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Türkiye

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Turkey

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INDUSTRY
WILL
PERFORM
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IN 2017

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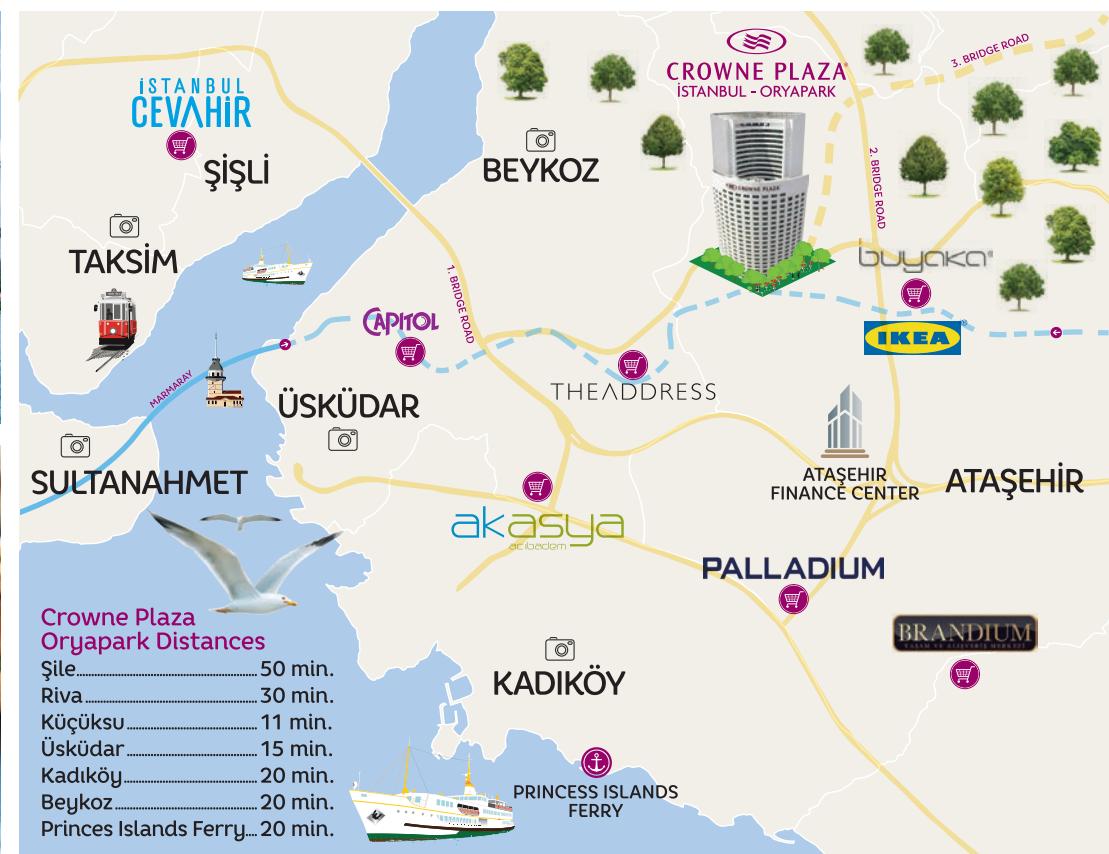
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UYMAYA SÖZ VERMİŞTİR.

HOW ABOUT SEEING THE BEAUTIES OF TURKEY ON SITE?

Another year has passed and as 'Turizm Aktüel Magazine' we are again in Dubai. It is again time for the show, time for making an impression. Turkey, especially in the recent years, has made a breakthrough in the tourism arena. And this will continue in the same way. Bringing the world tourism industry together, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) Fair has a great significance for the tourism sector. This huge platform, where exhibitors and visitors introduce themselves, exhibit their products, new trends make a debut, and even the tendencies of the new season is determined and future strategies are formed, has great significance also for Turkish tourism.

In 2015, many things have changed both in Turkey and in the world. It was inevitable that such a dynamic sector like tourism would remain uninfluenced. We, as a sector, had challenges again but we managed to ride out the storm. 2017 will be a different year in many aspects. But it will be a year that values and balances will change.... Now we are at the ATM Tourism Fair, which is considered as the biggest tourism fair of the Middle East. We will see altogether that Turkey will come into prominence also in this tourism fair. Turkey, especially in the recent years, has made a breakthrough and it has often become a byword in the world tourism arena.

The important thing is to leave a mark in people's pleasant holiday memories. Hosting their most pleasant moments... Enabling them to cherish the memories of the Mediterranean and Aegean until the next holiday... They should be dreaming of İstanbul, Antalya, Bodrum, Çeşme, Marmaris, Kapadokya, Bursa, Kuşadası, Yalova and the Black sea. The most favorite name of the Mediterranean basin should be Turkey again. The only reason that prevents people coming to Turkey should be a volcano. Otherwise, what could possibly restrain a holiday in Turkey, such a unique pleasure?

That's it. This must be said abroad. The Mediterranean region, the address of the youngest and most elegant facilities... Antalya, the irresistible address of a holiday with its nature, sea and sun, the most pleasant brand of Turkey... İstanbul, Antalya, Kapadokya, Çeşme, and Bodrum dream holiday towns...

And Turkey will repeat the appearance made at the ITB Berlin 2017 among the world tourism giants, now at the ATM Dubai with its Antalya, İstanbul, Bodrum, Marmaris, Kuşadası, Çeşme, Kapadokya and other touristic centers and all the cultural motifs.

In our current issue you will read the latest news of the tourism sector, interviews each more interesting than the other, the newest information on hotel investments, latest developments of the world and European tourism and clues from the sector before the new season. We look forward to meeting you in our next issue...

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Levni Hotel welcomes 2017 with double prize

Levni Hotel in the "Travelers Choice 2017" awards, determined by millions of TripAdvisor's guests, the biggest hotel and travel evaluation site in the world, won double prize in categories of "Turkey's Top 25 Hotels" and "Turkey's Most Romantic Hotel".



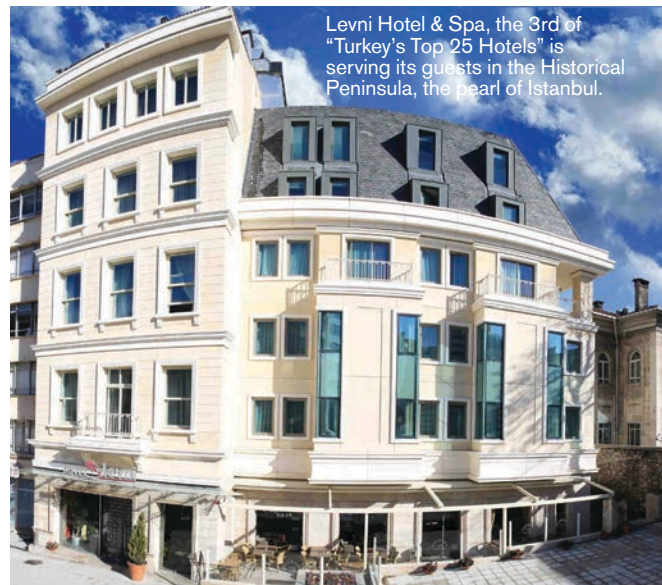
Aydın Karacabay, Chairman of the Executive Board of Levni Hotel & Spa, "We are proud and happy of prizes we received."

Levni Hotel & Spa in Sirkeci, Istanbul welcomes 2017 with 2 prizes. The hotel is the 3rd of "Turkey's Top 25 Hotels" and the 18th of "Turkey's Most Romantic Hotel" in the "Travellers Choice 2017" Awards. Serdar Orak, Levni Hotel Deputy Chief Executive, being proud of two awards that they received stated, "Success is a team work. I congratulate all my teammates who have a share in this success. Levni Hotel & Spa will continue to be one of the

most popular hotels of Istanbul with its high standard of service, stylish and comfortable rooms, spa and rich breakfast options." Nural İnciler, Guest Relations Manager, who has a very important role in this success achieved by Levni Hotel said, "Our hotel made a special effort for guest satisfaction since the first day. We are happy of being received the rewards of our efforts." Aydın Karacabay, Chairman of Executive Board of Levni Hotel & Spa said, "Our hotel

started 2017 with two prizes that reflect the guest satisfaction. We are proud and happy of prizes we received. The motivating power of the prizes is out of discussion. Our happiness is doubled since these prizes are determined according to the votes of our guests. I thank my team who worked for these awards. We will proceed with our understanding of service that does not compromise on quality and with the energy given by the awards we receive."

Levni Hotel & Spa, which is mobilized for the satisfaction of its guests with its service concept that does not compromise on quality, is made up of a successful top-level team.



Levni Hotel & Spa, the 3rd of "Turkey's Top 25 Hotels" is serving its guests in the Historical Peninsula, the pearl of Istanbul.

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NABI AVCI: TURKISH TOURISM INDUSTRY WILL PERFORM BETTER IN 2017

Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı said he expects the Turkish tourism industry to perform better in 2017 based on the positive signals they receive from foreign markets. He also said the tourism sector will be one of the most positively affected areas in a transition to a presidential system since the effective decision making is the main feature of tourism



Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı, who opened the Turkish booth at the 51st International Tourism Stock Exchange (ITB) in Berlin, Germany, last week, said that German tourism sector representatives expressed discomfort about the harsh political discourse in recent weeks and that the Germans are trying to normalize this discourse. Stating that the Turkish tourism industry is expected to perform better in 2017 compared to last year; nevertheless, Minister Avcı said they are aware that this year's figures won't match pre-2016 levels. Commenting on strained relations with Germany and Netherlands, Avcı stressed that militants are systematically engaged in media and lobbying, a well-known method of theirs, in various European countries, including Germany and Netherlands, and they can trace that influence. Regarding Turkey's transition to a presidential system if the proposed referendum passes on April 16, Minister Avcı underlined that effective decision-making is

the main feature of the presidential system and the tourism sector will be one of the most pleased about this transition. Last week, you opened Turkey's booth at ITB Berlin and held official talks. Germany is an important market for Turkish tourism. What were your observations in this regard? As you said, I had the chance to meet representatives in the tourism sector and our citizens. It's the 51st anniversary of one of the most important tourism expos, and we opened our own booth and visited other booths. As I became the Minister of Culture rather recently, it was my first time at this expo; however, many of those who visited the expo say that the interest in our country's booth is extraordinary this year. Despite Germany and Turkey's harsh discourse against each other, many German citizens were interested in our booth. After the expo, I talked with people from both German and Turkish media and leading figures in the German tourism sector. Representatives of the German tourism sector are as discomforted as we are by the harsh political

discourse, which they are trying to normalize. Germany is an important market for Turkish hotel businesses, while Turkey is an important market for German tourism companies and tour operators. Therefore, there is a reciprocal relation and the regression in our market also negatively affects the German one. We depend on each other; thus, I believe we were able to understand each other.

How will the Turkish tourism sector fare in 2017?

Perception management is a crucial part of tourism. It's a sector that thrives if you believe it's getting better and that declines if you believe it's getting worse. Therefore, it is important to manage perception. I believe tourism will fare better in 2017 and 2018 than 2016. There are positive signals from Russian and English markets, while we observe similar signals from the German market as well. We expect 2017 to be better than 2016, but it won't return to the pre-2016 levels at the snap of a finger; we are pretty realistic in this matter.



