

Outlook for Travel to Britain

- The forecast is positive in relation with market situation. A good exchange rate and wide range of offers make Great Britain attractive, especially London and major cities.

Britain in the News

- The coverage on the media on the H1N1 (swine) flu related to Britain decreased due to the high attention given to the domestic impact. The peak period in Italy was around October and now the pandemic topic is almost disappeared from the media.
- Media covered the news of an Italian student studying at London Metropolitan University arrested and put into jail for 5 hours because she was filming attractions and refused to show to policemen the footage. Media reported that policemen treated her in an aggressive and rude way. This news generated queries at UK Embassy in Rome on how tourists should behave (what, and what not to film).

General Market Mood

- Domestic demand is still weak. Consumer confidence fell slightly in the third quarter. Although business confidence is improving, expectations on the purchase of capital goods are still disappointing. GDP rose 0.6% in quarter 3, lifting Italy out of recession. The recovery was led by exports, up 2.5% on the back of healthier demand from the Eurozone, and by non-residential investment, which picked up after the slide that began in mid-2008. Consumption increased by 0.4% after a 0.1% rise in quarter 2. As in the rest of Eurozone, the prospects of the labour market are the main source of worries for consumers.

Consumer Behaviour

- According to the Tourism Observatory, more than 11 million Italians will take a holiday during the Christmas/News period but the majority will stay in Italy. On top of them there another 4 million who are undecided but the desire to travel is incredibly high.
- Facebook reached the 13.5 million members in Italy (Facebook opened in Italy in May 2008) but the trend is starting to change as customers are looking for more specific type of social sites and less generic ones (i.e. creativecitizen.com, meetup.com, ge.la.to, wayn etc).
- Italians will spend about €20 million on Christmas shopping.
- The Italian holiday trend is to get less but more strategic holidays, registering 4% increase in sustainable tourism which in some cases reached 10%.
- The FCO launched the 'See Britain through my eyes' campaign and the local Embassy invited VisitBritain and the British Council to work in partnership with them on the Italian version. We are now at the development stage but some preliminary thoughts have been shared already that were raised during the course of meetings. More details will be available following the next meeting which will take place early January at the VisitBritain offices.
- VisitBritain also organized a first meeting with the local NOC (CONI) and there is a good level of interest for them to work with us but after Vancouver winter Olympics.

Media Matters

- On the TV side Italy is now facing the change from analogical into digital, which will be completed by the end of 2010. In the current situation, this means that a relevant part of programming on the National Networks (RAI, MEDIASET, la7) has been frozen whilst waiting for further developments.

Some relevant lifestyle and travel programmes have been closed until further notice (i.e. Nonsolomoda), and no new editions of the most popular travel shows (i.e. il Viaggiatore, Stella del Sud) are planned, with just the exception of "Alle Falde del Kilimangiaro" broadcast on national TV, RAI3 has been confirmed.

- The television scenario is going to evolve and it will become fragmented, with the appearance of themed, commercially oriented channels mainly on the Sky platform.
- On the Print media front, the situation has recently improved. The number of enquiries is slowly coming back to normal seasonal standards, this because the main changes happened during the course of last year, and editorial staffs are now more confident and ready to plan content for next issues.
- Web magazines, above all the ones dedicated to travel and lifestyle (and among them the web version of the main weekly magazine, including the female magazines) are becoming a good instrument to widespread messages and ideas.
- Blogs and Digital media are still in an early phase in Italy, but they need to be monitored.

Routes and Fares

- The last period of 2009 has not been easy for air travel due to the rising cost of petrol by \$55-56 dollars (per barrel). Alitalia has slightly increased their market share even if demand was very weak however December looks pretty positive and the Company expects peak traffic.
- bmi axed its flights to Heathrow from Venice
- Easyjet announced the increase of 14 new routes as from June 2010 but none of them will be to Britain but mainly to Greece, Slovenia, Spain and France.
- Ryanair traffic increase by 15% in October 2009.

