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THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF TOURISM FROM  
THE EUROPEAN MARKET IN SOUTH AFRICA:  
WESTERN CAPE  
2021

**WESGRO**  
cape town & western cape  
research

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# 1. Background

This report reveals the economic benefit of tourism in South Africa. The key focus is on European tourists travelling to South Africa and the Western Cape. The trends following below will indicate the number of travellers visiting, why these tourists decided to visit the country, the number of nights spent as well as the average expenditure used during their stay.

The information used to collate this report was received from data released by South African Tourism (SAT) in 2020.

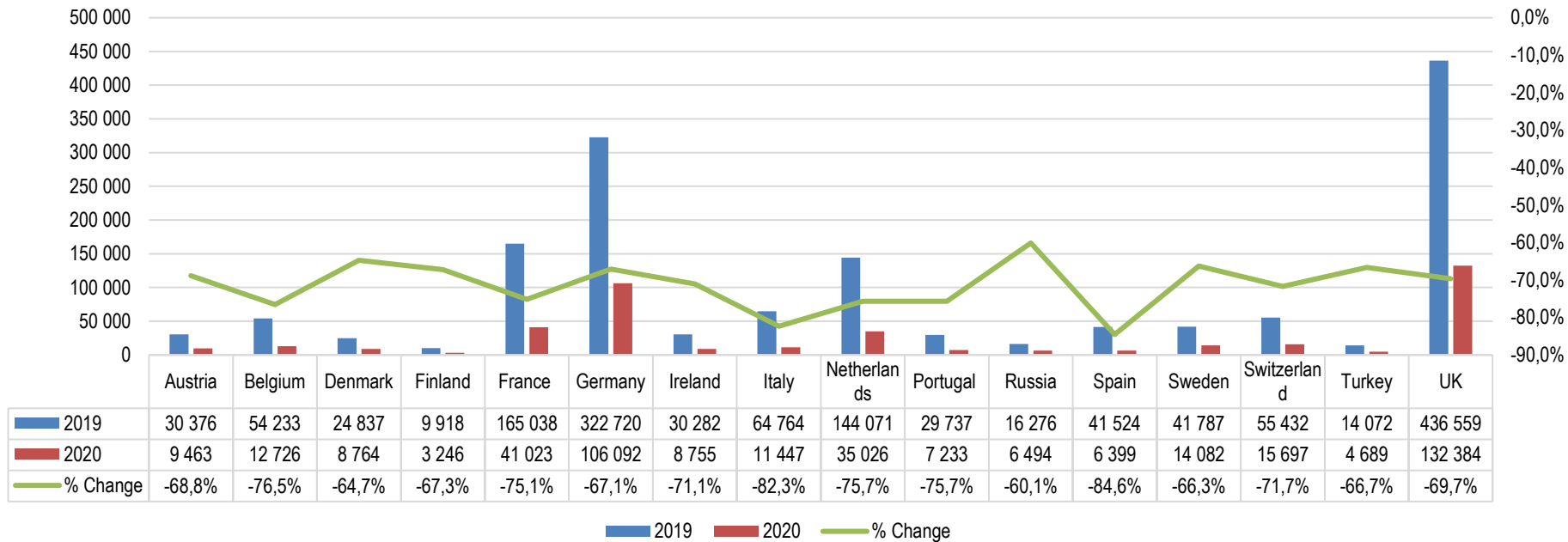


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## 2. European Tourist Arrivals in South Africa

The United Kingdom (132 384), Germany (106 092), France (41 023), Netherlands (35 026) and Switzerland (15 697) were the top 5 leading markets to travel to South Africa in 2020. Although there was a major decline in visitor numbers as compared to 2019 due to the COVID 19 pandemic, European tourists continued to travel to South Africa. The highest decline was from the Spanish market (-84,6) this was closely followed by Italian travellers (-82,3%) and those coming from Belgium (-76,5%).

EUROPEAN ARRIVALS TO SOUTH AFRICA (2019 vs 2020)



### 3. Passenger Movement Through Cape Town International Market (Jan-Jun 2020/21)

The United Kingdom (105 669) led the number of tourists travelling to the Western Cape in 2020. However Germany took the lead in 2021 during the time under review. The highest decline in travellers to the Western Cape was also seen from the United Kingdom (-95,12) and Denmark (-94,02). However, Turkey had the smallest decline in numbers with a mere -10,11% decline in visitors to the Western cape.

