

Turizm Aktüel

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**HOTELIERS
HAVE LITTLE HOPE
OF ATTRACTING
WESTERN TOURISTS**

**TURKISH
HOTELIERS SEE
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IN NUMBER OF
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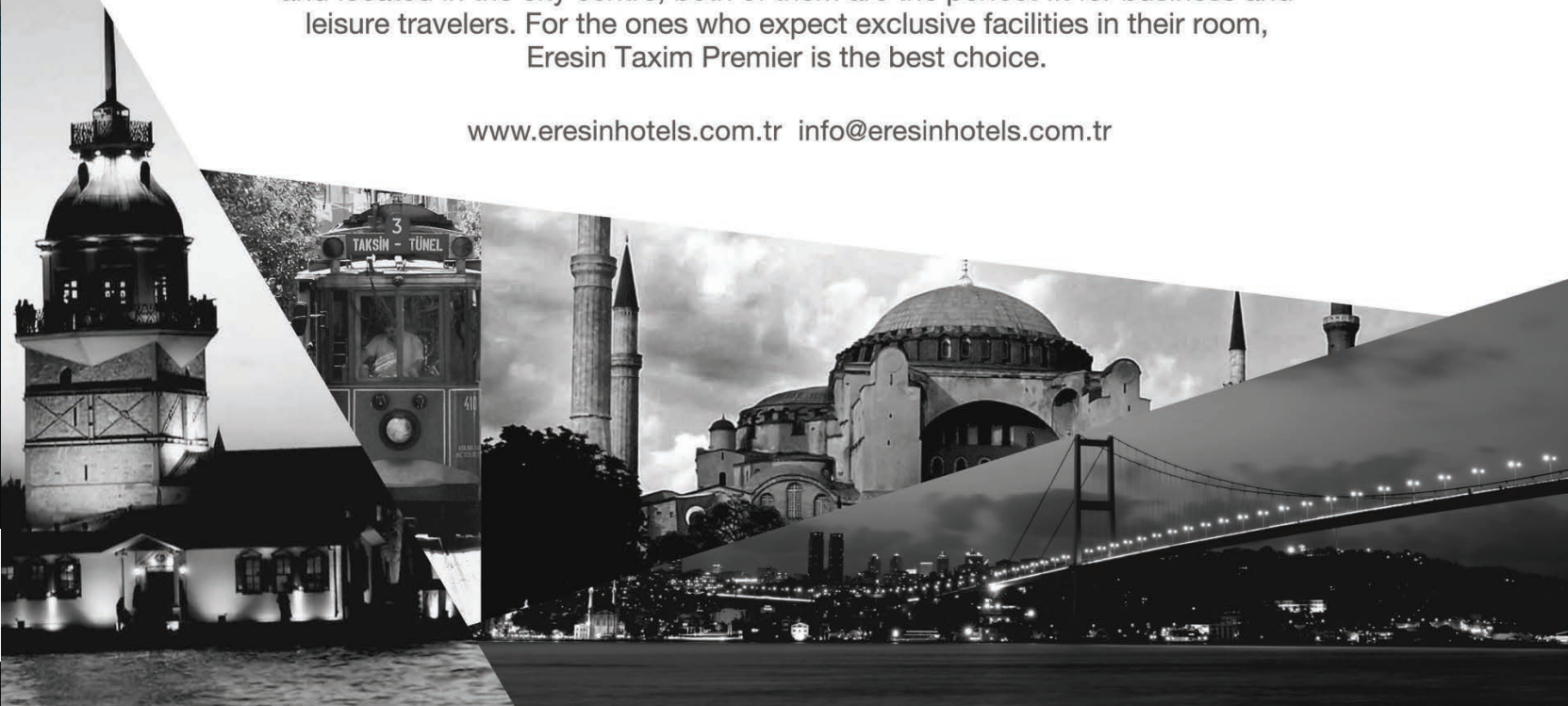
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YAYIN TÜRÜ

Yerel Süreli Yayın - Aylık Dergi

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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. 2016 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 2016 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...

HASAN ARSLAN
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TURKEY UNVEILS 'SUPPORT PACKAGE' FOR TOURISM

Turkish Tourism Minister Mahir Ünal and Labor and Social Security Minister Süleyman Soylu have revealed an employment support package to back the hard-hit tourism sector, according to Reuters.



The five-item package will be in force for the Mediterranean resort of Antalya and the Aegean province of Muğla for the next year in the initial stage but could be extended if necessary, the ministers said April 12. This package aims to support employment and training in the sector and to offer incentives for all tourism workers, from foreign employees to newcomers, said officials. Soylu said the package was mainly developed to support around 45,000 people who have opportunities for work in nine months of the year but have no job prospects in the remaining three months of the year. Noting that around 95 percent of the people in question were in Antalya and Muğla, Soylu said: "The social security premiums of these 44,753 people will be covered by the Turkish Employment Organization (İŞKUR) for the three-month period in which they are not em-

ployed. The cost is estimated at around 260 million Turkish Liras (\$92 million)." Soylu said the people would be trained by İŞKUR during the three-month period in line with the needs of the sector.

RISE IN EARLY RESERVATIONS BY LOCAL TOURISTS

Ünal said the number of early reservations by domestic tourists had increased over the year, noting that some 4 million early reservations had been made so far by local tourists – an increase of 25 percent compared to last year. The number of foreign visitors coming to Turkey tumbled 10 percent in February, the biggest drop in a decade, data released by the Tourism Ministry showed on March 29. Turkey has been hit by a spate of bomb attacks this year, including two targeting tourists that were blamed on the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Istanbul,

the country's largest city and a traditional tourist draw. The number of reservation cancellations from the German market has been around 40 percent, according to tourism representatives. The number of arrivals from Russia has also declined by over the half in the first months of the year, compared to the same period of 2015, particularly since Turkey shot down a Russian jet last year, triggering a furious Russian response. In order to support the sector during the current troubles, the government announced a number of detailed packages. A package announced by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu on Feb. 22 includes a 255 million-lira grant and several mechanisms which will enable tourism firms to restructure their debts. A \$6,000 fuel subsidy for each airplane carrying tourists to certain airports in Turkey has also been extended from June until September



Expand your point of view





SECURITY TOPS CONFERENCE AGENDA

Safety and security will be a key topic at this year's annual conference of the German Travel Industry Association (DRV) in Kusadasi on the Turkish Aegean coast in October.

The DRV said that "professional crisis management" will be a central theme at the event in response to diverse security events in destinations in recent months while the positive effects of travel will also be underlined in various presentations. "Tourism is not only an important economic factor but also promotes cultural exchange and contributes to understanding between nations," the association stressed.

The DRV itself plays an important role

over security issues. It cooperates with IT firm A3M's Global Monitoring System, which monitors destinations and analyses potential risks worldwide round the clock, and also organises crisis management seminars, draws up guidelines and takes other measures. In the event of a crisis or emergency the DRV becomes the main communication channel between the German travel industry and the government. It gathers information about the number of travellers in the affected destination and informs the Ger-

man foreign ministry, while in parallel informing the industry about the ministry's decisions. "The close cooperation between the DRV, the government and travel companies has paid off in different crises, from volcanic eruptions to terror attacks. Hardly any other industry possesses such a professional crisis and security management as the travel industry," the association said.

Other topics at the DRV's annual conference this year will include the impact of digitalisation on the travel and tourism industry. The full programme, including further topics and speakers, will be published at the end of May. Several hundred participants, including travel agents, tour operators and travel suppliers, are likely to attend the DRV conference, which takes place from October 27-29. There will also be several tours before and after the conference, including to Istanbul. The event is being organised in cooperation with the Turkish travel agency association Türsab and the Turkish ministry for culture and tourism.



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GERMAN TOUR OPERATORS WELCOME SUBSIDIES U-TURN

Tour operators in Germany have welcomed a U-turn by Turkish tourism minister Mahir Ünal under which they will receive flight subsidies this summer rather than airlines.



TURKISH TOURISM MINISTER MAHİR ÜNAL

Ünal has clarified plans to provide a subsidy of US\$6,000 per flight this summer to support the country's tourism sector. Under the '2016 Tourism Action Plan' presented by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu in February, it was initially proposed to pay airlines a subsidy of US\$6,000 per flight for services to five airports in April and May to cope with low load factors.

However, German tour operators criticised this idea, arguing it would be more effective to pay them the subsidy instead so that they could pass on the cost saving to consumers. They also had to wait several weeks for details of the plans.

The Turkish government has now published a draft law, under which the subsidies would be paid throughout the summer season, with applications to be made through one of the ten largest incoming agencies.

However, there are complex condi-

tions for the subsidies. They only apply to flights by planes with 100 seats or more. At least 11 passengers of the relevant incoming agency must be on the flight, regardless of which tour operator they booked with. The \$6,000 subsidy is then divided up according to the number of passengers whose agency has the right to apply for funding.

The new rules were welcomed by major tour operators in Germany. "The conditions are now very clear. It's a basis that we can plan on. I think we should be able to pass on part of the saving to consumers in the form of price reductions," said Deniz Ugur, CEO of Bentour Reisen. Similarly, Songül Göktaş-Rosati, managing director of Thomas Cook brand Öger Tours, added: "We welcome the decision of the tourism ministry and are pleased with the support, since as tour operators we bring the guests to Turkey. It's a good start."

But airline were less happy about the U-turn which will benefit tour opera-

tors instead. "We're pleased that we've been able to achieve an extension until September, but we would have liked a different structure for the support," said leisure airline Sun Express. "But we will stay active and try to argue for support from which the whole industry benefits."

Meanwhile, leisure airlines are cutting back capacity to Turkey this summer in response to the slump in bookings, forcing tour operators to reschedule flight times for booked passengers. Experts predict a 25% drop in German visitor numbers to Antalya this summer. Condor, for example, has cut about one third of its capacity to Turkey this summer but Thomas Cook and Neckermann Reisen are aiming to ensure that passengers can still fly on the same day as they originally booked. DER Touristik, with a 20% reduction in flight capacity, and TUI, which is rerouting TUIfly services, are also trying to keep the flight time changes as minimal as possible.

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CRISIS IS OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAVEL AGENTS

The current bookings slump is an opportunity for German travel agents to profit from their expertise and secure business with active sales and marketing measures, according to experts.

Many Germans, especially families, are currently holding back with bookings due to fears about safety in destinations. Summer package holiday sales were down by 7.5% as of end-February, according to market researchers GfK, and about one million fewer bookings than last year have been made to date.

