

ALGARVE TOURISM FACES LONG-TERM PROBLEMS



The Algarve region registered increased tourism numbers last year achieving all-time records. According to the Report on Tourism and Air Transportation in Portugal published recently, the reasons for the previously stagnating Algarve tourism are still there.

One of the problems of the sector highlighted by Sérgio Palma Brito, the author of the report, **are obsolete hotels, many of those on the waterfront, which represent an obstacle for the region's image and reputation among travelers.**

Another key point is that Algarve and its official bodies need to acknowledge that at least 100 national and foreign families have invested in the region's real estate, stated the report. Thus, these types of tourist accommodation establishments must be nourished, instead of being deemed illegal. The author of the report goes even further in his criticism, saying that the EU Framework 2020 ignores these establishments completely.

"This sort of tourist offer needs to be integrated," Mr. Brito explained. Furthermore, even official bodies, such as the Eurostat, consider that tourist accommodation is any establishment that accommodates tourists, he said.

Sérgio Palma Brito illustrated this with the example of Vale do Lobo, which only started to develop itself when in 1982 they asked to drop its tourist village status. "If the law had been complied with, Vale do Lobo would be an amalgam of bungalows," he said.

The former general director of the Portuguese Confederation of Tourism (CTP) however draws a more negative image of the region. According to him, Algarve doesn't have the capacity to attract visitors. Between 2001 and 2015, Faro Airport grew 38%, whilst Lisbon and Porto grew 115% and 192%, respectively. **This shows the troubles of attracting more traffic to the region.**

"Low-cost airlines only fly to a destination if they consider it to be attractive and that only happens if there is an interconnection between the region's industries."

The solution proposed by Sérgio Palma Brito would be to outline private marketing plans for each source market. For instance, a three-year marketing and sales plan for the German market.

And if, according to the report's author, Algarve tourism works with five markets, seven airlines and two tour operators, the truth is that people have been witnessing the transformation and destruction of the traditional and regional economy.

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