



HELPING BRITISH NATIONALS ABROAD 2015/16

INTRODUCTION

British nationals took more than 65 million overseas trips in 2015, an increase of around 5 million on the year before. With more of us taking overseas trips than ever before, not to mention the millions that live overseas for all or part of the year, it is an FCO priority to help British nationals travel safely. FCO consular staff do this in many different ways: keeping our travel advice up to date; answering calls from those in need; visiting British nationals in prison and contacting friends and family in the UK; or issuing emergency travel documents so that people can get home if their passport is lost or stolen.

In 2015/16 we provided assistance to more than 23,000 British nationals and issued over 31,000 emergency travel documents. Our network of British embassies, high commissions and consulates handled over 390,000 telephone enquiries and our staff supported British nationals in 9 major crises overseas.

We are also helping people to help themselves; supporting them to take responsibility for their own safety and security while overseas. We encourage people to check the FCO travel advice, research the culture and customs of their destination and any health risks, and take out appropriate insurance, to ensure that their travel is memorable for the right reasons.

We understand that no matter how well prepared people are, they may still find themselves in a difficult or distressing situation overseas and we will always do what we can to help. Our aim is to assist those who need it most.

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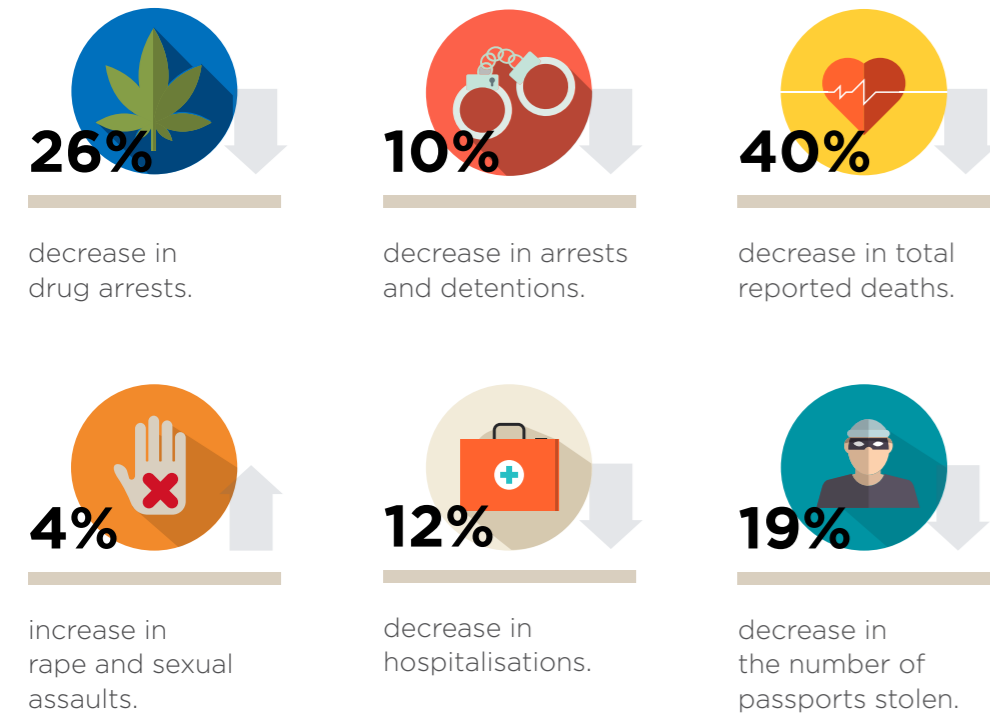
Total assistance cases	2
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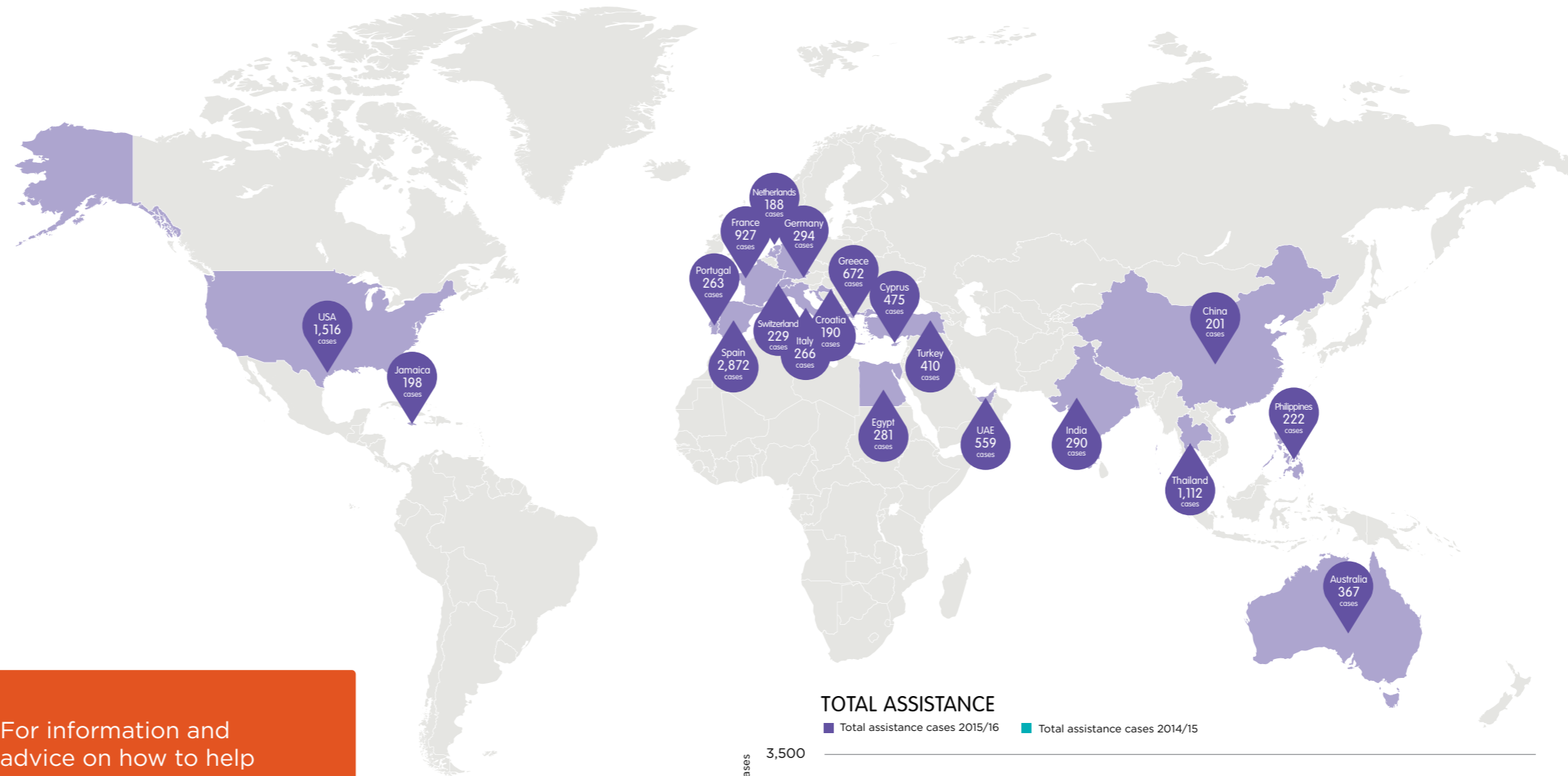
TOTAL FINDINGS

