

Total outbound tourists for the first quarter in 2021 were estimated at 18,717, a decrease of 83.8 per cent over the corresponding quarter of 2020.

## Outbound Tourism: Q1/2021

### January-March 2021

During the quarter under review, a total of 11,601 outbound tourist trips were undertaken for visiting friends and relatives. Most outbound tourists were aged between 25 and 44 years (61.8 per cent), followed by those within the 45-64 age bracket (22.0 per cent). A general increase in the average length of stay was recorded (Table 1).

Total nights spent by outbound tourists decreased by 53.7 per cent, amounting to 311,629 nights. In absolute terms, the majority of guest nights (84.7 per cent) were spent in non-rented accommodation establishments (Table 3).

Total estimated expenditure by outbound tourists between January and March decreased by 77.7 per cent over the same quarter of 2020, and stood at €18 million, equivalent to an average €968 per person (Tables 4 and 5). Italy remained the most popular destination, with a share of 37.3 per cent of total tourist trips (Table 6) ■



Statistics in this News Release should be interpreted in the context of the COVID-19 situation.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, the following tourism-related sequence of events took place in 2020:

28-Feb	Passengers flying in from Italy, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Iran and South Korea, from 26 February onwards were requested to stay in quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.
8-Mar	Flights from/to Milan were suspended.
10-Mar	Flights from/to Italy were suspended.
10-Mar	Last cruise liner call.
11-Mar	Flights from/to France, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, were suspended.
11-Mar	Passengers flying in from France, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, were requested to stay in quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.
13-Mar	All passengers flying in from all destinations were requested to stay in quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.
18-Mar	Last Virtu' Ferries service for passengers between Malta and Sicily was operated.
21-Mar	All flights from/to all destinations were suspended.
1-Jul	Re-opening of Malta International Airport. The first group of destinations that reopened for travel comprised: Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, Poland, Cyprus, Switzerland, Iceland, Slovakia, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Greece and Croatia.
15-Jul	Restrictions on all other flight destinations were lifted.
21-Aug	First cruise liner call since March 2020.

Sources: Malta Tourism Authority, Virtu' Ferries, Transport Malta and Valletta Cruise Port

**Table 1. Profile of outbound tourists by period of departure**

Characteristics	January-March			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021	2021/2020	
<b>Outbound tourists</b>	<b>146,841</b>	<b>115,573</b>	<b>18,717</b>	<b>-96,856</b>	<b>-83.8</b>
<b>Mode and type of travel</b>					
<b>Air</b>	<b>142,034</b>	<b>111,889</b>	<b>17,215</b>	<b>-94,674</b>	<b>-84.6</b>
Low-cost airlines	75,220	64,494	3,767	-60,727	-94.2
Other airlines	66,814	47,395	13,448	-33,947	-71.6
<b>Sea</b>	<b>4,807</b>	<b>3,684</b>	<b>1,502</b>	<b>-2,182</b>	<b>-59.2</b>
<b>Sex</b>					
Males	83,028	65,382	12,922	-52,461	-80.2
Females	63,813	50,190	5,795	-44,395	-88.5
<b>Age group</b>					
0-24	23,545	18,666	2,346	-16,320	-87.4
25-44	75,522	55,673	11,571	-44,102	-79.2
45-64	39,102	33,444	4,115	-29,329	-87.7
65 or more	8,672	7,789	684	-7,104	-91.2
<b>Final destination<sup>2</sup></b>					
<b>EU</b>	<b>128,936</b>	<b>75,161</b>	<b>12,282</b>	<b>-62,879</b>	<b>-83.7</b>
of which: Euro area	86,617	65,887	10,430	-55,458	-84.2
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>17,905</b>	<b>40,411</b>	<b>6,435</b>	<b>-33,977</b>	<b>-84.1</b>
<b>Purpose of visit</b>					
Holiday	84,783	66,416	2,423	-63,993	-96.4
Visiting relatives and friends	29,910	27,761	11,601	-16,161	-58.2
Business and professional	25,014	17,316	2,356	-14,960	-86.4
Other (including educational, religious and health tourism)	7,135	4,080	2,338	-1,742	-42.7
<b>Organisation of stay</b>					
Package	15,326	11,393	635 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
Non-package	131,515	104,180	18,082	-86,098	-82.6
<b>Duration of visit</b>					
1-3 nights	57,488	46,048	3,512	-42,536	-92.4
4-6 nights	49,260	38,200	1,892	-36,309	-95.0
7 nights or more	40,093	31,325	13,313	-18,011	-57.5
<b>Average length of stay (nights)</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>-</b>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to methodological note 6.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to methodological note 8.

