

MEXICO PLANS TO BOOST LGBTI TOURISM



Mexico is the first country in Latin-American to sign an agreement with the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) and Queer Destinations, to support tourism products offered to the LGBTI tourism community.

Recently, the head of the Secretary of Tourism (Sectur), Miguel Torruco, explained that the agreement gives continuity to the letter of intent that was signed by the parties in Berlin, Germany, last March.

The objective is to position, promote and consolidate the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, and Intersexual (LGBTI) touristic product **so that Mexico will be recognized as an inclusive destination for this segment of travelers, which shows an annual growth rate above traditional tourism.**

Experts explained that although the country has already worked on the promotion of the LGBTI tourism offer, now with the agreement it will be in a more structured way.

Mexico is one of the countries with the growing LGBTI tourism numbers. Based on the data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, between 2.9 million and 3.4 million people from this community arrive to the country every year. However, the annual SPARTACUS Gay Travel Index ranks Mexico 57th when evaluating the level of civil rights of the LGBTI community, anti-discrimination laws, or homophobic violence. The criteria of the index also include the question of whether same-sex couples can get married, which is actually possible in some Mexican states but not the others.

LGBTI tourism and its development cannot rely on an extensive promotion campaign - it should include widespread and systematic changes and it will require a change of attitudes of the locals. It will thus take some time any promotion can take effect.

Today, the cities of Mexico and Puerto Vallarta are the ones that attract the highest influx of LGBTI tourists. The authorities, however, plan to promote other locations as well - e.g. Pueblos Magicos or other types of destinations.

Local authorities are well aware that LGBTI tourism is not just a couple of men traveling; there are women, older adults, families and children; and not everybody is looking for the same type of destination and one of the most important parts is working hand by hand with the Secretary of Tourism to see which is the perfect product, one different from the ones already being promoted.

According to reports, Sectur plans to support destinations and service providers interested in the LGBTI market. The products will be promoted nationally and internationally.

In order to boost the segment marketing, **IGLTA will make available for the project a global network of influencers and digital media to design a marketing, communication and public relations strategy in order to increase the number of travelers.** In coordination with the IGLTA, also standards of international quality for optimal attention for the travelers of this market will be adopted.

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