Alltours and FTI this week extended their offers of free re-bookings of holidays in the three main impacted destinations - Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia - for the entire summer season in an effort to stimulate bookings. The two tour operators originally had a cut-off date of March 31 for the option of changing bookings to other destinations up to 30 days before departure but this option now covers all new bookings through to the end of the summer season.

One problem, however, is that these three countries are all relatively cheap destinations that cannot be easily replaced by more expensive alternatives, such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, even though these destinations are all benefiting strongly from switch bookings at present. A price comparison by researchers GfK for fvw shows that the annualised average price per person of a 7-day package (including flight) rose in Portugal by 23% (to €740), in Spain by 17% (€702), Italy by 15% (€694), Croatia by 9% (€654) and Greece by 8% (€649), as of March 12.

In comparison, the average price for Turkey was €602 and for Egypt was €605. The only comparable cheap destinations are Bulgaria, where the average price dropped 12% to €530, and



Tunisia, with an average price fall of 18% to €492. But Bulgaria simply does not have anything like the capacity to cope with a large-scale switch from Turkey, which welcomed 5.7 million German visitors last year. Some 330,000 Germans holidayed on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast last year, which represented a 90% hotel room utilisation rate.

In response, experts are urging travel agents to take advantage of their position as trusted advisors and to step up proactive sales and marketing measures to encourage customers to make bookings, either for the impacted destinations or alternatives. "The current phase heavily favours travel agents," claimed Thomas Bösl, head of the large RTK travel agency consortium. "Customers come to us, ask questions and want to talk about security in holiday destinations." Trainer and coach Roman Hohaus agreed: "It's a chance for travel agents to profile themselves in dealing with customers. They should be more curious about people, more relaxed about different opinions, and show more empathy and openness." Instead of countering customer concerns with "Yes, but..." responses, agents should openly discuss people's fears and provide factual information about the distance of holiday destinations from the sites of terror attacks, or, where appropriate, suggest alternatives instead, he recommended.

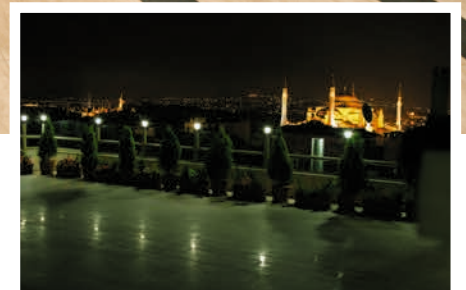
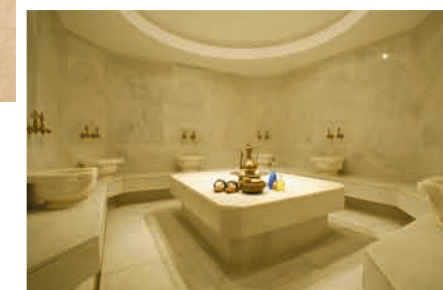
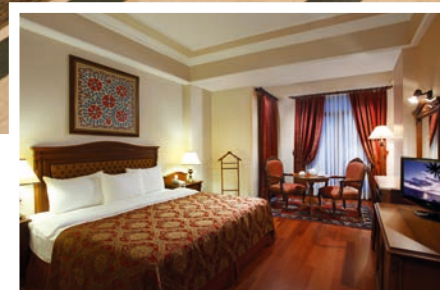
In terms of alternative destinations for families and price-sensitive customers, this could be the Spanish mainland instead of the more expensive Balearics or Canaries, for example, or cheaper accommodation such as apartments, holiday homes and campsites in countries such as Italy, Austria or Croatia, commented Uwe Wenglikowski, head of Kozica Reisen.

For travellers with a larger budget there are plenty of alternatives, according to Aquilin Schömig, managing director of the Derpart chain. "For individuals, Scandinavia is interesting as well as long-haul trips. South Africa is an alternative for couples and singles, especially due to the current attractive exchange rate."

Meanwhile, TUI's Robinson Club will open its new resort at Belek on the Turkish Riviera as planned at the end of April, the club on Djerba in Tunisia has been open since March and the resort at Soma Bay in Egypt will open after extensive renovations in July, managing director Ingo Burmeister told fvw. Robinson has a lower decline in demand for Turkey than the general market, he pointed out. "Compared to price-driven competitors, we can rely on our high proportion of repeat guests," he said. In addition, the club operator is actively communicating with clients and travel agents about its security arrangements to dispel concerns, he added.



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SERDAR ALİ ABET STARTS ACTING FOR TURKISH TOURISM

“I AM TAKING PART IN AN INITIATIVE THAT WILL PROVIDE MARKETING SUPPORT TO THE TOURISM SECTOR THAT IS PASSING THROUGH A HARD PERIOD, ESPECIALLY THIS YEAR. THIS IS A TV SERIES AND I AM PLAYING THE LEADING ROLE.”

BY HASAN ARSLAN • PHOTOGRAPHER ÖZGÜR PERKİTEN

The tourism sector will be the scene of a promotional event; a similar one has not been encountered before. Moreover, a tourism professional will realize this promotion with an almost individual effort. Let us tell you, this project will bring a lot of noise not only in Turkey but also in the Arab world. You can make a difference by creating a style. This is such a situation, a way of promotion that has not been tried before. It is different and assertive, target oriented and very special. At the center of the project there is the owner of Karnak Travel, Serdar

You know, the tourism sector entered a challenging process when the Russian plane was brought down. Antalya has experienced an especially sharp decline. We can state that a loss of 3.5 million tourists will be experienced in the Mediterranean region. The Ministry is working to fill this gap. Mathematically this loss cannot be compensated in any way. Everyone should put his shoulder to the wheel, and should do his best for the sector. What I do is an attempt to provide promotional support to the sector as it encounters hard times this year.

“ANTALYA NEEDS THIS PROJECT”

Ali Abet, who is an experienced tourism professional. Abet, who is standing before the camera for the promotion of Antalya within the Middle Eastern market, lets his acting work be used as the leading role of a series. Serdar Ali Abet has talked about the process leading him to the front of the camera for the promotion of Antalya, about the TV series, and its targets to Turizm Aktüel.

Mr. Abet, when reading this news, everyone knowing and not knowing you will be very surprised. You have thrown everyone a curve ball. You have tackled acting for the promotion of Turkey. How did this process start, can we learn about it from you?

3 million Arab tourists are coming to Istanbul each year. But only 80,000 Arabs are coming to Antalya. After the conflict with Russia the hotel owners of Antalya are expecting the Arab market to increase. We cannot get serious results through fairs, workshops, and billboards. But, if we can enter the mind, the eye, the living room, and the family of the tourist... Only then, will the situation change. There is a TV series; it will be broadcast to a mass audience. Let's not forget that the Arab population is 350 million. Let's imagine that 50 million people will watch this series. If we can attract one or two percent of this 50 million, we will be bringing 1 million

SERDAR ALİ ABET HAS GONE ON THE STAGE AS A LEADING ROLE OF A SERIES FOR TURKISH TOURISM.



tourists. But this is not done by talking. We have to act. I am putting my signature to a very important event for the promotion of Antalya.

How did the TV series develop and how did you get involved in this project?

I have been talking to a very famous Arab actor in Dubai. The situation in Syria was open. He said: 'All of our actors are idled; they are skulking here

This Arab actor let me talk to an Arab script writer on the phone. Actually there were doubts. He said 'Mr. Abet, this is a nice idea. But do you know how the process operates? I mean, how will it be broadcast, how long will the process take?'

We have considered the difficulties, and made the necessary evaluations. They stated: 'We can only do this job within one year.' The script writing step

vacation in March?" He said that they will shoot a series in Amasra. His wife is already an actress. He said it is an Arab series and he was also given a minor role. The producer is a company named Sadaf. We learned that the company is a Saudi Arabian company that produces the best Arab series. They are number one in the Arab World. I told them that I have a similar project in mind.

Shadi Youssef told me that the Gov-

ural beauties and ultra-luxury hotels." I said. They had not seen Antalya. We showed them Antalya. We brought them to Regnum. Even at the entrance they were considerably attracted by the hotel and Antalya.

Actually, Antalya is a location that appeals with so much richness and to such a scenario. Later we showed them the villa, they admired it. They stated that they have very limited time. A crew of 60-70 will work on the project. We will settle them. The shooting will last 60 days. I asked for an appointment and thankfully Mr. Fikret Öztürk directed me to his son Mr. Şafak Öztürk. I told Mr. Şafak Öztürk about the project. "We would compensate the 3 million tourists that Antalya has lost."

Actually, I talked about this story very enthusiastically. 'Mr. Abet if you believe in it, then we are at your side. You are telling it really very well.' he replied. He looked at his managers. No one made any comment. 'Give them what they want' he said. Of course, this is a troublesome process. Hosting the artists here for 60 days, and providing the needs of those people is not an easy

tion company is in business and an Arab-Turk co-production film is being made for the first time. And the actors are mixed.

What is the cost of the series? How much do you supply?

It is a really troublesome process for us. The production has a lot of demands other than accommodation. Horses,

SERDAR ALI ABET, OWNER OF KARNAK TRAVEL, WITH FAISAL ALAMRI, SAUDI ARABIAN ACTOR AND EGYPTIAN MONA HUSSAIN FROM THE CAST.



playing this rich businessman. This businessman is coming from a rich family. He has married three or four times, all his wives have died. He does not have children. Also he has an uncle. But he got lost in the Arab countries 20 years ago. This businessman does not have any relatives in Turkey. Because of this, he makes a call through a film in order to find whether his uncle has any relatives. He publishes this film on social media. But here's an interesting detail. This video really is going to be broadcast on social media.

In this 6-minute video the character I play says: 'I Davut Mehmet Çobanoğlu. I have 1 billion dollars. I am 60 years old. My uncle got lost in the Arab countries 20 years ago when he was trading in pulses. 5 years after my uncle left we could not find any news of him. Is there anyone who has information about my uncle? If there is anyone possessing the surname Çobanoğlu or has any connec-

cars, crews... We are giving support as the executive producer domestic company. We are making this with a considerably modest amount of money. But let me say something; the real surprise in this series is that I am playing one of the leading roles. I am the one at the focal point of the whole story.

Can you give us some information about the subject of the series?

