping trips by residents of 4 nights and more, 2008

| | Number of holiday camping trips (4+ nights) | | | % of holiday camping trips in relation to all holiday trips (4+ nights) | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------|------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| | Total | Domestic | Outbound | Total | Domestic | Outbound |
| EU-27 | 23 078 883 | 16 090 967 | 8 439 046 | 5.8% | 5.8% | 5.7% |
| BE | 281 121 | 32 502 | 248 619 | 3.8% | 2.6% | 4.1% |
| BG | 57 554 | 47 666 | 9 888 | 2.3% | 2.4% | 2.1% |
| CZ | 743 454 | 421 603 | 321 851 | 7.5% | 8.6% | 6.5% |
| DK | 544 664 | 264 654 | 280 010 | 9.1% | 16.8% | 6.3% |
| DE | 6 208 332 | 2 678 219 | 3 530 113 | 6.0% | 5.9% | 6.0% |
| EE | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| IE | 222 000 | 89 000 | 134 000 | 3.8% | 7.2% | 2.9% |
| EL | 120 283 | 98 593 | 21 690 | 1.5% | 1.4% | 2.0% |
| ES | 722 890 | 621 068 | 101 822 | 1.8% | 1.8% | 1.8% |
| FR | 6 636 275 | 6 159 287 | 476 988 | 6.5% | 7.1% | 3.1% |
| IT | 1 873 062 | 1 302 906 | 570 156 | 4.5% | 4.3% | 5.0% |
| CY | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| LV | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| LT | 34 768 | 1 362 | 33 406 | 2.5% | 0.3% | 3.9% |
| LU | 26 101 | 1 174 | 24 927 | 3.5% | 38.8% | 3.3% |
| HU | 193 981 | 72 337 | 121 644 | 2.7% | 1.7% | 4.3% |
| MT | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| NL | 3 864 000 | 1 874 000 | 1 990 000 | 20.0% | 28.4% | 15.6% |
| AT | 264 686 | 55 518 | 209 168 | 3.1% | 1.7% | 3.9% |
| PL | : | : | : | : | : | : |
| PT | 138 276 | 129 363 | 8 913 | 4.0% | 4.9% | 1.1% |
| RO | 130 939 | 124 419 | 6 520 | 2.4% | 2.7% | 0.9% |
| SI | 176 030 | 32 961 | 143 069 | 11.1% | 7.7% | 12.4% |
| SK | 144 467 | 70 205 | 74 262 | 3.1% | 3.1% | 3.1% |
| FI | 140 000 | 106 000 | 34 000 | 2.1% | 2.3% | 1.6% |
| SE | 556 000 | 458 000 | 98 000 | 4.2% | 6.5% | 1.5% |
| UK | : | 1 450 130 | : | : | 5.4% | : |
| HR | 62 522 | 59 899 | 2 623 | 2.0% | 2.8% | 0.3% |
| CH | 652 106 | 231 105 | 421 001 | 7.9% | 9.7% | 7.1% |
| NO | 386 498 | 243 732 | 142 766 | 5.4% | 7.3% | 3.8% |

Notes: EU-27 excluding EE, CY, LV, MT, PL and UK (for Total and Outbound trips). 2007 data for DK and RO.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_dem_ttac](#))

The popularity of camping as a choice of accommodation for holiday trips varied considerably between the EU-27 Member States. Table 3 shows the share of camping trips in the total number of holiday trips of 4 nights and more. Dutch tourists had the highest preference for camping. The values recorded for the Netherlands exceeded by far the values for tourists from any other EU country for which data is available. A total of 20.0% of holiday trips by Dutch residents were camping trips. This was almost four times the EU-27 average share (5.8%) and about twice the value of the next Member States in the ranking — Slovenia (11.1%) and Denmark (9.1%). With a share of 7.5%, 6.5% and 6.0% respectively the number

of camping trips by Czech, French and German tourists was also higher than the EU-27 average.

