

Tourism statistics - participation in tourism

Statistics Explained

Data extracted in May 2018

Planned article update: July 2019

This article is part of the [Eurostat](#) online publication [Tourism trips of Europeans](#), which provides recent statistics on tourism [demand](#) in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and [EFTA](#) countries.

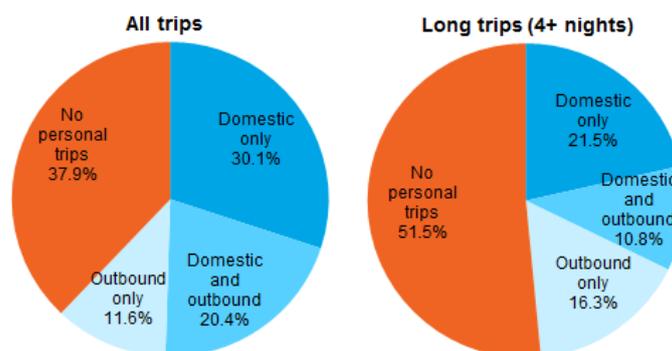
The article analyses participation in [tourism](#) (sometimes called 'tourism propensity'), i.e. the proportion of a given population that makes at least one tourism trip of a specified minimum duration in a given reference period. In this article, the reference period is one year (2016) and the scope is all tourism trips taken for personal purposes (i.e. excluding trips for professional purposes) of at least one overnight stay.

These statistics show how many Europeans participate in tourism following policy initiatives promoting "tourism for all". However, not all "non-tourists" should be considered excluded — some population groups are simply not interested in making tourism trips (as opposed to others whose reasons for not travelling are linked to limiting factors such as their financial situation, physical disabilities or lack of time due to family and/or work commitments).

More than three in five EU residents made tourism trips in 2016

In recent decades, tourism trips have become an important aspect of the lives of many Europeans. Tourism gives people the opportunity to break out from their usual environment and discover other parts of their own country, other countries in Europe or other regions of the world. Tourism thus helps to bring people from different cultures together and fosters mutual respect between different communities within and across countries or continents.

Share of the EU population (aged 15 and over) participating to personal trips, EU-28, 2016 (%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_totot, demo_pjanbroad)

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Figure 1: Share of the EU population (aged 15 and over) participating to personal trips, EU-28, 2016 (%) - Source: Eurostat (tourdemtotot)

Participation in tourism of EU residents (aged 15 and over), 2016

	Total number of tourists (thousand)	Share of the population that has taken part in tourism (%)			
		Any trip	Domestic trips only	Domestic and outbound trips	Outbound trips only
EU-28	267 552	62.1	30.1	20.4	11.6
Belgium	5 825	58.5	4.0	16.7	37.8
Bulgaria	1 841	29.8	26.2	1.6	1.9
Czech Republic	7 215	80.8	40.6	34.8	5.4
Denmark	3 832	79.8	22.3	17.3	40.3
Germany	53 762	75.4	21.2	37.8	16.3
Estonia	759	68.7	23.3	31.6	13.8
Ireland	2 794	74.2	16.8	46.0	11.4
Greece	3 249	35.6	30.1	1.9	3.5
Spain	25 614	65.7	45.1	15.3	5.3
France	38 050	73.1	47.7	21.1	4.3
Croatia	1 598	44.0	29.1	8.8	6.1
Italy	21 803	41.9	26.2	9.2	6.5
Cyprus	491	69.0	24.3	26.0	18.7
Latvia	963	59.0	25.3	23.1	10.6
Lithuania	1 412	57.3	27.9	1.8(u)	27.7
Luxembourg	390	80.9	u	8.4	72.0
Hungary	4 729	55.2	32.9	15.6	6.7
Malta	218	59.7	14.5	19.9	25.2
Netherlands	11 881	85.3	22.8	40.0	22.4
Austria	5 661	76.8	18.5	34.7	23.6
Poland	18 375	56.8	39.7	9.1	7.9
Portugal	3 768	25.6	19.3	4.2	2.2
Romania	3 961	24.0	22.4	0.2	1.4
Slovenia	1 170	66.6	12.8	20.4	33.4
Slovakia	3 039	66.1	33.2	14.3	18.7
Finland	4 080	91.4	29.8	56.7	5.0
Sweden	6 488	78.8	28.2	38.5	12.1
United Kingdom	34 584	64.1	24.8	19.5	19.8
Switzerland	6 117	89.8	9.2	42.6	37.9

Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

"u" - Unreliable.

