

**Under Strict Embargo: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2008, 0001**

### **Three million Brits looking across Europe for romance**

We Brits may not like the idea of losing the pound sterling and joining the Eurozone, but we are increasingly open to the international currency of love.

According to a new survey by PARSHIP, Europe's largest matchmaking service for singles wanting a committed relationship, the last 12 months have seen a three fold increase in the number of UK singles looking to date someone in a foreign country. In fact, three million of the UK's 15 million singles are open to a serious long distance relationship (LDR). But if you think this trend is being driven by a lack of suitable partners in the UK it's not. With the increased cost of cross country rail travel in the UK compared to air travel, it's now twice as expensive to date someone living in another UK city than it is a European.

Now 30% more likely than their mainland cousins to develop a cross-border relationship, British singles are taking a more adventurous attitude towards international affairs. Of the those looking for a LDR, 38% said it was due to cheap air travel, – \*a flight within Europe (£47.38) is on average 40% cheaper than a return train ticket from London to any major British city (£81.54) - 26% attributed it to a desire to learn more about different cultures, and 28% said they already spoke a second language. What's more, nearly a quarter of singles (22%) said they would happily enter a long-distance committed relationship, even if they had no plans to live in the same country as their partner.

Dave (47) from England met Ingrid (51) from Austria. "Ingrid and I have been happily dating for three years now and we are deeply in love, although we have no plans to live together in the near future. I live with my son in the UK and Ingrid lives with her children in Austria; we see each other regularly, share holidays and we are constantly in touch. For us this is the perfect relationship."

Of the 60,000 people polled by PARSHIP, topping the list of foreign men that British women would most like to date are the smooth-talking Irish (11%), French (11%) and Italians (11%), followed by the Danes (10%), Dutch (10%) and Swiss (10%). British men favored the Nordic touch with Swedes (14%) and Germans (14%), closely followed by the Swiss (13%), Dutch (12%) and Danish (12%).

Dr Victoria Lukats, psychiatrist and PARSHIP's dating expert commented:

"By polling its large database of UK members PARSHIP has been able to show that whilst the majority of singles would only consider dating somebody living in the UK, 20% of people are now also open to dating someone in a foreign country. In the past this would have been unheard of, except for only a few jet-setting elite. However, initiating and maintaining an international long distance relationship has now become easier with the user of Internet dating, email, cheaper international phone calls, and low cost air fares."

Gwen (35) from Hamburg and Alastair (38) London dated internationally for one year before settling in London. Gwen commented: "Alastair and I originally met in our early 20's but as we were both living in different countries it wasn't viable to have a relationship. Then, 10 years on we met again by chance. Due to the low cost air travel we were able to see each other every other weekend and

sometime more often, flying to Germany, the UK and Italy at a cost of around £80 a month. We are now getting married this summer.”

Commenting on the PARSHIP research Ryanair Sales and Marketing Executive, Ashley Casey said:

"It was only a matter of time before single people started to look further afield for relationships and Ryanair is delighted to be of assistance for people in Long Distance Relationships. Rail Travel has gone up in price making it hard to travel around England let alone Europe. With Ryanair's guaranteed low air fares it makes it easier for couples to commit to a European long term relationship without paying huge amounts for travel on a weekly basis. Forget the train and find out more on our fantastic selection of European Destinations or to book the lowest fares guaranteed at [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)"

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#### **Notes to Editors**

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#### **Flights v rail travel**

\*As of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008 the average cost of the cheapest return ticket, traveling on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May from London to seven major UK cities, returning on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April cost £81.54. The equivalent flight with Ryanair on the same dates, London to seven European cities, cost £47.38 including all taxes and charges.

#### **Return flights 24th – 28th May 2008**

##### **Flying from London to:**

Sweden	£19.98
Netherland	£37.30
Spain	£39.30
Hamburg	£48.96
Norway	£50.75
Ireland	£56.84
Italy	£78.56

#### **Return train 24th – 28th May 2008**

##### **Train from London to:**

Manchester	£176.40
Birmingham	£92.00
Leeds	£79.20
York	£79.20
Liverpool	£62.00
Cardiff	£57.00
Brighton	£25.00

#### **About the survey**

The study was based on a random sample of 60,000 PARSHIP members based in the UK and was conducted in March 2008. To establish the acceptance of long distance relationships within the European community, the singles were surveyed by market research institute Innofact aged between 18 and 59, from 13 Western European countries.

#### **About PARSHIP.co.uk**

PARSHIP.co.uk is the British subsidiary of PARSHIP, Europe's largest premium online matchmaking service. It is specifically for people who are serious about forming a lasting relationship and is built on a rigorous personality profiling test that determines compatibility. It has millions of members across Europe, predominantly affluent, educated men and women between 28 and 55 years old.

Since its launch in Germany in 2001, PARSHIP has successfully matched many thousands people, and it now operates in 13 countries of Western Europe and also in Mexico

PARSHIP GmbH is headquartered in Hamburg and is part of the Georg von Holtzbrinck publishing group, one of Germany's largest publishing companies with financial interests in more than 80 companies, including the Macmillan Group.

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