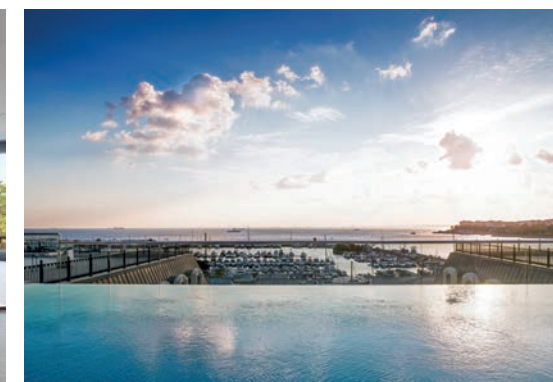
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Torosluoglu, warmed up to the lodging industry with his first establishment buys Vikingen Royal in Alanya and opens it as Orange County Alanya.



Torosluoglu states that they sell 500 thousand plane tickets per year in Europe, of which 100 thousand are tourists flying to Turkey.

WE WILL ADD NEW RINGS TO THE ORANGE COUNTY CHAIN



Omer Torosluoglu entered in the accomodation sector by opening his first hotel with the name of Orange County in Kemer in 2005.

Ömer Turgay Torosluoğlu works in tourism for 32 years. He served in every area of tourism: in an airline company, tour operator, travel agency, hotels. In all these areas where he served, he brought more than 4 million tourists to Turkey and contributed a total of 4 billion dollars to the tourism income.

KEREM KOFTEOGLU

There is a cliché saying: my life makes a novel if written. The story of Ömer Turgay Torosluoglu is just like that. He got ripped off by his partners with whom he founded a company. While dealing with mother's illness, he was diagnosed with colon cancer. While that was being treated, the directors that he had entrusted the company registered every property in their names. He had to deal with courts and bankruptcy. After all, he weathered the crisis. Torosluoğlu was born in 1962 in Kilis. He completed his primary, secondary and high school education in his fatherland. He started to make 1 Lira a day by selling newspapers when he was a student. During university years as he was studying Mining Engineering at Istanbul Technical University he started to sell postcards to tourists in front of the Topkapi Palace. This not only provided him his pocket money but also drew his future profession. Torosluoğlu who started to work in a tourism company after graduation notices that English is a must in his job and ends up in London to learn the language. As he improves his English, he learns the subtlety of the job by working for İlhami Özbay, owner of Bosphorus, one of the great tour operators of the period.

FOUND ONUR AIRLINES

Later, Torosluoğlu fits the establishment of Onur Airlines with Cypriot businessman Tonguc Kazım in his 7-year-adventure in Europe. They name the company after his co-founder's son: Onur. Torosluoğlu created this company's whole European structure and enlarged the company. Then he sold this company to Ten Tour who owns it today. After Onur Airlines he founded GTI with Talha Görgülü. The disagreements with the new partner cools him off this partnership and he starts to search for new things. At this moment as he goes to collect his debts from Adnan Şen, Şen sells him his company. He buys his company and starts to serve as Inter Airlines. In 1996, he established tour operator company ITT in order to bring European tourists to Turkey. As Torosluoğlu starts out a new business, he takes the advice of an Israeli friend of him as a reference: "If you are going to do something either do the thing you know the best or do what others do not." As a matter of fact, he launches cross flights between İstanbul, Ankara, Antalya, Adana, Bodrum, İzmir and Gaziantep with Fokker aircraft of Inter Airlines. In the meantime, he also founded Birce Tour in 2001 in order to run the transfers and other requests of the passengers. "General Directorate of Civil Aviation kept creating new obstacles all the time," says Torosluoğlu and summarizes the period when he was away from the sector as follows: "They came up such irregular things that I finally grew away from aviation and got into restaurant business. Then I could not take it any longer to stay away from the sector and came back."

INTRODUCTION TO HOTEL MANAGEMENT WITH ORANGE

Torosluoğlu while returning to the sector has taken a proper step to do business again. He opened Orange County in Kemer in 2005 and entered in the accommodation sector. What an entrance! The hotel was designed as a replica of Amsterdam, the Dutch city. The hotel attracts attention immediately with its theme

and becomes the subject of many news in Europe receiving positive feedback. Sometimes the number of people who take picture in front of the hotel reaches 500 thousand in one day. Torosluoğlu, warmed up to the lodging industry with his first establishment buys Vikingen Royal in Alanya and opens it with the same brand. Today in these hotels, whose room capacity reaches to 1200, total 900 people are employed in summer. The number of employees of Birce Tour, Orange County and ITT in Turkey and Europe is more than 1000. After he overcame the cancer, according to what he says, Torosluoğlu "stepped on the break" and shared the company with his managers and handed over the daily work to them. Torosluoğlu, father of 3 daughters and a son, determines his job in the company as to decide the general strategy and leaves the rest to the young team. He spends the rest of his time to have fun and travel with his children.

NEW HOTELS WILL ARRIVE

Torosluoğlu is proud to tell that he brought 4 million tourists to Turkey and contributed more than 4 billion dollars to the economy in his 32 years in the sector. "We have no other place to go other than Turkey. So we made our investments here and will do so," he says underlining the awareness of his duties towards Turkey. Torosluoğlu states that they sell 500 thousand plane tickets per year in Europe, "of which 100 thousand are tourists flying to Turkey," he adds. In these days when tourism is not doing great, those who want to sell their hotel are knocking his door. "Nowadays there are intensive offers from those who want to sell two hotels with the price of one," he says. He is negotiating to add third maybe even fourth ring to the Orange County chain. Orange County hotels, ITT and Birce Tours owned by Torosluoğlu reached a total of 106 million euros endorsement last year. He aims to increase it 15% this year.



THE NEW PRESIDENT OF TYD: OYA NARIN

Oya Narin was elected as the Chairman of the Board of Directors at the 14th Ordinary General Assembly of TYD [HALIL TUNGER](#)



The New President of TYD: Oya Narin



In the 14th General Assembly of the Turkish Tourism Investors Association (TYD), gathered on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, TYD members elected new term president, the Executive Board, the Audit and Disciplinary Committee. Oya Narin, the Chief Executive Board of Marti Hotels, after being elected as the new term president of the TYD that has been serving to the investors of the tourism sector for 28 years stated in her speech:

"We have finalized our elections, from now on we will all work in unity and harmony. As TYD, we are a large family that has gathered to evaluate the potential of our country's economic and social

development at its best. Today, as the world and our country are passing through a critical period this union becomes even more important. With an investment portfolio of \$24 billion, TYD will continue to work according to its mission, to contribute to the country's economy and to develop tourism vision and strategies in this period.

Following closely the new rapidly developing tourism movements in the

world, we see it necessary to capture trends and innovations that stands out especially in the digital platforms, to produce contemporary investment projects that will feed the needs of tourism and tourism investors, to carry out and apply the breakthroughs for this transformation and to find new ways. We believe and are excited that we will bring Turkish tourism to higher levels by working with other vocational organizations to act with a viewpoint and common mind that respects the needs of all TYD members and to make improvements in the sector."



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ACCORHOTELS AND RIXOS HOTELS PARTNER UP

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AccorHotels and Rixos Hotels Monday announced a strategic partnership illustrating AccorHotels' strategy to expand its presence in the Upper Upscale/Luxury market, with a primary focus on developing global activities in the resort sector.

Under a long-term joint venture, both parties intend to collaborate, develop and manage Rixos branded resorts and hotels worldwide. Upon closing, AccorHotels will own a 50 percent interest in the joint venture management company. Through this joint venture, AccorHotels will

integrate its network of 15 iconic hotels that are ideally located in premium resort markets in Turkey, the UAE, Egypt, Russia and Europe and which benefit from a strong room rate performance. As part of this transaction, Rixos plans to reflag five city-center hotels to AccorHotels brands, which

will also be managed by AccorHotels. To this portfolio, Rixos will add a second iconic hotel in Dubai in the short term as well as two other properties by the end of 2018 in Abu Dhabi and the Maldives highlighting the expansion of the Rixos brand into this key resort market.

Rixos is one of only a handful of iconic resort brands in the region that caters to both high-end transient and group customers. It is recognized as one of the leading luxury destination brands in Turkey and the Middle East due to its best-in-class facilities, dining options and entertainment venues. Each unique property is able to capture the traditions of its surroundings while providing signature experiences, unforgettable sensory offerings, and an unparalleled level of tailored services. The Rixos collection includes notable landmark assets such as Rixos Premium Belek in Turkey and Rixos The Palm in Dubai. Additionally, Rixos has invested in Turkey's largest live entertainment center, The Land of Legends Theme Park, which opened its gates in the country's tourism capital Antalya in July 2016. The joint venture will also manage the hotel within the entertainment park.



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Sébastien Bazin



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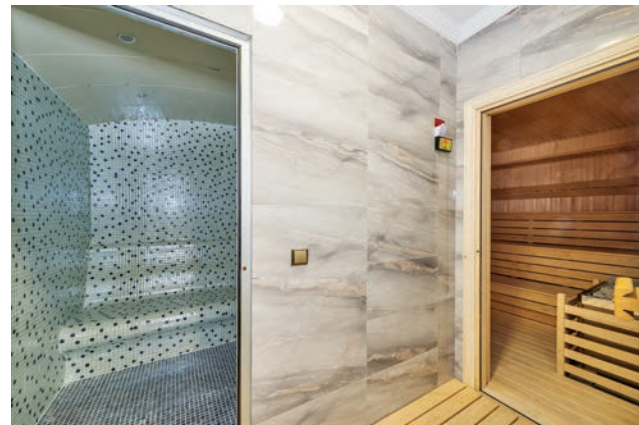
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Bahadır Yaşık, Istanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau - ICVB Executive Deputy Chairman

WE ARE STRENGTHENING ISTANBUL BRAND

The Executive Board of ICVB consists of leading names and institutions of public and private sector.

[HASAN ARSLAN](#)

Bahadır Yaşık, Istanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau - ICVB Executive Deputy Chairman, who has been in the tourism industry for many years, shared the work of ICVB, Turkey's first destination promotion office, and the future route of Istanbul tourism with Turizm Aktüel Magazine readers.

How was ICVB, which makes great contributions to the promotion and branding of Istanbul in international platforms, established? What kind of structural changes has it undergone since it was established?

ICVB, Turkey's first destination promotion office, was established in 1997 as a non-profit, impartial destination promotion and marketing organization within TUGEV- (Tourism Development and Training Foundation). ICVB's board of directors and the executive board members have consisted of the leading names of the public and private sectors since it was established. This structure has made a huge contribution to the development of ICVB. ICVB affiliates the private sector organizations. ICVB has a member profile composed of the companies active in tourism and MICE sectors such as the congress centers of Istanbul, 5 and 4-star hotels, agents which organize congresses (PCO/DMC), restaurants and similar service providers.

ICVB's works can be summarized as increasing its share in the related market through the promotion and marketing of destination as a whole to the national and international congress sectors,

Bahadır Yaşık, Istanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau - ICVB Executive Deputy Chairman

which is in general the same as the functioning and standards of international congress offices. A new development in the last period is that the administration of howtoistanbul.com, the first official promotional website of Istanbul, has been transferred to ICVB by the Governorship of Istanbul.

With the takeover of the administration of howtoistanbul.com website, the "Visitors" department of Istanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau has been activated. This development is an important step for our city and the sector.

What is the establishment purpose of ICVB?

The establishment purpose of ICVB is to help the marketing of infrastructure and organization power of Istanbul in the fields of congresses, conferences, fairs and exhibitions through promotions at home and abroad. And also to encourage congress and conference tourism through branding, to ensure the development of tourism through contributing the promotion of the city and the country.

