

# Headwind for tourist destinations

## TV news coverage in 2004 and the travel plans of Germans

**Research Links:**  
<http://www.globaltraveltourism.com/>  
<http://www.wttc.org/>

**Literature:**

Opaschowski, Horst W.:  
 Tourismusanalyse 2005  
 mit Grundlagenforschung,  
 Hamburg 2005

Opaschowski, Horst W.:  
 Tourismusanalyse 2006,  
 Hamburg 2006

In the German media, tourism often appears as an entertaining pastime for the German people. Tourist destinations, however, generally depend on travelers from Germany – and on positive media coverage.

Time and again, natural disasters and conflicts break through the absence of coverage for many regions in the world. This has long-term consequences, because many countries only recover from a slump in demand with great difficulties. Particularly “acts of terrorism and epidemics” cause “massive fears that continue to have an effect for a long time” (Opaschowski, Tourismusanalyse 2005 mit Grundlagenforschung, p.11). In New York, it took until 2005 for the post-September 11th tourism crisis to end. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism sector, compared to the previous year, has grown by 5.7% worldwide in 2005. Travelers from around the world spent more than 6 trillion US\$. In 2006, more than 76.6 million jobs depend directly on tourism, that is 2.8% of all employees worldwide. But equality of opportunities does not exist in the competition for potential tourists.

**Little positive news from abroad**

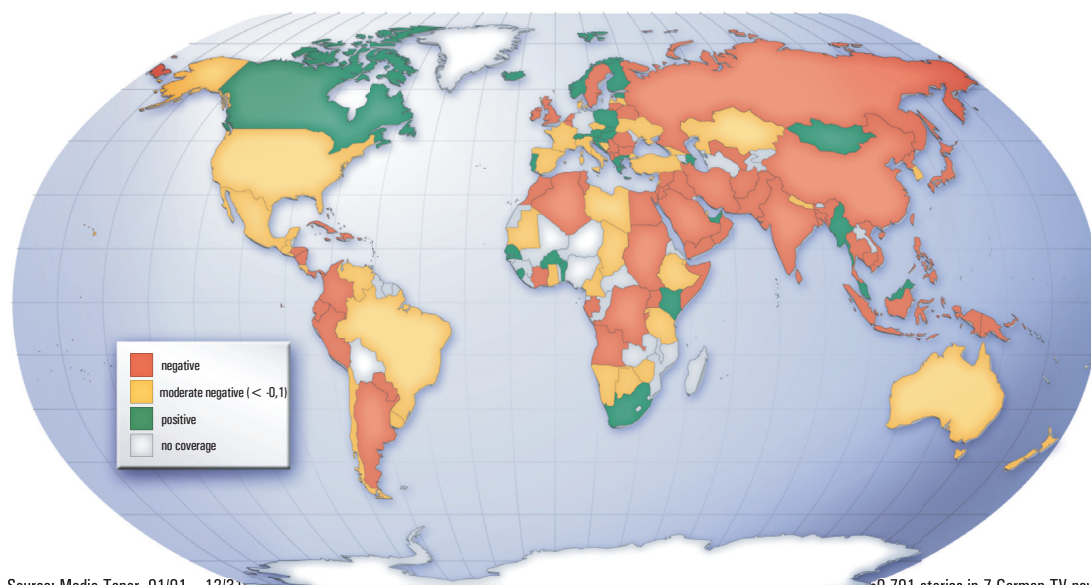
Aside from personal recommendations and re-

ports, second-hand knowledge from the media plays an important role in making travel plans. The choice of a travel destination is directly or subliminally influenced by its media image. Television, in particular, focuses heavily on foreign news: In 2004, almost half of the news stories in German prime time news dealt primarily with news from abroad. The emphasis was mainly on the US and the hot spot of Iraq. Some exceptions aside, bad news dominated these stories. The **Media Tenor** content analysis examines the assessment of the main protagonists, which can be both persons and organizations. In this context, the protagonists’ origin was not part of the analysis. Of the 50,791 reports with a focus on foreign news, a large majority appeared in a critical context. Only 34 of the 135 states mentioned in the seven news programs analyzed received a positive coverage.

Of those, only Greece, Portugal, Austria, Switzerland, Poland and Norway were portrayed in more than 100 news stories, which gave those countries a certain chance for raising awareness. Among the Germans’ main travel destinations, based on the travel intentions for 2005 (Opaschowski 2005, p. 88), Austria, Greece and the Benelux countries received an overall positive coverage. The image of most other traveling regions, with the exception of Turkey, was also positive. Aside from Austria, Turkey had been one of the winners of the 2004 tourist season: Compared to the previous year, travel increased by 2.1%.