Since 2010/11, the overall number of global assistance cases has increased by **24%** from **19,228** to **23,857**.

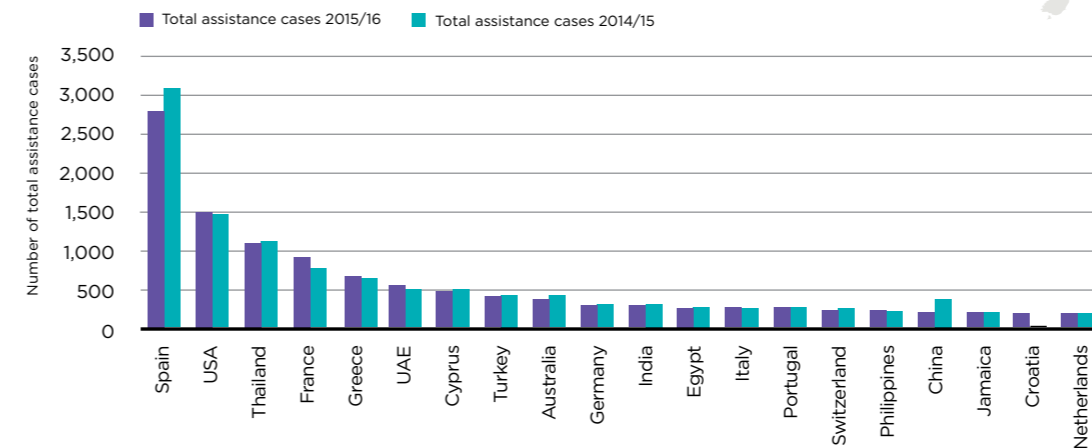
Over five years there has been:



For information and advice on how to help stay safe overseas visit www.gov.uk/travelaware



TOTAL ASSISTANCE



THE FCO CAN:

- Issue you with an emergency travel document
- Provide information about transferring money
- Provide help if you have suffered rape or serious sexual or physical assault, are a victim of crime, are ill or in hospital
- Give you a list of local lawyers, interpreters, doctors or funeral directors
- Contact you if you are detained abroad
- Contact friends and family back home for you if you wish
- Provide help in cases of forced marriage
- Assist people affected by parental child abduction

THE FCO CANNOT:

- Help you enter a country if you do not have a valid passport or necessary visas.
- Give you legal advice or translate documents.
- Investigate crimes or get you out of prison.
- Get you better treatment in hospital or prison than is given to local people, but we will raise concerns if treatment falls below internationally recognised standards.
- Pay any bills or give you money.
- Make travel arrangements for you.

ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

Key findings:



Spain (1,012), USA (925) and the UAE (325) saw the greatest number of detentions during the last year.



decrease in drug arrests over the last year, and a 26% decrease over the last five years.



