

# NEW RESORT TO ATTRACT WEALTHY TRAVELERS TO PORTUGAL



Efforts by the Portuguese Government to revamp its tourism industry received a major boost following the announcement of plans for a new luxury resort worth US\$ 121 million.

The supporters of the resort say that this is no doubt one of the biggest investments ever made in the tourism sector. **According to Espirito Santo Group, a conglomerate whose subsidiary in Rioforte is leading the development, the project will be conducted by an Aman Resort and Spa.** This will be on the Alentejo coast found in the southern part of Lisbon.

The resort will include an 18-hole golf course. There will also be 51 second homes designed for wealthy German, Austrian and Swiss buyers. This project will be in conjunction with Dahler, a real estate company based in Germany.

The Chief Executive of Herdade da Comporta, Carlos Beirao da Veiga, said that the move signified the faith international business still has in Portugal despite the recent recession.

Tourism contributes about 9.5 percent of the country's GDP. It plays a significant role in the government's efforts of reviving growth and creating a surplus in the current account.

Adolfo Mesquita Nunes, the tourism secretary, said that there is so much Portugal had to do to keep up with the tight competition from countries such as Turkey and Croatia. It also needs to show the world that it has a lot more to offer than just its beaches.

He further added that **in as much as they are a competent player in the sun and sea market, work has to be done to diversify their image as a tourist destination.** Some of the potential tourism areas include sports, religion and culture.

According to Francisco Calheiros, the President of the Portuguese Tourism Confederation, the number of domestic tourists will continue dropping this year to about 3 to 5 percent. This is due to the effects of the recession. In 2012 it dropped by double digits.

The dropping figures made it key for Portugal to attract more tourists from the rest of the European countries. Calheiros further added that Portugal receives only one percent of tourists from the German tourism market. He believes that this percentage can be raised to 2 or 4 percent quite fast.

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