<sup>u</sup> Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

**Table 2. Outbound tourists by period of departure and type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	January-March			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021		
<b>Rented accommodation</b>	<b>104,855</b>	<b>77,144</b>	<b>5,152</b>	<b>-71,992</b>	<b>-93.3</b>
Collective	87,150	61,001	3,775	-57,227	-93.8
Other rented	17,705	16,143	1,378	-14,765	-91.5
<b>Non-rented accommodation</b>	<b>41,986</b>	<b>38,428</b>	<b>13,564</b>	<b>-24,864</b>	<b>-64.7</b>
<b>Total tourists</b>	<b>146,841</b>	<b>115,573</b>	<b>18,717</b>	<b>-96,856</b>	<b>-83.8</b>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to methodological note 6.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

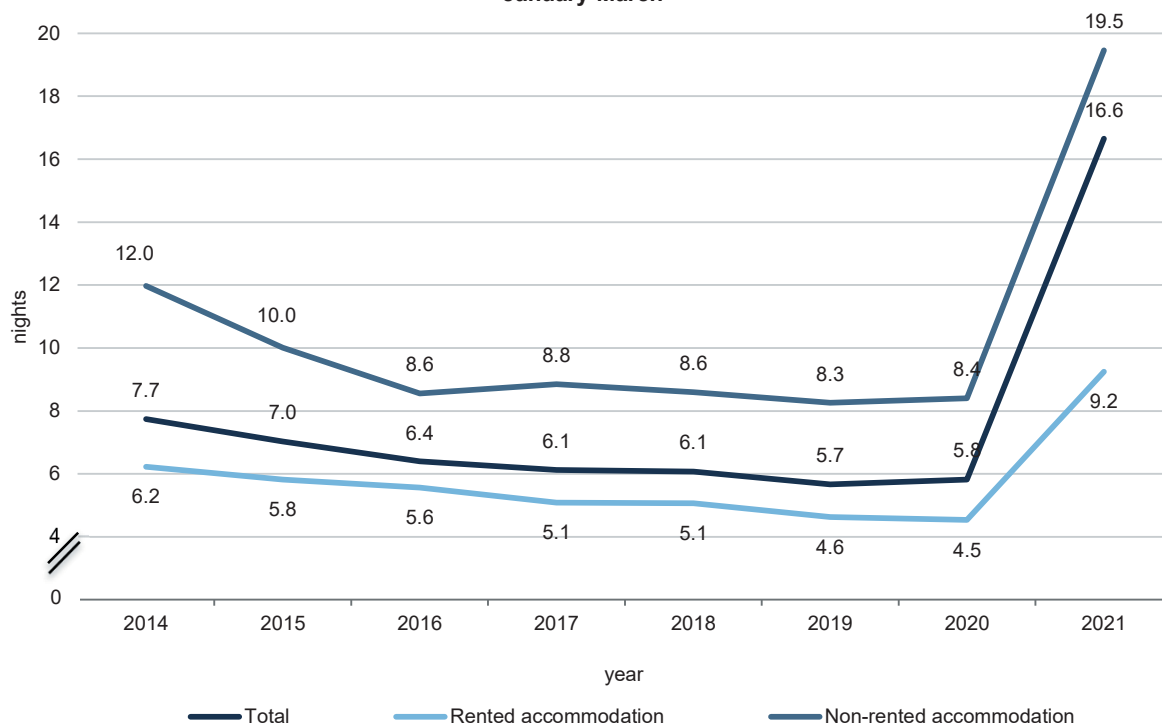
**Table 3. Total nights spent by outbound tourists by period of departure and type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	January-March			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021		
<b>Rented accommodation</b>	<b>485,246</b>	<b>349,864</b>	<b>47,658</b>	<b>-302,206</b>	<b>-86.4</b>
Collective	390,107	263,472	27,763	-235,709	-89.5
Other rented	95,139	86,392	19,895	-66,497	-77.0
<b>Non-rented accommodation</b>	<b>346,639</b>	<b>323,073</b>	<b>263,971</b>	<b>-59,102</b>	<b>-18.3</b>
<b>Total nights</b>	<b>831,885</b>	<b>672,937</b>	<b>311,629</b>	<b>-361,308</b>	<b>-53.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to methodological note 6.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