Business Tourism

- With more than 35,000 admissions, TTG Incontri-TTI October 2009 was the event of the year for the B2B industry and the most important B2B exhibition. There was a strong increase in foreign attendance up 37% compared to 2008 confirming the international nature of the event.
- Travel business continued to decline and to date the level of spend for this segment is back to the one of three years ago (2006). Business tourism is strictly related to the GDP. The company behaviour related to business tourism changed and it is likely to continue even if the economic crises will be surpassed (UVET-AMEX research 2009).

Leisure Travel Trade

- Generally positive trend in sales of tour operators, especially in anticipation of the Christmas and New Year departures with a confirmation of the advance booking formula. The most popular destinations are the short haul ones mainly in Egypt and Canary Islands.
- I Viaggi del Ventaglio, one of the most important Italian tour operator, seeks a new way to avoid bankruptcy and fulfill at least part of creditors for the payment of debts for €15 million. The group has signed a preliminary agreement with the HDS group, a company specializing in tourism and Hotel management for the sale of IVV Resorts, and branch management of VentaClub villages.
- Over 67.3% of Italians are independent travellers. The trade network has a 27.6% market share and 5% is represented by all those 'parallel organizations' such as CRAL, Associations, Clubs etc.

Competitor Activity

- This autumn the following destinations launched massive campaigns mainly offline: Austria promoting short-breaks and mountain resorts. Swiss promoting mainly Zurich, Spain and Ireland (some examples of competitors activities are available [here](#))

VisitBritain Activity Update

- VisitBritain Italy and Visit Scotland have set up monthly teleconference to update each other on latest insights, on any news on Marketing, Press & PR and B2B. In quarter 3, three conference calls have taken place.
- The report of ENC campaign has been delivered, VisitBritain now is proceeding with the evaluation of this. Unfortunately after the dedicated direct mail to the Trade in which they showed a good interest for the destination (most of them would have welcomed a familiarisation trip to the Region), ENC withdrew the interest to the Italian market for this year so it won't be possible to follow up.
- Following TTG, the B2B department supported VisitScotland in refreshing the Trade contacts and providing niche operators as well in view of the recruitment for VISITEXPO 2010.
- Italy provided local insights and support to the Welcome to Yorkshire campaign's brief and for the selection of a local agency due to be appointed in December. Campaign to be launched February 2010, VisitBritain is hoping to provide further support to Welcome to Yorkshire.
- Press and PR organized the following media trips: 1 trips to England (Gloucestershire for monthly magazine Gardenia), 3 for Scotland (Open Golf for Golf e Turismo, the Gathering for Vanity Fair and West Coast and Skye and the Jacobitean steam train for Aqua, Bell'Europa and V&S) 1 for Wales (Touring overview for Viaggiando) , 3 for London (Traditional London for V&S, Contemporary London for Traveller and Max plus Monctezuma Exhibition and Anish Kapoor for Arte. As part of the ENC campaign 1 press trip in the Yorkshire, 1 TV Alle Falde del Kilimangiaro.
- Sherlock Holmes: media preview done on 17 December organized by Warner Bros Pictures. VisitBritain got 20 slots and invited selected journalists on behalf of VisitEngland offering at the end of film lunch. VisitEngland press release has been distributed to the 150 journalists that attended.
- TTG exhibition in October: VisitBritain attended with its stand partnering with VisitScotland, Abbey Tours, Jet2.com, Welcome to Yorkshire and Historic Royal Palaces.

Upcoming activities

- Educational workshop on Scotland destination might take Place in February 2010 during BIT week. Visit Scotland to confirm participation.
- Best Of Britain & Ireland 17 & 18 March with a familiarisation trip to East of England due between 13 – 21 March, with a participation of 7 Italian tour operators and one travel journalist.
- OTO (One to One) Discover the World due 8 March: VisitBritain presence with exhibition area to run planned meetings with MICE and Incentive Houses

Who's in Town?

- Nothing to report for October to December.