

# Turizm Aktüel

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WHAT WILL  
TURKISH  
TOURISM  
DO FOR 2017?

OPEN ARMS IN

ANTALYA

DESPITE ALL  
THE CURRENT  
NEGATIVE  
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WE WILL NOT  
GIVE UP ON  
HOPE

THE BEST  
BOUTIQUE  
HOTELS IN  
THE  
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HOPEFUL SIGNS  
FROM GERMANY  
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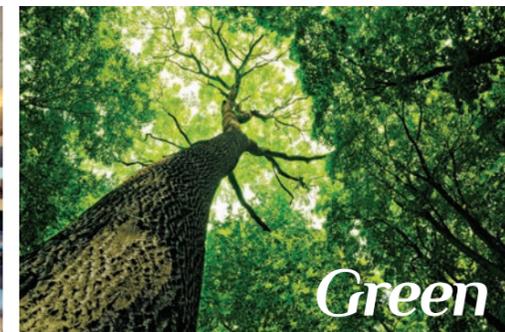
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# TURKISH TOURISM IS READY FOR 2017

**A**warm welcome from Turizm Aktüel Magazine, Netherlands Utrecht Exhibition special edition...  
The Utrecht Vakantiebeurs Tourism Exhibition, where Turkish tourism both showed itself and sounded the atmosphere in the international arena, started joyfully this year. Again we are at the fair with the same excitement, hope and energy. Tourism professionals are enjoying the pleasure of having achieved their targets for 2016. Achieving these targets, however, was not that easy. But neither the crisis in Russia, nor the civil war in Syria managed to obstruct the advance of Turkish tourism. New strategies were produced against these developments and the problems were examined to offer solutions. As a result tourism professionals completed 2016 successfully. We are in the winter season and now all preparations and expectations are for 2017. By each passing day the tourism habits in the world are changing and the variety of tourism is increasing. In fact, tourism is a chess game. Those setting accurate targets and determining their strategies by taking the developments that took place around the world in foreign policy in 2016 into consideration will close the year with profit.

Turkish tourism professionals have vast experience that has succeeded in overcoming problems for years. They even successfully solve problems in the arising of which they played no part. And the sector grows stably by day. For this reason hotel investments reached a peak last year, especially in Istanbul. Service quality increases by year.

We have been following foreign exhibitions for nearly 17 years. This year we prepared a special edition for the Dutch Utrecht Vakantiebeurs Tourism Exhibition. In our new edition containing up-to-date news on the sector and interviews with those who have left important marks on the sector, we are enjoying the deserved pride of having brought Turkish tourism to the Netherlands. With the support the sector lends it, the Turizm Aktüel magazine continues to be the voice of Turkish tourism abroad.

This year a vast press army will follow the Utrecht Vakantiebeurs Tourism Exhibition attended by 1500 corporations from 150 countries and visited by an average of 150 thousand visitors every year. And Turkey prepares to leave its mark on Utrecht, the Netherlands this year. In the meanwhile we wish to wish everyone a happy New Year through our new issue as the Turizm Aktüel family. We wish Turkish and world tourism much luck and profit in 2017...

Our next special edition will be prepared for the EMITT Tourism Exhibition. Hoping to meet you again soon...

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# 120 German tourism agencies attend “We Love Turkey” event in Antalya

Senior managers of 120 leading tourism agencies from Germany have come together at the “We Love Turkey” event in Antalya in order to discuss tourism expectations and plans for 2017, stating that Turkey and Antalya are safe for tourists to visit.



The “We Love Turkey” event is sponsored by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and organized with the aim of accelerating tourism to Turkey. Promotional activities were conducted by Tropo in 24 different German cities throughout September, and the event is currently taking place between 17 and 20 November in Antalya. “We Love Turkey” is compensating for the cancellation of the German Tourism Agencies event last year, and presents Antalya as a safe holiday destination promoting 24 hotels from the region. Tropo’s Sales and Marketing Director Okan Doğanaslan expressed his happiness at taking part in the project, saying: “We are at the right place at the right time. We believe that we will see positive sales feedback in a very short time. We also aim to double the number of German agency at our next year’s event.” Germany has been Turkey’s primary tourism partner for years. According to data compiled by state-run Anadolu Agency (AA) and figures from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 36.2 million tourists visited Turkey in 2015. Following a pattern established over the previous two years, the largest number of tourists visiting Turkey from a single country was Germans with 5.6 million. The number of German tourists has actually increased by nearly 10 percent since 2013.



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# WHAT WILL TURKISH TOURISM DO FOR 2017?

With the 2016 tourist season now largely over, it is known that the Turkish international tourism sector's revenues have dropped by over one third over the previous season.

