

BRAZIL'S TOURISM RECOVERING SLOWLY FIGHTING DEEP-ROOTED PROBLEMS



With the colorful parades of the Sambódromo in Rio de Janeiro postponed because of the spread of the omicron variant, Brazil is experiencing a carnival week with not much partying this year. This is bad news for Brazil's tourism already punished enough by the pandemic.

Brazil's tourism is trying to recover from the pandemic. In a world without Covid-19, the streets of Rio would be crowded with tourists night and day during the party week.

However, this is an ongoing trend. According to data, the tourism industry, which represented 7.7% of the Brazilian economy before the pandemic, with 551.5 billion reais (about \$110 billion) in direct and indirect revenue in 2019, **lost US\$ 94,1 billion in the last two years and over 340,000 jobs.**

With regards to the number of tourists, before the pandemic, Brazil welcomed more than 6 million foreigners every year, while in 2020 it was only 2.1 million. A drastic fall indeed.

Slow Recovery

Brazil is a very popular destination, not only because of Rio and Carnival, but also because of the Amazon rainforest, the Pantanal, the colorful Salvador, the impressive Iguazu waterfalls and many other places to visit.

But the country has been hit hard by the coronavirus, with nearly 650,000 dead, a number only surpassed by the United States, with some businesses recording drops in revenue of more than 80 % due to the crisis.

While it is true that Brazil's tourism earned 152.4 billion reais (+12 % compared to previous year) in 2021, as per official figures, this is still 24.2 % below 2019.

Experts assure that the decrease in foreign tourists was partially offset by the increase in the number of Brazilians traveling within the country, fearing to go abroad. At the same time, they believe that the full recovery of the sector will not occur until 2023.

Deep-rooted Problem?

However, while the Covid-19 pandemic fully exposed Brazil's tourism, data show that the problem may be more deep-rooted and systematic than it may seem.

A report by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) points out that between 2000 and 2019 the flow of tourists in the world increased by 117.5%, increasing from 673 million to 1.5 billion people. In Brazil, however, the rise was only 19.6% in the same period: from 5.3 million to 6.4 million in 19 years.

Experts generally note that Brazil does not integrate large global trends of tourism. "Basically, it is centered on South America. When looking at the data, most foreign tourists come from countries bordering Brazil, especially Argentina," Helena Costa from the University of Brasilia explained.

“Of course, it is difficult to bring a significant flow of tourists from Oceania, Africa and Asia, even for logistical reasons, because it is far away. But obviously Brazil needs to leverage the tourism around the most unique part of its offer, such as biodiversity,” Costa added.

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