

NORDICS REPORT

January 2026

Travel
South
USA

Prepared By:

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ABOUT TSUSA

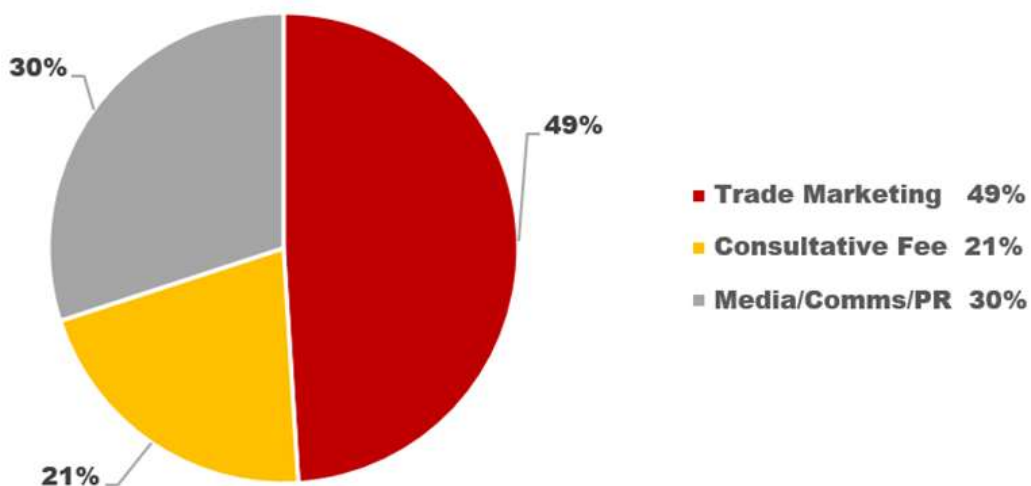
Global Partner Programming

The TSUSA GPP provides a foundational base from which state tourism offices have shared in country representation with international export marketing and sales activities. Managed by Travel South USA, the official regional destination marketing organization for the 12 state tourism offices, these collaborative efforts create leveraged actions, increase reach of travel trade and journalists, and coordinated consumer campaigns which deliver visitors to the South. In 2019, the Travel South USA region welcomed 10.2 million visitors, who spent \$10.3 billion, with 90% of these visitors arriving from 15 markets from around the globe.

The Nordic Region – Denmark, Sweden and Norway have a combined population of approximately 27 million citizens, with have historical high levels of disposable income and extensive vacation days. They rank 10th in visitor volume and often seek off-the-beaten path destinations. They are polite, approachable, and speak English well. They traditionally are willing to adapt to local culture, willing to try local cuisine, tip generously and have prior to the pandemic planned holiday with longer itineraries with more stops than other European visitors. Scandinavians enjoy five to six weeks vacation. There were an impressive range of types of southern tours being sold in the Nordic market prior to the pandemic and booking travel with professional operators for long-haul travel is very common. Therefore, we plan to prioritize travel trade marketing efforts and partnering with operators in consumer efforts for FY22 .

FY 26 Nordic GPP

Resource Allocations



I. Executive Summary

- Attended TravelMatch and the Grand Travel Awards in Oslo on 8 January, completing a full schedule of B2B appointments with Norwegian tour operators and media, generating multiple follow-up opportunities.
- Hosted a successful Denmark media event on 26 January, featuring a presentation and bourbon tasting, resulting in strong journalist engagement and confirmed story placements.
- Conducted 16 travel-trade meetings/trainings in January, training 11 Nordic agents as part of ongoing market engagement efforts.
- Completed 3 media meetings, which contributed to 2 published articles and generated 26,700 impressions during the month.
- Distributed the January Travel South newsletter to 486 recipients, achieving a 32.7% open rate and a 2.52% click-through rate.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	Q1 TTL	Q2 TTL	Q4 TTL	FY 25/26 Total	
AL/KY /LA/M O/NC/ SC/TN /ROTS	Nordics							
	Travel Trade							
	Meetings/Trainings	16			20	25		61
	# Agents Trained	11			8	256		275
	Media							
	Media Meetings	3			7	9		
	Total # articles published	2			16	24		
	Impressions	26,700			4m	6.9m		10,942,770

