

Travelling in Europe 2011–12



European Union

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The European Union stretches over the continent of Europe from Lapland in the north to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the west coast of Ireland to the shores of Cyprus: a rich tapestry of landscapes from rocky coastlines to sandy beaches, from fertile pastureland to arid plains, from lakes and forests to arctic tundra.

The peoples of Europe with their diverse traditions, cultures and languages make up over 7 % of the world's population. Their historic heritage is charted in prehistoric cave paintings, Greek and Roman antiquities, Moorish architecture, medieval fortresses, Renaissance palaces and baroque churches. The modern Europe too attracts the traveller with its vibrant cities, colourful cultural festivities, winter and summer sports, and varied cuisine.

Europeans love to travel and the removal of most passport and baggage formalities has made travelling much easier. Seventeen EU countries share the same currency, the euro, which makes price comparisons easy and removes the cost and inconvenience of changing money. The creation of a single market of more than 500 million people from 27 countries has brought wider choice and lower prices. In fact most Europeans find it as easy to travel within the EU as to travel within their home country.



Documents you will need

For EU citizens

Passport or identity card

There are no longer any frontier controls at the borders between 22 EU countries. This is thanks to the Schengen rules which are part of EU law. These rules remove all internal border controls but put in place effective controls at the external borders of the EU and introduce a common visa policy. All EU countries are full Schengen members except for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the United Kingdom. Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are also Schengen members but are not in the EU.

You will therefore need to present a valid passport or ID card when travelling to the five non-Schengen countries and when entering or leaving the EU at the external borders. Carry them when travelling in the EU because they may be required for identification or security purposes. Be aware that the only valid ID is the one obtained from national authorities.

Make sure that any children travelling with you either have their own passport or ID card or are registered on your passport. By 26 June 2012 all children who wish to travel will have to have their own passport.

Visa

You will not need a visa for travelling within the EU.

For non-EU citizens

Passport

You will need a valid passport.

Visa

There are 39 countries whose nationals do not need a visa to visit the EU for three months or less. These include Australia, Canada, Croatia, Japan, New Zealand and the United States. The list of countries whose nationals require visas to travel to the United Kingdom or Ireland differs slightly from other EU countries. Apply for a visa from the consulate or embassy of the country you are visiting.

If your visa is from a country fully applying the Schengen rules, it automatically allows you to travel to the other Schengen countries as well. Moreover, if you have a valid residence permit from one of those Schengen countries, it is equivalent to a visa. You may need a national visa to visit non-Schengen countries.

Money

The euro

The euro is the legal tender for around 330 million people in 17 EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. EU countries not using the euro are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Estonia adopted the euro in January 2011 and the seven other countries that have entered the EU since 2004 are committed to adopting the euro when they are ready.

The symbol for the euro is €. The euro notes are identical in all countries but each country issues its own coins with one common side and one side displaying a distinctive national emblem. All the notes and coins can be used in all EU countries that have adopted the euro, including many of their overseas entities, such as the Azores, the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Madeira, Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion, and Saint Pierre and Miquelon.

Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City have adopted the euro as their national currency, which also gives them the right to issue a certain number of euro coins with their own national sides. A number of countries and territories use the euro as their de facto currency such as Andorra, Kosovo and Montenegro.

In European countries outside the euro area, many hotels, shops and restaurants, particularly in tourist areas, accept payment in euro as well as the national currency, although they are not legally obliged to do so.

Cash and cards

Thanks to EU rules, withdrawing euro from a cash machine costs you the same anywhere in the EU as it does in your own country from a cash machine that does not belong to your bank. The transaction fee for making a debit or credit card payment in the EU in euro is the same as in your own country. Charges may of course differ between banks.



Shopping

Within the EU

There are no limits on what you can buy and take with you when you travel between EU countries, as long as it is for personal use and not for resale. Taxes (VAT and excise duties) are included in the price you pay and no further payment of tax can be due in any other EU country.

Tobacco and alcohol

To determine whether tobacco and alcohol are for personal use, each country can set guide levels. If you carry a larger quantity of these goods, you may be asked to prove that they are for your own personal use only. The guide levels may not be lower than:

800 cigarettes

400 cigarillos

200 cigars

1 kg of tobacco

10 litres of spirits

20 litres of fortified wine (such as port or sherry)

90 litres of wine (of which, a maximum of 60 litres of sparkling wine)

110 litres of beer





Coming from outside

If you enter the EU from outside, you can bring with you goods free of VAT and excise duties for personal use within the limits set out below. The same applies if you come from the Canary Islands, the Channel Islands, Gibraltar or other territories where EU rules on VAT and excise do not apply.

