

EUROPEAN TOURISM TO SUFFER IN CASE OF BREXIT



The possible withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (shortened to "Brexit") could have disastrous consequences on the wallet of British travelers and therefore on the European tourism as a whole. The cost of traveling to the UK might also increase with costlier air fares.

On 23 June, British citizens will decide whether or not to leave the European Union. **The vote on "Brexit" promised by Prime Minister David Cameron might impact local and European tourism quite negatively.**

Several CEOs of various airlines already announced their position on the subject. Carolyn McCall, easyJet's CEO, explained their view: "We are very clear on this: we believe that staying in Europe is very important for the British. It's better economically for them as well as for us."

She pointed out that Europe has allowed the boom of low-cost airlines and therefore the democratization of air transport. "In the past, flying was reserved for an elite who traveled to companies controlled by the government."

The CEO of the low cost Monarch Airlines, Andrew Swaffield, says that Brexit would probably result in higher airfares and fewer flights between the European Union and the United Kingdom.

The aerospace giant European Airbus has also called for the continuation of the UK in the EU, threatening to review its investments. The group employs 15,000 people working on the design and manufacture of the wings of the aircraft.

The only voice in transport that is quite the opposite, is that of Willie Walsh, the boss of IAG, the airline holding company. He said that the withdrawal would have no effect on their business. "This is an issue for Ryanair and EasyJet, not for us."

The Association of British Travel Agents (Abta) is however not very positive about Brexit and its impact on UK's holiday sector and European tourism. "The potential risks and disadvantages are not compensated by equivalent benefits for travelers," said in a statement Mark Tanzer, the Director General, commenting on the results of a study commissioned to Deloitte.

"Whatever the case envisaged, Britain will diminish permanently if we left the EU," said mid-April George Osborne, the British minister of finances.

The weakening of the pound against the euro and the impoverishment of British travelers could affect many tourism professionals around EU. Especially French and Spanish market would feel the change since these are the two destinations the British holidaymakers seek the most.

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