European Tourists to the UK Could Drop by a Third Following Brexit

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A vote to leave the European Union this month could cost the UK's tourism industry as much as £4.1 billion a year in international tourist spending alone. According to new research* published today by global travel deals publisher Travelzoo (NASDAQ: TZOO), a third of travellers from Germany, Italy and Spain – and a quarter from France – say they would be less inclined to travel to the UK in the event of a Leave vote. Four in 10 respondents from EU countries also worry that Brexit could make UK holidays more expensive.

Sentiment among the four largest European Union nations (France, Germany, Italy and Spain) is that the UK should stay in the EU, with just under 70% in the Remain camp. In spite of this, respondents from some nations – notably France – believe that leaving the EU could make the UK a safer destination for holidays.

Although almost 75% of the UK's international visitors come from within the EU, even respondents from further afield (10% of those from Canada and 12% from the US) stated they would be less likely to come to a post-Brexit UK.

Holidays for British tourists in Europe, meanwhile, could become more expensive if the sentiment expressed by some of our neighbours in France and Spain becomes more widespread: 40 per cent of respondents from these countries feel it would be fair to impose higher fees, such as a hiked city tax, on British visitors, if the UK votes Leave on June 23.

UK travellers have their own concerns regarding the impact Brexit could have on the cost of their holiday. Over a quarter (28%) are concerned that withdrawal from the EU could lead to more expensive holidays for them, while 56% are worried that Brexit would reduce the ease and flexibility with which British nationals can currently travel inside the EU.

Other UK tourist concerns include:

- **The price of holiday insurance** – 25% are worried that the price of holiday insurance would go up, and 20% worry that their holiday protection cover would be impacted if they were no longer entitled to a European Health Insurance Card
- **The cost of mobile roaming** – 24% are concerned that roaming charges will increase if Britain is no longer governed by European Union roaming regulations
- **The impact for UK beaches** – 22% worry that UK beaches could become more polluted without strict regulations enforced by the EU

UK consumers looking to travel abroad also have concerns about Brexit impacting the outbound tourism industry the impact of Brexit on tourism is a difficult one to predict, given that France, Germany, Italy and Spain make up four of the UK's top seven tourist-supplying countries – accounting for more than 11 million international visitors annually – it's likely that the net result of Brexit will be significantly negative for the UK economy. While the figures above reflect only the direct tourism-related economic impacts of voting to leave the EU, if tourist spending from overseas visitors did indeed fall by £4.1 billion per year, this is likely to reduce HMRC revenue by more than £1.1 billion and reduce support for around 63,000 jobs in the UK.

Even though a UK exit would take some time to complete, especially as renegotiating our revised status with Europe could take five to seven years from start to completion, there will be immediate effects created by this uncertainty."

Other key findings:

- The Travelzoo survey of 3,050 British people indicates 46% believe the UK should stay in the EU, while 40% believe it's time to leave – 14% remain unsure
- Around a third of Italian (33%), Spanish (33%) and German (30%) travellers, and a quarter of those from France (24%), would be less inclined to travel to the UK in the event of a Leave vote
- 10% of British people admit they have taken the impact of Brexit into consideration when planning their holiday
- 12% of Americans and 10% of Canadians say if the UK leaves the EU they would be less likely to

travel here. American visitors currently spend more than £3 billion a year in the UK
- Interestingly for those in favour of an independent UK, 61% said they'd be willing to pay more for their holidays

***About the research**

Travelzoo's survey was conducted using an online questionnaire in the five largest European Union member states by population, and the US and Canada. The questionnaire was completed by 4,950 Travelzoo members across France, Spain, Germany, the US and Canada. For the UK and Italy Travelzoo commissioned independent research with Atomik Research surveying 2,004 consumers in the UK and 1,003 consumers in Italy.

Tourist spending figures calculated by Bournemouth University using data from Travelzoo's research and figures from VisitBritain's Inbound Tourism Reports:
https://www.visitbritain.org/inbound-tourism-performance

https://www.visitbritain.org/2014-snapshot

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