

**Press contact**

Janneke Kraanen  
BCD Travel  
[janneke.kraanen@bcdtravel.nl](mailto:janneke.kraanen@bcdtravel.nl)  
+31 20 204 8053

**Press contact**

Antje Gasster  
BCD Travel  
[antje.gasster@bcdtravel.de](mailto:antje.gasster@bcdtravel.de)  
+49 30 40365 4288

## NEWS RELEASE

## BCD Travel 2023 Cities & Trends Report: Amsterdam and New York are the top destinations for European business travelers

**UTRECHT, The Netherlands, March 14, 2024** - According to BCD Travel's [Cities & Trends Europe 2023 edition](#), Amsterdam and New York are the most visited cities for European business travelers. The most popular countries are Germany and the United States. The report is based on BCD flight and car rental data in 2023 in a range of [European markets](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### Top 10 business travel cities

Overall, business travel spend in Europe in 2023 has recovered to 96% of pre-pandemic (2019) levels. Recovery varies by region and country, and depends on geopolitical developments, supplier inventory and other factors. In line with [GBTA's 2023 findings](#), Western Europe is clearly leading with the top 10 intra-European cities driven by the return of face-to-face meetings and events, and the rebound in international business travel capacity and volumes. The rest of Europe is recovering slower, challenged by the war in Ukraine among other reasons.

The list of intercontinental cities is led by the U.S. with seven cities in the top 10. However, Dubai is performing very well in third place. The emirate is heavily focused on growth, [planning to become the world's most visited destination](#). Other cities that complete the top 10 are Singapore and Shanghai.

2023 ranking	Intra-European cities	Intercontinental cities
1	Amsterdam	New York City
2	London	Chicago
3	Frankfurt	Dubai
4	Munich	Washington D.C.
5	Paris	San Francisco
6	Copenhagen	Boston
7	Zurich	Atlanta
8	Vienna	Los Angeles
9	Brussels	Singapore
10	Stockholm	Shanghai

"While global business travel rebounds, the pace of recovery in China has been more gradual," said Jonathan Kao, managing director of North Asia. "Beijing has dropped off the list from its 2019 position as the eighth most visited intercontinental city for European business travelers, and Shanghai has fallen from second to 10th place. Despite this, we're encouraged by the recent visa exemptions for travelers from certain European countries, and overall, more lenient visa procedures. We anticipate a significant resurgence in business travel to China in 2024, evidenced by the early increase in travel volumes we've seen in the first two months of 2024."

### Top five business travel countries

Germany is the most visited European country, followed by the United Kingdom which dropped from first place in 2019 to second in 2023. After Brexit, EU and Swiss citizens need a valid passport to travel to the U.K. and can no longer freely enter the country with a national ID card since October 2021.

Nevertheless, the U.K. remains a top destination for business travel. The Netherlands, France and Italy follow in third, fourth and fifth place, respectively.

The U.S. is leading the intercontinental ranking, followed by the United Arab Emirates, India and China. This demonstrates the strong trading relationship between Europe and Asia. Canada closes the ranking in fifth place.

<b>2023 ranking</b>	<b>Intra-European countries</b>	<b>Intercontinental countries</b>
1	Germany	United States
2	United Kingdom	United Arab Emirates
3	Netherlands	India
4	France	China
5	Italy	Canada

“Risks like geopolitics and rising crime, new sustainability legislation and remote work continue to impact business travel volumes and where travel budgets are directed to,” said Michèle Lawley, BCD’s president of Europe. “Airline capacities once sufficient might become scarce. A destination once safe might have become dangerous for travelers. These are some examples of why travel programs quickly need to adjust to new circumstances. We support our corporate clients by keeping them abreast of any developments, advising them on supplier negotiations, managing risks, and providing travelers with tools they like to use.”

### Top 10 business travel routes

The most frequently traveled [routes<sup>2</sup>](#) for intercontinental flights from Europe depart from London and Frankfurt, together accounting for eight positions in the top 10. Amsterdam and Paris complete the list of European departure hubs in ninth and tenth place.

The top 10 arrival hubs for intercontinental routes are largely dominated by the U.S., with New York City being the most popular. Shanghai is the only APAC arrival hub in the list.

<b>2023 ranking</b>	<b>Intercontinental routes</b>
1	London to New York City
2	Frankfurt to Chicago
3	Frankfurt to New York City
4	London to Los Angeles
5	London to Chicago
6	Frankfurt to Washington D.C.
7	Frankfurt to San Francisco
8	Frankfurt to Shanghai
9	Amsterdam to Atlanta
10	Paris to New York City

### Cabin class

When looking at the cabin class European travelers booked for intercontinental flights in 2023, business class leads with 47%, followed by economy class with 42%. Premium economy accounts for 10% and first class for only 1%. This is slightly different from the results in a soon to be published report with insights about U.S. travelers, where business class and economy class make up for respectively 53% and 36% on intercontinental flights.

### Flight type

When traveling for business in Europe, 84% of booked flights are direct with only 16% as connecting flights. However, for intercontinental travel, the breakdown is almost equal: 51% of booked flights are direct, 49% are connecting flights.

“The chosen service class, type of flight and even the route have a direct effect on CO2 emissions,” Lawley added. “For example, direct flights offer a shorter route and use less fuel on landing and take-off than connecting flights. By analyzing their emissions data, companies can hone in on what behaviors or policies they want to influence or change to support smart and purposeful travel.”

## Car rental

For 21% of all air bookings in Europe, travelers book a rental car with an average of four days. Germany leads the ranking for car rental with five cities in the top 10: Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Berlin. Other top 10 car rental cities include Paris, London, Amsterdam, Milan and Barcelona.

According to a recent BCD car rental survey of more than 900 business travelers worldwide, most business travelers rent a car to visit their company’s office, meet with clients or provide onsite service. The most common reasons for renting a car instead of using other means of transportation are convenience, speed, lack of alternatives and price. Intermediate/standard cars are rented most often, followed by compact/economy. Click [here](#) for more findings from the car rental survey.

The full *Cities & Trends Europe 2023 report* with insights about European travelers can be found [here](#).

*Ref. 1: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K.*

*Ref. 2: Top routes combine data of multiple airports for the following cities: London (Heathrow, London Gatwick and London City); Paris (Charles de Gaulle and Orly); New York City (John F. Kennedy, Newark and La Guardia); Shanghai (Shanghai Pudong and Shanghai).*

**-END-**

## Hi-res image(s)

[BCD Travel - Michèle Lawley](#)

[BCD Travel - Jonathan Kao](#)

[BCD Travel - Top 10 cities](#)

[BCD Travel - Top 5 countries](#)

[BCD Travel - Top 10 routes](#)

## About the report

Business travel can be a seismograph of economic growth. The rise and fall of business travel volumes reflect the level and health of economic activity within a region or country. BCD’s latest *Cities & Trends 2023 Europe edition* shows the top destinations for European business travelers with insights into how they travel. The findings are based on BCD flight and car rental data from 2023 in a range of European markets. The upcoming *Cities & Trends 2023 U.S. edition* will publish soon too. The reports are produced annually.

## About BCD Travel

BCD Travel helps companies travel smart and achieve more. We drive program adoption, cost savings and talent retention through digital experiences that simplify business travel. Our 13,000 dedicated team members service clients in 170+ countries as we shape a sustainable future for business travel. For more information, visit [www.bcdtravel.com](http://www.bcdtravel.com).