

SPAIN NEEDS INNOVATION TO GET 80 M VISITORS IN 2015



Spain's tourism industry sees innovation, technology, product differentiation and public-private collaboration as key elements in order to attract between 75 and 80 million tourists in 2015. These are some of the points raised in the report 'Hot Topics of Tourism in 2013' presented in Madrid and prepared by PwC Consulting based on the opinion of the representatives of the sector in Spain.

The partner in charge of tourism in the PwC, Alvaro Klecker, said that although in recent years there has been growth in this sector, it is "insufficient" and there have been declines in the profitability of all business areas. **Furthermore, although the number of foreign visitors continues to increase, with 58 million international tourists in 2012, domestic tourism "suffers greatly," so the expectations that were already negative "have been overcome."**

To achieve growth in the sector this year, Klecker said that Spain is a country that "is obliged to export services and import visitors" for which the offer needs to be improved by making it "different especially in times of high season," the technology must be seized and the sector needs to be "sensitive" to what the demand is.

Among the "keys to growth" is the better communication of the offer to the tourists, the need to understand "what the demand is" to retain visitors and "renew and preserve" the 'sun and beach' tourism characteristic of Spain.

In order to get the figure of between 75 and 80 million tourists in 2015, the report stresses the need "to attract those who are not coming here," linking tourism to the entertainment industry and not abandoning events and business tourism.

In addition, other proposals are the independency of seasonal-only tourism through innovation, and "trying to get a 20% additional income beyond the high season" that "has no problems," for which Klecker advised to enhance the "alternatives" that exist in other seasons and be "in constant contact" with international tourists.

"It is frustrating to see how the profit margins have reduced," lamented the PwC partner, who admitted that there was a need for changes in the tourist business model and focusing on attracting more visitors by improving efficiency and restructuring travel agencies.

On this topic, he also referred to the airline Iberia as an example of what to do, undertake restructurings although "sometimes it's difficult."

Finally, on air taxes, the PwC partner said that in some cases there is no other choice than to proceed to a rise, though he added that "if you raise them, do it rationally."

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