

CYPRUS TOURISM NEEDS REVIVAL



Tourism still dominates but has lost most of the sheen at Cyprus. The main players are optimistic about the promising summer season, but others doubt the probability of this optimism.

International leaders and the government are trying hard to revive this service industry. The result of the financial sector being halved is going to affect all related industries adversely. There is a need for collaborative efforts by all of them to perk up tourism.

It is hoped that tourism will flourish again but far from certain. **The prospects seem promising theoretically with Cyprus having about 2.5 million tourists last year**, thus swelling revenues by approximately 10% of GDP as compared to 20% in late 1990s.

Hotels are finding it difficult to operate on the shoe-string budget. Yet, the strategic managers feel positive about restoring the tourism industry of Cyprus. The government is sure that the banks and hotels will find an amicable solution to their common problems. There are many conflicting views regarding this issue. Many officials feel that the hotel and related industries need protection and assistance to tide over the current crises so that economic growth is given a boost in the years ahead.

A few suggestions to revitalize the tourism industry include lengthening the tourism season, promoting domestic tourism, adopting improved methods of advertising, encouraging sports, medical and cultural tourism, and increasing the occupancy rates of the hotels. These should be taken up by the Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO) with greater emphasis.

Large scale investments would be required to rebuild the infrastructure and to diversify the tourism industry. **Another million tourists will have to be attracted in order to make any discernible changes.** Also, lowering of prices would fetch more visitors. The number of tourists from UK has dropped from 1.6 million 10 years ago to only one million today.

Cyprus faces stiff competition from Croatia, Tunisia, Turkey, and Egypt in terms of tourism. The industry is no longer a magic bullet. The poor shape of the economy can hardly stand up to attract foreign investments like Greece and Turkey do. Uncertainty is a major setback to expect a restart of the industry of tourism. However, many feel that Cyprus is an attractive destination till date. The local government is optimistic about a renewed interest in the island country.

People feared that Germans were expected to stay away from Cyprus due to the recent political issues. There exists a certain degree of ambiguity regarding this myth. Fierce attempts are being made to rectify the situation. The number of Germans to Cyprus is consistently on the rise.

Other than the fall during Easter, travelers from UK too will shoot up according to the booking statistics obtained from travel agencies. UK is the most lucrative market for the tourism industry of Cyprus, and this is not expected to change in a hurry.

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