



updated
Version
2025

Focus on Travel Trends 2025

**Comparative Short Study on Media Coverage
and Travel Behavior**

Introduction

“Tourism reporting reflects societal debates – from sustainability to overtourism. With over 20 years of analytical experience and AI-powered technology, we identify relevant patterns early and make trends strategically usable.”



Axel Oepkemeier
Media Analyst at pressrelations

Tourism in a field of tension – wanderlust, media attention, and the lack of sustainable perspectives

The desire to travel is back – but where are people really going, and how strongly does media coverage influence their travel decisions?

The study **Focus Travel Trends 2025** addresses this very intersection and examines how **actual travel behavior** and **media attention** relate to each other – where they align, diverge, or emphasize one-sided focal points.

Methodologically, the present study focuses on five reporting countries (DE, CH, AT, GB, and US), twelve popular travel destinations, and ten travel topics.

Moreover, all these considerations focus exclusively on **outbound travel**; domestic tourism is therefore excluded.

For the measurement of media coverage, pressrelations analyzed a total of **30,194 articles** published throughout **2024** across the various destinations.

The analysis examined how coverage evolved over the course of 2024 and compared it to previous years. Particular attention was paid to **which destinations** were covered, to what extent, and on **which topics**.

Introduction

“Tourism is changing rapidly, whether due to societal values, crises, or technological developments. With the World Travel Monitor®, we provide reliable data to make this transformation tangible and to respond strategically.”



Dennis Pyka
CEO at IPK

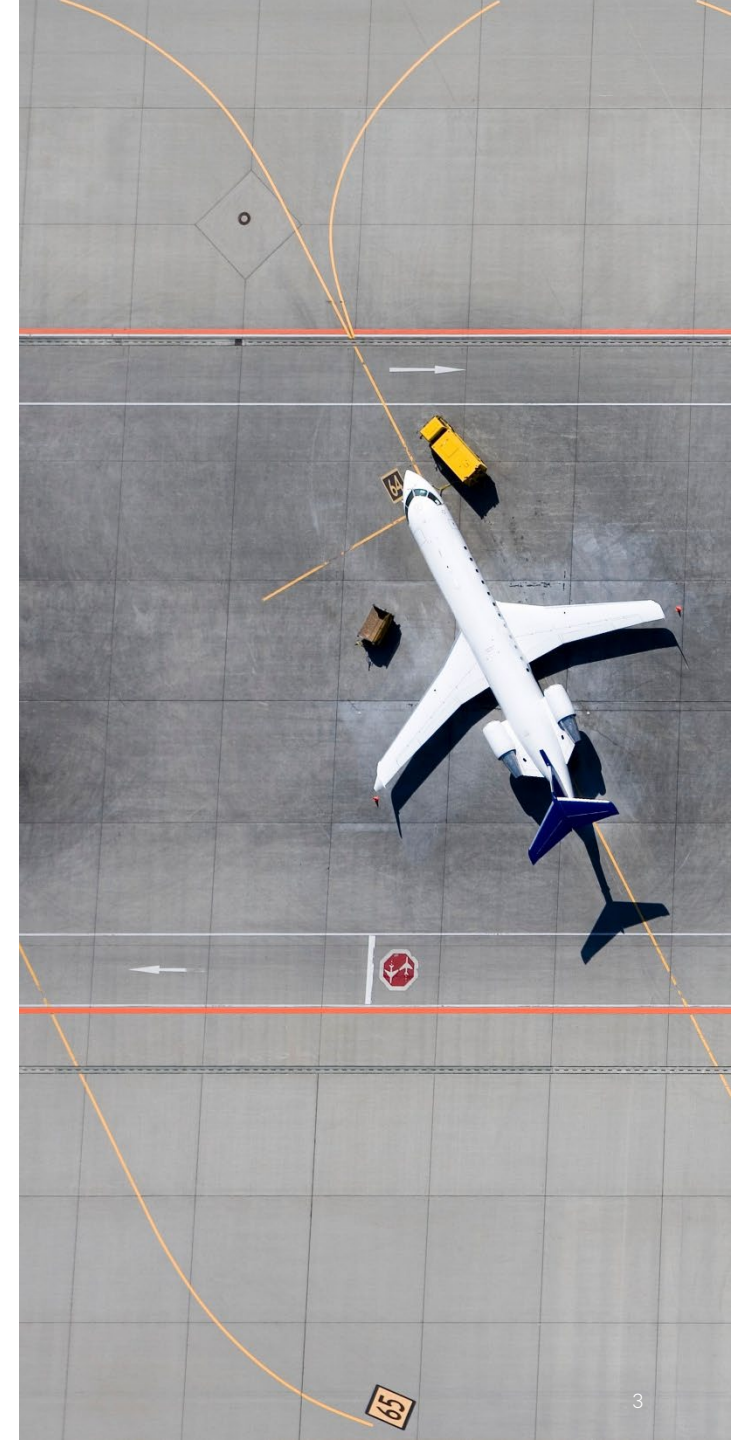
For the **measurement of travel flows** and volumes, the **World Travel Monitor®** by IPK, the world's largest travel study, was used. Each year, around **500,000 contact interviews** are conducted worldwide on outbound travel behavior in more than **50 source markets**.

A direct comparison reveals both similarities and surprising differences between these two dimensions of analysis. All the more reason to take a closer look at the relevant findings.

Over the past years, the study has established itself as a **recognized reference** for many **travel journalists, tourism professionals** and **communications managers**, providing exclusive insights.

We hope you enjoy reading it.

pressrelations & IPK



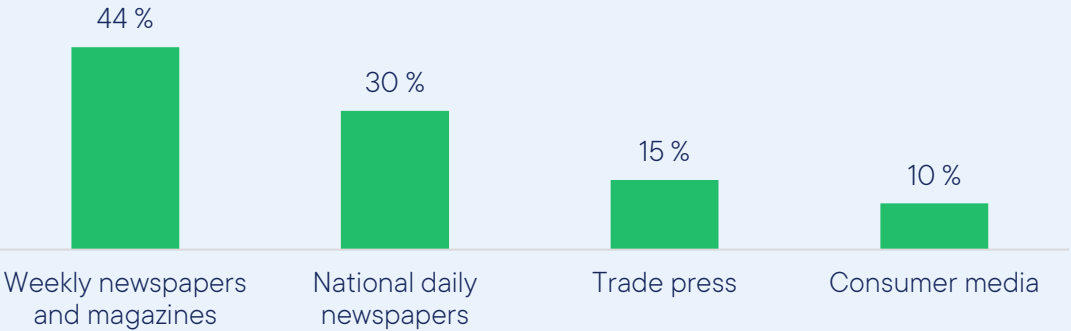
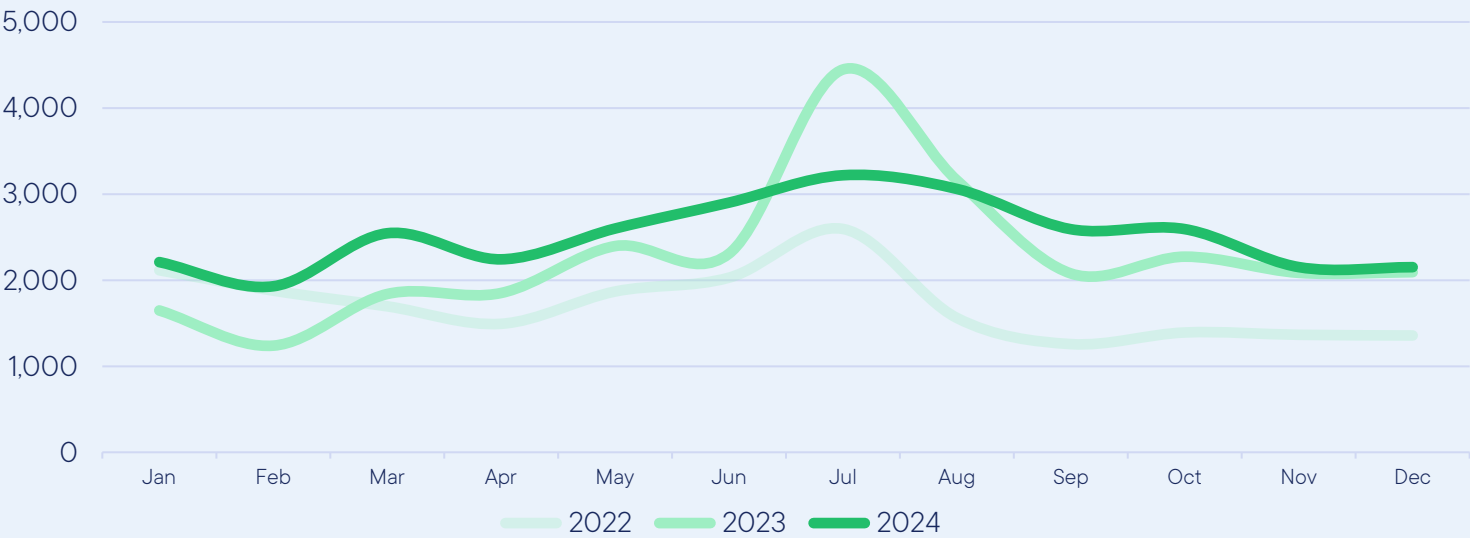
With a total of **30,194 articles**, 2024 saw more coverage of outbound travel than ever before – **an increase of +10 % compared to the previous year**.

