

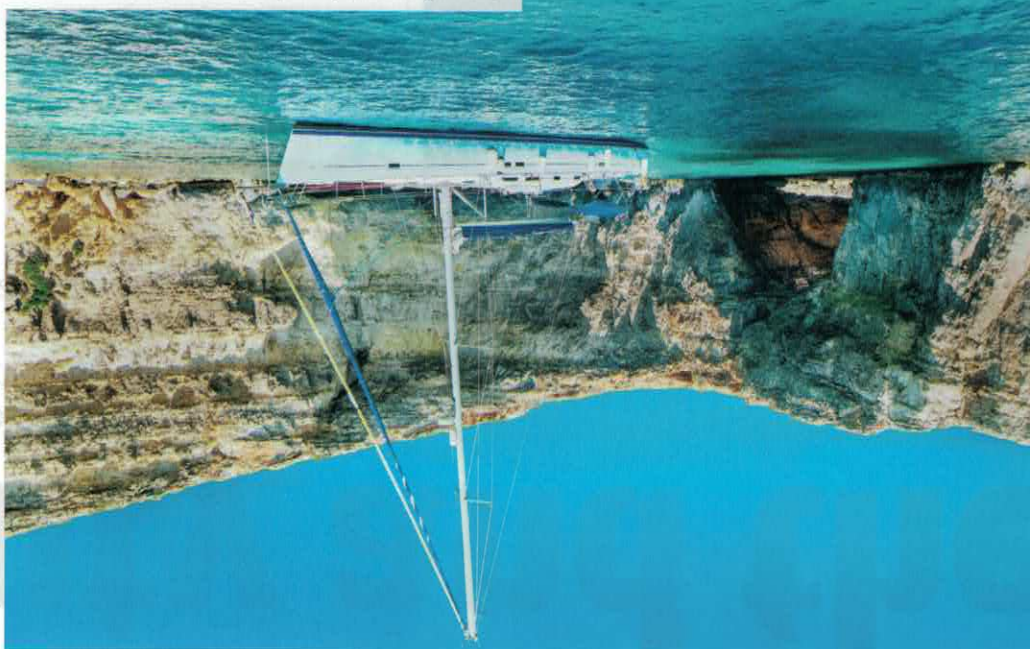
tourists at key sites, creating new attractions, improving the dispersal of visitors, curbing hotel expansion, controlling short-term rentals, and raising prices such as introducing ticketing at formerly free attractions."

Resorts around the Mediterranean are experiencing record demand, partly as a result of visitors avoiding Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey due to terrorism concerns. But visitors are returning to Turkey, while British tour operators will return to Tunisia next year for the first time since the attack on tourists in 2015. Thomas Cook chief executive Peter Fankhauser said Turkey was back in favour, adding: "Greece continues to be the standout destination for summer 2017, while customers are also seeking out smaller destinations like Cyprus (**EU1300**) and Bulgaria (**EU900**). In contrast, following strong growth last year, bookings to the Spanish islands have levelled off in a very competitive market."

### Business booms

Wherever you look around the Mediterranean, visitor numbers are booming. Tourism represents about 20% of GDP in Greece (**EU1200**, **EU1250**), and is vital to lifting it out of a long economic depression. Arrivals in 2016 were up 7.5% from 2015 and reached approximately 28 million. Germany (**EU740**), France and Russia were the fastest growing markets for Greece in the first half of 2017. The forecast for Spain is very positive for 2017 as it expects a new record number of international tourists, surpassing the 75 million of 2016. Numbers were up 11.6% to 36.3 million tourists in the first half of this year. As an example of how some Mediterranean countries hope to grow, the Cyprus Tourism Organisation aims to hit six million visitors by 2030, a nearly threefold increase. 2017 is set to be its most successful year on record after 1.46 million global tourist arrivals in the first half of the year, up 16.6%. A 10.5% increase for Malta (**EU1450**) meant it had nearly two million visitors last year, followed by a 20% increase in the first half of 2017. It is ranked first out of 136 countries in the latest World Economic Forum report, for the priority attached by the government to tourism. "This is indicative of how much we value our tourism industry, which is really thriving. For a small island, we punch well above our weight in terms of profile," said a Malta Tourism Authority spokesperson. Now is the time for all European destinations to plan carefully for the growth that is likely to come - especially islands with limited resources. This week's conference sessions on overtourism promise interesting outcomes.

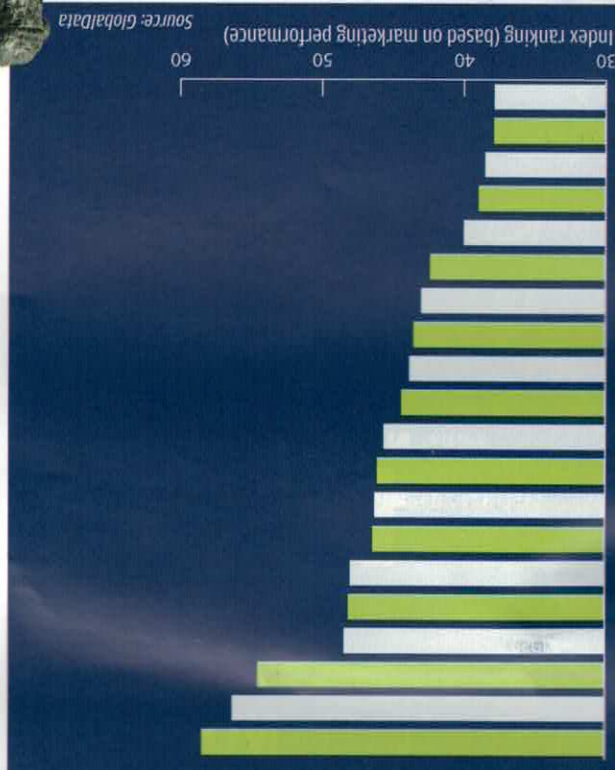
For a small country, Malta punches above its weight in terms of profile



### Facing up to the future

Overtourism looks likely to be an issue for years to come as parts of Europe face up to the problems of success. Despite major terrorist incidents in several cities that have given a negative image of Europe, there is no evidence so far that terror has a long-term effect on visitor numbers. The attacks in Paris (**EU1920**) in 2015 and Nice (**EU1900**) in 2016 hit arrivals, but now France (**EU1900**) is bouncing back. In the first half of 2017 hotels in Paris and the Ile de France hit a 10-year high of 16 million guests, with major increases in Japanese and Chinese visitors. Spain (**EU1500**) is the second most visited country in the world by the number of trips and third in inbound revenue, according to Euromonitor. Barcelona, Madrid (**EU1500**) and Majorca receive collectively 15 million visitors per year. "It is obvious that strategies are needed to cope with large tourism demand," said Caroline Bremner, head of travel at Euromonitor. "Venice is a prime example with the local population declining by two thirds in the last 50 years, with residents moving out whilst tourist numbers have swelled. "In Barcelona the tourist tax, currently used for tourism promotion, will instead be directed towards providing basic services for neighbourhoods most affected by the influx of visitors. Other strategies could include imposing quotas on the number of

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Source: GlobalData

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