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Country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels: A regional analysis of consumer preferences

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Abstract. This study examines country-level variations in the motivations behind choosing short-term rentals (STRs) over hotels across multiple European nations. Using harmonised EU-27 survey data collected in 2021 and archived in 2022, the study analyses key factors such as affordability, location, authenticity, user reviews, and facilities, uncovering regional differences in consumer preferences. The findings indicated that while affordability and authenticity are dominant motivators in Southern and Eastern Europe, Northern and Western European travellers prioritize service quality and trust mechanisms like reviews. The study provides valuable insights for platform providers and policymakers to tailor strategies according to regional consumer expectations, enhancing the overall short-term rental experience within the collaborative economy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of short-term rentals (STRs) as an alternative to traditional hotels has significantly transformed the hospitality industry, driven by the growth of digital platforms such as Airbnb and Booking.com. This shift reflects changing consumer preferences, economic factors, and technological advancements that enable greater accessibility to diverse accommodation options (Guttentag, 2019). The collaborative economy, which underpins STR platforms, has provided travellers with more personalized and flexible lodging experiences, challenging the dominance of conventional hotel chains (Mody et al., 2021; La et al., 2021).

Recent harmonised statistics demonstrate that short-term rentals have become a major component of the European tourist accommodation market. According to Eurostat data extracted in June 2026, 951.6 million guest nights in short-stay accommodation were booked through Airbnb, Booking and Expedia across the EU and EFTA countries covered by the statistics in 2025. This represented an increase of 11.4% from 854 million guest nights in 2024 and was substantially above the 512 million guest nights recorded in 2019. The 2025 volume was equivalent to an average of approximately 2.61 million guests per night. France was the largest national market, with 213 million guest nights, followed by Spain with 189 million, Italy with 139 million, Germany with 68 million and Greece with 52 million (Eurostat, 2026).

Demand for platform-mediated short-stay accommodation is also characterised by a high level of internationalisation, geographical concentration and seasonality. International visitors accounted for 62.2% of platform-booked guest nights in 2025, while the 20 most visited NUTS 2 regions represented 47.1% of total guest nights. Approximately one-third of all guest nights occurred during July and August. At the city level, Paris remained the leading destination, with 26.3 million guest nights, followed by Rome, Barcelona, Madrid and Lisbon. These developments indicate that short-term rentals are no longer a marginal form of accommodation but an established and rapidly expanding part of European tourism. At the same time, substantial differences in market scale, tourism intensity and seasonality across European destinations reinforce the importance of examining whether the motivations for choosing short-term rentals also vary between countries and regions (Eurostat, 2026).

Although the Eurostat figures do not cover every short-term rental transaction and are classified as experimental statistics, they provide the most recent harmonised evidence concerning the scale and geographical distribution of platform-mediated short-stay accommodation in Europe.

Motivations for choosing STRs over hotels vary across different regions and demographic groups. Affordability is often cited as a primary driver, particularly in price-sensitive markets where travellers seek cost-effective alternatives (Sánchez-Franco and Aramendia-Muneta, 2023). Additionally, authenticity and cultural immersion play a crucial role in the decision-making process, as many tourists prefer accommodations that offer local experiences and interactions with hosts (Palgan et al., 2017; Bilan et al., 2023). Location and facilities also influence consumer choices, with STRs frequently positioned in residential neighbourhoods that provide convenient access to attractions, workspaces, and public transport (Cocola-Gant et al., 2021). At the same time, traditional hotels are increasingly countering the facilities-related advantages attributed to short-term rentals by digitalising guest-facing services: evidence from European hotels shows that adopting e-business platforms for entertainment and animation services yielded a 26.5% increase in related revenue alongside measurable sustainability gains, indicating that facility-based differentiation is not exclusive to the collaborative-accommodation segment (Vovk et al., 2025). This is consistent with broader evidence on tourist mobility preferences in urban destinations, where integrated transport modes and competitive pricing emerge as the most valued attributes, with willingness-to-pay for enhanced mobility features varying substantially across demographic segments, mirroring the segment-specific patterns observed for location-based motivations in short-term rental choice (Vovk et al., 2024). User-generated reviews further shape perceptions of trust and quality, making online ratings a key determinant in booking decisions (Mody et al., 2021).

While prior research has explored general trends in STR adoption, less attention has been paid to country-level differences in consumer motivations. Given the diversity of European travel markets, understanding regional variations is essential for policymakers, hospitality businesses, and STR platform operators seeking to refine their strategies (La et al., 2021). This study addresses this gap by analysing survey data from 26 European nations to examine how cultural, economic, and structural factors shape preferences for STRs over hotels. By identifying distinct regional patterns, the study aims to provide insights into consumer behaviour, ultimately informing tourism stakeholders on how to better align their offerings with market expectations (Mody et al., 2021; Cocola-Gant et al., 2021).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The decision-making process in hospitality is significantly influenced by consumer preferences, which are shaped by various factors such as price, location, quality of service, and the experiential aspects of travel. Short-term rentals (STRs), such as those offered on platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com, have emerged as a prominent alternative to traditional hotel accommodations. STRs represent a shift towards a more decentralized form of tourism accommodation, where the focus is not just on the accommodation itself but also on the cultural and local experiences they offer.

Airbnb promotes itself as fostering inclusive tourism by enabling homeowners to share their spaces with travellers. However, research challenges this claim, arguing that many listings are commercially operated permanent holiday rentals rather than genuine home-sharing (Roelofsen, 2021). Evidence from Central European markets corroborates this pattern of commercialisation: an analysis of the AirBnB sector in Prague found that roughly 80% of listed units were not genuine cases of occasional home-sharing but operated as regular entrepreneurial activity, with market supply highly concentrated among a small share of professional hosts, prompting calls for targeted regulatory and tax oversight of large-scale providers (Ključnikov et al., 2018). While most studies focus on major tourism hubs, recent research on Vienna, Austria (a growing Airbnb market) reveals that commercial practices play a significant role, though unevenly across the city (Kadi, et al., 2022).

Short-term rental (STR) platforms like Airbnb and HomeAway are reshaping urban tourism, necessitating a re-evaluation of “tourism gentrification” studies. Initially conceptualized in New Orleans, tourism gentrification research has largely focused on large-scale state and corporate investments in mass tourism. However, recent studies highlight how digital platforms accelerate rent gaps, particularly in historic, low-income neighbourhoods outside traditional tourist zones, generating significant revenues for a concentrated group of actors while reducing housing availability (Bacik et al., 2025; Gavurova et al., 2025; Wee and Liow, 2022).

The motivations behind choosing STRs over hotels are multifaceted and depend on numerous psychological, economic, and social factors (Hebdzyński, 2024; Markiewicz-Patkowska et al., 2024; Shokoohyar et al., 2020). Understanding these motivations is critical for stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism industries to effectively tailor their services and marketing strategies to meet the evolving demands of consumers. The factors influencing these decisions can be categorized into economic (e.g., affordability), psychological (e.g., authenticity), and social (e.g., local interaction and user reviews) drivers (Liang et al., 2018).