The **peak of coverage occurred in July**, right in the middle of the main travel season. Throughout the year, **the media level remained remarkably stable**. Weekly newspapers and magazines covered the topic most frequently (44 %), followed by national daily newspapers (30 %), trade press (15 %), and consumer media (10 %).

A **comparison with 2022 and 2023** shows that **interest in travel topics has not only recovered** – it has established itself **permanently at a higher level**.

Outbound travel: media presence over the course of 2024

Peak of coverage in July – the level remained consistently high



= 30,194 articles
(+10 % compared to the previous year)

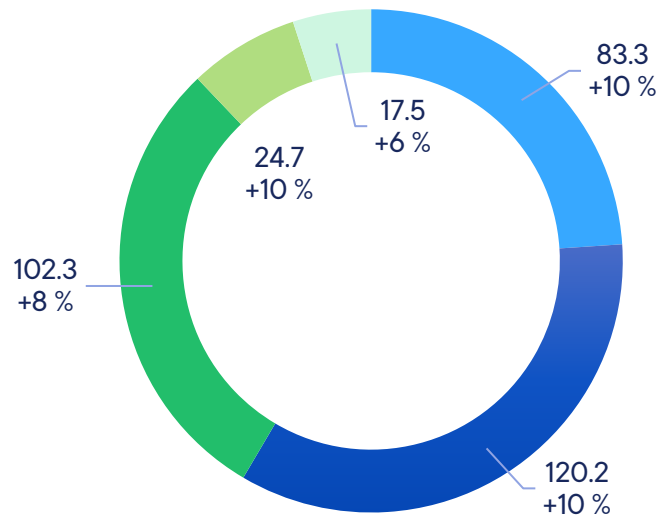
Part 1

How many **outbound trips** took place in the surveyed source markets and into the selected destinations in 2024?

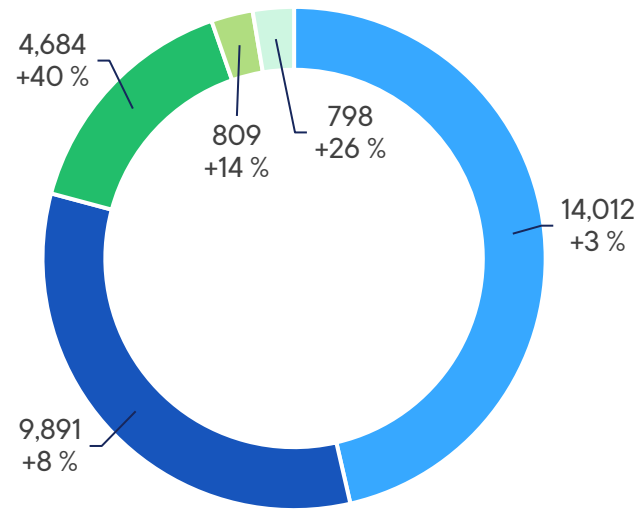


Travel behavior vs. Media coverage

United Kindom USA Germany Switzerland Austria



Number of outbound trips
in millions



Number of relevant articles

In 2024, **outbound travel increased once again** – people from the USA traveled abroad most frequently (120.2 million), followed by Germany (102.3 million) and the UK (83.3 million). Travelers from Switzerland and Austria also contributed to moderate growth.

However, when comparing the total **relevant media coverage** to actual travel volumes, it becomes clear that media reporting on some of these countries increased particularly sharply – for example, coverage of **Germany rose by +40 %** and of **Austria by +26 %**.

This illustrates that **media interest** and **travel behavior** do not always develop in parallel but are often shaped by **other factors** such as politics, culture, or societal issues.

42 mio. Trips

In 2024, travel volume to Spain was the highest.

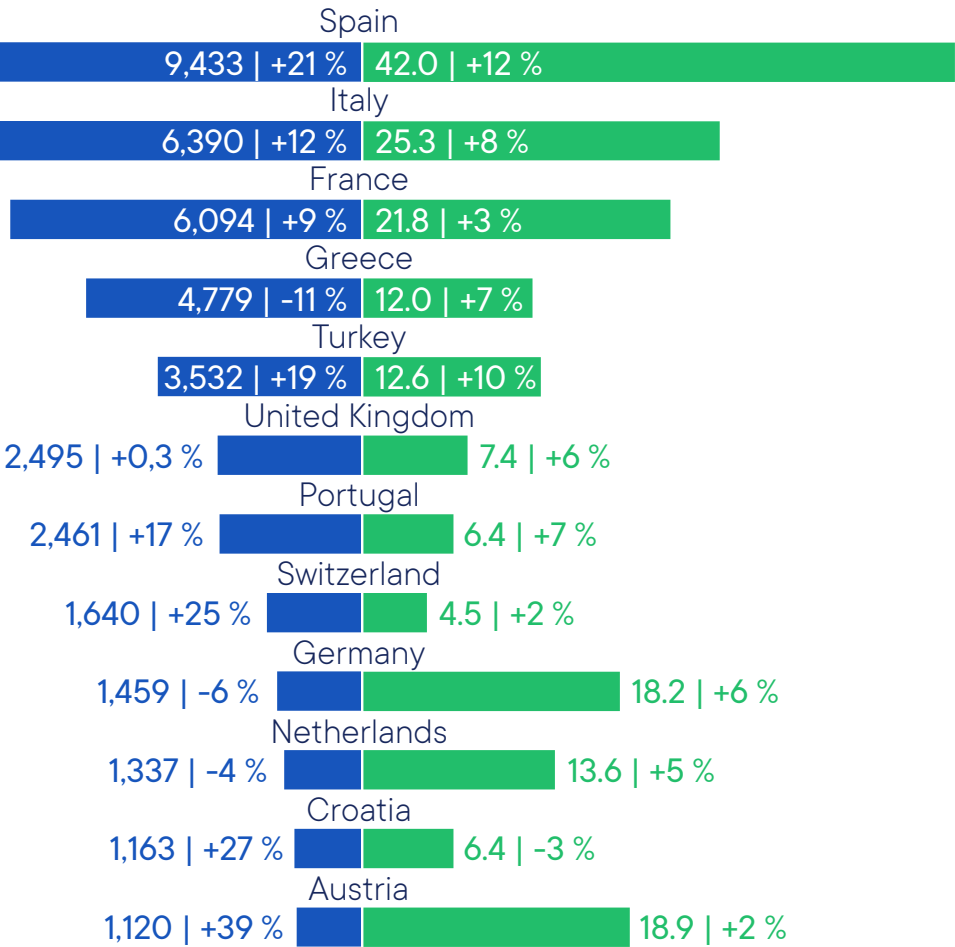
In 2024, Spain, Italy, and France rank among the top three destinations both in **media presence** and in **travel volume**.