KAYHAN TANER ÖZEN

While the consensus among many is that the main reason for this unexpectedly large drop is due to the travel ban Russia imposed on Turkish holiday destinations, the data shows this ban to be only one reason among several for the drop in revenue, and is far from being the main contributing factor. The total number of Russian tourists visiting Turkey peaked in 2014 at 4,479,049 people. In 2015 it fell to 3,537,428, and was only 766,871 for the most recent season. But despite a more than 80 percent drop in the number of Russian tourists from the previous year, the market impact of the reduced number of Russian visitors only account for 10 percent of the total 35 percent revenue drop, which is less than one third of the total. The Russia-Turkey political spat may

have grabbed the headlines, and certainly cost the Turkish tourism sector about a lot of dollars, but further analysis shows these headlines are masking a larger problem. The remaining larger loss, costing the tourism sector an additional 10 billion dollars, is due to the loss of tourists from countries besides Russia. Perhaps the loss of visitor numbers hasn't been as steep as with Russia, but the losses have been across the board, affecting many countries including Germany (down 30 percent), Great Britain (down 32 percent), the Netherlands (down 26 percent), France (down 35 percent) and Italy (down 59 percent). These markets have fed the tourism sector for decades, going back to the first investments made in the 1960s. So while the political conflicts impacting Russian tourism have been largely addressed this year and there is

optimism for a recovery in 2017, a much larger and possibly more stubborn problem remains. Looking back in time, below is an illustration from 1986 showing the business expectations for the tourist sector. The Development Bank of Turkey prepared this map to show the main streams of tourists that were expected, which were primarily from Europe and the Middle East. Russia, then part of the Soviet Union, was not even imagined as being a significant market at the time. Since then, the Turkish tourism sector has served these markets with great success, managing to climb to become the sixth largest tourist market in the world. Among Western markets, Germany has always been the largest for Turkish tourism, making up 15.4 percent of the total incoming foreigners. German citizens spend

approximately \$100 billion annually on international tourism. This expenditure has not declined over the years and is expected to consistently increase for the foreseeable future. Having this main market suddenly drop by a third is a big problem for the tourist sector. The problem in the Russian tourist market was obvious; a ban had been placed on that market. This led to the search for a straightforward solution which was recently achieved; better relations between Turkey and Russia, which ended the ban. Unfortunately, the problems with the German market are not so easily solved. There is no analogous agreement that could be signed to wipe away the problems in the German tourist market. This complexity, combined with the fact that the average German tourist spends more

than the average Russian tourist, means the problems in the German tourist market (and other large markets) demand greater analytical scrutiny, as well as a stronger resolve to implement solutions to identified problems. One way to analyze the situation would be to look at the public statements of German travel agents doing business in Turkey, who are impacted by a downturn in spending by German tourists in Turkey. They want to increase their sales of packages to Turkey sales, so they largely share the same interests as the Turkish tourist industry. TUI is a German travel agency serving many international destinations, with annual revenue of over \$35 billion. The Deutscher ReiseVerband (DRV) is the name of the German Travel Agents' Association. Recently,

the DRV held a meeting in Antalya on Nov. 24, which was one day before the sixth International Resort Tourism Congress, also held in Antalya. DRV head Norbert Fiebig and TUI head Friedrich Jousen delivered speeches at this meeting, which were heard by representatives in the congress that met the next day. In these speeches, it was explained that Turkey is in large part a holiday destination for families, and families tend to buy their holiday as a package from travel agents instead of online private buying. They explained the positive reasons for families to choose Turkey, including its climate, good value for money spent and high food quality. The bad news in their reports is that the German market for tourism in Turkey is still slipping. Problematically, travel agencies



explained that the majority of German family travelers buy their summer holiday before Christmas. For this year, sales of packages to Turkey are down 58 percent, which portends to a very lean 2017 for the German segment of the tourist market. Extrapolating to other European markets, the upcoming year may not be good at all.

While this is bad news, and there may be a reflexive impulse to avoid such information or deny it, the sales figures don't lie, and denial only prevents the possibility of addressing problems. In their reports the reasons for this huge loss were explained unequivocally: security problems, Turkey's foreign policies and standards of democracy.

Regarding security, no family would spend their holiday where they don't feel safe.

Turkey's portrayal in the Western media is not helping to sell holiday packages to families who save up for a year to travel abroad.

While the portrayal of Turkey in the media may be unfair, it was noted in the speeches that the media has a short memory, and that if conditions improve, it could be expected that the media's portrayal will quickly improve, too.

Turkey's foreign policy should be more communicative and constructive. Virtually everyone in developed countries, including those in markets important to Turkey, care about international politics and events around the world.

At this point, many Europeans do not understand, much less appreciate, Turkey's role in the case of Syria and other regional conflicts. Turkey should do what it can to show that it understands the concerns of other countries, and that it shares the goals of peace and prosperity in the region.

Citizens of Europe are concerned about



democratic institutions all over the world. Let's look at an example from Thailand. After a coup in the country, tourism from Europe dropped. In Egypt, government changes in recent years have had a very bad effect on the tourism sector.

Whether it is appreciated or not, European tourists expect the countries they visit to uphold democratic standards similar to their own. To give another example, Dubai suffered from its criminal law differing from European law. A tourist couple were seen kissing in a restaurant, which caused a complaint to be filed and resulted in the couple's punishment.