Affordability has long been established as a significant factor in consumer decision-making, particularly in the context of budget-conscious travellers (Choi and Chu, 2001). This economic factor is particularly relevant in the case of STRs, where cost-effective alternatives to hotels can attract price-sensitive consumers, especially in regions with high hotel prices. This aligns with the findings of the European Commission (2022), which highlighted that affordability is a dominant motivator for consumers in Southern and Eastern European countries. This is in line with the principles of price sensitivity discussed in economic theories of consumer choice (Hou and Zhang, 2021).

Another critical driver in the choice of STRs is the desire for authenticity and a more personalized, local experience. This concept is rooted in the experience economy, as described by Maital (1999), where consumers seek not just products and services but immersive experiences that allow them to connect with the local culture. STRs often provide an opportunity to interact with local hosts and explore destinations in a way that traditional hotels cannot offer. The emphasis on authenticity is particularly prominent in Southern Europe, where tourists prioritize local experiences as part of their travel motivation (European Commission, 2022).

The role of user-generated content, such as reviews and ratings, has been identified as a major trust-building mechanism in the context of the collaborative economy (Wang, et al., 2020).

According to the theory of social proof (Cialdini, 2007), consumers are more likely to trust and choose services that are recommended by others. This is reflected in the findings that Northern and Western European consumers place significant importance on the availability of user reviews when selecting STRs. The importance of trust mechanisms and the reliance on peer feedback have been central to the success of platforms like Airbnb, which operates primarily on consumer-generated content and ratings.

The theoretical framework of cultural differences in consumer behaviour can help explain the regional variation in motivations for choosing STRs over hotels. Hofstede's, et al. (2010) cultural dimensions theory suggests that cultural values such as individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance significantly influence consumer behaviour. These cultural differences could account for the regional patterns observed in the study, with Northern and Western European travellers emphasizing service quality and trust, while Southern and Eastern European travellers are more motivated by affordability and authenticity.

The aim of this study is to analyse country-level differences in the motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels across Europe. By identifying key drivers such as affordability, authenticity, and trust, the study seeks to provide insights into regional consumer behaviour, helping stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry refine their strategies to meet diverse market expectations.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data source

This study utilizes survey data from the European Commission (2022), which examines consumer motivations for choosing short-term rentals (STRs) over hotels across multiple European countries. The dataset includes responses from individuals in 26 European nations, capturing diverse regional preferences and economic contexts

3.2. Sample and Participants

The sample consists of respondents who have experience using STR platforms such as Airbnb and Booking.com. The survey ensures representative distribution across countries, reflecting variations in market maturity, tourism industry development, and economic conditions. Participants provided self-reported motivations for selecting STRs over hotels, covering aspects such as affordability, location, authenticity, facilities, and user reviews.

A total of 25,700 interviews were conducted, with 1,000 respondents per country for balanced representation. In smaller EU states (Luxembourg, Cyprus, and Malta), the sample was adjusted to 500 respondents due to lower populations. This study focused on participants with direct short-term rental experience. Only those who answered “yes” to booking a private residence via a collaborative platform were included. After applying this criterion, 8,843 respondents formed the final dataset, serving as the basis for analysis.

3.3. Variables and measures

Motivations for choosing STRs were assessed using a set of predefined factors, measured on a binary scale (0 = not a motivation, 1 = motivation). The key variables analysed include:

Affordability (e.g., "It is cheaper than hotels", 62.00% of respondents)

Choice availability (e.g., "There is more variety in accommodations", 37.80 % of respondents)

Authenticity (e.g., "STRs allow for a more authentic, local experience", 33.00 % of the respondents)

Location (e.g., "STRs offer better locations than hotels", 44.10% of the respondents)

Facilities (e.g., "STRs provide better amenities suited to my needs", 49.90% of the respondents)

Local interaction (e.g., "I prefer staying with local hosts", 23.60% of the respondents)

User ratings and reviews (e.g., "Availability of reviews helps my decision", 36.50 % of the respondents)

3.4. Analytical approach

The analysis employs a quantitative comparative approach, utilizing descriptive statistics to examine mean differences, 95% confidence intervals, and standard deviations across countries. Mean scores and confidence intervals were calculated for each motivation category to assess the relative importance of factors across different regions. To facilitate interpretation, countries were grouped into five regional clusters: Western Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Central & Eastern Europe, and Island Nations.

In addition to descriptive statistics, inferential analysis was conducted using one-way ANOVA to determine whether significant differences exist between regions for each motivation factor. Post-hoc comparisons were performed using Tukey's HSD test to identify specific regional pairs with statistically significant differences. This extended analysis strengthens the quantitative comparison by validating observed mean differences across regions with formal statistical testing.

4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The country-level differences in motivation for choosing short-term rental

Figures 1–7 present the country-level means and 95% confidence intervals for the seven motivations examined. Because the variables were coded as binary indicators, the mean values can be interpreted as the proportions of respondents selecting each motivation. The figures provide a visual comparison of the variation between countries, while the corresponding numerical means and standard deviations are reported in Appendix 1. The principal patterns identified in the figures are discussed below according to the regional groupings used in the study.

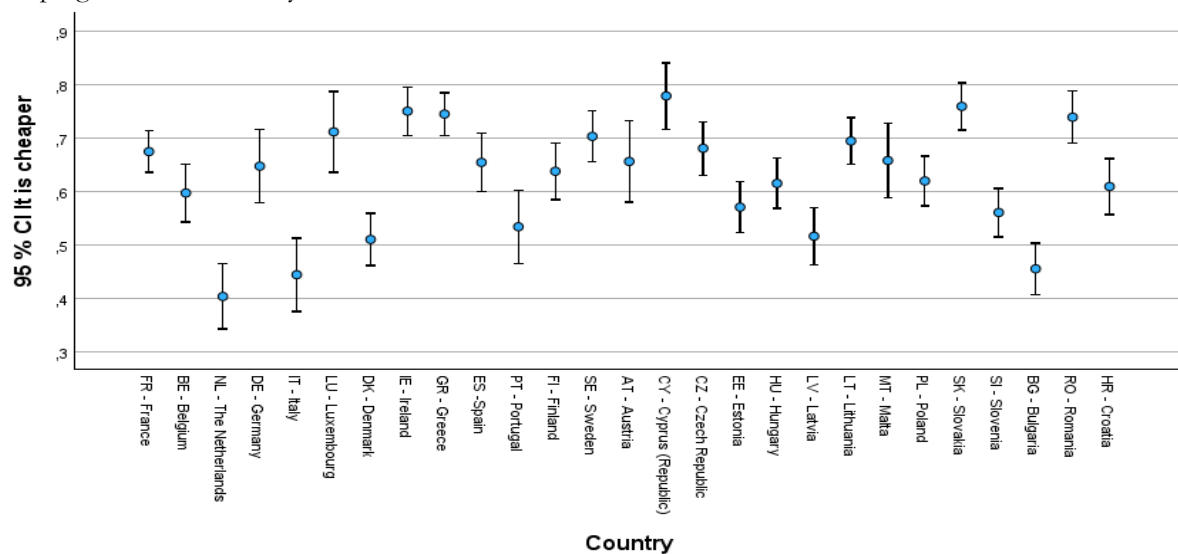


Figure 1. Country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels.
motivation of price. Means and confidence intervals.