":-" - Extremely unreliable or not available.

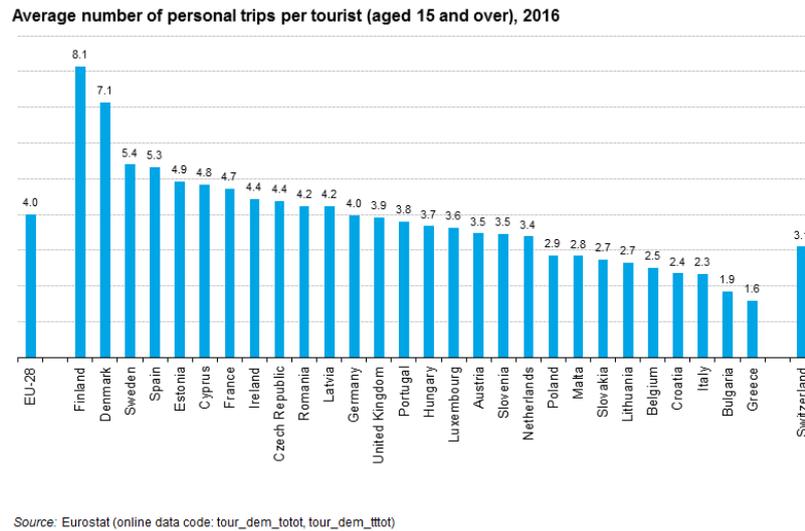
Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_totot, demo_pjanbroad)

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Table 1: Participation in tourism of EU residents (aged 15 and over), 2016 - Source: Eurostat (tourdemtotot)

In 2016, 62.1 % of the EU population (aged 15 or over) made at least one tourism trip for personal purposes

(see Figure 1 and Table 1). This subpopulation of tourists made on average 4.0 trips during 2016 (see Figure 2), i.e. the total number of trips made by Europeans divided by the number of those who made tourism trips. More than half of Europeans (50.5 %) made at least one domestic tourism trip with at least one overnight stay in 2016, while nearly one third of Europeans (32.5 %) made at least one trip abroad. More than one in five (20.4 %) made domestic trips as well as outbound trips. When only trips of at least four overnight stays are taken into account— thus excluding tourists whose trips lasted no more than three nights — the participation rate drops to below 50 % (see pie chart on the right of Figure 1).

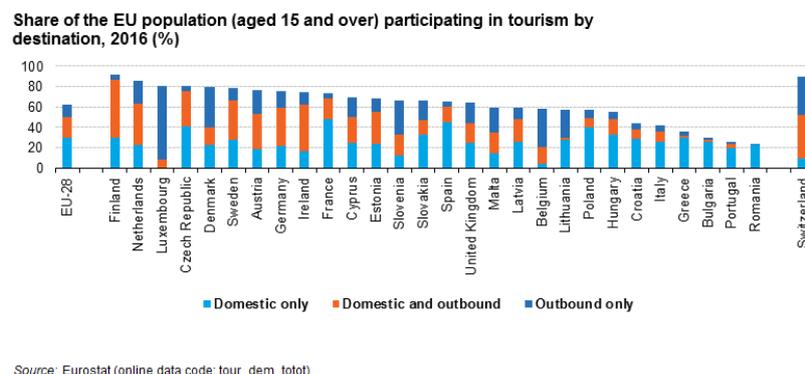


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Figure 2: Average number of personal trips per tourist (aged 15 and over), 2016 - Source: Eurostat (tourdemtotot), (tourdemttot)

Tourism trips by EU resident: from 91.4% in Finland to 24.0% in Romania

In four Member States, more than eight out of ten residents made at least one tourism trip for personal purposes in 2016: Finland (91.4 %), the Netherlands (85.3 %), Luxembourg (80.9 %) and the Czech Republic (80.8 %) (see Table 1 and Figure 3). At the other end, less than half of the residents of Romania (24.0 %), Portugal (25.6 %), Bulgaria (29.8 %), Greece (35.6 %), Italy (41.9 %) and Croatia (44.0 %) participated in tourism.