Rank	Source Country	Jan-Jun 2020	Jan-Jun 2021	20/21 % Change
1	UK	105 669	5 155	-95,12%
2	Germany	87 060	7 140	-91,80%
3	Netherlands	26 156	4 999	-80,89%
4	France	19 731	2 827	-85,67%
5	Switzerland	14 990	1 850	-87,66%
6	Sweden	12 127	909	-92,50%
7	Belgium	8 867	861	-90,29%
8	Austria	8 751	553	-93,68%
9	Ireland	8 402	979	-88,35%
10	Denmark	8 326	498	-94,02%
11	Italy	6 997	1 594	-77,22%
12	Spain	4 876	1 366	-71,99%
13	Norway	4 275	473	-88,94%
14	Turkey	4 113	3 697	-10,11%
15	Russia	4 103	2 890	-29,56%
16	Portugal	2 342	915	-60,93%
17	Finland	2 272	230	-89,88%

## 4. Purpose of Visit to South Africa

The table below shows the reasons for travel of European visitors to South Africa. Holiday was the most popular reason for travelling to South Africa. This was closely followed by those visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and business travelers.

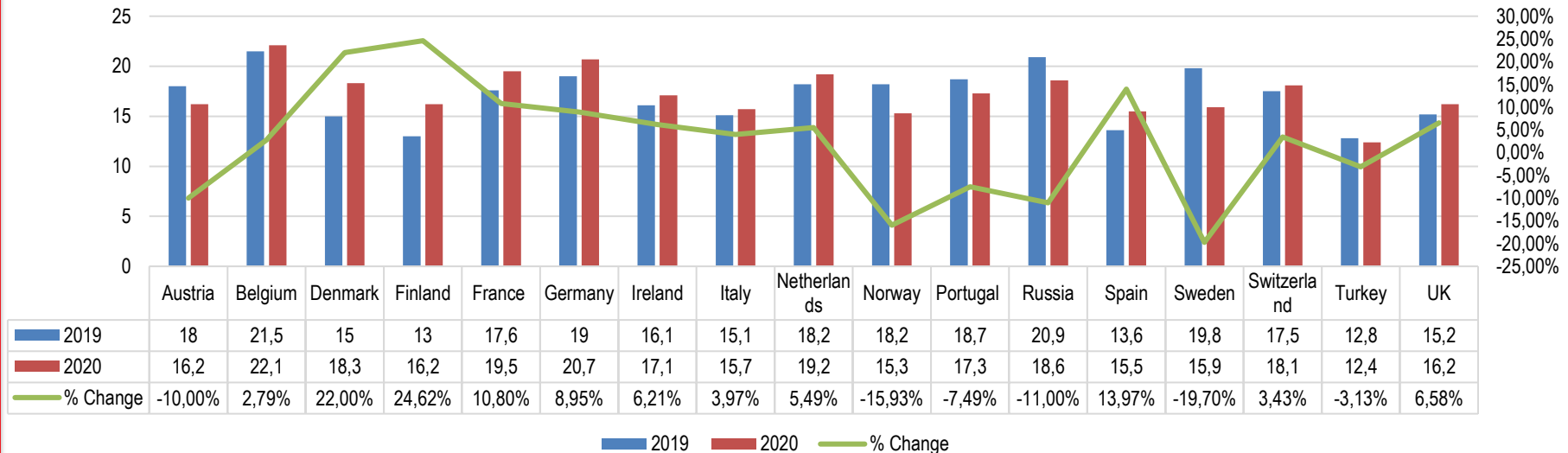
	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Russia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	Turkey	UK
Holiday	70,8%	64,7%	66,4%	61,1%	68,7%	68,4%	55,7%	62,1%	64,1%	56,1%	51,6%	39,6%	60,8%	59,2%	60,4%	48,0%	51,8%
Shopping Personal	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,7%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,1%
Shopping Business	0,1%	0,1%	0,0%	0,3%	0,1%	0,0%	0,0%	0,1%	0,4%	0,0%	0,1%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,1%
Business Traveller	5,2%	6,1%	6,5%	5,6%	6,5%	7,1%	6,7%	11,5%	7,0%	7,9%	7,5%	17,7%	12,5%	7,1%	8,5%	13,8%	5,7%
MICE	8,1%	6,4%	5,7%	8,1%	7,6%	5,2%	8,3%	9,2%	6,4%	5,1%	9,1%	17,2%	10,7%	5,7%	8,5%	17,6%	7,6%
Medical	0,0%	0,1%	0,3%	0,0%	0,4%	0,2%	0,0%	0,5%	0,2%	0,0%	1,2%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,3%
VFR	11,7%	11,5%	16,0%	15,6%	11,1%	12,3%	26,5%	9,7%	15,9%	17,8%	21,7%	18,7%	8,8%	14,3%	16,2%	11,5%	29,8%
Religion	0,0%	0,5%	0,4%	1,9%	0,1%	0,2%	0,8%	0,2%	0,0%	1,3%	0,3%	0,0%	0,0%	1,0%	0,3%	0,0%	0,2%