What are the main activities of ICVB and what has been done until this day in the direction of the purpose of establishment?

ICVB carries on promotion and marketing activities with a view

to reinforcing the Istanbul brand and ensuring its recognition and market continuity in the congress-meeting sector. We can exemplify these activities as organizing the meeting-congress fairs of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, attending international workshops and sales exchanges, manufacturing and distributing printed-visual promotional materials such as Istanbul Meeting Planner Guide and the like, supporting national associations in the preparation phase of congress nomination files and congress presentations, hosting foreign purchasers during their inspection and promotional tours organized in Istanbul, representing our city and country in international platforms as well as attending general assembly, workshops, sales trips and many similar activities of the international organizations and thus developing business opportunities. ICVB manages and maintains all the activities in the direction of its establishment purpose incessantly since it was established.

ICVB is a member of which of the leading organizations of international meeting sector?

ICVB is a member of ICCA (International Convention & Congress Association), ECM (European Cities Marketing) and DMAI

(Destination Marketing Association International), the leading organizations of international meeting sector. ICVB has the characteristic of being the single competent body representing Istanbul actively in these organization.

What is the importance of congress, fair and conference tourism for Istanbul?

For this it is necessary to assess what importance the meeting and congress sectors have in general for the destinations. The congress tourism ensures the development of points of arrival. The congress delegates are tourists whose purchasing powers are, depending on their socio-economic positions, 3-4 times more than those of the ordinary tourists and therefore these people, who have a high level of traveling culture, bring an important liveliness to the commercial life of the city including the hotels, restaurants, museums, places of entertainment, shopping malls, shops, banking and credit card companies of the city.

At the same time they have the potential to return to the city again, this time with their families, friends and working groups. Thus they can be counted as tourists with a high purchasing power, which

we hope to increase in number for Istanbul. The verbal promotional power of these people also plays an important role in the promotion of our city.

It is accepted as a world standard that the average staying period per delegate is 3.8 days and the expense amount per person is 2,424 dollars.

The meetings and congresses also bring the scientific world and contribute to upgrade the level of present expertise in subjects and fields such as technology and medicine and the progress of academic life.

It is decided a long time in advance when and where the congresses will be held and important preparations are made in this process. It is hard to cancel them. Therefore, the congress sector is not rapidly and deeply influenced by the periodical political, economic and similar crises as much as the other sectors of tourism.

The congress sector requires qualified infrastructure and service together with architecture and technology. This is to say urban improvement and development for the general image and life of the city. As is known, the congress sector requires high quality service supply and specialization according to the customer profile and technical equipment and service standards expected from the facilities. This brings along the development and progress in the tourism sector related fields of man power, technology use and so on.

What is the place and importance of Istanbul in the world congress sector?

Both Turkey and Istanbul are in the positions of a country and city whose charm increases every passing year in the world congress market with the geographical position, historical and cultural riches, developing infrastructure and tourism potential. Thus, considering the distribution of the world congress market among continents and countries, it is observed that traditional North America and Western European countries havereached a certain saturation point, on the contrary the share received by the Eastern European, Mediterranean, Middle East and Asian Pacific countries from the congress market increases every passing year.

What needs to be done so that Istanbul tourism reaches the point it deserves?

In general, our most important problem in Istanbul is the lack of coordination among the organizations especially in the field of promotion and the lack of middle and long-term tourism policies.

As for the city, lack of a tourism risk management plan is a major concern. As Istanbul grows, the present capacity in terms of congress is increasing on a regular basis. We don't have an infrastructural problem in the congress sector; we have sufficiently large sizedcongress centers and five-star hotels. However, we need more 3 and 4 star hotels for both the congress sector and the other fields of urban tourism.

The active usage of the historical and cultural places in the congress and meeting sectors has contributed to Istanbul in increasing its charm as a congress destination, but from now on we need more than that as the sector. Istanbul needs to develop policies in the congress and tourism sectors compatible with the economic strategies of the city and work in close cooperation with the intellectual circles such as universities, research institutes etc. located in the city. One of the most important problems in Istanbul in terms of the congress sector is to collect the statistical data.



LUX HOSPITALITY BRAND ENTERS TURKEY WITH LUX BODRUM

The LUX hospitality brand enters Turkey after the Indian Ocean islands, China and UAE with the announcement of Lux Bodrum which is set to open this Spring 2017.

The new addition to Turkey's Aegean Riviera and the first Lux resort in the Mediterranean region, the 85-key hotel, 19 residences and a grand beach villa invite discerning style-seeking guests to discover an intoxicating cocktail of beauty, culture and history that is the Bodrum Peninsula. Set in an area of pine-clad hills dotted with sugar-cube homes and exotic landscaped gardens, Lux Bodrum Resort & Residences has already won Silver in the A'Design Awards for Architecture, Building and Structure Design. Located on a peninsula and surrounded by radiant turquoise blue waters, all of the rooms, chic residences and beach villa at this intimate resort have panoramic sea views in high definition. "For us, this is a major step in our global expansion and our first venture in the Mediterranean region. We have managed to bring our "Lighter and Brighter" con-cept all the way to the Turkish Riviera. We are very excited to establish the LUX brand in Turkey after the Indian Ocean islands, China and UAE." —Paul Jones, CEO, LUX

With its contemporary, cosmopolitan spirit, Lux Bodrum Resort & Residences is a breath of fresh air amid excep-tional natural beauty. Soft, white sand on an exclusive bay is teamed with luxury facilities including unique wellness services, spacious indoor and outdoor pools and private dock for yachts ensure all the signature notes of the Lux experience and more. At Lux Bodrum, the gastronomy makes a strong statement. At Stella, the main restaurant, executive chef Baris Torcu uses highest-quality seasonal and organic ingredients including aromatic local herbs and vegetables, to create simple but delicious Italian dishes for lunch and dinner. Paying tribute to Turkish dining culture is a moreish meze menu (best washed down with a glass of raki, Turkey's iconic aniseed aperitif). Breakfast is equally impressive, with a wide variety of freshly squeezed juices matched with a cornucopia of local cheeses, pastrami, olives and honey. For those who feel sociable, the Beach Rouge beach club will be as atmospheric for



lunch as it is for late-night cocktails, with live DJs, international music guests and leading mixologists. The resort will have a kids' club for little ones to have fun in the fresh air while parents recharge their batteries knowing their youngsters are happy and entertained. Play tennis or golf, go hiking, practice yoga, or soak up those rays from a sunlounger. Hidden beaches and crystalline waters call for a little bay-hopping aboard a traditional gulet boat, and easy-to-reach ancient Greek and Roman relics and cultural experiences beg you to explore the history and entertainment.



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REPORT

European tourists continue to prefer Turkey for vacation

Regardless of recent tensions between Turkey and some EU countries, European tourists continue to prefer Turkey as a popular holiday destination with the number of bookings from Germany, the U.K. and the Netherlands on the rise.

Major actors in the country's tourism sector have also foreseen an increase in last-minute sales.

European tourists coming to Turkey have seemingly been unfazed by last year's string of terror attacks, efforts to devise a negative perception of Turkey and anti-democratic prevention of Turkish ministers' events in Europe as well as the electronic device ban on Turkish Airlines flights. Thomas Cook, one of the world's prominent tour operators, previously reported that European tourists were heading back to Turkey. Burak Tonbul, a board member of TÜRSAB (Association of Turkish Travel Agencies) and general manager of Thomas Cook's Turkey Representative, Diana Travel, said bookings for Turkey increased by 40 percent in February, compared to the same month the previous year. Acknowledging that though reservations had slowed in the first week of March due to tension with Europe, Tonbul said bookings were up once again over the last week, particularly in the German and British markets.

Underlining that the electronic device ban implemented by the U.K. will not affect demand, Tonbul said, "The British won't stop coming to Turkey just because children won't be able to watch cartoons on iPads in flight."

Meanwhile, Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı said that they have launched a huge promotion campaign in Europe. Avcı claimed that a recent European survey showed that tourists, who traveled to Greece and Spain instead of Turkey last year, were not satisfied with the service.

"They had the opportunity to compare Turkey with other destinations. Turkey is way ahead of its competitors in terms of facility, services and price," said the minister.



Timur Bayındır

TÜROB CHAIR TİMUR BAYINDIR SAID THAT POSITIVE COMMENTS FROM THOMAS COOK WERE PROMISING

"To break any negative perceptions about Turkey, we are participating in different fairs around the world. We're trying to inform them about the truth," he said, suggesting that European tourists were also aware of the advantages of travelling to Turkey.

BOOKINGS FROM THE NETHERLANDS GAIN MOMENTUM

Yildray Karaer, founding partner at Corendon Tourism Group, which brought more than 60 percent of all Dutch tourists to Turkey, said that the Dutch market was also gaining momentum.

Karaer said that though reservations had stalled for a short while after a diplomatic row between the two countries, following an anti-democratic stance by the Netherlands, the situation has improved. "There has been some serious mobility in regards to reservations over the last two weeks. Unless there is a negative development, I think serious shares will come from last-minute sales, especially in June and July. Our goal is to close the year without any loss and match last year's figures."



Yildray Karaer

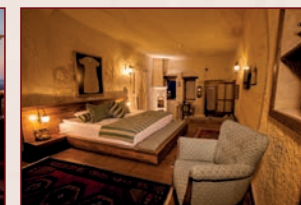
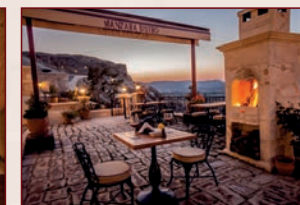
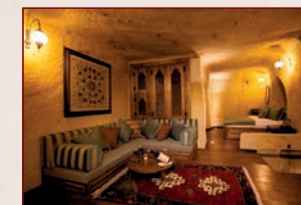
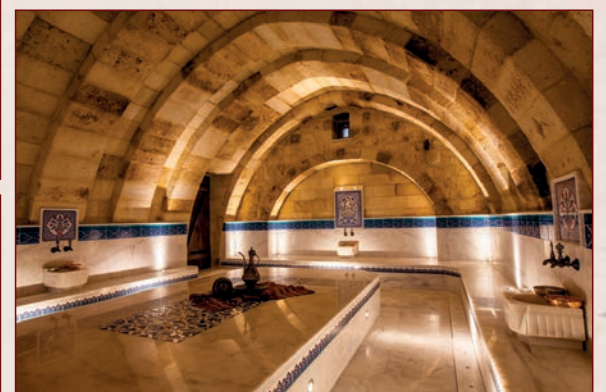
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Ayhan Hüzmeli, the Chairman of the Executive Board of Troya Hotel

YOU WIN AS LONG AS YOU DON'T COMPROMISE ON QUALITY

THE BIGGEST TROUBLE OF THE SECTOR IS INVESTORS WHOSE ONLY AIM IS TO MAKE MONEY IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT. BUT IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT MAKING MONEY. YOU MUST LOVE WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND ADD A VALUE TO IT.

HASAN ARSLAN

Ayhan Hüzmeli, the Chairman of the Executive Board of Troya Hotel, "I am hopeful. I believe everything will improve. But now, new hotel investments should not be done."

Troya Hotel Taksim located in the core of Istanbul serves for tourism sector since it's foundation in 1986. Ayhan Hüzmei, the Chairman of the Executive Board of Troya Hotel shared with our readers about the hotel that has created its frequenters and makes a difference with its quality.

Could you give us information about Troya Hotel Taksim?