Alcoholic drinks

1 litre of spirits over 22 % vol. or 2 litres of fortified or sparkling wine

4 litres of still wine

16 litres of beer

Tobacco products

There is a higher or lower limit depending on the country you are visiting (Romania uses the lower limit for all travellers). The following countries have chosen to apply the lower limits to land and sea travellers: Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia.

<i>Higher limit</i>		<i>Lower limit</i>	
200 cigarettes	or	40 cigarettes	or
100 cigarillos	or	20 cigarillos	or
50 cigars	or	10 cigars	or
250 g tobacco		50 g tobacco	

Other goods including perfume

Up to a value of €300 per traveller or €430 for travellers by air and sea is allowed. Some EU countries apply a lower limit of €150 for travellers under 15.



Help for consumers

As a consumer, you are protected by basic laws no matter where you are in the EU.

- EU laws on food labelling enable you to make informed choices about what you are buying. You can check the list of ingredients for any that are associated with allergies or intolerance. The new EU organic logo on all pre-packaged organic foodstuffs produced in the EU indicates that the goods comply with EU organic farming regulations. There are also rules on the use of nutrition and health claims on foods.
- The unit price of products — the price per kilo or per litre — must be given by supermarkets to make it easier to compare prices.
- Cosmetic products have to indicate how long they can be used after opening. Look out for the open jar symbol. Sunscreen products now have clearer labelling, including a standardised indication of UVA protection, standardised terms for describing levels of protection and no misleading terms such as 'total protection'.
- CE marking on products such as toys, electrical products and mobile phones indicates that they meet all relevant EU safety, health and environmental protection requirements. However, not all products sold in the EU need to bear the CE marking.
- EU law offers protection on package holidays and timeshare property schemes.

Respecting the environment

You can make your contribution to tackling the problem of climate change by tracking your carbon footprint on your mobile phone while on your travels. Download mobGAS (mobgas.jrc.ec.europa.eu) free and calculate how much impact your daily activities are having on the environment and get practical tips on how to reduce that impact.

Look for the EU Ecolabel on everyday consumer goods from soaps and shampoos to shoes to help you find greener products. You can also use it to help you identify an environmentally friendly hotel, bed and breakfast, youth hostel or campsite. The EU Ecolabel tells you that the tourist accommodation or campsite limits its energy and water consumption, reduces waste and makes use of renewable energy sources.

By road

Driving licence

A valid driving licence issued in an EU country is valid throughout the EU. In some countries, in addition to carrying a valid driving licence, you will need to have your vehicle registration document with you.

Motor insurance

Wherever you are travelling in the EU your car insurance policy will automatically provide the minimum cover (third-party liability) required by law. This also applies to Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. If you have comprehensive insurance at home, check that the cover extends to travelling in other countries.

A green card is not obligatory when travelling in the EU but it serves as internationally recognised proof of insurance and it makes it easier to settle claims arising from an accident. If you do not take a green card with you, you should carry your certificate of insurance.

Your insurer can give you a European accident statement form, a standard document that makes it easier to make a declaration on the spot if you have an accident in another country.

Driving safely

In all EU countries, seat belts must now be worn in all vehicles, including tourist coaches and minibuses. Children must also have appropriate child restraints in cars and lorries and, where possible, in other vehicles as well.

Using a mobile phone while driving greatly increases the risk of an accident and it is either explicitly or implicitly forbidden in all EU countries.

The maximum permitted blood alcohol level varies between 0.2 mg/ml and 0.8 mg/ml, although some countries do not allow any alcohol in the blood while driving.

Remember to drive on the left side of the road in Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom and that in some countries, such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Portugal, you normally have to give way to traffic coming from your right.





By air

Creating a single European market in air transport has meant lower fares and a wider choice of carriers and services for passengers. EU measures agreed in 2009 are now improving the performance and safety of the European aviation system and will mean safer, greener and more cost-efficient flights.

Air passenger rights

As an air passenger, you have certain rights when it comes to information about flights and reservations, damage to baggage, delays and cancellations, denied boarding, compensation in the case of accident or difficulties with package holidays. These rights apply to scheduled and chartered flights, both domestic and international, from an EU airport or to an EU airport from one outside the EU, when operated by an EU airline. The EU also maintains a list of airlines banned from operating in the EU and using EU airports. Disabled or elderly passengers are now entitled to free help on aircraft and in EU airports so that they can travel as easily as anyone else. You should, however, give the airline at least 48 hours advance notice of your requirements. Travellers can compare prices of air travel as a result of EU rules to ensure that the price given includes the fare, all taxes, fees and surcharges.