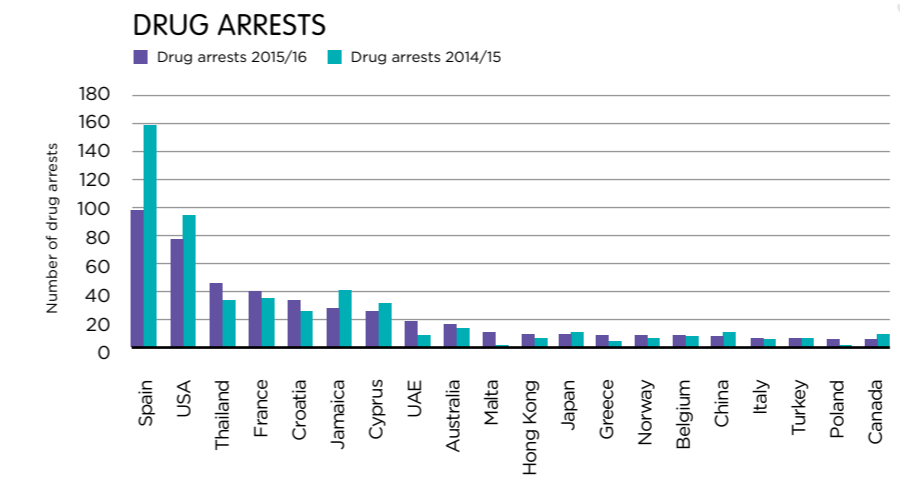
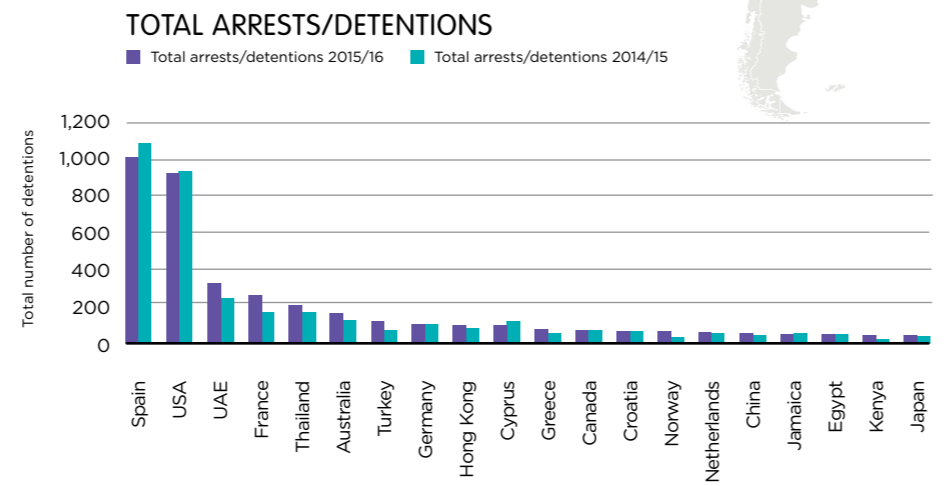
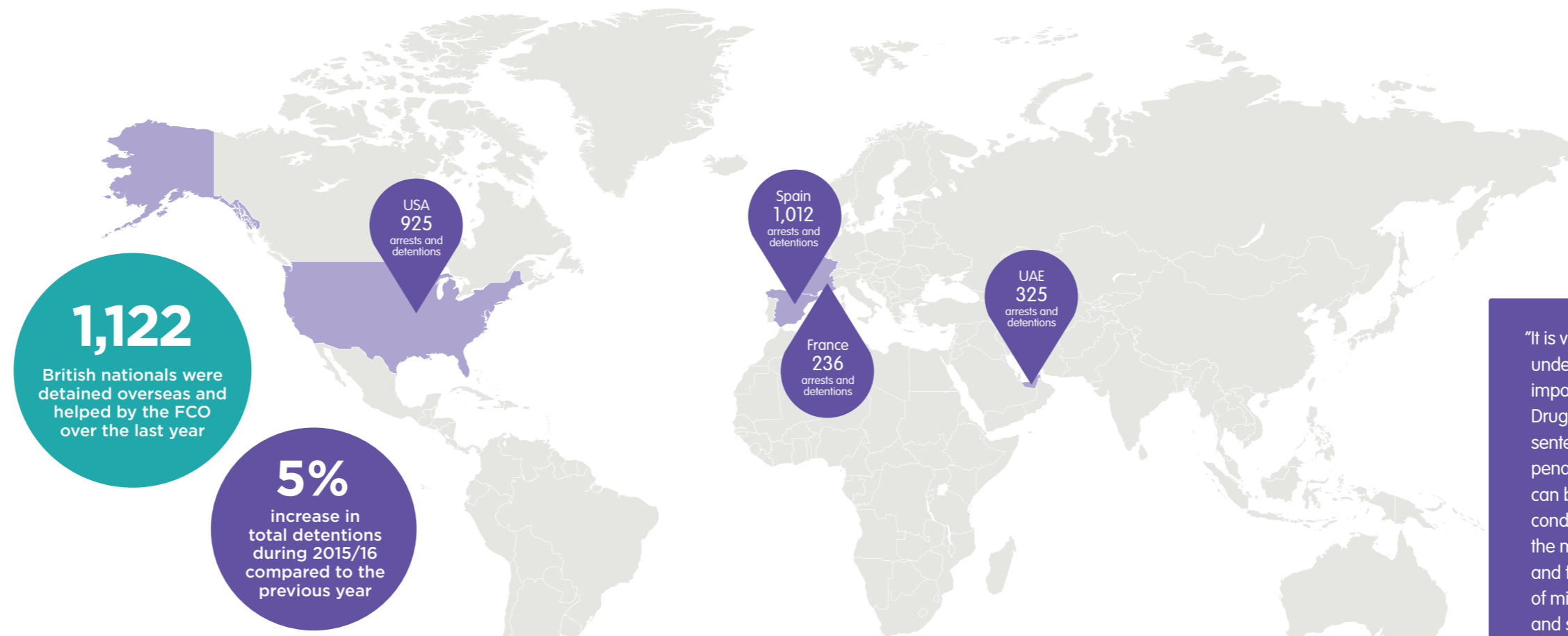
Over the past five years, there has been a 10% fall in the number of Brits detained overseas.



Spain has seen a 41% decrease in drug related arrests during the last year. This fall has been put down to a decline in petty drug related offenses and a rise in larger and better organised drug related offenses. People involved in these bigger cases do not typically request consular assistance.



Croatia has seen an increase of 8 drug arrest cases over the last year. This increase can be attributed to a rise in British nationals visiting the country during this period. Many attend some of the new music festivals, which have risen in popularity with UK visitors in recent times.



"It is vital that British travellers understand the devastating impact of imprisonment abroad. Drug convictions can attract long sentences and even the death penalty in some countries. Time can be served in the most severe conditions with little food and only the most basic medical care. Family and friends will be many thousands of miles away and suffer isolation and stigma alongside the person in prison. Rebuilding a life following imprisonment abroad will also come with huge challenges and obstacles."

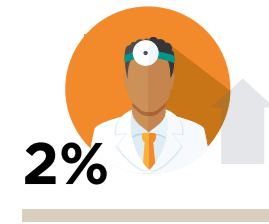


FCO ADVICE

- Don't take risks with the law abroad – or you could end up throwing years of your life away in a foreign prison.
- Think about what you are doing at all times and trust your instincts – do not take risks that you would not at home. Many countries have a zero-tolerance approach to offences involving drugs and sentences can be long.
- It is a good idea to research the local laws and customs of the country you are visiting - there may be serious penalties for breaking a law that might seem trivial at home. Advice relating to country-specific local laws and customs can be found at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

HOSPITALISATIONS

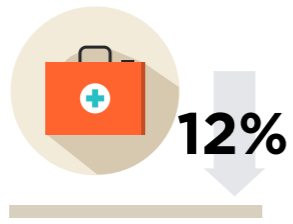
Key findings:



increase in hospitalisations during the last year.



Spain, which reported the greatest number of hospitalisations, witnessed an 8% decrease in hospitalisations over the last year.