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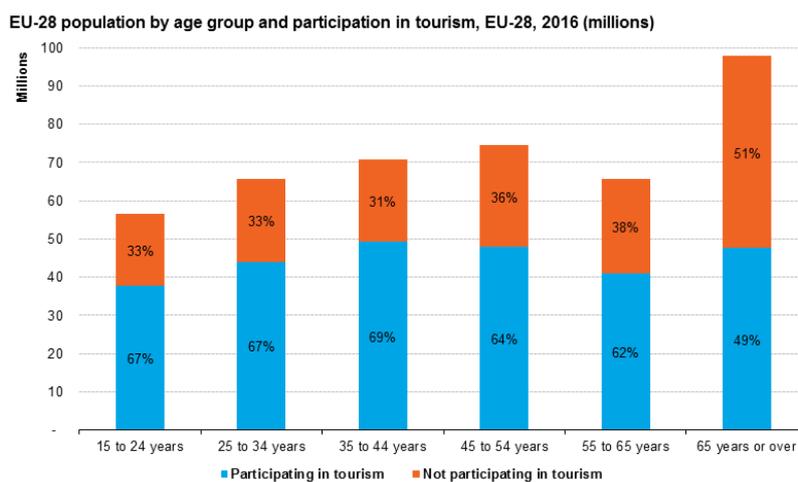
Figure 3: Share of the EU population (aged 15 and over) participating in tourism by destination, 2016 (%) - Source: Eurostat (tourdemtotot)

In the three largest Member States in terms of population, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, the participation rate was higher than the EU average (75.4 %, 73.1 % and 64.1 % respectively); together they accounted for nearly half (47.2 %) of the European tourists.

Countries with the highest participation rates in domestic tourism (i.e. "domestic trips only" plus "domestic and outbound trips") were Finland (86.5 %), Czech Republic (75.4 %), France (68.8 %) and Sweden (66.7 %) (see Table 1 and Figure 3). As regards outbound tourism, the highest participation rates were observed among residents of Luxembourg (80.4 %) and the EFTA country Switzerland (80.5 %). Other countries where more than half of the population made at least one trip (with at least one overnight stay) to a destination abroad were the Netherlands (62.5 %), Finland (61.7 %), Austria (58.3 %), Denmark (58.0 %), Ireland (57.4 %), Belgium (54.6 %), Germany (54.2 %), Slovenia (53.8 %) and Sweden (50.6 %). Countries whose populations made the highest proportion of domestic trips only (and no outbound trips) during 2016 were France (47.7 %), Spain (45.1 %) and the Czech Republic (40.6 %).

Participation in tourism lower in people aged 65 and over

Age had a limited impact on participation in tourism. On average, 62 % of the EU population in all age groups (15 and over) made tourism trips for personal purposes in the course of 2016. The participation rate ranged between 62 % and 69 % in all groups except for those aged 65 or over, where it dropped to 49 %. While persons aged 65 or over represented 23 % of the EU population, they accounted for only 18 % of EU tourists. However, even with a low share of participation in tourism, this age group of 65+ represents nearly 48 million tourists (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

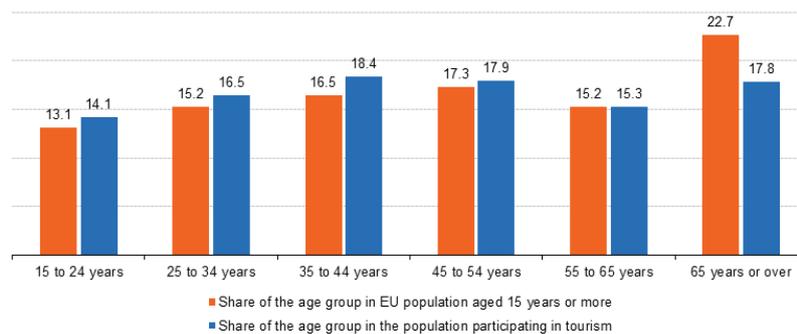


Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_dem_toage, demo_pjangroup)

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Figure 4: EU-28 population by age group and participation in tourism, EU-28, 2016 (millions) - Source: Eurostat (tourdemtoage), (demopjangroup)

Share of the EU population participating in tourism, by age groups, EU-28, 2016 (%)