If you have a complaint, first contact the airline or organiser of the package holiday. If they fail to fulfil their obligations then you should complain to the competent national enforcement body. Call the Europe Direct freephone number 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 to get details of the relevant authority.

Security

In order to ensure a high level of security throughout the EU, common rules and standards have been laid down on such things as screening of passengers, cabin and hold baggage and aircraft security checks. There is an agreed EU list of items that are not allowed in the cabin on flights from EU airports and a list of articles banned from the baggage hold. Check also the latest restrictions on carrying liquids.

By rail

The EU has over 212 000 km of railways with extensive international passenger services. There are over 6 000 km of high-speed lines in several countries with trains reaching speeds of up to 350 km/h and the network is being extended.

International rail passenger services are becoming more competitive. Since the beginning of 2010 any licensed, certified rail company established in the EU is now able to offer international services with the right to pick up and set down passengers at any station along the international route.

Rail passengers' rights have been reinforced and improved with better information and rights in the event of delay, missed connections and cancellations. The disabled and elderly are now entitled to free assistance at stations and on trains provided advance notice of special requirements is given.

By water

There are many key sea routes between EU countries offering regular, high-quality services as an alternative to, or in combination with, road, air or rail. There are also 41 000 km of navigable inland waterways in 20 of the 27 EU countries. The EU has been at the forefront of improving maritime safety and promoting high-quality standards with rules to protect passengers and crew sailing on ferries to and from European ports as well as on passenger ships sailing within the EU.