II. Travel Trade

Contact	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/Next Steps
FDM Travel – Frederik Øhrgaard / Birgitte Vraadal	We met with Frederik and Birgitte at their new sales office in downtown Copenhagen. Frederik began with a update on the market. Sentiment for travel to the US has taken a big hit with recent geopolitical events and it is our joint feeling that it is best to suspend our marketing campaign at this time. A postponement rather than cancellation as it will make it easier to resume and show our joint commitment to the project. Frederick is unable to attend the TS event in London in March as he will be away. He is however looking to secure his CEO to attend. Fuller details of the event have been forwarded.	Follow up with Frederik on March event
USA Rejser – Christian Walker Willumsen	Met with Christian at the new USA Rejser offices in Copenhagen. The offices in the main shopping area had no provision for customer meetings. Christian also advised that consumer sentiment for travel to the US is severely down. They have ceased social media postings as they are a US specialist and the company name has attracted many negative comments. They are handling a small amount of repeat customers but are largely focusing on their Norwegian brand which is doing well. They are still very keen to maintain contact as things can change fast and they have positioned themselves ready for as and when things improve.	
Travel South Mission – London/March 2026	We have approached four Nordic entities to attend the seminar in London on the 18 th March. FDM (Denmark) Swanson's (Sweden) AmerikaSpesialisten (Norway) Kilroy Group (Denmark). Swanson's (Magnus Hermansson) and AmerikaSpesialisten (June Jundeby) have confirmed attendance. FDM are considering sending their CEO. Kilroy have no-one at a group level they can send and speaking with Frederik at FDM, who was a senior exec at Kilroy, he confirms they do not have the structure or commercial set up to direct at the group level.	
Swanson's Travel – Johan Rudolf	Johan has offered us the opportunity to undertake a training session for the Swanson's staff ahead of their America Day at the end of	

	February. We will also sponsor their dinner and attend alongside Discover America.	
Discover America Sweden – Johnny Gardsater	Johnny advised Discover America will be holding trade dinner events in Malmo and Gothenburg on the 18/19 March. We had to decline as this clashes with the Travel South London events and it was a short notice activity not on our plan or budgeted for. There is also no opportunity for individual training or presentations at these events.	
Discover America Denmark	In discussion with board members of the Danish Discover America association, we have learned that the USA event at the end of February has been renamed the 'Americas Day' and will now include suppliers from the Caribbean and possibly Canada (depending upon Canadian Tourism support). This is largely around concerns around turn-out for the event due to sentiment around travel to the US. Discover America will also move to join the Brand USA supported events due to be held in September. This will now involve events in Stockholm, Oslo, Helsinki and Copenhagen.	
American Trails – Jonas Larson	Jonas advise that American Trails has launched its first B2B newsletter, aimed at providing information on previous activity and also outlining upcoming articles and events.	
Hablo – Russell Meara/Johnny Gardsatter/Widar Jensen and Rebecca Taernstroem	Following several meetings with Discover America Sweden and Norway Discover America Sweden will lead the soft launch of Hablo in the Nordics. They have created a page and will launch with a promotion led by Russell and Johnny. We are in final discussions and there may be a Discover America Nordics page created and then content is posted by market. Russel is heading to Stockholm ahead of the Swanson's show for a meeting with Johnny. Swanson's will join also as they have a large travel industry base and see an opportunity to use Hablo to promote to the trade.	
Travel Match / Grand Travel Awards - Oslo	We attended TravelMatch in Oslo on January 8 th with the Grand Travel Awards taking place the same evening. Travel Match is the only B2B travel industry event in Norway and is an appointment-based event. The appointments were as follows: <u>daGama Traveller Magazine – Jan Johannessen</u> daGama features two publications; 'Insider' a hotel guide and 'Know the City' a city guide.	

They have a combined reach of 90k, with 10% of subscribers in the US. They publish twice a year. April's issue has been cancelled but they are keeping the fall edition. Jan thought this might be an opportunity for the like of Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans. They have no other US cities featured.

Fotefar temareiser AS – Marianne Ryssdal
Fotefar, with an annual turnover of 90 million Kr (\$9.4m) operate themed tour across the globe. Their Southern tour features Nashville/Memphis and New Orleans. The April tour has been cancelled but they are keeping the fall tour 'for now'.