According to the scenario a Turkish businessman has 1 billion dollars. I am

“VARIOUS WAYS OF MARKETING SHOULD BE TRIED”

and there. You should see it, they are working for very reduced prices.' I replied; 'Why don't we shoot a series in Turkey?' Look, nowadays Antalya seriously needs the Arab potential. 'What about me writing a scenario for you, and you shooting it in Antalya.'

We should also emphasize that Syrian drama is the greatest competitor of Turkish drama among the Arab World. After this the event started to develop.

will last one or two months, afterwards it will be sold to the channels. If the cost of a series is 5 million dollars and, if Turkey will gain 1 billion dollars and host 1 million extra tourists thanks to this series, this job can be done. Yes, it is a hard job, but the project stands to reason.

Afterwards I returned to Turkey. Our colleague Shadi Youssef, who is working for me, asked "May I take a 20 day

error of Amasra is also supporting the series. Amasra is a nice, small place, however, how many tourists can Amasra host? It has a limited potential. But for the time being, Turkey has suffered a major loss in tourism. If we use such a project for Antalya, we will have great support for the tourism sector, I said. Our colleague offered to introduce me to the producers if I wanted. We met and talked in our Istanbul office. 'Do you know Antalya?' I asked, and they said 'No.'

Two days later they gave me the scenario. The scenario was ready. They would start shooting in 10 days. I read and evaluated the scenario. The event is happening in a magnificent and huge villa. They are telling the story of a man in this villa. I cannot give the details for now. The scenario is well written and full of surprises. I said to them that this is right up Antalya's street. Where will they find a space like an 8-10 roomed palace in Amasra?

"We can also provide the greatest support; additionally, the result will become a luxury product. Also, in terms of the visual aspects, Antalya will make more of a contribution with both nat-





tion, please respond to these e-mail addresses.'

Actually, this video clip is talking about a rich looking man who has a helicopter, a yacht, and a villa. Indeed, I am looking for my heir. The script writer said "In order to stir people up, let us spread this video on the social media. Let the people get excited for 10 days. Let them say 'look at the mad Turk.'" They will publish this short film 10 days before the broadcasting of the series and they will start broadcasting the series when the excitement reaches its peak.

"THE EARTH WILL BE DISPLACED IN THE ARAB WORLD"

Thus it will be ensured it has the great repercussions in the Arab world...

Yes, exactly like this. The people will be excited and it will ensure that they think this is real. In other words, it is a kind of PR project. After great repercussions are ensured the production company will make a statement. They will say 'This is a series starting on TRT Arab this Ramadan'. And this will be done to increase the rating of TRT Arab. The series will be broadcast daily for 30 days during Ramadan.

What will be the name of the film?

The name of the film is Big House. The fur will fly after the broadcasting of the short video, is this Mr. Abet or not? Everyone will get confused.

You can't make such a PR project work, no matter how much money you pay, Mr. Abet.

The production company will make a statement after the turmoil caused by the video. 'This is a series, watch it during Ramadan' they will say. For the Davut character they wanted an unknown actor. Because, if a known actor plays in the video that will be broadcast, it will be known that this was a film. This detail was recorded even in the scenario. Additionally, the one who will play the Davut character should

a thing in my life. Then we talked for a while. We thought, I could deal with the project better if I will be included within the project. I would be taking care of the project at every stage. The stage I am interested in is the tourism side, not the drama side.

This is how my acting adventure started. We are shooting for one week. It actually is a hard job. I saw the set for the first time. For the first time I heard words like "action" or "motor". 30 people are watching you. Audio capture is done. Episode by episode, scene by

scene... Some scenes are in Arabic and

I have been chosen because I can talk both Arabic and Turkish. In fact, they have chosen me by chance. I was only planning to provide support as a sponsor at the production step. I was only interested in how I could contribute to Antalya. The director of the production company said looking at me: 'Here is Davut!' I was surprised. I asked 'no joke?'

'Mr. Abet we are serious. We have found a character and when we saw you we thought you are very suitable for this job' they stated. 'I don't know anything about this job. I don't have any background' I replied. I never dreamt of such

some are in Turkish. After the first day I asked myself 'Why am I doing such a thing?'

It is definitely evident that the series will contribute to the tourism sector by a huge amount. Additionally, you will be one of the well-known figures in the Arab world with this series. What kind of a contribution will this project make to Karnak Travel?

This year everyone should do his best for the tourism sector. Making a contribution to Antalya with this project will make me considerably happy. Of course my face will become known with this project. I can use this popular-

ity for the marketing and promotion of my own company Karnak later. Otherwise, I do not have a target to be a famous actor. This series will be a super PR job for Turkish tourism. In the following years the series can be broadcast at hotels and fairs, and can be used for videos and promotion works. It has been an interesting experience to take part in this project that will provide compensation for the tourism sector in many ways.

One of the important points is the support of Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort to the project. The hotel is the sponsor of the series. But the size of this sponsorship is really huge. It is not easy to wine and dine 60-70 people for 60 days. We have calculated a cost of at least 200,000 dollars. Moreo-

and North African people. They see it as sea-sand-sun. This does not correspond very well with Arab tourism. However, we will introduce them to a city, and a shopping center. We will show them that all the important brands have shops here.

Can we state that Antalya has a lack of promotion in the Arab world?

Actually, it is not a lack, it is a direct promotion. Generally, Antalya receives tourists from the European markets; therefore, sea-sand-sun has not been put to the fore front at that region.

You are making an effort for the tourism sector in spite of your own business at a time that can be called the highest season. Do you believe that it will be worth your efforts?

Two months is a very significant time

come loss due to spending my time on this project.

These two months are such a fruitful season for tourism ... But I am expecting serious amounts of return from this project. Of course, Turkey comes first, my company comes second, and additionally all of my colleagues will gain. We will all gain together.

Well we are making calculations about receiving 1 million tourists; Karnak will see at least 30,000 of this 1 million. Finally, the whole market, all of my colleagues, all of the hotels will benefit from this. For the time being, the most important thing is to bring 1 million tourists to Antalya during the summer months. This project is a really durable one. Bigger projects might follow since my vision has widened with this project.

"REGNUM CARYA IS PROVIDING VERY ADMIRABLE SUPPORT"

ver, they replied 'Let us do it' within five minutes of hearing about it. This is not something to be underestimated.

This project will provide considerable support for Regnum Carya to become well known in the Arab World. The whole of Antalya will benefit from this, because, shooting will be done in the most beautiful places of Antalya. Antalya is a seaside town for the Gulf

period. Although all of my colleagues are bating around attending fairs in this time, I am camping out here. People ask 'Where is this guy?' I am not present at any activity, or any event. The cost of this is very heavy. If you pay me 50,000 dollars monthly and ask 'Would you do this job for 100,000 dollars for two months?' I would not do it, because I will have a considerable amount of in-

Additionally, television is the easiest means of communication. You directly enter people's homes.

No need to print a brochure or anything else. The whole family is watching, and the watchers may decide while saying 'How nice, we should go there'. What demands do the Arab tourists have? Greenery, food, and shopping... We have all three here. He wants freedom to wander, walk, and shop peacefully at a free place. We have all this and more in Antalya. We will introduce Antalya to them with this series and invite them to experience these beauties.

There is a generalization that the Arab tourists like cooler places, and will choose Bursa or the Black Sea Region.

That is a wrong generalization. If it was true 2 million Arab tourists would not go to Dubai in June or August where the heat is 50-60 degrees. So this does not appear to be a true generalization. Of course those who go to Dubai for shopping. Now we will show them that everything they are looking for is also present in Antalya. We will propose a new vacation opportunity to the Arab tourist. We will ask him to change his vacation location. This means a new experience. We will enable them to live this experience in Antalya. I believe that the results will be fabulous.



SERDAR ALI ABET IS ACTING OUT AS A RICH TURKISH MAN WHO IS LOOKING FOR HIS UNCLE GOT LOST IN ARAB COUNTRIES.

TURKISH CIVIL AVIATION'S NIGHT OF VICTORY

Air Transport News, the sole institution giving awards in all categories of the civil aviation industry, announced the winners of the 2016 Air Transport News Awards.

Turkish Airlines (THY) won the Airline of the Year award and Turkish Cargo is awarded Cargo Airline of the Year. Turkish Technic, THY's maintenance division, was named the maintenance, repair and operations company of the year at the 2016 Air Transport News Awards. Istanbul's Atatürk International Airport, operated by TAV Airports, was selected Airport of the Year. Making a statement via Turkish Airlines' (THY) Press Consultancy, THY Chairman İlker Aycı said: "Our flight network is getting bigger day by day, and the contentment of our passengers continues to be our priority." Regarding aircraft passenger capacity, Aycı said: "As a result of a big breakthrough, we increased our passenger capacity to 62 million, compared to 10

ordering new planes. We were chosen as Europe's Best Airline in the Skytrax passenger choice awards for the fifth time last year. Our goal for 2023 is to increase the number of passengers to 120 million and the number of planes in our fleet to 450. We foresee that the airport currently being built in Istanbul will accelerate our growth in a brand new level."

