

SPAIN BEATS SUMMER RECORDS WITH 6% INCREASE IN FOREIGN TOURISTS



The volume of foreign tourists in Spain's summer season increased by 6%, according to an announcement by Minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism, José Manuel Soria, who also stated that this year 68 million visitors are expected to come to the country.

Soria stressed that the case of tourism has been a success story over the last few decades, but this does not guarantee a repeat in the future, due to daily changes at an increasing rate, especially in the digital economy.

"We must adapt our tourism structures to an increasingly demanding tourist, who will require a la carte services," the minister said.

"From the supply point of view, there will be an increase because more and more countries see tourism as a source of economic activity and employment," Soria noted during a meeting of EFE Tourism Forum.

The minister stressed that Spain should promote and establish frameworks for investment in the sector by placing limits on investment activity in the form of moratoriums or fees. "When we spend public resources to promote the country as a destination it is not a good idea to drive tourists away with extra charges," he explained.

Soria tried to highlight the fact that this year Spain will consolidate its position on the podium with more than 68 million tourists but that this cannot lead to complacency. Therefore, a plan for shopping tourism and 'smart cities' has been launched.

Tourism is one of the engines of economic recovery in Spain, according to Soria. The sector contributed 11% to GDP, 12% to employment and 25% to new jobs in the last 12 months, in addition to offsetting the trade deficit by 256%.

According to estimates by UNWTO, it is expected that in 2020 more than 1,400 million foreign tourists will be recorded around the world and the number will exceed 1,800 million in 15 years. The travel industry represents \$9 out of every \$100 generated each year and 1 in every 11 jobs worldwide. The impact of tourism on other sectors such as construction, agriculture and the digital economy is also critical, said the minister.

In 2014, a total of 582 million tourists visited Europe, 51% of the total volume, and they spent 510 million dollars, 41% of tourism spending worldwide. This also accounts for 9% of all economic activity and generates 32 million jobs.

Date: 2015-09-21

Article link:

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