

# FRENCH TOURISM SECTOR REPORTED A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE



After more than two years of growth, the French tourism sector reported a sharp fall in the first quarter, especially in the Ile-de-France region.

Over the first three months of this year, the use of collective tourist accommodation – expressed in overnight stays – fell by 2.5% in the territory, compared to the same period in 2018, according to provisional figures.

**While this decline is more marked for foreign tourists (-4.8%) than for the French (-1.5%), it concerns both clienteles.**

It contrasts sharply with the previous quarter, which saw a 2% increase, and puts an end to "more than two years of continuous growth in tourist numbers", observes INSEE. This increase led to a record number of tourists in 2018 in France, with more than 438 million overnight stays, a rise of 2.4% compared to the previous year.

As for hotel attendance, it fell by 1.3% from January to March 2019, compared to the same period a year earlier, after an increase of 1.5% in the previous quarter.

Only the high-end hotels, 4 and 5-star, are doing well by maintaining their attendance levels which are good news for the French tourism sector.

Once again, this decline puts an end to "a continuous increase since the fourth quarter of 2016", and it is more recognized among foreign tourists (-3.4%), while that of the French has fallen by only 0.4%.

It is in Ile-de-France that hotel overnight stays are falling sharply (-4.6%), for both foreign tourists and those from the national territory, "probably in line with the social movement of the Yellow Vests", says INSEE, while in the provincial cities, the drop is only 0.8% (for both categories).

On the other hand, the number of foreign tourists remained dynamic in the ski resorts (+4.2%), while that of the French fell by 3.1%. The latter have often opted for the coast (+4.8%) in order to take advantage of the "very mild weather conditions" at the beginning of the year, says INSEE.

**As for the use of other collective tourist accommodation (tourist residences, holiday villages, family homes, youth hostels), it fell by 4.5%, whereas it had increased by 3.6% in the previous quarter, over one year.**

During the peak of a winter sports season, the number of visitors to these accommodations fell in the ski

resorts: -7.6% for French tourists and -8.2% for foreigners.

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