### Image of foreign countries in German TV news in 2004: Assessment of protagonists (-1/+1)

Good news is outnumbered: Successful events offer chances for positive reporting



Source: Media Tenor, 01/01 – 12/31/2004. 50,791 stories in 7 German TV news



## International: Foreign news coverage and tourism

The country's image, however, was far from being secured, which is why Turkey's share of tourism from Germany dropped to 5.1% in 2005 (Opaschowski 2006, p. 28). And things got worse with the outbreak of the Avian Flu: When the data on travel plans for 2006 was collected in January, Turkey's share plummeted to 2.9% (ibid. p.32).

### Bad news comes on its own

In foreign news coverage, news from all over the world compete for the journalists' attention in a particular manner. Aspects such as the ferocity of conflicts as well as the extent of damages or the number of victims in the case of accidents and natural disasters play an important role. These "news factors" cannot always entirely explain the specific shaping of news. But the rules of news selection normally lead to a situation, where bad news primarily shapes the image of countries that have few contacts to German media, and where German TV correspondents rarely set foot. This partly explains the noteworthy fact that, in past years, the permanent hot spots Sudan and Congo only sporadically appeared in television news.

A country has to work hard in order to get positive coverage onto German TV screens. Chances for increased positive attention, such as holding the Olympic Games, are rare. In order for good news to have any effect on audiences, a singular event is obviously not enough. Only repetition will create resonance.

According to the research by the WTTC and the consulting firm Accenture, Montenegro, China and India will have the highest chances of growth in tourism ([www.wttc.org/frameset5.htm](http://www.wttc.org/frameset5.htm)) between 2007 and 2016. None of these countries and the ten states with the highest potential for growth (see column to the right) attained a positive media image, except for Croatia and the Maldives. The image of all other nations was clearly negative over the year. As a main focus of coverage, Montenegro did not appear in the seven news programs analyzed, at all. Moreover, particularly the Balkan countries, but also those in the Far East suffer from the negative image of the entire region. Faced with critical day-to-day coverage abroad, some countries may spend much of their advertising money in vain. ck

### Travel and Tourism Demand, 2007 – 2016

(% Annualized Real Growth)

1	Montenegro	10.2
2	China	8.7
3	India	8.0
4	Romania	7.9
5	Croatia	7.6
6	Vietnam	7.5
7	Latvia	7.3
8	Maldives	7.2
9	Albania	7.0
10	Cambodia	7.0

[www.wttc.org/frameset5.htm](http://www.wttc.org/frameset5.htm)

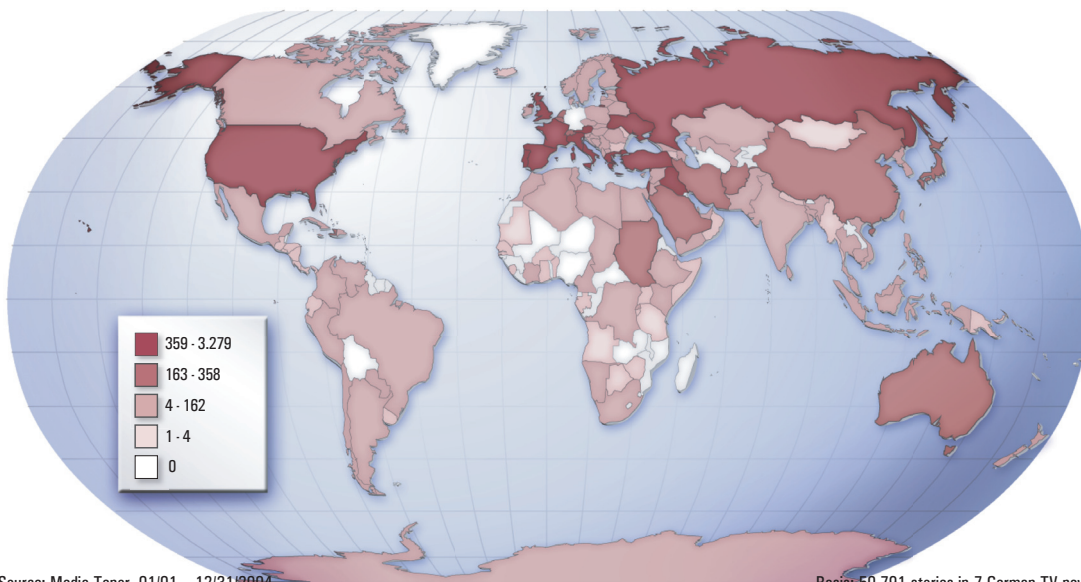
### Basis:

**Media:** ARD Tagesschau and Tagesthemen, ZDF Heute and Heute Journal, RTL Aktuell, SAT.1 News, ProSieben Newstime

**Time:** 01/01 – 12/31/2004

**Analysis:** For this report, 50,791 news stories were analyzed, of which 25,517 focused primarily on Germany. Analysis of the places/countries/regions and the assessment of protagonists (persons or organizations), who were portrayed in relation to the places mentioned. The assessment of German politicians and parties as well as companies was excluded from the analysis.

## Foreign news coverage in German television 2004: areas of reporting



Source: Media Tenor, 01/01 – 12/31/2004

Basis: 50,791 stories in 7 German TV news

