

RUSSIAN TOURISTS BOOST SPANISH TOURISM AGAIN



Nearly a million Russian tourists visited Spain between January and November 2016, 1.8% more than in the previous year, a figure that is rebounding from the lows, although it is still far from the 1.5 million arrivals in 2013.

According to Alla Manilova, from Russia's Deputy Minister of Culture, in the first eleven months of the year 953,000 Russian tourists visited Spain. **This figure is in contrast to the 40% decline since 2014 and coincides with the instability of the Russian rouble at the time** and "the worsening of political relations between Russia and Europe," he explained.

The Russian Deputy Minister of Culture expects a "good" 2017, with Spain possibly becoming the third destination most visited by Russians, receiving more than one million of these tourists.

The Secretary of State for Spanish Tourism, Matilde Asían, reported that "Spain has beaten all records in 2016" and noted that tourists from Russia have contributed to this. "Without Russian tourists, it would not have been possible," she said.

The Russian government explained that the amount of arrivals in Spain is a result of the collaboration between both countries to "streamline procedures and promote destinations".

Experts indicate that the average stay by Russian tourists is between 8 and 10 nights, one of the longest among all the countries that send tourists to Spain.

By region, Catalonia, the Canary Islands, the Valencian Community, the Balearic Islands, Andalusia and Madrid are the most visited destinations, she stated.

On the other hand, the Russian Federation's ambassador to Spain, Yuri Korchagin, pointed out that the number of Spanish tourists who visited Russia in 2016 increased by 30%, reaching a volume of between 10,000 and 20,000 tourists.

Russia estimates that more than 100,000 Spanish tourists will visit that country in the short and medium term.

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