

WEEKLY REPORT

23 May 2025



ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

President Trump threatens 50% tariffs on EU countries

The US President has recommended 50% tariffs on goods imports from the EU into the USA. Shares in the US and EU fell on Friday after the threats, with the S&P 500 down about 1% and Germany's Dax falling more than 1.7%. Trump has said he wants to reduce his country's longstanding trade deficit with the EU, which occurs when a country imports more than it exports. He blames the deficit on policies that he says are unfair to American companies.

Source: [BBC](#)

A new tax in Spain brings in high taxes on holiday homes and short-term rentals

Hotel taxes are being increased, as well as taxes on holiday homes and short-term rentals, whilst Spain attempts to tackle its housing crisis for residents. The move aims to address growing concerns over the availability and affordability of housing for residents, as landlords increasingly favour more profitable short-term lets for tourists. The move will impact a significant portion of Spain's tourism sector.

Source: [Independent](#)

Wildlife charities urge Labour to scrap nature planning bill

Leading UK wildlife charities are urging the Labour government to remove a controversial clause from its planning bill, describing it as a "licence to kill nature." The clause allows developers to bypass local environmental laws by contributing to a national nature recovery fund instead. The charities argue that this undermines protections for critical habitats and could accelerate environmental degradation. Over 60 conservationists and experts have called for the bill to be paused for proper consultation.

Source: [The Guardian](#)

Households urged to fix energy bills as prices fall

From July 2025, the UK energy price cap will reportedly decrease, leading to a £129 annual reduction in bills for a typical household. This drop is attributed to falling wholesale gas prices. However, the regulator, Ofgem, advises consumers to shop around for better fixed-rate deals, as those on existing fixed tariffs won't benefit from this reduction. While the price cap's adjustment offers some relief, energy costs remain higher than pre-2022 levels.

Source: [BBC](#)

TRADE UPDATE

CEO of Visit Barcelona defends tourism amidst protest

Visit Barcelona's CEO Mateu Hernández has spoken out against upcoming overtourism protests planned for June 15, calling them "sad" and unrepresentative of broader public sentiment. While acknowledging past incidents—like water pistol protests targeting tourists—he highlighted the city's commitment to sustainable tourism and its efforts to regulate illegal rentals. Hernández urged critics to recognise tourism's role in creating prosperity, and reaffirmed that Barcelona, like Palma, continues to invest in responsible tourism practices that benefit both residents and visitors.

Source: [LINK](#)

Travel companies potentially breaking a new law on pricing

Which? Travel says several of the biggest online travel companies, including Loveholidays and comparison site Trivago could be breaking the law on drip pricing. The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Act, introduced on 6 April, requires businesses to provide a total upfront price for their services. However, the consumer body Which? Travel says some travel companies are continuing to hide mandatory charges, such as admin and booking fees or taxes, and add them at a later stage in the buying process.

Source: [LINK](#)

UK Airports Prepare For Busiest Day Of 2025

UK airports are bracing for their busiest day of the year so far (Friday, May 23), as the late May bank holiday getaway begins. More than 3,200 flights are scheduled to depart, with over 2.2 million seats available across the long weekend. While departures remain slightly below pre-pandemic levels, this year marks a 2% increase on 2024. Dublin, Amsterdam, Palma, Alicante and Malaga top the list of most popular destinations, with Heathrow leading in total departures, followed by Gatwick, Manchester and Stansted.

Source: [LINK](#)

AIRLINE UPDATE

Easy Jet - EasyJet will open a new three-aircraft base at Newcastle Airport in March 2026, marking its 11th UK hub and reinforcing its commitment to regional growth. The move is expected to create 130 direct jobs and support over 1,200 roles across the UK. It comes as demand for holidays surges, with easyJet holidays reporting a £13 million year-on-year rise in H1 profit. With new routes and packages set to be announced soon, the base will enhance connectivity for Northeast England and southern Scotland, offering more choice for leisure travellers and bolstering the local economy.