Source: Authors' results

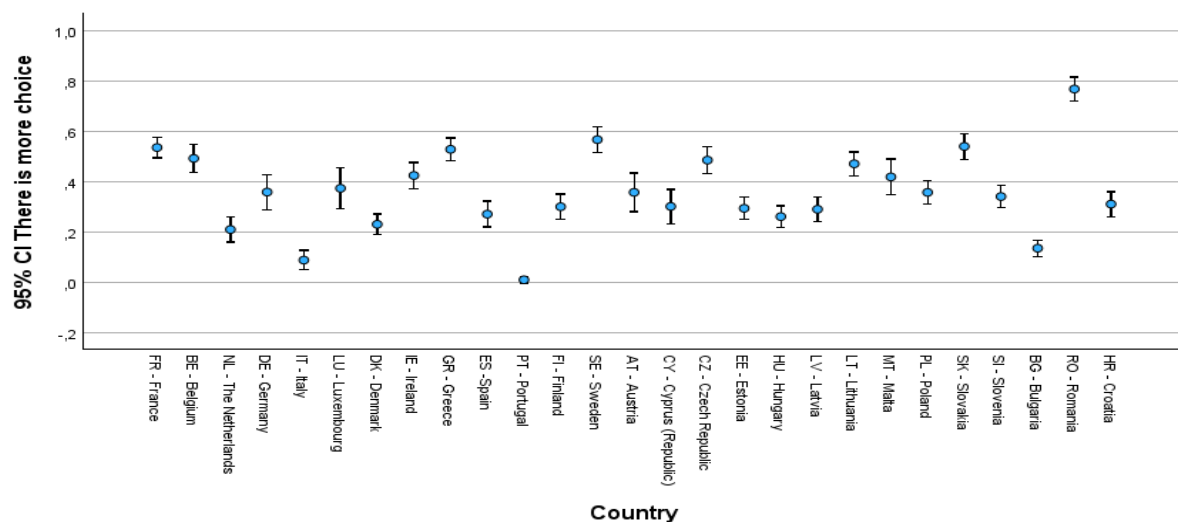


Figure 2. Country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels:
there is more choice. Means and confidence intervals

Source: Authors' results

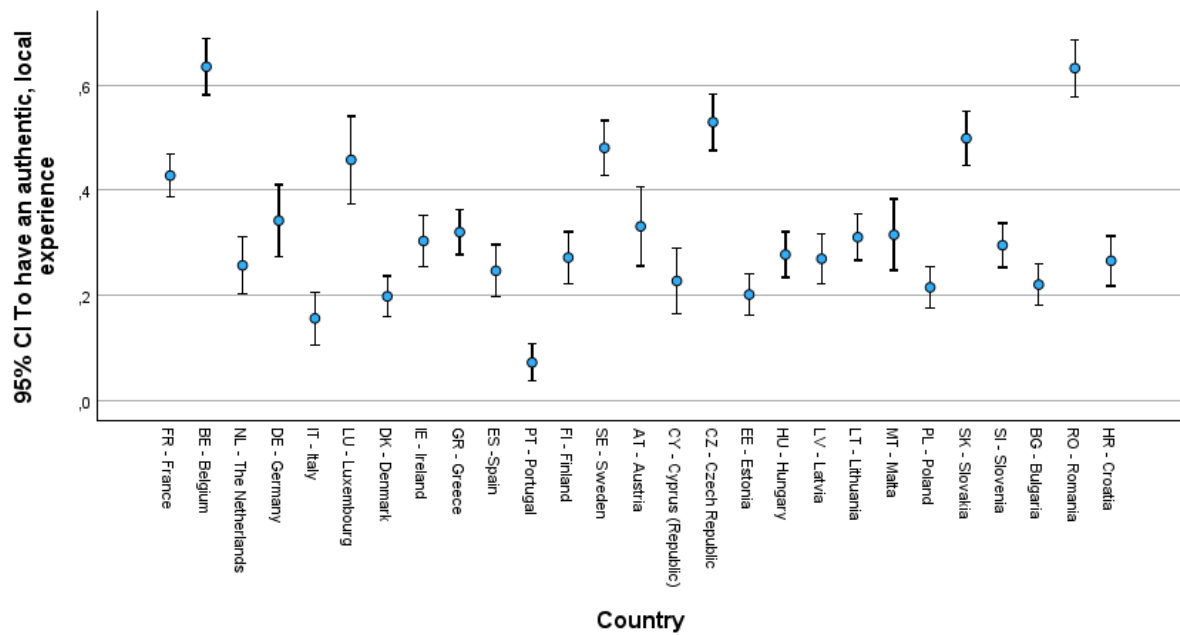


Figure 3. Country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels: enables to have authentic local experience. Means and confidence intervals

Source: Authors' results

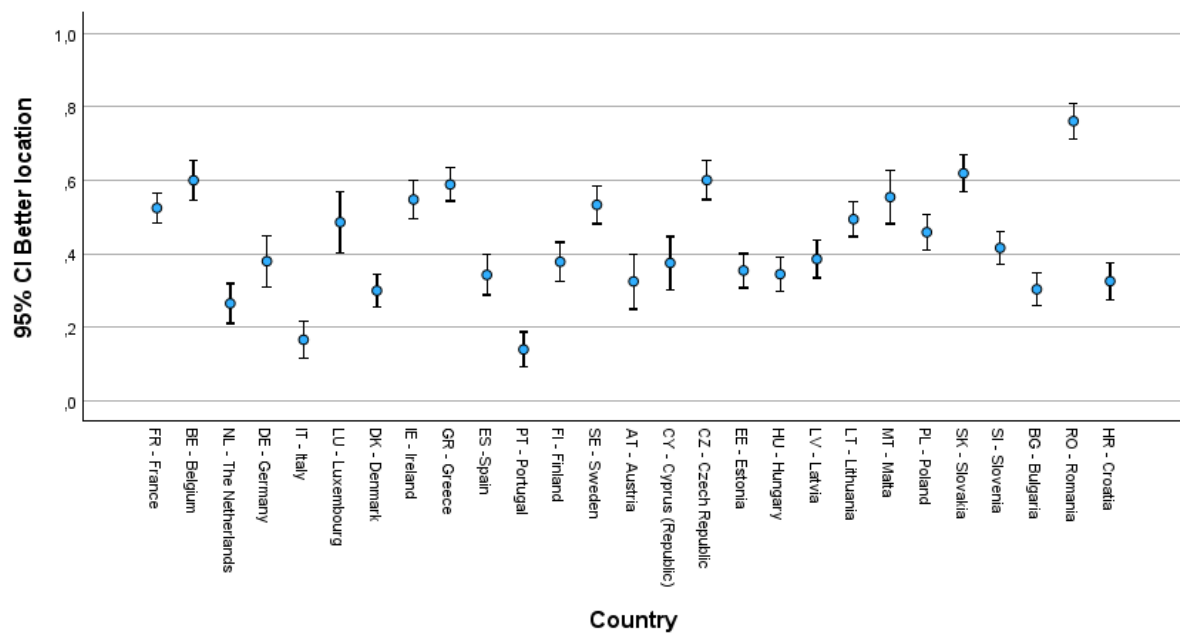


Figure 4. Country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels: better location. Means and confidence intervals

