

SPAIN ISSUED 22% MORE VISA LAST YEAR



Spanish authorities informed that the number of visas issued in 2012 increased by 22% with a denial rate reduction of almost 40%. The reasons for improved statistics are the speeded up emission policy, new consulates in Russia and China, and outsourcing in these countries.

Especially significant is the case of Russia, where the amount of visa issued for travelers heading for Spain increased by 30% compared to 2011 and 19.2% so far this year, compared to the same period in 2012. In China the paperwork has been reduced to less than 5 days. **The number of visas issued in China between January and August of 2013 rose by 20%**, according to the data from the Industry, Energy, and Tourism Ministry.

This has been one of the subjects mentioned during a meeting of the Industry, Energy, and Tourism Minister, José Manuel Soria, the minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, José Manuel García-Margallo, and the general secretary of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Taleb Rifai, in Madrid.

During the meeting, García-Margallo and Soria shared with the general secretary of the UNWTO the initiative that the Spanish Government will propose on the next revision of the Schengen policies with the aim to speed up the tourism visa issuance.

Soria highlighted the efforts that Spain is making in this regard from the tourism point of view, as he explained during the T20 reunion that took place in London during WTM, and gathering for the National and Integral Tourism Plan.

Both ministers have recognized that the visa policy needs to adapt to the new challenges of the tourism industry like the emergence of markets, such as China and Russia, or the necessity of major coordination of the countries in the Schengen area to avoid competing internally for the visa emission and to push for good practices.

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