

TOURISM TO BECOME A STRATEGIC PART OF CHINESE ECONOMY



China plans to make tourism industry a strategic pillar of its economy. It is now easier for private businesses to enter the market. Further development of tourism infrastructure could be also expected.

China intends to develop its tourism industry into a strategic part of the country's economy. This statement is a result of a State Council meeting, chaired by Premier Wen Jiabao. According to the council there is a need for a development of tourism and transport infrastructure.

They also called for more people to be trained for the industry. **Previously state owned tourism businesses were preferred by the government but the situation has changed.** Private businesses can enter the market under the same conditions as the state owned ones. The government also hopes there will be further cooperation between the tourism industry and other sectors such as culture, sports, agriculture, forestry and environmental protection.

The country certainly has a big tourism potential which it managed to present during the Olympics. Chinese tourism has grown quite fast during the last decade. There is, however, still space for development. For example foreign tourists come mainly to the East Coast. **Beijing and Shanghai are among the most popular destinations for international tourists.** However, there are other parts of the vast country that want to attract foreign visitors as well. The greatest asset of the remote destinations is often the charm of the unknown luring visitors from the "Western" world. However besides the lack of infrastructure it is often the language barrier and lack of skilled guides that slows down the growth of tourism in other parts of China. For example Russian visitors, who often prefer group tours may have problems when looking for Russian speaking guides. European tourists on the other hand many times opt for independent traveling and thus need to get over lack of travel information about transport services and the destinations in English.

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