Austria recorded the largest increase in media coverage compared to the previous year, **with +39 %**, while travel volume rose only slightly by +2 %. A key driver of this **increased media presence** was **December**, when there was a surge in reporting on ski resorts in Austria, France, and Switzerland – often in comparison to **cheaper alternatives in Italy**.

Croatia is also one of the biggest media winners, with a **+27 %** increase in coverage, but **despite this high presence, it saw a decline in travel volume (-3 %)**.

Spain continues to lead the destination ranking – both in media coverage and in actual travel behavior

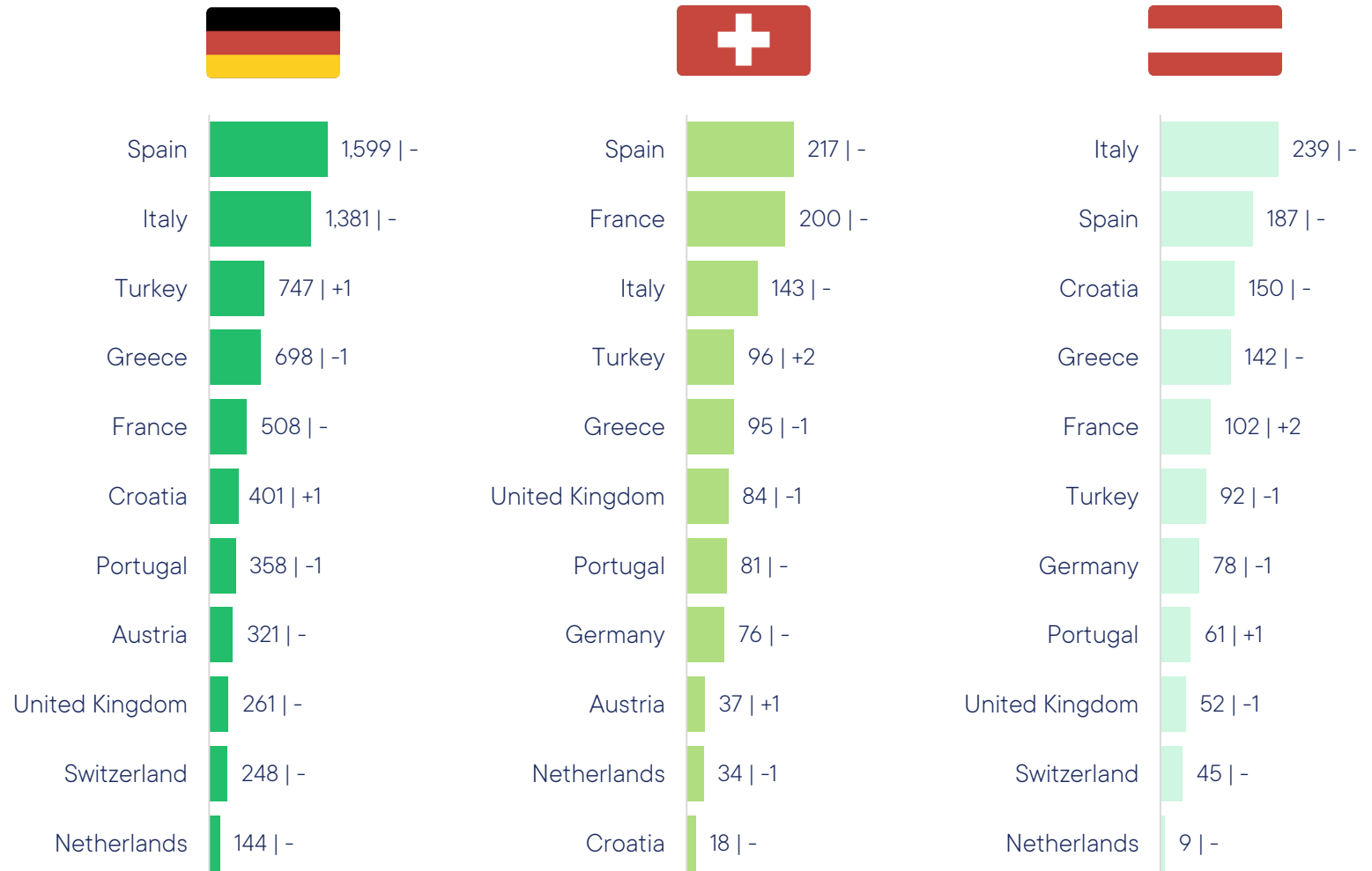
Number of relevant articles* and number of outbound trips in millions.



Destination Countries: Ranking by Reporting Countries (DACH)

The ranking shows the most media-present travel destinations in the DACH region.

Notable findings: **Spain** ranks first in both **Germany** and **Switzerland**, while **Italy** tops the list in **Austria**. **Croatia** is particularly prominent in **Austria** but is hardly relevant in **Switzerland**.



* Note: No internal analysis / no disclosure of the number of articles mentioning the destination country, nor any indication of changes in the ranking (compared to the ranking positions of the previous year).

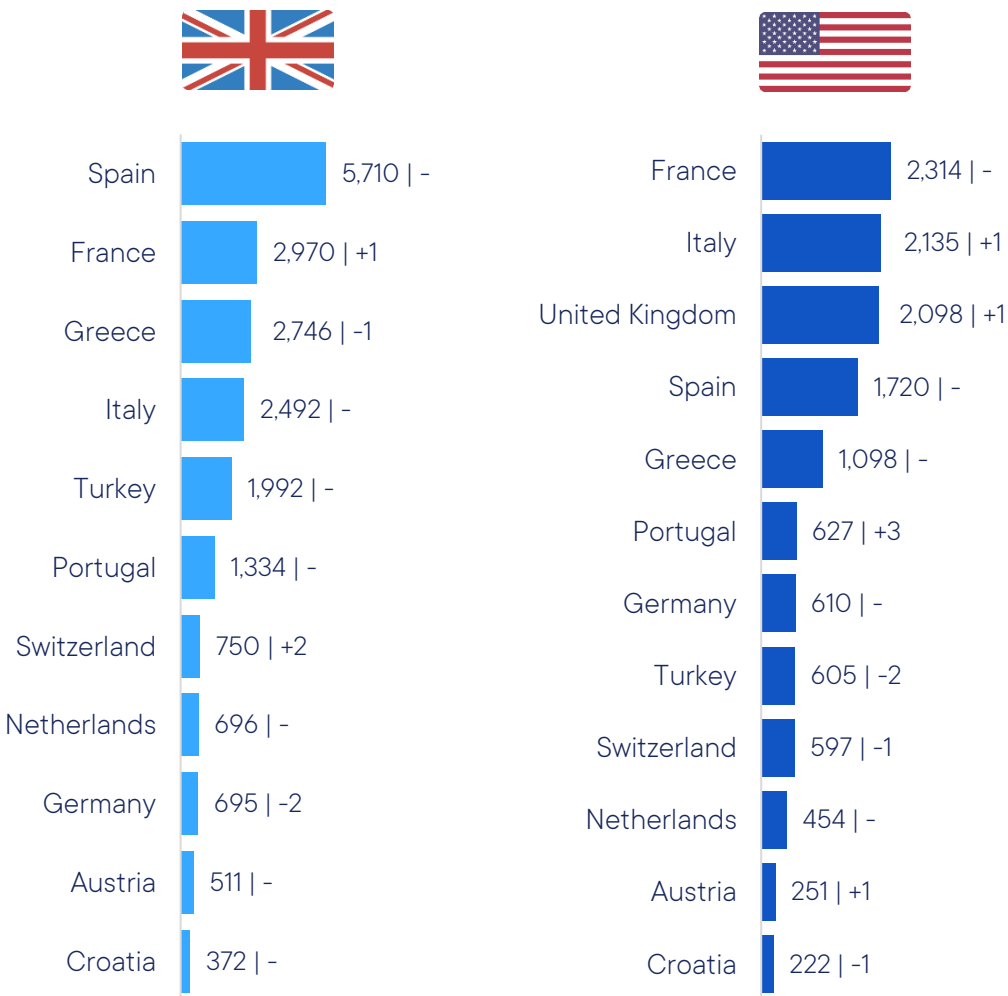
Destination Countries: Ranking by Reporting Countries (UK/US)

The ranking shows the most **media-present travel destinations** based on reporting from the UK and the USA, highlighting differences in media coverage.

