



## Press Release

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### Families skimp on holidays

#### Current results of the GfK Tourism Distribution Panel for the 2009 summer season

**Nuremberg, March 09, 2009 – Travel bookings taken by German travel agencies for the coming summer are on the decline. Families, in particular, are being cautious.**

In January 2009, sales in high street travel agencies dropped by 9% compared with the prior month. Business declined particularly sharply in the first two weeks of January. This year's summer season, which will begin in May, is bearing the brunt of the bookings downturn, with sales currently down 5% on their level at the same time last year. Only the autumn vacation period is seeing better levels of bookings.

Conversely, the current winter season, which ends in April 2009, is recording a 6.7% growth in sales, and is therefore performing considerably better than last year's season. The high number of early bookings made between June and August 2008 have ensured that sales for the 2008/2009 tourism year are still up by 1%.

#### And the winner of the 2009 summer season is: Turkey

Turkey is attracting an increasing number of German vacationers and a growing share of the German market, and with a 13% increase in sales by the end of January 2009, out of the top 15 destinations of choice, it is the vacation destination with the strongest growth for the coming summer season. With the exception of Italy (+5%), other holiday destinations in southern Europe can expect to welcome fewer German tourists this summer, according to the current bookings situation. The region is registering a decline of 3% overall. However, it has still suffered lower losses than the market as a whole.

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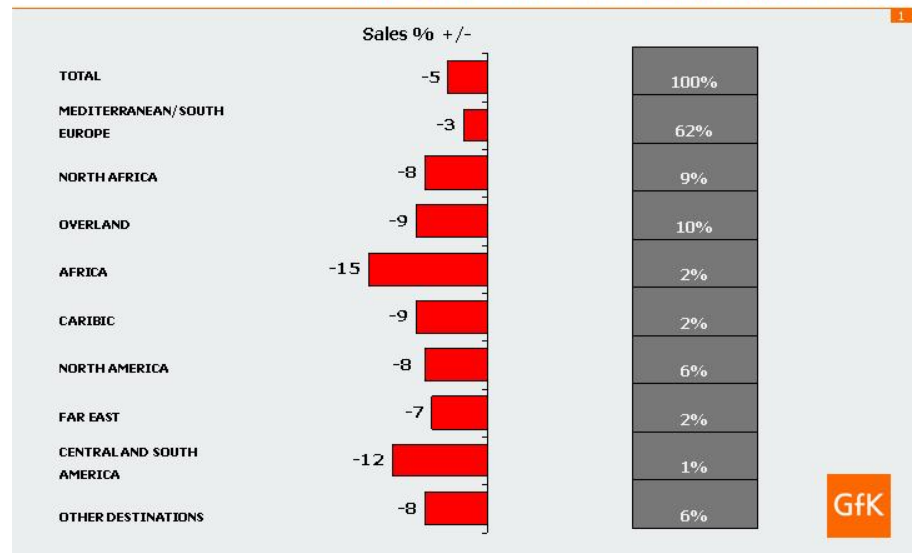
Commercial register  
Nuremberg HRB 25014

Booked:

Sep08-Jan09 vs. Previous year

GfK Tourism Distribution Panel

Development of the summer holiday destinations 2009



The fact that more Germans are spending their summer holidays in their own country or neighbouring countries as a result of the economic crisis is of course not evident from the travel agency booking figures. As a holiday destination, Germany is actually continuing to see good growth, with a sales increase of 2%, but at minus 8%, Austria is significantly below the prior year's level. Travel agency bookings for vacation destinations in northern and Eastern Europe that can be easily reached without flying, (i.e. overland) were also 9% down. In contrast, long haul destinations are performing neither better nor significantly worse, with a few exceptions (Africa, Central America and South America). Long hauls are also enjoying by far the highest growth in travel agency bookings, with Vietnam, the Cape Verde Islands, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Japan und Tanzania currently the destinations of choice.

### Families' bookings down, high price segment remains stable

Families, in particular, are being cautious in their vacation planning, and have been booking considerably fewer vacations since the autumn. In contrast, the travel and booking behavior of single travellers and couples is quite stable, despite the negative economic outlook. Although these groups also booked significantly fewer holidays in January, looking at the period after September shows that bookings have remained on an equal level to the prior year.

There are also marked differences in the breakdown of summer bookings by length of stay and price bracket. Expensive vacations costing more than EUR 1,500 are selling just as well as in the prior year. Single travellers (36%) and couples (29%) are particularly well represented in this segment.

It is the lower price brackets that are primarily seeing a decline. People with less money at their disposal are likely to skimp on their summer vacation this year. The fact that holidays in the below EUR 750 price category have declined so steeply could also suggest that people are forgoing second holidays – for example over the Whitsun bank holiday. A decline in bookings for vacations of between seven and ten nights further supports this theory.

The two-week summer holiday also remains standard this year. Short trips of up to three nights, vacations lasting less than a week and longer vacations of more than 20 nights are recording positive development. Single travellers are the biggest group booking longer holidays, followed by couples. Families are tending to book somewhat shorter vacations this summer.





### **The GfK Tourism Distribution Panel**

Analysis is based on the booking data from approx. 1,200 travel agencies, which are representative of the high street travel market in Germany. An average of 340,000 booking records from this continuous sampling enter the GfK system every month, and are used to make projections for the market as a whole with as much accuracy as possible. The analysis produced by the GfK Tourism Distribution Panel makes it possible to draw reliable conclusions about the booking behavior of German vacationers.

Statements on the current winter season and forthcoming summer season based on booking data as at end of January 2009 represent a snapshot overview only.

### **The GfK Group**

The GfK Group is the No. 4 market research organization worldwide. Its activities cover the three business sectors of Custom Research, Retail and Media. The Group has 115 companies operating in more than 100 countries. Of a total of approximately 10,000 employees (as at September 30, 2008), more than 80% are based outside Germany. For further information, visit our website: [www.gfk.com](http://www.gfk.com)

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