If Turkey wants to encourage tourism from Europe, it should show the Western public that human rights are protected and legal standards are not below those in Europe.

In closing, while the data above as well as other indicators paint a bleak picture for tourism from Europe in 2017, the good news is that Russian tourists are now booking for

Turkey and their number are expected to be about 3 million, similar to 2015. Based on this, it is predicted that tourism from Russia will offset some of the expected loss from the West. Unexpected developments like homicide attack to Russian Ambassador to Ankara may ruin the developments in Russian market. With a bit of luck, 2017 will be a similar year as 2016 for Turkish international tourism, but will remain below 2015 levels.

These numbers are not cast in stone, however. They are subject to both the conditions in the countries where tourists come from, as well as the conditions within Turkey. While there is little to be done about the conditions in other countries, there are many things within Turkey's control to restore the tourism sector to previous numbers and then increase it to new record levels.

\*Kayhan Taner Özen is a senior financial analyst for tourism loans at the Development Bank of Turkey.

Expand your point of view





# HOPEFUL SIGNS FROM GERMANY IN TOURISM

Europe's top Turkish tour operator Bentour brought together the owners and staff of 400 tourism agencies from Switzerland, Germany and Austria at a three-day event in the southern tourism hub Antalya.

Considering the serious decline this year in the number of tourists visiting Turkey, it was a particularly important meeting, during which projections for 2017 were discussed. Everybody was hopeful for the new season. Both German and Turkish owners of tourism agencies had high expectations. It was reported that many German tourists who had opted for alternative places (Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal) rather than Turkey had not had very positive experiences. According to a story broadcast two weeks ago on one of the German news stations NTV, major German tour operators such as TUI Thomas Cook and Neckermann,

DER, FTI, and Alltours are very hopeful about Turkey for 2017. They have therefore increased their capacity accordingly. It is of course very good news for Turkey that major tour operators are hopeful for next year. One travel agency owner who flew from Germany told me that there was an elderly German couple sitting next to him on the plane. They were going for a vacation in Antalya. During their chat he asked them whether they were afraid of visiting Turkey. "We are going on vacation. We're not interested in politics. This is our 15th trip anyway. We are not afraid of Turkey," they said. However, tourism professional Kadir Uğur

drew a dark picture for 2016. He said everyone had been affected by the price reductions made in panic by hoteliers. His group's turnover had therefore dropped from 120 million euros to 55 million euros. "Urgent shock treatment is needed for 2017: An advertisement budget worth 200 million euros in Europe. Such a budget should not be too much for Turkey, which can spend \$10 billion on Syrian refugees. With such an advertisement budget, the atmosphere in the European media could immediately turn in favor of Turkey," Uğur said. He is the owner of Bentour, which has operated in the European tourism market for

almost 50 years. He still distributed many of the group's famous printed reservation catalogues in Antalya "despite the internet, because I believe these catalogues are important for all our customers young and old." Uğur said he would be converting his 500-square meter house in Stuttgart into a Tourism Museum. "We have collected so many documents, catalogues and pictures over the years that this place has to become a museum. Those visiting the museum will be able to experience the history of tourism." He plans to hand over the reins at Bentour's headquarters in Zurich to his son Deniz Uğur and will go on a world tour in his boat that lasts for two years. "I will post details of the journey on the internet day by day," he said. Despite all the current negative conditions, Bentour was still able to make a profit this year, Uğur added. "I am not pessimistic and you should not be either. Politics belongs to politicians. Let's all just do our jobs the best we can, then both Turkey and us tourism

professionals will be the winners. Our only demand from politics is for it to open our path. That is just enough. All my 40-year experience points to this," he said. Every year, Bentour hosts the agencies it has worked with throughout the year at a traditional "Bentour Comedy Night" that took place during the event in Antalya.

During the comedy evening at the Regnum Karya Hotel, heavyweights from the German comedy world such as Fatih Çevikkollu and Bodo Bach both entertained the audience and made them think. Before their programs, many in the audience wondered whether they would make ironic fun of Turkey, but actually both of them focused more on the stance of Germans.



# OPEN ARMS IN ANTALYA

The fvw workshop in Antalya with travel agents, tour operators and hoteliers, was highly symbolic in politically turbulent times, writes fvw's Klaus Hildebrandt.



Klaus Hildebrandt

More than 80 German participants, including 60 travel agents, DRV President Norbert Fiebig, high-ranking managers from all major tour operators offering Turkey holidays as well as Sun Express, along with 180 Turkish hoteliers at the one-day conference and widespread coverage in the Turkish media – the fvw workshop in Antalya was not just bigger than usual but clearly came at just the right time.

Turkish tourism is going through its deepest crisis as a result of the Russian travel boycott and severe drops in visitors from all European source markets. Many hoteliers and business owners face threats to their existence, and thousands of jobs have already been lost. Many German consumers are worried about safety after the terror attacks in Istanbul and Ankara, political relations are at a low-point following the Armenian resolution by the German Parliament, and press freedom is increasingly restricted in Turkey.