In the UK, **Spain leads by a wide margin**, followed by France and Greece. In the USA, France, Italy, and the UK top the list, with Spain only in fourth place.

Portugal made the biggest leap in the USA (+3), reaching 6th place.

Germany, Switzerland, and Austria are represented in both markets, but generally appear in the middle or lower parts of the ranking. **Croatia ranks last in both lists.**



* Note: No internal analysis / no disclosure of the number of articles mentioning the destination country, nor any indication of changes in the ranking (compared to the ranking positions of the previous year).

A scenic view of a Norwegian fjord with steep mountains and a small village. The image shows a deep blue fjord with a small village on the right side, surrounded by steep, rocky mountains. The sky is clear and blue. In the foreground, a person with long hair is seen from behind, looking out over the fjord.

Part 2

What **travel topics** were of interest in 2024, particularly in relation to the various destinations?

Sustainability

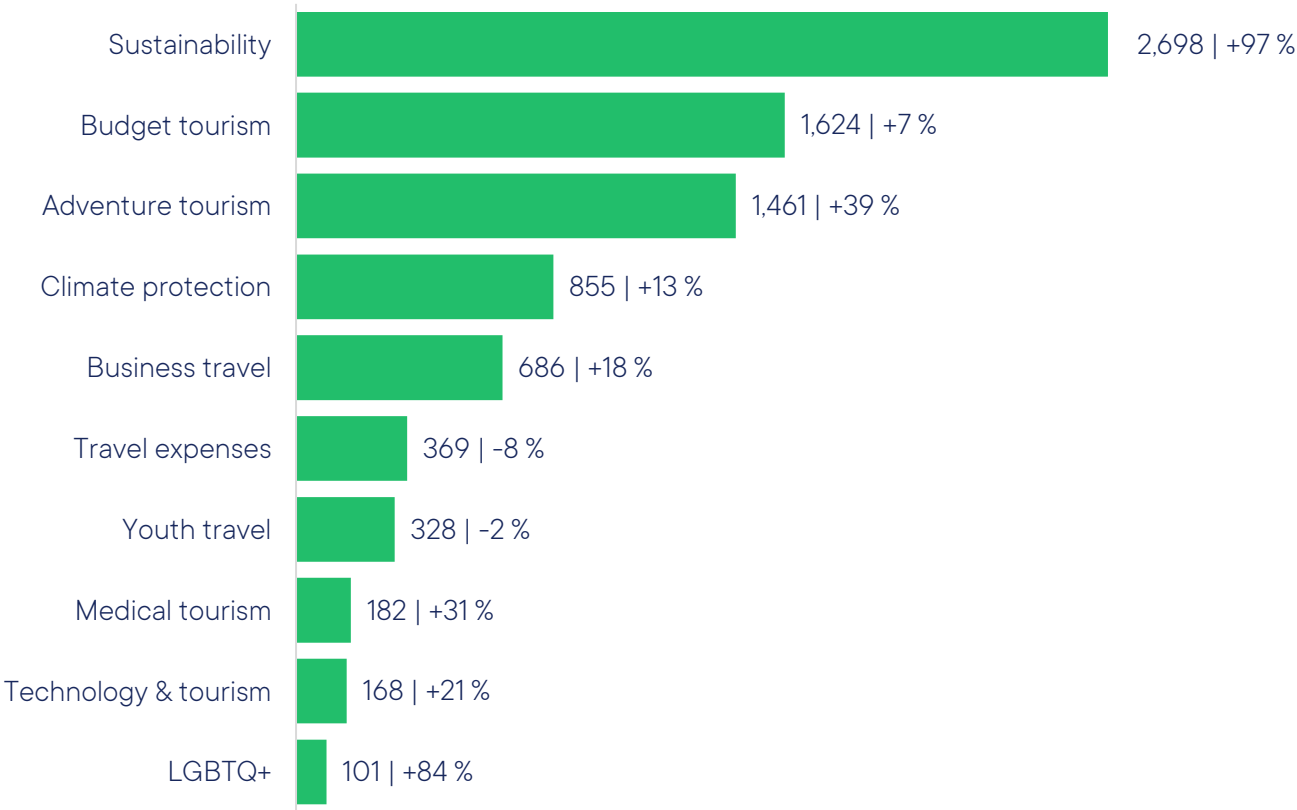
at the center of media attention and public debate

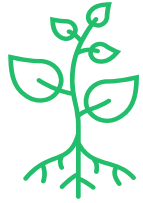
The analysis of media travel topics in 2024 reveals a clear signal: **sustainability is the dominant theme** in the public travel debate. In the current evaluation, it ranks first for the first time – with **coverage doubling** compared to the previous year. This pushes the previously leading topic, budget tourism, down to second place.

The graphic highlights: **no other topic is growing as strongly in the media.** This reflects a clear trend – sustainability is not only gaining media attention but also increasing in social importance. Environmental awareness and social responsibility are increasingly shaping expectations for tourism offerings.

Travel topics in the focus of media coverage

Number of relevant articles on the specific travel topics

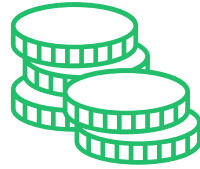




Sustainability becomes a guiding principle

The doubling of media coverage on sustainable travel and the rise to first place clearly show: **Sustainability is no longer just a trend topic, but a central guiding principle.**

Media, travelers, and providers are increasingly focusing on ecological responsibility.



Between saving and self-fulfillment

Budget tourism remains a strong topic despite ranking second – an **expression of ongoing price sensitivity.**

At the same time, the continuous growth in adventure tourism shows a rising need for **individual, experience-oriented travel beyond classic offers.**



Dynamic niche topics

LGBTQ+, medical tourism, and travel technology remain **niche topics but show above-average growth rates.**

This points to new impulses – topics with the potential to come into much greater media and societal focus in the future.

Media presence: Cost and budget Planning

Coverage of top topics over time



Budget tourism

with a clear spring peak

Both **budget tourism** and **travel expenses** are continuous topics in media coverage. **Budget tourism** in particular is in focus **during spring**: in **April**, coverage reaches its **peak** – driven by numerous articles about **particularly cheap and expensive travel destinations**.

Unlike in previous years, the focus this time is **not on specific countries of origin** but is distributed **internationally**.

In contrast, coverage of **travel expenses** remains **consistent throughout the year** – **without significant seasonal fluctuations**.