Aycı also spoke about Turkish Cargo winning the Best European Cargo Airline at the Cargo Airline of the Year Awards. "Operated by Turkish Airlines and using THY's flight network and fleet as well as its own, Turkish Cargo has become one of the fastest-growing players in global air cargo transport. Over the past 10 years, Turkish Cargo has grown 18 percent while increasing



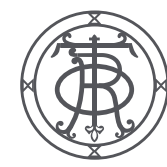
THY CHAIRMAN
İLKER AYCI

terminal in Istanbul Atatürk Airport, Turkish Cargo will have a closed area of 150,000 square meters in the new airport. Turkish Cargo is determined to increase service quality day by day and make Istanbul a global logistics center." Regarding Istanbul's Atatürk International Airport being awarded Airport of the Year, TAV Airports Board Chairman Sani Şenerise said: "Providing smooth service to 61.3 million passengers last year, Istanbul's Atatürk International Airport has become the third (best) airport in Europe, following (those in) London and Paris. We made comprehensive regulations in order to provide the best travel experience to passengers and increase their comfort. As a result, we have been chosen as the airport that has increased service quality the most in Europe." THY Technical Inc. General Manager Ahmet Kahraman said that receiving the Aircraft Maintenance Center of the Year Award was proof of their growing brand and they are proud of the award given to THY Technical Inc. by a selected jury. Speaking at the award ceremony, Air Transport News General Director Dr. Kostas Iatrou also said that he was proud that the Air Transport News awards have become one of the leading awards in the aviation industry.



million passengers in 2012. By flying to 284 destinations in 113 countries, we still preserve the title of the airline flying to the largest number of countries in the world. We plan to host 72 million passengers this year." Noting that THY has one of the world's youngest fleets, Aycı said: "At the moment, we have 304 aircraft. We keep growing by adding new destination points to our global flight network and

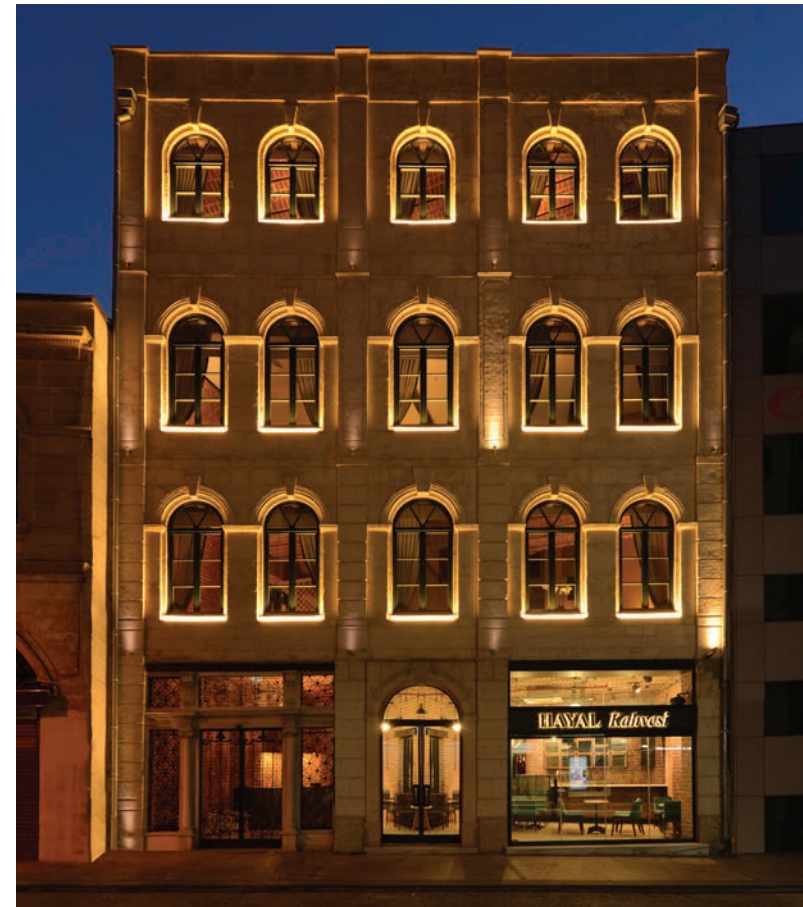
its cargo volume to 720,000 tons." Aycı added that Turkish Cargo's current goal is to join the Millions League. "Serving 61 cargo destinations with its current fleet, Turkish Cargo transports cargo to 284 destinations on THY's passenger planes. This is the largest number of destinations and widest international network in terms of cargo and mail transporting services. Continuing investment in the new cargo



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THE STAR OF ANTALYA, THE PRIDE OF TURKEY

REGNUM
CARYA

GOLF & SPA RESORT

“We have survived a very important test as the central hotel of the G20 Summit. We have hosted world leaders like Obama and Merkel under the same roof with extreme care and dedication.”

BY HASAN ARSLAN

Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort, which has been the most talked about place of the tourism sector since it was put into service in 2014, is preparing for the new season with a final sprint. The resort has built and put into service 15 new villas in 2 different styles this year due to the intense interest, and is making a difference with its service quality. Yüksel Gürhan, Assistant General Manager, has talked about the Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort, which has represented Turkish

tourism with great success during the G20 Leaders' Summit, to Turizm Aktüel. **Can you describe Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort emphasizing the main points?**

Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort, which has been presented to the tourism sector with the motto “Everyone is special and should get VIP treatment” by the Öztürk Group of Companies that operates in many sectors, especially in the energy sector, has been providing

a very special hospitality experience for domestic and foreign tourists since April 2014.

The hotel, based on a 1 million square meter area, is providing its guests with a unique hosting experience with a ballroom of 2,100 square meters without columns, a congress center, including meeting rooms of various sizes, 2 golf courses, one of which is illuminated at night, a spa of 4,800 square meters, and

REGNUM CARYA GOLF&SPA
RESORT HAS BEEN AWARDED
MANY IMPORTANT PRIZES WITHIN
THE 2 YEARS LONG SERVICE LIFE.



YÜKSEL GÜRHAN, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER, HAS TOLD ABOUT REGNUM CARYA GOLF & SPA RESORT WHICH HAS REPRESENTED TURKISH TOURISM WITH SUCCESS DURING THE G20 LEADERS' SUMMIT TO TURİZM AKTÜEL



THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE THAT DISTINGUISHES REGNUM CARYA GOLF & SPA RESORT FROM OTHER "ALL INCLUSIVE" HOTELS IS THE QUALITY OF SERVICE.



REGNUM CARYA GOLF&SPA RESORT HAS BEEN AWARDED MANY IMPORTANT PRIZES WITHIN THE 2 YEARS LONG SERVICE LIFE.

2 different aqua parks; one for adults and the other for children. Besides these, we have 8 different family, child, and adult pools; a main restaurant, 5 a la carte restaurants and bars; standard rooms starting at 60 square meters; in addition, there are 8 different room types ranging up to 250 square meters, and 21 villas of various form and sizes. The privileges our hotel presents are not restricted to room sizes. At Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort, it is possible to get most of the exclusive services that are usually presented in a hotel suite in our standard rooms. In the rooms there are king size beds, a big screen LCD TV embedded into a mirror, stereo system, tea and coffee facilities, bathrooms with double sinks, and separate dressing rooms, also balconies with much a greater width than standard, and a

terraces decorated with sofa groups. In our hotel where every detail has been extended for the comfort and peace of the guests, it is possible to spend a holiday away from all unwanted noise due to effective acoustic insulation.

What are the most important features that distinguish Regnum Carya from other "all inclusive" hotels?

The most important feature that distinguishes Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort from other "all inclusive" hotels is the quality of service. As a worldwide average, the hotels have 1 employee per 1.3 guests, but at Regnum Carya we have 1 employee per 1 guest. This presents our "Personalized VIP service" understanding.

With the G20 Leaders' Summit your resort has gained a great reputation in the world. What kind of reactions did

you get after the G20 Summit?

We have survived a very important test as the central hotel of the G20 Summit. We have hosted world leaders like Obama and Merkel under the same roof with extreme care and dedication. We started the preparations months before the summit. We have presented a foolproof service by shaping every detail from a to z, one by one. Indeed, at the end of two intense days, we have received thanks from all of the leaders starting with our own President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. This is a great pride in the name of our country.

We have shown the perfectionist hospitality of the Turkish tourism sector to the whole world with the G20 Summit. This will bring about a very important return both for Regnum Carya and the Turkish tourism sector. We believe in that.

Although only a short period of two years has passed after the opening, Regnum Carya has been awarded numerous prizes. Can you tell us about those awards?

Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort has been awarded many important prizes within its 2 year life. Regnum Carya has been chosen as the best hotel in the world by Tophotels in its first year, and has been awarded a Certificate of Perfection with 9.2 points by booking.com within the same year. Our hotel has also been chosen as the best hotel among the 2015 The Choice of Travelers Award by TripAdvisor.

Finally, it has been nominated the 'best hotel in the world' award in the Starway World Best Hotels competition among 5,210 hotels from 28 countries. Our hotel, having won the best web-

site prize in the Golden Spider Web Awards category, has also gained the best managed luxury hotel prize in the Quality Management Awards (QM Awards 2015) organized by the Professional Hotel Managers Association in the luxury hotels category.

Besides prizes Regnum Carya owns certificates that we care about very much. We are the first hotel to be certified as applying the programs of The Hygienic Room and The Hygienic Gym/SPA, which have been implemented in Turkey for the first time by Diversey Consulting. Another important certificate we care about is the LEED Golf certificate, which has made our hotel the first certified golf hotel in Turkey.

Can you give a brief description of the villas and Golf Club present in your resort?

There are two different golf courses in Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort and one of them is the first and only night illuminated golf course in Europe. We are serving golf addicts with a National Golf Club, which is among the first golf clubs of Turkey, and has been extended from 18 holes to 27 holes, and the 18 hole Carya Golf Club.

There are 20 villas within the hotel area. One of these is the 3 story Crown Villa of 3,500 square meters, it is very special and has the capacity and equipment able to host world stars. The Crown Villa, where our president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stayed during the G20 Summit, is serving very special guests with its own private garden, private pool and Jacuzzi, spa, gym, and a traditional Turkish bath. Our guests staying at the Crown Villa, which is presented with



THERE ARE 20 VILLAS WITHIN THE HOTEL AREA.

a Maybach automobile in its garage, are transferred by helicopter. They are provided with special service personnel during their stay. This year we have built and presented an additional 15 new villas in two different styles for the service of our guests due to the intensive interest. 2 King Villas of 600 square meters and 5 bedrooms, and 13 Baron Villas of 250 square meters and 5 bedrooms will be available for our guests in May.

Can you tell us about your guest profile?

In Regnum Carya Golf & Spa Resort we are especially hosting congress groups and golf addicts from Northern Europe during the winter season. England, Germany, and the Netherlands coming first, and North European Countries and countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States are among the other countries we are often hosting guests from. During the summer season

we also often host local tourists. Besides these we have also started hosting considerable amounts of guests from Arab Countries and Iran. The crowded Arab families tend to prefer villas in spite of the hotel rooms, where they can stay more comfortably. We think that we will be able to host more Arab tourists with the new villas we have added to our accommodation.

There is a TV series being shot at your resort. What kind of a support are you providing to this series as a resort?

Serdar Ali Abet, the owner of Karnak Travel agency whom we have been in strong cooperation with since our opening, has come to us with a good project. As a hotel we wanted to be part of this valuable project and we sponsored the series. A large part of this considerably high budget series is being shot at our hotel. Our aim is to

consolidate our reputation within the Middle Eastern market where the series will be broadcast.

Do you have anything to add or a message for the sector?

