

MOROCCO: 13 MILLION ARRIVALS IN 2022 IS DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE



Although the year is expected to end with positive figures for tourism, two major operators believe that the recovery will not be enough to match the number of visitors in 2019. However, from their point of view, the target of a revenue level of 78 billion dirhams remains achievable.

"At the end of August, the cumulative occupancy rate was barely 38% against 48% in 2019. We should not achieve the same performance as the pre-crisis year, because we have not yet implemented the recommendations (strengthening the air, promotion and investment)," laments a major professional, especially since competitors already surpassed them.

The current growth will not allow reaching the 13 million arrivals of 2019. Impatient to know the content of the roadmap, professionals deplore the lack of structural decisions to change the pace of growth, which remains insufficient to achieve the same number of visitors as in 2019, namely 13 million arrivals of foreign visitors.

Morocco Lost Four Months of Arrivals

This decline is explained by the late reopening of the borders, which deprived the sector of four months of traffic. As a result, Morocco was no longer included on itineraries by operators. In addition, foreigners did not want to take risks by opting for a destination that has closed its airspace several times.

The good summer performance is to be credited to domestic tourism, which recovered 97% of its 2019 traffic, while international tourism achieved a 53% recovery rate compared to the pre-crisis period, with only 50% for European markets, for an overall rate of 65% (8.5 million arrivals compared to 13 million in 2019) for a hotel occupancy rate of 38%."

French Savings to Benefit Moroccan Tourism

Some experts are more optimistic about the expected level of revenue and believe that Morocco will be able to reach at the end of 2022 the same level as in 2019, or 78 billion dirhams.

When asked how it is possible to achieve the same level of revenue with 3 million fewer visitors, another source argues that the figures of the Office of Foreign Exchange published in late August confirm this assumption, with 52.2 MMDH against 52.7 MMDH in the same period of 2019. So almost the same level.

Between the incredible surplus of savings built up in France during the two years of crisis (187 billion euros in December 2021 against 114 billion at the end of 2020) and the aid distributed by the State, the French issuing market, which needed to turn the page, spent much more than in 2019.

Accelerating Promotion across Foreign Markets

For 2023 to exceed the figures of 2019, it is hoped that the authorities will finally take the appropriate measures - multiplying airline routes, increasing the budget for promotion of the ONMT,

and hotel investments - to comply with the expectations of demand well present. **Ditto for the electronic visa, which does not yet concern enough countries to create a virtuous dynamic in terms of arrivals of new markets, and is still subject to the classic visa.**

Hoteliers have not yet seen a significant increase in the arrival of certain nationalities, such as the Indian outbound market that is not used to coming to Morocco. Without a communication campaign in these countries, without direct long-haul airlines, the introduction of the electronic visa will not be enough to obtain significant results.

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