Source: SA Tourism, 2021

## 5. Average Number of Nights Spent In South Africa

On average travellers from Belgium (21,5 nights), Russia (20,9 nights), Sweden (19,8 nights), Germany (19,0 nights) and Portugal (18,7 nights) spent the longest time in South Africa. Besides the negative effect Covid-19 had on the tourism industry there was a rise in the number of bed nights spent by the following countries in Europe. Finland (+24,62%), Denmark (+22,00%), Spain (+13,97%) and France at (+10,80 %).

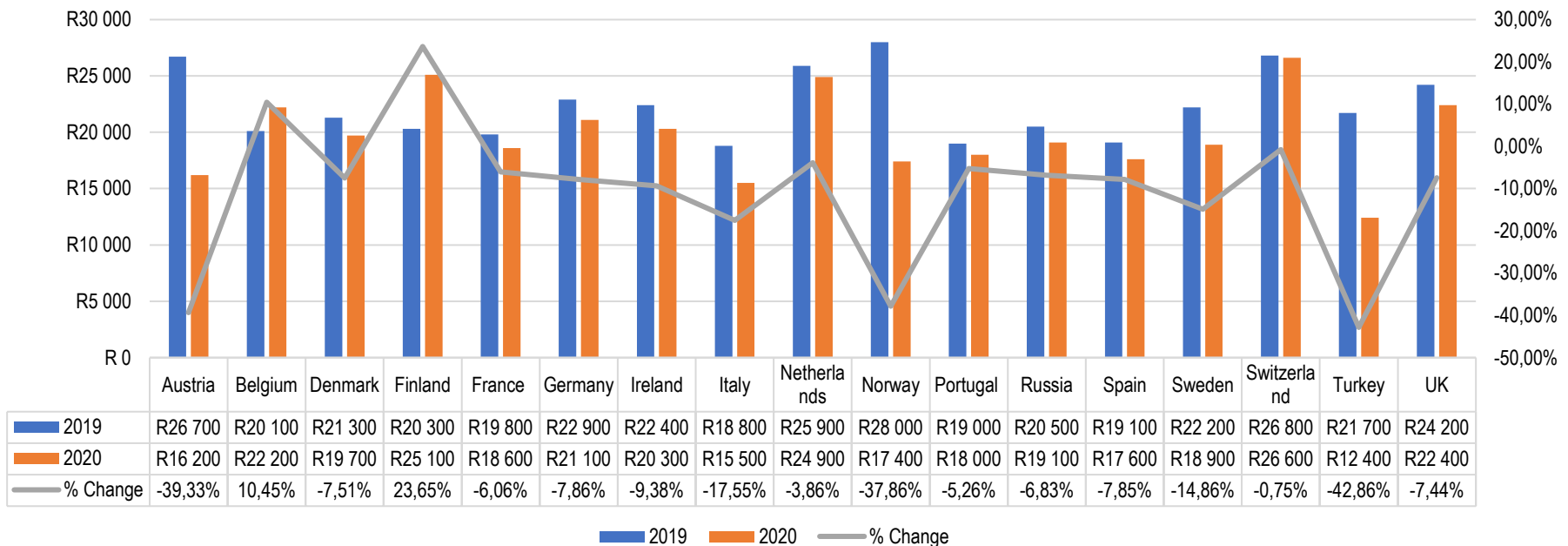
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN SOUTH AFRICA BY EUROPEAN MARKET (2019/20)



## 6. Average Spend In South Africa by European Market

Norway (R28,000), Switzerland (R26,800), Austria (R26,700), Netherlands (R25,900) and the United Kingdom (R24,200) ranked as South Africa's top five highest spenders in 2019. However in 2020 Switzerland (R26 600) had the highest spend from the European market, this was followed by Finland (R25 100) and the Netherlands (R24 900).

AVERAGE SPEND IN SOUTH AFRICA BY EUROPEAN MARKET (2019/20)





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