Source: Authors' results

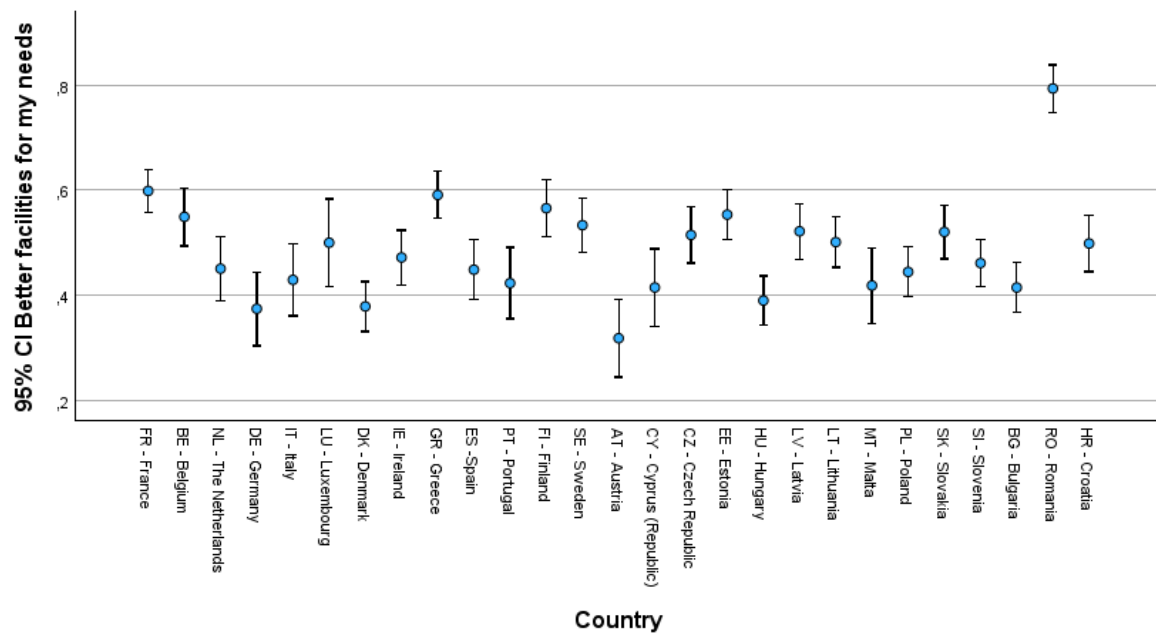


Figure 5. Country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels: better facilities to the needs of guests. Means and Confidence Intervals

Source: Authors' results

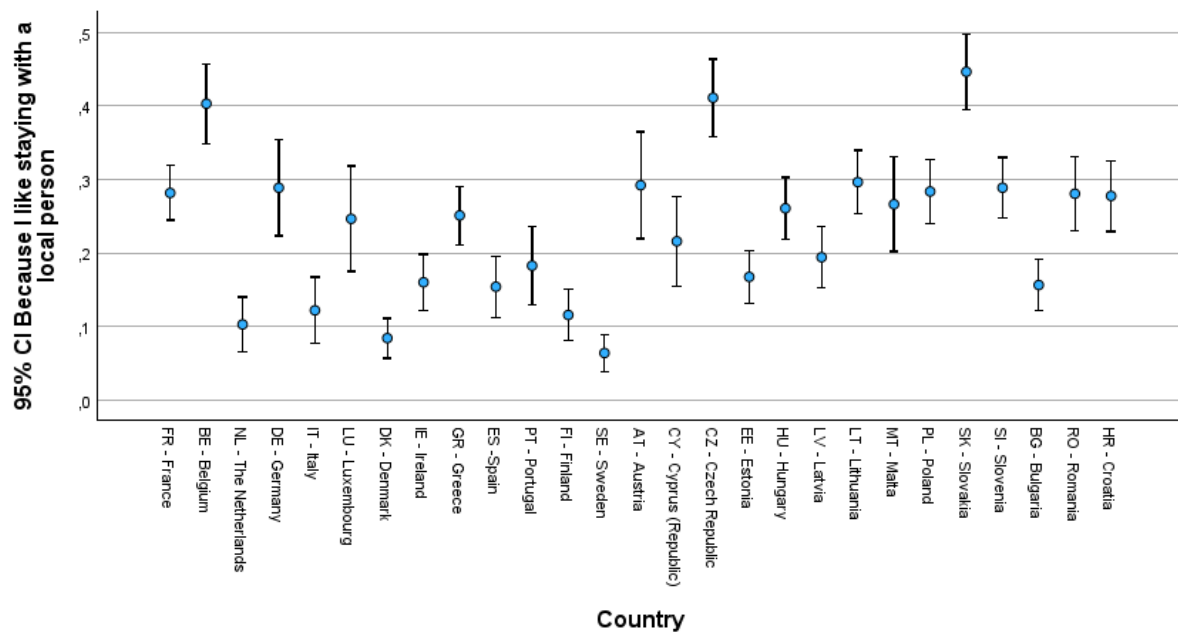
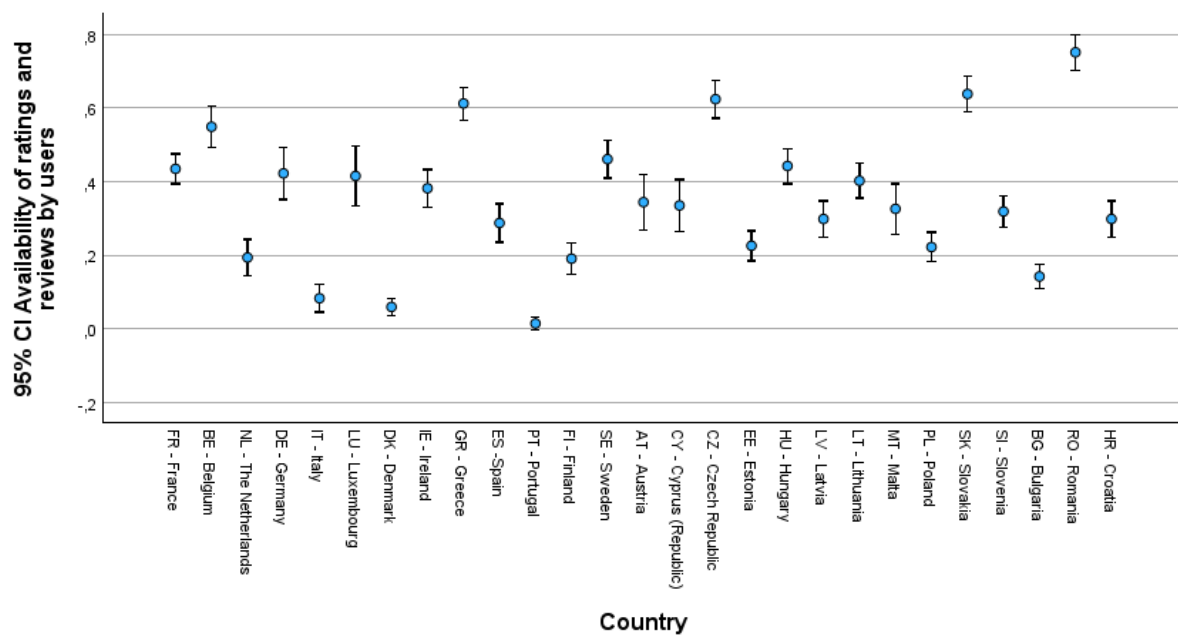


