

EUROPE MAKING CHANGES FOR VISITORS FROM CHINA



The results from the recent World Tourism Market report show that while the United States has been suffering from lower numbers of business tourists, more and more Asian travellers have been coming to Europe. The number of foreign visitors in the US is down by 10%, and the blame has been placed on over-strict security measures. The number of visitors for Europe is up by 8% - which means 84 million people.

The number of Asian holiday makers and business people coming to European countries mostly from India and China peaked at 14 million in 2005. However, the services offered by Europeans to Asians are still not properly focused. So what precisely is missing?

Caroline Bremner, Euromonitor International's global travel and tourism research manager, has pointed out that Europeans has so far failed to cater for Chinese habits. She stressed that Chinese tourists like to enjoy coach or self-drive trips but many European cities have limited access by coach and parking facilities are insufficient.

She added that Chinese people are restricted to the amount of cash they are allowed to travel with and solve this problem by loading credit cards in advance. Nevertheless, in Europe there are few cash machines outside city centres and limited credit card facilities. Chinese tourists like to spend their money on international brands and eating out, simultaneously trying to save on accommodation. In the UK, for example, this is nearly impossible as cheap accommodation is very difficult to find.

A further problem lies in the shortage of documents translated into Chinese.

So far, France has been leading the way in attempting to improve the situation and accommodate Chinese tourists with its 'year of France in China'. The French recognised that each tourist from

China spends an average of \$US 3,800 per visit, and hurry up to capitalise on this opportunity. Other European countries have been slower in making necessary changes.

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