



Summary

Tourism in Greece and in the main competing destinations, 2013 - 2017

October 2019

Dr Aris Ikkos, ISHC
Research Director

Serafeim Koutsos
Analyst

Introduction

Tourism in recent decades has been recording - on a global level - continued growth and a diversification of the products offered. It has emerged as one of the fastest growing economic sectors, and also one of the main sources of revenue for many developing countries. Thanks to the extent of its expansion, it offers economic and employment benefits in many sectors of the economy (e.g. construction, transport, food and beverage trade, etc.) and has an impact on many different parts of the social and productive fabric of a country. According to the World Tourism Organisation ([UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2018](#)), tourism ranks third in exports after chemicals and fuels, and is ahead of the automotive and food industries.

Major factors contributing to the growth of global tourism in recent years is the exponential growth of digital technology, the ease in finding low-cost carrier flights, the growth of short-term leases (e.g. Airbnb) and the continuous increase of inbound trips from the markets of China, India, Russia, etc.

This survey aims at examining the state of tourism in Greece through time in this constantly growing and changing environment, and more particularly whether the growth of inbound tourism in Greece in recent years has followed the general growth of tourism worldwide, or whether its market shares have increased/decreased.

In order to respond to this question, we analysed data (subject to availability) of the 2000-2017 period, regarding the development¹:

- of international arrivals Worldwide and
- of international arrivals in Europe.

and, specifically for the 2013-2017 period, during which Greek tourism recorded a significant increase in its figures, regarding the development:

- of international arrivals in Southern Europe which, according to the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), includes: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, FYROM, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey,
- of shares of arrivals, receipts and overnight stays (in hotels and similar establishments) of Greece and its main competitors in Southern Europe,

- of shares of arrivals and overnight stays (in hotels and similar establishments) in Greece for trips to Southern Europe from Greece's 7 main markets (Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy, USA, Russia, Netherlands)
- of the **dependence** and **penetration** of Greece, with regard to arrivals and overnight stays, in the individual markets under examination, where:
 - **Dependence**: arrivals - overnight stays from each market in Greece as percentage (%) of total arrivals - overnight stays of inbound tourism in Greece.
 - **Penetration**: outbound trips - overnight stays from each market to Greece as a percentage (%) of total outbound trips - overnight stays from this country to destinations in Southern Europe.



Summary

World tourism - Tourism in Europe - Tourism in Southern Europe

World tourism increased from **680 million** international arrivals in 2000 to **1,329 million** in 2017 (**+95.4%**). The greatest volume of arrivals for the period under examination was recorded in Europe, which represents, for all years, more than **50.0%** of outbound trips globally (albeit with a downward trend of its share). Arrivals to European destinations during the 2000 – 2017 period increased by **+71.6%**, from **393 million** in 2000 to **674 million** in 2017. In European sub-regions, Southern Europe got the lion's share during the 2000-2017 period, representing **35.0% - 40.0%** of inbound trips to Europe, followed by Western Europe with approximately **30.0% - 36.0%**.

As regards individual destinations in Southern Europe, Spain and Italy were the most popular destinations for 2013-2017, representing **52.0%-54.0%** of arrivals and **54.0%-58.0%** of receipts from inbound tourism in Southern Europe. Notable amongst destinations of Southern Europe was the increase of the shares for Greece, from **8.9%** in 2013 to **10.2%** of 2017, as a result of the significant **+51.8%** increase in arrivals during 2013 - 2017. On the other hand, the picture for receipts does not appear to be consistent with that for arrivals, with fluctuations between years, and the shares for Greece do not exceed the **9.0%** mark for 2013 - 2017.

In conclusion, we can say that the annual growth rate of arrivals in Europe falls short of the world rate; in Southern Europe, it is higher compared to the world and, in Greece, it is significantly higher compared to Southern Europe.

Finally, the greatest pressure from tourism flows, compared to each country's population, appears in Greece, Cyprus, Croatia and Malta, where in 2017 inbound tourism exceeded their population by at least **153%** (Greece) and up to **389%** (Malta).

