

THE WAR IN LIBYA INFLUENCES TOURISM IN TURKEY



The revolution that swept over North Africa together with a military campaign against Libya has an entirely unexpected effect: European tourists are afraid to go on vacation to Turkey.

Turkey has recorded a 9 % drop in tourists coming to the country on holiday. According to the survey done by British newspaper Daily Mail **tourists began to reconsider their vacation in Turkey a week before the start of military action against Libya**, as soon as the idea of the war became a serious issue in the UN. Akin Koc, the director of Turkish travel agency 'Anatolian Sky Holidays' was surprised by the situation: "After the unrests in Egypt and Tunisia and the beginning of operations in Libya, we expected more tourists would be arriving in Turkey. But people actually started relating Turkey to the facts they had seen on TV." As a result, the British tourist agencies had to act very quickly. They explained to both current and potential customers that Turkey is far from the zone of military conflict and is not taking part in it.

At the same time **Turkey recorded a growth of Russian tourists**. Dmitriy Mazurov, the director of Russian travel agency 'Sunrise Tour' said that according to their numbers, there has been no reduction in demand for holidays in Turkey. Moreover, a significant increase in the demand has been recorded by all Russian tour operators who sell vacations in Turkey. The rise in the demand has been observed particularly in premium class hotels as the experts confirmed. The representatives of 'Pegasus Touristik', another Russian travel agency, noticed the same trend. Anna Podgornaya, the manager of the agency, explained that the demand for holidays in Turkey among their customers is very high. She said that several resorts in Turkey where the company arranges vacations for their clients are fully booked until the end of May. She also expressed her concerns about the rates in Turkish hotels. If even more tourists decide to spend their holiday in Turkey, the local hotels might raise the prices.

However, **in current circumstances Turkish hotels may even be a little cheaper**. There are a number of factors that might persuade Turkish hoteliers and operators to reduce rates. One of them is the re-opening of Egypt to tourists after the period of unrest. When the Russian Foreign Ministry allow flights to Egypt again, it will lead to a redistribution of tourist flow and the emergence of competitor for Turkey.

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