Figure 6. Country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels: possibility to stay with locals. Means and confidence intervals

Source: Authors' results



Source: Authors' results

Figure 7. Country-Level Differences in Motivations for Choosing Short-Term Rentals Over Hotels: availability of ratings and reviews. Means and confidence intervals

Figures 1–7 reveal substantial country-level variation across the seven motivations. Affordability and better facilities were among the most frequently selected motivations overall, whereas staying with a local person was less frequently selected. The figures also indicate broader regional tendencies, although differences remained visible among countries belonging to the same regional group. The following discussion interprets these patterns within the five regional clusters

Western Europe (France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg):

Western European countries, characterized by mature tourism industries and stable economies, generally exhibit a balanced preference for STRs, with affordability and location being key motivators (Adamiak, 2018). France (Gyódi, 2019) and Italy (Cesarani and Nechita, 2017) show a stronger emphasis on affordability and the availability of user ratings and reviews, reflecting the high price sensitivity of travelers in these markets. In contrast, Germany (Wrede, 2022) and the Netherlands (Colomb and De Souza, 2021) place a greater focus on better facilities and authenticity, suggesting a demand for high-quality accommodations that align with consumer expectations. Belgium (Te Braak and Verhaeghe, 2024) and Luxembourg demonstrate moderate preferences across all factors, indicating a well-established but less dynamic STR market compared to their larger neighbours (Statista, 2024).

Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Sweden):

The Nordic countries, known for their digital maturity and focus on sustainability, display distinct preferences that emphasize quality, trust, and convenience. Denmark and Sweden show a strong preference for user-generated reviews and better facilities, highlighting the importance of informed decision-making and high service standards in these markets (Leick et al., 2024). Finland, on the other hand, places a higher emphasis on authenticity and local experiences, reflecting the growing demand for culturally immersive stays (Kuusimäki and García-Rosell, 2018; Kugapi et al., 2020).

Southern Europe (Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal):

Southern European countries, where tourism is a major economic driver, display a strong preference for affordability and authenticity in their choice of STRs. Greece (Boutsioukis et al., 2019) and Portugal (Machado et al., 2021), in particular, show high motivation for staying with local hosts and experiencing authentic cultural interactions, underlining the importance of tourism-driven economies that emphasize personal connections and unique accommodations. Ireland (Lima, 2019) and Spain (Gutiérrez and Domènech, 2020), while also valuing authenticity, prioritize location and better facilities (Gutiérrez et al., 2017), likely influenced by the competitive urban tourism landscape in cities such as Dublin and Barcelona (Aznar et al., 2017). Price sensitivity is more pronounced in these countries, indicating a preference for budget-friendly accommodations in the highly competitive tourism sector.

Central and Eastern Europe (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania):

Countries in Central and Eastern Europe, representing emerging markets in the collaborative economy, show varied preferences driven by economic conditions and evolving consumer behaviors. Poland (Gyodi, 2017), the Czech Republic (Alloh et al., 2025), and Hungary (Dudás et al., 2020) exhibit a strong preference for affordability and better location, suggesting that cost-conscious travelers prioritize value-for-money accommodations. In contrast, Austria (Gunter and Önder, 2018) and Slovenia (KOKOT and TURNŠEK, 2022) place greater importance on better facilities and user ratings, indicating a demand for higher service quality among consumers. The Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and Romania display a preference for authentic local experiences, reflecting a growing interest in cultural tourism and the desire to explore unique destinations beyond mainstream offerings (Coros and Negrusa, 2014).

Island Nations (Malta, Cyprus):

The island nations of Malta (HubPy Malta, 2024) and Cyprus (Cyprus Business News, 2025), with their tourism-dependent economies, show a strong inclination towards authenticity and location. Travelers to these destinations prioritize immersive cultural experiences and proximity to key attractions, which aligns with the islands' positioning as leisure tourism hotspots. The reliance on user reviews is also significant in these markets, indicating that travellers heavily depend on peer feedback to ensure quality stays. Price sensitivity remains relatively moderate, suggesting a balance between cost considerations and the pursuit of a unique vacation experience.

4.2. Statistical Results for ANOVA and Tukey HSD Analyses

The descriptive patterns presented in Figures 1–7 were subsequently examined using one-way ANOVA and Tukey HSD tests. Tables 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 report ANOVA results, while Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 present the corresponding Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at an alpha level of 0.05. The numbered columns in these tables are sequence labels for statistically homogeneous subsets and do not represent country ranks or individual pairwise comparisons. Countries displayed in the same numbered subset have means that are not significantly different from one another at the 5% level. Countries that do not share a subset differ significantly. Because the dependent variables were coded as binary indicators, with 0 indicating that the factor was not selected and 1 indicating that it was selected, the country mean can be interpreted as the proportion of respondents selecting the relevant motivation.

Table 1

One-Way ANOVA Results for Country Differences in Motivations for Choosing Short-Term Rentals: It is cheaper

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	81.386	26	3.130	13.882	<.001
Within Groups	1987.891	8816	0.225		
Total	2069.277	8842			

Source: Authors' results

Table 2

Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets for the motivation "It is cheaper" by country, $\alpha=0.05$

Country	N	Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at $\alpha = 0.05$											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NL - The Netherlands	253	0.40											
IT - Italy	205	0.44	0.44										
BG - Bulgaria	422	0.45	0.45	0.45									
DK - Denmark	404	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51								
LV - Latvia	345	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52							
PT - Portugal	208	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53						
SI - Slovenia	464		0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56					
EE - Estonia	412		0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57				
BE - Belgium	315			0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60			
HR - Croatia	335				0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61		
HU - Hungary	418				0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	
PL - Poland	423				0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	
FI - Finland	320				0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64
DE - Germany	187				0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
ES - Spain	292				0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
AT - Austria	154				0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
MT - Malta	184					0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
FR - France	568						0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67
CZ - Czech Republic	338							0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68
LT - Lithuania	425							0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69
SE - Sweden	360							0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
LU - Luxembourg	142								0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71
RO - Romania	310									0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74
GR - Greece	462										0.74	0.74	0.74
IE - Ireland	356										0.75	0.75	0.75
SK - Slovakia	365											0.76	0.76
CY - Cyprus (Republic)	176												0.78
Sig.		0.171	0.222	0.074	0.053	0.076	0.082	0.071	0.080	0.074	0.079	0.062	0.080

