

Weather

- UK weather in March brought exceptionally above average amounts of sunshine (third sunniest since 1929), below average rainfall and above average temperatures

Transport and tour operator news

- BAA's seven UK airports handled 11.3% fewer passengers in March than a year earlier; domestic traffic declined 8.6%, European scheduled 11%, North Atlantic by 17.6% and other long-haul by 5.6%
- Civil Aviation Authority figures reveal that the number of passengers arriving and departing UK airports in January onboard scheduled air services was 7.2% down on a year earlier
- BA carried 8.2% fewer passengers in March than a year earlier
- easyJet carried 6.3% fewer passengers in March than a year earlier
- Lufthansa axe flights from Frankfurt to Bristol
- VLM to fly double-daily from Nantes to London City
- Lufthansa Italia introduce flights from Milan Malpensa to Heathrow
- Flybe to operate 18 flights per week from Dusseldorf to Gatwick from June
- Luton Airport to introduce a £1 fee for dropping passengers off outside the terminal building this summer
- The Port of Dover handled 16.3% fewer passengers in March than a year earlier, the early Easter in 2008 may have influenced the figures
- Blockades by French fishermen result in the cancellation of several cross-channel ferry services

Domestic Economic News

- UK consumer confidence sees a slight improvement in March

European Economic News

- The European Central Bank cuts interest rates to 1.25%
- German unemployment increased more sharply than expected in March
- Poland has asked for the IMF to provide a 'supplementary reserve' of \$20bn to help protect the banking sector
- Eurozone consumer confidence declines further in March
- Eurozone unemployment increases to 8.5% in February, ranging from 2.7% in the Netherlands to 15.5% in Spain

US Economic News

- Deloitte and Touche say that US hotel occupancy dropped by 7.8% and daily rates by 6.4% in March leading to a decline in revenue per available room of 13.7% - underscoring the weakness of the US travel market
- The US unemployment rate increased to 8.5% in March, with 663,000 Americans losing their jobs; 5.3 million fewer Americans are in employment now than a year ago
- US consumer confidence remained flat in March close to an all time low

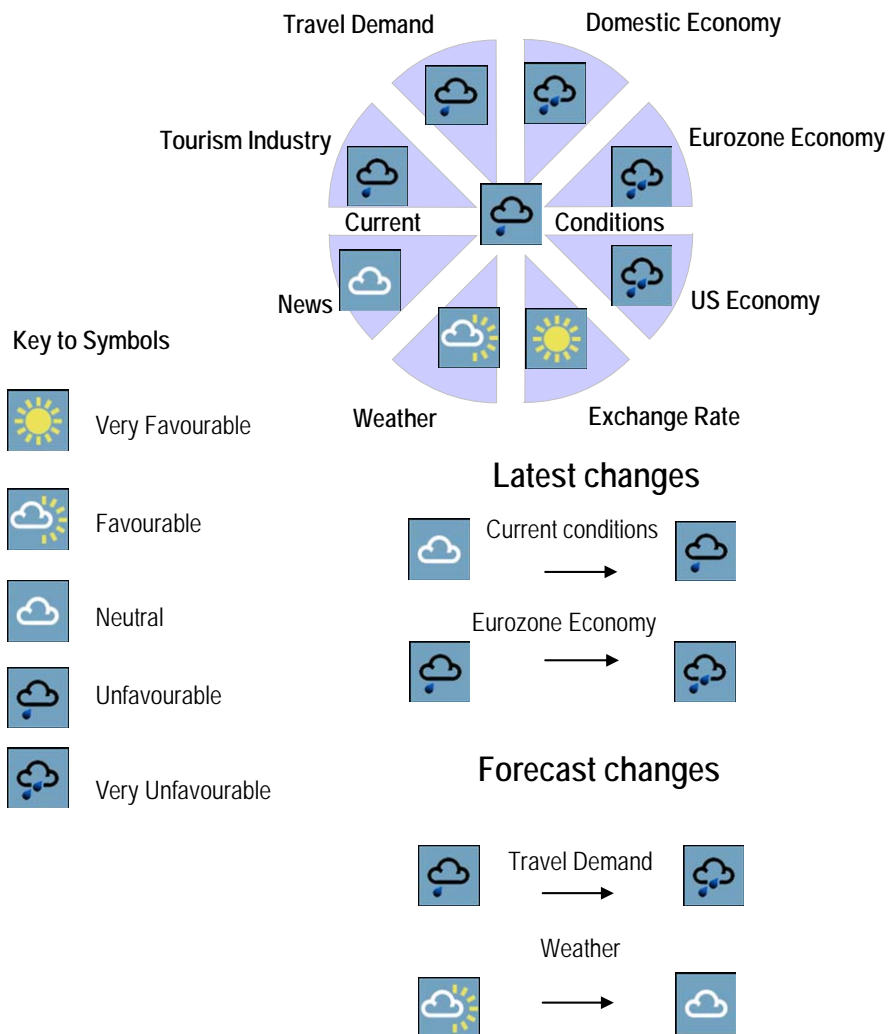
Global Economic News

- Business confidence in Japan falls to a record low
- Thailand sees another wave of political protests
- Singapore's economy shrank at an annual rate of 11.5% in the first three months of 2009, the sharpest contraction on record

Tourism News

- Figures from PKF indicate that hotel occupancy in London during February stood at 74.9% compared with 77% a year earlier, with occupancy in provincial hotels down from 69.7% in February 2008 to 64.3% this year
- The Government confirms that the South Downs will become England's 10th national park

Factors contributing to tourism trends in Britain, April 2009



- Overall conditions remain in the Unfavourable range
- The weather in March was exceptionally sunny
- The exchange rate remains very favourable for American and Eurozone visitors
- Some indications that credit conditions starting to ease
- Many Asian countries report rapidly weakening economies
- Airlines struggle as revenue, in particular that from premium class travel, declines at an unprecedented rate