Aparte Reiser AS SRL – Cristian Turc
Operating in both Oslo and Bucharest, Aparte Reiser has been operating for 15 years. They were keen to get a local DMC for the south and wanted something 'local'. I mentioned Rey Royal and have passed their details on to Tomas Rey.

Travelletters – Lena Eriksen
Travelletters is an online travel magazine that targets 40-60 year old female decision makers and focusing on sustainability. They operate under travelletter.net in Norwegian. There is also a tab for English but this offers different content.

Temareiser AS – Liv Hammersmark
Temareiser offer themed tours, based around culture, history and music. Liv was keen to secure a DMC in the South. Have provided Rey Royal details.

TAKs verden – Anna Kittilsen Johansson
TAKs Verden have been in operation for 2 years and currently offer FIT and Group tours currently focusing on SE Asia and Africa. Ann took a TS Guide and business card and will touch base if they expand to the USA.

Unike Reiser – Katharina Wiig

Katharina has been to TS showcase in the past and has a good amount of Southern product. She is also on the board of Discover America Norway. Unike has changed their communications approach with a big switch to their blog content and away from social media.

Sembo.no / Stena Line Travel Group AB - Jacob Nordendahl

Jacob has recently joined Sembo and is keen to develop content. We will liaise on product development. Sembo are a possible target for TS showcase. We also discussed content around 'hidden gems' for their blog.

Epique Golf (Unike Reiser) – Raymond Johansen

Raymond is familiar with the Carolinas golf product but was keen to explore other area. We discussed the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and he was keen to research accommodations around this. He will feed back what he finds and we will assist as necessary.

Magiske Reiser AS – Ole Vidar Skogheim

Ole is now partnering with several key tour operators in Norway leveraging his intimate knowledge of theme parks and ride attractions. He is also interested in hotels such as Gaylord and Bear Creek and will look at these across the south.

Vega Reiser AS – Tove-Merete Lilledal

Vega Reiser primarily focuses on cultural and associations tours in Scandinavia and Europe. We had a good discussion around the history, culture and music of the South. Tove found these interesting and may consider expanding to the USA when she feels the demand is there.

TravelMatch & Grand Travel Awards



III. Communications & PR

Contact	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/Next Steps
Monthly Travel South Newsletter	<p>Find attached the coverage chart and the PDF's for the January newsletter.</p> <p>Newsletter links DK: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=416135724797740&format=web NO: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=848768940846295&format=web SE: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=201523542826369&format=web FI: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=827864398154527&format=web</p> <p>Newsletter stats Delivered: 486 Open rate: 159 (32.7%) Click rate: 4 (2.52%)</p>	
Media Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oliver Orskaug, Journalist for Finansavisen and Kapital Reise (NO) – Discussing press trip opportunities. Oliver is in dialogue with the editor of Kapital Reise about whether he can take part in GMM • Fredrik Brändström, Editor in chief for Vagabond (SE) – Interested in press trips to USA, but right now does not look like the right timing for them. • Anneli Juutilainen, freelance for tier 1 media (FI) – Discussing press trip opportunities. Anneli is very interested in visiting the Southern states but has a hard time selling a story to Finnish media. 	
Media event 26th of January	<p>We hosted a successful media event in Denmark, featuring an inspiring presentation and a bourbon tasting. The event sparked many great conversations with journalists. Among other outcomes, Louise Alkjar (who is attending the Media Marketplace and Fam in Mobile) sold a couple of stories to the newspaper Berlingske. Overall, the journalists showed strong interest in visiting, but it is more difficult than usual for them to get stories commissioned, as many media outlets either do not publish U.S. travel stories or are keeping them to a minimum.</p>	

Attendees were

- Lise Kloch – Editor for Berlingske
- Judith Beak – Freelance for Rejser, Børsen, Berlingske
- Louise Alkjær – Freelance for Berlingske, Politiken
- Frederik Øster – Journalist for Travelmore
- Silke Huniche – Journalist for Travelmore
- Lissen – Freelance for Ritzau, Rejser
- Charlotte Mielko – Freelance for Elle and several magazines
- Tina Dines Appelt – Freelance for Luxury Afficionados

Media Event - Copenhagen





IV. Newsletters

TravelSouth
All You're Welcome USA

Press release

Visit the Southern States in 2026: New themed routes, museums and nature experiences

In 2026, the Southern United States will offer a range of new cultural experiences. Visitors can follow a series of themed routes highlighting music, food and African-American heritage, explore interactive museums and experience Tennessee's Smoky Mountains as fireflies light up the darkness on a three-day backpacking trip.