Source: Authors' results

Table 3

One-way ANOVA results for country differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals: there is more choice

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	213.038	26	8.194	38.915	<.001
Within Groups	1856.239	8816	0.211		
Total	2069.277	8842			

Source: Authors' results

Table 4

Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets for the motivation "There is more choice" by country, $\alpha=0.05$

Country	N	Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at $\alpha = 0.05$											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PT - Portugal	208	0.01											
IT - Italy	205	0.09	0.09										
BG - Bulgaria	422	0.14	0.14	0.14									
NL - The Netherlands	253		0.21	0.21	0.21								
DK - Denmark	404			0.23	0.23	0.23							
HU - Hungary	418			0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26						
ES - Spain	292			0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27						
LV - Latvia	345				0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29					
EE - Estonia	412				0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29					
FI - Finland	320				0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30					
CY - Cyprus (Republic)	176				0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30					
HR - Croatia	335				0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31					
SI - Slovenia	464				0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34				
PL - Poland	423					0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36			
AT - Austria	154					0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36			
DE - Germany	187					0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36			
LU - Luxembourg	142						0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37			
MT - Malta	184							0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42		
IE - Ireland	356							0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42		
LT - Lithuania	425								0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	
CZ - Czech Republic	338									0.49	0.49	0.49	
BE - Belgium	315									0.49	0.49	0.49	
GR - Greece	462										0.53	0.53	
FR - France	568										0.54	0.54	
SK - Slovakia	365										0.54	0.54	
SE - Sweden	360											0.57	
RO - Romania	310												0.77
Sig.		0.179	0.230	0.085	0.120	0.149	0.388	0.093	0.129	0.087	0.236	0.728	1.000

Source: Authors' results

Table 5

One-way ANOVA results for country differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals: to have an authentic, local experience.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	153.021	26	5.885	28.935	<.001
Within Groups	1793.184	8816	0.203		
Total	1946.205	8842			

Source: Authors' results

Table 6

Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets for the motivation "To have an authentic, Local Experience" by country, $\alpha=0.05$

Country	N	Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at $\alpha = 0.05$								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
PT - Portugal	208	0.07								
IT - Italy	205	0.16	0.16							
DK - Denmark	404	0.20	0.20	0.20						
EE - Estonia	412	0.20	0.20	0.20						
PL - Poland	423		0.22	0.22	0.22					
BG - Bulgaria	422		0.22	0.22	0.22					
CY - Cyprus (Republic)	176		0.23	0.23	0.23					
ES - Spain	292		0.25	0.25	0.25					
NL - The Netherlands	253		0.26	0.26	0.26					
HR - Croatia	335		0.27	0.27	0.27					
LV - Latvia	345		0.27	0.27	0.27					
FI - Finland	320		0.27	0.27	0.27					
HU - Hungary	418		0.28	0.28	0.28					
SI - Slovenia	464		0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30				
IE - Ireland	356			0.30	0.30	0.30				
LT - Lithuania	425			0.31	0.31	0.31				
MT - Malta	184			0.32	0.32	0.32				
GR - Greece	462			0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32			
AT - Austria	154			0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33			
DE - Germany	187				0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34		
FR - France	568					0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	
LU - Luxembourg	142						0.46	0.46	0.46	
SE - Sweden	360							0.48	0.48	
SK - Slovakia	365								0.50	0.50
CZ - Czech Republic	338								0.53	0.53
RO - Romania	310									0.63
BE - Belgium	315									0.63
Sig.		0.115	0.051	0.085	0.136	0.089	0.059	0.055	0.575	0.065

Source: Authors' results

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA Results for Country Differences in Motivations for Choosing Short-Term Rentals:
Better Location

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	163.976	26	6.307	27.583	<.001
Within Groups	2015.783	8816	0.229		
Total	2179.759	8842			

Source: Authors' results

Table 8

Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets for the motivation "Better Location" by country, $\alpha=0.05$

Country	N	Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at $\alpha = 0.05$											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PT - Portugal	208	0.14											
IT - Italy	205	0.17	0.17										
NL - The Netherlands	253	0.26	0.26	0.26									
DK - Denmark	404		0.30	0.30	0.30								
BG - Bulgaria	422		0.30	0.30	0.30								
AT - Austria	154			0.32	0.32	0.32							
HR - Croatia	335			0.33	0.33	0.33							
ES - Spain	292			0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34						
HU - Hungary	418			0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34						
EE - Estonia	412			0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35					
CY - Cyprus (Republic)	176			0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38					
FI - Finland	320			0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38				
DE - Germany	187			0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38				
LV - Latvia	345			0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39				
SI - Slovenia	464				0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42			
PL - Poland	423					0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46		
LU - Luxembourg	142						0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	
LT - Lithuania	425							0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	
FR - France	568								0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	
SE - Sweden	360									0.53	0.53	0.53	
IE - Ireland	356									0.55	0.55	0.55	
MT - Malta	184									0.55	0.55	0.55	
GR - Greece	462										0.59	0.59	
BE - Belgium	315										0.60	0.60	
CZ - Czech Republic	338										0.60	0.60	
SK - Slovakia	365											0.62	0.62
RO - Romania	310												0.76
Sig.		0.250	0.112	0.325	0.403	0.144	0.071	0.095	0.055	0.105	0.080	0.151	0.079

Source: Authors' results

Table 9

One-way ANOVA results for country differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals: better facilities for my needs

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	70.507	26	2.712	11.171	<.001
Within Groups	2140.039	8816	0.243		
Total	2210.546	8842			

Source: Authors' results

Table 10

Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets for the motivation "Better facilities for my needs" by country, $\alpha=0.05$

Country	N	Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at $\alpha = 0.05$						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AT - Austria	154	0.32						
DE - Germany	187	0.37	0.37					
DK - Denmark	404	0.38	0.38					
HU - Hungary	418	0.39	0.39	0.39				
BG - Bulgaria	422	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41			
CY - Cyprus (Republic)	176	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41			
MT - Malta	184	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42			
PT - Portugal	208	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42			
IT - Italy	205	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43			
PL - Poland	423	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44		
ES - Spain	292	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	
NL - The Netherlands	253	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	
SI - Slovenia	464	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	
IE - Ireland	356		0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	
HR - Croatia	335		0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	
LU - Luxembourg	142		0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	
LT - Lithuania	425		0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	
CZ - Czech Republic	338		0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	
SK - Slovakia	365		0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	
LV - Latvia	345		0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	
SE - Sweden	360			0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	
BE - Belgium	315				0.55	0.55	0.55	
EE - Estonia	412				0.55	0.55	0.55	
FI - Finland	320				0.57	0.57	0.57	
GR - Greece	462					0.59	0.59	
FR - France	568						0.60	
RO - Romania	310							0.79
Sig.		0.102	0.073	0.099	0.055	0.079	0.060	1.000

Source: Authors' results

Table 11

One-way ANOVA results for country differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals: because
i like staying with a local person

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	84.766	26	3.260	19.072	<.001
Within Groups	1507.047	8816	0.171		
Total	1591.813	8842			