**Chart 1. Average length of stay by year and type of accommodation: January-March**



**Table 4. Total expenditure by outbound tourists by period of departure and expenditure category**

Expenditure category	January-March			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021		
				2021/2020	
<b>Package</b>	<b>8,664</b>	<b>5,594</b>	<b>539<sup>u</sup></b>	<b>-5,055</b>	<b>-90.4</b>
<b>Non-package</b>	<b>40,456</b>	<b>31,119</b>	<b>6,978</b>	<b>-24,141</b>	<b>-77.6</b>
Air/sea fares	20,039	17,450	5,335	-12,115	-69.4
Accommodation	20,417	13,669	1,643	-12,026	-88.0
<b>Other expenditure</b>	<b>63,750</b>	<b>44,619</b>	<b>10,605</b>	<b>-34,014</b>	<b>-76.2</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>112,870</b>	<b>81,331</b>	<b>18,121</b>	<b>-63,211</b>	<b>-77.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to methodological note 6.

<sup>u</sup> Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations.

Notes:

1. Expenditure estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand Euro.

2. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

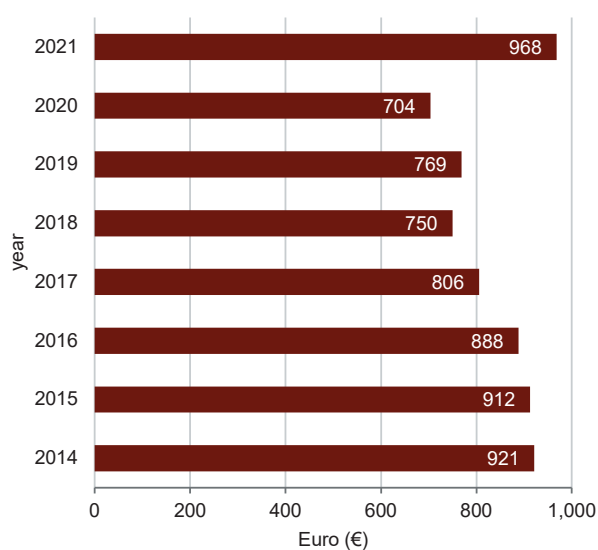
**Table 5. Average expenditure per capita and per night by outbound tourists by period of departure and expenditure category**

Expenditure category	January-March					
	per capita			per night		
	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021
<b>Package</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>848<sup>u</sup></b>	<b>115</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>95<sup>u</sup></b>
<b>Non-package</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>23</b>
Air/sea fares	152	167	295	26	28	17
Accommodation	225	202	357	48	44	39
<b>Other expenditure</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>58</b>

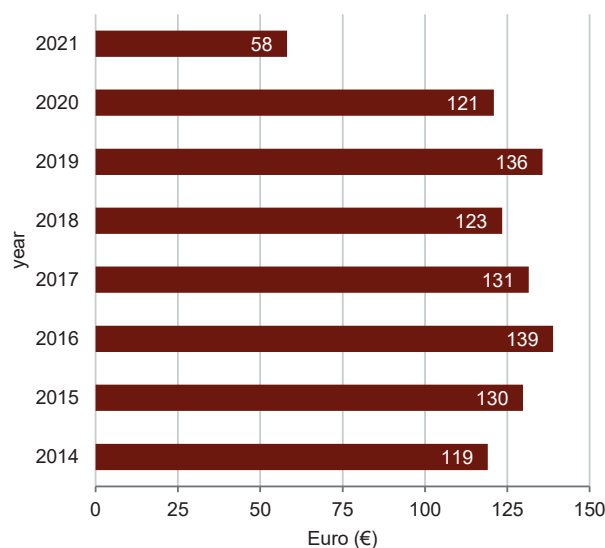
<sup>1</sup> Refer to methodological note 6.