New route highlights African-American heritage in Kentucky

Kentucky recently launched a trail called the Kentucky African American Heritage Trail. The trail brings together more than 50 significant sites that highlight African-American Kentuckians and their remarkable resilience, culture, and contributions to both the state and the country. Among the sites are Camp Nelson National Monument in Nicholasville, where former slaves found freedom and fought for the Union, and the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, which offers insight into the boxing legend's fight for social justice, human rights, and racial equality.

[Read more](#)



Firefly experience in Tennessee's Smoky Mountains

In June, adventurers can experience a special three-day backpacking trip in Tennessee's Smoky Mountains, where the mountains are illuminated by 15 species of glowing fireflies as darkness falls. During the day, explore the park's lush ecosystems, learn about plants and their uses, wildlife habits, and get helpful tips for safe wilderness travel. At night, the forests transform into a luminous spectacle, where you can experience the fireflies' natural light in full action.

[Read more](#)



Hot Sauce route in Louisiana

In Louisiana, experience the new Louisiana Hot Sauce Trail, which features 17 stops at hot sauce locations across the state. The route highlights small-scale hot sauce producers, a visit to Tabasco, and special sites like the Hot Sauce Shrine at Abita Mystery House, a quirky and photogenic exhibit filled with hundreds of hot sauce bottles. Along the way, visitors can sample local flavors, learn about the production of hot sauce, and learn the history behind some of the most iconic brands.

[Read more](#)



Iconic lighthouse reopens in North Carolina

This summer, the iconic Cape Hatteras Lighthouse on the Outer Banks coast will reopen after an extensive restoration. The lighthouse is one of the most recognized and represented lighthouses in art and photography. At 195 feet (58 meters), the lighthouse is the tallest brick lighthouse in the United States and can cast light for more than 15 miles (25 kilometers) in all directions. Visitors can climb to the top of the lighthouse and enjoy the stunning views.

[Read more](#)



Music and culture on a new route in Mississippi

The city of Greenwood will introduce a new route with 22 special stop signs in 2026. The route introduces visitors to personalities and attractions related to blues and country music, civil rights history and literature. The route will be accompanied by an online visitor pass that can be used to scan QR codes at the various stops and earn rewards in the form of prizes.

[Read more](#)



Rhythms of the South: Museums with a focus on history, culture and music

The cities of Atlanta, Nashville and New Orleans are a popular combination on many road trips, and in 2026 they will offer a number of museum innovations that focus on history, culture and music.

In Atlanta, the [National Center for Civil and Human Rights](#) has undergone a \$56 million expansion, and now offers a number of new experiences such as an exhibit on the Reconstruction period and a family exhibit space targeted at children under 12.

The new Dolly Parton-themed [Songteller Hotel](#) in Nashville will open in June. The hotel will also feature a museum, featuring the largest Dolly Parton exhibit to date, giving visitors an up close look at Dolly Parton's career and personal memories.

In New Orleans, the [JAMNOLA](#) (Joy Art Music New Orleans) museum opens. The museum is a kind of "fun house" with a series of colorful and creative exhibitions. Here, visitors walk through different rooms with artwork and interactive elements that tell the story of New Orleans' culture in a lively and visually engaging way.

About Travel South USA

Travel South USA is the tourism board for 12 states in the southern United States. Here you will find a wonderful mix of beaches, mountains, music, culture and culinary experiences. With short distances between cities and experiences, the area is perfect for a USA road trip.