In Troya Hotel Taksim which is located in the center of culture, shopping and entertainment that lives 24 hours a day between centuries-old buildings, mosques, churches and synagogues, there are stylishly designed and decorated 77 rooms of which 7 are special.

Our hotel is located in the best position to move around the city: Taksim Square is 15 minutes away and the Istiklal Street is 50 m away. Taksim Troya Hotel serves for Turkish tourism since 1986, the year it was established.

What are the things that distinguish you hotel from the similar ones?

You win constantly as long as you do not compromise on quality. As you start to compromise on quality, that's where you start to lose. The ones who look for a chance to rob the client can not be permanent in the sector, ever. They can only be "fickle".

We do not see any of our guests as a client. We do not name them after their room numbers. The guest has a name, right? We show our guests how we value them by calling them with their names. They like this a lot too. We have 77 rooms in our hotel. Everyone staying in each room is seperately precious and important to us. The guests coming to our country is the guests coming to our home. If I can not serve a food to my kids at home, I can not serve that food to my guests in the hotel.

Could you please tell us about the services you offer to your guests in your hotel?

We demonstrate our dedication to our guests with the services we offer in our hotel. There are 60 varities in our open buffet breakfast served in our terrace. They are not ordinary market food. The olives are from Ayvalık, cheese is from Hatay. Each product is brought from it's production place and served to our guests. I buy the meat myself, asking where it was produced and how. I prefer only Thrace region for meat and buy accordingly.

The hotel covers my house subsistence. I am offering the same product to my guests, which I am serving my kids at home, and I am very selective in this matter. I never compromise on quality. In our hotel, guests find everything they want in the room. The tea or coffee in the lobby is not charged. This is our service policy, and it has not been changed since 1986. And it will always be the this way.

What are the features that make Troy Taksim Hotel indispensable?

As a result of our management policy based on continuity in service, we have a continuous customer profile. First of all we care about our staff's continuity. Our guest is happy to be welcomed and hosted by familiar faces. Sometimes our guest telephones our personnel by his or her name, and make a reservation for his wife or child. He entrusts us with the people he values the most. It makes us very happy. The biggest trouble of the sector in these days is investors whose

only aim is to make money in hotel management. But it's not all about making money. You must love what you are doing and add a value to the sector that you are in. Those people who do not have this perspective destroy tourism. If you charge a cup of tea 20 TL, you will never see that guest coming back again in your place. It might be a fair price in Europe but not in here. I am a hotelier from the core. I have worked in all stages of this industry. We, as a family, are hoteliers. The first hotel of my grandfather, father and uncles is Büyük Londra Oteli. Our family partnership still continues since 1964. This is a very serious profession. I represent my country with my job. The Turkish hospitality is the beginning of the service. If you recompense the money you received, guest leaves the hotel satisfied, and prefers you for the next time. We have the luxury to determine the target group in this sector. You can build your customer profile by your service. And this gives you a freedom. I love my guests because I made it to this point thanks to them.



Ayhan Huzmeli, "Hotel Troya Balat, is a pearl on the coast of Golden Horn. It is spectacular internally as well."

Who does your hotel's customer profile consists of?

We mostly host European guests. Then there is Middle East. We have guests from Lebanon, Quwait, Saudi Arabia. The profile is changeable depending on the season. We also have an elite profile which consists of local businessmen. We have such guests that the manager who works for him is staying in a 5 star hotel nearby, but he, himself prefers to stay in our hotel for the family hotel warmth that he feels here.

We have frequenters among the foreigner guests too. There are many diplomats among our guests. When they first come to Turkey, as their residence is being renovated, they stay in our hotel. Later they book for their acquaintances, their spouses, their children. We are a 30-year-old operation. We grow and multiply with our guests like a snowball.

The tourism sector is going through a difficult period. How did you survive?

It is clear that tourism is going through a very difficult period in the

last years. But since we have protected our rock solid group of guests, we have avoided this distressing process without getting hurt. My only complaint is the price reduction. The reduced prices do not serve anyone both in the short and long term. Unfortunately the hoteliers could not unite. We should have stayed together and stand up for higher prices.

Because our hotels are of high quality. We do not deserve to sell our rooms with these prices. You should see the hotels in Greece. The hotel with five stars is like a ruin. And then you see its prices. But here is a business, if the price is down, you have to compete with it. The calculation is simple: in the same locality, there are two hotels of the same quality. One gives a price of 70 euros, the other 50 euros. As a customer in which would you stay? In the cheaper, right? That's the whole point.

Can we make money? No. I have managed to survive only for 17 months. We, the hoteliers, are making a mistake. Breaking the



Ayhan Huzmeli, "The prove of how much we care our guests is the services offered in our hotel."

price is our most fundamental mistake. When Big Dubai was built, Emirates Airlines lowered prices to attract tourists from the Middle East market. The government subsidized it. We want the same thing from THY, our national airline. We have no other expectation from the state. THY need to grab this flag. The government will give the subsidy not to us but to Turkish Airlines, which will eventually reduce the prices. I think that will help to increase the number of tourist coming to our country.

Would you also tell us about your other hotel, Troya Balat?

The former owner of that place is a very old friend of mine who is an architect. I thank him for the beautiful building that he contributed to this city. That building is a pearl on the coast of Golden Horn. It is spectacular internally as well. The owner wanted to focus on his businesses and I took over it in 2013. It used to have a technology of 10 years ago. It underwent a renovation. We renovated it according to it's original historical Ottoman texture. The fine decorations are fixed by the person who fixed it in Topkapı Palace. The characteristics of

furnitures are kept just as they were.

And finally we have a very neat hotel with 19 rooms. It has an unbelievable atmosphere and energy there. It is perfect in the texture of Balat. Balat is already a very old district. The "Old Istanbul" is still there in the look and in the lifestyle. With its traditional residential architecture and cloth drying strings between windows, Balat is a district that still keeps the old Istanbul traces and welcomes a lot of visitors. It's a must-see place for the local and foreign visitors of Istanbul. As the tourism sector, our luck is to have mayors who support us and give importance to tourism. Both the Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and the mayors of the districts are signing very important works that will support tourism in their own regions. After all, the hotel is not just a building. The infrastructure of the surrounding area and environmental regulations are always the responsibility of the municipality. We are very pleased with the work done by the municipalities in terms of tourism. Istanbul is an immaculate and lush city. A tourist arriving from the airport is seeing a clean, green town with flowers.

Are you hopeful of tourism in the future?

I am hopeful. I believe everything will improve. But now, new hotel investments should not be done. Every new added room causes the prices to fall a little further down. Because the number of tourists is certain. Many of our friends who took credit and invested in hotels were in a very difficult situation because they could not pay their credits during the crisis period. It is now necessary to limit hotel investments in Istanbul. There is a Barcelona example. Barcelona made a very radical decision and stopped investing in the hotels.

You serve the tourism sector with two hotels. Do you have new investment plans?

I do not have that plan right now. Because we are going through a period when the investment of the hotel is very risky. We are a family who works in tourism. My grandfather started in the sector, my father followed him and then there is me. Now it's my son. Since 1964 we have been in the hotel management in the same region. There are periods when investment risks rise. This period is one of them. That's why I do not plan a new investment.

Finally, do you have a message for the sector?

First of all I would say: I am not a person who asks everthing to be done by the state. The state is doing everything possible to help the tourism sector. Now it's the sector employees who should do something for their sector. They must be united and seek common solutions to problems. I also want to talk about the banning of Booking.com. While tourism is such a difficult situation, I find it unnecessary to ban Booking.com. It is clear that there is something to be fixed with Booking.com operation in Turkey. But the process could have been managed more quietly.

The tourism sector is experiencing a transition period. The conditions will not go on like this forever, it will surely get better. Sector representatives should continue to serve without sacrificing quality without lowering their standards. Hoteliers are people who do not hesitate to take initiative and become a part of solution. We serve to the "industry with no chimneys" and deserve to be as reputable as industrialists.

Finally, I advise entrepreneurs who are planning a new hotel investment to wait a little longer. Unless they want to wait, they should buy a hotel that is already operating instead of building a new one.



UK TOUR OPERATOR: TOURISTS HEADING BACK TO TURKEY

Thomas Cook, one of the world's largest U.K.-based travel agencies, announced that customers have begun traveling back to Turkey, underscoring early signs of recovery in Turkish tourism.

