

Over three quarters of UK, Europe market ITOs seeing cancellations – TECNZ

16th March 2026 By Paul Yandall | paul@tourismticker.com | @tourismticker

More than three quarters of UK and Europe market inbounders are reporting cancellations due to the Middle East conflict, according to an industry poll by the Tourism Export Council of New Zealand.

TECNZ says UK and European travellers appear to be the most affected so far. Image: 123rf

A TECNZ survey of its membership found 77% of respondents have experienced cancellations from the UK and Europe for travel scheduled in March and April 2026.

The association said its poll has so far received a 20% response rate from inbound tour operators and tourism suppliers across accommodation, attractions, transport and guided tour experiences. TECNZ has 74 ITO members and 260 allied members.

Most respondents to its survey primarily served UK and European visitors travelling via Gulf hubs, such as Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi, which play an important role connecting Europe with New Zealand. Those focused on Asian markets reported little disruption to travel plans to New Zealand.

“UK and European travellers appear to be the most affected so far, reflecting the importance of Middle East airline connections for long-haul travel to New Zealand,” TECNZ chief executive Lynda Keene said.

Cancellations were spread across both group and independent leisure travel, with approximately 50% of respondents reporting group tour cancellations and 50% reporting FIT cancellations, along with a small number of incentive travel cancellations.

The association said only 10% of respondents reported cancellations from markets outside Europe, with isolated cancellations from the United States, Canada, Australia, India and some Asian markets. Most of these cancellations were linked to group travel.

“The financial impact varies across businesses, with some operators reporting cancellation losses between \$200,000 and \$300,000 for immediate travel, while others are seeing smaller but growing numbers of FIT and partial group cancellations,” TECNZ said.

Many respondents to its survey reported that their cancellations were linked directly to airline flight cancellations, route disruptions or reduced availability on flights transiting Middle East hubs, making it difficult for travellers to reach New Zealand.

“At this stage, the disruption appears largely confined to immediate travel over the coming weeks, with very limited impact reported for the 2026–2027 inbound season, where only three respondents have reported cancellations to date,” the association said.

“Industry feedback suggests the situation remains fluid, with some operators reporting slowing new bookings from Europe and North America, while others are seeing early signs of increased interest from North American and Asian markets, particularly in the premium travel segment.”

Keene added that maintaining positive messaging to international travel trade partners will be important while the situation evolved.

“New Zealand remains open and welcoming to international visitors, and strong communication with offshore trade partners will be key to ensuring the destination remains front of mind for travellers looking to adjust their travel plans,” she said.

“Global events can quickly influence travel patterns, but they can also create opportunities as travellers look for alternative destinations.”

TECNZ noted that the industry response from New Zealand’s tourism suppliers has largely been supportive, with flexible terms or waiving cancellation fees where possible. That would help maintain New Zealand’s reputation as being a welcoming destination for the clients of UK and European offshore agents.

TECNZ will continue to monitor cancellation and booking trends in partnership with industry members and international tourism partners.