Here you can drive along green fields or along winding roads in the Great Smoky Mountains - or enjoy the lush landscape along the 1,200-mile Coast Highway, which runs from the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the ocean and beaches. Along the way, you can enjoy the hospitality of small towns, delve into the region's unique musical history, visit local bourbon distilleries or explore the diverse food culture.

www.travelsouth.visittheusa.com

See press rooms for all states here: www.industry.travelsouthusa.com/media

Attachments

[Kentucky_Muhammad Ali Center Interior.jpg](#)

[Tennessee_Blue Ghost and Synchronous Firefly experience.webp](#)

[Louisiana_Miles.LOT.PK.Tabasco.011.JPG](#)

[North Carolina_Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Outer Banks Morning Shot.jpg](#)

[Mississippi_Greenwood.jpg](#)

[Atlanta_Exterior @ Albert Vecerka-Esto & The Freelon Group HOK.jpg](#)

[Louisiana_Tabasco.jpg](#)

[Nashville_SongTellerHotel_rendering.png](#)

[Cotton District Greenwood.jpg](#)

[Mississippi-Clarksdale-Ground Zero-Slaga.jpg](#)

[Louisiana_Tabasco bottles.tif](#)

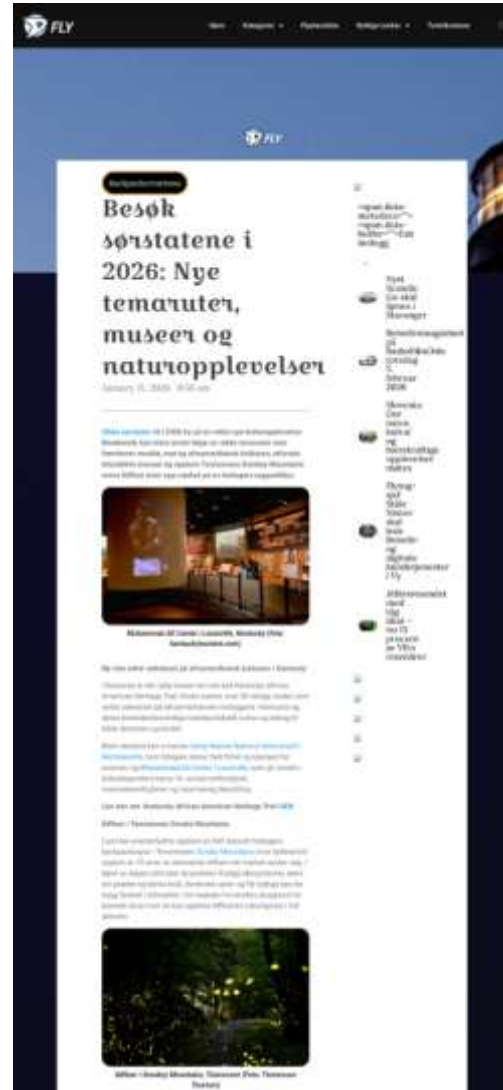
Contact information

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Sample Media Coverage



Les mer om Synchromus Firefly Backpacking [HER](#)

Hot sauceroute i Louisiana

I Louisiana kan du oppleve den nye Louisiana Hot Sauce Trail, som har 17 stopp på steder som selger hot sauce rundt om i delstaten. Ruten setter søkelyst på endeligproducenter av hot sauce ved å besøke **Tabasco** og spesielle steder som Hot Sauce Shrine i **Ada Mych's House**, en utstilling og fotograf utstilling fylt med hendelser av hot sauce-fancker.



Tabasco Restaurant 1868 på Avery Island i Louisiana (Fotofabrikk: Jouniertravel.com)

Lange ruter kan besøke de smake seg frem til det beste vinen, lære om produksjon av hot sauce og lære historien bak noen av de mest kjente merkene.

Les mer om Louisiana Hot Sauce Trail [HER](#)

Historisk fyrlys gjenspeiler i North Carolina

I sommer gjenspeiler det ikoniske **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse** på kysten av Outer Banks uten en omfattende restaurering. Fyret er et av de mest erkeoplyste og avbildede fyrene i sin land og fotograf. Med sine 50 meter er fyret det høyeste muretsfyret i USA, og det kan ses fra i over 25 kilometer i alle retninger. Som besøkende kan du gå opp til toppen av fyret og nyte din vakre utsikt.



Morgensolnng ved Cape Hatteras fyr som ble bygd i 1849 og ligger i Outer Banks i Nord-Carolina (Foto: © Visit North Carolina)

Les mer om Cape Hatteras Lighthouse [HER](#)

Musikk og kultur på en ny rute i Mississippi

I byen Greenwood ble en ny rute med 22 spesielle stoppesteder introdusert i 2016. Ruten introduserer besøkende for personligheter og utvalgte steder knyttet til musikk- og countrymusikk, biografier/historier og litteratur. Ruten er knyttet til et nettverk av besøkende som kan brukes til å skaffe til koder på de forskjellige stoppene og rulle forhåpninger.



