

TOURISM IN TUNISIA LOST 51% OF REVENUES



In Tunisia, it was inevitable that tourism would be the first sector to be wiped out by the coronavirus crisis. Despite the resilience it has shown on many occasions, the sector is now facing an unprecedented situation where the coronavirus crisis may strike a final blow to a plethora of companies, now weakened since 2011.

Already, in the first half of the year, cumulative tourism receipts had already suffered a 47% drop to 962 million dinars compared to the same period in 2019.

Thus, during the first six months of 2020, tourism receipts reached 1.08 billion dinars. **This is compared to 2.04 billion dinars for the first six months of the previous year.**

Despite the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism professionals remain optimistic and say that Tunisia can expect an even greater number of tourists in 2020, given that the country's health situation has ceased to be a cause for concern. And within the framework of the revitalization of the Tunisian destination, several large-scale communication campaigns will be launched by the Tourism Department, in collaboration with the professionals of the sector, to restore the country's image not only in Europe but also in various Arab countries such as Algeria and Morocco.

According to financial indicators by the Central Bank of Tunis (BCT), tourism receipts have fallen by 51%, on July 10, 2020, to 1127 million dinars (MD), in comparison with the same period of the past year.

BCT has, in fact, reported a slight drop in cumulative labor income of 4%, to nearly 2.3 billion dinars. As for the servicing of the cumulative external debt, it increased by 10% to 5.1 billion dinars, compared to 4.7 billion dinars in 2019.

According to the Bank of Banks, net foreign exchange assets have largely evolved by 44%, as of 14 July 2020, to reach the level of 20.8 billion dinars, covering 135 days of imports (compared to 14.4 billion dinars and 81 days of imports on the same date last year).

On another front, BCT revealed a significant drop in the overall volume of refinancing by 32%, from 15.3 billion dinars in July 2019 to 10.3 billion dinars at present.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) recently posted a tweet that it is promoting Tunisia as a safe tourist destination during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The WTO stressed that Tunisia has put in place a health protocol to ensure the protection of tourists and staff in the sector.

Drawn up by the Tunisian National Tourist Office (ONTT), the health protocol for Tunisian Tourism Anti Covid-19 provides for a series of measures which relate, essentially, to the respect of the rules of hygiene and sanitary safety, in order to prevent any possibility of propagation of the coronavirus in the tourism sector.

In spite of the travel restrictions required by some countries, Tunisia, which has so far managed to

contain the virus, aspires to revive tourism in Tunisia during the summer of 2020.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, **Tunisia hoped to welcome 10 million tourists in 2020**, after having managed to attract more than 9 million in 2019.

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