Penetration of Greece in terms of arrivals per market, 2013-2017

Penetration of Greece in terms of arrivals per market, 2013 - 2017					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Cyprus	85,7%	86,3%	86,7%	91,3%	88,3%
Albania	69,0%	61,9%	62,9%	70,8%	68,4%
North Macedonia	71,4%	75,3%	79,1%	67,0%	61,4%
Bulgaria	23,5%	30,5%	43,9%	51,7%	48,4%
Turkey	60,4%	65,0%	63,1%	44,2%	45,7%
Serbia	36,1%	40,7%	35,8%	36,4%	45,0%
Romania	15,2%	24,4%	22,5%	34,4%	32,3%
Finland	9,5%	11,0%	10,4%	12,9%	15,6%
Italy	11,7%	12,2%	13,9%	14,0%	13,7%
Poland	10,2%	13,8%	15,8%	15,3%	13,3%
Czech Republic	10,5%	14,0%	16,1%	10,5%	12,0%
Sweden	9,7%	8,8%	9,2%	10,7%	11,3%
Netherlands	7,9%	8,6%	8,2%	9,3%	10,4%
Germany	7,5%	7,8%	8,5%	9,2%	9,9%
Belgium	7,3%	8,1%	9,5%	9,4%	9,5%
USA	7,3%	8,7%	9,8%	9,8%	9,0%
Un. Kingdom	7,3%	7,7%	8,3%	9,2%	8,9%
Denmark	8,6%	9,5%	8,9%	8,5%	8,9%
Hungary	6,2%	6,0%	9,0%	8,5%	7,9%
Switzerland	6,0%	6,0%	6,0%	6,7%	6,5%
Russia	13,5%	12,4%	7,0%	12,1%	6,3%
France	5,9%	7,0%	6,5%	5,7%	5,9%
Austria	3,9%	4,6%	5,0%	5,1%	5,4%
Spain	1,7%	2,3%	1,5%	3,1%	2,1%
Ireland	2,1%	3,3%	3,2%	3,7%	-

Source: UNWTO - Processing INSETE Intelligence

Data are subject to change

In nearly all the markets under examination in the period 2013 – 2017, Greece recorded a (significant) increase in its penetration, and mainly in Romania (from **15.2%** in 2013 to **32.3%** in 2017), in Bulgaria (from **23.5%** in 2013 to **48.4%** in 2017), in Poland (from **10.2%** in 2013 to **13.3%** in 2017), in Italy (from **11.7%** in 2013 to **13.7%** in 2017) and in the USA (from **7.3%** in 2013 to **9.0%** in 2017). Exceptions were Albania (from **69.0%** in 2013 to **68.4%** in 2017), North Macedonia (from **71.4%** in 2013 to **61.4%** in 2017), Turkey (from **60.4%** in 2013 to **45.7%** in 2017) and Russia (from **13.5%** in 2013 to **6.3%** in 2017).

The period 2016 – 2017 presents a mixed picture, with 13 markets recording a decrease in penetration and 11 markets recording an increase. In particular, the highest penetration growth is recorded in the markets of Serbia (from **36.4%** in 2016 to **45.0%** in 2017) and Finland (from **12.9%** in 2016 to **15.6%** in 2017) and the highest decline is recorded in the markets of North Macedonia (from **67.0%** in 2016 to **61.4%** in 2017), Bulgaria (from **51.7%** in 2016 to **48.4%** in 2017) and Russia (from **12.1%** in 2016 to **6.34%** in 2017)

Greece recorded the greatest penetration in its neighbouring markets, such as: Cyprus (from **85.7%** in 2013 to **88.3%** in 2017), Albania (from **69.0%** in 2013 to **68.4%** in 2017), North Macedonia (from **71.4%** in 2013 to **61.4%** in 2017), Bulgaria (from **23.5%** in 2013 to **48.4%** in 2017), Turkey (from **60.4%** in 2013 to **45.7%** in 2017), Serbia (from **36.1%** in 2013 to **45.0%** in 2017) and Romania (from **15.2%** in 2013 to **32.3%** 2017).

Noteworthy for Greece is the fact that its penetration in outbound trips with a destination in Southern Europe, from the markets of Germany and the United Kingdom (which historically constitute its largest markets), is below **10.0%**.