<sup>u</sup> Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations.

**Chart 2a. Total expenditure per capita by outbound tourists: January-March**



**Chart 2b. Total expenditure per night by outbound tourists: January-March**



**Table 6. Outbound tourists, nights spent and total expenditure by period of departure and final destination**

Final destination <sup>2</sup>	January-March			Change	Percentage change
	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021	2021/2020	
<b>EU</b>	<b>128,936</b>	<b>75,161</b>	<b>12,282</b>	<b>-62,879</b>	<b>-83.7</b>
<i>of which:</i>					
France	5,818	3,957	797 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
Germany	8,145	6,328	807 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
Italy	42,843	33,891	6,974	-26,917	-79.4
Netherlands	4,276	3,221	:	-	-
Spain	9,286	5,878	744 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
United Kingdom	30,445	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>17,905</b>	<b>40,411</b>	<b>6,435</b>	<b>-33,977</b>	<b>-84.1</b>
<i>of which:</i>					
United Kingdom	n/a	23,462	846 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>146,841</b>	<b>115,573</b>	<b>18,717</b>	<b>-96,856</b>	<b>-83.8</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>619,763</b>	<b>346,974</b>	<b>154,160</b>	<b>-192,813</b>	<b>-55.6</b>
<i>of which:</i>					
France	26,002	18,023	13,193 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
Germany	37,042	31,427	14,290 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
Italy	183,262	134,841	68,264	-66,577	-49.4
Netherlands	21,157	17,555	:	-	-
Spain	44,601	27,784	10,526 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
United Kingdom	156,439	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>212,122</b>	<b>325,964</b>	<b>157,469</b>	<b>-168,495</b>	<b>-51.7</b>
<i>of which:</i>					
United Kingdom	n/a	134,980	19,484 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>831,885</b>	<b>672,937</b>	<b>311,629</b>	<b>-361,308</b>	<b>-53.7</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>85,135</b>	<b>45,508</b>	<b>8,667</b>	<b>-36,842</b>	<b>-81.0</b>
<i>of which:</i>					
France	4,273	2,895	855 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
Germany	5,536	4,226	599 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
Italy	23,449	18,019	3,850	-14,168	-78.6
Netherlands	3,589	2,625	:	-	-
Spain	5,523	3,446	685 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
United Kingdom	23,803	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>27,735</b>	<b>35,823</b>	<b>9,454</b>	<b>-26,369</b>	<b>-73.6</b>
<i>of which:</i>					
United Kingdom	n/a	17,029	1,037 <sup>u</sup>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,870</b>	<b>81,331</b>	<b>18,121</b>	<b>-63,211</b>	<b>-77.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to methodological note 6.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to methodological notes 8.

: Unreliable - less than 20 sample observations.

<sup>u</sup> Under represented - between 20 and 49 sample observations.

Notes:

1. n/a: not applicable.
2. Expenditure estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand Euro.
3. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

