

THE 2018 EU-CHINA TOURISM YEAR MAKES SOLID PROGRESS

Central and Eastern Europe show the strongest growth as EU increases share of valuable Chinese tourists

Brussels/Madrid, 8 October 2018

The [European Travel Commission \(ETC\)](#) today reported that the EU-China Tourism Year, a major strategic political initiative, designed to promote Europe as a destination to the rapidly-growing Chinese tourism market, is delivering the tourism growth intended. Its report is based on a study of Chinese travel to European Union (EU) countries undertaken by ForwardKeys, which monitors over 17 million flight booking transactions a day.

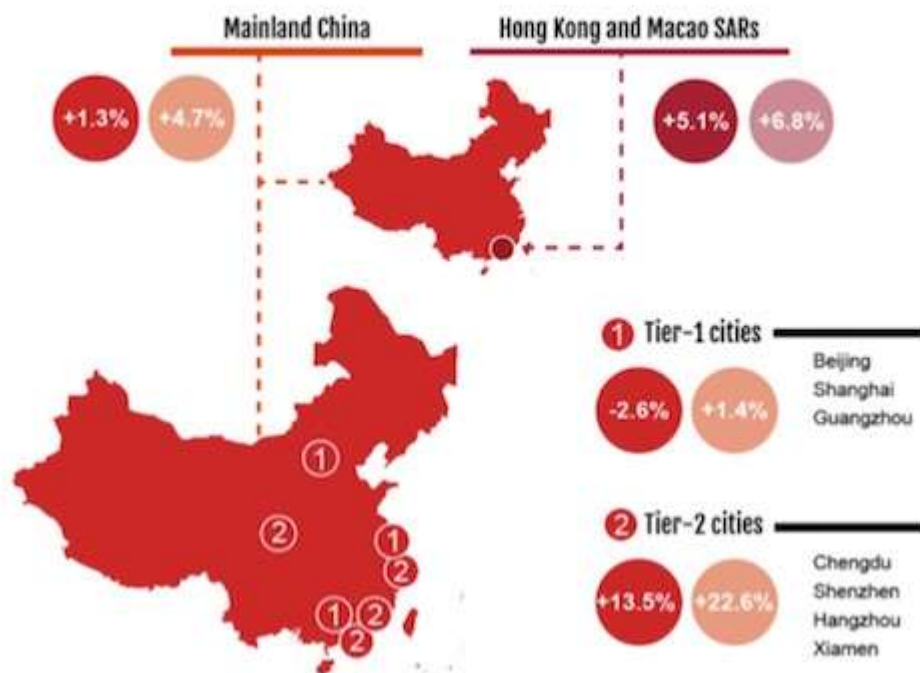
For the first eight months of 2018, Chinese arrivals in the EU were 4.0% up on the same period in 2017. Growth in the first four months was up by 9.5% and in the second four months, up by 2.2%.

Looking forward to the last four months of the year, Chinese bookings to the EU are currently 4.7% ahead of where they were at the same point last year. This is a relatively encouraging position, since outbound bookings from China to the rest of the world are currently 3.6% ahead.

When analysing source cities, it is apparent that the recent growth is coming from the Hong Kong and Macao SARs and tier-2 Chinese cities. During May-August, growth from Hong Kong and Macao was 5.1%, while arrivals growth from Chengdu, Hangzhou, Shenzhen and Xiamen was 13.5%. The outlook for the remainder of the year is similar but amplified. Bookings from the tier-2 cities are 22.6% ahead of where they were at the same point last year; bookings from Hong Kong and Macao are 6.8% ahead and bookings from the tier-1 cities are just 1.4% ahead.