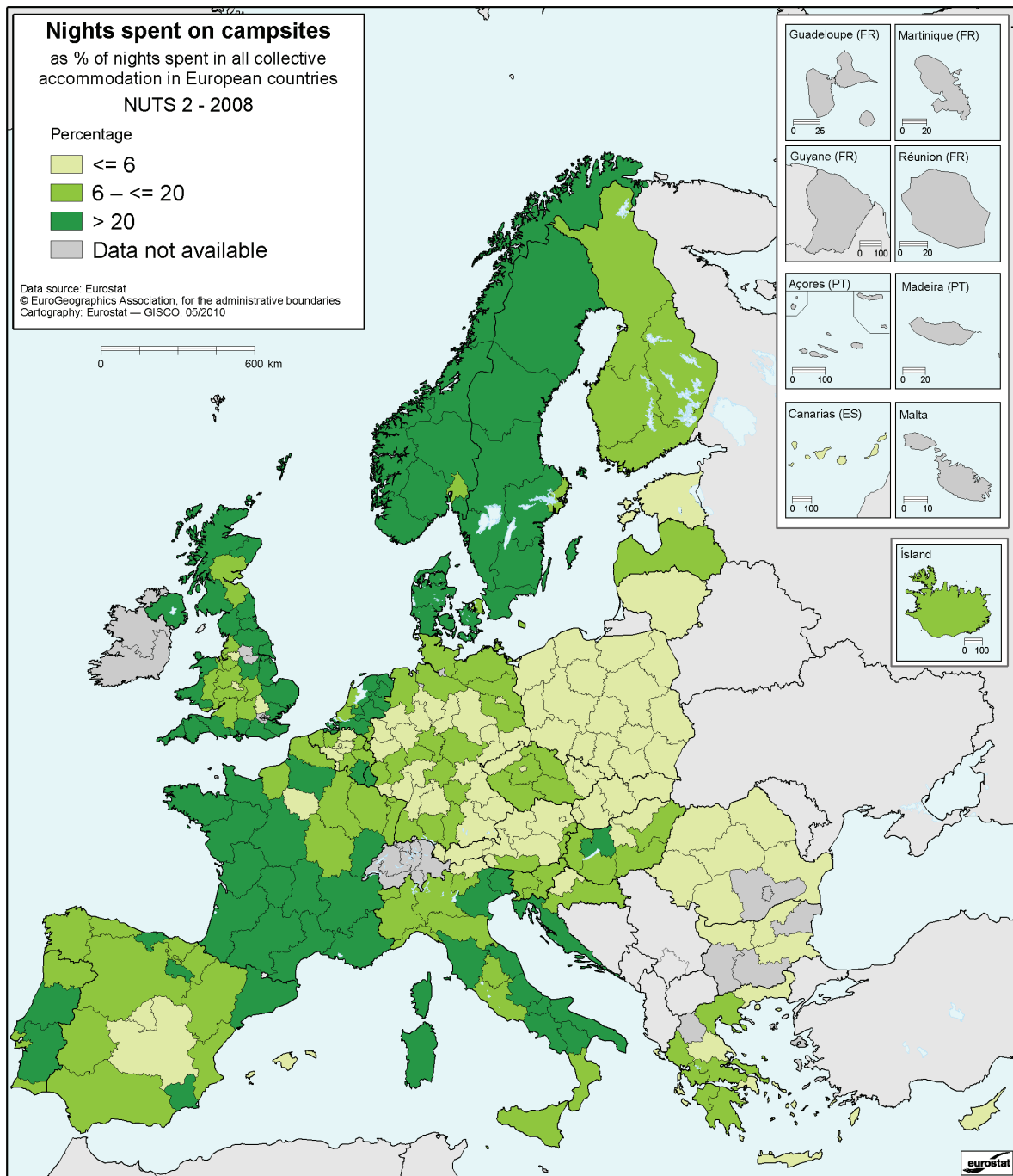
On average, the share of camping trips in the total number of trips did not differ much for domestic and outbound trips (5.8% and 5.7% respectively). The exceptions were Luxembourg — where almost 40% of domestic holiday trips of 4 nights or more were camping trips — and the Netherlands (28.4%). At 15.6%, the Netherlands also recorded the highest share of camping trips in the total number of outbound trips, followed by Slovenia (12.4%), where the high share can partly be explained by the proximity of campsites in Croatia, which is the main destination for Slovenian tourists.

French tourists made 6.6 million camping trips in 2008 (the large majority having a destination within France) ranking first in EU-27, followed by German tourists, who made 6.2 million camping trips. With 3.9 million camping trips

Dutch tourists ranked third, significantly ahead of countries such as Italy (1.9 million camping trips) or Spain (0.7 million), countries with many more inhabitants than the Netherlands.

The importance of camping varies among countries but also among regions within countries

Figure 4: Nights spent on campsites as % of nights spent in all collective accommodation



EL, FR: All collective accommodation excluding holiday dwellings; SE: 2007 data; UK: 2008 data for nights spent by residents, 2007 data for nights spent by non-residents.

Source: Eurostat ([tour_occ_nin2](#))

Map 1 shows significant differences at regional level across Europe. To take account of the differences in the size of regions when making comparisons, Map 1 shows the nights spent on campsites (by residents and non-residents) as a percentage share of the total number of nights spent in all types of collective accommodation (for data at national level, see Table 2).