Dependence of Greece in terms of arrivals per market, 2013 - 2017

Dependence of Greece in terms of arrivals per market, 2013 - 2017					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Germany	12,7%	11,2%	11,9%	12,7%	13,6%
Un. Kingdom	10,3%	9,5%	10,2%	11,7%	11,0%
Bulgaria	3,9%	7,0%	8,1%	10,2%	9,4%
North Macedonia	9,4%	10,7%	12,8%	6,9%	5,8%
Italy	5,4%	5,1%	5,7%	5,6%	5,3%
France	6,4%	6,6%	6,4%	5,3%	5,2%
Romania	1,6%	2,5%	2,3%	4,1%	4,2%
Serbia	4,3%	4,5%	3,1%	2,9%	4,0%
Turkey	4,6%	4,4%	4,9%	3,6%	3,6%
Netherlands	3,2%	3,0%	2,7%	3,1%	3,5%
USA	2,6%	2,7%	3,2%	3,1%	3,2%
Albania	2,8%	2,2%	2,1%	2,9%	3,0%
Poland	2,2%	2,7%	3,2%	3,0%	2,7%
Cyprus	2,2%	2,0%	2,0%	2,6%	2,3%
Russia	7,5%	5,7%	2,2%	2,4%	2,2%
Belgium	1,9%	1,9%	2,0%	1,9%	1,9%
Sweden	2,1%	1,5%	1,5%	1,7%	1,8%
Switzerland	1,9%	1,7%	1,7%	1,8%	1,7%
Austria	1,3%	1,3%	1,4%	1,4%	1,5%
Czech Republic	1,6%	1,6%	1,9%	1,1%	1,2%
Denmark	1,1%	1,1%	1,0%	1,0%	1,0%
Finland	0,8%	0,8%	0,6%	0,8%	0,8%
Spain	0,5%	0,6%	0,4%	0,8%	0,6%
Hungary	0,4%	0,4%	0,6%	0,6%	0,5%
Ireland	0,2%	0,3%	0,3%	0,4%	-
Total	91,1%	90,8%	92,1%	91,6%	90,2%

Source: UNWTO - Processing INSETE Intelligence

Data are subject to change

The markets under examination in Table 2 represent during the 2013-2017 period more than **90.0%** of inbound tourism in Greece. The largest shares for 2017 are held by the markets of Germany (**13.6%**) and the United Kingdom (**11.0%**), and are followed by Bulgaria (**9.4%**), North Macedonia (**5.8%**), Italy (**5.3%**), France (**5.2%**), Romania (**4.2%**), Serbia (**4.0%**), Turkey (**3.6%**) and Netherlands (**3.5%**). In particular, the top-10 inbound tourism markets in Greece represent **65.6%** of arrivals for 2017.

More specifically, notable was the increase of the share from the markets of Bulgaria (from **3.9%** in 2013 to **9.4%** in 2017) and Romania (from **1.6%** in 2013 to **4.2%** in 2017) and the decrease from the markets of North Macedonia (from **9.4%** in 2013 to **5.8%** in 2017) and Russia (from **7.5%** in 2013 to **2.2%** in 2017).

Penetration of Greece in terms of overnight stays per market, 2013-2017

Penetration of Greece in terms of overnight stays per market, 2013 - 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Cyprus	75,6%	78,0%	77,8%	77,4%	78,3%
Bulgaria	39,1%	38,9%	37,7%	42,1%	41,4%
Romania	37,2%	35,9%	37,7%	35,9%	35,5%
Czech Republic	23,4%	22,6%	23,0%	22,3%	24,8%
Finland	21,2%	20,5%	21,6%	22,5%	24,1%
Turkey	20,4%	22,5%	21,1%	21,3%	23,3%
Poland	19,2%	20,5%	22,7%	21,6%	23,0%
Sweden	17,7%	18,3%	20,7%	21,2%	21,9%
Denmark	17,8%	17,6%	19,0%	18,7%	21,0%
Italy	18,6%	18,7%	18,1%	17,5%	18,5%
Russia	18,3%	17,6%	16,8%	24,6%	15,5%
Netherlands	12,4%	13,2%	12,4%	12,5%	15,4%
France	11,2%	11,4%	12,2%	12,1%	13,1%
Belgium	10,6%	10,2%	10,9%	11,8%	12,5%
Un. Kingdom	9,8%	10,1%	10,9%	11,2%	11,9%
Germany	7,1%	7,9%	8,2%	9,1%	10,9%
Hungary	11,1%	11,3%	11,5%	10,4%	10,9%
USA	6,3%	7,5%	8,5%	8,3%	9,0%
Austria	8,3%	8,6%	8,9%	8,3%	8,6%
Switzerland	7,4%	7,9%	8,4%	8,0%	8,4%
Spain	3,7%	4,5%	5,0%	4,9%	5,5%
Ireland	2,6%	2,8%	3,2%	3,1%	3,0%