Sustainability

comes strongly into focus starting in April

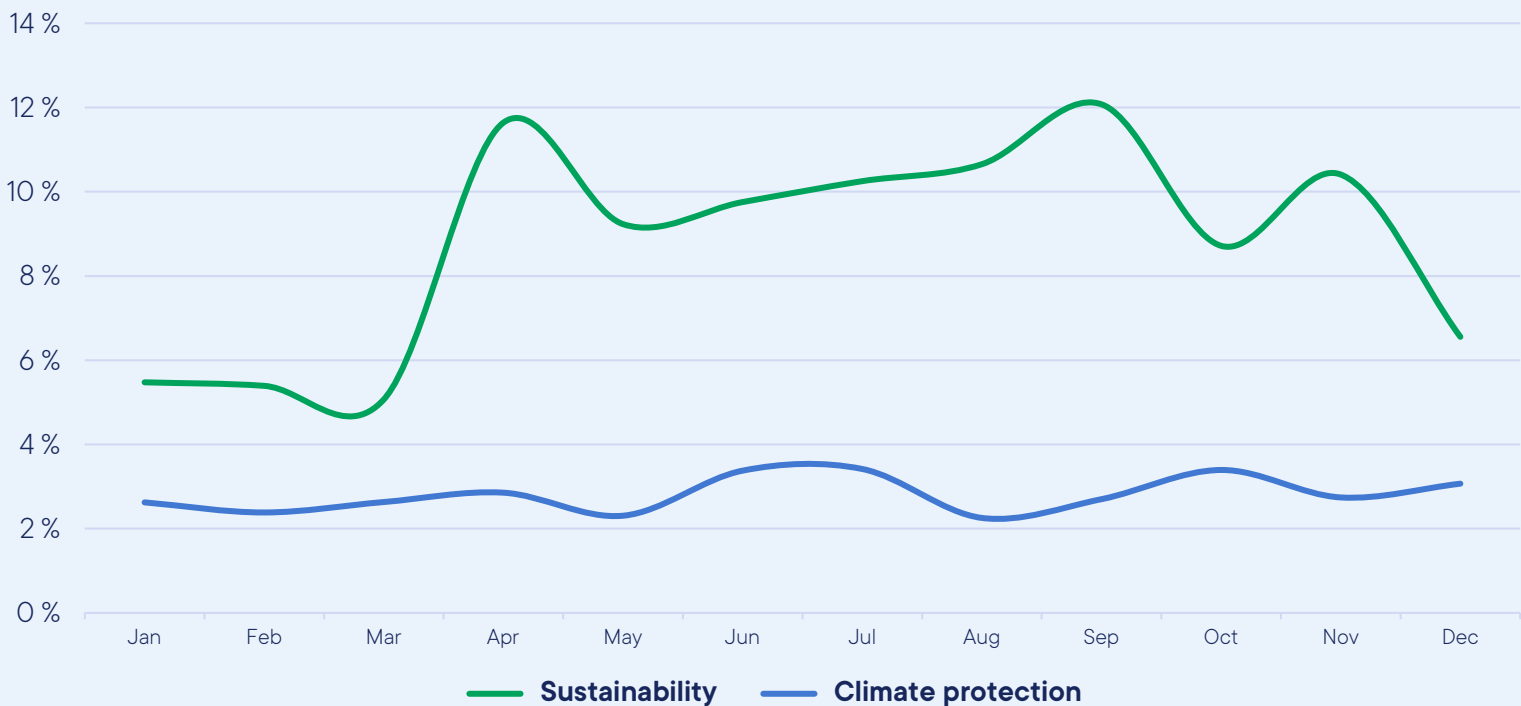
Media presence on the topic of **sustainability** rises sharply from April 2024 and remains at a high level for the rest of the year. This brings the topic clearly into focus – significantly more so than the area of **climate protection**, which remains consistently but less prominently covered.

Drivers of this growing importance are especially the increased discussion of **mass tourism** and corresponding **countermeasures**. Spain, as a travel destination, is also more frequently mentioned in the context of sustainability starting in April.

A **seasonal influence** or a **regional shift** in media coverage could not be determined in the correlation analysis – interest appears to extend across borders and remains stable.

Media presence: Sustainability and climate protection

Coverage of top topics over time



Two topic areas

in the long-term perspective

From 2022 to Q3/2023, sustainability & climate protection and budget tourism & travel expenses were roughly equally present in the media. Starting in Q4/2023, sustainability moved significantly more into focus than the finance-oriented topics.

In the last two quarters (Q4/2024 and Q1/2025), however, the importance of sustainability and climate protection fell back below the peak value of 12.5% of coverage (based on the number of articles).

Whether this indicates a trend reversal in the media importance of sustainability in tourism is currently still unclear.

Media presence: Sustainability and climate protection

in comparison to Budget tourism & travel expenses (2022–2025)



Overtourism

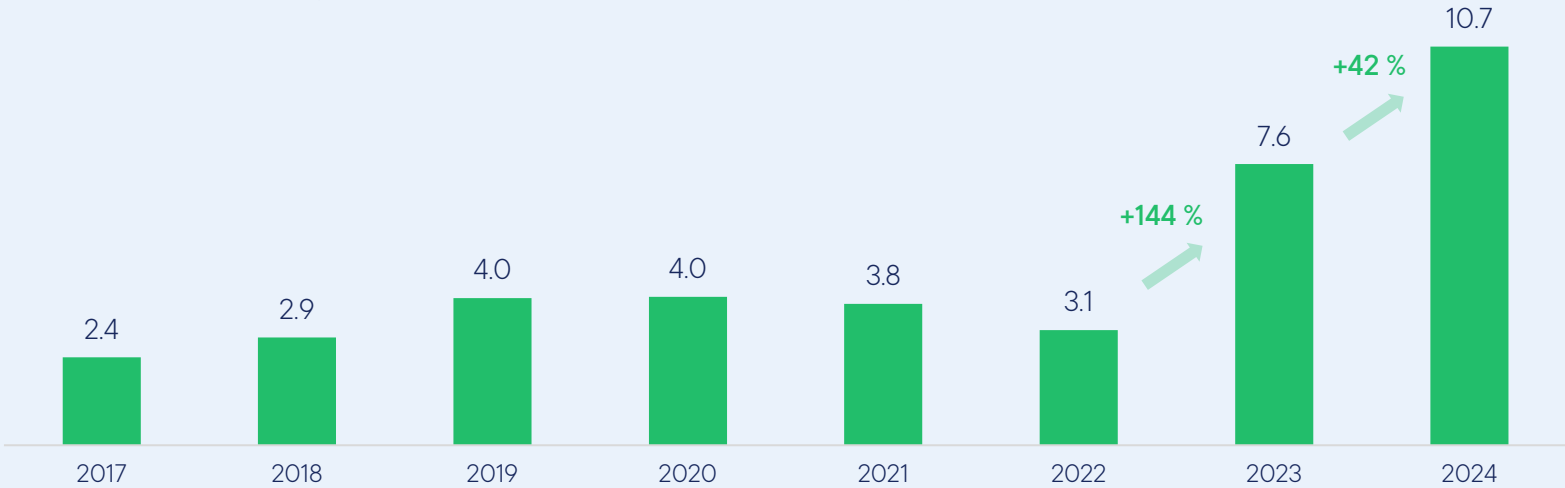
is back – and more present than ever

During the pandemic years 2021 and 2022, media coverage of overtourism slightly declined.

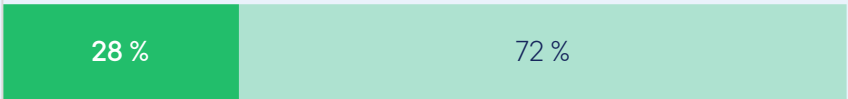
Since 2023, however, there has been a **marked increase**: the number of articles **more than doubled compared to the previous year** and reached a new high of **10,700 articles in 2024**. In around one third of thematic articles, **overtourism** was addressed. This aspect is particularly pronounced in connection with **sustainability**, where it is present in **70 % of the articles**.

Overtourism is therefore increasingly linked to societal debates about **responsible travel** and the **future of tourism**.

Long-term perspective: Coverage of overtourism in German media* (number of articles in thousands)



Articles in which **at least one of the 10 topics** is addressed



Articles in which **the topic of sustainability** is addressed



■ Overtourism covered ■ Overtourism not covered

Media

recognize the problem – but solutions are lacking

81 % of the articles mention **concrete countermeasures** to curb overtourism, such as visitor limits or entrance fees.