As representatives of the sector we are taking part in many worldwide fairs and organizations by taking advantage of all kinds of promotional opportunities in order to increase the tourism potential of Turkey. It is very important that the Ministry of Tourism is supporting this attempt by the sector in a sustainable way. Istanbul is at a considerably advantageous position due to being the center of air traffic and transfer flights. Especially during the winter season, increasing direct flights to Antalya will provide the city with the opportunity of benefiting from this advantage. We are expecting the necessary steps to be taken about this issue.

What to eat in Istanbul?



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ADVERTISING FOR A TURKEY COMEBACK

Thomas Cook and FTI are hopeful for an upturn in Turkey bookings, with Cook set to launch a Germany-wide marketing campaign for the destination.

Thomas Cook Germany is launching an advertising campaign for Turkey this month in an effort to speed up a comeback for the troubled destination. The tour operator suffered a slump in bookings for Turkey and North Africa from November until January but demand has clearly picked up again since mid-February, managing director Stefanie Berk told FVW. She now wants to stimulate demand with a multi-channel advertising campaign for Turkey during March. "Many early booking discounts expire during this period and consumers will need a push to get them booking," she said. Berk said she is convinced that overall demand will recover. "The impression that Germans do not want to travel

is completely wrong," she said. This is shown by the strong demand for alternative destinations such as the western Mediterranean and long-haul trips, which are growing at a double-digit rate, led by Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. Long-haul travel now generates a quarter of Cook's turnover. Meanwhile, Munich-based FTI is optimistic it will grow this year despite the impact of the collapse in Egypt and Turkey bookings on its overall business. Like other tour operators, FTI is also seeing good bookings for the western Mediterranean and long-haul holidays. It has double-digit growth for Spain, Portugal, the UAE, Germany and Italy, resulting in an overall single-digit sales increase to date.



THOMAS COOK GERMANY
CHIEF STEFANIE BERK

"We expect to close the business year again with a rise in turnover," said sales and marketing director Ralph Schilller just ahead of ITB. He also expects sales for the eastern Mediterranean to start rising again soon as capacity gets short further west. "We're absolutely convinced that Turkey will make a comeback and really catch up in the summer," he declared. In terms of Egypt, the passenger numbers to Hurghada "are still stable", flight capacity has not been cut and "a load factor of well over 90% speaks for itself".

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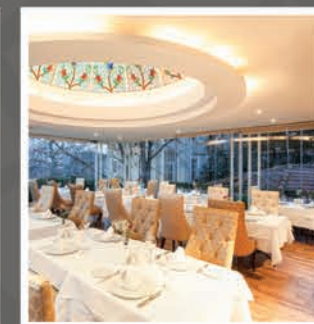
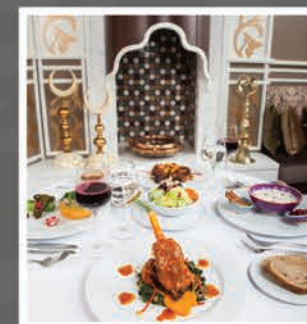
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TURKISH-RUSSIAN TRAVEL FIRMS EYE GERMAN MARKET

Two Turkish-owned Russian tour operators are actively looking at entering the German market to diversify from their struggling home market.



FROM THE LEFT:
OTI MANAGEMENT
AHMET BEKTAŞ,
COŞKUN YURT AND
AYHAN BEKTAŞ (RIGHT)
WITH MICHAEL FRENZEL.

OTI Holding and Anex Tour are considering offering packages in Turkey and Egypt to German customers in addition to Russian holidaymakers, according to fvw information. The Istanbul-based OTI group is active on the Russian market through the Coral and Sunmar brands, and is also present on the Polish market and several others in Eastern Europe, has a charter airline, Royal Flight, and owns eight hotels and incoming agencies in Turkey and Egypt.

OTI has now signed up a prominent name, Michael Frenzel, as a managing consultant to advise it on 'strategic planning in Europe, especially in Germany'. An OTI spokeswoman declined to comment on the plans for Germany ahead of a press conference scheduled for late April. The former long-serving TUI boss is now

chairman of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and president of the German Tourism Industry Association (BTW). Meanwhile, Anex Tour, which owns charter airline Azur Air, several hotels and an incoming agency, could be interested in gaining a German operating licence for Azur Air and in cooperating with charter broker Involatus, according to industry sources at ITB.

But Involatus owner Erkan Türkoral



MICHAEL FRENZEL

told fvw: "We are not working with Anex Tour and do not plan to do so." His company charts capacity on Turkish Airlines/Anadoloujet and Small Planet Airlines to several Turkish destinations. The two companies, together with Pegas, another Turkish-owned company, are among the largest tour operators on the Russian market, selling mostly holidays in Turkey and Egypt. About 5.5 million Russian package holidaymakers headed for these two destinations last year.

But the slump in the Russian outbound market following the travel bans to Egypt and Turkey has impacted on tour operators, who are now trying to switch customers to Greece, Bulgaria and other destinations instead for this year. Diversifying into other source markets thus represents an additional move to bolster business.



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TURKISH TOURISM SECTOR EXPECTS \$12 BLN LOSS IN REVENUE

Tourism representatives have said 2016 has been “much worse” than the predicted “worst case scenario,” noting the revenue loss in the sector would likely surge to \$12 billion over the year.

The current problems, which have risen amid escalating security concerns and a significant decrease in the number of Russian tourists, will likely impact other sectors, including the agriculture sector, and push up the unemployment rate across the country, according to sector representatives.



The head of the Antalya Chamber of Trade and Industry (ATSO), Davut Çetin, said the number of Russian tourists has almost zeroed over this year and they expected a significant drop in the number of arrivals from Europe, mainly from Germany, after a series of terror attacks which recently hit Turkey.

He noted the organization submitted various scenarios to the government after the Russian crisis erupted, but only optimistic scenarios were shared with the public.

“We are at a point which is much worse than what we had earlier predicted in our worst case scenario,” he noted at a meeting late March 18.

The vice president of the organization and the head of the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers' Association (AKTOB), Yusuf Hacısüleyman, said they predicted a loss of \$8 billion in revenue in their previous scenario upon the predicted loss of around 4 million tourists following the jet crisis with Russia, by presuming the spending per capita at \$1,000 plus the multiplier effect at 1.87.

“With the addition of the expected losses from the European market, we have now revised our potential revenue losses to \$12 billion,” he said one day before another terror attack in Istanbul, which killed at least four foreign nationals in central Istanbul on March 19. Hacısüleyman said the rising number of security warnings for Turkey by Western countries has spurred further losses in the sector, noting that the German Travel Association (DRV) canceled a four-day meeting scheduled in April in the Aegean resort of Kuşadası.



“When travel agencies canceled their meetings over security concerns, we cannot wait for arrivals from Germany to Turkey,” he added. He noted that the number of European tourists may decline by almost half over this year, adding that the number of Iranian tourists is expected to decrease to 30,000 over this year from around 45,000 last year.



Spain will lure much more tourists than it did earlier this year, and may reach around 80 million tourists, according to sector representatives. Another popular destination will be Greece, they added.

JOB LOSSES ‘MAY HIT 100,000’

Çetin noted many hoteliers would not open their hotels this year, and around 80,000-100,000 job losses are expected in Antalya alone. He said the problems in the tourism sector have already started to spillover to other sectors, mainly the agricultural sector, and the losses will become more visible by May and the following months. Çetin also noted the EXPO Fair will open on April 22 with the attendance by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. A number of world-famous stars are expected to attend the event, which will last six months and provide an increase in the number of tourists, bringing about some relief to the sector, he noted. Over 44 countries have so far affirmed their participation in the event, according to sector representatives.

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HOTELIERS INCREASE STAKES IN **TURKEY** SPECIALIST TOUR OPERATOR

Turkey's Royal Hotels has bought into specialist tour operator Bentour while Delphin Hotels has increased its existing minority stake in the company.

The Stone Group, which trades as Royal Hotels, has acquired a 10% stake in Bentour, which is based in Switzerland but mostly active on the German market.

The Turkish group operates six hotels, including well-known properties such as the Adam & Eve, the Dragon and the Taj Mahal, and will open a seventh next year. "With the new partnership, Bentour has guaranteed access to larger contingents in top properties," explained CEO Deniz Ugur.

In parallel, the Delphin Hotels group has increased its existing stake in the tour operator from 18% to 28%. The company, with seven hotels on the Turkish Riviera, has been a shareholder in Bentour since 2007.

The combined 20% stake had been held by Kuoni but was sold back to Bentour founder Kadir Ugur and his son Deniz last year as part of the Swiss group's exit from the tour operator business. Kadir and Deniz Ugur will thus retain 62% ownership of the company, which was founded in 2004.

Deniz Ugur told fvw: "We know Stone and Delphin as reliable and strong partners. They offer products that we can sell well through Bentour Reisen." Kadir



KADIR (LEFT) AND DENIZ UGUR WILL RETAIN MAJORITY OWNERSHIP OF BENTOUR REISEN.

Ugur emphasised that "such partnerships are especially valuable in a challenging year like this one. Together with the expansion of our portfolio and cost optimisation, they are important pillars for a healthy enterprise".

Just one day earlier the company announced it had streamlined its staff by getting rid of its five-person travel agency field sales staff in Germany as well as four internal sales employees. Travel agencies are now handled

through the service centre in Zurich.

However, Deniz Ugur stressed that Bentour has stable revenues this year despite the strong drop in demand for Turkey thanks to diversifying to other destinations such as Cyprus, Spain, Portugal and Greece, which now account for about 30% of revenues. Last year, the company's revenues dropped by 9.5% to €86 million and customer numbers declined by a similar amount to 100,000.