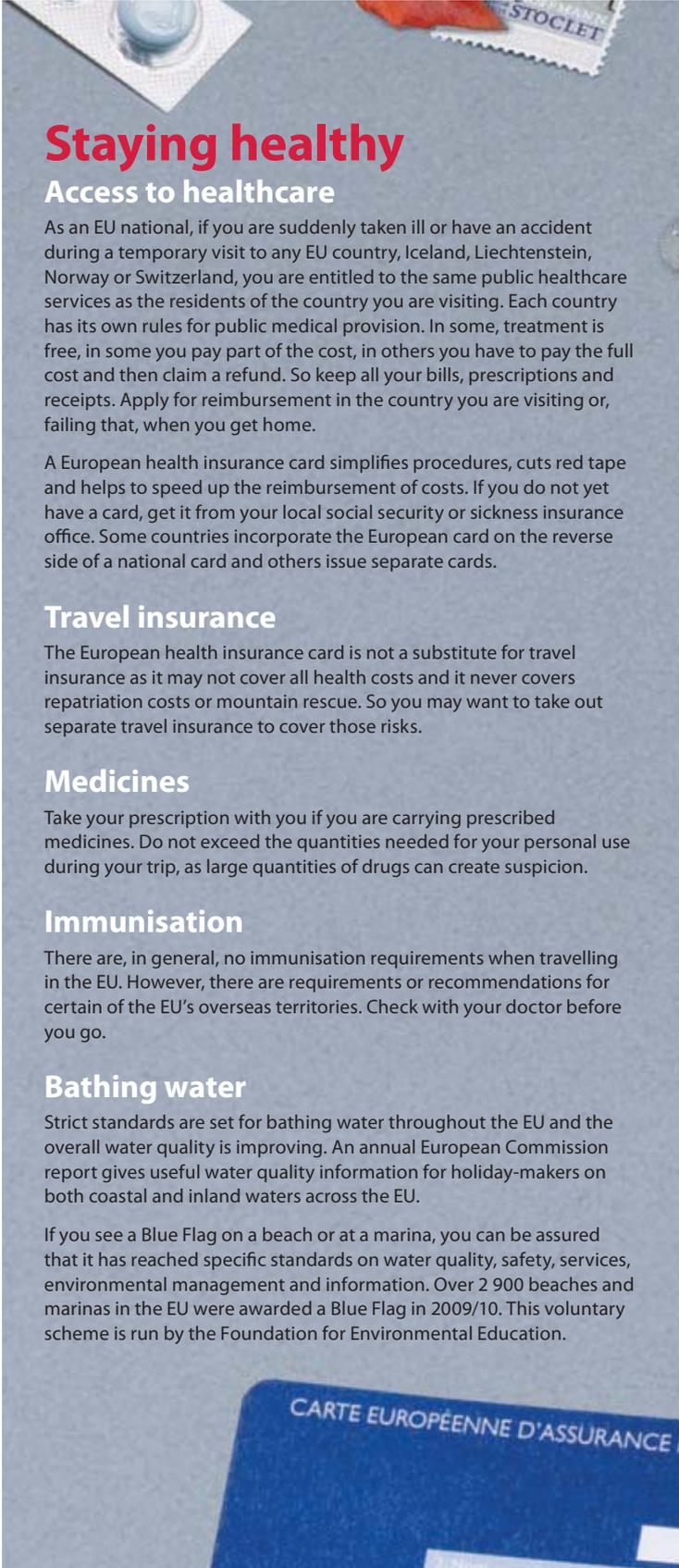
Pets

Travelling with a cat or dog is now much easier with the new EU pet passport available from any vet. All cats and dogs must have a passport containing details of a valid rabies vaccination. Until the end of 2011, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom also require proof that the vaccination has been effective.

In addition, and also until the end of 2011, treatment for ticks and tapeworm is required for entry into Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom. Finland and Sweden require a tapeworm treatment.

An animal has to be identified by an electronic microchip. A clearly readable tattoo is also acceptable until 3 July 2011, except if you are taking your animal to Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom where a microchip is already required.





Staying healthy

Access to healthcare

As an EU national, if you are suddenly taken ill or have an accident during a temporary visit to any EU country, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, you are entitled to the same public healthcare services as the residents of the country you are visiting. Each country has its own rules for public medical provision. In some, treatment is free, in some you pay part of the cost, in others you have to pay the full cost and then claim a refund. So keep all your bills, prescriptions and receipts. Apply for reimbursement in the country you are visiting or, failing that, when you get home.

A European health insurance card simplifies procedures, cuts red tape and helps to speed up the reimbursement of costs. If you do not yet have a card, get it from your local social security or sickness insurance office. Some countries incorporate the European card on the reverse side of a national card and others issue separate cards.

Travel insurance

The European health insurance card is not a substitute for travel insurance as it may not cover all health costs and it never covers repatriation costs or mountain rescue. So you may want to take out separate travel insurance to cover those risks.

Medicines

Take your prescription with you if you are carrying prescribed medicines. Do not exceed the quantities needed for your personal use during your trip, as large quantities of drugs can create suspicion.

Immunisation

There are, in general, no immunisation requirements when travelling in the EU. However, there are requirements or recommendations for certain of the EU's overseas territories. Check with your doctor before you go.

Bathing water

Strict standards are set for bathing water throughout the EU and the overall water quality is improving. An annual European Commission report gives useful water quality information for holiday-makers on both coastal and inland waters across the EU.

If you see a Blue Flag on a beach or at a marina, you can be assured that it has reached specific standards on water quality, safety, services, environmental management and information. Over 2 900 beaches and marinas in the EU were awarded a Blue Flag in 2009/10. This voluntary scheme is run by the Foundation for Environmental Education.

Communicating

Languages

Europe is rich in languages. The main language families in the EU include Germanic, Romance, Slav, Baltic and Celtic. The EU institutions have 23 official languages but there are many other lesser-spoken ones.

Many Europeans speak at least one other language as well as their mother tongue and over a quarter of the adult population speak at least two foreign languages. However, during your travels in Europe, try using a few phrases of the local language when talking to local people. Start with a thank you:

<i>Bulgarian</i>	<i>Blagodarya</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Grazie</i>
<i>Czech</i>	<i>Děkuji</i>	<i>Latvian</i>	<i>Paldies</i>
<i>Danish</i>	<i>Tak</i>	<i>Lithuanian</i>	<i>Ačiū</i>
<i>Dutch</i>	<i>Bedankt</i>	<i>Maltese</i>	<i>Grazzi</i>
<i>English</i>	<i>Thank you</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Dziękujemy</i>
<i>Estonian</i>	<i>Aitäh</i>	<i>Portuguese</i>	<i>Obrigado</i>
<i>Finnish</i>	<i>Kiitos</i>	<i>Romanian</i>	<i>Mulțumesc</i>
<i>French</i>	<i>Merci</i>	<i>Slovak</i>	<i>Ďakujem</i>
<i>German</i>	<i>Danke</i>	<i>Slovene</i>	<i>Hvala</i>
<i>Greek</i>	<i>Efkaristo</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Gracias</i>
<i>Hungarian</i>	<i>Köszönöm</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>Tack</i>
<i>Irish</i>	<i>Go raibh maith agat</i>		

Telephone

There is just one prefix for making international telephone calls anywhere in the EU. It is 00.

