

# UNWTO: 1 BILLION TOURIST ARRIVALS IN 2012



According to the prognosis of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2012 will be a record-breaking year as an incredible 1 billion international tourist arrivals are expected worldwide.

The relevance of the tourism industry is undisputed for most economies. On a global basis, this sector is responsible for 5% of world's GDP and in every advanced or emerging economy employs on average more than 10% of the population.

**According to a recently revealed study of the UNWTO, 2012 will be a record-breaking year,** even though the growth of the industry is expected to slow down. However, the milestone of 1 billion international tourist arrivals is expected to be reached, which is a fantastic development.

The results for 2011 have already been released and many regions have a reason to rejoice. Overall, the growth recorded was 4.4%, totaling 980 million international tourist arrivals. The economic recovery is one of the main reasons why the numbers are so positive.

Europe had a fabulous year, and with a 6% increase to 503 million featured the best result. South America broke last year's record with a 10% increase. On the other hand, some regions experienced natural disasters as well as political changes and these had a negative impact on tourism.

**Middle East lost 8%, which means approximately 5 million international tourist arrivals, while North Africa lost 12%.** Even some Asian countries noticed a drop which was caused by the disaster in Japan earlier in the year.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization's forecast expects a steady growth of the sector in 2012, even if at a slightly slower pace. 3-4% is the predicted increase and if all goes well, the international tourist arrivals will indeed reach a whopping 1 billion.

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