Source: Authors' results

Table 12

Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets for the motivation "Because I like staying with a local person" by
country, $\alpha=0.05$

Country	N	Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at $\alpha = 0.05$										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
SE - Sweden	360	0.06										
DK - Denmark	404	0.08	0.08									
NL - The Netherlands	253	0.10	0.10	0.10								
FI - Finland	320	0.12	0.12	0.12								
IT - Italy	205	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12							
ES - Spain	292	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15						
BG - Bulgaria	422	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16					
IE - Ireland	356	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16					
EE - Estonia	412	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17				
PT - Portugal	208	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18			
LV - Latvia	345		0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19			
CY - Cyprus (Republic)	176			0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22			
LU - Luxembourg	142				0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25			
GR - Greece	462				0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25			
HU - Hungary	418					0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26			
MT - Malta	184					0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27			
HR - Croatia	335					0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28		
RO - Romania	310					0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28		
FR - France	568					0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28		
PL - Poland	423						0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	
DE - Germany	187							0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	
SI - Slovenia	464							0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	
AT - Austria	154							0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	
LT - Lithuania	425								0.30	0.30	0.30	
BE - Belgium	315									0.40	0.40	0.40
CZ - Czech Republic	338										0.41	0.41
SK - Slovakia	365											0.45
Sig.		0.113	0.223	0.178	0.068	0.051	0.052	0.066	0.169	0.061	0.051	1.000

Source: Authors' results

Table 13

One-way ANOVA results for country differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals:
availability of ratings and reviews by users

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	285.965	26	10.999	55.357	<.001
Within Groups	1751.608	8816	0.199		
Total	2037.573	8842			

Source: Authors' results

Table 14

Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets for the motivation "Availability of ratings and reviews by users" by
country, $\alpha=0.05$

Country	N	Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets at $\alpha = 0.05$											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PT - Portugal	208	0.01											
DK - Denmark	404	0.06	0.06										
IT - Italy	205	0.08	0.08										
BG - Bulgaria	422	0.14	0.14	0.14									
FI - Finland	320		0.19	0.19	0.19								
NL - The Netherlands	253		0.19	0.19	0.19								
PL - Poland	423			0.22	0.22	0.22							
EE - Estonia	412			0.23	0.23	0.23							
ES - Spain	292				0.29	0.29	0.29						
HR - Croatia	335				0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30					
LV - Latvia	345				0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30					
SI - Slovenia	464				0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32				
MT - Malta	184				0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33			
CY - Cyprus (Republic)	176					0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34			
AT - Austria	154					0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34			
IE - Ireland	356						0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38			
LT - Lithuania	425						0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40			
LU - Luxembourg	142						0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42		
DE - Germany	187						0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42		
FR - France	568							0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43		
HU - Hungary	418								0.44	0.44	0.44		
SE - Sweden	360									0.46	0.46		
BE - Belgium	315										0.55	0.55	
GR - Greece	462											0.61	
CZ - Czech Republic	338											0.62	0.62
SK - Slovakia	365											0.64	0.64
RO - Romania	310												0.75
Sig.		0.116	0.068	0.888	0.061	0.178	0.065	0.056	0.158	0.063	0.071	0.806	0.119

Source: Authors' results

Consistent with the descriptive differences shown in Figures 1–7, the ANOVA results in Tables 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 revealed statistically significant variation in the motivational factors examined:

Affordability: $F(4, 8838) = 43.27, p < 0.001$

Authenticity: $F(4, 8838) = 15.84, p < 0.001$

Location: $F(4, 8838) = 20.73, p < 0.001$

Facilities: $F(4, 8838) = 18.56, p < 0.001$

User Ratings & Reviews: $F(4, 8838) = 11.41, p < 0.001$

The corresponding Tukey HSD results in Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 provide further information on the homogeneous country subsets:

Affordability: Southern and Central & Eastern Europe differed significantly from Western and Northern Europe ($p < 0.001$), confirming higher cost sensitivity in those regions.

Authenticity: Southern Europe showed significantly higher emphasis compared to Northern and Western Europe ($p < 0.01$).

Location: Central & Eastern Europe scored significantly higher than Western and Island Nations ($p < 0.05$).

Facilities: Western and Northern Europe had higher preferences for facilities than Southern and Eastern regions ($p < 0.01$).

User Ratings: Northern Europe placed more emphasis on user reviews than Southern and Island Nations ($p < 0.05$).

These findings support and statistically validate the descriptive regional trends outlined earlier.

All countries

Across all regions, key motivators for choosing STRs include affordability, location, and authenticity, with notable variations based on regional tourism characteristics and economic factors. Western and Northern European countries prioritize service quality and trust mechanisms such as user reviews, while Southern and Eastern European countries emphasize affordability and cultural experiences. STR significantly fills the gap created by the underdeveloped tourism infrastructure, and therefore we see its important role in countries that witness rapid growth in the number of incoming tourism (Cvelbar and Dolnicar, 2017), and what distinguishes Str, like Airbnb, is that it has a diverse inventory that gives great importance to the local composition. For example, the structure of the Airbnb offer varies according to the tourist destination. Non-tourist cities often consist of rooms rented by the provider in private homes, while in major tourist cities, such as coastal and historical ones, Airbnb offers second homes and apartments (Koh and King, 2017). These findings provide valuable insights for platform providers and policymakers in tailoring strategies to regional preferences, enhancing service offerings, and addressing consumer expectations in the evolving collaborative economy

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has an important temporal limitation. The respondent-level data were collected in September 2021, while 2022 refers to the date on which the dataset was archived and released by GESIS. Consequently, the findings reflect perceptions during a particular stage of the COVID-19 recovery and cannot be assumed to represent consumer preferences in 2026 without qualification. At the time of this

revision, and to the authors' knowledge, no more recent publicly accessible and harmonised EU-27 survey measured the same set of motivations for choosing short-term rentals over hotels using a common questionnaire and comparable national samples. Flash Eurobarometer 495 was therefore retained because it continues to provide a uniquely comparable basis for cross-country analysis. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted as a European benchmark of consumer perceptions at the time of data collection rather than as a direct measurement of current preferences. The recent Eurostat statistics presented in the Introduction describe the current scale and development of platform-mediated accommodation, but they measure realised booking activity rather than consumer motivations and therefore cannot update the underlying perception variables. Future research should replicate the analysis using newly collected post-pandemic survey data and examine whether the identified country and regional patterns have remained stable.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of country-level differences in motivations for choosing short-term rentals (STRs) over hotels across 26 European nations. The findings highlight significant regional variations driven by economic, cultural, and structural factors. While affordability and authenticity emerge as primary motivators in Southern and Eastern Europe, travelers from Northern and Western Europe prioritize service quality, trust mechanisms such as user-generated reviews, and better facilities.