Grand Zero Blues Club, Clarksdale, Mississippi (Fotofabrikk: TravelSouth USA)

Les mer om blues- og countrymusikk-ruten i Mississippi [HER](#)

Byene i sør: museer med fokus på historie, kultur og musikk

Byene Atlanta, Nashville og New Orleans er en populær kombinasjon på mange måter, og i 2016 vil de tilby en rekke musikk- og kulturprogrammer som fokuserer på historie, kultur og musikk.

I Atlanta har **National Center for Civil and Human Rights** gjennomført en utstilling på 36 millioner dollar og tilbyr nå en rekke nye aktiviteter, som en utstilling om gjennomgangsperioden og et utstillingsrom netter med bare under 12 år.

I den gamle **Songwriter Hotel** i Nashville, der Dolly Parton er tema, forteller får også et museum med den største Dolly Parton utstillingen til dags dato, hvor du kan komme tett på Dolly Parton kamere og personlige historier.



Dolly Parton-utstilling i Songwriter Hotel i Nashville, Tennessee (Foto: Tennessee Tourism)

I New Orleans åpner museet **JAMBOUA (Jazz Art Music: New Orleans)**. Museet er et slags «fusjon» med en rekke fargerike og kreative utstillinger. Her går besøkende gjennom ulike rom med kunstverk og interaktive elementer som forteller historier om New Orleans' kultur på en fyllig og svært engasjerende måte.

V. Market Updates

World Cup 2026

While overall international air travel to the U.S. is softening, demand linked to the 2026 FIFA World Cup host cities remains comparatively strong. Airline bookings from Europe to the U.S. for summer 2026 are currently down 14% year on year, reflecting broader declines in inbound travel and reduced airline seat demand from key European markets.

Importantly for host destinations, this downturn is far less pronounced when looking specifically at World Cup travel. For June 2026, when the tournament begins, bookings into U.S. host cities are down only 5% from Europe, down 3.6% from Asia, and are effectively flat from South America. This indicates that the World Cup is acting as a stabilising force for demand, helping to offset wider softness in international aviation markets.

FIFA forecasts the tournament will deliver \$30.5 billion in economic output and support 185,000 jobs, with host cities expecting an approximate 50/50 split between domestic and international visitors. For tourism partners, this points to strong event-driven demand in host cities, even as airlines experience softer overall booking trends.

The Norwegian Football team is heading to Greensboro, North Carolina as their training base ahead of their group games in Boston and New Jersey.

Nordics Arrival Data – 2025

Arrivals from the Nordics took a hit in 2025 showing an overall decline of almost 12% YOY. However, this was largely driven by a 23.5% drop in arrival from Denmark with the other Nordic market showing a 7-8% decline. This in comparison to an 11% decline in Germany.

Arrivals to the US								
Period January - December 2025 (preliminary)								
Country/Period	Jan - Dec 2025	Jan - Dec 2024	Diff	2023	2022	2019	Population	% Travel to US
DENMARK	180,571	235,894	-23,5%	236,176	214,340	314,060	5,946,984	4,0%
SWEDEN	283,367	304,820	-7,0%	287,747	247,593	451,612	10,536,338	2,7%
NORWAY	159,145	173,412	-8,2%	171,060	143,118	267,930	5,597,924	3,1%
FINLAND	97,405	106,759	-8,8%	101,861	79,288	142,405	5,614,571	1,8%
ICELAND	44,914	45,458	-1,2%	43,099	43,980	60,241	360,872	11,9%
TOTAL AREA	765,402	866,343	-11,7%	839,943	728,319	1,236,248	28,056,689	3,0%
ITALY	1,182,877	1,123,844	5,3%	976,952	717,593	1,086,026	61,021,855	1,6%
FRANCE	1,589,676	1,706,081	-6,8%	1,592,934	1,317,882	1,843,782	62,814,233	2,5%
GERMANY	1,770,112	1,994,786	-11,3%	1,838,481	1,481,008	1,481,008	84,220,184	2,2%
UNITED KINGDOM	4,058,124	4,037,119	0,5%	3,897,534	3,466,107	4,779,997	68,138,484	5,7%