In most Central and Eastern European countries, campsites were of limited importance within the tourist accommodation sector in 2008. In none of the regions (NUTS2 level) of Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania or Estonia, did the share of nights spent on campsites exceed 5%. In this part of Europe the only region with a share exceeding 15% was Közép-Dunántúl (22.3%) bordering the Hungarian Lake Balaton.

On the other end of the spectrum, in ten regions more than half of the recorded nights were spent on campsites. France accounted for six of these

ten regions: Languedoc-Roussillon (69.3%) on the border of the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean Sea, the Pays de la Loire (62.8%), Aquitaine (60.7%), Poitou-Charentes (58.7%) Brittany (56.1%) on the Atlantic coast and the island of Corsica (52.9%). Other shares exceeding 50% were observed in the Danish regions of Midtjylland (58.2%) and Syddanmark (56.5%) and in Lincolnshire (55.0%) and West Wales and the Valleys (54.0%) in the United Kingdom. Other regions where camping was relatively important were the Scandinavian countries and the Adriatic basin. With the exception of the capital regions that include Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo, the share of camping nights in total nights spent in collective accommodation was higher than 25% in all regions of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. With the exception of Emilia-Romagna in Italy and Zahodna Slovenija in Slovenia, all the regions situated along the Adriatic coast recorded shares of more than 20% (with 36.6% for Jadranska Hrvatska in Croatia as the highest share in the Adriatic basin).

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Tourist

A visitor who stays at least one night in collective or private accommodation in the place/country visited. Visitors are divided into residents and non-residents. Resident tourists are the residents of a given country travelling to and staying in places only within that country but outside their usual environment. Non-resident tourists are tourists travelling to and staying in places outside their own country.

Tourist accommodation establishments

The accommodation establishment conforms to the definition of local unit as the production unit. This is irrespective of whether the accommodation of tourists is the main or secondary activity. This means that all establishments are classified in the accommodation sector if their capacity exceeds the national minimum, even if the major part of their turnover may come from restaurant or other services.

Collective tourist accommodation establishments

This group contains 'hotels and similar establishments' and 'other collective accommodation establishments'.

Other collective accommodation establishments

They include 'holiday dwellings', 'tourist campsites' and 'other collective establishments not elsewhere classified'.

Tourist campsites

These consist of collective facilities in enclosed areas for tents, caravans, trailers and mobile homes. All come under common management and provide some tourist services (shop, information, and recreational activities).

Campsites are used for both permanent and holiday camping. Tourists spending their holidays on campsites are considered in this publication (so-called holiday camping). Permanent camping i.e. rental on a multi-monthly or annual basis of a campsite pitch for frequent or permanent use is not included.

Number of bed places

Determined by the number of persons who can stay overnight in the beds set up in an establishment (dwelling), not counting any extra beds that may be set up at the request of the customer. The term applies to a single bed, a double bed being counted as two bed places. A bed place is also a place on a pitch or on a boat on a mooring to accommodate one person. One camping pitch should equal four bed places if the actual number of bed places is not known. The unit serves to measure the capacity of any type of accommodation.

Pitch

A pitch is an area on a campsite to let for tents, caravans, mobile homes and similar shelters to overnight visitors who want to stay on a 'touring' pitch for one night, a few days or week(s), as well as to people who want to hire a 'fixed' pitch for a season or a year.

Accommodation capacity on campsites

Imputed number of bed places assuming that one pitch on a campsite has four bed places.

Number of tourism nights

A tourism night (or overnight) is each night that a guest actually spends (sleeps or stays) or is registered (his/her physical presence there being unnecessary) in a collective accommodation establishment or in private accommodation.

Tourism trip

Trip made by a tourist i.e. an overnight trip. Each trip has one main purpose but may have secondary reasons, several visits with possibly different purposes and several activities. In general they are divided into business and holiday trips. They are counted in the country of departure and describe tourism from the standpoint of the place or country of origin.

Holiday trip

Covers the whole period that a person engages in tourism for leisure purposes.

Country abbreviations:

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| EU-27: European Union | IE: Ireland | LT: Lithuania | PT: Portugal | HR: Croatia |
| BG: Bulgaria | EL: Greece | LU: Luxembourg | RO: Romania | CH: Switzerland |
| BE: Belgium | ES: Spain | HU: Hungary | SI: Slovenia | IS: Iceland |
| CZ: Czech Republic | FR: France | MT: Malta | SK: Slovakia | LI: Liechtenstein |
| DK: Denmark | IT: Italy | NL: Netherlands | FI: Finland | NO: Norway |
| DE: Germany | CY: Cyprus | AT: Austria | SE: Sweden | |
| EE: Estonia | LV: Latvia | PL: Poland | UK: United Kingdom | |

Symbols

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