Travelling in Europe

2005
The European Union stretches from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean Sea and from the western borders of Ireland to the eastern borders of Latvia: a rich tapestry of landscapes from rocky coastlines to sandy beaches, from fertile pastureland to arid plains, from lakes and forests to arctic tundra.

The peoples of Europe with their diverse traditions, cultures and languages can trace their roots to ancient civilizations, empires and invasions. The people share Roman antiquities, Viking and Moorish architecture, medieval castles, baroque churches and the region's rich artistic and cultural traditions, winter and summer sports and varied cuisine.

Six of the 25 European Union countries were ranked in the world's top tourism destinations in 2003 and tourism continues to be an important source of income and jobs. Life has become much easier for the traveller in the EU with the removal of most passport and baggage formalities. Twelve EU countries share the same currency, the euro, which makes price comparisons easy and removes the cost and inconvenience of changing money. The creation of a single market of over 350 million people offers wider choice and lower prices.
Documents you will need

For EU citizens

Passport or identity card

There will be no change to passport controls at the borders between those that will be part of the EU. This is thanks to the so-called Schengen Agreement which is part of EU law. The Schengen rules have now been amended to ensure that there are no controls on the internal borders of the EU and that normal passport controls are again in place. The 26 Schengen countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. All Schengen countries now participate in the Schengen visa policy.

The EU countries that joined the EU in 2004 do not yet fully participate in Schengen. You will therefore need a valid passport or ID card to travel to those countries and to Ireland and the United Kingdom.

When entering or leaving the EU at the external borders you will need a valid passport or ID card. You may, of course, need your passport when leaving the EU in order to enter your destination.

It’s best to have your passport or ID card when travelling in the EU because you may be required to prove your identity. If public order or national security so require, checks at the internal borders may be carried out for limited periods.

Make sure that any children travelling with you either have their own passport or ID card or are registered on yours.

Agreements with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland enable their nationals to be treated in the same way as EU citizens and to travel with just an ID card or passport in the EU.

Visa

You will not need a visa for travelling within the EU.

For non-EU citizens

Passport

You will need a valid passport.

Visa

There are 35 countries where nationals do not need a visa to visit the EU for less than 90 days in any six-month period. These include most European countries, the United States, Canada, most Caribbean states and some states in central and South America. The Schengen member countries publish a list of visa-exempt nationalities. If in doubt, check with the nearest consulate of any EU country.

If your visa is from a country fully applying the Schengen rules, it automatically allows you to travel to the other Schengen countries. The Schengen visa policy also applies even if your visa is issued outside the Schengen area. It is therefore possible to travel to the Schengen countries if you have a visa issued outside the Schengen area.

If your visa is from a country partly applying the Schengen rules, it automatically allows you to travel to the other Schengen countries. The Schengen visa policy also applies even if your visa is issued outside the Schengen area. It is therefore possible to travel to the Schengen countries if you have a visa issued outside the Schengen area.

You should check with your national authorities about the visa requirements for each country you plan to visit.
Money

The euro

The euro is the legal tender for more than 300 million people in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. The symbol for the euro is €.

The euro is used also in Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City, as well as in the Azores, the Canaries, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Madeira, Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion, and Saint Pierre and Miquelon, all of which are part of EU countries using the euro.

The euro notes are identical in all countries but each country issues its own coins with one common side and one side displaying a distinctive national emblem. Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City also have their own euro coins. All the notes and coins can be used anywhere in the euro area.

Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom are not currently using the single currency. The 10 member states that joined the EU in 2004 are committed to adopting the euro but none will be ready to do so until at least 2007.