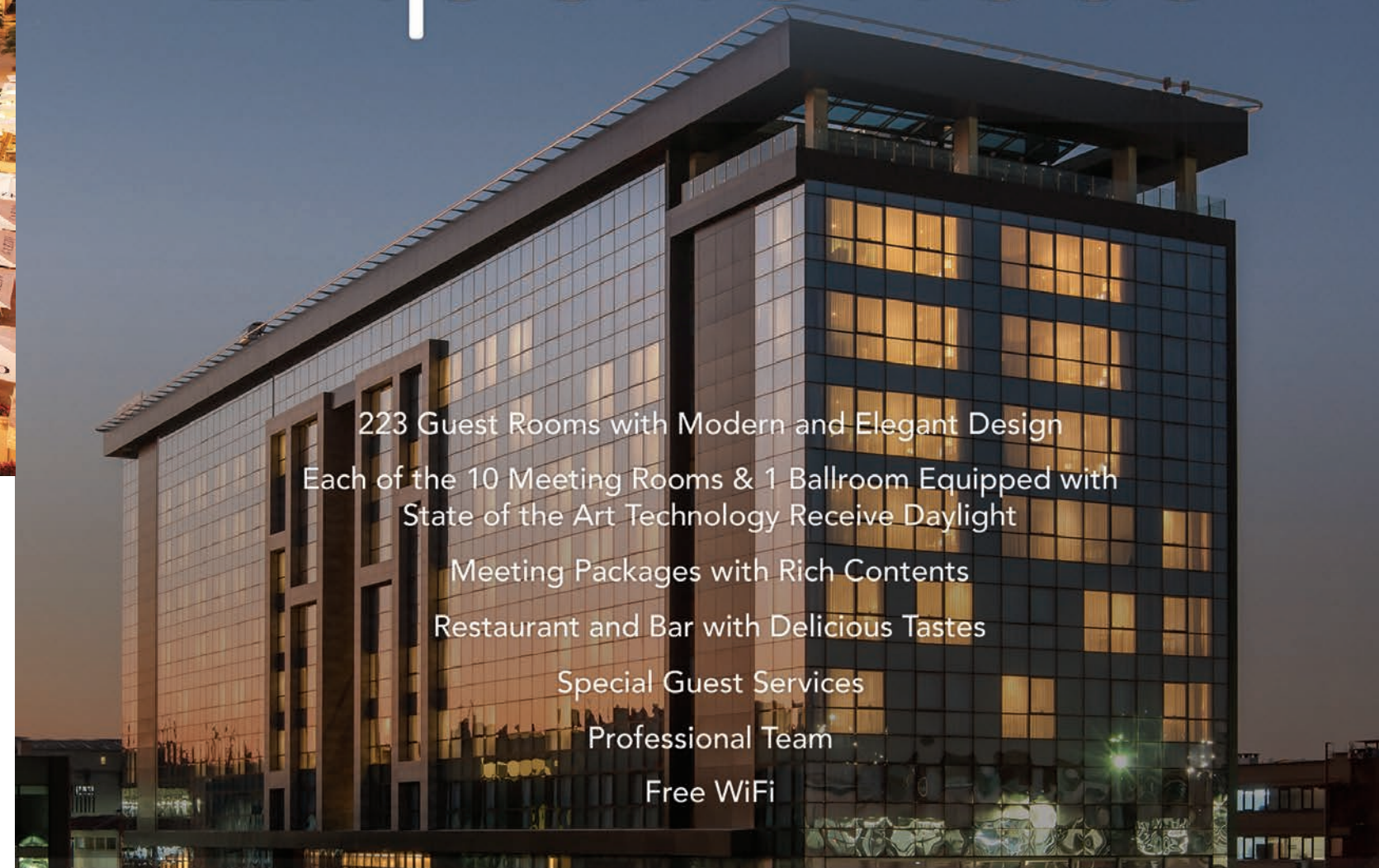


Foreign holidays remain a top priority for Europeans despite economic and security worries, Thomas Cook revealed in a statement. "Customers' appetite to go abroad on holiday this summer is good across all our markets," CEO Peter Fankhauser said. "After a slow start to the season and a tough year in 2016, we're seeing early signs that customers are beginning to go back to Turkey and Egypt." The travel agency said summer bookings for the group were up 10 percent compared to a weak period last year. Tourists turned their backs on previously popular resorts in Turkey and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean last summer because of concerns about security, leaving Thomas Cook scrambling to find more hotel rooms in Spain and Portugal. Meanwhile, the increase in the number of Russian tourists in the January and February months reached record levels in Antalya, where the Russian tourism market saw a huge decline in 2016 due to the crisis that occurred in November 2015 when Turkey downed a Russian jet for violating Turkish airspace. While the number of foreign tourists overall dropped by 10 percent in January, the number of Russian tourists increased by 81.5 percent. A total of 1,398 tourists came to Antalya in January to February 2016, including the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the number of Russian tourists rose to 27,075 in the same period this year. The change in the two-month period in the CIS-Russian market was 1,837 percent, while in February alone, the number of tourists from the CIS and Russia market, which was 360 in the previous year, increased to 12,679, amounting to an increase rate of more than 35-fold.



Peter Fankhauser

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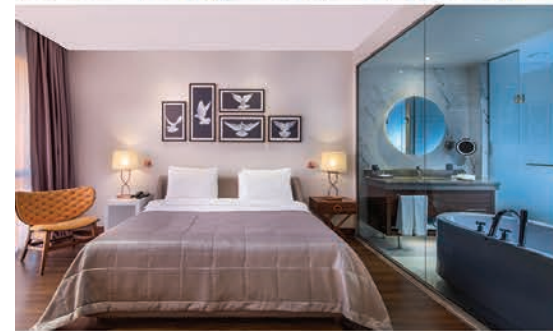
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UP FRONT

KEFALUKA RESORT HOTEL CONGRESS TOURISM FORGE

The achieved increase of 225% in the number of big congresses held in Turkey in the last 10 years motivated bigger hotels in Aegean and Mediterranean to get a share from congress tourism.

Kefaluka Resort Hotel in Bodrum Akyarlar, which was one of the top 3 in the category of "Aegean Region Best Congress Hotel" in the ACE of M.I.C.E. Award 2017 which every year brings the industry-leading professionals of congresses, meetings and events together, accelerated its efforts in this area. Fatih Can Ekşi, Kefaluka Resort Hotel General Coordinator, stated that the losses that Turkey has experienced in tourism in the last few years may be covered by congress tourism and added: "Bodrum is an important touristic destination generally preferred because of its unique beauty, sea, nature and entertainment. We are trying to make Bodrum an indispensable center for congresses with all its attractive and magical features.

We understand that we are progressing on the right path both from the satisfaction of our guests from all over the world and the comments of the professionals in the sector and of tourism authorities. The



Fatih Can Ekşi, Kefaluka Resort Hotel General Coordinator

awards we have gained both nationally and internationally reinforce these gratifications and motivate us to do better. With the quality of our service, with the superiority of our technology, we host dozens of congresses with world standards. Especially the guests who come for conferences and seminars forget their stress and relieve tiredness of the day while sipping hot or cold beverages and enjoying the assertive world cuisine with the view of one of the 'best 15 bays of the world', Akyarlar."

Kefaluka, an investment of EK-CAN Group, operating in Bodrum, Akyarlar has been awarded 27 international and national awards and certifications including TUI UK "Golden Award" which is among the most prestigious awards of the tourism sector so far. Kefaluka, which was selected as the winner of "Starway World Best Hotels 2013" in Moscow leaving the world's best 100 hotels behind and the winner of the Great Honour of the same year's "Holidaycheck Quality and Selection", won the third place in the guest survey of "Starway World Best Hotel" in 2015 carried out in 28 countries and 5210 hotels.



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Floating hotel project on Euphrates to boost tourism in southeastern Turkey

An entrepreneur in the southeastern province of Şanlıurfa is planning to build “floating hotels” on the Euphrates in the region which was submerged during the construction of the Birecik Dam.

Amid aims to generate touristic activities along the Euphrates, both the Turkish state and private investigators are investing in the region which is one of the largest river basins in Turkey. Many projects have been introduced to allow local and international tourists to take tours along the Euphrates which runs through areas with historic stone houses and unique natural beauties; beautiful attractions that have failed to garner the same level of interest as the “floating hotels” project.

A local entrepreneur making investments in

30-square-meter wooden boats. Currently, the entrepreneur continues to invest in his projects and aims to introduce this entirely new concept in tourism to tourists on the shores of the Euphrates, an iconic river which is known for its natural beauties and serene atmosphere. Initially, “the floating hotel” will be built across a total of 12 wooden boats. If the necessary approvals are granted by the Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality and the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, the floating hotel project will be inaugurated this summer.

Kurt said that he presented his “floating hotels” project to relative state officials wary of the fact that it is a widely unheard of concept in Turkish tourism. “This year, Turkey will experience a tourism boom according to the initial expectations. Halfeti is labeled as a “cittaslow” and we intend to improve touristic activities in the province with new initiatives such as this one. Our hotel rooms will be rented out daily and the facility will run on solar power. The rooms will be in the shape of boats and the guests will be able to take a tour on the Euphrates River and accommodate in the location they desire. The managers and the guests will communicate with each other using walkie-talkies,” Kurt said.

The cost of the project is estimated at TL 2 million and will be the first of its kind in Turkey. Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Nihat Çiftçi also offered insights regarding the project and the touristic activities in the region, saying that Euphrates boat tours are one of the most widely preferred and entertaining forms of tourism in the region. Reminding that the region is home to important wetlands such as the Atatürk Dam and the Euphrates, Mayor Çiftçi said the municipality has plans to utilize the wetlands more and more in tourism developments in the future. Mayor Çiftçi also shared plans to initiate ferry services on the river, noting: “Investments in tourism and transportation are very important to us. There are beautiful and important historic sites along the coast of the Euphrates. We are supporting tourism initiatives in the region.”

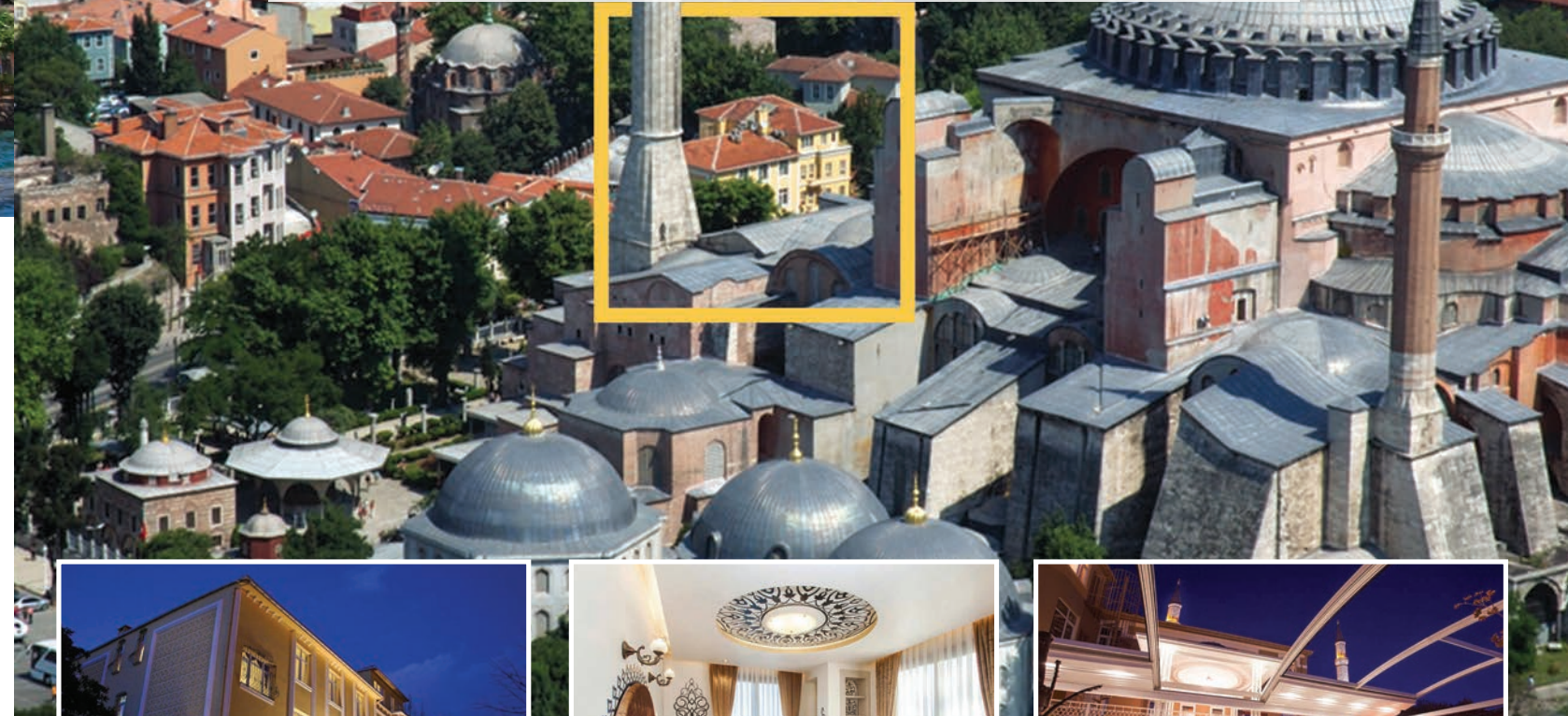
Speaking to Anadolu Agency (AA), Kurt asserted that the Şanlıurfa region attracts more and more local and international tourists every year. Stating that locals in the region want tourists to discover their homeland extensively, Kurt said local investors are working hard to introduce alternative tourism activities in the region.



tourism and the launcher of the project, Salih Kurt, was inspired by the floating houses he saw while on a visit to the Netherlands - a unique concept that he decided to bring to Şanlıurfa's submerged region, Halfeti, with the construction of the Birecik Dam, in the form of “floating hotels.” He returned to his native Turkey and began designing hotel rooms on

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Ottoman Hotels Group is one of the most recognized names in the travel industry in Turkey standing as the stylish, forward thinking leader of hospitality. With over 37 years of experience, Ottoman Hotels Group continues to be synonymous with hospitality business because of its innovative approach to products, amenities and service. Consisting of two design hotels and two traditional restaurants, Ottoman Hotels Group aims to make traveling enjoyable with authentic hospitality and commitment to the global community.