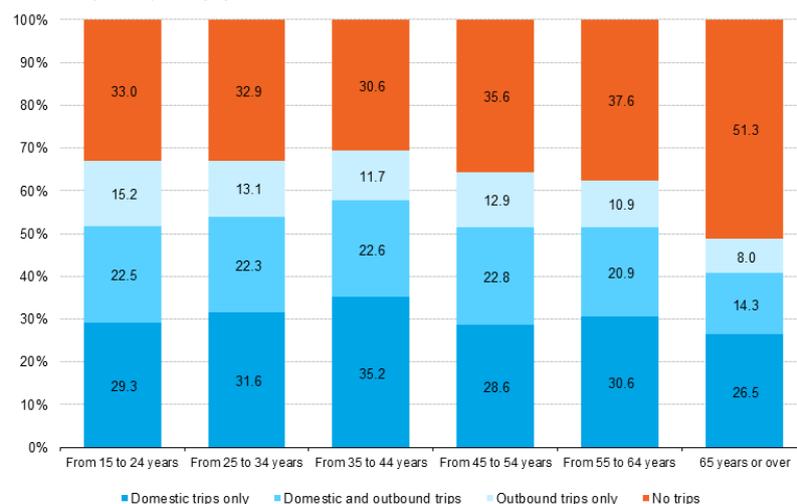
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_dem_toage, demo_pjangroup)

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Figure 5: Share of the EU population participating in tourism, by age groups, EU-28, 2016 (%) - Source: Eurostat (tourdemtoage), (demopjangroup)

In terms of breakdown by destination (domestic, outbound), the pattern was fairly stable across all age groups. Half of the EU population (or 81 % of the tourist population) in all age groups made at least one domestic trip while the shares for outbound trips were respectively 32 % and 52 % (see Figure 6).

Share of the EU population participating to tourism, by age group and destination, EU-28, 2016 (%)



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_dem_toage, demo_pjangroup)

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Figure 6: Share of the EU population participating to tourism, by age group and destination, EU-28, 2016 (%) - Source: Eurostat (tourdemtoage), (demopjangroup)

Half of the Europeans who did not make tourism trips mentioned financial reasons

Data on reasons for not participating in tourism is transmitted to Eurostat every three years. In this article we present data for the reference year 2016. New data will be available in 2020 for the reference year 2019.

In 2016, nearly half (48 %) of the Europeans who did not participate in tourism reported financial reasons as one of the main reasons (See Table 2 and Figure 7) - please note that respondents could report more than one reason. Around 20 % of non-tourists mentioned health problems, while another 20 % mentioned no motivation to travel as one of the main reasons for not taking holidays. Work or study commitments was mentioned by

16 % of the European non-tourists for not participating in tourism while 13 % mentioned family commitments.

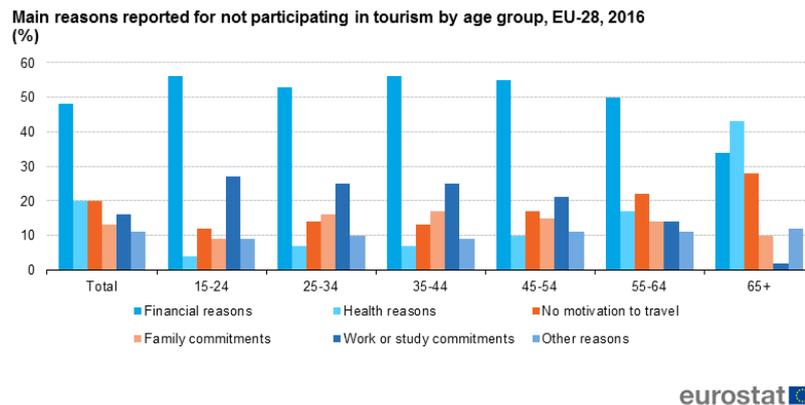


Figure 7: Main reasons reported for not participating in tourism by age group, EU-28, 2016 (%)

Share of the non-tourist population by reasons for not participating in tourism trips, 2016 (%)