In this situation, should you – and can you – even hold a conference in Turkey? At fvw, we discussed this issue intensively. But we're glad that we organised the workshop, and that so many people took part. Not only because the trip was viewed as a gesture of solidarity by the Turkish tourism industry and we were welcomed with open arms. Above all, because German and Turkish business partners were able to leave the loud sounds of politics behind them and discuss their common interests.

Reading between the lines was also important. No Turkish tourism manager can now afford to openly criticise the increasingly autocratic rule of President Erdogan. But when people referred to the country's image problems as well as the security concerns, everyone understood what was being referred to. In private conversations, there was no shortage of harsh words from the country's mostly liberal and Westernised tourism managers.

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## TOUR OPERATOR REVENUES DROP ON TURKEY SLUMP

German tour operators have suffered their first revenue declines for years after massive sales falls for Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia outweighed growth for other destinations and travel products.

Norbert Fiebig

Tour operators saw their combined revenues drop by 4% to €26.3 billion in the tourism year ending October 31, which is about €1 billion less than last year, according to figures presented by the German Travel Association (DRV) at its annual conference in Berlin. Travel agency sales dropped by 2-3% to about €23 billion, with lower leisure travel sales and stable business travel sales at about €7.4 billion. The main reason for the market downturn – the first since 2009 in the aftermath of the financial crisis – is that package holiday bookings for Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia dropped by between 40% and 60%. DRV president Norbert Fiebig said there was clearly “a switch in the travel flows of German holidaymakers from East to West” this year, citing GfK market research figures. But he admitted that strong growth for the Western Mediterranean, long-haul destinations and cruises “could not offset the declines for Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia”. On the positive side, Spain, and especially the Balearics and Canaries, saw strong growth this year on already very high volumes. In addition, Portugal, Greece and Bulgaria generated double-digit growth in

travel agency bookings this summer. Moreover, Germans booked more long-haul holidays and cruises this year. Sales of cruise holidays grew by “a high single-digit figure” thanks to new ships and new offerings, according to Fiebig. Tour operators increased revenues from long-haul bookings by 3%, and the segment now accounts for 22% of travel agency sales, according to the DRV. In terms of destinations, there was good growth for the Caribbean (+16%), led by the Dominican Republic and Cuba, for Africa (+14%) and the UAE. In contrast, demand for the USA and Thailand was somewhat weaker this year. Germany and neighbouring countries were also popular as consumers switched to self-drive destinations. However, most of these trips are self-organised with direct accommodation bookings rather than booked as tour operator packages. Addressing some 650 conference participants, Fiebig urged the travel industry to pay attention to the increase in self-drive holidays to overland destinations (such as Germany, Austria and Italy). “The more demand for overland destinations increases, the more this business will be lost for tour

operators and travel agents. Will the trend to overland destinations disappear next year or the trend to self-organised holidays also extend to simple air-based package holidays?” he asked. In response, the travel industry needed to promote its services better for this market segment, especially the security of a tour operator package holiday, he urged. Against this background of uncertainty, the DRV is not making any overall forecasts for 2017. It noted that winter 2016/17 sales are so far behind last year’s level but said it is too early to make any forecasts for summer 2017 due to very low booking volumes so far. At the conference, DRV members overwhelmingly re-elected Fiebig by 99.88% as the association’s president for a further three years. Among diverse other elections, Stefanie Berk (Thomas Cook), Thomas Ellerbeck (TUI) and René Herzog (DER Touristik) were chosen to represent Germany’s three large ‘tourism groups’, while Johannes Zurnieden (Phoenix Reisen), Markus Daldrup (Alltours) and Pascal Zahn (Olimar Reisen) represent medium-sized tour operators. Fraport’s Susanne Schick was elected to represent the DRV’s diverse associate members.



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## “DESPITE ALL THE CURRENT NEGATIVE CONDITIONS, WE WILL NOT GIVE UP ON HOPE”

Interesting results came out of an interactive survey involving 1,000 participants from all over Turkey, at the 6th International Resort Tourism Congress in the Mediterranean city of Antalya's Lara Barut Hotel. [YALÇIN BAYER](#)

This was the sector's most important meeting in 2016, amid the worst crisis in the modern history of Turkey's tourism. Other important topics besides tourism were discussed at the Congress, which was also attended by Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avci. The topic was brought up a day before the congress meeting, at the Turkish-German Forum, in a meeting attended by Avci. This time it was discussed in relation to the survey. Ten questions were asked to participants regarding the situation on

tourism and what they expected from 2017. Participants had to choose from six to seven different responses to the survey questions. Asked what the most important issue affecting the year in tourism was, 74.7 percent of them responded “foreign policy.” This is concrete proof of the concern voiced by tourism players on the crisis the sector has been suffering since Turkey's downing of the Russian plane on Nov. 24, 2015. Their argument is that the problem in tourism is not mainly economic or sector-related. The average answer to the question, “What

losses have managements experienced in turnover in 2016?” was “34 percent.” When asked about their expectations for 2017, 41.6 percent said they thought things would get worse. Regarding the general economic situation, 70.3 percent believe it will get worse in 2017, 25.5 percent said it would be similar to this year, and only 4.2 percent said it would be better than this year. In response to the question, “What do you predict will be the most important issue in 2017?” some 74.7 percent chose “political tensions caused by foreign policy.”