Chinese departures to the European Union

History May-Aug 2018 & forward looking Sept-Dec 2018



Different parts of the EU are growing in terms of Chinese visitors at very different rates, with the stand-out sub-region being Central/Eastern EU. Over the second third of the year (May-August), Chinese arrivals in Central/Eastern EU were 10.3% up on 2017 and the outlook until the end of December, based on current bookings is 9.4% ahead. As one of the objectives for the EU-China Tourism Year included the promotion of lesser-known destinations, these numbers indicate further success of the initiative. Top performers in the region were Estonia and Bulgaria, with increases in Chinese arrivals of 45.3% and 43.4% respectively. The outlook until the end of the year is encouraging for both destinations, with bookings ahead 48.2% and 21.6% respectively.

By contrast, arrivals in Northern EU, during the second third of the year, were disappointing -0.6% down on 2017. The least optimistic outlook for the last four months of the year is currently for Western EU, where Chinese bookings are 2.5% ahead of where they were at the equivalent moment in 2017.

The star performer in the Southern EU is Croatia. Chinese arrivals in May-August were up 46.2% and the outlook for September-December, based on current bookings, is 66.4% ahead.

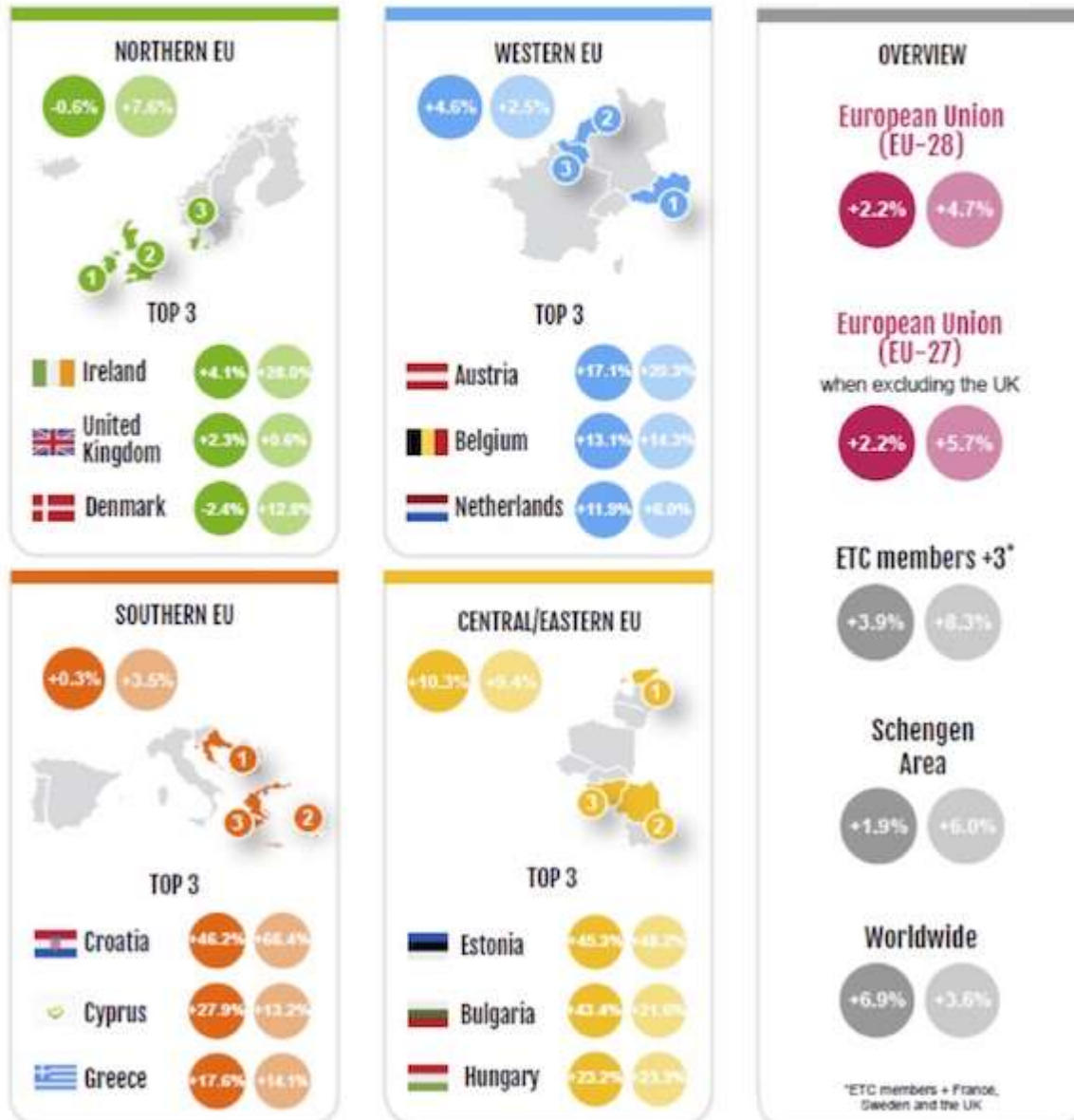
An analysis of future travel reveals that the outlook, in terms of Chinese bookings to the UK for the last four months of the year, is just 0.6% ahead of where it was last year. Consequently, if the UK were to be excluded from the figures, Chinese travel bookings to the EU would be 5.7% ahead rather than 4.7% ahead, which is the figure for the EU as a whole.