## Methodological Notes

1. This release focuses on outbound tourism, which comprises the activities of Maltese residents travelling to, and staying in places outside Malta (i.e. outside their usual environment), and staying for not more than 12 consecutive months for personal, business or other purposes.
2. Data on outbound tourism trips are collected from an ongoing frontier national survey known as Tourstat. Tourist air departures are collected through a continuous survey carried out at the departure lounge of the Malta International Airport. A two-stage sampling design is used to collect data on air passengers. In the first stage, alternate days and nights are selected. In the second stage, within each shift, a sample of passengers is selected systematically. Every crossing air passenger is counted and respondents are selected using a pre-defined interval of 1:20, with the exception of July 2020, and as from October 2020, where the pre-defined interval is 1:10.
3. Tourist sea departures are collected through a regular survey conducted during three separate months every year at the Valletta Cruise Port. A quota sample is used to conduct sea passenger departures in which survey interviewers are guided to select people according to some fixed quota. Survey data is supplemented by administrative data provided by ferry operators.
4. 'Tourist trips' differs from the 'number of tourists' such that the same person can undertake more than one trip during a reference period.
5. Absolute and percentage changes between one survey estimate and another, which are based on less than 1,500 tourists should be treated with caution and are represented in this news release by means of the dash symbol (-).
6. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the Tourstat survey was suspended on 12th March 2020. It was assumed that no Maltese residents departed from Malta after 12th March given that airports abroad were suspending flights and in most countries one had to be quarantined upon arrival into the country.
7. Malta International Airport reopened on 1st July 2020. The first group of destinations that reopened for travel comprised: Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, Poland, Cyprus, Switzerland, Iceland, Slovakia, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Greece and Croatia. Restrictions on all other flight destinations were lifted on 15th July 2020.
8. Owing to the UK's exit from the European Union (with effect from 1st February 2020), UK data is statistically classified as Non-EU from January 2020 in all tables. Comparability between comparative periods should be treated with caution.
9. Expenditure data in this release represent the budgeted expenditure of outbound tourists prior to their departure.
10. **Definitions:**
  - **Usual environment:** the geographical area, though not necessarily a contiguous one, within which an individual conducts his regular life routines and shall be determined on the basis of the following criteria: the crossing of administrative borders or the distance from the place of usual residence, the duration of visit, the frequency of visit and the purpose of visit.
  - **Resident:** a person is considered to be a resident of Malta/Gozo if:
    - a. S/he has lived for most of the past 12 months in Malta/Gozo;
    - b. S/he has lived in Malta/Gozo for less than 12 months but intends to return within a year to settle here.
  - **Traveller:** a person who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration.
  - **Visitor:** the three fundamental criteria used to distinguish visitors from travellers are:
    - a. **The trip should be to a place other than that of the usual environment**, which would exclude short-distance local transport and commuting, i.e. more or less regular trips between the place of work/study and the place of residence;
    - b. **The stay in the place visited should not last more than 12 consecutive months**, beyond which the visitor would become a resident of that place (from the statistical standpoint);
    - c. **The main purpose of the visit should be other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited**, which would exclude migratory movements for work purposes.
  - **Tourist trips:** trips with at least one overnight stay in either rented or non-rented accommodation in the place/country visited.
  - **Total nights spent:** nights which a guest actually spends or is registered to spend in a rented accommodation or in a non-rented accommodation.
  - **Average length of stay:** the number of nights spent divided by the number of tourists during a specified reference period.
  - **Rented accommodation:** consists of the following two sub-categories:
    - a. **Collective accommodation:** comprises hotels, guesthouses, hostels, tourist villages, holiday complexes, Bed & Breakfast establishments and campsites;
    - b. **Other rented accommodation:** comprises holiday furnished premises (farmhouses, flats and villas), host families, marinas, paid-convents, rented yachts and student dormitories.
  - **Non-rented accommodation:** comprises own private residence (owned dwellings, owned caravans and yachts), staying with friends or relatives (even if charged - includes also friends' private apartments) and other private accommodation (oil rig, free-convents or timeshare, etc.).
  - **Total expenditure:** refers to the amount that is going to be paid for the acquisition of consumption goods and services, as well as valuables during tourism trips. It includes expenditures by visitors themselves, as well as expenses that are paid for or reimbursed by others. Maltese residents are asked to budget the expenditures which they are about to incur when travelling abroad. The total expenditure is broken down by the following expenditure categories:

- a. **Package expenditure:** the whole amount of money spent on transport, accommodation and other services such as rental of a car, activities or outings during the trip;
- b. **Non-Package expenditure:** the amount of money spent on transport and accommodation reported separately;
- c. **Other expenditure:** the amount spent on shopping, souvenirs, tickets for concerts or sport events, entrance to museums or zoos and day excursions during a tourism trip. It also includes durables and valuable goods, that is, the amount spent on cars, computers, paintings, jewellery and works of art.

11. More information relating to this news release may be accessed at:

Sources and methods: [https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources\\_and\\_Methods/Unit\\_C3/Tourism\\_Statistics/Pages/TOURSTAT-Survey.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_C3/Tourism_Statistics/Pages/TOURSTAT-Survey.aspx)

Statistical concepts: <https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/concepts.aspx>

Metadata: <https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/reports.aspx?id=39>

12. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.

13. A detailed news release calendar is available on:

[https://nso.gov.mt/en/News\\_Releases/Release\\_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx](https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx)