

MOROCCO FIGHTS OFF CRISIS BY TOURISM



Morocco fights off the crisis by boosting its tourism industry. Moroccan government has set aside \$37.3 million to help the sector.

Moroccan tourism is successfully resisting the global economic crisis. The government intends to boost this sector even further by huge investments. Some **\$37.3 million** is reportedly allocated for this purpose.

According to an agreement between the Moroccan government and the National Tourism Federation, there should be further promotion of the country as a tourism destination. New markets should be looked for and the image of the country as an interesting tourism destination should be maintained in the most important European markets i.e. France, Spain, the UK, Italy, Germany and Benelux. Majority of people traveling to Morocco are Moroccans living abroad but the **second most important market is France**.

New incentive programs are to be introduced for tourism industry investors. The incentives could be for example in the form of tax exclusions. The government has also promised it will heavily invest in new resorts to increase Morocco's overall bed capacity.

By boosting the tourism industry Moroccans want to diminish the negative impacts of the global economic crisis. This sector represents **nine percent of GDP, it is the primary foreign currency earner and a very important employer**.

The development of Moroccan tourism industry is a part of the governmental long-term strategy. In 2001, King Mohammed VI initiated the Plan Azur Vision 2010 tourist development program. The goal of the plan was to increase the incoming tourism from 4.5 million in 2000 to 10 million visitors by 2010. In 2008, some 7.9 million people visited the country, which was a six per cent rise when compared to the previous year. Also signature of the open-skies EU agreement in 2005 had a positive effect on increasing numbers of visitors coming to this North African country.

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