

A stylized map of Europe is shown in the background of the main title area. The map is rendered in shades of blue, with the Mediterranean Rim countries highlighted in a lighter blue. The text "Visa Europe: Mediterranean Rim Tourism Monitor" is overlaid on the map.

# Visa Europe: Mediterranean Rim Tourism Monitor

**January to April 2011**

Foreign consumer spending across six Mediterranean Rim countries, with a spotlight on Greece

June 2011



# Foreign consumer spending increases 14.24% across six Mediterranean countries

Foreign consumer spending on Visa debit, credit and pre-paid cards across the six Mediterranean Rim countries for the period January to April 2011 totalled €7.5bn, a year-on-year increase of 14.24% in foreign consumer spending compared to €6.6bn during the same period in 2010\*.

**Table 1: Total foreign consumer spending across all six countries**

Total	€
2010 (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr)	6,620,356,141.92
2011 (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr)	7,563,308,591.30

Source: Visa Europe card data

Across the six countries, the top ten foreign spenders saw between a 6.61% and 50.65% increase in consumer spending, with Russian visitors accounting for the largest increase in year-on-year spending across all six countries.

The United Kingdom continues to top the table of the top ten spenders across all six countries, with UK visitors spending €1.3bn for the period January to April 2011, a year-on-year increase of 17.75% on the same period in 2010 when UK visitors spent €1.1bn.

**Table 2: The Top Ten Foreign Spenders Across All Six Mediterranean Rim Countries**

Country	2010 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	2011 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	Year on Year % rise
UK	1,113,020,582	1,310,561,900	17.75
France	783,311,653	871,821,281	11.30
USA	512,975,589	583,183,803	13.69
Germany	344,297,194	394,204,725	14.50
Russia	261,856,225	394,498,542	50.65
Switzerland	249,114,616	309,536,713	24.25
Spain	237,236,710	255,532,631	7.71
Belgium	229,875,329	251,728,915	9.51
Norway	220,729,244	264,204,844	19.70
Italy	188,661,918	200,291,597	6.16

Source: Visa Europe card data

Of the six countries, France received €2.4bn of foreign consumer spend during the January to April 2011 period, some ten times the amount spent in Greece over the same period (€245m). Turkey benefitted from the largest year-on-year increase in foreign consumer spending, rising from €336m in January - April 2010 to €444m over the same period in 2011 (32.23% increase).

**Table 3: Total Foreign Consumer spending in each of the six countries**

Country	2010 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	2011 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	Year on Year % rise
France	2,198,558,980	2,422,474,669	10.18
Spain	1,988,200,322	2,243,724,837	12.85
Italy	1,530,985,605	1,796,570,386	17.35
Portugal	351,609,584	410,392,388	16.72
Turkey	336,260,261	444,662,239	32.24
Greece	214,741,386	245,484,070	14.32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,620,356,141</b>	<b>7,563,308,591</b>	<b>14.24</b>

Source: Visa Europe card data

Foreign visitors to these six markets withdrew a total of €2.28bn in cash on their Visa debit, credit and pre-paid cards over the course of January to April 2011, a year-on-year increase of 12.12% from €2.04bn in 2010. Cards make it easier – and cheaper – for tourists to withdraw foreign currency whilst abroad. Whilst due to the nature of cash we are not able to see directly where it is spent, the amount of cash withdrawn is indicative of spending whilst abroad.

Foreign visitors helped drive retail demand in the six Mediterranean Rim countries, totalling a 19.39% increase in year-on-year retail spending, rising from €1.87bn in January to April 2010 to €2.24bn in January to April 2011. Airlines saw the lowest foreign consumer spending over the same period, with spend dropping by -1.22% while the continuing rise in oil may account for the 18.25% increase in spending on petrol over the 2011 period compared to the year before.

\*This growth is in part due to an increasing number of Visa cards in circulation alongside a trend for cardholders to use cards versus cash.