OTTOMAN HOTEL IMPERIAL

Ottoman Hotel Imperial was built as an Ottoman school and hospital in the mid of 1800's. The building was home to both the teachers and pupils of the historical 'medrese' for around 70 years. The hospital was built in early 1900's and served the merchants of the Ottoman handicraft producers and masters. In the mid of the 20th century the building had been converted to a hotel in order to host young travelers and pupils. The building has gone through several renovations in 2005 and has turned out to be a premium & superior historic hotel. Ottoman Hotel Imperial is situated on the truly premium location in town, on an elevated position, surrounded by all the major historic and cultural sights in the heart of the old town, Sultanahmet, viewing the impressive Hagia Sophia (St.Sophia, Aya Sofya) Museum. This is an inspiring location all year around, in the heart of the old city, within walking distance of Sultanahmet Square and the main historic, shopping and harbor districts and just 16 km away from the Atatürk International Airport (IST) and 44 km away from the Sabiha Gökçen International Airport (SAW).

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WE DEVELOPED 7 DIFFERENT CONCEPTS IN OUR HOTEL

Which is the Turkey's one and only hotel with wellbeing-healing concept and awarded with 22 international awards, holds the title of being the only hotel with 7 stars by Seven Stars Luxury Hospitality and Lifestyle Awards. [HAKAN METİN](#)

Recai Cakir, Chairman of the Executive Board of Sianji Group, explained to Turizm Aktüel about Sianji Wellbeing Resort located in Kadikalesi, Bodrum.

How was Sianji Wellbeing Resort established?

I entered the tourism sector in 1986 with Kadikale Resort, a first class holiday village in Bodrum. In 2009, we carried out the project of Hanging Gardens Hotel of Babylon, both a hotel and a residence. Within this project, we developed the concept "for living in or for rent". With my daughter Cisem Cakir and my son Oytun Cakir getting involved in the business in 2014, after an innovation project that costed 1 million Euro, Hanging Gardens Hotel of Babylon took the name of Sianji Wellbeing Resort. We developed 7 different concepts for Sianji Wellbeing Resort, which is the Turkey's one and only hotel with wellbeing-healing concept and awarded with 22 international awards, holds the title of being the only hotel with 7 stars by Seven Stars Luxury Hospitality

Reci Cakir,
Executive
Board
Chairman of
Sianji Group

and Lifestyle Awards. Our hotel serves for 12 months. We have an average of 60% occupancy during the year which is a serious level in Turkey. Our customers are from all over the world. Guests from Romania, England, China, Qatar and Russia stay in our hotel just for our health programs.

Could you please tell us some about Sianji Wellbeing Resort?

At Sianji Wellbeing Resort located in Kadikalesi, Bodrum, we offer a health program that anyone coming to our hotel can apply. We kept the options quite wide. At the moment in Turkey, a wellbeing hotel brings a diet program and spa therapies in your mind. Often these two is enough to let you have the "wellbeing" title. However, being a wellbeing hotel is not just having a diet program and a spa for the guests. It requires more than that. It is necessary to have a holistic viewpoint.

At Sianji Wellbeing Resort we offer a wide range of practices that provide soul - body - mind integrity such as alkaline diet, raw nutrition, detox, daily ongoing group exercise programs, spa therapies, ozone therapy, Infrared, Thalasso, yoga, meditation, voice therapy. I think we outshine with these extensive programs we offer. Also, since our hotel is located on the "ley line" that contains of world's energy centers, the person who sleeps even one night in our hotel claims to wake up more vigorously and feel better. Ley lines are energy regions with dense active magnetic fields that pass through certain points of the world.

From which countries do you have guests?

We have many customers both local and foreigner. However among our international guests healthy living is more prevalent while in our country there is a small group having this understanding. Already one of our goals is to spread the ideo of healthy living to more people. We have guests coming from all over the world, even from China. Generally speaking, they come mainly from Romania, Holland, Emirates, Egypt and Lebanon.

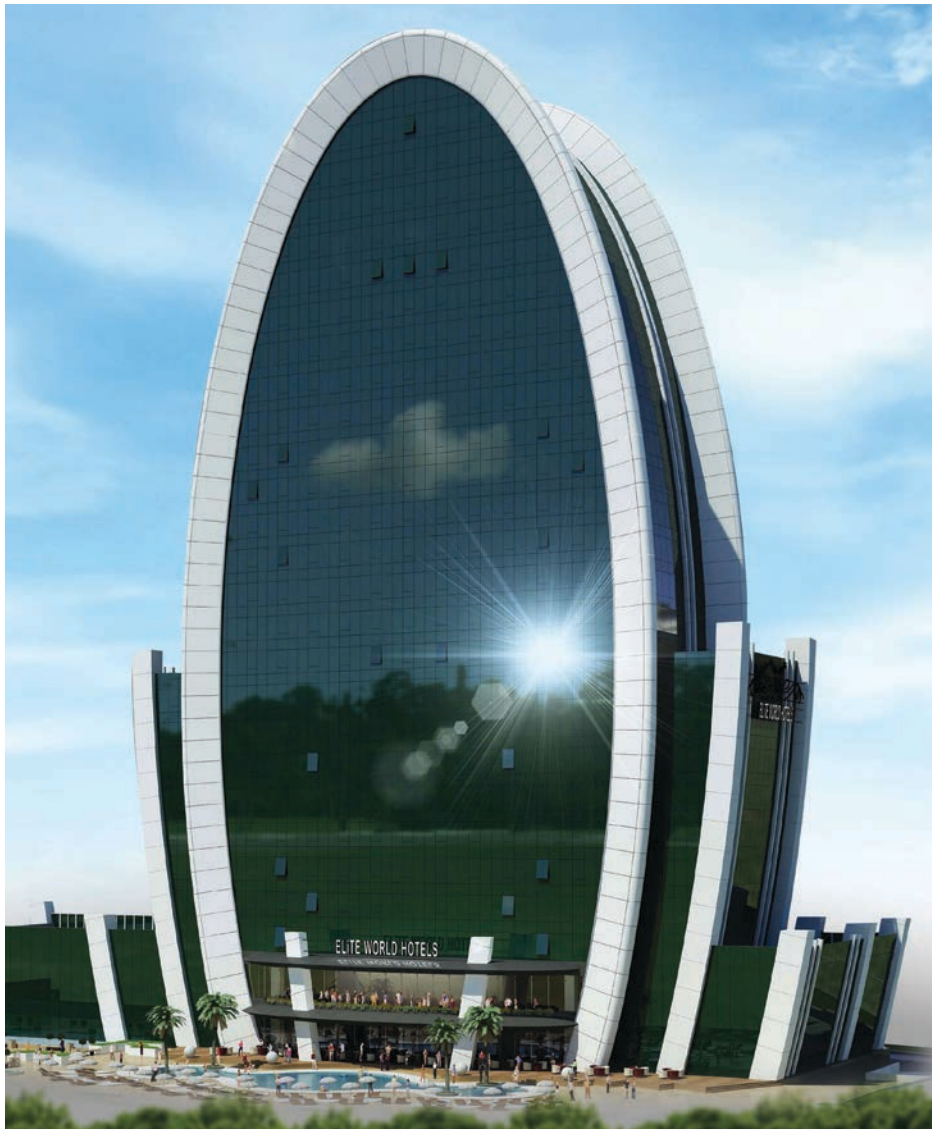


Sianji Wellbeing Resort



ELITE WORLD HOTELS OPENS NEW HOTEL IN ISTANBUL

Elite World Hotels Opens new property in Istanbul. Elite World Europe - Largest Hotel of the chain



Elite World Hotels chain, which has been operating in the Turkish tourism industry for over 15 years, announced the opening of Elite World Europe, the largest hotel of the chain. This five-star hotel will open its doors on February. This new signing will accompany the existing five properties: Elite World Prestige, Elite World Istanbul and Elite World Business in Istanbul, Elite World Van in Van and Elite World Marmaris in Marmaris.

Elite World Hotels is part of Worldhotels, a global brand that brings together some of the world's most unique independent hotels. Worldhotels' CEO Geoff Andrew: "I have personally visited this hotel and it is a stunning addition to the Worldhotels portfolio, especially for the business and MICE markets. We are delighted that our partner Elite World Hotels is continuing to add high quality hotels into the market offering the very best in independent, authentic hospitality."

Elite World Europe is located five minutes away from Istanbul Atatürk Airport and 25 minutes from the city center. It operates a brand new "Business to Happiness" approach, which puts the concept of happiness at the center of service and underlines it with the slogan "If the mood is good, all is good". Chain General Manager Ünsal Şınık says: "We define service at Elite World Europe Hotel in a very specific way. We go beyond satisfied customers; we make them smile." With 58 suites, 401 rooms and eight meeting rooms, Elite World Europe offers the latest technology and comfort for congresses, seminars and meetings. With its two ballrooms, that are 925 and 995 square meters respectively, its botanical garden and its outdoor pool it is also an ideal choice for weddings, invitations and cocktail parties.

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ONLINE



TURKEY'S SHARE IN ONLINE TRAVEL MARKET HITS 15 PCT

Online travel markets are also undergoing rapid growth in Turkish tourism, with 67 percent of tourists coming to Turkey from European countries purchasing their airline tickets online and 55 percent using online booking for their accommodation. The share of online travel markets in Turkish tourism is estimated at around 15 percent, Dünya daily reported.

The tourism sector has recently come to the brink of a deep divergence with the suspension of Booking.com's activities in Turkey after the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) brought a suit against the online travel agency on the grounds that it has created unfair competition in the market. Following the court's decision to suspend the site's activities in Turkey, travel agencies stood against the online reservation system in tourism, while accommodation services stood by the online system. Regarding the figures, while the online travel market reached \$590 billion in 2016, it is expected to exceed \$800 billion in 2020. More than \$100 billion of the turnover in the world's online travel market is made through mobile channels. In 2020, this amount will exceed \$200 billion while mobile phone usage is expected to increase by 70 percent. Today, the largest transaction volume in the world online travel market is concentrated in North America, Asia-Pacific and Western Europe, which together have a share of about 30 percent in the market. In addition to Booking.com, which operates under U.S.-based Priceline Group, there are other major players in the online travel market, such as the Expedia Group, TripAdvisor and Chinese Ctrip Group. Expedia Inc. leads the market with a turnover of \$60.8 billion, followed by Priceline Group with \$55.5 billion. The total market share of the two companies rose to 65 percent in 2015 from 38 percent in 2011. In 2016, Google also generated \$12.2 billion in online travel market revenue thanks to its ads, which corresponds to about one-third of Turkey's tourism revenue for that same year



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Rooms: 40 Standard rooms, 5 Deluxe Suites All rooms benefit from: air-conditioning, double glazing, mini bar, telephone, Internet access, Satellite TV, en suite bath or shower, WC and hairdryer.

Facilities: Coffee shop in lobby (breakfast only), bar, Turkish Bath, sauna, lift.

Location: Centrally located in the old city of Istanbul, 05 minutes walk to the Topkapi Palace, Hagia Sophia and the Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque and 10 minute walk to the Bosphorus, where the ferry goes to the Asian side of Istanbul.

Transfer: 20 minute transfer from Istanbul airport.



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2018 IS DECLARED TO BE THE YEAR OF TROY

Nabi Avcı, Minister of Culture and Tourism announced that 2018 will be Troy Year at a press conference at the ITB Berlin Fair.