Source: [LINK](#)

Etihad - Etihad Airways has reported its strongest-ever quarterly performance, with Q1 2025 profits soaring 30% year-on-year to \$187 million. The surge was driven by robust passenger demand, a 16% rise in passenger revenue, and operational efficiencies across its growing network. The carrier flew five million passengers during the quarter and

expanded its fleet to 98 aircraft, including additional A380s and A350-1000s. With 16 new routes launching in 2025—including Abu Dhabi to Atlanta and Hong Kong—Etihad continues to strengthen its global footprint and premium offering.

Source: [LINK](#)

Norse Atlantic- Norse Atlantic has reported strong revenue growth for the first quarter of 2025, which it says has been driven by a 95% record load factor. The low-cost carrier's latest financial results showed revenues of \$125.3 million, up 23% on Q1 of 2024, which sat at \$78.2m. Net losses after tax decreased to \$14.9m compared to \$62.8m in the 2024 period. The number of flights flown in the quarter stood at 1,052 - a 22% increase from 2024's figure of 862.

Source: [LINK](#)

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES & OTA UPDATE

Audley Travel - Audley Travel doubled its profits in 2024 compared with the previous year, according to the tour operator's annual report, following bookings growth in a "strong market". The directors said: "This has been a year of strong revenue and profit growth. The company significantly increased headcount in 2023 to provide capacity to meet the expected demand in 2024. An increase in bookings in 2024 reflected a strong market for travel, as well as our attractive and continually evolving product proposition." The company is ranked 40th on the latest list of largest Atol holders, with a capacity to carry 44,687 passengers.

Source: [LINK](#)

Baldwins Travel - Eleven branches of Baldwins Travel have closed after the company went into receivership. Receivers were called after a period in which the business was expelled from Abta, had its Iata accreditation suspended and left the Advantage Travel Partnership. The 11-branch agency had about 50 staff, some of whom have already found new jobs in travel.

Source: [LINK](#)

Tui - TUI has cancelled all holidays to Sri Lanka departing up to and including 31 May 2022, following the UK Foreign Office's updated guidance advising against all but essential travel due to ongoing political and economic unrest. A State of Emergency was declared in the country on 6 May. Affected customers are being contacted in order to discuss alternative options. Travellers already in Sri Lanka have been assured they can continue their holidays as planned, with TUI continuing to monitor the situation closely.

Source: [LINK](#)

SOCIAL UPDATE

YouTube introduces quiz sticker for shorts and voice replies for Android

For shorts, YouTube has added a question sticker which can be customised and added to clips. With this feature, creators will be able to see the total number of responses and the

percentage breakdown for each answer option. The platform launched voice replies for iOS creators in December 2025, which allows creators to respond with an audio clip to comments. This feature has now been expanded to a test group on Android, with a wider roll out to follow.

Source: [Social Media Today](#)

TikTok integrates SoundCloud with 'add to music app' feature

TikTok's 'add to music app' was previously accessible to those using music streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music. This feature has now been expanded with users now able to save tracks they have found in TikTok to their SoundCloud app. When TikTok users click on a video's music track, an "add to music app" button shows, and the track is added to their music streaming platform.

Source: [The Verge](#)

MICE UPDATE

How could Labour's immigration plans affect the events industry?

As the UK events industry continues to grapple with staffing shortages and post-Brexit workforce challenges, new immigration plans unveiled by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer could add further complexities. The Labour government's whitepaper sets out proposals to "significantly" reduce net migration, aiming to reverse the record-high figures seen in recent years. While some sectors may benefit from targeted visa expansions, the events industry could face fresh hurdles. From tighter skilled worker criteria and shorter post-study visas to increased English language requirements and longer residency waits, the combined effect could deepen existing labour shortages and disrupt the industry's ability to attract and retain talent.

Source: [CMW \(Conference & Meetings World\)](#)

LIGHTER NOTE

Lighter Note:

Capybaras Gizmo and Kiwi have been moved to their temporary home at London Zoo for the Summer until their move to Whipsnade Zoo, Bedfordshire.

See more [HERE](#).