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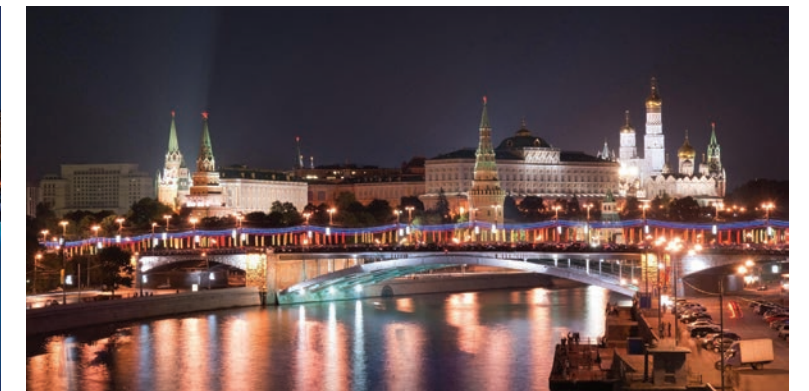
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RUSSIAN TOURISM FIRMS SHUT DOWN DUE TO TURKEY SPAT

The crisis and resulting tensions in relations after Turkey down a Russian jet have caused obstacles to both countries conducting business, which is especially bad for Russia as its economy is already in recession

According to a forecast by the Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR), the number of tourism companies operating in Russia will decrease from 2,000 to 500 this year. Speaking to Russian media, ATOR President Dmitriy Gorin said: "We had 2,000 tourism operators in the country last year; however, now, according to our evaluations, there will be 300 to 500 firms (in the sector) at the end of the year." The Russian government also passed legislation in January concerning the exemption of some Turkish firms from sanctions previously imposed on imports from Turkey following the downing of a Russian military jet over the Turkish-Syrian border for violating its airspace in November 2015. According to the legislation, some rules were determined with a view to foster

trade with Turkish firms and narrow the scope of sanctions imposed on Turkish imports. This decision was thought to be in response to the reality that the bans imposed on Turkish goods have put upward pressure on Russian inflation, which had already been following a rising trend. According to Russian daily Kommersant, this decision was taken because the Russian government plans to provide some flexibility for Turkish construction companies in order to not risk the planned construction work that must be completed on time for the 2018 World Cup, which will be held in Russia. Following the jet downing crisis, Russia imposed a range of unilateral sanctions on Turkey, including a ban on food imports, an end to visa-free travel and calls for tourists not to visit the coun-

try. Moreover, analysts from Russia and Turkey have repeatedly warned the Russian government that Russia risks economic pain by freezing economic relations with Turkey. "The Russian economy cannot replace what Turkey exports," wrote Stanislav Tkachenko, a professor of international relations at St. Petersburg State University in a Nov. 26, 2015 note published on Russia Direct. On the other hand, four months after Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Ankara of the jet crisis, Turkish business executives in Russia are also getting used to saying hasty goodbyes. "Every week another friend calls to say he's leaving," one Turkish businessman based in Moscow told Reuters. "It's become very difficult for Turks to do business here." In interviews with Reuters, expatriate members of the Turkish busi-

ness community accused Russian authorities of creating obstacles for their firms that go beyond the measures set out in the official sanctions. This, along with the economic crisis in Russia, was why increasing numbers of Turks are heading back home, they said. Before the Russian military jet was brought down, about 1,500 Turkish firms operated in Russia in businesses ranging from construction and tourism to imports of Turkish fruit, vegetables and textiles. While no numbers are available, one of the expatriates estimated that around 200 Turkish firms have since left. Many Turkish executives say they have experienced difficulties in getting Russian visas, and some have had to rearrange their affairs. Of the four businessmen interviewed by Reuters in Moscow, two said they had registered their companies in the names of Russian relatives or trusted Russian friends to try to avoid additional checks from law enforcement officers. Moreover, the businessmen requested that their names and those of their firms not be published, citing fears that public comments could result in further pressure from Russian officials. All four said it was difficult to stay, as

their country was demonized in the Russian media. For example, the Komsomolskaya Pravda mass-market tabloid ran a report earlier this month headlined "Turkey never was and never will be a friend of Russia." Russia's Interior Ministry did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. The Russian Economy Ministry said the problems outlined by Turkish businessmen did not fall within its remit. Turkish firms had stood to gain from an earlier set of Russian sanctions - restrictions on Western food imports imposed in retaliation for U.S. and European Union sanctions over the Ukraine crisis. Now, however, Turkish businessmen say that over-zealous Russian officials are subjecting their goods to additional checks at customs and have conducted impromptu searches at their premises. Dagir Khasavov, managing partner of Moscow-based legal firm Drakonta, which has Turkish clients, described the attitude of Russian law enforcement agencies toward Turkish citizens since the downing of the plane as "hostile." One Turkish businessman said he had registered his firm, which serves Russia's metals industry, in the name of a Russian friend to try to avoid problems. "I used to own 100 percent

of my firm. Now I feel like a thief of my own goods," he said. The first businessman cited in this article said shipments of Turkish textiles were sometimes held up for as much as 20 days at the Russian border, longer than previously. A Turkish diplomatic source said it was too early to say the two sides had found a way to resolve the dispute. "We hope that a compromise can be found, but we haven't seen any big shifts so far," the source said. Around 80,000 Turkish citizens live in Russia, although not all are involved in business. One potential bright spot is that a Turkish firm, Renaissance Construction, won a tender this month to build a terminal and tunnel at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. However, Renaissance Construction submitted its bid via its Russian subsidiary and the airport operator had no choice on the nationality of its contractor - the only other bidder was another Turkish firm, Limak. A Russian employee at a Russian-Turkish business group in Moscow said all joint investment projects had been frozen in line with a Russian government order. "For the moment there is a lock-down," he said. "Informal contacts continue, but it looks like projects will be frozen for this year at least."



ANTALYA SLUMP CONTINUES IN FEBRUARY

German bookings for package holidays on the Turkish Riviera slumped by more than 40% in February while Crete was up more than 50%, according to new figures showing holiday sales to major destination airports.

Rhodes, Bulgaria, the Canary Islands and Majorca also all showed strong growth rates last month while demand for Egypt continued to collapse, monthly sales figures from leading German holiday reservations provider Traveltainment showed. Antalya, the major airport serving the Turkish Riviera, had a 42% fall in package holiday bookings in February compared to 12 months earlier as holidaymakers switched to alternative destinations or delayed their bookings. This left it with a 19% share of all bookings for the ten largest destination airports on the German market, much lower than its usual market share at this time of the year. The airport had already seen heavy falls in the previous three months: January (-40%), December (-26%) and November (-24%). Similarly, bookings for Hurghada, the

largest holiday airport in Egypt, were down by 29% last month after a 57% collapse in January, 29% in December and 42% in November, as customers continued to avoid the Red Sea coast following the Russian charter plane crash last November. The biggest winner last month was Heraklion, the main airport on Crete, with a 56% surge in bookings compared to February 2015. It had already seen a 25% rise in January. In a further sign of rising demand for Greece, bookings for Rhodes were up by 37% after double-digit rises in the two previous months. The Bulgarian Black Sea coast is also proving popular for Germans as an alternative destination at present, as reflected by a 35% rise in bookings to Varna. The surge in bookings for Spain was shown in the figures for Palma and the Canaries. There was a 23% rise in

package bookings to Palma last month, leaving the Majorcan airport with a dominant 32% share of top ten airports. This was three percentage points higher than in January. The Canary Islands also did well with high double-digit growth rates for the three largest airports for the second month in a row. Fuerteventura grew by 24% in February after a 27% rise in January. Las Palmas followed a 28% rise in January with a 24% increase last month, while Tenerife South grew by 14% after 18% in January. However, Arrecife only showed a 3% rise last month. Traveltainment's Bistro system is used by some 11,000 travel agencies in Germany to make package holiday bookings from 130 tour operators, while its Internet Booking Engine is used by more than 350 online travel agents and portals.

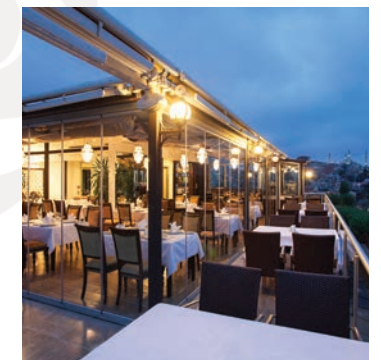
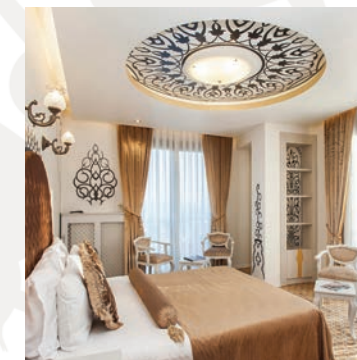


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TURKEY AMONG TOP DESTINATIONS IN GLOBAL MUSLIM TRAVEL MARKET

Turkey, which will host the world's biggest conference on rapidly growing halal tourism in May, is the third-most popular destination in the global Muslim travel market on the list of destinations published by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Turkey is the third most popular destination in the global Muslim travel market, according to the most comprehensive research yet released on this sector. The MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2016, which covers 130 destinations, saw Turkey take third place on the list of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) destinations behind Malaysia, which retained its primary position followed by the UAE. In May, Turkey will host the world's biggest international conference on halal tourism with the Halal Tourism Conference 2016 in Konya, bringing together some of the world's leading names in the travel industry. This conference is expected to foster halal tourism and

further contribute to Turkey's popularity as a trending travel destination.

Indonesia climbed two places to take the fourth spot with Bahrain becoming the biggest mover, jumping four spots to come in 10th place. Singapore also retained first position amongst non-OIC destinations, with Thailand, the UK, South Africa and Hong Kong making up the top five.

The study also revealed that in 2015, there were an estimated 117 million Muslim visitor arrivals globally, representing close to 10 percent of the entire travel market. This is forecasted to grow to 168 million visitors by 2020 - equal to 11 percent of the market seg-



ment, with a market value projected to exceed \$200 billion. Asia and Europe were also revealed as the two leading regions in the world for attracting Muslim visitors, accounting for 87 percent of the entire market.

Regarding the outcome of the GMTI, CrescentRating & HalalTrip CEO Fazal Bahardeen said: "The MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index 2016 has now become the number one tool for destinations around the world to realign their strategies to reach out to the Muslim consumer. One of the biggest trends we are seeing is non-OIC destinations making a concerted effort to attract Muslim tourists, and they now represent over 63 percent of the destinations covered in the GMTI. For example, Japan and the Philippines have taken some major steps over the last few months to diversify their visitor arrivals, and boost their economy in the process."

Global Products & Solutions for the Asia Pacific Region of MasterCard Group Executive Matthew Driver drew attention to the rapidly growing potential of the Muslim travel market, saying: "Many already successful destinations around the world are looking to diversify their visitor base to maintain tourist growth rates in today's increasingly competi-

THE MASTERCARD-CRESCENTRATING GLOBAL MUSLIM TRAVEL SHOPPING INDEX 2015



tive travel market. The fast-growing Muslim travel segment is an opportunity in plain sight, but in order to benefit from it, it is crucial to understand the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers and how to adapt and tailor products and services for them. We believe that the GMTI provides real value to businesses and governments looking to tap into this important market segment."