Source: UNWTO - Processing INSETE Intelligence

Data are subject to change

In the markets under examination, Greece recorded an increase in its penetration, with the exception of Romania (from **37.2%** in 2013 to **35.5%** in 2017), Italy (from **18.6%** in 2013 to **18.5%** in 2017), Russia (from **18.3%** in 2013 to **15.5%** in 2017) and Hungary (from **11.1%** in 2013 to **10.9%** in 2017). Greece recorded the greatest penetration in its neighbouring markets, such as Cyprus (from **75.6%** in 2013 to **78.3%** in 2017), Bulgaria (from **39.1%** in 2013 to **41.4%** in 2017) and Romania (from **37.2%** in 2013 to **35.5%** in 2017).

Moreover, Greece recorded a notable penetration in the markets of the Czech Republic (from **23.4%** in 2013 to **24.8%** in 2017), Finland (from **21.2%** in 2013 to **24.1%** in 2017), Turkey (from **20.4%** in 2013 to **23.3%** in 2017), Poland (from **19.2%** in 2013 to **23.0%** in 2017), Sweden (from **17.7%** in 2013 to **21.9%** in 2017) and Denmark (from **17.8%** in 2013 to **21.0%** in 2017).

As with arrivals, it is notable for Greece that its penetration in overnight stays in hotels and similar establishments from the markets of Germany and the United Kingdom is one of the lowest ones recorded (**10.9%** and **11.9%** respectively).

Dependence of Greece in terms of overnight stays per market, 2013 - 2017

Dependence of Greece in terms of overnight stays per market, 2013 - 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Germany	14,8%	16,0%	16,2%	17,2%	18,0%
Un. Kingdom	14,6%	14,4%	16,2%	17,2%	16,3%
Russia	14,2%	12,2%	7,8%	7,8%	7,8%
France	6,3%	6,5%	7,0%	7,0%	6,7%
Poland	3,2%	3,6%	4,2%	4,1%	4,5%
Netherlands	4,5%	4,5%	4,3%	4,0%	4,5%
Sweden	4,0%	4,0%	4,2%	4,3%	4,2%
Italy	4,4%	4,4%	4,4%	4,2%	4,1%
USA	2,0%	2,4%	2,6%	2,4%	2,6%
Belgium	2,7%	2,5%	2,7%	2,6%	2,4%
Denmark	2,0%	2,0%	2,1%	2,2%	2,3%
Czech Republic	2,3%	2,1%	2,2%	2,0%	2,1%
Romania	1,8%	1,9%	2,0%	2,0%	2,0%
Switzerland	1,7%	1,8%	1,9%	1,8%	1,7%
Austria	1,9%	1,9%	2,0%	1,7%	1,6%
Finland	1,7%	1,7%	1,5%	1,6%	1,6%
Bulgaria	1,0%	1,0%	1,1%	1,1%	1,1%
Cyprus	0,8%	0,9%	0,9%	1,0%	0,9%
Turkey	0,6%	0,7%	0,7%	0,8%	0,8%
Spain	0,5%	0,6%	0,6%	0,6%	0,7%
Hungary	0,5%	0,5%	0,5%	0,5%	0,5%
Ireland	0,3%	0,3%	0,3%	0,3%	0,3%
Total	85,9%	85,8%	85,5%	86,2%	86,4%

Source: UNWTO - Processing INSETE Intelligence

The markets of Table 4 represent, during the 2013-2017 period, more than **85.5%** of overnight stays in hotels and similar establishments recorded in Greece. The largest shares for 2017 are held by the markets of Germany and the United Kingdom, with **18.0%** and **16.3%** respectively, followed at significantly lower levels by Russia (**7.8%**), France (**6.7%**), Poland (**4.5%**), the Netherlands (**4.5%**), Sweden (**4.2%**), Italy (**4.1%**), USA (**2.6%**) and Belgium (**2.4%**). Namely, the top-10 of the markets represents **71.0%** of overnight stays in hotels and similar establishments in Greece for 2017.

