

# UNWTO: GLOBAL TOURISM IN 2009 TO DROP



Tourism industry has been doing very well in the recent years. The global financial crisis is, however, changing the pattern. According to UNWTO, tourism arrivals will fall worldwide in 2009.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization expects **global tourism** to drop by up to 2 per cent. Europe and Americas will be probably hit the hardest. Nevertheless, since we live in an interconnected global economy, the slowdown is also **affecting other destinations** like China, India, and Brazil.

The first half of 2008 was not affected too much and the tourism industry internationally grew by 5 per cent. In the second half of the year however the numbers dropped by 1 per cent as a result of the **economic meltdown**. In the last six months of 2008, Europe and Asia witnessed a decrease of -3 per cent. Especially Asia was hit by the recession hard since it enjoyed a double digit growth in 2007.

The Middle East (+11 per cent), Africa (+5 per cent) and the Americas (+4 per cent) were the best performers in 2008. Some destinations did exceptionally well despite the crisis. Honduras, the Republic of Korea or Egypt were among them. For 2009 the experts predict further slowdown in demand - both in the domestic and international tourism sector.

Tourism industry is a vital part of numerous economies. Last year, there were **924 million tourist arrivals** worldwide. The industry is often advocated as a green sector and as an important employer. Though the industry is not affected as hard as for example construction, real estate or car manufacturing, the losses will be felt anyway. Right now, travel experts are unable to predict further developments of the crisis and its impact on the tourism industry. They, however, expect tourism to recover as soon as the global economy gets better.

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