	Share of the population not participating in tourism	Reasons reported for not participating in tourism					
		Financial reasons	Health reasons	No motivation to travel	Family commitments	Work or study commitments	Other reasons
EU28	37.9	47.8	19.5	20.2	13.3	15.8	10.8
Belgium	41.5	55.3	24.5	44.2	19.6	24.7	25.6
Bulgaria	70.2	50.1	15.8	0.7	9.3	18.1	6.0
Czech Republic	19.2	37.2	40.2	22.6	14.5	10.6	7.0(u)
Denmark	20.2	21.1	29.1	2.7	1.1	10.7	35.3
Germany	24.6	33.1	39.3	35.0	23.7	25.1	24.6
Estonia	31.3	38.1	34.3	27.9	13.7(u)	13.6(u)	14.5(u)
Ireland	25.8	53.7	18.4	24.3	12.6	13.8	10.4
Greece	64.4	74.6	17.5	10.9	8.9	10.1	7.9
Spain	34.3	46.8	22.0	19.3	11.0	13.9	5.4
France	26.9	39.5	15.5	13.6	8.2	11.5	11.8
Croatia	56.0	61.6	24.3	14.3	15.9	12.8	7.1
Italy	58.1	48.8	14.2	19.6	14.4	13.5	6.5
Cyprus	31.0	56.7	22.3	7.7	17.9	12.6	15.1
Latvia	41.0	48.1	23.0	9.3	8.6	9.2	1.9
Lithuania	42.7	19.7	14.7	7.3	4.9	10.5	42.8
Luxembourg	19.1	15.0	19.5(u)	24.3	20.0	8.3(u)	20.4
Hungary	44.8	46.4	22.1	2.9	3.5	15.2	9.9
Malta	40.3	27.3	18.6	25.1	7.0(u)	10.6	16.4
Netherlands	14.7	33.3	22.4	26.8	6.8	11.1	17.2
Austria	23.2	21.6	32.0	38.3	24.7	25.1	16.1
Poland	43.2	49.4	23.2	21.4	13.7	21.4	6.5
Portugal	74.4	66.4	26.5	53.1	18.7	31.0	18.1
Romania	76.0	55.3	12.8	4.9	8.9	13.1	4.9
Slovenia	33.4	47.4	34.3	23.3	5.6	19.1	5.5
Slovakia	33.9	50.3	32.1	57.0	24.3	9.8	10.9
Finland	8.6	.u	21.4(u)	34.5(u)	.u	.u	.u
Sweden	21.2	46.3	19.2	60.4	5.2	10.6	16.0
United Kingdom	35.9	52.0	5.0	12.0	12.0	11.0	8.0
Switzerland	10.2	31.1(u)	30.4(u)	21.3(u)	11.7(u)	13.6(u)	14.5(u)

“-” - data not available
 “u” - low reliability.

eurostat

Table 2: Share of the non-tourist population by reasons for not participating in tourism trips, 2016 (%)

Looking at country level, financial reasons as one of the main reasons for not participating in tourism was the most frequently reported reason in the majority of the Member States. This was the main reason mentioned by three out of four non-tourists in Greece and more than six out of ten non-tourists in Portugal and Croatia. However, in Luxembourg, Austria, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden the most frequent reason for not participating in tourism was not of a financial nature, but rather a lack of interest or motivation to travel. In the Czech Republic and Germany health issues tended to be the main reason to stay at home.

When looking at the differences by age, financial aspects are the main obstacle to taking part in tourism for all age groups except for the age group 65+ for which health reasons are the most frequently mentioned barrier (43 % of this age group did not travel for health reasons, compared to – on average – 9 % in the other age groups).

The statistics on [income and living conditions](#) include an indicator related to tourism which gives the proportion of households that cannot afford to pay for one week of annual holiday away from home during the reference year (see Figure 8 and Figure 9). After a peak of 39.7 % in 2012, this proportion started decreasing in 2013 and reached 30.5 % in 2017 (-6 percentage points, compared with the pre-crisis year 2007).

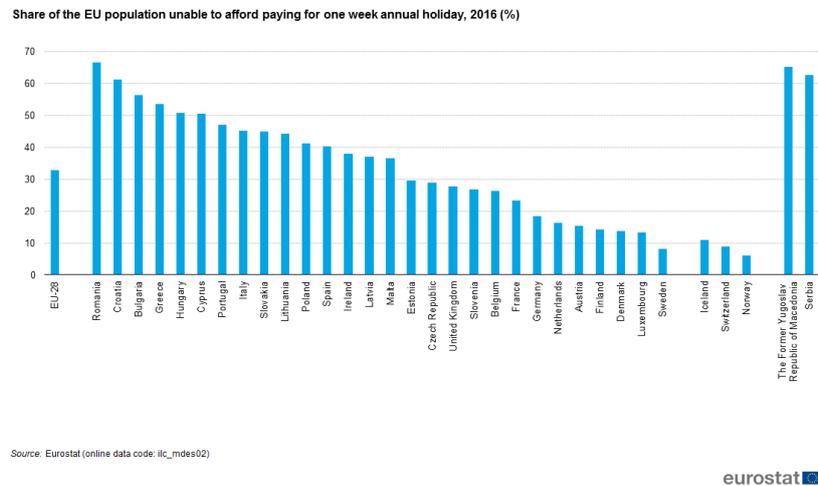


Figure 8: Share of the EU population unable to afford paying for one week annual holiday, 2016 (%) - Source: Eurostat (ilc_mdcs02)

