

MOROCCO'S TOURISM IS GRADUALLY RECOVERING



Morocco's tourism is slowly getting back on track, according to the latest data published by the Directorate of Financial Studies and Forecasts (DEPF), which forecasts a double-digit increase in the number of tourist arrivals by the end of August 2021.

According to this department under the Ministry of Economy and Finance in its October business report, the flow of arrivals to Morocco destination has increased by 16.2% to nearly 2.5 million arrivals, compared to 2.1 million at the end of August 2020 and 9.3 million at the end of August 2019.

Although still insufficient, this performance has reduced the decline in arrivals from their pre-crisis level from -77% at the end of August 2020 to -73.3% at the end of August 2021.

As the DEPF states in its note, "for the period from June to August, the number of these arrivals totaled nearly 2 million, compared to 165 thousand a year earlier, for a share of foreign tourists of 28% (10.8% a year earlier).

According to the same source, compared to the same period of 2019, the decline in these arrivals has thus reduced to -60.2%, compared to -97% a year earlier.

Several factors including the reopening of national borders from mid-June 2021 (combined with the exceptional measures of the operation Marhaba 2021) explain this development which comes after more than a year of negative developments under the impact of the crisis Covid-19.

It should be said, in fact, that "the implementation of health measures to welcome Moroccan nationals abroad has somewhat revived this sector, which has been virtually at a standstill for several months," as noted by the Moroccan Center for Economic Studies (CMC) in its quarterly publication "Maroc Entreprise" last September.

After analyzing the data published by the DEPF, it also appears that at the end of the first eight months of the current year, the volume of overnight stays in classified accommodation reached nearly 5.6 million. It is thus slightly down by 0.5% compared to the end of August 2020 and 67.2% compared to the end of August 2019.

It should be noted that "for the period from June to August 2021, their number has boosted by 218.6% compared to the same period of 2020 and decreased by 52.3% compared to that of 2019," stressed the DEPF.

Improvements were also seen in Morocco's tourism receipts, which appreciated 223.3% in the first two months of the third quarter of 2021, according to the DEPF.

"Consolidated at an increase of 15.2% in the month of June 2021, the revenues reached 12.9 billion during the period from June to August 2021, compared to 4.8 billion a year earlier and 24.1 billion in the same period of 2019," the Directorate said.

Thus, at the end of the first eight months of 2021, these revenues fell by 17.6% in one year to 20.3 billion dirhams and 61.5% compared to the end of August 2019 compared to -74.1% at the end of May 2021.

As noted by the CMC in its quarterly publication, recall that "Morocco's tourism revenues have increased at the end of July of the current year by 45.6% compared to the same period last year. **On the other hand, travel receipts have decreased by 42.8% during the same period.**

Globally, all indications are that vaccinations and the reopening of borders have helped the recovery of this sector. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), "international tourism has shown signs of a rebound in June and July 2021 with the easing of travel restrictions in some destinations and the general increase in vaccinations in many parts of the world.

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