**Table 4: Where Foreign Consumers Spent Their Money Across The Six Countries**

Category	2010 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	2011 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	Year on Year % rise
Cash	2,034,393,800	2,280,892,036	12.12
Retail	1,873,267,029	2,236,440,374	19.39
Hotels	994,146,673	1,137,576,358	14.43
Entertainment	600,785,349	683,499,911	13.77
Supermarket	232,267,085	268,725,621	15.7
Travel	214,072,582	222,711,814	4.04
Miscellaneous	185,868,599	199,391,238	7.28
Petrol	145,757,257	172,363,163	18.25
Car Hire	113,462,380	116,166,418	2.38
Airline	102,976,520	101,716,305	-1.22
Health	47,316,157	53,395,143	12.85
Motoring	44,106,539	49,338,591	11.86
Food & Drink	32,151,740	36,739,521	14.27
Insurance	2,341,848	2,450,136	4.62
Utilities	1,074,912	1,902,669	77.01

Source: Visa Europe card data

### Visitors from emerging economies

Visitor spending from the BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China – held firm over the course of the January to April period year-on-year. Foreign spending by Russian visitors accounted for 5% of overall foreign spend across the six countries, appearing six times in the top 20 spenders. Spending by Indian visitors remains extremely low across the six, never appearing in the top 20 spenders and accounting for less than 1% of overall foreign consumer spending.

**Table 5: BRIC Countries As They Feature In The Top Twenty Foreign Spenders Across The Six Countries**

BRIC countries	2010 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)		2011 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	
	Number of times in top 20	As % of overall spend	Number of times in top 20	As % of overall spend
Brazil	4	2.64	4	2.83
Russia	6	4.79	6	5.22
India	0	0.10	0	0.09
China	2	0.61	2	0.55

Source: Visa Europe card data

### Visitors from the Eurozone's struggling economies

Foreign visitors from struggling Eurozone economies – namely Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain – across the six countries saw a reduction in their percentage of overall spending, year-on-year, though all four retain their respective positions in the top 20 spenders across the markets. Spain recorded the biggest drop in its share of overall foreign spending over the January to April period, year-on-year.

**Table 6: PIGS Countries As They Feature In The Top Twenty Foreign Spenders Across The Six Mediterranean Rim Countries**

PIGS country	2010 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)		2011 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	
	Number of times in top 20	As % of overall spend	Number of times in top 20	As % of overall spend
Portugal	2	3.25	2	2.43
Ireland	2	1.09	2	0.96
Greece	1	1.04	1	0.65
Spain	5	4.52	5	3.38

Source: Visa Europe card data

## Foreign consumer spending in Greece

Total foreign consumer spending in Greece over the period January to April 2011 was €245m, compared to €214m the year before, signalling a 14.32% rise in foreign consumer spending. Visitors from Cyprus continued to account for the largest amount of foreign consumer spending in Greece, with a total spend of €70m from January to April 2011, a 14.66% increase on the year before. Visitors from the United Kingdom came in second, though their spend was half of Cypriot spend in 2011 for the January to April period.

Russian visitors dramatically increased their consumer spending in Greece by a staggering 80.84% (year-on-year), rising from €4.3m to €7.9m. Russian consumer spending in 2011 (January to April) outstripped spending by Italy, Norway, Sweden and Australia.

**Table 9: The Top Ten Foreign Spenders In Greece**

Country	2010 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	2011 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	Year on Year % rise
Cyprus	61,101,014	70,063,648	14.66
UK	32,869,942	35,454,065	7.86
USA	25,210,556	26,121,513	3.61
France	19,060,026	21,351,612	12.02
Sweden	7,159,476	7,802,168	8.97
Germany	6,751,815	8,255,884	22.27
Norway	4,415,471	5,161,880	16.90
Australia	4,414,910	5,735,509	29.91
Italy	4,394,825	4,725,711	7.52
Russia	4,366,684	7,896,915	80.84

Source: Visa Europe card data

Year-on-year consumer spending on hotels grew by 22.71% in Greece over the January to April period, rising from €21m in 2010 to €26m in 2011. Airlines, Supermarkets and Petrol witnessed impressive year-on-year growth in foreign consumer spending with 49.32%, 20.86% and 27.95% increases respectively.