2018 EU-China Tourism Year

Chinese arrivals in the European Union



Top 3 most growing destinations by sub-region during May-Aug 2018
 History May-Aug 2018 & forward looking Sept-Dec 2018



Two important festivities for Chinese outbound travel this year are China's Mid-Autumn Festival and the National Day Golden Week (18 September to 8 October). Currently, Chinese bookings to the EU are 0.6% ahead of where they were for the equivalent period last year, which does not sound particularly exciting; however, considering that Chinese outbound bookings to other long-haul destinations are 3.6% behind, the EU seems to be performing relatively well.

Chinese bookings to EU destinations are pacing steadily for the coming Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day Golden Week

Mid-Autumn Festival



2018: 24 Sep
2017: 4 Oct

Golden Week



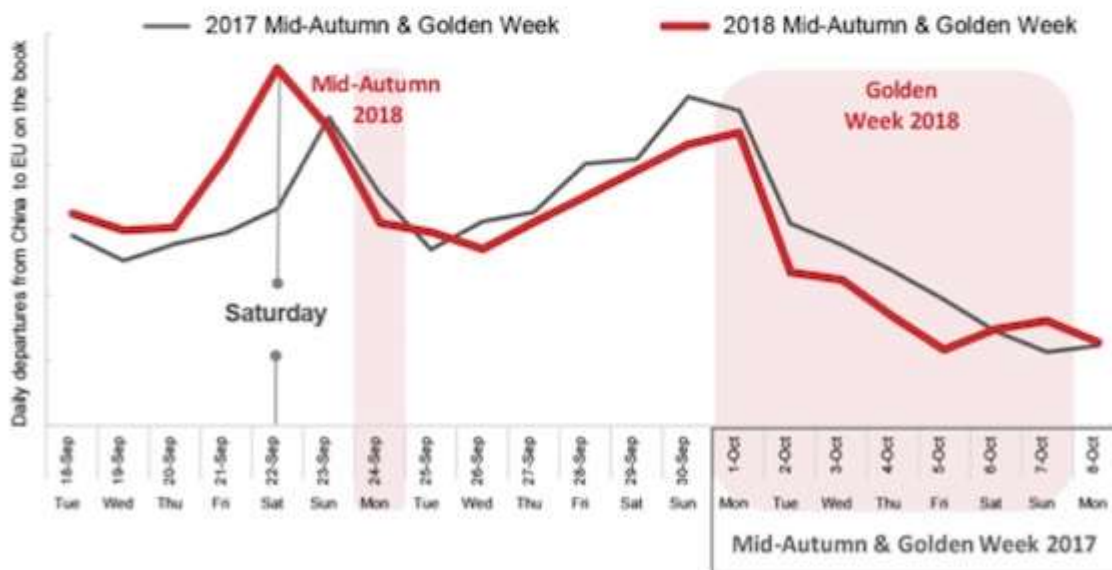
2018: 1 Oct to 7 Oct
2017: 1 Oct to 7 Oct

