

## **THE TRIPADVISOR WORLD HERITAGE CAMPAIGN: HELPING PROTECT THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT PLACES**

### **World's Largest Travel Community Pledges Support to UNESCO and Reveals Travellers' Must-See Sites in the U.K. and Beyond**

**LONDON, U.K. – 23 OCTOBER, 2009** – TripAdvisor®, the world's most popular and largest travel community, today launched the TripAdvisor World Heritage Campaign: a two year initiative to support the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, which calls upon TripAdvisor's 25 million monthly visitors to help protect the places around the world that matter.

The campaign will see TripAdvisor encourage the contribution of reviews and opinions from its passionate community of millions of members to provide much needed information about the condition of World Heritage sites, so they may be better protected. British travellers can learn more about how they can help at [www.tripadvisor.co.uk/worldheritage](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/worldheritage).

With a need to compile field notes on nearly 900 World Heritage sites, UNESCO invited TripAdvisor to provide a technological solution. As a result, UNESCO will harness the power of the world's largest travel community in order to extract crucial information and opinions about the sites. TripAdvisor has also pledged to donate up to \$1.5 million US of support, including a cash donation which will be allocated to UNESCO World Heritage initiatives.

#### **Britons Reveal a Passion for Cultural and Historical Sites**

As a starting point for the campaign, TripAdvisor conducted a survey of over 2,500 European travellers (including over 600 Britons), with the results revealing that Britons hold both a genuine passion for culturally and naturally significant sites and a willingness to help protect them.

Whilst a staggering 87 percent of European travellers – including 81 percent of Britons – have visited a World Heritage site, 69 percent of Europeans (including 59 percent of Britons) reveal that the majority of their holiday time is spent visiting cultural and historical attractions.

Meanwhile, an overwhelming 98 percent of Britons maintain they are either very or somewhat concerned about protecting sites of historical, cultural and natural significance around the world – significantly higher than the European average of 88 percent. However, whilst three in five Europeans (60 percent) care more about attractions situated beyond their own country, 47 percent of Britons display a greater sense of loyalty to attractions within the U.K.

Despite this interest in World Heritage sites, just one in five (21 percent) Europeans, including 17 percent of Britons, are currently involved in supporting or protecting such sites. Seven in ten travellers (70 percent), including 66 percent of Britons, maintain that they would do more, if they had information on how they could help. Of those Britons who do currently help, the majority (81 percent) say they support the cause by visiting the destinations and spending money which benefits the local economy.

#### **Sustainable and Responsible Tourism: Britons Lead the Charge in Europe**

British travellers express a greater interest than their European counterparts in contributing to sustainable and responsible tourism, with 74 percent participating in their hotel's linen and towel re-use program, compared to the European average of 59 percent. A further 75 percent of Britons recycle or re-use plastic bottles or cans, compared to 56 percent of Europeans; 64 percent turn off electric devices in their hotel room, compared to 55 percent of European; and one in three (33 percent) use locally owned hotels, restaurants and tour agents, compared to one in four Europeans.

The survey also reveals details of the World Heritage sites around the world that European travellers hold dearest to their hearts.

#### **Top Five Historic or Culturally Significant Destinations in the U.K.**

1. Tower of London
2. Stonehenge
3. Westminster Palace, Westminster Abbey and Saint Margaret's Church
4. City of Bath
5. Old and New Towns of Edinburgh

**Top Three Environmentally or Naturally Significant Destinations in the U.K.**

1. Dorset and East Devon Coast
2. Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast
3. St Kilda

**Top Five Historically or Culturally Significant Destinations in the World**

1. Acropolis
2. Venice and its Lagoon
3. Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls
4. Angkor
5. Florence

Despite failing to make the top five list, Britons' number one choice was Auschwitz Birkenau.

**Top Five Sites Europeans are Most Concerned about Preserving and Protecting**

1. Galapagos Islands
2. Venice and its Lagoon
3. Acropolis
4. Angkor
5. Petra

**Top 10 Places Every Traveller Should See in their Lifetime:**

1. New York City
2. Rome
3. Paris
4. Venice
5. London
6. Cairo
7. Athens
8. Florence
9. Barcelona

## 10. Istanbul

“Travellers clearly want to do more to help protect sites around the world that matter, but are hungry for information on what they can do to contribute,” said Christine Petersen, chief marketing officer for TripAdvisor, “By submitting reviews on the condition of World Heritage sites, TripAdvisor travellers can provide UNESCO with much needed information to help preserve the places we cherish for generations to come.”

Francesco Bandarin, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, said: “Because of TripAdvisor’s excellent reach to their member community, we can, together, raise awareness of World Heritage as well as receive member feedback about sites. This certainly helps us flag site issues and provides useful information on how World Heritage travellers engage with the sites and their communities. We are looking forward to partnering with TripAdvisor on this initiative.”

**-Ends-**

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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For details of UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, please visit <http://whc.unesco.org/>

### **Notes to Editors**

2,522 European travellers took part in the survey (October 2009), including 612 Britons.

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