DARK CLOUDS GATHER OVER MOROCCAN TOURISM AS GROWTH SLOWS DOWN



Dark clouds seem to be forming over Moroccan tourism. Just when the phosphate sector was hit by the Middle East crisis, another economic pillar of the kingdom is showing signs of strain.

Tourism, which contributes almost 8% to GDP and 8.2% to total employment, has seen a significant decrease in growth, and this comes at a time when the dirham has already depreciated by 6.5% since the end of July, tightening foreign exchange reserves and purchasing power.

Growth in Moroccan Tourism Begins to Slow in 2026

Tourism growth has essentially stagnated compared to previous years, threatening national goals that are due by 2030. **Following an outstanding 20% increase in the number of tourists in 2024, the figure decreased to 14% in 2025** and, as of the end of September 2026, only 5%.

In 2026, the number of tourists is expected to reach about 20.8 million, compared to 19.8 million in 2025. By 2030, this tally will only reach around 25.3 million, well below the national goal of 26 million tourists for the year 2030. To meet this target, growth of almost 9.6% per year would be needed in the period 2027-2030, which seems difficult to achieve.

Airline Connectivity and Key Source Markets Under Strain

The drop in the growth of Moroccan tourism is explained by the slowdown in the signing of agreements between the National Office of Tourism (ONMT) and foreign airlines, which are crucial for the opening of new routes and the reinforcement of existing capacities of airlines carrying tourists from partner countries.

Meanwhile, two of Morocco’s most important tourist source markets, France and Spain, are experiencing political and social unrest. While in France, high-school student protests are erupting in an election year, and on the Franco-Spanish border, the situation is also heating up after the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, where riots broke out earlier this year.

A Cyclical Setback or a Permanent Change?

Industry officials fear that the current cooling of Moroccan tourism may be more than a temporary setback. It is necessary to understand if it is a cyclical change or whether there will be a permanent change in some European markets, which would have a lasting impact on Moroccan tourism.

The combination of the slowdown in Moroccan tourism and the phosphate sector problems has forced a reassessment of national economic priorities. As tourism remains a key driver of employment, foreign exchange and economic growth, political and industry leaders in Morocco have a lot to think about in terms of reconnecting key source markets and reinvigorating the tourism sector to sustain the strong growth of recent years before it is too late.

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