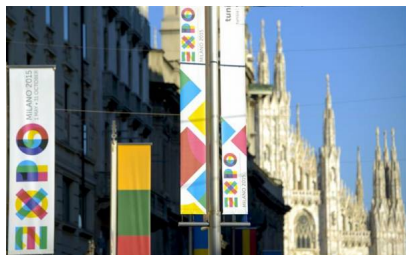


ITALY REJOICES OVER RECORD TOURISM NUMBERS BOOSTED BY EXPO 2015



All data from trading associations confirm that this year Italy can boast of a record summer with regards to tourism. The positive flow from abroad and the improvement of the domestic demand are characteristic for this year's summer season.

"A record summer. **Domestic tourism started to increase again after a long time and the international sector keeps growing.** We must insist on promoting and improving our tourist structures. The new tax credit, digitalization, restoration of structures and Enit new governance are going in the right direction. According to the first data for summer 2015, the contribution brought by tourism and culture to create new jobs found a great confirmation," said Dario Franceschini, Minister for cultural heritage in Italy.

Despite the different regions, tourism data show an increase all over the country. According to Federalberghi, the tourism association, Italians began traveling again (+8.6%) and foreigners prolonged their hotel and non-hotel stays (+2.5%) for an overall increase of about 20% in tourist economy. According to Federtourism the general increase is around 10%.

Southern Italy in particular confirms to be Italians' favorite destination. It is also experiencing an increase of foreign arrivals, even in places not traditionally related to cities of arts and seaside resorts. Seaside tourism is growing all over the country, with the most important destinations sold out during Ferragosto, which is a traditional bank holiday on August 15th.

For the first time since 2010 new restaurants and hotels recorded a positive trend, with an average increase around 3%. This turnaround has important consequences among entrepreneurs who, investing in this type of business, see tourism as a crucial sector for the economic recovery.

The international world exhibition Expo 2015 plays an important role in boosting domestic tourism numbers. The event is visited by one Italian out of four, reported Federalberghi. According to the Bureau International des Expositions 16 million Italians will visit the Expo by October 31st.

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