Minister of Culture and Tourism, Nabi Avcı said in his speech at the ITB Berlin Tourism Fair that "Troy, in the Dardanelles region, is a place that changes world history and we declare

2018 as the Troy Year. Unesco initiated an initiative on this issue and we, as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, want to organize 2018 as the Troy Year in order to introduce and promote the richness and

the stories of Troy. We invite the whole world to Turkey". Minister Avcı, referring to the Europe Representative of TURSAB, Hüseyin Baraner, "He is from Canakkale, I am from Çanakkale as much as him." said. As the representative of Canakkale, Arman Aydeğer, the General Secretary of Çanakkale Touristic Hotels Association (CATOD) and also Councilman of Çanakkale Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CTSO) stated that "May 2018 Troy Year be the strong wind to strengthen tourism in the region and in Turkey. Thank you very much dear contributors. I hope it will be an exemplary year and a study for the future." Salman Zeki Yüksel and Hilmi Selimoğlu, members of the CATOD (Çanakkale Touristic Hotels Association) were present at the ITB Berlin Fair and informed local and foreign participants about the "2018 Troy Year". Many sector representatives visiting the Çanakkale stand in ITB Berlin Tourism Fair expressed their support for the "2018 Troy Year".



One of the province of Canakkale hotels, our hotel is serving since 1974; Sadıkoğlu Heat Tech Tourism Investment San.Tic. Ltd. Sti. is a part of a chain of hotels. Büyük Truva Otel, with its seafront location in the heart of the city at the weekend on holiday, business meetings and summer holiday in the most beautiful example of hospitality gives you the Dardanelles ... Soothing architecture, a beautiful work of art and history can shed light on. Our hotel in the majestic beauty of the Bosphorus, experienced staff is proud to serve you throughout the four seasons.



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LIONEL HOTEL ISTANBUL

Burçak Atak, Marketing and Sales Director of Lionel Hotel:

THE DIFFERENCE OF LIONEL HOTEL IS THAT IT OFFERS REACHABLE LUXURY CONCEPT

As the management philosophy, we have the goal of being a guest-focused, difference creator facility that determines the guest's desires beforehand and serves to the needs of the guest of which even themselves do not realize. We invite our guests to experience "value-creating experiences". Our distinction is to offer service-sensitive "attainable luxury" concept.

HASAN ARSLAN

Burçak Atak, Marketing and Sales Director of Lionel Hotel Istanbul, "Every detail of the Lionel Hotel, the new attraction of those who love to explore the city, is actually enough to make it different."



Lionel Hotel which started to serve in the business in the last months of 2016, succeeded in creating its regulars very quick, even though it was only a short time after its opening. Burçak Atak, Marketing and Sales Director of Lionel Hotel Istanbul, one of the newest business hotels accompanying Istanbul's gleam, spoke for Aktüel Turizm readers.

Would you tell us outline of Lionel Hotel Istanbul?

Located in the important transportation center of Istanbul and within easy reach of the city, our hotel is a city hotel that is close to the business centers and factories, embracing the historical peninsula and comfortably accommodating the accommodation needs of all guests for business and touristic purposes.

The entire building, built having planned operational needs, is totally glass-clad. When high ceilings are added to this feature, we welcome our guests with brilliant spacious spaces. The hotel has a wonderful panoramic view of Maslak, Golden Horn, Bakırköy and Marmara Sea. We have 231 guest rooms in 6 different categories starting from a minimum of 30 sqm. Our superior rooms make up the majority; we have 131 superior rooms, 70 standard rooms, 14 deluxe rooms, 4 junior, 4 corner suite and 10 connection rooms.

In addition, we are able to respond to changing needs with 10 meeting rooms, all daylight, ranging from 50 sqm to 235 sqm. We also offer an unrivaled choice for fair, congress or dinner organizations with our 1070 sqm magnificent ballroom which is equipped with advanced technology, daylight, 5 m high ceilings with no columns. Our ballroom, which is built to allow car entrance, hosts 750 spectators in theater style or 600 people in banquet style and hosts weddings with wide participation.

Team work can not be denied in the success of a hotel. We have a successful team with opening experience. Our priority on the way to our targets is to reach perfect harmony moving with team consciousness. When your team is educated and experienced, sense of belonging makes a better result. Hence, we are adapting to sector developments by organizing trainings with the expert people

and institutions we trust and we allow our employees to renew and develop themselves.

What is the greatest feature that distinguishes Lionel Hotel from other hotels?

As the management philosophy, we have the goal of being a guest-focused, difference creator facility that determines the guest's desires beforehand and serves to the needs of the guest of which even themselves do not realize. We invite our guests to experience "value-creating experiences". Our distinction is to offer service-sensitive "attainable luxury" concept. I think we have succeeded in blending modern architecture and elegant details with technology. Every detail of the Lionel Hotel, the new attraction of those who love to explore the city, is actually enough to make it different. Our spacious lobby, with its simple lines, special decorations and minimalist style, offers a living space where guests can enjoy themselves.

Lionel Hotel is a project that will add value to the developing Bayrampaşa region. The only deluxe five star hotel in the area. We will be talked about with our guest-oriented service quality.

Can you please tell us about your guest profile?

We have determined our marketing strategy in accordance with the characteristics of the demand in the market. Considering the risk distribution method, we act with 360 degree marketing strategy. So we do not have a single basket of eggs. In addition to the domestic market, Latin America, Far East, Middle East, Balkan markets are included. Although the number has decreased compared to the past years, we also welcome guests from the European market. We get a lot of reservations from Europe, especially via online channels. Our team has a very well-designed and implemented online sales scenario.

Bayrampaşa is surrounded by business companies and factories engaged in production of textile and machinery industry. We are also hosting these companies' domestic and foreign guests. We welcome meeting groups from many institutions as well. We see great support



Lionel Hotel, combining luxury and comfort, is able to blend elegant details with the latest technology.

from industrialists and business people. We are very close to Halic Congress Center and Istanbul Congress Center. So we are also host to the congress participants. We have a goal of standing in equal distance to each segment and we move in that direction.

With our 5-star neighbors we do not promote or represent just our hotels but Bayrampaşa. That's why our responsibility is really great.

Could you tell us about Lionel Hotel's spa, wellness and gym facilities?

Oualia Exclusive Spa and Fitness in our hotel is the largest in the region with its 3000 sqm area. We also offer separate sections for our female and male guests. It features two hammams, two saunas, two steam rooms and 10 different massage rooms, all of which are the largest in the region. The menu includes stone and thai massages, reflexology, lifting, anti age skin care, traditional Turkish bath treatments. The VIP massage room offered to couples is another outstanding feature that we offer our guests. Our spa also has a bridal bath to keep traditional culture alive. The fitness room, which is equipped with the latest technology, is serving by a membership system and currently have approximately 1000 members.

Is your hotel assertive with its cuisine as well as in other service areas?

Hotel's kitchen is entrusted to Sami Bolu, Executive Chef. Dorlion, our main restaurant, serves a la carte during lunch and dinner. But in the morning it starts the day with a rich open buffet breakfast. Dorlion Restaurant offers a capacity of 150 people. Local flavors on the menu are blended with new presentations. The open kitchen has a pizza oven as well. In the menu that responds to the expectations of our guests there are mostly dishes of meat. The Lionel Brasserie & Bar, which has a different area, has a capacity of 60 people. There are requests from our spa and fitness sections. In the near future we will offer food and drink in the appropriate concept of buffet or menu.

Today, vegeterians, gluten-sensitive people, or people with allergic problems are numerous. We have vegetarian options in the menu. We can respond to gluten-free demand as well. In this kind of sensitivity we offer solutions to our guests. Dorlion Restaurant's yogurt kebab is very popular. We are very assertive in meat.

What characteristics make Lionel Hotel a preferred choice?

Nowadays, all the new hotels are beautiful. But what makes a facility alive and different is the team that welcomes you and the experience you have in the hotel. The most important criterion that distinguishes a hotel from alikes is quality of the service and the team that offers that service to the guest. We care about guest satisfaction. We think every necessary thing for the guest to the finest detail before they arrive. The human factor is very important to us. We go forward with service. We embrace our guests with our warm interest and care. A

satisfied person brings 90 people together.

What kind of reactions did you receive from your guests since your opening?

Our guests are very pleased with our team's smiling face and they express it in every opportunity. Our team really cares about all kinds of problems of our guests. They feel very comfortable in our hotel and we are here to make them feel that way.

We do not have square, pointed rules. Our guests also emphasize this and are very pleased that we are flexible. Our meals are very much appreciated. The comfort of our rooms is highly praised too.

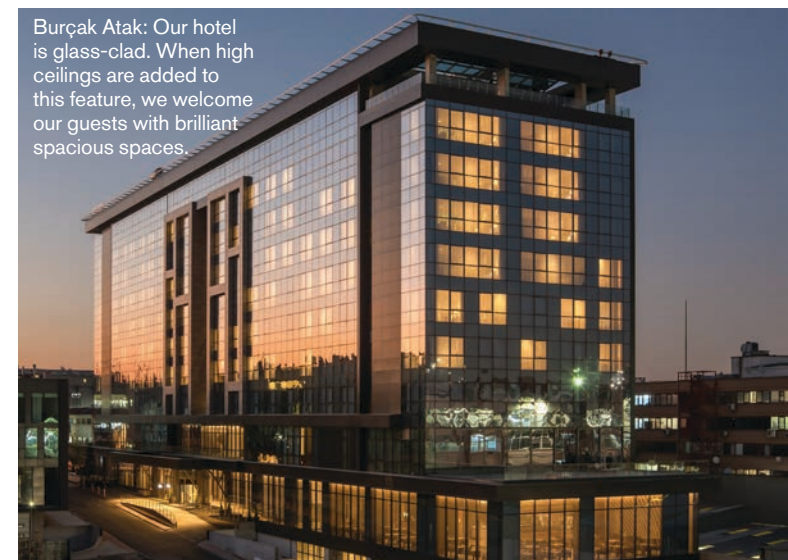
Do you have a message that you want to forward to the sector?

I love the saying, "There are invisible armies of the truth." It is so precious that people and institutions that have unity of essence,

word, and movement are able to exist within the framework of ethical truths. I am saddened by the rapid turnover of the personnel in the sector, the timelessly given promotions, unnecessary ambitions, copy-paste rhetoric and practices, and the fact that the people with idea took the place of the people with knowledge.

I wish the task will be granted to the one who deserves it. Due to my specialization, I want to emphasize that that marketing and sales are different things. The level of development can only be measured by being specialized.

In addition, young people are not given enough support and voice. They are our future. Their ideas are very valuable because they are born into technology. If I needed a consultant team today, it would mostly consist of young people aged between 15-25. I'm sure the projects would be inspiring.



Burçak Atak: Our hotel is glass-clad. When high ceilings are added to this feature, we welcome our guests with brilliant spacious spaces.



RUSSIA PROPOSES JOINT CRUISE TOUR WITH TURKEY

The Hotel Association of Turkey (TÜROB), in a recent statement, said that Russia has proposed organizing joint cruise tours on the Black Sea route between Sochi and Istanbul.



According to the TÜROB statement, Russian tourism in Turkey, which almost came to a standstill last year following the jet downing crisis between the two countries, has entered a revival period, as one of Turkey's biggest tourism markets. Even though the number of tourists recorded in 2014, some 4.5 million, may not be reached, 3-3.5 million Russian tourists were expected to visit Turkey this year.

