

France is still the number one choice for Brits buying property abroad, according to the latest overseas property 'hot spots' report compiled by Conti.

The country is top of the list for the fourth year running, accounting for a huge 45% of mortgage enquiries received so far this year. This is the country's biggest share achieved to date, and compares with 39% last year, and just 15% back in 2008.

Spain, in second place with 33% of enquiries, is also up from 31% last year and from 14% in 2008, thanks to excellent buying conditions and signs that the market is starting to bottom out. To say that the Spanish property market has experienced a turbulent few years would be a bit of an understatement, but it appears that our affections for this country show no signs of waning.

Portugal, accounting for 10% of enquiries, is in third position for the second year running. Although its share is down by 2% on last year, interest has picked up again over the past three months as falling property prices entice buyers back.

Turkey, Italy, USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Ireland make up the rest of the list of ten, respectively.

Clare Nessling, Conti's operations director, said: "Buyers have increasingly been sticking to locations they know and trust, which is why France and Spain are out on their own at the moment, and Portugal is starting to rise in popularity again too."

"The eurozone crisis continues, but the growing strength of the pound against the euro is boosting the budgets of people in the UK who are looking to buy property in these locations. This together with some bargain property prices and low interest rates, are making it even more affordable. It also helps that these countries offer easy access from the UK, and rental opportunities are good too."