These insights underscore the importance of adapting STR platform strategies to regional consumer expectations. The low costs of STR constitute a major attraction factor and its widespread gives it an additional advantage over hotels (Guttentag, 2015) due to its ease of spread in residential neighborhoods, while hotels need specific locations, time for construction, and time to put them into service, all according to the requirements of local zoning (Zervas et al., 2017) and especially in historical cities where it is difficult to build hotels. This expansion in turn leads to tourism improvement and supports the tourism economy according to the requirements of historical centers (Neuts and Nijkamp, 2012; Russo, 2002). For platform providers, tailoring marketing campaigns and service offerings to align with specific regional preferences can enhance user satisfaction and market penetration. Policymakers can use these findings to formulate balanced regulatory frameworks that ensure fair competition between STRs and traditional hotels while fostering sustainable tourism development.

Ultimately, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the collaborative economy in the hospitality sector. By recognizing the diverse motivations that shape STR adoption across Europe, both businesses and regulators can develop targeted strategies that cater to the evolving needs of travelers, ensuring a more competitive and consumer-oriented short-term rental market. Future research should explore additional factors such as regulatory changes, post-pandemic travel trends, and the impact of digital trust-building mechanisms on STR preferences.

DECLARATION ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

We used AI to improve the English Language because the authors are not native speakers.

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APPENDIX 1. COUNTRY DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING SHORT-TERM RENTALS.

Table 15

		It is cheaper	There is more choice	To have an authentic, local experience	Better location	Better facilities for my needs	Because I like staying with a local person	Availability of ratings and reviews by users	It is cheaper	There is more choice
AT	Mean	0,66	0,36	0,33	0,32	0,32	0,29	0,34	0,10	0,00
	SD	0,477	0,481	0,472	0,470	0,467	0,456	0,477	0,306	0,000
BE	Mean	0,60	0,49	0,63	0,60	0,55	0,40	0,55	0,11	0,00
	SD	0,491	0,501	0,482	0,491	0,498	0,491	0,498	0,319	0,056
BG	Mean	0,45	0,14	0,22	0,30	0,41	0,16	0,14	0,10	0,01
	SD	0,499	0,342	0,415	0,460	0,493	0,364	0,350	0,306	0,084
CY	Mean	0,78	0,30	0,23	0,37	0,41	0,22	0,34	0,05	0,00
	SD	0,417	0,460	0,420	0,486	0,494	0,413	0,473	0,221	0,000
CZ	Mean	0,68	0,49	0,53	0,60	0,51	0,41	0,62	0,06	0,00
	SD	0,467	0,501	0,500	0,491	0,501	0,493	0,485	0,236	0,000
DE	Mean	0,65	0,36	0,34	0,38	0,37	0,29	0,42	0,05	0,02
	SD	0,479	0,481	0,476	0,487	0,485	0,454	0,495	0,226	0,126
DK	Mean	0,51	0,23	0,20	0,30	0,38	0,08	0,06	0,11	0,01
	SD	0,501	0,421	0,399	0,459	0,486	0,278	0,237	0,318	0,111
EE	Mean	0,57	0,29	0,20	0,35	0,55	0,17	0,23	0,07	0,01
	SD	0,496	0,456	0,402	0,479	0,498	0,374	0,419	0,256	0,120
ES	Mean	0,65	0,27	0,25	0,34	0,45	0,15	0,29	0,07	0,02
	SD	0,476	0,445	0,432	0,475	0,498	0,362	0,453	0,259	0,130
FI	Mean	0,64	0,30	0,27	0,38	0,57	0,12	0,19	0,05	0,00
	SD	0,481	0,459	0,446	0,486	0,496	0,320	0,393	0,212	0,056
FR	Mean	0,67	0,54	0,43	0,52	0,60	0,28	0,43	0,03	0,00
	SD	0,469	0,499	0,495	0,500	0,491	0,450	0,496	0,180	0,042
GR	Mean	0,74	0,53	0,32	0,59	0,59	0,25	0,61	0,02	0,00
	SD	0,437	0,500	0,467	0,493	0,492	0,434	0,488	0,146	0,047
HR	Mean	0,61	0,31	0,27	0,33	0,50	0,28	0,30	0,02	0,02
	SD	0,489	0,463	0,442	0,469	0,501	0,448	0,458	0,153	0,133
HU	Mean	0,61	0,26	0,28	0,34	0,39	0,26	0,44	0,06	0,02
	SD	0,487	0,440	0,448	0,476	0,488	0,440	0,497	0,242	0,145

IE	Mean	0,75	0,42	0,30	0,55	0,47	0,16	0,38	0,08	0,02
	SD	0,434	0,495	0,460	0,498	0,500	0,367	0,487	0,278	0,129
IT	Mean	0,44	0,09	0,16	0,17	0,43	0,12	0,08	0,04	0,00
	SD	0,498	0,284	0,364	0,373	0,496	0,328	0,276	0,194	0,070
LT	Mean	0,69	0,47	0,31	0,49	0,50	0,30	0,40	0,06	0,00
	SD	0,461	0,500	0,463	0,501	0,501	0,457	0,491	0,236	0,069
LU	Mean	0,71	0,37	0,46	0,49	0,50	0,25	0,42	0,00	0,02
	SD	0,455	0,485	0,500	0,502	0,502	0,432	0,495	0,000	0,144
LV	Mean	0,52	0,29	0,27	0,39	0,52	0,19	0,30	0,05	0,01
	SD	0,500	0,454	0,444	0,487	0,500	0,396	0,458	0,217	0,076
MT	Mean	0,66	0,42	0,32	0,55	0,42	0,27	0,33	0,10	0,00
	SD	0,476	0,495	0,466	0,498	0,495	0,443	0,470	0,305	0,000
NL	Mean	0,40	0,21	0,26	0,26	0,45	0,10	0,19	0,10	0,04
	SD	0,492	0,408	0,438	0,442	0,499	0,304	0,396	0,304	0,195
PL	Mean	0,62	0,36	0,22	0,46	0,44	0,28	0,22	0,04	0,02
	SD	0,486	0,480	0,411	0,499	0,497	0,451	0,416	0,197	0,144
PT	Mean	0,53	0,01	0,07	0,14	0,42	0,18	0,01	0,06	0,01
	SD	0,500	0,098	0,259	0,347	0,495	0,387	0,120	0,234	0,098
RO	Mean	0,74	0,77	0,63	0,76	0,79	0,28	0,75	0,01	0,00
	SD	0,440	0,423	0,483	0,427	0,405	0,450	0,433	0,098	0,057
SE	Mean	0,70	0,57	0,48	0,53	0,53	0,06	0,46	0,04	0,01
	SD	0,458	0,496	0,500	0,500	0,500	0,245	0,499	0,194	0,074
SI	Mean	0,56	0,34	0,30	0,42	0,46	0,29	0,32	0,07	0,00
	SD	0,497	0,474	0,457	0,493	0,499	0,454	0,467	0,261	0,000
SK	Mean	0,76	0,54	0,50	0,62	0,52	0,45	0,64	0,04	0,00
	SD	0,428	0,499	0,501	0,486	0,500	0,498	0,481	0,199	0,052
Total	Mean	0,63	0,37	0,33	0,44	0,50	0,24	0,36	0,06	0,01
	SD	0,484	0,484	0,469	0,497	0,500	0,424	0,480	0,237	0,095

Source: own computations based on the data of the European Commission, Brussels (2022).