

CHINESE TOURISTS EXPECTED TO HELP EU ECONOMY



Europe as a continent relies greatly on tourism. It is estimated that 10 percent of the economy of the EU accounts to this industry. EU leaders are now looking to improve the situation by bringing in more Chinese tourists to the continent.

According to the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, the Asian market is set to be the driving force of European tourism in the coming years. **The Italian politician also stated that tourism outflow and inflow will increase to 700 million by the year 2020.** This would be a big increase, considering the fact that last year the figures reached 500 million.

European Commission VP Jyrki Katainen said that both EU and China will organize events to promote the year of tourism declared by both the EU and China so that more Chinese tourists decide for European holiday. The program is set to begin in Venice in January next year.

Yang Yanyi, Chinese ambassador to EU, had only positive words on Tajani's and Katainen's plans. She has praised the EU for stressing the importance of tourism on the GDP and jobs in Europe and said that she hopes for a "creative, coordinated, green, open and shared development".

"Recognizing the importance of travel and tourism between China and Europe, the 19th China-EU Summit proclaimed 2018 as the year of tourism. We want to maximize the full potential of this important relationship, from all perspectives - economically, socially, and academically," Yang said.

The ambassador also disclosed some interesting figures about Chinese tourists. As the leading tourism market of the world, 135 million Chinese traveled abroad in 2016 and have spent 251 billion dollars. The country predicts the outflow of travelers to reach 700 million in the next five years - a potential increase of more than 500%.

The trend is also confirmed by Luigi Gambardella, who is president of ChinaEU. This is a non-profit organization working on digital cooperation between the two powers. According to Gambardella's words, **China is rapidly becoming one of the main source markets in many EU countries.** One of the reasons for this is also the so called "digital revolution".

"There are about 10 million Chinese tourists visiting Europe today. Thanks to the Internet, this number could easily double in the years to come. It is a challenge and opportunity for the old continent if the industry adapts in time, and this is already happening," Gambardella said.

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