Further, notable was the drop of the share of Russia (from **14.2%** in 2013 to **7.8%** in 2017) and the increase of Germany (from **14.8%** in 2013 to **18.0%** in 2017) and the United Kingdom (from **14.6%** in 2013 to **16.3%** in 2017). Also, despite the drop recorded in overnight stays in hotels and similar establishments from the market of Russia, it continues to be the **3rd** largest market for 2017.

Main Conclusions - 1

World tourism during 2000-2017 recorded a continuous growth of international arrivals (from **680 million** to **1,329 million**). Europe remains the continent with the highest inbound tourism flows (**393 million** and **674 million** respectively), even though it has lost market share due to the faster growth of other destinations, particularly in Asia and the Pacific (from **110 million** to **323 million**), due to the economic growth of this area.

Amongst European destinations, Southern Europe (including Greece) has the highest annual growth rate of arrivals (2000 - 2017: **+3.9%**, 2013 – 2017: **+7.4%**) compared to the European average (**+3.2%** and **+4.5%** respectively) and – in the 2013 – 2017 period – Greece has the **2nd** highest growth rate (**+11.0%**) amongst the destination countries in Southern Europe. During the same period, Turkey is the only country in Southern Europe that recorded a marginal drop (**-0,1%**) in its inbound tourism. Spain and Italy receive approximately **52% - 54%** of arrivals and **54% - 58%** of revenues of inbound tourism in Southern Europe.

Amongst Southern European countries, Greece, Cyprus, Croatia and Malta receive the highest intensity of tourism flows compared to their population, with inbound tourism in 2017 exceeding their population by at least **153%** (Greece) and up to **389%** (Malta).

Main Conclusions - 2

During 2013-2017, Greece increased its market share in 12 of its markets, maintained it in 2, and saw its reduction in 10*. The highest increases were recorded in the markets of Bulgaria (from **3.9%** in 2013 to **9.4%** in 2017) and Romania (from **1.6%** in 2013 to **4.2%** in 2017), while the largest decreases were recorded in the markets of Russia (from **7.5%** in 2013 to **2.2%** in 2017) and North Macedonia (from **9.4%** in 2013 to **5.8%** in 2017).

During the period 2016 – 2017 the picture is reversed, with Greece having increased its market shares in 9 of its markets, maintained it in 4, and saw its reduction in 11. The highest increases were recorded in the markets of Serbia (from **2.9%** in 2016 to **4.0%** in 2017) and Germany (from **12.7%** in 2016 to **13.6%** in 2017) while the largest decreases were recorded in the markets of North Macedonia (from **6.9%** in 2016 to **5.8%** in 2017) and Un. Kingdom (from **11.7%** in 2016 to **11.0%** in 2017).

Finally, the percentage of tourists travelling to Greece from its two major markets, Germany (**9.9%**) and Un. Kingdom (**8.9%**) is among the lower. On the contrary, the percentage of tourists travelling to Greece from neighbouring countries ranges from **32.0%** (Romania) to **88.0%** (Cyprus).

* these 24 countries generate more than 90% of the revenue from inbound tourism in Greece

Sources

- [UNWTO](#) 2013 - 2017

The logo for INSETE, consisting of the word "INSETE" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a solid blue rectangular background.

Η παρούσα μελέτη υλοποιήθηκε από το INSETE στο πλαίσιο της Πράξης: «Ενίσχυση της θεσμικής και επιχειρησιακής ικανότητας του ΣΕΤΕ» με κωδικό MIS 5000993, η οποία εντάσσεται στο **Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα “Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού Εκπαίδευση & Δια Βίου Μάθηση ΕΣΠΑ 2014-2020”** και συγχρηματοδοτείται από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο (ΕΚΤ).



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