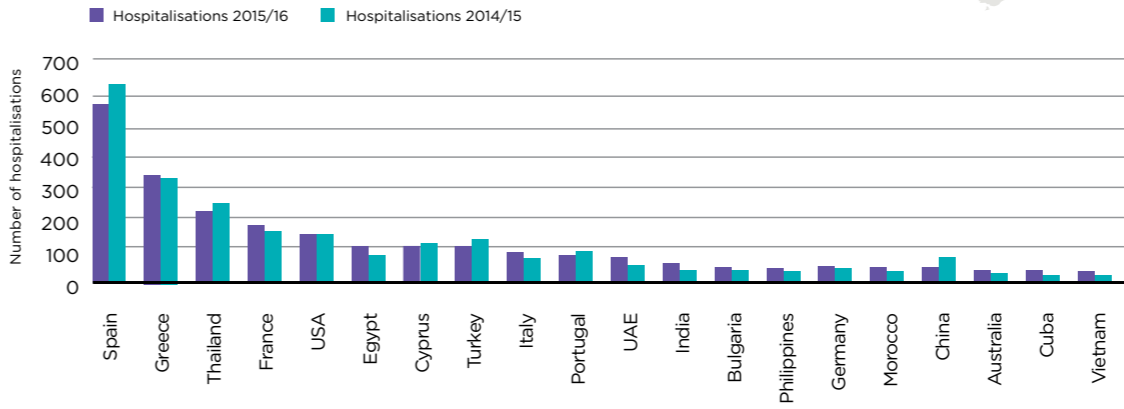
Over the last five years hospitalisations have fallen by over a tenth (12%).

3,319
British nationals hospitalised while overseas during the last year were assisted by FCO.

"No one likes to think they will fall unwell on holiday, but accidents, injuries and illness, both minor – and major – do occur. In the US, treatment costs can be very high. Standards of medical care vary considerably around the globe and can sometimes require an evacuation to another country for treatment, before repatriation home. Customers should ensure they have travel insurance that meets their needs and requirements, especially for pre-existing health conditions for medical and cancellation claims."



HOSPITALISATIONS



FCO ADVICE

- Research the health risks of the country you are visiting as soon as possible before travelling so you can get the right vaccinations and take preventative measures (e.g. malaria tablets) if required. Visit www.nhs.uk/livewell/travelhealth for more information.
- Ensure any medication you are taking is legal in the country you are visiting – contact the embassy of the country to which you are travelling and visit www.nathnac.net and www.nhs.uk for more information.
- Check the small print of your travel insurance policy to make sure you are covered for holiday activities such as moped or quad bike hire, and remember that most insurers won't pay out if you injure yourself or others when under the influence of alcohol.
- If you're travelling within the European Economic Area you can get a free European Health Insurance Card for free or reduced cost emergency care, even for a chronic disease or pre-existing illness. Visit www.ehic.org.uk for more information.

RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Key findings:



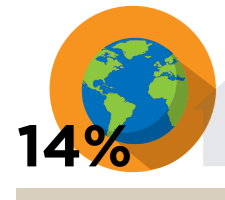
British nationals were victim of rape and / or sexual assault during the last year.



Egypt witnessed a 12% fall in cases over the last year, and 12% over the last five years, as visitor numbers to the country have significantly decreased.

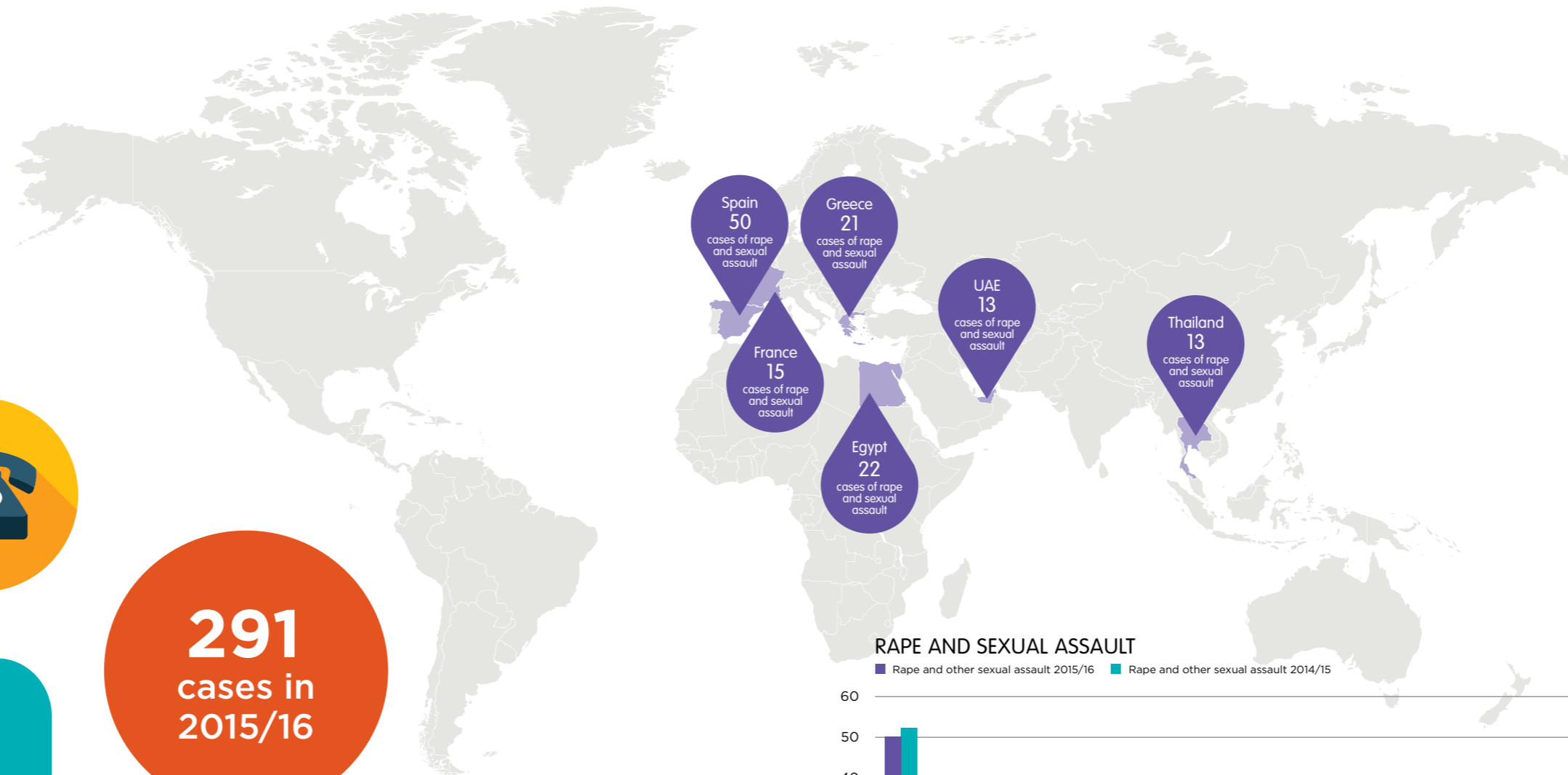


“We encourage anyone who is a victim of rape or sexual assault overseas to contact their nearest embassy or consulate for support.”