The GMTI 2016 is the most comprehensive research available on one of the fastest-growing tourism sectors in

the world, which represents 10 percent of the entire travel economy. The GMTI looks at in-depth data covering 130 destinations, up from 100 in 2015. This is the first time such thorough insights have been provided on one of the world's fastest-growing tourism sectors.

The index helps destinations, travel services and investors to track the health and growth of this travel segment, while benchmarking their individual progress in reaching out to this growing market.

All 130 destinations in the GMTI were scored against a backdrop of criteria that included suitability as a family holiday destination, the level of services and facilities provided, accommodation options and marketing initiatives as well as visitor arrivals.

Turkey had an index score of 73.9, placing it third in the overall combined list. Malaysia scored 81.9, followed by the UAE at 74.7. In comparison, the highest scoring non-OIC destination Singapore scored 68.4, with second place Thailand at 59.5.

GLOBAL MUSLIM TRAVEL SHOPPING INDEX 2015





HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES FALL BELOW 50 PERCENT: ASSOCIATION

Hotel occupancy rates declined below 50 percent in Turkey in February, a decrease of 13.4 percent compared to the same term of 2015. Last year's rate was measured at 57.6 percent, whereas this year occupancy dipped to 49.9 percent in the same period.

According to the "February 2016 Country Performance Report" carried out by Turkish data analysis company STR Global and announced by the Turkish Hoteliers' Association (TÜROB) on March 31, the oc-

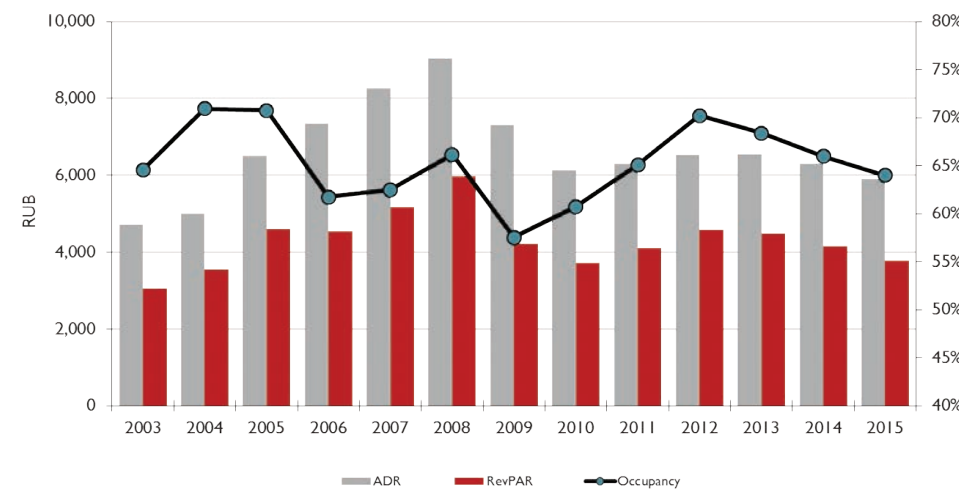
cupancy rate dropped by 9.8 percent to 48.7 percent level in the first two months of the year.

According to the TÜROB, the sharpest fall was in tourists from European countries, while Istanbul was the tour-

ism destination which experienced the worst hit tourist-wise across most of Turkey. In Istanbul, hotel occupancy rates fell by 21.4 percent, reaching 47.5 percent in February, compared to the same month of 2015. The occupancy rate in the Mediterranean resort of Antalya also dropped by 0.8 percent in February, hitting 48.1 percent compared to the same month of 2015, according to the TÜROB's statement.

Hotels' average daily rate (ADR) also fell by 10.7 percent, dropping rates to 88.6 euros per room. This number was 99.2 in the same month of 2015.

The RevPAR dropped by 29.8 percent to 42 euros, while this same number was 59.9 euros in February 2015. In the first two months of the year, the occupancy rate fell to 48.2 percent from 57.4 percent in the same period of 2015.



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TURKISH HOTELIERS SEE SIGNIFICANT **LOSS** IN NUMBER OF EUROPEAN TOURISTS

The Hoteliers Association of Turkey (TÜROB) has said the association expected a significant loss in the number of European tourists, mainly from Germany this year, adding that many reservations and organizations have already canceled due to security concerns.

The number of reservation cancellations from the German market has been around 40 percent, it said on April 4, as Reuters reported. The latest terror attacks in Turkey have created a big security concern for European tourists, so a significant loss in the number of foreign arrivals to Turkey from Germany, France, Spain and Italy is expected over this year, said TÜROB. German travelers' bookings for summer holidays in Turkey have dropped around 40 percent compared to a year ago, reflecting tourists' concern over security, German travel association DRV said in March. A meeting of around 600 tour agencies, which was scheduled to be held in the Aegean resort of Kuşadası in April, was canceled. According to the TÜROB statement, many planned reservations and business events were canceled in Istanbul as well as other provinces especially after the terror attack on İstiklal Street in central Istanbul.



TIMUR BAYINDIR

The TÜROB report said last minute reservations will play great role in Turkey's largest tourist market, Germany. The number of German tourists visiting Turkey increased 6 percent last year to 5.58 million compared to the previous year. Some 252,000 German tourists visited Turkey in the first two months

of the year with around 6 percent of decline compared to the same period of 2015. A significant loss in the Russian market is also expected over this year amid the jet crisis between Turkey and Russia, warned the report. A rise in the number of arrivals from Iran and the Middle Eastern countries is expected. According to the report, European tourists are expected to flock to Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Croatia and France rather than the destinations in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa due to escalating security concerns. The number of foreign visitors coming to Turkey tumbled 10 percent in February, the biggest drop in a decade, data released by the Tourism Ministry showed on March 29, as widening security concerns continue to eat into a major source of revenue for the Turkish economy. The decline was the biggest since October 2006. Yet several reports have underlined that last-minute reservations may hike tourist numbers significantly.



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LOW GROWTH AS DESTINATION SWITCHING CONTINUES

TUI today announced low growth for the summer 2016 season driven by a strong UK market and with Europeans continuing to switch away from Turkey to alternative holiday destinations.



CEO FRITZ JOUSSEN

European's largest tourism group has a 2% rise in bookings across all source markets and a 3% increase in revenues thanks to a 1% improvement in average selling prices. The UK is performing strongly, with revenue up 8% and bookings up 9%, but overall figures for other markets were not disclosed. However, TUI noted in a pre-close trading update that it has sold 47% of its summer programme to date, "broadly in line" with the same time last year.

In terms of destinations, TUI said that demand for Turkish destinations "remains subdued" and overall source market bookings are up 8% when excluding Turkey. The remix of capacity to alternative popular destinations has driven growth in Spanish bookings with medium-haul and long-haul destinations also seeing good demand.

In addition, there are "strong" cruise bookings for summer 2016 driven by demand for Mein Schiff 5 which is due to be launched this July and an improved fleet performance by Hapag-Lloyd Cruises.

TUI's hotels business has improved occupancy and performance outside Turkey and North Africa driven by the popularity of alternative destinations and new hotel openings. Two new Riu

hotels will open in Sri Lanka and the Dominican Republic this summer and there will be further openings in our other hotel brands. The winter 2015/16 programme is closing out as expected, with the source market programme almost fully sold, according to the company. Revenue is up 3% driven by higher average selling prices across most source markets with a "particularly good"

and Turkey and performance has been negatively impacted by the increase of third party flight capacity to sun and beach destinations.

CEO Fritz Jousen commented: "We remain pleased with our Summer 2016 trading performance, with both revenue and bookings ahead of last year. The UK continues to demonstrate a strong bookings performance, up 9% on prior year. Hotels & Resorts are performing well overall, benefitting from increased demand in Spain, the Canaries, and long-haul. Cruise is delivering continued growth, driven by strong demand for Mein Schiff 5 which is due to be launched this July.

"The Group has again demonstrated the flexibility of its business model and the ability to remix destination capacities to match demand and as a result demand and pricing has remained resilient overall despite the impact of geopolitical events.

"Our integrated model with our differentiated range of own accommodation content, combined with strong supplier relationships continue to give us a strong competitive position and sustainable earnings growth. We therefore remain well positioned to deliver underlying EBITA growth of at least 10% in financial year 2015/16."



performance in the Canaries, Spain and long-haul destinations. Germany has a 2% rise in winter revenues, with a 3% drop in bookings more than offset by a 5% rise in average selling prices, reflecting the higher proportion of long-haul bookings with growth in particular to Thailand and Asia.

TUI noted that consumer sentiment in Germany continues to be adversely impacted by geopolitical events in Egypt



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TURKEY EYES **\$5 BILLION** FROM HEALTH TOURISTS ANNUALLY AMID TOURISM WOES



Turkey has the potential to increase its annual revenue from health tourism to \$5 billion over the next two years, with officials looking for ways to boost and diversify the country's tourism appeal amid a downturn in the sector.

I strongly believe that Turkey's revenue from this sort of tourism will reach \$5 billion over the next couple of years, Health Ministry undersecretary Erol Afşin told Anadolu Agency. Afşin said annual revenue from health tourism is currently around \$1.5 billion officially, but the real figure is estimated to be around \$3 billion. The government's target is to make around \$20 billion in revenue annually from the sector by 2023, the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. While just 109,000 medical tourists visited Turkey in 2010, this figure rose to 583,000 by 2014, mainly thanks to a sharp rise in the number of tourists from Libya, Iraq and Germany. With the addition of plastic surgery figures, this figure increased up to 700,000, according to sector representatives. According to Afşin, most health tourists to Turkey

come from Iraq, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Greece, Uzbekistan and Bosnia Herzegovina as well as other European countries. Turkey is a particularly popular destination for organ transplants, hair transplants, heart surgery and plastic surgery operations. "The number of health tourists has been increasing rapidly as Turkey offers quite a high quality of health services and technologies at affordable costs ... A regular operation



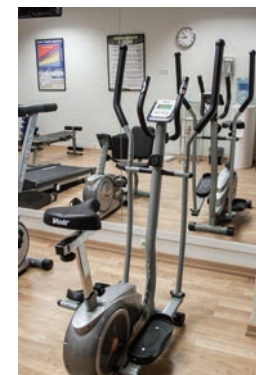
EROL AFŞIN

costs around 70 percent lower in Turkey than it does in Europe," Afşin added. The most popular spots for foreign patients are Istanbul and the Mediterranean resort of Antalya, according to sector representatives. The remaining tourists tend to prefer the capital Ankara, the Aegean city of Izmir and the northwestern province of Bursa, which is especially popular among Arabic tourists. Despite uncertainty in Turkey's tourism sector over terrorist attacks and bilateral political strains between Ankara and Moscow, all hotels in Antalya could be filled with visitors if the health sector's full potential is fulfilled, Afşin said. He stressed that non-governmental organizations, companies and the public sector need to work together in order to realize this target. He also noted that health tourists on average spend around four times more than ordinary tourists.