The country codes are:

A	Austria	43	GR	Greece	30
B	Belgium	32	H	Hungary	36
BG	Bulgaria	359	I	Italy	39
CY	Cyprus	357	IRL	Ireland	353
CZ	Czech Republic	420	L	Luxembourg	352
D	Germany	49	LT	Lithuania	370
DK	Denmark	45	LV	Latvia	371
E	Spain	34	M	Malta	356
EST	Estonia	372	NL	Netherlands	31
F	France	33	P	Portugal	351
FIN	Finland	358	PL	Poland	48
GB	United Kingdom	44	RO	Romania	40
			S	Sweden	46
			SK	Slovakia	421
			SLO	Slovenia	386





Mobile phones

You can use your mobile phone anywhere in Europe and in many other parts of the world thanks to the EU's GSM technical standard. Mobile phone users abroad have enjoyed significant savings of around 60 % thanks to the EU roaming regulation which sets limits or 'Eurotariffs' on international roaming rates for voice calls. The cost of sending a text from abroad has also been substantially reduced and now costs no more than 11 cents (excluding VAT).

Eurotariff maximum per minute roaming charge in euro (excl. VAT)

	Average charge summer 2006	1 July 2010	1 July 2011
Mobile calls made abroad	€1.10	€0.39	€0.35
Mobile calls received abroad	€0.58	€0.15	€0.11

Operators are free to offer cheaper rates so look out for the best deals. Customers now receive an automated message of the charges that apply for calls, texts and data-roaming services such as surfing the web or downloading movies. A mechanism for protecting consumers from 'bill shock' in data-roaming services has been introduced which means that, following a warning, the consumer's mobile connection to the Internet while abroad is cut when their bill reaches a specified limit. If the customer does not specify a limit, a default cut-off limit of €50 per month is applied.

An EU website (ec.europa.eu/roaming) lists the Eurotariff offered by operators in all 27 EU countries and has links to their websites. Tariffs for sending text messages or using data services can also be compared.

Postage

Postage stamps can only be used in the country in which you buy them, even when priced in euro.

Electricity

All Europe has 220–240 volt, 50 cycle alternating current. Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom have square three-pin plugs but, in general, all other EU countries have two-pin plugs. These may vary but you should be able to use your appliances, such as hairdryers and shavers, anywhere. Adaptors can usually be bought in airports and tourist resorts.



Things to do

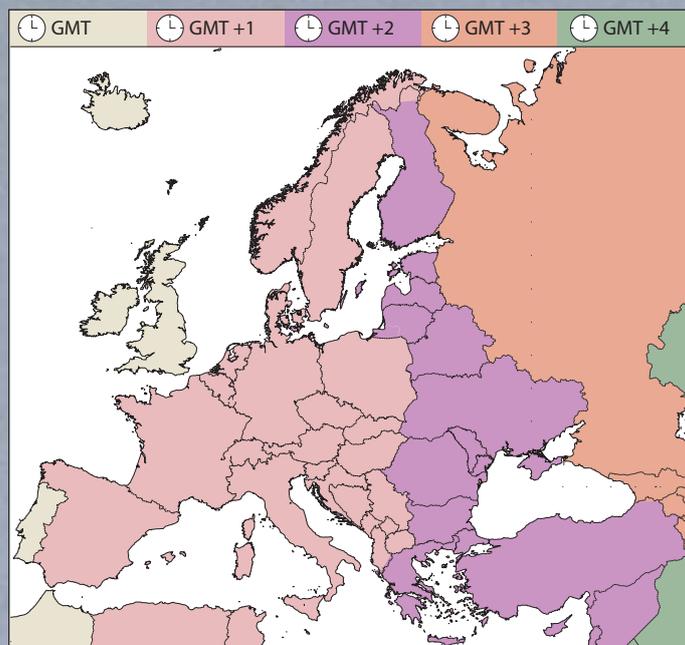
There is a dazzling choice of things to do and see in Europe. For ideas and information on all countries, have a look at the European tourist destinations website (www.visiteurope.com) or go to the websites of the official national tourist organisations of each EU country.