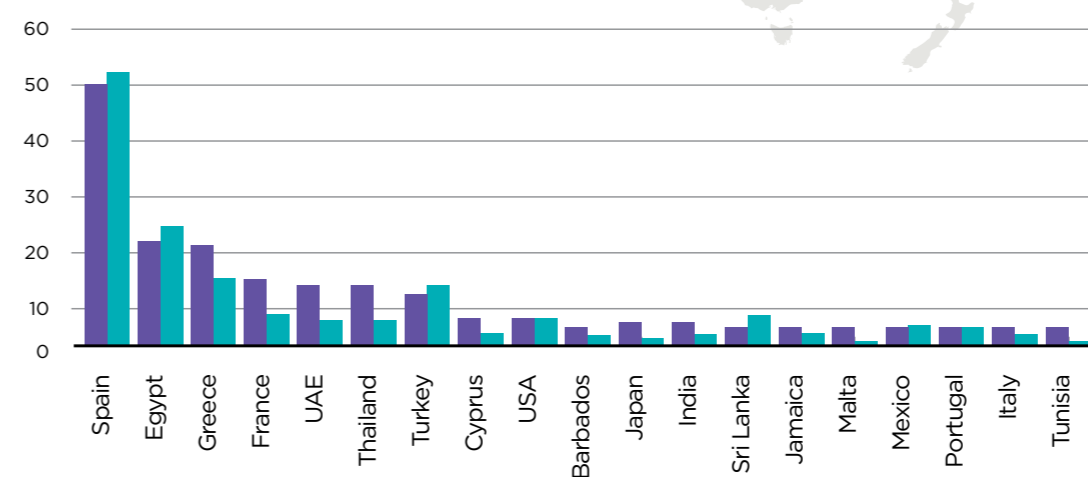
There was a 14% increase in cases across the top 20 countries between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

291 cases in 2015/16



RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

■ Rape and other sexual assault 2015/16 ■ Rape and other sexual assault 2014/15

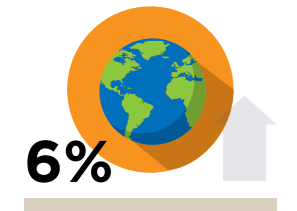


FCO ADVICE

- We encourage anyone who is a victim of rape or sexual assault overseas to contact their nearest British embassy or consulate for support. Contact details for embassies can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/world/embassies.
- We can offer support in a number of ways, including explaining local procedures, accompanying people to the police station, helping them deal with local authorities and medical staff and contacting friends or family at home if requested.
- In these cases it is never the victim's fault – it is the perpetrator who chooses to commit the crime. But we would encourage people to take the same precautions they would at home to avoid putting themselves at risk. For example, keeping an eye on their friends; never accepting car rides from strangers, and asking their hotel to recommend a taxi firm and never leaving food or drinks unattended.

CASES INVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Key findings:

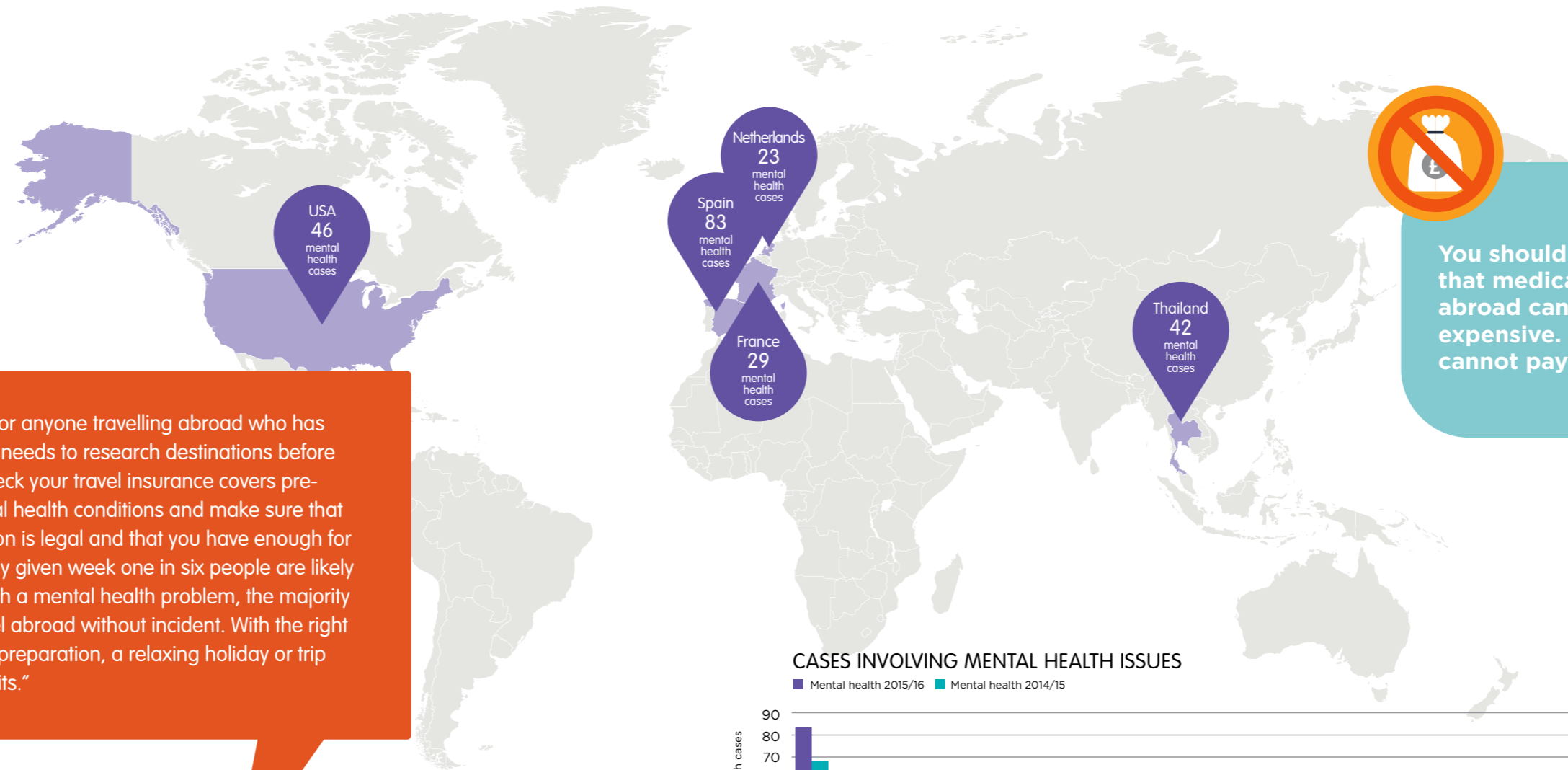


There has been a 6% rise in cases involving mental health issues globally over the previous year.



