

FRENCH TOUR OPERATORS EXPECT A 5.8% INCREASE IN TRAFFIC THIS WINTER



The French tour operators Association predicts positive outbound tourism numbers over the coming winter season.

The president of SETO (Syndicat des Entreprises du Tour Operating), René-Marc Chikli, said that he expects a **5.8% increase in traffic for this period. This growth represents 9.5% for the turnover and 3.5% for the unit revenues.**

"Frankly, we feel that tourism consumption is picking up," he said. Regarding the medium-haul travel, he anticipates "a lot of departures to the Canary Islands and Finland", but also a significant drop for Morocco and only a few bookings for Egypt and Tunisia.

Regarding the long haul, Canada and Cuba are in high demand and Mexico and Senegal are lagging behind.

Also, according to the president of the SETO (Association of French Tour Operators), the start of this season is marked by four factors. The perception of the economic situation from French consumers improved slightly (fuel prices, interest rates, and taxes). The timing of school holidays allows an advanced start of the 2016 Summer Season for several key destinations in Southern Europe. Furthermore, the destinations of North Africa / Middle East have not yet found the path of growth in terms of reservations. Finally, tour operators offer a number of new destinations and enhanced programming, including the Caribbean (e.g. Cuba, Haiti).

Looking at the summer season 2015 the French tour operators that are members of the SETO recorded a business volume of the "packaged holidays" activity of EUR 1,823 million, a virtually stable figure (-0.5%) compared to the same period of the previous year. They had almost 1.9 million customers to travel with them, which corresponds to a decrease in activity (-2.5%) compared to the same period of the previous year (on a comparable basis). The average unit revenue recovered during this period (+ 2.0%) and reached EUR 964.

France achieved a turnover of EUR 190 million, increasing by + 2.3%, with the number of customers that increased by 3.9% (360,575 clients) and an average unit revenue of EUR 526, decreasing by -1.6%. The medium-haul destinations achieved a turnover of EUR 1,162 million, decreasing by -1.5%, resulting from a decline in traffic of 4.2% (1.3 million customers) and an increase in unit revenue of 2.9% (EUR 880). The long-haul destinations achieved a turnover of EUR 471 million, increasing by + 0.8%, due to an increase in unit revenue of 2.4% (EUR 2,231) and a -1.5% decline in traffic (200,000 customers).

The destinations with the highest growth (end of August 2015) are mainland Portugal (+ 34%), the Canary Islands (+ 31%), mainland Greece (+ 21%), Sardinia (+ 18%) and Iceland (+ 17%) for large medium-haul destinations.

Among the major long-haul destinations, Cuba (+ 81%), Japan (+ 39%), Canada (+ 25%), Peru (+ 23%) and the Seychelles (+ 20%) show the strongest growths. The biggest declines

for major destinations are to be noticed for Tunisia (-55%), Turkey (-36%), Morocco (-30%), the Maldives (-20%) and Indonesia (-19 %).

Regarding the assessment of the 2015 Summer Season (end of October), since the results at the end of August account for about 75% of the total of the season, a turnover result close to balance seems attainable, however, dependent on a buoyant business for the All Saints School Holidays.

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