

TOURISM IN THE PARIS REGION FINALLY SHOWS POSITIVE SIGNS



Tourism in the Paris region, or Ile-de-France, was last year severely affected by a drop in foreign visitor numbers. However, the latest statistics reveal positive news.

The year 2016 was - after 2009 - the worst year in the past decade for tourism to the Ile-de-France region. However, there was a slight increase at the end of last year which bodes well for the prospects of a revival in 2017.

“2016 was a crisis year. Nevertheless, there has been stirrings of life at the end of the year which have continued into the beginning of this year. This make us conclude that the situation may improve in 2017”, said the president of the Regional Tourism Committee (RTC) and the mayor of Fontainebleau, Frédéric Valletoux, during the presentation of the 2016 statistics of the tourism in the Paris region.

Return of Chinese and Korean Clients

The return of Chinese and Korean visitors is a reality, and coincides with the introduction of communication campaigns launched as part of plans to reinvigorate France as a tourist destination which were conceived by public authorities and local communities. In contrast, authorities responsible for tourism in the Paris region, acknowledge a persistent “difficulty” where Japanese tourists are concerned.

Furthermore, the survey of professionals in the tourism sector which is regularly performed by the RTC of the Ile-de-France region attests to better business prospects: 62% of those concerned anticipate a medium-term improvement, which represents 7 points improvement over the findings for February 2016. Moreover, only 5% of people polled fear a deterioration of the present conditions as compared to a previous polling of 14%.

Stable Visitation Rate

Furthermore, as was pointed out by the RTC, the sudden increase in visitation numbers at the end of 2016 was enough to offset the drop in numbers for the rest of the year, ultimately resulting in a drop of 4.7% in hotel arrivals as compared to 2015, down to 30.9 million. This number contrasts with the record highs of 32.7 million seen in 2011 and 2012, as well as the record low of 30.2 million in 2009. The RTC, does not compile statistics on alternative lodging accommodations which account for an estimated 8% of all tourism activity.

The relative stability of internal French tourism, representing some 16.7 million hotel stays (- 0.8%) helped to mitigate the impact of the 8.8% decrease in hotel stays by foreign tourists (14.2 million).

While tourism in the Paris region still benefits from the popularity among tourists from all around the world, the global loss of revenue still amounted to 1.3 billion euros.

Looking at statistics for the last decade, tourist visitation is relatively stable, keeping in mind the

fact that the composition of this industry's clientele has evolved with the emergence of tourism from new markets such as Asian and South American countries. A sign of positive outlook is that the third largest group of tourists - 975 000 total hotel guests - was from China, surpassed in number only by American (2 million) and British (1.9 million) visitors.

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