Exchange rates

Rates will vary but in January 2005 one euro buys approximately:

- 1 € = 0.58 Cyprus pound
- 1 € = 30 Czech koruna
- 1 € = 7.43 Danish krone
- 1 € = 16 Estonian kroon
- 1 € = 0.71 British pound sterling
- 1 € = 246 Hungarian forint
- 1 € = 3.45 Lithuanian litas
- 1 € = 0.69 Latvian lats
- 1 € = 0.43 Maltese lira
- 1 € = 4.07 Polish zloty
- 1 € = 9.01 Swedish krona
- 1 € = 39 Slovakian koruna
- 1 € = 240 Slovenian tolar
- 1 € = 1.36 US dollar

Some retail outlets in countries outside the euro area do accept payment in euro as well as the national currency, but they are not legally obliged to do so.
Postage stamps
Postage stamps can only be used in the country in which you buy them, even when priced in euros.

Cross-border payments
Thanks to EU rules, withdrawing euros from a cash machine, making a card payment or a bank transfer in euros (up to €12,500) now costs the same wherever you are in the EU.

© Zefa

EU-countries using the euro
EU-countries not using the euro
Shopping

Within the EU

There are no limits on what you can buy and take with you when you travel between EU countries, as long as it is for personal use and not for resale. Taxes (VAT and excise) are included in the price you pay and no further payment of tax can be due in any other EU country.

Tobacco and alcohol

To determine whether tobacco and alcohol are for personal use, each country can set guide levels. In other words, if you carry a larger quantity of these goods, you may be asked to prove that they are intended for personal use and to justify their purchase. The guide levels are as follows:

- 800 cigarettes
- 200 cigarillos
- 200 cigars
- 1 kg of tobacco
- 10 litres of spirits
- 20 litres of fortified wine (such as port or sherry)
- 90 litres of wine (of which, a maximum of 60 litres of sparkling wine)
- 110 litres of beer

For a limited period, some countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) are maintaining limits on cigarettes and, in some cases, on certain tobacco products brought back from eight of the countries that joined the EU in 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia).

Coming from outside

If you enter the EU from outside, you can bring with you goods free of VAT and excise duties for personal use within the limits set out below. The same applies if you come from the Canary Islands, the Channel Islands, Gibraltar or any other territory where EU rules on VAT and excise do not apply.

Tobacco products

- 200 cigarettes or
- 100 cigarillos or
- 50 cigars or
- 250 grams of tobacco

Alcoholic drinks

- 1 litre of spirits over 22% vol. or
- 2 litres of fortified wine or sparkling wine
- 2 litres of still wine

Perfume

- 50 grams
- 250 ml

Other goods

Up to a value of €175. However, the limit for travellers under 15 years old is €90 for EU countries, the Faroe Islands, Norway, and Iceland, and the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and the British Crown Dependencies. Within the limit of €175, Finland allows a maximum of 16 litres of beer per person.
Meat and milk products

There are no restrictions on carrying any of these products if you are travelling within the EU since they all have to respect strict common veterinary standards.

If you are arriving in the EU from outside, you cannot bring with you any meat, meat products, milk or milk products without official veterinary documentation. These rules were introduced to prevent the spread of serious animal diseases. You are, however, allowed to bring in powdered infant milk, infant food and foods required for medical reasons with certain provisos. In addition, travellers arriving from the Faeroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland may bring up to 5 kg of meat, meat products, milk or milk products. Imports of such products for personal consumption are also authorised from Andorra, Norway and San Marino.

Consumer protection

As a consumer, you are protected by some basic laws that apply no matter what EU country you are in:

• You can be assured of the highest safety standards when you buy food in the EU because of the strict food safety laws governing the production, processing, use of colourings and additives, and the selling of food.
• EU laws on food labelling ensure that you check what you are buying. Full details must be given for ingredients, as well as for any colourings, preservatives and other chemical additives. There are regulations about what products can be called 'organic' and labels must show if a food is genetically modified or contains GM ingredients.
• The unit price of products – the price per kilo or per litre – must be given by supermarkets so you can compare prices.
• There are EU laws prohibiting unfair contract terms and practices such as 'bait and switch'.
• Advertising that is not truthful or misleading is prohibited and EU law offers consumers protection when buying from mail order, internet or telesales companies.

Practical information and support in bringing complaints against traders in other EU countries can be found through the network of European consumer centres.