A	Austria	www.austria.info
B	Belgium	www.visitflanders.com www.opt.be
BG	Bulgaria	www.bulgariatravel.org
CY	Cyprus	www.visitcyprus.com
CZ	Czech Republic	www.czechtourism.com
D	Germany	www.germany-tourism.de
DK	Denmark	www.visitdenmark.com
E	Spain	www.spain.info
EST	Estonia	www.visitestonia.com
F	France	www.franceguide.com
FIN	Finland	www.visitfinland.com
GB	United Kingdom	www.visitbritain.com
GR	Greece	www.visitgreece.gr
H	Hungary	www.hungary.com
I	Italy	www.enit.it
IRL	Ireland	www.discoverireland.com
L	Luxembourg	www.visitluxembourg.lu
LT	Lithuania	www.lithuaniantravel.com
LV	Latvia	www.latviatourism.lv
M	Malta	www.visitmalta.com
NL	Netherlands	www.holland.com
P	Portugal	www.visitportugal.com
PL	Poland	www.poland.travel
RO	Romania	www.romaniatourism.com
S	Sweden	www.visitsweden.com
SK	Slovakia	www.slovakia.travel
SLO	Slovenia	www.slovenia.info

The abbreviations for countries are those used on nationality plates on cars.



The EU supports and contributes to many cultural projects and events across Europe every year. One of these is to designate a cultural capital of Europe: Turku in Finland and Tallinn in Estonia share the title in 2011, to be followed by Guimaraes in Portugal and Maribor in Slovenia in 2012. Turku, in the south of Finland, is hosting thousands of events during the year including underwater concerts, a circus, aerial acrobatics, sauna culture, spectacular exhibitions and contemporary opera and theatre. Most of the events are free and about two million visitors are expected. The main venue for major performances and exhibitions is Logomo, a renovated engineering workshop of the Finnish railway company. Further round the Baltic Sea coast, Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, has a packed programme including a choir festival, puppet theatre, circus artists, a winter swimming festival, rooftop cinema, urban installations and experimental art, the first fire sculpture world championships and music ranging from the Afro-reggae rhythms of the young drum orchestra Trumm-It to the premiere of the foremost contemporary Estonian composer's piece for chamber choir and orchestra, Erkki-Sven Tüür. A theatre built entirely out of straw is staging contemporary Estonian and European productions throughout the year.



Time zones

Summer time

Daylight saving time begins across the EU on 27 March 2011 when clocks are moved forward an hour and it ends on 30 October 2011 when clocks are put back an hour. The dates for 2012 are 25 March and 28 October.

If things go wrong

Single European emergency number: 112

To contact the emergency services in any EU country from any phone, fixed or mobile, dial 112, free of charge.

Loss or theft

Report any theft to the local police. You will need to enclose the police report when making your insurance or compensation claim. Cancel any lost or stolen credit cards immediately. If your passport has been stolen, report it to your country's consulate or embassy as well as to the police. Remember that if you are outside the EU you can get help from the consulate or embassy of any other EU country if yours is not represented.

Getting in touch with the EU



ONLINE

Information in all the official languages of the European Union is available on the Europa website: europa.eu



IN PERSON

All over Europe there are hundreds of local EU information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: europedirect.europa.eu



ON THE PHONE OR BY MAIL

Europe Direct is a service which answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00800 numbers or may charge for these calls), or by payphone from outside the EU: +32 2 2999696, or by electronic mail via europedirect.europa.eu



READ ABOUT EUROPE

Publications about the EU are only a click away on the EU Bookshop website: bookshop.europa.eu

You can also obtain information and booklets in English about the European Union from:

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There are European Commission and Parliament representations and offices in all the countries of the European Union. The European Union also has delegations in other parts of the world.



Travelling in Europe 2011–12

Europe: a continent with thousands of years of history, a rich cultural heritage and some of the world's most breathtaking scenery. So much for the traveller to discover and explore and all made much easier thanks to the European Union (EU).

You can cross many borders within the EU without being checked and the euro makes it easier to shop around for bargains. You have easy access to healthcare should you need it and your dog or cat can travel with you. If you drive, your driving licence and motor insurance policy issued in one EU country are valid in all the others. And using your mobile phone abroad is getting much cheaper.

For more information, helpful tips and a map of Europe, see inside.



This *Travelling in Europe 2011–12* leaflet is also published on the Internet in an extended version, which provides links to more detailed information on the subjects covered:

europa.eu/travel

europa.eu/travel

You can find this leaflet and other short, clear explanations about the EU online at ec.europa.eu/publications

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