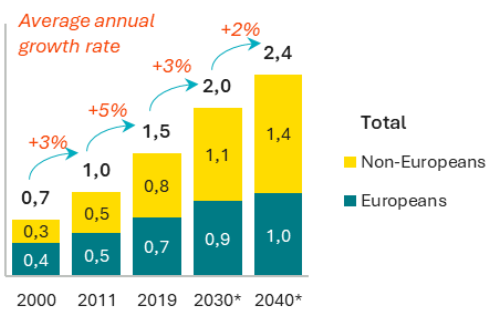


International demand trends as a unique opportunity for Greek tourism

The global tourism industry is expected to undergo substantial growth and transformation over the next 15 years, with nearly 1 billion new tourists joining the market, primarily from emerging source countries. Against this backdrop, the latest issue of the "Business Trends" series by the [Economic Analysis Department of the National Bank of Greece](#) focuses on the opportunities available to Greek tourism. The sector must move beyond “easy records” and seize the opportunity to transition toward a more efficient and sustainable tourism model.

Greek tourism saw robust growth in 2024, reaching a record high in arrivals (36 million, up 10% annually) and receipts (€21 billion, up 4% annually), while also reducing seasonality by 2-percentage points (summer months accounted for 50% of the year, down from 52% in 2023). Looking ahead, the global tourism market is projected to grow by 3%-5% in 2025 (according to UNWTO estimates), with Greece showing signs of exceeding this trend based on leading indicators (such as airline scheduling). However, global uncertainty persists. Disruptions in EU-US relations and aggressive trade policies are putting pressure on key source markets (e.g., Germany and the UK), as reflected in their consumer confidence index, which hit a 12-month low in early 2025.

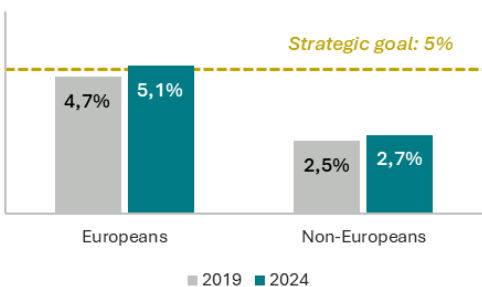
Global tourism demand
in billion international tourists per origin



Source: UNWTO, Eurostat | Data Processing: National Bank of Greece

these trends, Europe should attract 30% more European tourists and double the number of non-European visitors by 2040, to maintain its market share in both short-haul and long-haul travel.

Greek share on European tourism
as % of tourists' arrivals in Europe



Source: UNWTO, Eurostat | Data Processing: National Bank of Greece

Beyond short-term challenges, Greek tourism must remain focused on its long-term strategic goals by leveraging international tourism trends. Global tourism is expected to continue its strong momentum from the past two decades, reaching 2.4 billion tourists by 2040 (up from 1.5 billion in 2024), driven by (i) global population growth (from 8 billion today to 9 billion by 2040) and (ii) expansion of the middle class (from 45% to 60% of the world’s population). At the same time, the primary demand driver is shifting toward non-European tourists, leading to structural changes in the global tourism industry (as most tourists prefer to travel within their own continent). Given

In this context, Greece has a key advantage: significant room for growth in the dynamic market of non-European tourists visiting Europe. Over the past five years, Greece’s share of this market has remained relatively low at 2.5% (compared to 5% for European tourists). Portugal serves as a benchmark, having successfully increased its market share among American and Chinese visitors by over 2 percentage points in the past decade.

If Greece achieves a 5% share in both European and non-European markets, combined with overall growth in global tourism, it could generate an additional potential demand

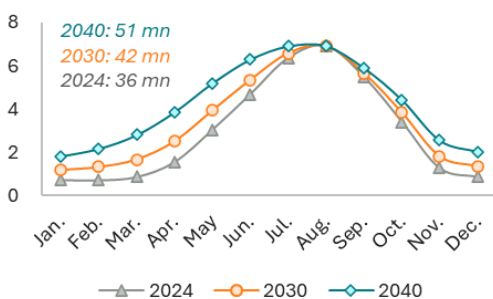
of approximately 19 million tourists by 2040.

Greek tourism should not “waste” this momentum by simply aiming for new record-breaking arrivals. Instead, the current global environment presents a unique opportunity to upgrade the country’s tourism model. Key factors supporting this transition include:

- Half of the new potential demand comes from non-European tourists (compared to just 8% in Greece’s current tourist mix), who exhibit lower seasonality and higher average spending (1.8 times higher than air arrivals from European tourists and 2.3 times higher than road arrivals).
- Greece is making significant investments in air transport infrastructure, focusing on direct connections with long-haul markets (e.g. Athens International Airport and the new Castelli airport).
- A redistribution of tourist flows is occurring in the region, with new emerging destinations attracting part of the Mediterranean’s regional demand (e.g. arrivals in Albania surged +82% in 2024 compared to 2019), while primarily absorbing lower-income tourist flows.

Estimated absorption of potential demand for Greece

in million tourists, excluding cruise



Source: Bank of Greece, Eurostat, UNWTO | Data Processing: National Bank of Greece

By leveraging the increasing demand from long-haul travelers, Greek tourism has the potential to be upgraded, attracting higher-quality visitors from both European and non-European markets. With a targeted revision of the national strategy, this goal is achievable, with significant benefits, particularly in addressing structural challenges:

- Seasonality will gradually shift away from the traditional “sun & sea” model, moving toward a pattern similar to that of other Mediterranean countries (aligning better to Greece’s climate conditions) with July-August representing 27% of total annual arrivals, down from 37% today).

- Average spending per overnight stay is expected to increase by 15% (in real terms), leading to a projected rise of €14 billion by 2040 in tourism receipts (€34 billion, up from €20 billion in 2040).

Given the significant potential benefits, Greece must take proactive steps to implement this strategy:

- Redefine the national tourism strategy to effectively manage tourist flows and promote alternative destinations.
- Upgrade hospitality infrastructure, including maritime and road transport, energy, water, and waste management systems, to keep pace with expanding airport capacity. Given the scale and complexity of these upgrades, local government support and direction will be crucial.

By capitalizing on these opportunities, Greece can move beyond short-term record-breaking arrivals and build a more sustainable, high-value tourism industry for the future.

The full report can be found on the National Bank of Greece Group’s website, under the Economic Analysis and Research section (Category: Greek Entrepreneurship):

<https://www.nbg.gr/el/omilos/meletes-oikonomikes-analuseis/reports/tourism-2025q1>

Athens, March 20, 2025