

Press Release

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Both younger and older Germans travel, the Dutch are the number one travelers

International survey by the GfK Association on travel/vacation behavior in 16 countries

Nuremberg/Frankfurt am Main, June 18, 2010: Six in ten respondents will be spending money on vacations this year. People in the Netherlands travel for the longest periods and, correspondingly, spend more money. The travel behavior of Germans more or less corresponds to that of the average Western European. While in all other countries it is particularly younger people who travel, in Germany there is no difference between the generations.

In the latest survey, citizens in 16 countries were asked travel-related questions, for example, whether and for how long they travel each year, how much money they spend on vacations and what their favorite vacation pursuits are.

Almost 40% of all respondents stated that they are not traveling in their leisure time this year. This figure increases to 61% in Eastern Europe and falls to 37% in Western Europe. The keenest travelers are the Swedes (87%), Dutch (85%) and Belgians (77%). The Germans are average for Western Europe in this respect: 38% are forgoing a vacation this year. The Bulgarians travel the least, with around 70% spending their vacation at home.

In almost all countries, it is young people in particular who travel in their leisure time. Germany is the only country in which there is no difference between old and young. "The Trend Sensor of the GfK Association shows us that older people in Germany are still in a good financial position compared with other countries. They like to take advantage of this by traveling, provided that their health is good," comments Dr Raimund Wildner, Managing Director of the GfK Association, on the situation in Germany.

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How much do holidaymakers spend per year on their travels?

Over a third of respondents will be spending a maximum of EUR 1000 per person per year on vacations in 2010, and 21% of this group will be spending up to EUR 500. Around one in ten will be investing between EUR 1000 and EUR 2000. This figure more than doubles in Sweden, and approximately 20% of the Dutch and Belgians are also prepared to pay between EUR 1000 and EUR 2000 for a vacation break. On average across all the countries, 9% will be spending more than EUR 2000. Among Americans this percentage rises to as much as 18%, followed by the British and Dutch (16% and 13% respectively). Germany remains around the Western European average in terms of expenditure: 37% will be paying up to EUR 1000 per person per year for their vacations, 15% between EUR 1000 and EUR 2000 and 4% more than EUR 2000.

| How much money are you planning to spend this year on vacations per person? | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Nothing – staying at home | up to EUR 500 | EUR 501 to EUR 1000 | EUR 1001 to EUR 2000 | More than EUR 2000 |
| All countries | 39% | 21% | 15% | 12% | 9% |
| Western Europe | 37% | 20% | 18% | 13% | 7% |
| Belgium | 23% | 20% | 22% | 19% | 9% |
| Germany | 38% | 15% | 22% | 15% | 4% |
| France | 38% | 26% | 17% | 10% | 3% |
| UK | 29% | 19% | 18% | 16% | 16% |
| Italy | 40% | 26% | 18% | 8% | 4% |
| Netherlands | 15% | 19% | 23% | 22% | 13% |
| Portugal | 66% | 11% | 6% | 6% | 1% |
| Sweden | 13% | 20% | 26% | 27% | 11% |
| Spain | 47% | 17% | 13% | 8% | 4% |
| Central/Eastern Europe | 61% | 24% | 6% | 3% | 0% |
| Bulgaria | 71% | 19% | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| Poland | 62% | 27% | 6% | 2% | 0% |
| Romania | 70% | 16% | 7% | 2% | 0% |
| Czech Republic | 30% | 37% | 13% | 7% | 0% |
| Turkey | 51% | 34% | 8% | 2% | 0% |
| Hungary | 65% | 22% | 3% | 1% | 0% |
| Europe overall | 42% | 21% | 16% | 11% | 6% |
| USA | 32% | 18% | 15% | 15% | 18% |

Source: "Vacation" survey, GfK Association / WSJE, spring 2010, n= 16.364

For how long do people go on holiday each year?