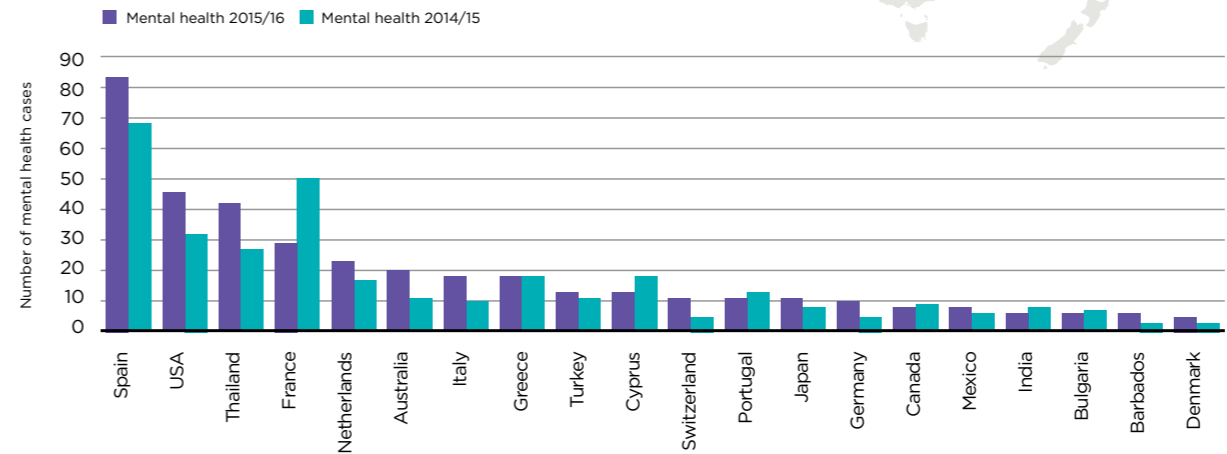
The FCO helped with **532** cases involving mental health issues during the last year

"It's important for anyone travelling abroad who has mental health needs to research destinations before departing. Check your travel insurance covers pre-existing mental health conditions and make sure that your medication is legal and that you have enough for your trip. In any given week one in six people are likely to be living with a mental health problem, the majority of whom travel abroad without incident. With the right planning and preparation, a relaxing holiday or trip overseas awaits."



You should bear in mind that medical treatment abroad can be very expensive. The FCO cannot pay medical bills.

CASES INVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



FCO ADVICE

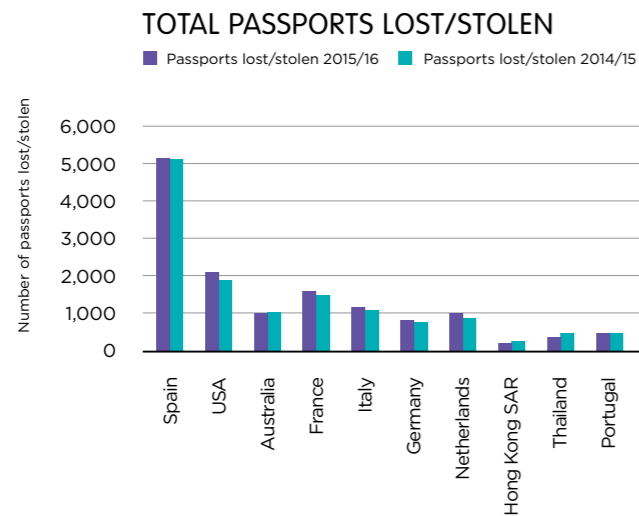
- If you take prescribed medication, make sure you have a sufficient supply for your trip.
- In some countries, your prescription medication might be banned, unavailable or available under a different name, so check this in advance.
- Travel insurance may cover costs of local medical treatment and possibly repatriation. However, it often does not cover pre-existing conditions, including previous mental health diagnoses
- If you're travelling within the European Economic Area you can get a free European Health Insurance Card for free or reduced cost emergency care, even for a chronic disease or pre-existing conditions. Visit www.ehic.org.uk for more information.
- For more information and advice on travelling with mental health needs visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues.

LOST AND STOLEN PASSPORTS AND EMERGENCY TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (ETDs)

Key findings:

