

TUNISIAN TOURISM RELIES ON ALGERIAN AND RUSSIAN VISITORS



Tunisian tourism is struggling to rise from its ashes. The bloody terrorist attacks in Tunis and Sousse harmed the strategic sector extensively. Tourism contributes more than 7.5% to the country's GDP and generates more than 400,000 direct jobs.

Local travel professionals and the Ministry of Tourism are preparing for the summer season hoping for the resumption of hotel bookings. The sector indicators are flashing red lights, but industry professionals do not give up and expect improved numbers, especially thanks to Algerian and Russian visitors.

In April 2016, **according to the Ministry of Tourism, Tunisian tourism receipts registered a decline of 47.6%**. The overnight stays dropped by 43.8% and tourist arrivals recorded a plunge of 19.7%.

In March 2016, the European market recorded a decrease of 51.4% in terms of the number of tourists, a drop of 89.9% for the UK market and 30.4% for the French market. As for the German and Italian tourists, they registered decreases of 35.4% and 55.9% respectively.

Indeed, the French, British, German and Italian markets are still recording sharp decreases in terms of the amount of visitors coming to Tunisia. The tour operator Thomas Cook UK has decided to remove Tunisia from their offer for UK travelers until May 17, 2017.

Regarding the German market, the situation is similar - for summer 2016 German bookings of Tunisia, Egypt and Turkey holidays decreased by 40% compared to 2015.

In Italy, the Francorosso/Alpitours group also removed the country from their offer due to the falling demand.

In France, recent studies show that 28 million French travelers plan to go on a tour in July and August 2016. However, they are heading to new destinations like Spain and Portugal, but also

Egypt.

Currently, Tunisian tourism professionals rely on Algerian and Russian markets to save the season. 1 million Algerian tourists are expected this summer according to the authorities.

Besides, the Russian Union of Tourism Industry (URIT) recently asserted that Tunisia and Greece have won 53% of sales trips for May and the Tunis-Moscow flights by the national company TunisAir is likely to strengthen their flights from Moscow.

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