Major European tour operators and top PR agencies participating in the meeting also said the crisis Turkey is going through in tourism had political reasons. This means that the solution to these problems is political. Tourism executives said they were “always optimistic,” but the bare facts cannot be disregarded. The moderator of the congress, Nizamettin Şen, commented on the bitter picture painted by the results of the survey. “Despite all the current negative conditions, we will not give up on hope,” he said.

### DEMOCRACY AND LAW FIRST

Davut Çetin, the head of the Antalya Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ATSO), spoke on the problems in tourism at the meeting. “The year 2016 has been a lesson for us. We have understood the value of the tourist. Now, the real issue is saving 2017,” Çetin said. “We are expecting tourism and agriculture support to be announced in due course by the government. We are waiting for this to become official. Despite

current disagreements with the EU, half of Turkey's exports are shipped to European countries,” he added, while also referring to other political issues that the government could address. “Every year, we make promotions. This year we have worked on a PR campaign for Antalya. But there needs to be a different effort at the government level in terms of Turkey's image in Europe. We should not be a country that continues to be so badly criticized regarding our democracy and law,” Çetin said.



Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı



## Airline subsidies to continue in 2017

Turkey will maintain subsidies for flights to tourist destinations next year while flight capacity from Germany could be restored to 2015 levels ready for a recovery in demand.

The Turkish government has decided to extend the current subsidies beyond November into 2017, Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı, told a conference of the Turkish hotel association 6th International Resort Tourism Congress near Antalya last december. The subsidies will be kept at \$6,000 per flight but broadened to

cover more destination airports and more source markets. Avcı also told hoteliers that financial support for their sector will be maintained but did not provide any details. The minister's aviation subsidy pledge came after TUI CEO Fritz Jousen appealed in a speech at the conference for the subsidies to be maintained in order to

provide international tourism companies with long-term planning security. The head of Europe's largest tourism group was optimistic that summer 2017 will be better for Turkey than this summer despite a weak start to early bookings. But he admitted that the number of Turkey customers for TUI's European tour operators had halved to one million this year.

Among other German speakers at the AKTOB conference, DRV president Norbert Fiebig said that Turkey bookings dropped by about 40% on the German market this year. "This year we are seeing that customers are making their choice of a holiday destination not only based on the security situation but also on their personal view of democracy and free speech," he told the largely Turkish audience. Meanwhile, German tour operators look set to restore flight capacity to Turkey next summer to the levels of summer 2015. After

a reduction of about 20% this summer in response to the slump in bookings from early 2016 onwards, observers estimate that capacity will rise again by about the same amount for summer 2017. "The tourism industry wants to grow again in Turkey. At present, there are 20% more flights available than for this past summer," Rolf-Dieter Maltzahn, head of DER Touristik's package holidays division, told fw. This means there will be no flight capacity

shortage if demand picks up again. According to Öger Tours, there will be up to 559 weekly flights to Antalya from 22 German airports next summer along with 104 weekly flights to Izmir, 18 to Dalaman and 11 to Bodrum. Altan Tarakci, product manager for Turkey, said the Thomas Cook subsidiary has increased capacity for the Aegean region after a 20% increase there this year. TUI and FTI have also increased flight capacity for the region.



DRV head Norbert Fiebig



TUI head Friedrich Jousen



Hakan Ateş CEO of DenizBank

## Turkey's Culture Ministry clarifies Julianne Moore question

It was determined that the promotional film would not be useful for the country's image, so it was not purchased and used," the ministry said in a response to questions on the matter. "In 2014, the ministry agreed with Julianne Moore via a relevant Turkish company in the U.S. But the promotional film was not purchased since it did not meet the contact criteria signed with the company. According to the technical report prepared by the General Directorate of Cinema, it was stated that the promotional film did meet many criteria in the contract, including the picture quality and content. For this reason, regardless of the fact that the lead actress is a Hollywood star, [the film was not purchased]," it said. The ministry made a contract with Iconisus & I Mean It, headed by famous Turkish advertiser Emrah Yücel, in 2014. Yücel hired Moore and started

shooting the film, after which the company shared scenes from the film to the media, saying Moore would become the face of Turkey. The ministry, however, later decided not to broadcast the film, citing Moore's "poor acting." In February 2015, Moore won the Best Actress Award at the Oscars for her performance in the film "Still Alice" after four previous Oscar nomination disappointments. The agency announced that it had chosen Moore for the "Home Of" promotional film project after it had won the tender for the project. In the film, Moore was seen revisiting her childhood journeys to Turkey while traveling on an airplane. During budget talks on Nov. 16, Republican People's Party deputy Utku Çakırözer asked Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı about the money spent for the film and the reason why it was not aired. "They said they did not



like Moore's acting but she won the Oscar sometime later," he told the minister.

