

TOURISM DEALS DEVELOP BETWEEN VIETNAM AND EU



Vietnam is a country slowly rising out of a post-war era through a two-decade long economic boom. Modernization, while slow and steady, is occurring, capitalism is being favored and progress is being seen by the wider world. With the country beginning to show its potential as a place of investment and trade, naturally some of the world's larger, established powers are looking to take advantage of the situation.

Currently, the EU and U.S. are battling it out over an agreement for free trade but it seems that the EU are winning the race to become Vietnam's new best friend - not only was the Marou Chocolate factory started by Frenchmen, there are some important, growing tourism links too. **Officials are looking for a two way street and greater opportunities for Vietnamese tourism.**

It is no surprise that it is Europe who is being targeted by Vietnam's tourism board given their current relationship with the region: six million tourists came to the country in 2013 and a sixth came from European nations, meaning a lot of potential revenue and a lot of incentive to expand the industry and entice more visitors over.

So far, Brussels have signed a co-operation agreement and there is excitement about the prospects from experts and officials. There is talk of developing resorts and the International Tourism Institute's President has spoken about "a big opportunity for exchange"; however, there are some concerns in Vietnam about just how open and balanced these deals and exchanges will be.

Clearly the country would love to see the benefits of European support and visits but that is not their only concern; as was suggested by the Chairman of Vietnam Tourism, not only do they want support from the EU within Vietnam, **they are also hoping to see more Vietnamese tourists permitted entry into EU countries.**

Vietnam is happy to open its doors but only if the EU do the same back and ease their visa rules for more than just one-off events such as the Euro 2016 tournament. It seems that like the rest of the country's economy, tourism is growing slowly and encouragingly but there is still work to do to satisfy everyone.

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