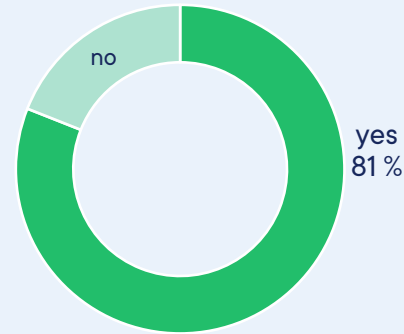
56 % particularly highlight **severely affected destinations** – problematic examples like Venice or Barcelona are often used as prominent case studies.

Only 28 % of articles suggest **alternative destinations** (“just as beautiful, but less crowded”) – insider tips therefore remain a marginal issue.

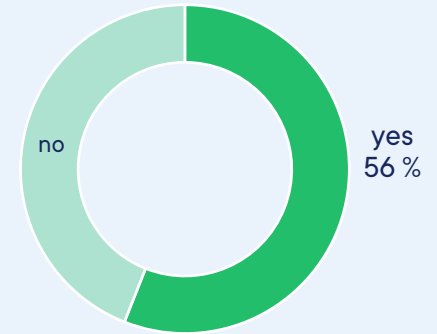
Just 12 % address **alternative forms of travel** such as sustainable or more considerate tourism (“slow travel”) – and even then, mostly only in passing.

Do articles on overtourism ...

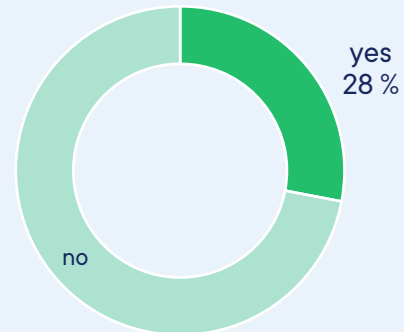
... describe **countermeasures** to curb the problem?



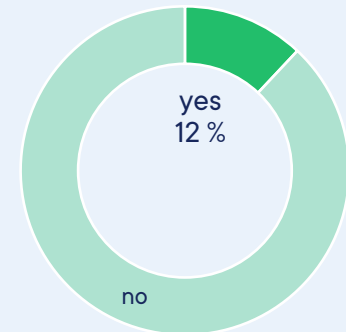
... name **severely affected destinations** (“no gos”)?



... suggest **alternative destinations** that are not yet heavily affected by overtourism?



... describe **alternative forms of tourism** (e.g., sustainable travel or “slow travel”)?



Rethinking travel?

No Chance.

The media's engagement with overtourism remains mostly reactive: problems are clearly identified, and particularly affected destinations as well as measures to contain them are frequently discussed.

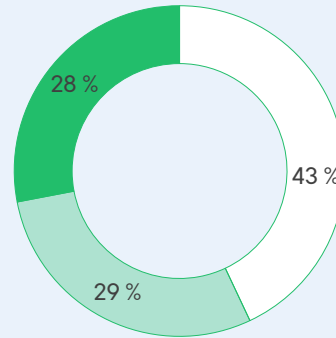
What is missing, however, are inspiring ideas for sustainable travel in the future.

Sustainable forms of travel, alternative destinations, and concrete proposals for solutions remain in the background – and with them the potential to actively shape the discourse.

The opportunity to rethink travel exists – but so far, it has rarely been seized.

The **World Travel Monitor®** by IPK also provides survey results on the topic of sustainability in the context of travel.

For example, respondents were asked: **“Did the aspect of sustainability play a role in the planning and execution of your trip?”** The result is surprising and has remained unchanged over the past two years:



□ No, did not played a role ■ Yes, partly ■ Yes, played a role

If **sustainability** is important to 57% of respondents, but the media highlights **alternative destinations** in only 28% of articles and **alternative forms** of travel in just 12%, a clear **discrepancy** with people's lived reality becomes evident.



Reality and media image

In harmony or in contradiction?

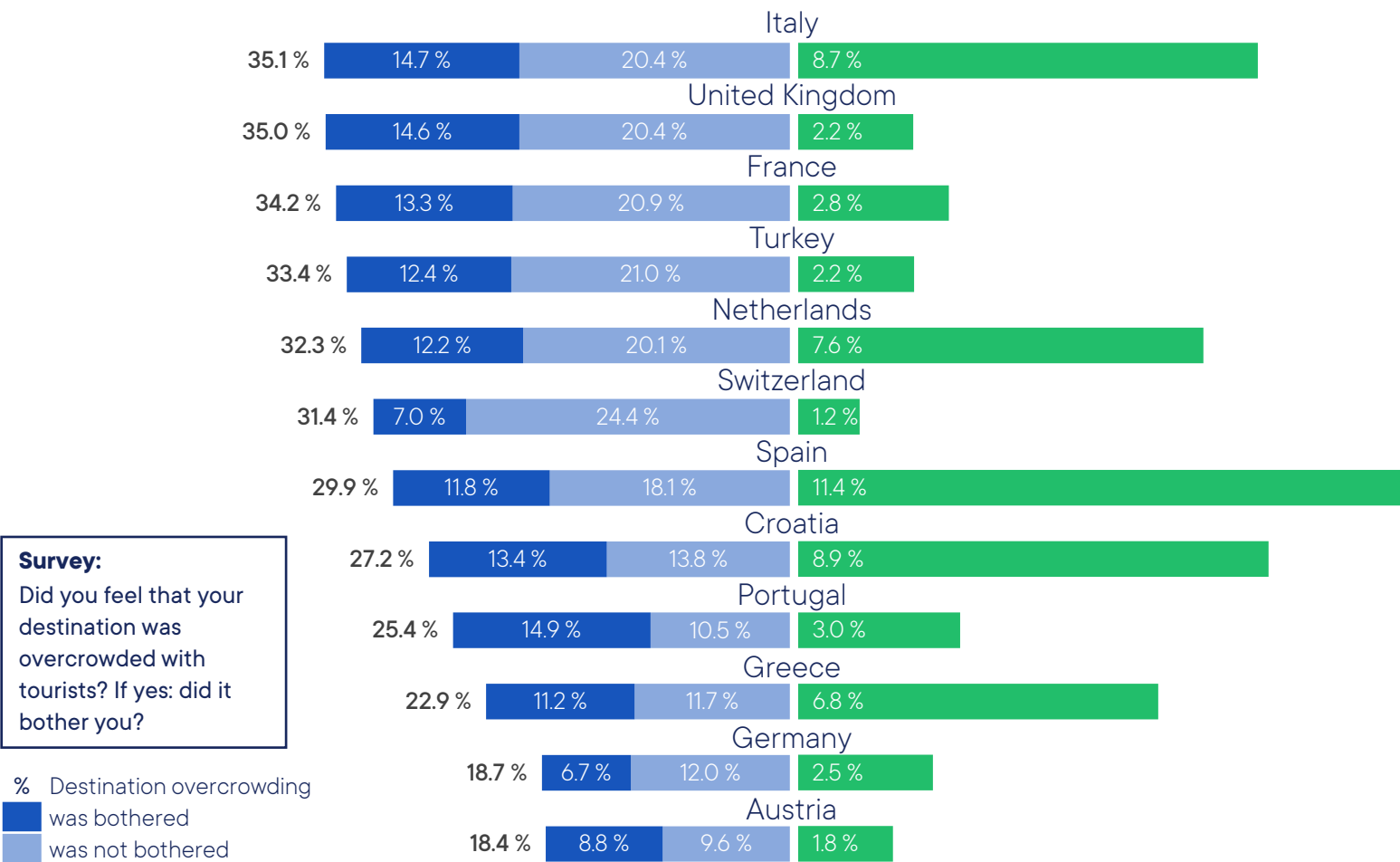
The data from the World Travel Monitor® by IPK also sheds light on the extent to which travelers perceived their respective destinations as overcrowded **in the past year**.

In the holiday destination **Italy**, travelers most frequently felt that it was overcrowded. The frequency with which the media covered this correlates with travelers' actual perceptions. However, for **Spain** and **Croatia**, there is a clearer gap between perceived reality and media representation. This is partly because extreme examples (see slide 17) are more often highlighted in reports on these countries.