Just under 30% of respondents go on holiday for 2 weeks every year, almost the same percentage for just a week and 13% for under 7 days. One in five respondents travels for 3 or 4 weeks each year: the Dutch, British and Belgians are particularly well represented in this group. In the Netherlands, 17% of citizens take a vacation of 5 weeks or longer (all countries: 7%), which – taking into account expenditure – makes the Dutch the number one travelers.

Among Germans, almost half travel for 2 weeks every year, 20% for three or four weeks, and just 3% for longer than 5 weeks per annum.

What is the preferred travel destination?

Of all respondents, two thirds prefer to stay in their own country. This proportion falls to just under 50% in Western Europe. People from the Southern European countries are particularly keen on staying in their home country: almost 70% of Portuguese citizens, almost as many Spanish and Italian people and 60% of the French enjoy spending their time off at home. Most Americans (80%) also do not travel abroad, and this percentage increases to 95% among Turkish people. In Germany, 37% of citizens spend their vacation on home turf, around 30% head for Southern European countries such as France, Italy and Spain, while 7% visit countries in Central and Eastern Europe (average for Western Europe: 3%). Just 2% of German holidaymakers fly to Asia and Africa, and a mere 1% go to America.

What are the most popular vacation pursuits?

When asked what they prefer to do on their vacation (respondents named a maximum of 2 activities), 37% said that they want to relax by reading a book, simply resting or playing games. Pure relaxation is particularly high on the list of priorities among Europeans (58%), and especially for Germans (69%). In contrast, just 10% of Americans appreciate “dolce far niente” (the sweetness of doing nothing), preferring to visit friends and relatives when on vacation (25%), enjoy sport (16%) or have fun in bars, clubs and discos (15%).

Discovery of new countries and cultures comes second in the rankings of Europeans’ favorite vacation activities (34%), while as many as half of Belgian and Dutch respondents are keen sightseers. In Germany, two activities share second place: 26% want to discover the cultural features of other countries, and the same percentage prefer sport. Turkish people (43%) and Czechs (37%) particularly enjoy sport on vacation. The third favorite vacation activity of Europeans is sport (18%), followed by visits to friends and relatives (17%) and going to bars, clubs and discos (16%). Discovering foreign cuisine is favored by 13% of all respondents, and by as many as 19% of German holidaymakers.

The survey

For the international "vacation" survey, which was commissioned by The Wall Street Journal Europe and financially subsidized by the GfK Association, GfK Custom Research surveyed a total of 16,364 people aged over 15 in 16 countries in spring 2010. The survey investigated whether European citizens go on vacation, and if so, for how long, what activities they prefer (respondents named a maximum of 2 activities), where they go and how much they are spending on vacations this year per person.

The Wall Street Journal Europe (www.wsj.com)

Founded in 1983, The Wall Street Journal Europe forms part of the world's leading business publication franchise, which includes The Wall Street Journal, The Wall Street Journal Asia and The Wall Street Journal Online at WSJ.com, the leading provider of business and financial news and analysis on the web with more than one million subscribers and 23 million visitors per month. Together, these publications have a total circulation of nearly 2.9 million, reaching the world's top business and political leaders. The Wall Street Journal Europe draws on the Dow Jones network of nearly 1,900 business and financial news staff, the largest network in the world, including more than 400 in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Its website, Europe.wsj.com, offers relevant, reliable breaking news and analysis, opinion, market data and multimedia features tailored for a European audience by a London-based editorial team. The WSJ.com Mobile Reader for Europe also delivers content to BlackBerry® smartphones as well as iPhone and iPod touch devices

The GfK Association

The GfK Association was established in 1934 as a non-profit organization for the promotion of market research. Its membership consists of approximately 600 companies and individuals. The purpose of the Association is to develop innovative research methods in close cooperation with academic institutions, to promote the training and further education of market researchers, to observe the structures and developments in society, the economy and politics that play a key role in private consumption, and to research their effects on consumers. Survey results are made available to the membership. The GfK Association is a shareholder in GfK SE. Further information: www.gfk-association.com.

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