

FRENCH TOURISM INDUSTRY REPORTS MASSIVE DECLINE



Following a wave of attacks that hit France over the last 18 months, French tourism suffered the effects of these events at full force. The government announced that the number of tourists in the country has fallen by 7% since January, also due to poor weather and strikes.

“The arrivals of foreign tourists since the beginning of the year are down by 7% in the whole country, but **the results by regions are mostly stable in comparison to the last year, although they were recently impacted by the bombing in Nice,**” said the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Jean-Marc Ayrault.

According to him, the decline in French tourism industry was partly caused by the attacks. “The perception of security risk has had a clear influence on certain travelers, including the wealthiest ones or those from Asia,” said the French tourism minister. The economic difficulties in Russia and Brazil need to be taken into account as well.

While all of France is affected by the drop in tourist numbers, Ile-de-France and Paris have been hit particularly hard. The tourism sector in Ile-de-France has lost a billion Euros in sales since January, according to a report of the Regional Tourism Committee (RTC), published recently.

“All the indicators are red,” said Frédéric Valletoux, president of the RTC. Jean-Marc Ayrault however pointed to the high prices in the capital, while, according to him, the travel professionals from the French Riviera adjusted their prices immediately after the attack in Nice.

The minister, who in March presented a plan with one million Euros to promote France abroad after the attacks in 2015, announced that **he would invest additional 500,000 Euros to boost the program led by Atout France to cover in particular the French Riviera.**

The French tourism minister also announced his plan to bring together a new committee for economic emergencies in early September. The meetings will focus on the regions most affected by the decline in tourists.

Jean-Marc Ayrault also claimed that UEFA Euro 2016 resulted in record hotel occupancy in some of the host cities. The hotel turnover increased by 70% in Lens, Lille, and Saint-Etienne.

The decline in French tourism industry is taken seriously since the industry is an important part of the economy - it generates between 7 and 8% of French GDP and two million direct and indirect jobs.

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