### WAS MOORE PAID?

It is mentioned in the statement that some criteria were not met. It should be transparently revealed; which criteria are these?" Çakırözer said. "Was the problem Julianne Moore? Were Moore and the company paid compensation? Was this compensation met by our citizens' taxes? Did Moore act for free?"



2film.com.tr

## Hotels.com sets Guinness World Record for 'fastest mobile bed'

Hotels.com sets 'Fastest Mobile Bed' Guinness World Records title in the United Arab Emirates by building a bed on a Ford Mustang GT.

A sports car racing driver has broken the World Record for the fastest bed, with Tom Onslow-Cole taking a Ford Mustang GT-powered bed down a drag strip in the United Arab Emirates in excess of 80 mph. The hi-octane feat saw a Hotels.com bed, based on a modified Ford Mustang GT, traveling at almost 135 kilometers per hour. Footage of the world record setting attempt can be seen here on YouTube The Guinness World Records title was claimed during an event at the purpose-built Emirates Motorplex dragstrip in the emirate of Um Al Quwain by renowned international racing driver Tom Onslow-Cole on 13 December 2016, at a verified speed of 135 kilometers per hour. An adjudicator from Guinness World Records was present and confirmed the new record for 'Fastest Mobile Bed', beating the previous record of 111 kilometers per hour which was held in the UK since 2008. Tom Onslow-Cole, driver of the World's Fastest Bed, said: "As an international racing driver, I travel the world and use Hotels.com wherever I stay, so I already knew they could deliver a fast bed via the app and online – now I know they can deliver it on track, too! I was made-up to take the World's Fastest Bed Record with Hotels.com, it was an unforgettable experience and I hope it'll stand the test of time – it'll take some beating!"



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## HOTEL PORTFOLIO DOUBLED FOR SUMMER 2017

TUI has presented a massive hotel capacity increase for next summer as it aims to extend its German market leadership.

Like all tour operators, TUI has suffered this year from the slump in bookings for Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia but says it has kept revenues stable by switching customers to alternative destinations in the Western Mediterranean and elsewhere. TUI's main destination winners this summer were Spain, including a 30% revenue rise on the Canaries, Italy and Greece. Germany chief Sebastian Ebel, who is targeting a 25% market share within the next few years, claimed the market leader gained 1.5 percentage points this summer, giving it a 22.3% share. Detailed booking and revenue figures were not disclosed, however, at the presentation of the summer 2017 programme.

For next summer, TUI is doubling its overall hotel portfolio to 150,000 properties, with new hotels mostly in long-haul, self-drive and city destinations, along with 300,000 holiday

homes. "Our ambition is to offer customers the biggest and best variety in the market," Ebel declared. There will be 15 new TUI brand hotels. In Italy, the hotel portfolio has been expanded by 50% with 1,000 new properties. There will be three new own-brand hotels in the country, with two adults-only Sensimar properties in Calabria and on Sardinia and a five-star TUI Blue hotel in the group's Castelfalfi holiday village in Tuscany. In Spain, TUI will increase capacity for the Canary Islands by 20% and sees "great growth potential" for mainland destinations, especially Andalusia, where it has increased flights to Malaga and Jerez, and expanded its programme for Huelva. In Greece, hotel capacity for Crete, Rhodes and Kos has been increased by 40% and there is more flight capacity from Germany, including on new Easyjet flights from Berlin.



Sebastian Ebel

Elsewhere in Europe, TUI has increased capacity for other destination winners of this summer, including Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal and Austria, and added city breaks in Scandinavia.

Among long-haul destinations, TUI claims to have overtaken Dertour as German market leader to North America this winter, and has expanded its summer 2017 programme for the continent by adding more hotels as well as Alaska and Yukon tours.

Prices will remain stable overall, according to TUI. Holidays in Spain will go up by 3% on average but Turkey will be 5% cheaper and prices will also be lower in various long-haul destinations.

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## THE BEST BOUTIQUE HOTELS IN THE TURQUOISE COAST TURKEY

An insider's guide to the best places to stay on Turkey's Turquoise Coast, including the top hotels in Antalya, Kalkan, Kas and Alanya, featuring lush gardens, stylish interiors, warm service, Ottoman touches, glorious views and traditional food.

### MEHMET ALI AGA MANSION / DATCA

From the rose garden and citrus orchards to the intricately carved wooden ceilings, everything about the mansion oozes style and elegance, without overstatement. The Ottoman ambience, created by the vintage furniture pieces and impressive frescoes, are beautifully set-off by the tasteful and calming décor.

### TUVANA HOTEL / ANTALYA, TURQUOISE COAST

A genuine family business, the Ottoman konak (mansion) at the heart of the collection of period properties forming this hotel belonged to the grandmother of current owner, Özgür Tankut. The old mansion house

is now ranged around a pretty blue pool, and shaded by bougainvillea and palms.