Look for the Flower

Look for the Flower, the EU eco-label, on everyday consumer goods from detergents to textiles to help you find greener products. For a full list of products carrying the Flower, visit www.eco-label.com. You’ll now also be able to use the Flower to find an environmentally friendly hotel, bed-and-breakfast or youth hostel. The Flower tells you that the accommodation has reduced its energy and water consumption and has a good overall environmental performance. The Flower is being extended to campsites.
Driving licence

A valid driving licence issued in an EU country is valid throughout the EU. However, some countries impose restrictions and may require that you hold a valid driving licence from at least one other country. In some countries, in addition to carrying a valid driving licence, you will need to have your vehicle registration document with you.

Minimum age limits for hiring a car are not fixed at EU level and generally vary between 20 and 23. There may also be maximum age limits and these can vary between 60 and 70.

Motor insurance

Wherever you are travelling in the EU, your car insurance policy will automatically provide, at no extra cost, the minimum cover (third party liability) required by law. This also applies to Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. If you have comprehensive insurance at home, check that the cover extends to travelling in other countries. You may also want to consider vehicle breakdown insurance.

A green card is not necessary when travelling in the EU but it serves as internationally recognised proof of insurance and is easier to claim compensation if you have an accident. If you do not have a green card with you, you should carry your certificate of insurance with you.

Your insurer can give you a European accident statement form, a standardised document that makes it easier to claim compensation if you have an accident in another country.

EU rules were introduced in 2003 to make it easier for victims of road accidents outside their home country to get speedy compensation. Procedures are significantly simpler and faster. However, the rules apply only to accidents that happen in the EU but also to accident victims who are injured outside the EU but which occur within the green card system.

Driving safely

In all EU countries, it is compulsory to wear seatbelts in both the front and back of the car.

Remember to drive on the left side of the road in Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom and remember that in some countries, such as Belgium, France and the Netherlands, you normally have to give way to traffic coming from your right.

The speed limit on motorways is generally 110, 120 or 130 km/h and the limit in built-up areas is 50 or 60 km/h. Keep an eye on the signs to make sure of the exact limits and any special conditions that apply.

Using a mobile phone while driving increases the risk of a fatal accident five times over. It is either explicitly or implicitly forbidden in all EU countries. In some countries, the use of hands-free devices is tolerated.
The maximum permitted blood alcohol level varies between 0.2 mg/ml and 0.9 mg/ml in the majority of countries. Some countries, however, do not allow any alcohol in the blood while driving.

Tolls
Tolls are toll roads in many countries including Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Tolls may be charged per kilometer, per car, per mile, by the number of occupants, or by the number of cigarettes. Toll information is available on the websites of these countries. These can be brought or all major tourist websites into Austria and an online payment solution. The system is different in each country, but there is a similar option of a sticker affixed to the windshield.

Flying
Creating a single European market in air transport has meant lower fares and a better choice of carriers and services for passengers. EU rules also enforced passenger rights with a new regulation, effective January 2005.

Air passenger rights
Air passenger rights are protected by EU Regulations 261/2004 and 261/2005, which guarantee a range of rights for passengers on flights within the EU and flights departing from an EU airport to destinations outside the EU. The rights include information about flight status, compensation for delays, denied boarding, baggage allowance, overbooking, and other issues.

If you have a complaint or a grievance, contact the airline or organizer of the package holiday, or your national air transport reinforcement body or consumer protection organisation. You can also email the European Commission for information at transportrights@ec.europa.eu.

Similarly, national laws and regulations of landing countries concerning the prohibition and control of prohibited items are enforced by airport security by checking that you do not have any prohibited articles with you on the plane or in your luggage. A full list of items that are not allowed on the cabin is available at the airport. National authorities have to provide the information to passengers before boarding, as a full list of allowed and prohibited items is available on the websites of the airports or the relevant authorities.
Staying healthy

Access to healthcare
If you are an EU national and you are suddenly taken ill or have an accident during a visit to any EU country, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, you can get free or reduced-cost healthcare. Since June 2004, a European Health Insurance Card has been introduced to facilitate access to healthcare in the EU and to speed up the reimbursement of costs. It is replacing the E111 form, which remains valid during the changeover period.