Cash withdrawals using a Visa debit, credit or pre-paid card topped €143m during January to April 2011, an 18.03% increase year-on-year from €121m. Cards make it easier – and cheaper – for tourists to withdraw foreign currency whilst abroad. Whilst due to the nature of cash we are not able to see directly where it is spent, the

amount of cash withdrawn is indicative of spending whilst abroad.

**Table 10: Where Foreign Consumers Spent Their Money In Greece**

Category	2010 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	2011 (Jan, Feb, March, Apr)	Year on Year % rise
Cash	121,948,988	143,941,778	18.03
Retail	35,179,162	37,410,932	6.34
Hotels	21,895,057	26,866,390	22.71
Travel	11,062,386	9,882,549	-10.67
Entertainment	6,011,382	6,258,927	4.12
Miscellaneous	4,424,749	3,701,337	-16.35
Airline	4,113,153	6,141,720	49.32
Supermarket	3,632,636	4,390,531	20.86
Car Hire	2,285,546	2,367,303	3.58
Health	1,687,974	1,569,656	-7.00
Petrol	1,440,166	1,842,716	27.95
Motoring	588,637	578,680	-1.69
Food & Drink	326,569	359,906	10.20
Insurance	115,289	100,589	-12.75
Utilities	30,450	71,765	135.68

Source: Visa Europe card data

## Methodology

The figures in this monitor are based on all Visa debit, credit and pre-paid card cross-border consumer transactions in the six countries. These data are then amalgamated to determine a cumulative figure for the four month period (across the six countries and individually). These are then compared to the previous year's spending in order to deliver a year on year indicator in the change on consumer spending.

These data are not adjusted and just use raw transaction data only.

## Spending Categories

The Monitor covers spending in the following categories:

- Cash – cash withdrawn on a Visa card from an ATM
- Hotels
- Retail – clothing, catalogue shopping, department stores, and DIY household sales
- Entertainment
- Supermarket
- Travel
- Petrol
- Car Hire
- Airlines
- Health
- Motoring
- Food & Drink
- Insurance
- Utilities
- Miscellaneous – including professional services, taxes etc

## Background to the Monitor

The Mediterranean Rim Tourism Monitor provides an indicator of foreign consumer spending in six Mediterranean countries – France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey based on the cross-border transactions that are processed by Visa Europe. The Monitor quantifies foreign consumer spending, as indicated by Visa Europe data, for three periods throughout the year – January to April, May to August, and September to December. It offers year on year insight into foreign consumer spending, both at a macro and spending category level across the six countries.

The Monitor provides details of total foreign consumer spending across the six markets, whilst also looking at each market individually in more detail.

## Visa Europe

In Europe, there are 430 million Visa debit, credit and commercial cards. In the 12 months ending March 2011 those cards were used to make purchases and cash withdrawals to the value of €1.6 trillion. 12.5% of consumer spending at point of sale in Europe is with a Visa card, and more than 70% of that is on Visa debit cards.

Visa Europe is owned and operated by more than 4,000 European member banks and was incorporated in July 2004. In October 2007, Visa Europe became independent of the new global Visa Inc., with an exclusive, irrevocable and perpetual licence in Europe. As a dedicated European payment system it is able to respond quickly to the specific market needs of European banks and their customers - cardholders and retailers - and to meet the European Commission's objective to create a true internal market for payments.

Visa enjoys unsurpassed acceptance around the world. In addition, Visa/PLUS is one of the world's largest global ATM networks, offering cash access in local currency in over 200 countries.

For more information, visit [www.visaeurope.com](http://www.visaeurope.com)