### HOTEL VILLA TURKA / ALANYA, TURQUOISE COAST

Vernacular architecture at its best, this stylish wood and stone 19th-century Ottoman konak has been superbly restored to its former glory. Because of the steepness of the hill on which it's built the Villa Turka is all overhanging balconies and projecting verandahs supported by 18-foot long cedar poles. Set in its own lush grounds, this is what a real boutique hotel is all about.

**LIKYA YOLU PALAS HOTEL/ KAPAKLI** Restrainted elegance is the key attribute

of each individually furnished room, with plain walls and traditional Turkish rugs on the gleaming wooden floors. All rooms have their own built-in balcony which opens onto a terrace and the hotel's pool. As you'd expect from a hotel with a mere five bedrooms, the atmosphere is intimate.

### COURTYARD HOTEL KALKAN / KALKAN, TURQUOISE COAST

Set at the end of a narrow, quiet street running at right angles to the harbour with the sea-front a few minutes' walk below. These three turn of the century cottages have been stunningly restored to make Kalkan's premier boutique hotel. There are only six rooms, each individually designed,

ranged around a tranquil yet stylish courtyard, with a distinctive pebble mosaic floor, potted plants, spreading bougainvillea and benches for lounging.

### GARDENIA BOUTIQUE HOTEL / TURQUOISE COAST

The hotel is perfectly situated just a few minutes' walk from the town centre with all its amenities, and handy for the strip of swimming platforms at nearby Küçükçakıl. Modern hotels trying to be anything but (think faux-Ottoman or mock-Alpine rustic flourishes) are a rarity in Turkey, especially in traditional resorts like Kaş, giving the Gardenia its contemporary stylistic 'edge'. The rooms are all individually designed but the overall effect of all is one of simple, but not austere, modernity.

### VILLA PERLA HOTEL / ANTALYA, TURQUOISE COAST

This former Ottoman mansion house survived the vicissitudes of time far better

than most buildings of its type and was painstakingly restored, rather than rebuilt, in its conversion to a hotel. Views from the rooms were not important to the Ottoman Turks, who favoured privacy, so concentrate instead on the rich carpets, original dark wood floors and carved wooden ceilings and (in a couple of rooms) four-poster beds.

### THE OLIVE FARM GUEST HOUSE/ DATCA

Foodies seeking accommodation away from it all, where you can see the organic vegetables growing in the garden before they are magically transformed and appear on your table, will stay here. To be doubly healthy have a quick game of tennis or a swim in the pool, or just head straight for the hot tub and steam room. Set in a 400 acre olive farm, if you want to be close to nature, this is the place. Clean, comfortable and laid back. This is a peaceful retreat offering high quality facilities.

### DEGIRMEN (THE WATERMILL)/ FETHIYE

Everything is done in the best possible taste, with all the buildings made of natural stone and timber. There is a real emphasis on the natural, whether it be the organic food or the linseed oil (rather than varnish) used on the woodwork. Ever present is the sound of the watercourse for the old mill and birds singing in the lush woodland roundabout.

### VILLA IL CASTELLO / ANTALYA, TURQUOISE COAST

Owner Asim lived and worked in Germany for many, many years and has recreated northern European levels of comfort in this remote Turkish village. The grounds are beautifully landscaped, set around a small pool, and there are glorious views from the charming breakfast/dining room over the sea and mountains. All nine rooms are suites, each with a decent-sized bedroom, bathroom and very large sitting area giving onto a balcony.

# SPECIALIST TOUR OPERATORS STAY IN PROFIT DESPITE BOOKING SLUMP

The two main Turkey specialists on the German market managed to remain profitable this year but are adjusting capacity for summer 2017.

Öger Tours, as a subsidiary of stock exchange-listed Thomas Cook, did not disclose any booking or revenue figures at its summer 2017 programme presentation but managing director Songül Göktaş-Rosati had one important piece of news: the Hamburg-based company remained profitable this year. "We thank this to our high proportion of repeat customers, synergy effects with our parent company and the engagement of hoteliers who reduced their prices," she explained.

Öger Tours' holidays in Turkey, which account for 85% of its sales, were 8% cheaper on average this summer. Bookings for Turkey dropped by an undisclosed percentage although Bodrum bucked the trend with a 20% increase. More positively, the new destination of Bulgaria proved a success with 10,000 guests in the first year. For next summer, the tour operator is reducing capacity. It has reduced the number of hotels in Turkey by 18% to 390, while its Orient programme has been downsized by 25% to 165 hotels in five countries.

Göktaş-Rosati is taking a pragmatic view of prospects for next summer. "We won't tire from promoting Turkey," she declared. But she admitted it would be difficult to get prices back to former levels "as long as the challenges remain" and "no one can say how long it will take".

Meanwhile, Swiss-based Bentour, which generates a



Songül Göktaş-Rosati

was certainly that we expanded our product portfolio to many other destinations," Ugur said. Bentour introduced holidays in 11 other destinations this year, which accounted for about 30% of revenues. For next summer, the tour operator has bundled these destinations, including Spain, Portugal and Greece, into a separate brochure called 'Bentour Select'. Another innovation is the launch of a dynamic packages tour operator under the BENX label, enabling the company to offer a wide range of flight and hotel combinations.