It was noted in the statement that at the MITT 2017 Moscow International Travel & Tourism Exhibition, attended by TÜROB President Timur Bayındır and its executive board, Russia proposed cooperation between the two countries to launch cruise tours on the Sochi-Istanbul route in the Black Sea. The proposed tour would sail along the Black Sea coast, starting in Sochi and ending in Istanbul. According to the statement, TÜROB prepared a report following the fair, taking into account the demands made by Russia in the first quarter of the year, and reservations for the next months. The report included expectations from this market, which is very important for the Turkish tourism sector. The number of tourists coming from Russia to Turkey dropped by 76 percent to reach 866,000 in 2016, compared to approximately 4.5 million tourists in 2014 and 3.5 million in 2015, according to the report. A total of 31.6 million Russians traveled abroad in 2016.

Turkey, which had been the top destination for Russian tourists, fell down to eighth position last year. However, with a thaw in Turkey-Russian relations, and given Turkey's popularity among Russian tourists, as well as price-quality balance, experience of the industry, and possible demand contraction in European market will likely bring Russian tourists back to the country this season.



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Cruise ships to receive \$30 gov't support per passenger



To encourage cruise ships to come to Turkey, the government will give financial support of \$30 per passenger to travel agencies to increase the number of cruise tourists, which was 2 million in 2015 and is currently 600,000. This support will be provided to A-group travel agencies that bring 750-passenger capacity cruise ships and above to Turkey.

In cruise tourism, the number of passengers increased from 800,000 in early 2000 to over 2 million in 2015. During the last year, especially because of the crises with Russia and terrorism, most cruise companies removed Turkey from their routes, while the number of tourists dropped to 600,000. The government wants to increase the figure to 2 million again with this support plan. Moreover in the short term, the government plans to build a giant port in Antalya for cruise ships to dock. While the tender for the project is expected this year, a 1,000-bed capacity hotel is also planned. Furthermore, a search continues for investors for the port, which is to be built on a 30,000-square-meter commercial area at Antalya Lara Beach.

A delegation from the Tourism Ministry will attend a sister city protocol ceremony between the Antalya Metropolitan Municipality and the Miami Municipality and also negotiate with cruise companies. Despite the temporary downturn in the sector, cruise companies' interest in Turkey is rising. Offers are coming from Russia and Ukraine for cruise tours on the Black Sea. Tura Tourism Chairman Erkunt Öner said they have started work for cruise tours on the Black Sea for 2018. "We plan to launch a one-week tour starting from Sochi, Russia to Trabzon, Samsun, Istanbul and back to Sochi," Öner said. Moreover, Royal Caribbean Marketing Director Cihangir Canyılmaz also said that they would launch Turkey tours in 2018. "Our ships will be on the Aegean coast in 2018. The ship number and program will be established due to demand," Canyılmaz said.



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Open branch in Turkey to avoid ban: Association tells Booking.com

Top representatives from the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) have said they will not have any problem with Booking.com if the online portal opens a branch in Turkey and fairly competes with its Turkish competitors.



An Istanbul court on March 29 ordered the suspension of the activities of Booking.com in Turkey, citing accusations of unfair competition, following a lawsuit filed by TÜRSAB. The website, which had around 13,000 hotel members from Turkey, halted selling rooms in Turkey to Turkish users on March 30, one day after the court decided to block the website in the country. The website can still be used from foreign countries to make reservations for Turkish hotels.

In a press meeting on April 5, TÜRSAB President Başaran Ulusoy said the main reason behind their move was based on “unfair competition reasons.” “The court found us right after we started our fight in a legal framework in Turkey, where there is the rule of law. The Hoteliers Association of Turkey thanked us in a letter. They believed us and we did what it required,” he said, adding that the move was to avert unfair competition. “We cannot say anything (against Booking.com) if they open a branch in Turkey and fairly compete with their Turkish

counterparts,” said Ulusoy, adding that it was unacceptable to set “the lowest price” under these conditions.



TÜRSAB President
Başaran Ulusoy

“Is it possible for TÜRSAB members to do the same in Germany or Switzerland?” he said. “We obey the rules where we go; and we have to,” he noted, adding that it was expected from Booking.com to obey the fair competition rules. Ulusoy noted that the Turkish operators faced serious problems when finding rooms, as the online reservation portal secured many guaranteed rooms, adding that the compliant was only against the portal's Turkey operations. Hoteliers from Turkey's touristic Aegean region, as well as small city hoteliers, have voiced their anger against the court decision against Booking.com, blasting TÜRSAB that filed the case against the online reservation portal over competition concerns. They accused TÜRSAB of “harming Turkey's tourism” with the move. TÜRSAB Secretary-General Çetin Gürsel said small hoteliers had created an information pollution regarding the issue in the last few days. He called for small hotels to give the same prices offered to Booking.com and others to them.

TURKISH HOTELIER ASSOCIATION ASKS COURT TO LIFT BAN ON BOOKING.COM



TÜROB President
Timur Bayındır

On March 29, the Istanbul 5th Commercial Court of First Instance ordered the suspension of the activities of Booking.com in the country, citing accusations of unfair competition, following a lawsuit filed by the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB). TÜROB's lawyers applied to the court on April 6 to lift the suspension decision, the association said in a statement, noting that it was harming the accommodation sector even more following recent difficulties. TÜROB also said the decision had dealt a severe blow to hotels in the country that had been receiving most of their business through the website, as well as small hotels. “The rule of law is unquestioned and Booking.com's activities leading to unfair competition should be corrected if illegality is revealed. However, the suspension of Booking.com activities despite the fact that the judicial process is continuing amounts to punishing the citizen rather than Booking.com,” the statement read. “Moreover, this decision leads to the creation of a negative perception against our country in the international arena. Our association, which always prioritizes the rule of law, accepts the need to protect the interests of all sector shareholders in the phase of correcting the unlawful implementations as the fundamental principle,” it said. TÜROB's application came one day after top representatives from TÜRSAB said they would not have any problem with Booking.com if the online portal opened a branch in the country and competed fairly with its Turkish competitors.

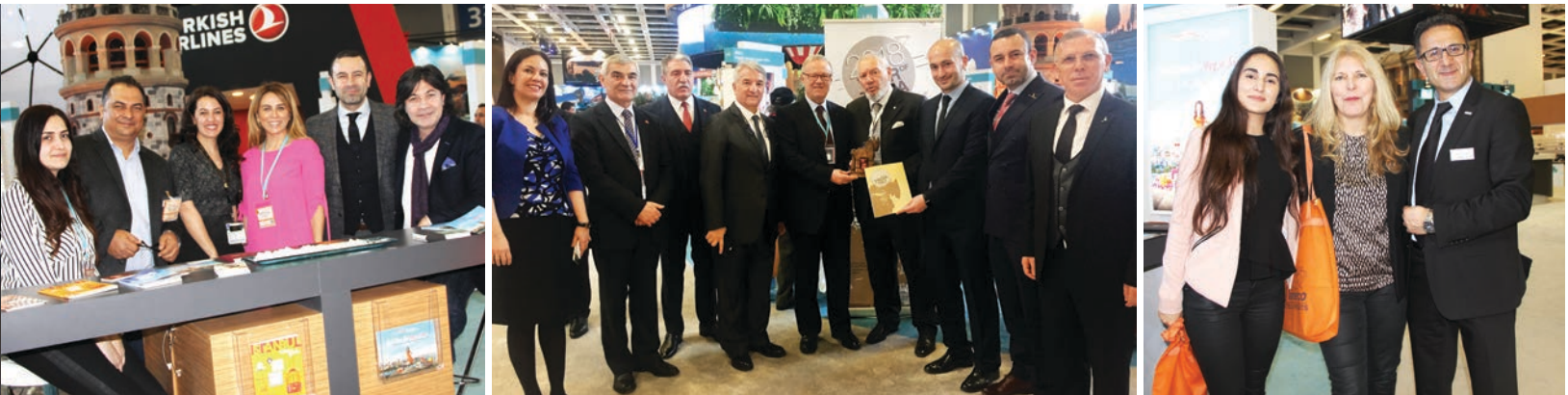


Aegean hoteliers voice anger against Booking.com decision

An Istanbul court on March 29 ordered the suspension of the activities of Booking.com in Turkey, citing accusations of unfair competition, following a lawsuit filed by the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB). The website can still be used from foreign countries to make reservations for Turkish hotels. The head of the Aegean Touristic Hoteliers Association, Mehmet İşler, accused TÜRSAB of “harming Turkey's tourism” with the move. “Booking.com offered our tourism players across the country a chance to introduce and market themselves in a fair and equal manner. Can there be a fairer move than this? The website did not create unfair competition; on the contrary, it offered equal opportunities,” said İşler in a press meeting on April 3, as quoted by Anadolu Agency. The website, which had

around 13,000 hotel members from Turkey, began to halt selling rooms in Turkey to Turkish users on March 30, one day after the court decision to block the website in the country. İşler accused TÜRSAB of “not being able to keeping pace with today's realities,” adding that the association would be named in the future as “the unit which dealt the greatest harm to Turkey's tourism.” A hotelier association from the Ayvalık district of the Aegean province of Balıkesir also held a demonstration on April 2 to protest the move, claiming that almost 70 percent of local tourists used to make their reservations via Booking.com. The head of the Ayvalık Hoteliers Association (AYOP), Hatice Arga, said the association would do whatever is necessary to reverse the ban. This move will hit the country's tourism in a more

disastrous manner than the Russian crisis or the July 2016 coup attempt did, she said in a press statement following a demonstration, according to Doğan News Agency. “Almost 70 percent of local tourists made their reservations via Booking.com for local tourism destinations. The average was quite a bit higher for Ayvalık, around 90 percent. TÜRSAB's demand to exclude Booking.com from the game will hit us,” she added. Arga questioned how small hoteliers would make a deal with big travel agencies which are a TÜRSAB member. “Are we going to chase and find customers by making noisy advertisements at bus stations again? Or will we need to work only with TÜRSAB members or choose to close down our business? The move will also negatively affect them,” she added.



TURKEY MARK ON ITB BERLIN

Turkey had its mark in the ITB Berlin Tourism Fair held in Berlin, Germany, as usual. [HASAN ARSLAN](#)

The world's largest tourism stock market ITB Berlin was held this year between 8-12 March in Berlin, Germany. This year Minister of Culture and Tourism, Nabi Avci and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlut Cavuşoğlu opened the Turkey stand in the fair, organized for the 51st time. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Minister Avci thanked the firms and sector representatives who participated to the fair and said, "In recent years, Turkey has been promoted not only through a general Turkish brand but also separately at the city levels, at different destinations and in terms of products. We take advantage of this as well. We have presentations in our stands to prove that Turkey is not just sea, sand and the sun, and that our country has every kind of tourism and is extraordinarily rich, perhaps it is even the world's largest open-air museum." Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cavuşoğlu said he believes that relations with Germany will be better. Cavuşoğlu said, "I would like to thank Germany for organizing this successful fair once more. We welcome our German friends to our beautiful facilities in Turkey. May 2017 tourism season will be good for all." 10 thousand participants from 184 countries participated in the fair organized in Germany's capital city, Berlin. ITB Berlin, where 1092 booths stand at 26 halls, is set up on an area of 160000 square meters. Partner country of the fair this year was Botswana and the main topic was "security and freedom of travel". Criteria such as security and the political crisis play an important role in Germans' travel preferences, which are known as world travel champions. In ITB Berlin, which hosted many discussions and panels, sessions were held about recent discussions on important debate issues in the sector such as "sustainable tourism", "digital developments" and medical tourism. Turkey has participated in the fair with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's stand of 3079 sqm. 187 countries from 5 continents met in Berlin. The Turkish tourism sector participated in the fair in order to test the water, specially of the German market, which shrank by around 50 percent in 2016.





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