

SPAIN: NUMBER OF MEDICAL TOURISTS TO DOUBLE WITHIN 5 YEARS



The number of medical tourists coming to Spain is expected to double in the next five years. A new public-private partnership 'SpainCares' has been proposed to boost the segment and to achieve 200,000 travelers seeking medical care in the country in 2019.

According to estimates from the president of the Spanish Tourism Cluster of Health, Íñigo Valcaneras, cooperation with the Ministry of Industry in this area **could place Spain among the top three medical tourism countries in the world**, shortening the distance that separates it from countries like the United States, Morocco and the Czech Republic.

"Our sectors are much more competitive from the point of view of health and tourism, especially when we unleash our full potential with this initiative," said Valcaneras.

To achieve it, the Tourism Cluster, through the EOI Foundation and Secretary of State for Tourism, and the body of private companies have signed two agreements to organize activities to attract foreign patients generating revenue and employment in Spain.

As explained by the Secretary of State for Tourism, Isabel Borrego this initiative is in line with the objective of tourism diversification pursued by the government - "looking for a quality product and improving profitability of the sector."

2.7 Million Budget

The new project will have a group funding of EUR 2.7 million in the next two years, but the activities to boost medical tourism industry will take place over a decade. The initiative includes marketing campaigns to attract tourists in the UK, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, Morocco and the United States. The brand 'SpainCares', that will be promoted in the campaigns is currently connecting a number of private clinics in Spain and it will become a property of the Spanish State.

However, the EOI will transfer the management of the brand to the Cluster so as to "be able to develop group projects perfectly defined by the protocol," according to the vice president of the Institute for Spanish Tourism Quality and vice president of the Cluster Health Tourism, Miguel Mirones.

Online Platform for Travelers

Also, in the coming weeks an 'online' platform will be created to facilitate both domestic and foreign patients finding treatment and health services around Spain. "We hope that when a tourist gets treatment, 'SpainCares' will be their reference," said Mirones.

Spain currently has the second largest number of hospitals with accreditation in Europe and more than 100 resorts.

Another objective of the agreement is to control the number of medical tourists coming to Spain

more accurately, since the Spanish Cluster so far only has estimates from studies by companies like Deloitte and statistics.

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