City tourism in places like Venice, London, and Paris in particular led to tourists perceiving these destinations as especially overcrowded.

Perceived reality and media representation in comparison

Destination overcrowding / perceived disruption and share of articles on overtourism %

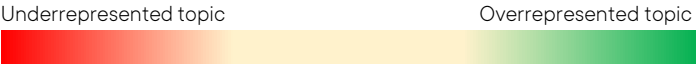
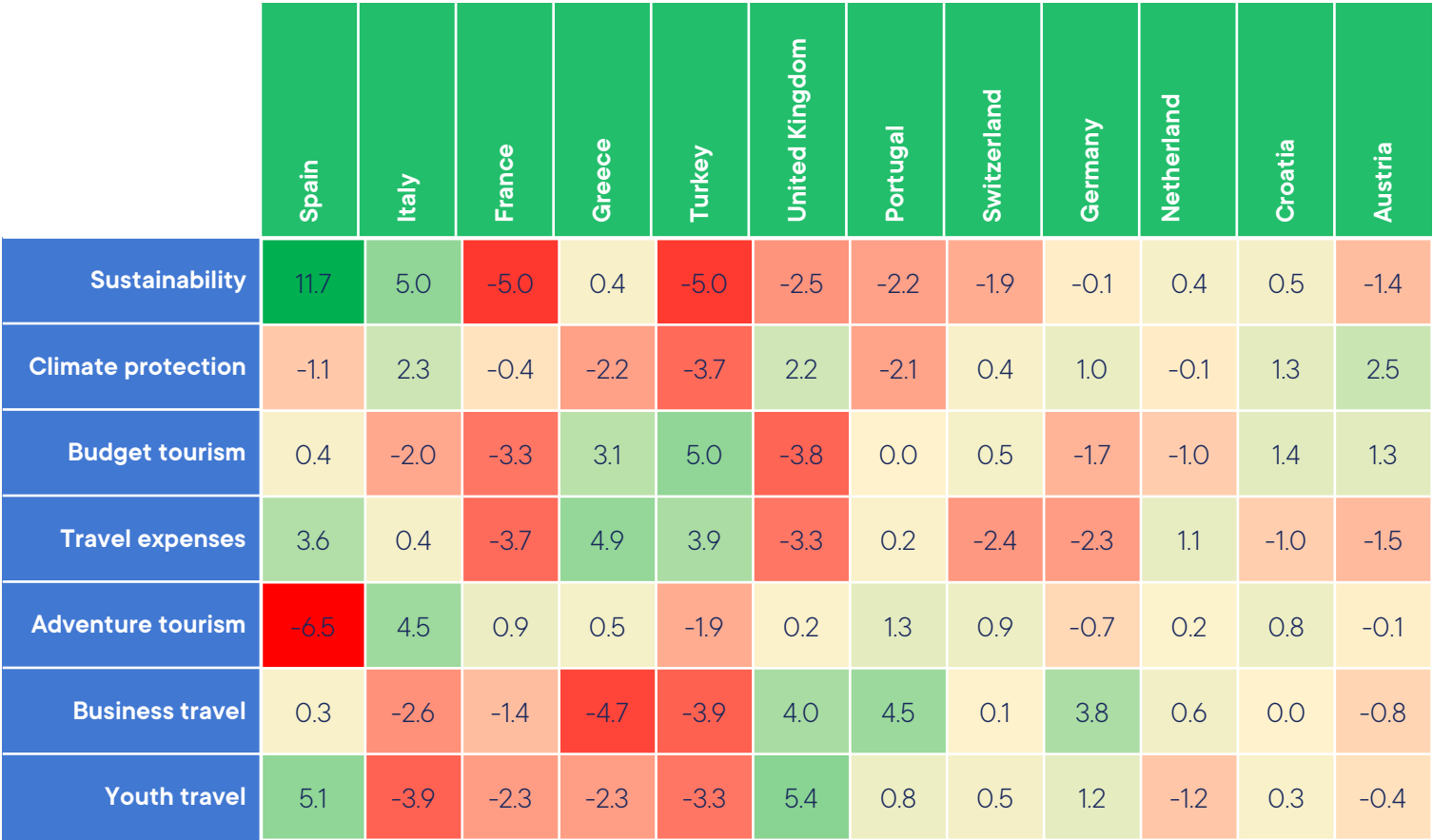


Sustainability is particularly often associated with Spain and Italy in the tourism context. However, this media presence does not mean they are seen as pioneers of sustainable travel – on the contrary: coverage mainly focuses on shortcomings, especially overtourism. This accounts for around 70 % of articles in the “Sustainable Tourism” topic (see slide 16). As a result, Spain and Italy appear more as overloaded rather than sustainable destinations.

France and Turkey, on the other hand, are mentioned much less frequently in connection with sustainability or overtourism – although Turkey is strongly present in the context of budget travel (overrepresented in the topic of “Budget Tourism”).

Other notable points: Adventure tourism is hardly associated with Spain. Similarly, budget tourism and travel costs are underrepresented in coverage of France and the UK – unsurprising, as neither country is typically considered a budget-friendly destination.

Travel topics in media coverage in relation to different destinations



Topics

reflect national travel interests –
and journalistic preferences

Sustainability:

A central topic in Germany and Austria, less
present in the USA.

Climate protection:

Overall weak coverage, with the UK showing the
least focus.

Budget tourism:

Strong focus on low-cost travel in the UK.

Travel expenses:

Hardly covered at all.

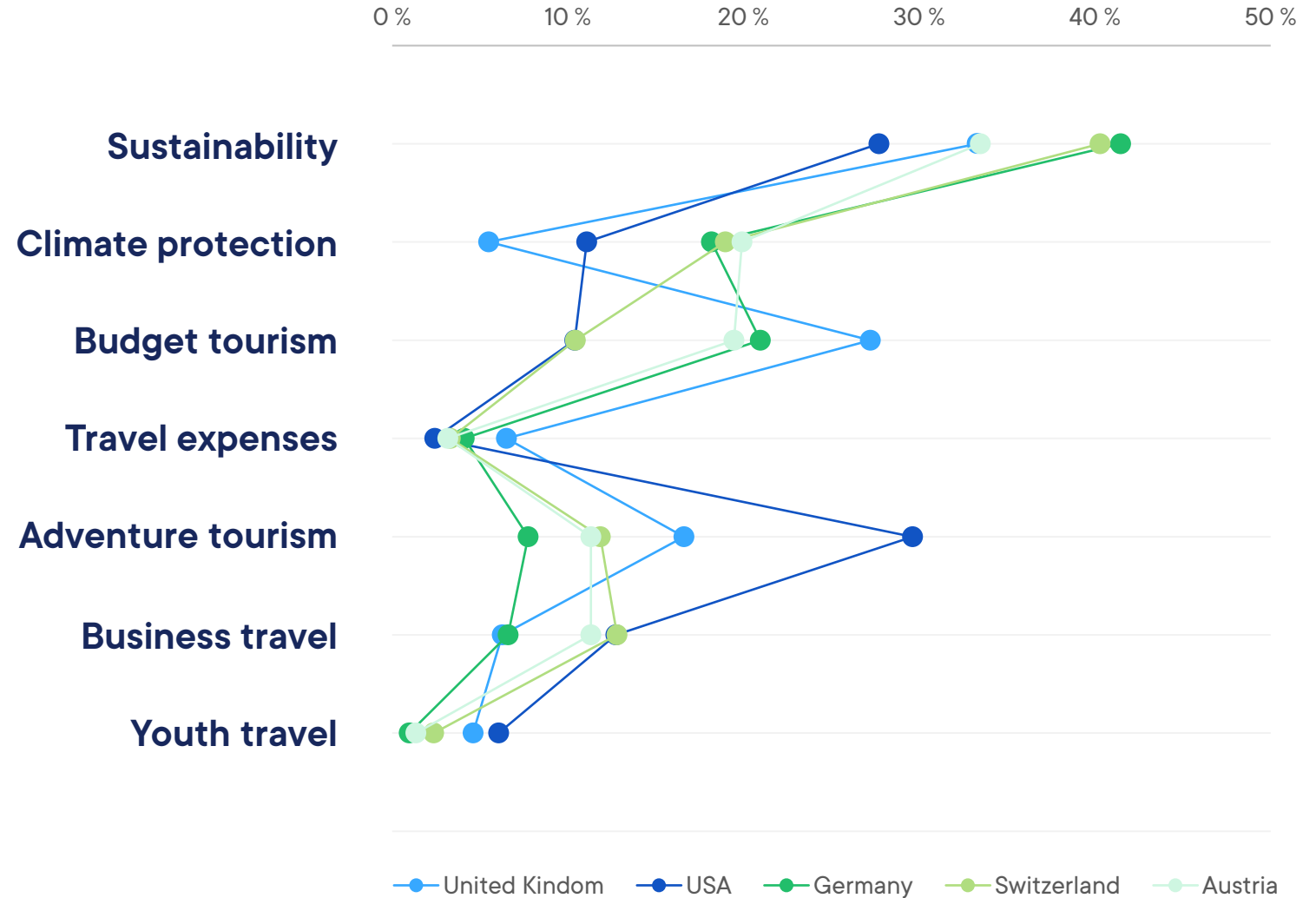
Adventure tourism:

The USA is the main media focus, but in terms of
actual adventure travel volume, Switzerland leads –
ahead of the USA, Austria, Germany, and the UK.

Business & youth travel:

Hardly relevant in media coverage across all
countries.

Share of topics by reporting country



A scenic view of a boat on a turquoise lake surrounded by steep, forested limestone cliffs. The boat is in the lower center, carrying several people. The water is a vibrant green, and the cliffs are covered in lush green vegetation. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

Part 3

Conclusion and outlook on the **current developments** in **2025**

“Our analysis clearly shows: Media attention and actual travel behavior follow different logics. Anyone who wants to communicate strategically in the tourism industry must keep an eye on both – only then can trends be identified early and interpreted correctly.”



Axel Oepkemeier
Media Analyst at pressrelations

Between wanderlust and media focus – when headlines don’t match travel flows

The study **Focus Travel Trends 2025** impressively demonstrates that travel behavior and media coverage are indeed intertwined, but do not necessarily align. While **travel volumes in the analyzed source markets – particularly the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom – saw a significant recovery in 2024**, media focus often followed different directions. Countries like Germany and Austria, for example, recorded a disproportionately high increase in media coverage compared to actual travel volumes.

On the destination side, interesting shifts also emerged: Spain, Italy, and France dominated both media attention and actual travel activity, whereas Croatia maintained a strong media presence despite declining visitor numbers. Another notable finding is **the dominance of the topic of sustainability**, which in 2024, for the first time, became the leading media travel topic – surpassing classic themes like budget tourism or travel costs.

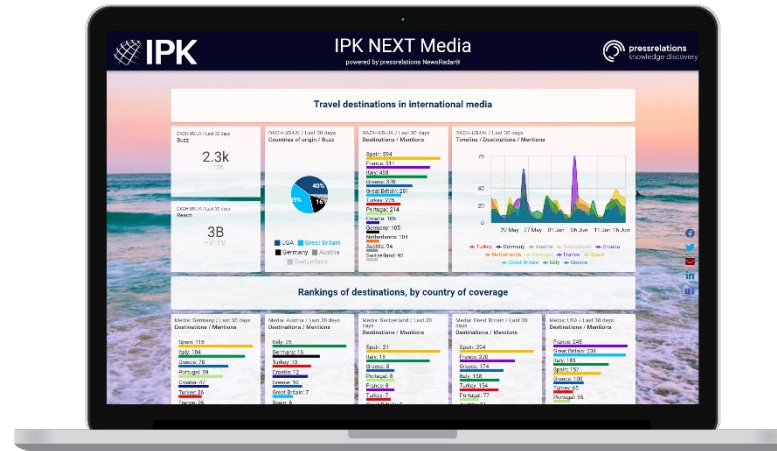
The results make it clear: tourism communication must be analyzed in a differentiated way to be strategically effective. The combination of media analysis and empirical travel behavior research – as offered here by pressrelations and IPK International – provides a sound basis for destinations, providers, and decision-makers to identify trends early and take targeted action.

“Media attention on sustainability in tourism has almost doubled – yet this has no impact on travel behavior: 43 % of travelers state that sustainability does not play a role in their planning, unchanged from the previous year. This discrepancy is particularly evident with the topic of overtourism, which is widely discussed in the media but rarely leads to more conscious travel behavior. This gap between debate and decision offers key starting points for strategically sound tourism development.”



Moritz Bohrer
Tourism Research Assistant at IPK

Real-time travel trends infoboard



Stay up to date with our **free Infoboard** and track in real-time which **travel topics in the year 2025** are most relevant for which **destinations**.

[See the infoboard](#)

Methodology

pressrelations

For the study, pressrelations analyzed more than 30,000 articles from 2024. The articles included online pieces from high-reach, nationally distributed print media, general-interest publications, weekly newspapers and magazines, as well as trade press.

The reporting came from five countries: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the USA. Articles were considered if they covered twelve European holiday destinations: Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, France, Croatia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, as well as Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Domestic tourism (travel destinations within the country of the reporting outlet) was explicitly excluded from the analysis. The travel destinations and current tourism industry trend topics were identified automatically using content analysis methods.

IPK International

In addition, findings from IPK were considered and compared to the results of the media analysis. IPK has been conducting a continuous survey of key data on global international travel behavior for the past 25 years, based on representative population surveys.

Using a standardized questionnaire, international travelers are contacted and surveyed about their travel behavior during ongoing waves of surveys in Europe and overseas. The results of the population-representative surveys are extrapolated (based on approximately n = 500,000 interviews) to the population aged 15 and above in each country. The data from the World Travel Monitor® aims to provide a realistic picture of current market volumes and travel structures in the international global travel market.

For this study, we have also focused on the five source markets and twelve destinations.

About us

About pressrelations

Founded in 2001, pressrelations GmbH, headquartered in Düsseldorf with twelve additional locations including Berlin, Austin (Texas), Shanghai, Vienna, and Paris, is a leading full-service provider of cross-media monitoring and analysis services. The company combines its in-house developed, AI-powered technology with the expertise of its news managers, analysts, and consultants. In addition to the real-time customer portal NewsRadar®, pressrelations offers tailored reporting formats, scalable newsroom solutions, and the award-winning FirstSignals® analysis method for early trend detection, recognized by the DPOK. Based on this, pressrelations provides more than 1,000 clients with practical insights and actionable recommendations for planning, managing, and evaluating their communications efforts.

 germany@pressrelations.de
 www.pressrelations.com

About IPK International

IPK is one of the world's leading consulting firms in the tourism industry, specializing in tourism research, tourism marketing, and tourism planning.

Under the new leadership of Dennis Pyka since 2022, IPK has been conducting the World Travel Monitor®, the most comprehensive study worldwide on the international travel behavior of Europeans, Asians, North Americans, and Latin Americans, for over 25 years. The World Travel Monitor® is conducted in over 60 countries, covering more than 90 percent of the global demand for international travel.

 info@ipkinternational.com
 www.ipkinternational.com

Get in touch!

Do you have any questions? Please do not hesitate to contact us.

pressrelations GmbH



Axel Oepkemeier

030 / 200 07 75 - 33

axel.oepkemeier@pressrelations.de

www.pressrelations.com



Timo Neisen

0211 / 175 20 77 – 858

timo.neisen@pressrelations.de

www.pressrelations.com

IPK International GmbH



Moritz Bohrer

089 / 829 23 - 70

bohrer@ipkinternational.com

www.ipkinternational.com