Fourteen countries are already distributing the card and the rest should do so by the end of 2005. Some countries are incorporating the elements of the European card into their national cards and others are issuing separate cards. Ask at your local social security or sickness insurance office to get your card.

Only publicly funded health treatment is included in this scheme for the moment and each country has its own rules for public medical provision. In some countries treatment is free, in some you pay part of the costs, in some you have to pay the full cost and then claim a refund. So keep all your bills, prescriptions and receipts.

Medicines
Take your prescription with you if you are carrying prescribed medicines. Do not exceed the quantities needed for your personal use during your trip.

Travel insurance
It is advisable to take out travel insurance as few EU countries pay the full cost of medical treatment. Some or all medical treatment may be covered by your National Health Service.

Immunisation
There are in general no immunisation requirements when travelling in the EU. However, immunisation against yellow fever is required for travellers entering in Malta from certain areas. For information on the requirements in all the EU's overseas territories, check with your doctor before you go.

Bathing water
Strict standards are set for bathing water throughout the EU. To be safe, wait until the water is visibly clear and use a towel to dry yourself after swimming. Do not swallow the water.
If things go wrong

Emergency number 112
To reach the emergency services in any EU country, dial 112.

Loss or theft
Report any theft to the local police. You will need to enclose the police report when making your insurance or compensation claim. Cancel any unused or stolen credit cards immediately. If your passport has been lost or stolen, contact your country's consulate or embassy as soon as possible.

Advice on your rights
For free advice, which could be a lawyer and an elevator rights actuator, phone the 0800 6 7 8 9 10 11 service in the EU, or 1900 6 7 8 9 10 11 from anywhere in the UK. You may also email the service via europeu.int/europedirect

Cultural activities
The EU supports and contributes to many cultural projects and events taking place across Europe every year. One of these is the designation of a cultural capital of Europe. Cork in Ireland has been chosen as the European Capital of Culture for 2005. The city is celebrating with music, theatre, dance, film, craft, fashion, design, literature, visual arts, architecture, food and sport. Further details at www.cork2005.ie

Europe's calendar is crowded with festivals and special events in music, arts, theatre, dance and film. Direct links and local sources for details of when you are travelling.
Choosing a time to travel

Weather

Europe's weather is generally temperate. This table shows average minimum January temperatures and average maximum July temperatures in the capitals of the EU countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Average min. January</th>
<th>Average max. July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brussels</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallinn</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallinn</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warsaw</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljubljana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warsaw</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check the press for weather forecasts or contact national tourist offices for more detailed weather information.
Time zones

Summer time

Daylight saving time begins across the EU on 27 March 2005 when clocks are moved forward an hour and it ends on 30 October 2005 when clocks are put back an hour.

Pets

A new pet passport was introduced in 2004 making it easier to travel with pets. All cats and dogs will need one, and it will be accepted across the EU as proof that a pet has received the anti-rabies vaccination. However, pets entering Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom will require a blood test to confirm that the vaccination has been effective. The necessary tests must be carried out by an approved veterinarian six months prior to travel to Ireland, Malta and the UK and 120 days beforehand in the case of Sweden.

An electronic microchip will be introduced over the next eight years to allow easy identification of the animal. In the meantime a tattoo can be used as identification except in Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom where a microchip is already required. It can also contain other details of the animal's medical history.
Communicating

Languages

Europe is rich in languages with about 225 spoken indigenous languages. The major language families in the EU are Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Baltic and Celtic. The EU institutions have 20 official languages.