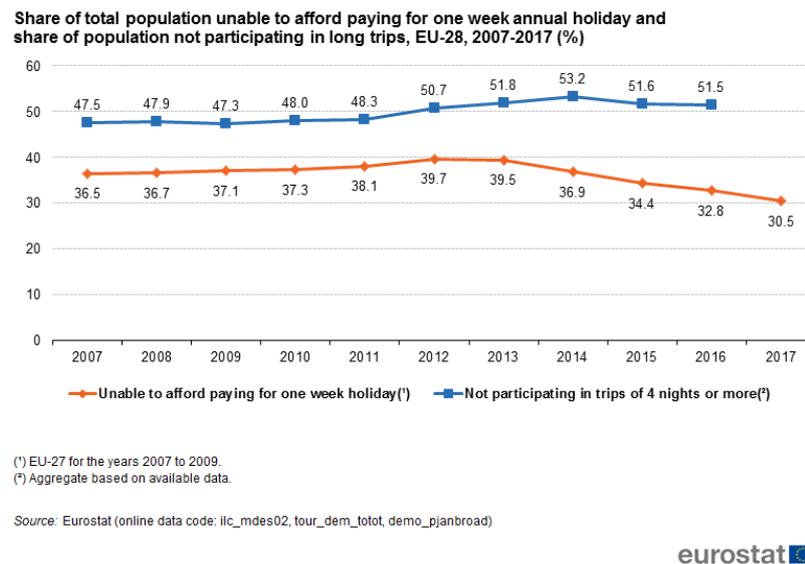


Figure 9: Share of total population unable to afford paying for one week annual holiday and share of population not participating in long trips, EU-28, 2007-2017 (%) - Source: Eurostat (ilc_mdcs02), (tourdemtoq), (tourdemtotot)

The data on participation in tourism shows that the proportion of EU residents aged 15 and over that did not participate in any trips of at least four overnight stays dropped by 1.6 percentage point in 2015 (51.6 %) compared with 2014 (53.2 %), while it remained relatively stable in 2016 (51.5 %).

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Download Excel file - Tables and figures on Participation in tourism](#)

Data sources

Collection of annual data on trips of EU residents

The collection consists of harmonised data collected by the Member States in the frame of the [Regulation \(EU\) No 692/2011](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on [tourism](#) .

The scope of observation for the data on participation in tourism are the residents of the country, aged 15 or over, and refers only to tourism for personal purposes, excluding trips made for professional reasons.

Data on the reasons for not participating in tourism is transmitted to Eurostat every three years. The first data transmission took place in 2014 for the reference year 2013 while this article is based on data transmitted in 2017 with 2016 as reference year.

Context

The EU is a major tourist destination, with five Member States among the world's top ten destinations for holidaymakers, according to UNWTO¹data. Tourism is an important activity in the EU which 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.

Other articles

- [Tourism trips of Europeans](#) (online publication)
- [All articles on tourism statistics](#)

Publications

- [Recent Eurostat publications on tourism](#)

Main tables

- [Tourism \(ttour\)](#) , see "Annual data on trips of EU residents":

[Participation in tourism for personal purposes \(number of tourists\) \(tin00185\)](#)

[Participation in tourism for personal purposes \(tourists as share of total population\) \(tin00189\)](#)

Database

- [Tourism \(tour\)](#) , see "Annual data on trips of EU residents", "Participation in tourism".

Dedicated section

- [Tourism statistics](#)

Methodology

- [Annual data on trips of EU residents](#) (ESMS metadata file — tourdemesms)

¹ UNWTO [Tourism Highlights](#)

Legislation

- With 2012 as reference year:
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 692/2011](#) of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing Council Directive 95/57/EC
 - [Regulation \(EU\) No 1051/2011](#) of 20 October 2011 implementing Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 concerning European statistics on tourism, as regards the structure of the quality reports and the transmission of the data
- Previous legal acts (concerning reference periods before 2012):
- [Directive 95/57/EC](#) of 23 November 1995 on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism
 - [Commission Decision 1999/35/CE](#) of 9 December 1998 on the procedures for implementing Council Directive 95/57/EC on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism
 - [Commission Decision 2004/883/CE](#) of 10 December 2004 adjusting the Annex to Council Directive 95/57/EC on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism as regards country lists
 - [Directive 2006/110/EC](#) of 20 November 2006 adapting Directives 95/57/EC and 2001/109/EC in the field of statistics, by reason of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania

External links

- [Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism](#) (Communication from the European Commission, October 2007)
- [European Commission - Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs - Tourism](#)