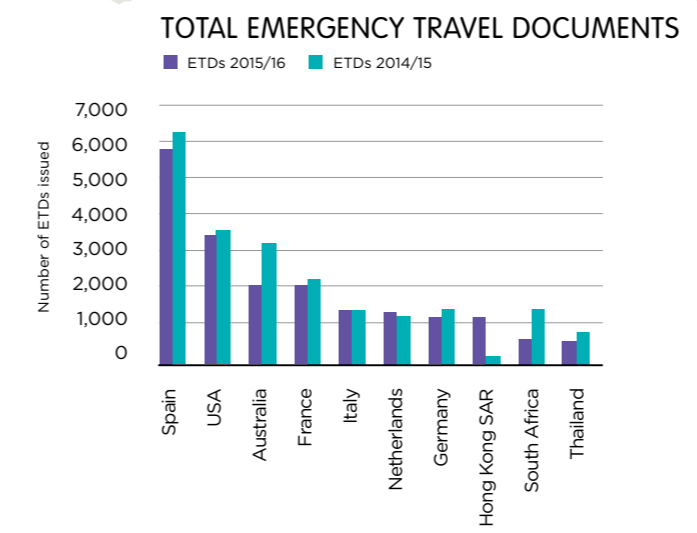
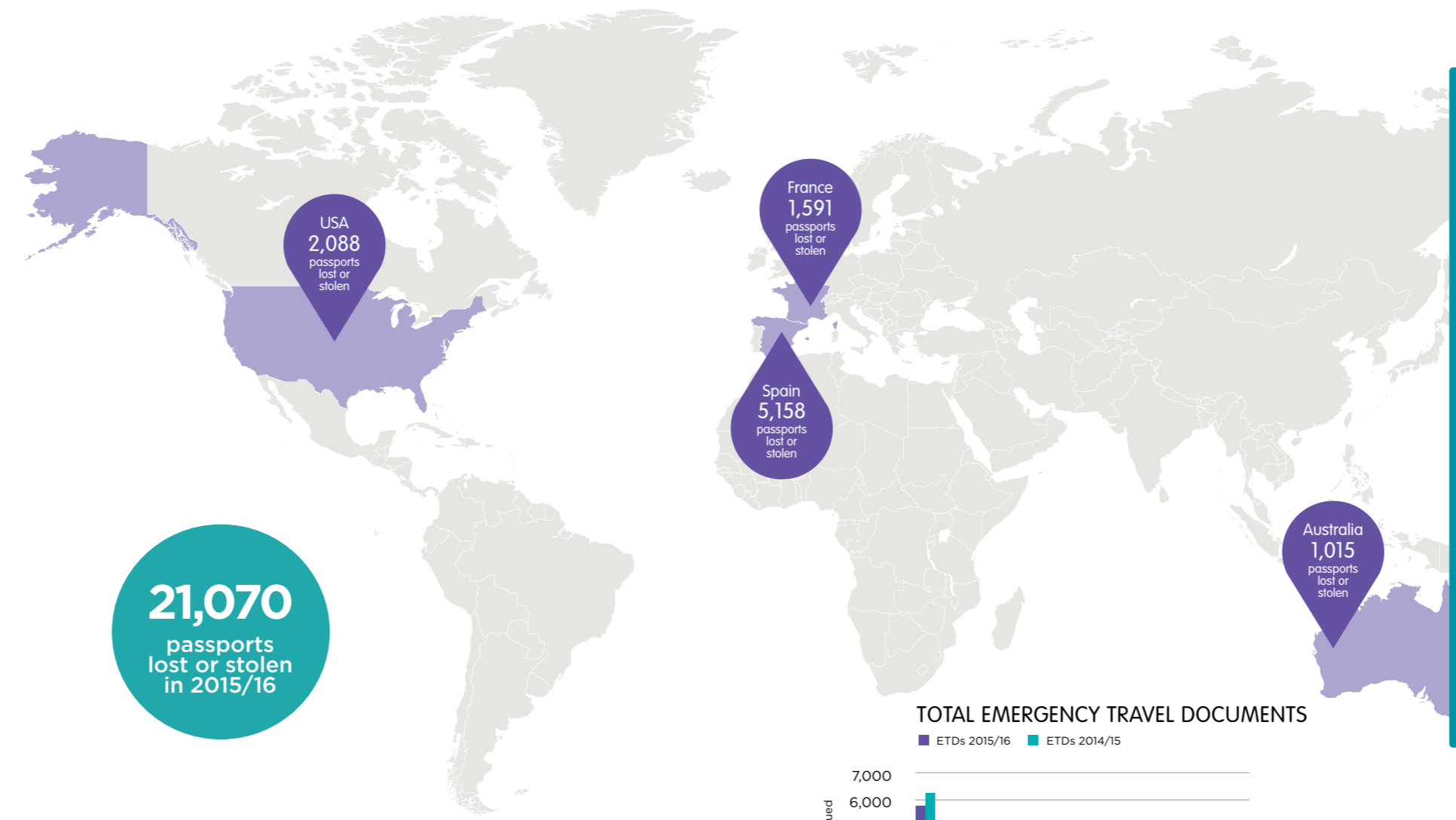


British nationals lost or had stolen 21,070 passports during the last year, a 2% increase on the previous year.



21,070 passports lost or stolen in 2015/16

It's not a requirement that an emergency travel document is issued for every passport lost or stolen overseas. Where return travel to the UK isn't an immediate requirement, for example where a passport is lost or stolen and involves a British national resident of another country, then replacement passports are issued directly by HM Passport Office.



"Losing a passport can be more serious than just the cost and inconvenience of a replacement. A passport is a valuable document and criminals can use it to commit crimes like identity and financial fraud, which is why it's so important to report any loss or theft to Her Majesty's Passport Office so we can log the details and cancel the passport. Immigration and law enforcement agencies around the world are then notified to minimise the risk of your passport being misused. Information about replacing a lost or stolen passport, or getting an emergency travel document from your nearest British embassy, high commission or consulate if you need to travel urgently when overseas, is available on www.gov.uk/emergency-travel-document."



FCO ADVICE

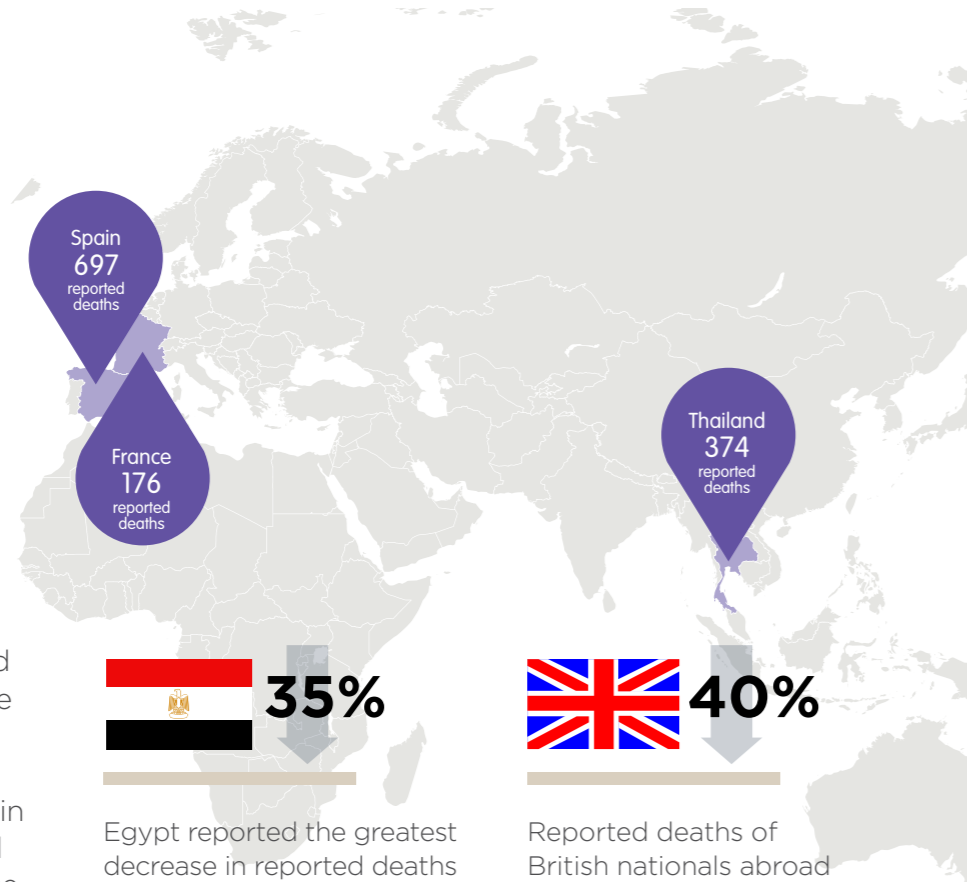
- Be aware of your surroundings and be wary of strangers who take an unusual amount of interest in you.
- Keep your passport in a safe place, and if you are required to keep it with you ensure its location is not visible.
- A damaged passport cannot be used for travel, so value it and keep it safe.
- Make two photocopies of your passport – leave one with friends or family and take the second with you, or store an electronic copy securely. Where permitted, use your photocopy as alternative ID, for example when going out at night.
- For certain countries your passport must be valid for 6 months after the date you travel – check the entry requirements before you go.
- Ensure you fill in the emergency details / next of kin page before you go.
- If you do need to get an emergency travel document to enable you to travel, further information is available at www.gov.uk/emergency-travel-document.