Many Europeans speak at least one other language as well as their mother tongue but during your travels in Europe, try using a few phrases of the local language when talking to local people. It will add colour to your experiences. Start with a good morning!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>Dobre rano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Goedemorgen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian</td>
<td>Tere hommikust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Hyvää huomenta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Bonjour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>Guten Morgen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Kalimera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>Jo reggelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Buon giorno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvian</td>
<td>Labrī</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuanian</td>
<td>Labas Rytas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltese</td>
<td>L-Ghodwa t-Tajba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Dzien dobry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Bom dia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak</td>
<td>Dobré ráno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Buenos días</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>God morgon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The internet

While on the move, you can check your e-mail, send and receive messages or surf the internet at the now ubiquitous internet cafes. If you travel with your PC, you can access the internet from the many hotels with internet plug sockets in the rooms. If you are offered dial-up access, make sure the number you dial is a local one. Dialling a server in another country will make costs soar.

Another alternative is to use the so-called Wi-Fi wireless networks which now exist at airports, railway stations and other locations. Wi-Fi zones (hotspots) are usually clearly indicated. But your PC will need to be fitted with a special wireless network card.
Electricity

All of Europe has 230-volt, 50-cycle alternating current. Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom have square three-pin plugs but, in general, all other EU countries have two-pin plugs. These may vary but you should be able to use your appliances, such as hairdryers and shavers, anywhere. Adaptors can usually be bought in airports and tourist resorts.

Mobile phones

You can use your mobile phone anywhere in Europe and in many other parts of the world thanks to the EU's GSM technical standard. Before travelling, however, contact your network provider to make sure that your phone is enabled for international roaming. Coverage will vary and the costs will depend on your provider. Don't forget that there can be charges for receiving calls abroad both for you and the caller.

Telephone

There is just one prefix for making international telephone calls anywhere in the EU. It is 00.

The country codes are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>352</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>353</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>370</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<tr>
<td>371</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
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<td>356</td>
<td>Malta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>386</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other information on the European Union

Information in all the official languages of the European Union is available on the European Union’s internet. Access to this information is provided free of charge. You can access it through the Europa server:

europa.eu.int

All over Europe there are hundreds of local EU information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at this website:

europa.eu.int/comm/relays/index_en.htm

EUROPE DIRECT is a service which answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service by freephone:

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(or by payphone from outside the EU: +32-2-299 96 96), or by electronic mail via europa.eu.int/europedirect

You can also obtain information and booklets in English about the European Union from:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

REPRESENTATIONS

Representation in Ireland
18 Dawson Street, Dublin 2
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Fax (353-1) 634 11 12
Internet:  www.euireland.ie

E-mail: eu-ie-info-request@cec.eu.int

Representation in the United Kingdom
Jean Monnet House
8 Storey’s Gate, London SW1P 3AT
Tel. (44-20) 79 73 19 92
Fax (44-20) 79 73 19 00/10
Internet: www.cec.org.uk

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Internet: www.cec.org.uk

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Fax  (44-131) 557 49 77
Internet: www.europarl.org.uk

E-mail: epedinburgh@europarl.eu.int
Tourist information

For further information on any EU country you are thinking of visiting, here are the websites of their official national tourist organisations:

Austria
www.austria.info

Belgium
www.visitflanders.com
www.opt.be

Cyprus
www.visitcyprus.org.cy

Czech Republic
www.czechtourism.com

Germany
www.germany-tourism.de

Denmark
www.visitdenmark.com

Spain
www.spain.info

Estonia
www.visitestonia.com

France
www.franceguide.com

Finland
www.visitfinland.com

United Kingdom
www.visitbritain.com

Greece
www.gnto.gr

Hungary
www.hungarytourism.hu

Italy
www.enit.it

The abbreviations for countries are those used on nationality plates on cars.

Ireland
www.ireland.ie

Luxembourg
www.tourisme.lu

Lithuania
www.travel.lt

Latvia
www.latviatourism.lv

Malta
www.visitmalta.com

Netherlands
www.holland.com

Portugal
www.portugalinsite.com

Sweden
www.visitsweden.com

Slovenia
www.slovenia-tourism.si

The abbreviations for countries are those used on nationality plates on cars.
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For more information, helpful tips and a map of Europe, see inside.

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