

QUICK FACTS AND INSIGHTS POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC AND HUNGARY

Economic environment

	Poland	Czech Republic	Hungary
Population	38m	10m	10m
Internet penetration (% of population):	28%	50%	34%
GDP 2006 (US\$ PPP)	543bn	211bn	182bn
GDP growth:	c.6%	c.5%	c.3%

Now established members of the EU, the Czech and Hungarian economies are expected to continue to grow at a similar rate, while the Polish economy is expected to slow slightly. Poland is the 23rd largest economy in the world and 6th in Europe. Internet usage is growing at a fast rate.

Source: Economist / ETC

Polish, Czech and Hungarian outbound travel trends

- Outbound travel has been increasing due to the greater freedom to travel offered by EU membership, growing personal affluence and many low-cost flight launches. However, only relatively small proportions of the population are able to travel abroad – mostly commonly the better-off and residents of the major urban areas.
- There has been a traditional holiday pattern of a big summer holiday, either taken at home or a nearby beach destination. However, travel behaviour is evolving quickly and people are taking different types of holidays and more short breaks. Touring holidays and city breaks are both growing in popularity.
- In keeping with their location in central Europe, the most popular destinations for outbound trips are other mainland countries such as Germany and Austria, while Croatia is popular as a beach destination. For the same reason, despite the growth in low cost flights from these countries, driving by car is the most common mode of transport. At the end of 2008, these countries will become part of the Schengen area of limited border control.
- The peak time for holidays is July and August, although the shoulder months of May, June and September are also popular. The average length of stay is around 10 nights.
- Travel agents still play an important role for both information and booking. However, as they become more experienced travellers (as well as knowledge gained from working abroad), Eastern Europeans are becoming increasingly independent.
- Budget and mid-price accommodation is most commonly used and information in their own language is preferred

Scotland's visitors

- The number of visitors to Scotland from these countries has been boosted by the many low-cost flight launches.
- London is often the destination for first-time visitors to the UK, while Scotland may be chosen as an additional destination on a long trip or for a second visit.
- Key attractions for Eastern European travellers are history, castles, whisky, nature and beautiful scenery, while the Scottish people are viewed as friendly and our culture authentic.
- There is a lack of detailed knowledge about what Scotland can offer for a holiday, so education of both travellers and travel trade is vital. Hurdles to visiting Scotland include perceptions of poor weather and expensiveness.

For more information on Scotland's Eastern European visitors, visit
www.visitscotland.org