

Press release

First edition of the Tootbus barometer on sustainable tourism: Europeans are in favor of green tourism... as long as it does not cost them

Paris, July 11, 2022 – Tootbus, RATP Dev’s sightseeing subsidiary, unveils the results of the first edition of its study on sustainable tourism. The survey was conducted by OpinionWay with a panel of British, Belgian, and French respondents. The results show that environmental concerns are a factor in choices relating to tourism, and even exert some influence. But considerations relating to cost remain the most influential.

*“A year ago, we undertook a major overhaul of RATP Dev’s sightseeing business line, which now operates under the Tootbus brand. Making a commitment to environmentally friendly practices was an obvious choice for us, in line with the values that drive RATP Dev. For example, in Brussels, we operate the first 100% electric fleet of sightseeing tour buses,” explains **Arnaud Masson, executive director of sightseeing and digital at RATP Dev.** “But we felt it was important to understand how travelers and tourists feel about the issue of sustainable tourism. In particular, we wanted to investigate our core belief that post-pandemic tourism must factor in caring for the environment, while also offering tourists a meaningful experience and simplicity.”*

Sustainable tourism, a known but vague concept

About two thirds of the respondents said they had heard of the concept of “sustainable tourism”. However, only 32% of the French respondents and 29% of the Belgians could say exactly what it means. 41% of the British respondents said they would be able to offer a definition. As a reminder, the World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities”.

Urban tourism: expensive or sustainable? Europeans are divided

To the question “How do environmental considerations affect how you organize your vacation?” For the majority of the respondents, such considerations come into play above all

when choosing the destination. Conversely, the mode of transportation used to get around once at the destination was the factor least impacted by environmental considerations: only 27% of Belgians and 30% of French take it into account.

It is also worth noting that, across all the nationalities surveyed, women assign greater importance than men to ecological concerns when organizing their vacations.

There are sharp differences between the nationalities when it comes to concepts associated with sustainable tourism. 18% of the French respondents consider it primarily compatible with urban tourism, while 23% of the British and 21% of the Belgians think of it above all as expensive. The same proportion of the Belgian respondents said that they think tourists should pay attention to the environmental impact of their trip.

Travelers consider sustainable tourism more a local concern than an environmental one

When asked about practical actions they consider valuable for promoting sustainable tourism, 71% of French respondents and 70% of British respondents value initiatives that have a local impact: consuming local products, supporting the local economy, or respecting the lifestyle of the local residents. Environmental actions come second: the fight for air quality, waste sorting, reducing food waste... On the other hand, 71% of the Belgian respondents assign greater value to reducing food waste.

Environmentally conscious, budget conscious

Finally, when asked about the importance of environmentally responsible criteria when choosing their leisure activities, 56% of the French and the British, as well as 55% of the Belgians, find them important... as long as they do not cost more. Out of all the respondents, only 17% of the French, 13% of the Belgians, and 19% of the British are ready to pay more for an environmentally responsible factor. Among those willing to pay more, the acceptable extra cost for the French is 10.8% on average, and 11.8% for the Belgians.

In France, Belgium, and the United Kingdom, sustainable tourism benefits from a positive image and visibility, and the advantages of it are clearly recognized. Nevertheless, cost remains a major deterrent to sustainable tourism.

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Methodology: the Tootbus survey was given to a panel of 3,113 respondents (1,027 French, 1,036 Belgian, and 1,050 British) by OpinionWay between May 30 and June 7, 2022, in the form of a self-administered questionnaire.

About RATP Dev

Founded in 2002, RATP Dev operates and maintains urban transportation systems in 14 countries on four continents (the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, China, the Philippines, and the United States of America). Day by day, RATP Dev demonstrates its extensive and renowned expertise in all sorts of mobility services, ranging from rail, regional express rail, tramway, to bus, cable car, and sightseeing tour buses. RATP Dev capitalizes on the technical know-how and experience of the RATP Group—the leader in driverless mobility, tramway services, and operator of the Paris multimodal public transit network, one of the largest in the world—to develop its activities in France and internationally.

A subsidiary of RATP Dev, Tootbus offers its tourist bus experience in Brussels, Paris, London, Windsor, Bath, Bristol, and Cardiff.