

2nd Mondial Assistance Barometer

« Winter Holidays » (December 15th, 2008 - March 15th, 2009):

Mondial Assistance reveals European* airline travellers' favourite destinations

Paris, 21 January 2009 – During the next several weeks, where will Europeans choose to fly for their winter holidays? This classification is based on an analysis of 346,106 travel insurance contracts subscribed up to December 5th, 2008 on the Internet sites of European airline companies (clients of Mondial Assistance) for flights scheduled between December 15th, 2008 and March 15th, 2009.

« Several hundred airline company sites, tour operators and on-line travel agents use e-Magin, our e-commerce platform. As a result we benefit from a unique point of view regarding air travel in Europe and the rest of the world, » says Erick Morazin, International Sales Director for Mondial Assistance.

Two places tie for favourite destination

The preferred destination of most Europeans is primarily their own country. Consequently, the French, Spanish, English and Italians have put their own countries at the top of their holiday destination list. And only Germany prefers a foreign destination – Spain – to its own. The shortened travel distances are probably proportional to the reduction in holiday budgets.

Overall, the U.K. and Spain are the most sought after destinations and each country welcomes 17% of Europeans travelling by plane for lengthy (9 days on average) holidays. Italy holds 3rd position with 11% and is ahead of France, which is number 4 with 10%. These first four leading countries together represent more than half (55%) of all holiday flights. The remaining flights are divided among Germany (6%), Ireland (4%), Switzerland, Portugal, Morocco (3%) and finally the United States with only 2%.

Country by country, a jumbled classification

According to whatever country they're from, Europeans chose different holiday destinations. The French travel within France (28%), the U.K. (9%), Morocco (9%), Italy (7%) and, more than their neighbours, the U.S. (4% vs. 2% on average).

The Germans are consistently attracted to the Spanish sun (18%), appreciate their own country (14%), the U.K. (14%) and, to a lesser extent, Italy (8%).

The Poles, eager to practice their English, flock to the U.K. (50%) and Ireland (29%). A few internal flights within Poland (10%) complete the trio of favourite destinations.

True homebodies, 43% of Spanish vacationers fly within Spain. Far fewer travel to the U.K. (16%), Italy (11%) and France (6%).

The Dutch are very fond of Spain (24%), and are equally numerous in flying to the U.K (10%) and Italy (9%). They also prefer Austria (6%) more than their neighbours do.

The British travel within Great Britain at 22%. 19% prefer Spain, 9% Switzerland and 8% France.

28% of Italian holiday travellers visit Italy. 17% travel to the U.K, 16% to Spain, and 10% to France.

* Methodology: Analysis is based on insurance policies covering leisure flights exclusively booked on the websites of European airline companies, clients of Mondial Assistance, for flights scheduled between December 15th and March 15th 2008. 346,106 insurance policy sales from 7 European countries (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, Spain) were analysed by Occurrence, an independent market research company. This data only concerns leisure flights during the noted period of departure. Leisure flights are defined as trips abroad lasting at least 3 days OR including a week-end day OR when at least 3 people are travelling together.

Notes to Editors:

Mondial Assistance Group: an intervention every 3 seconds around the world.

International leader in Assistance, Travel Insurance and Personal Services, today the Mondial Assistance counts more than 9,356 employees who speak 40 different languages and work throughout the world with a network of 400,000 service providers and 180 correspondents. 250 million people, or 4% of the world's total population, benefit from its services, which the Group provides on all five continents. Mondial Assistance is a member of the Allianz Group.

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