REPORTED DEATHS

Key findings:



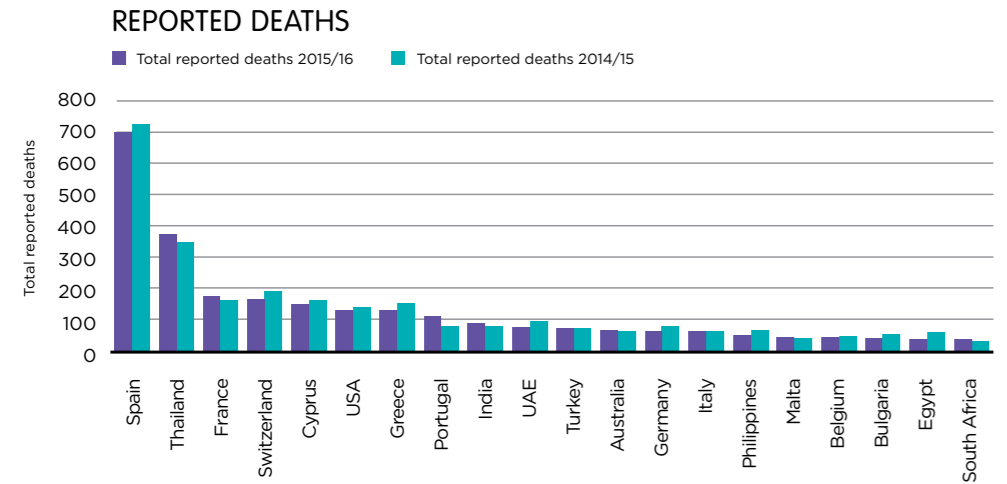
Spain (697), Thailand (374) and France (176) recorded the three highest numbers of reported deaths during the last year. Spain recorded a 5% decrease in reported deaths while Thailand and France both recorded a rise, of 5% and 6% respectively.



35%
Egypt reported the greatest decrease in reported deaths during the last year, falling from 60 to 39, or 35%.

40%
Reported deaths of British nationals abroad have fallen 40% over the last five years.

Reported deaths fell from 3,727 in 2014/15 to **3,606** in 2015/16
3% decrease



FCO ADVICE

- No matter how old or how fit you are, take out comprehensive travel insurance – if an uninsured person dies whilst abroad any treatment they have received and their repatriation to the UK is unlikely to be covered. Repatriation can cost thousands of pounds.
- If you are living in the UK and a relative or friend dies when abroad, you should contact the FCO on 020 7008 1500. If you are abroad, you should contact the relevant British embassy, high commission or consulate.
- It is essential that the death is registered in the country where the person died. The FCO can advise you how to do this. The FCO can also advise you about bringing a body and personal belongings back to the UK and provide support during this distressing time.
- For more information and advice see our publications on coping with death overseas: www.gov.uk/government/publications/coping-with-death-abroad.

TOP 20 COUNTRIES WHERE BRITISH NATIONALS SOUGHT CONSULAR ASSISTANCE FROM 1 APRIL 2015 – 31 MARCH 2016

Country	Number of Visits ¹	Drug Arrests	Total Arrests/ Detentions	Total Reported Deaths	Hospitalisations	Rape and Sexual Assault	Total Other Assistance	Total ³	ETDs	Lost and Stolen Passports
Global	65,720,000	589	5,122	3,606	3,319	291	3,770	16,697	31,340	21,070
Spain	12,988,000	98	1,012	697	581	50	434	2,872	5,869	5,158
USA	3,503,000	77	925	132	145	8	229	1,516	3,514	2,088
Thailand	432,000	46	194	374	229	13	256	1,112	633	368
France	8,849,000	40	236	176	185	15	275	927	1,979	1,591
Greece	2,314,000	9	81	132	339	21	90	672	485	430
UAE	786,000	19	325	75	76	13	51	559	270	141
Cyprus	650,000	26	106	148	98	8	89	475	260	191
Turkey	931,000	7	128	73	97	12	93	410	503	343
Australia	665,000	17	170	67	41	3	69	367	2,007	1,015
Germany	432,000	4	112	65	48	2	63	294	1,095	814
India	446,000	1	40	90	68	6	85	290	269	154
Egypt	251,000	1	51	39	100	22	68	281	119	71
Italy	3,533,000	7	38	63	87	4	67	266	1,261	1,164
Portugal	65,000	4	18	111	83	4	43	263	556	469
Switzerland	3,533,000	1	27	166	12	1	22	229	512	395
Philippines	133,665 ²	0	26	53	50	0	93	222	126	85
China	537,000	8	58	28	42	3	62	201	211	140
Jamaica	219,000	28	55	28	30	4	53	198	166	48
Croatia	500,000	34	71	16	35	3	31	190	97	73
Netherlands	2,548,000	0	63	24	9	0	92	188	1,226	1,010

¹ Figures sourced from the Office for National Statistics
² 2014 visitor figures from local authorities
³ Total cases covering categories above only

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