Monitored period 

2018: 18 Sep to 8 Oct
2017: 18 Sep to 8 Oct

Air bookings
+0.6%

Based on air bookings made by 31 Aug 2018



The best performing EU destinations during this period are set to be Sweden, 26.3% ahead, Austria, 13.1% ahead and the Netherlands, 8.7% ahead. The stand-out non-EU destinations during October Golden Week are Serbia, Turkey and Montenegro, where current bookings are ahead 174.9%, 86.5% and 49.1% respectively.

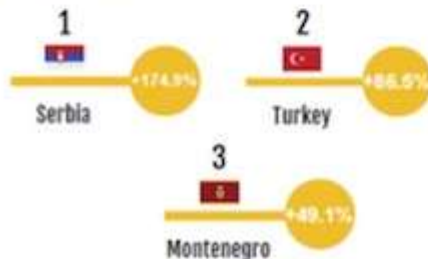
Forward looking October Golden Week ECTY2018

Top 5 best performing EU destinations

Countries that enjoy at least 4% of current Chinese bookings to EU destinations



Top 3 best performers among other European countries



 **Monitored period**
2018: 18 Sep to 8 Oct
2017: 18 Sep to 8 Oct

Eduardo Santander, Executive Director European Travel Commission said: "Whilst the numbers we are reporting for the May-August period are not quite as strong as the January-April period, the growth in Chinese travellers has been solid and the near future, judging by current bookings, will see the EU continuing to increase its share of the valuable long-haul Chinese traveller market."

Olivier Jager, CEO, ForwardKeys, commented: "One has to take one's hat off to the officials behind the EU-China Tourism Year because it is on course to achieve its parallel objectives of increasing the EU's share of the outbound Chinese market and of encouraging travel to less well-established destinations."

ENDS



Note to editors

About the European Travel Commission

The European Travel Commission (ETC) is the non-profit organisation responsible for the promotion of European tourism in long-haul markets. For 70 years, the ETC has been a state-of-the-art unique association in the public sector, and it is now representing 33 members National Tourism Organisations in Europe. In accordance with its mission to strengthen the sustainable development

of Europe as a tourist destination, ETC works in areas of advocacy, best practice, market intelligence sharing, and promotion, with the long-term aspiration of setting up a new unique forum in which public and private tourism stakeholders can cooperate to create benefits and eliminate disadvantages for the travel industry in Europe. For more information: www.etc-corporate.org and follow us on Twitter @ETC_Corporate and LinkedIn European Travel Commission

For more information, please contact European Travel Commission (ETC) info@visiteurope.com

About ForwardKeys

ForwardKeys analyses more than 17m flight booking transactions a day, drawing data from all the major global air reservation systems and selected airlines and tour operators. This information is enhanced with further independent data sets, including flight search and official government statistics, plus data science to paint a picture of who is travelling where and when. ForwardKeys' analytics are used by travel marketers, retailers, hotels, destination marketing organisations (DMOs), financial institutions, car rental companies, tour operators, online travel agents (OTAs) and other traveller-focussed businesses worldwide to monitor and anticipate traveller arrivals from a particular origin market at a specific time. This analysis enables parties to anticipate the impact of events, better manage their staffing levels, fine tune supply requirements, adjust and measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and anticipate future market trends.

For further information, please contact Sophie Luis, Sophie.Luis@Tarsh.comon +44 (0) 20 7112 8556 or David Tarsh, David@Tarsh.com on +44 (0) 20 7602 5262.