

27 March 2020

Tourist Activity

February 2020 – Flash estimate

Tourist activity is expected to have accelerated in February

The current pandemic is affecting the activity of most economic sectors, at national and global levels, particularly tourism. Given the concern that is being generated about this sector, Statistics Portugal decided to exceptionally release, in advance, statistics on tourist activity in February 2020 based on the primary information already collected up to March 24 in the scope of the Survey on guest stays in hotel establishments and other accommodations. This disclosure does not prevent the press release of the tourist activity in February, scheduled for April 15, in the usual way.

Understanding the seriousness of the situation, **Statistics Portugal nevertheless calls on companies to continue to respond to the survey, which will include questions to characterize the current situation.** This appeal is motivated by the need for information to assess the impact of the pandemic and to implement consequent public policies.

According to the flash estimate, in February 2020, the **tourist accommodation sector**¹ should have registered 1.6 million guests and 3.9 million overnight stays, corresponding to year-on-year rates of change² of +16.0% and +15.3% respectively (+12.2% and +7.6% in January 2020, in the same order). Overnight stays from residents will have increased by 27.2% (+12.1% in January) and those from non-residents will have grown 10.0% (+5.6% in January).

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These results were influenced by the effect of the Carnival period, which this year occurred in February and the previous year occurred in March. Additionally, it is also necessary to consider another calendar effect, given that February had 29 days in 2020, one more than in 2019.

¹ Monthly series which includes three types of accommodation facilities: hotel establishments (hotels, apartment hotels, tourist apartments, tourist villages, pousadas and quintas da Madeira), local accommodation with 10 or more beds (according to the statistical threshold defined by EU Regulation 692/2011) and rural/lodging tourist.

² Unless stated otherwise, the rates of change presented in this press release correspond to year-on-year rates of change.

Figure 1. Overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments by NUTS II regions

Unit: 10³

NUTS II	Total		Residents		Non residents	
	Feb-20	Y-o-y change rate (%)	Feb-20	Y-o-y change rate (%)	Feb-20	Y-o-y change rate (%)
Portugal	3 857.6	15.3	1 313.5	27.2	2 544.1	10.0
Norte	636.8	22.1	1187.3	21.8	334.0	22.4
Centro	418.8	27.7	302.7	34.3	124.7	14.5
AM Lisboa	1120.2	7.3	294.1	17.8	821.3	3.9
Alentejo	171.9	42.6	298.9	35.3	54.1	61.5
Algarve	852.8	15.1	117.7	42.3	679.0	9.7
RA Açores	110.7	20.5	173.8	14.7	43.3	30.9
RA Madeira	546.4	9.7	67.4	34.6	487.6	7.3

Most of the main inbound markets³ recorded growth in February. The increases recorded by the Spanish (+41.4%), Canadian (+32.8%) and Brazilian (+32.4%) markets stood out.

Already influenced by the effects of COVID-19, the Chinese market registered a decrease of 51.3% in February.

Figure 2. Overnight stays in tourist accommodation establishments by country of residence

Unit: 10³

Country of residence	Overnight stays		Y-o-y change rate (%)
	Feb 19	Feb 20	
TOTAL	3 344.8	3 857.6	15.3
Portugal	1 033.0	1 313.5	27.2
Foreign countries	2 311.8	2 544.1	10.0
<i>(of which)</i>			
United Kingdom	425.5	447.5	5.2
Germany	303.7	315.6	3.9
Spain	200.8	283.9	41.4
France	202.7	213.2	5.2
Brazil	142.8	189.1	32.4
USA	99.4	110.2	10.9
Netherlands	144.1	154.2	7.0
Ireland	40.1	45.2	12.6
Italy	84.8	85.3	0.7
Belgium	34.4	40.3	17.3
Canada	63.8	84.7	32.8
Poland	42.5	47.9	12.8
Switzerland	32.4	34.5	6.7
Sweden	55.2	51.3	-7.2
China	54.3	26.5	-51.3
Denmark	48.4	47.4	-2.0

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The source used in this press release is: Survey on guest stays in hotel establishments and other accommodations.

Guest – Individual that spends at least one overnight stay in a tourist accommodation activity establishment.

Overnight stay – Time spent by an individual between midday and midday of the following day.

The results published in this press release, referring to the month of February 2020, are based on a lower response rate (74.0%) than that underlying the results obtained for the same month last year (87.9%) for two main reasons.

First, because it corresponds to an early disclosure based on a shorter primary information collection period.

The second is related to the fact that many establishments decided to close during the month of March due to the spread of the epidemic in national territory, having not yet provided information to Statistics Portugal.

Year-on-year rates of change – comparison between the variable level in the reference period and the same period of the year before. The calculation of year-on-year rates of change for the main indicators is based on values in units, although in this press release they are visible only in thousands.

Year-on-year variation (p.p.) – comparison between the variable level in the reference period and the same period of the year before presented as a difference in percentage points.

Rounded figures may imply that totals might not correspond to the sum of the parcels.

Language - In order to simplify the language, the term "foreigner" might be used instead of "non-resident".

Date of next press release: 15 April 2020

³ Based on the preliminary results of overnight stays in 2019.