

MEXICO: RAILWAY INSTEAD OF TOURISM PROMOTION



Mexico plans to rebuild its tourism industry. However, one of the first steps to do so is a controversial move. Mexico announced closing 18 of the 21 Mexican tourism offices around the world by the end of the month.

Only three tourism offices will remain - in Berlin, New York, and Tokyo. But not for long. They will also shut their doors after the Tianguis Turistico event held from April 7 to 10 in Acapulco.

The reason for this is that the government intends to allocate the budget of about \$300 million from the tourist tax to the construction of a railway line along the Riviera Maya in Yucatan. So far, nearly three-fourths of the tax were spent on tourism promotion.

The government insists, despite everything, that the country wants to continue its efforts to promote tourism. However, the new tourism promotion scheme has not yet been revealed entirely. At the moment, it is known that the old one will be replaced by an entity made up of representatives of the state as well as the private sector.

According to reports, the site visitmexico.com should remain, although negotiations continue regarding the cost and the way in which the digital strategy of the brand will be put into practice in the future. A change made incorrectly could put the digital ecosystem of the country's tourism at risk. Today it has eight million followers and is the second largest in the world, after the website of Australia.

"Tourism promotion goes far beyond distributing leaflets in embassies. What we need are well-conducted advertising campaigns," says Pablo Azcarraga, president of the Consejo Nacional Empresarial Turistico.

According to data from Google and Expedia, a 10% fall in tourism to Mexico is expected. Dinero, meanwhile, **has registered a decrease of 15% of searches for Mexican destinations**. Azcarraga predicts that hotel occupancy in Mexico would fall by up to 30% in the following summer season without tourism promotion.

For now, it remains to be seen how the situation will develop for sure. Mexican authorities will have to come up with the best possible solution to replace their old tourism promotion concept in order to give the industry continuity but also a room for improvement.

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