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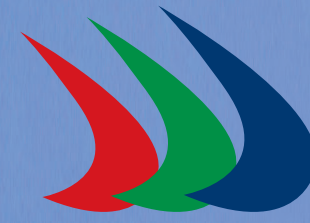
TURKISH HOTELIERS ACCELERATE PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN NEW MARKETS

Turkish hoteliers have sped up promotional activities in new markets in a bid to recover their expected losses in key markets, mainly European and Russian markets.

The Hotel Association of Turkey (TÜROB) said the association recently attended tourism fairs to diversify their markets in places like Latin America, South Africa and Azerbaijan, in a written statement on April 18. TÜROB Board Member and General Coordinator Kasım Zoto, who attended a sector fair in South Africa, said there was a rising attention to halal tourism in Africa, mainly in Nigeria. He noted that Turkish Airlines airplanes flying from Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg in South Africa to Istanbul were always full, although a majority of these passengers are transit guests. A total of 885,000 tourists from Africa visited Turkey last year and 47,000

were from South Africa, he added. Another potential huge market is Azerbaijan, according to the association. TÜROB Board Member and Secretary General Uygur Koçaş recently attended the AITF Fair in Baku. "Azerbaijan has many commonalities with us both culturally and linguistically. Turkey has been the most visited destination for Azeri people. We have, however, seen rising economic problems in the country for the last two years, pushing them to limit their travel plans. We should also say that the recent terror attacks in Turkey have negatively affected foreigners' travel plans to Turkey," he said. "Turkey is still a popular destination. It is of great importance to keep mak-

ing promotional campaigns, especially for Istanbul, Cappadocia and other hot touristic destinations, in Azerbaijan," he said, adding that Turkey hosted a total of 602,000 Azeri tourists. Representatives from the association also attended the WTM Latin America Tourism Fair. They noted that Turkish TV series have been very popular in the region, especially in Argentina, making a positive contribution boosting visits to Turkey. While the number of Brazilian tourists visiting Turkey decreased by 6 percent to 85,000 last year compared to the previous year, the number of Argentinian tourists visiting Turkey increased by 86 percent to 83,000, they added.



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TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADDED **7.2 MILLION** NEW JOBS IN 2015 DESPITE UNCERTAINTIES: ASSOCIATION

In 2015, global travel and tourism sector added 7.2 million jobs to the global economy and contributed over \$ 7.2 trillion in GDP, according to the latest economic impact report of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC).

Despite uncertainty in the global economy and specific challenges to Travel & Tourism last year, the sector grew by 3.1 percent, contributing a total of 9.8 percent to the global GDP. Travel & Tourism also supported a total of 284 million jobs in 2015, an increase of 7.2 million, which means it now supports, directly and indirectly, 1 in 11 jobs on the planet,” said David Scowsill, President & CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council in a press release on March 21 during the launch of the report, which covers 184 countries and 24 regions.

“Travel & Tourism once again has proved its resilient nature. Terror attacks, disease outbreaks, currency fluctuations and geopolitical challenges have impacted the sector at a country or regional level, but Travel & Tourism at the global level continues to produce an-

other robust performance,” he added. Country growth Travel & Tourism direct contribution to GDP growth outpaced overall GDP country growth in 127 of the 184 countries covered by the research. Countries where Travel & Tourism most markedly outperformed the wider economy in 2015 include Iceland, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Uganda, according to the report. The growth of the sector is stimulated by a worldwide increase in middle-class income households, an ageing population, which tends to travel more, and growing connectivity between destinations, making travel more accessible and affordable. All regions of the world showed growth in total Travel & Tourism contribution to GDP in 2015, showed the report.

Southeast Asia was the fastest growing region with growth of 7.9 percent

followed by South Asia, which grew 7.4 percent. Middle East grew 5.9 percent, Caribbean 5.1 percent, Sub-Saharan Africa 3.3 percent, North America 3.1 percent, Europe 2.5 percent, Northeast Asia 2.1 percent, Latin America 1.5 percent and North Africa 1.4 percent, according to the report. Travel & Tourism’s total contribution to GDP is forecasted to grow by 3.5 percent in 2016, and is again expected to outpace global economic growth for the sixth consecutive year. “Security concerns, border policies, oil prices, the strength of the U.S. dollar relative to other currencies, and other macroeconomic developments will continue to influence travel trends in 2016 and beyond. Nevertheless, over the next decade, Travel & Tourism is expected to continue to outpace the world economy, growing by 4 percent on average annually,” said the report.



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THE ROYAL DRAGON IN ANTALYA SIDE IS MAKING A SPLASH IN TURKEY

NEW NUMBER ONES IN TURKEY AND SPAIN

The Delphin Diva in Lara and the Lopesan Costa Meloneras on Gran Canaria each leapt to first place in the rankings for Turkey and Spain in the latest fvw Hotelometer.

The Delphin Diva jumped from fifth to first place in the demand-based rankings for the fortnight from February 22 - March 6. The Aydinbey Kings Palace was knocked into third place while the Royal Dragon remained number two. New entrants in the top ten were the Primasol Hane Family (6th), Limak Lara de Luxe (7th) and the Sunis Kumköy (8th). There were also changes in the ranking of enquiries by German families. The Club Astoria in Belek jumped from third to first, the Delphin Diva was second and the Limak Lara de Luxe was third. Couples were most interested in the Adalya Ocean, the Delphin Diva and the Aydinbey. In Spain, the Lopesan Costa Meloneras regained top spot from the Sotavento Beach Club on Fuerteventura, with the Blau Punta Reina in Cala Mandia (Porto Cristo) in third place. The biggest jump was



made by the SBH Club Paraiso Playa on Fuerteventura which entered the top ten in 4th place. In the family ranking, the Blau Punta Reina, the Sotavento and the Iberostar Pinos Park in Font de Sa Cala (Majorca) were the top three. The Lopesan Costa Meloneras defended top spot in the couples' ranking ahead of the SBH Costa Calma Palace and Sotavento Beach Club. The Greece ranking, in contrast, had an unchanged number one. The Ikaros Beach luxury resort retained top spot, ahead of the Lyttos Beach

and the Kernos Beach, which jumped from eighth to third. New names in the top ten were three hotels on Rhodes: the Atrium Palace at Kalathos (5th), the Rhodes Palladium at Kalithea (7th) and Apollo Beach at Faliraki (8th). In the family ranking, the Lyttos Beach, the Lindos Princess Beach and the Apollonia retained the top three places. Couples were most interested in the Ikaros Beach, the Kernos Beach and the Atrium Palace. The fvw Hotelometer is a fortnightly ranking of the most popular tourist hotels in Turkey, Spain and Greece, showing customer enquiries but not actual bookings. It is based on all enquiries in the Traveltainment reservations system used by German travel agents and online booking engines. The data, supplied by IT company TrevoTrend, is split into different categories (overall, families, couples, singles and star ratings).



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Hoteliers have little hope of attracting western tourists

Tourism representatives from the southern province of Antalya, Turkey's tourism center, have said they did not find what had expected at the ITB Berlin fair, adding they saw 2016 as a difficult year for the sector once again. **BY HASAN ARSLAN • PHOTOGRAPHER HALİL TUNCER**

They noted Turkey needed to focus on promotional campaigns abroad more than in previous years amid rising security concerns and negative perceptions about the country, after they returned from the Berlin fair, which was held on March 9-13. "We confirmed what we had foreseen for this year in Berlin. Namely, we once again saw that the reservation cancellations would be fairly high and 2016 would be a difficult year, especially for Antalya. Our biggest concern is to experience huge shrinkage in employment across the sector," said the head of the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers Association (AKTOB), Yusuf Hacısüleyman. Forecasting that the regression in the sector's German market would be around 30 percent by the year-end, he noted, "In a bid to decrease these negative effects to a minimum, we need to start a PR campaign, which also includes closer ties with the western European countries. Negative perceptions about Turkey need to

be averted. Some political discourses, some inefficiency in informing what has been done regarding the refugee crisis and the latest terror attacks have triggered negative thoughts about Turkey." He noted it would be a big fault to decrease prices, as the country has achieved a good price-service balance over the last 30 years.

SECURITY 'MATTERS'

The head of the Hoteliers Federation of Turkey (TÜROFED), Osman Ayık, said the German market was of crucial importance for Turkey. "We have called Germany, Britain, France, Scandinavian countries and the former Iron Curtain countries as our European market. The reservations in this market for Turkey have been lower than they were in earlier years," he said. He noted some of the losses in this market have not been directed towards Turkey's competitors on the Mediterranean coastline, such as Spain, Italy or Greece. "We can recover some losses

and the last minute reservations may bring some recreation across the sector. A majority of German people have not made their holiday plans yet. This is a chance for us. Here security matters a lot... we need to resolve the security issues," Ayık noted. Saying that the losses in the European market would be around 20 percent unless a new terror incident happens in touristic areas, the vice president of the Promotional Foundation of Antalya (ATAV), Yeliz Gül Ege, added, "We have forecasted the sector would see some 20 percent loss from the European market. The only market that will bring some relief to Antalya is the Middle Eastern market and promotional campaigns should be diverted to this market." According to Ege, even German-Turks found Turkey insecure in their meetings. "We need to reverse these negative perceptions through comprehensive PR work. In the Russian market, any peace attempts will make a huge difference. Any other attempts will bring nothing," she added.



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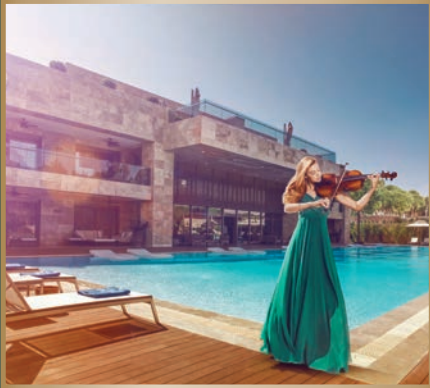
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