Meanwhile, Sun Express also managed

to steer its way through a turbulent year for Turkey this year. The Lufthansa-Turkish Airlines joint subsidiary suffered a passenger drop of only 8% on flights to Antalya, its home airport, compared to an overall 45% fall in international arrivals at the Turkish Riviera airport. The carrier benefitted from other airlines reducing Antalya capacity massively.

However, commercial director Peter Glade said the airline also adjusted its flight schedule this summer in response to the lower demand, and added new flights from Germany to destinations in the Canary Islands, Greece and Bulgaria. "From nothing we've become market leader on Bulgaria routes from the German source market," he said.

Looking ahead to next summer, Glade said that Sun Express hopes for better demand to Turkey, will maintain its flights to Bulgaria and is flying for FTI to Egypt among diverse charter services.



Deniz Ugur

high proportion of sales in Germany, also remained in the black this year with a six-digit profit thanks to cost reductions and adding new destinations. "This year was also a challenge for us. But we once again managed to make a profit," CEO Deniz Ugur told fvw. This was partly to scaling back sales staff, as well as positive currency effects from the strong Swiss franc and price reductions by hoteliers. "But the most important factor



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# It's family-friendly Turkey with all the chic trimmings: Alacati

Alacati is a pretty town on Turkey's Izmir peninsula, and it's very budget-friendly. A bottle of good chardonnay is about £10, and dinner for two costs less than £20. There are now some 400 hotels. Many are small and call themselves 'butik'

The pavement cafes are filling up; couples are holding hands in the sunshine. You could be in St Tropez — except that a bottle of good chardonnay is about a tenner here and dinner for two costs less than £20.

This is the pretty town of Alacati on Turkey's Izmir peninsula, a fertile crescent as long as the French Riviera but without the silly prices. It's pronounced 'Alla Chatter' which means red roofs. As recently as ten years ago there were only 18 hotels, now there are more than 400 — most of them small and calling themselves 'butik'.

This is because the chic set from Istanbul has descended on Alacati in droves, opening hotels and restaurants and building smart villas close to the peninsula's glorious beaches which attract expert windsurfers. Just be aware that any hotel within 100 yards of a mosque does not have a drinks licence but our hosts at the Zeytin Konak obligingly send out for some wine.

Zeytin Konak is a collection of four elegant mansion houses converted into a hotel, with lovely stone-flagged floors and two pools surrounded by lavender bushes.

Our second base is Cadde 75 hotel, another 'butik' delight, with stripped floors, wrought iron beds and lovely blue and white bed linen. But what thrilled my nine-year-old daughter Katya most was that everyone was so friendly. 'Turkish people really seem to like children, don't they?' she says.

Seeing anywhere through the eyes of a child is charming even for the most jaded traveller. All those things that annoy the hell out of adults (Bob Marley songs sung in Turkish) go unnoticed. Katya sees only wonder in almost everything. You simply must visit one of the two Ferdi Baba restaurants, one in Alacati marina, the other in Cesme, the beach resort of Alacati. Both have lovely views of bobbing yachts, sublime seafood and a cold counter groaning with imaginative starters.

At both our hotels, we particularly enjoy our breakfasts of fruit, yoghurt and the wonderful pisi — tiny hot pastries which you



split open and fill with jam.

A basket of 12 is put in front of the two of us and somehow disappears. The only thing I suggest you avoid is manti, a stuffed pasta dish with dollops of hot yoghurt on top.

Half an hour's drive from Alacati is the Urla winery, which produces 200,000 bottles a year and they're so good that they have won more than 150 awards and are served in Michelin-starred restaurants in London.

The winery owner, Can Ortabas, has somehow found time to create his own arboretum, where he has amassed 1,938 species of trees from around the world. For an ancient history fix, the ruins of Erythrai are a short drive away and are atmospheric, especially if, like us, you find you're the only people there.

It is one of the 12 Ionian cities of Asia Minor

and now there's just the amphitheatre and a couple of houses but the views from the highest 'seats' are impressive. If your stay includes a Saturday, then you have to visit Alacati market, where 200 stalls groan with fruit, wild herbs, fabulous pickles and pastries.

We pick up some leather loafers for under a tenner, and there was even, dare I say it, a stall selling Mac and Chanel make-up — the provenance of which remained unknown.

I'm a dog lover and many of my trips abroad have been marred by the sight of emaciated canines roaming the streets. But not here. The dogs all look well-fed and content and are friendly, thanks to a civic programme of neutering, chipping and encouraging restaurant owners to feed them at closing time. Bravo, I say.

www.clubnena.com.tr

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# MEDITERRANEAN HOTELIERS VOW TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

Global crises changing nature of hotel industry, expert warns Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders conference



Hoteliers in the Mediterranean have a responsibility to protect the environment, the president of the International Hotels & Restaurants Association said December. Speaking at the 10th Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders conference in Barcelona, Ghassan Aidi said climate change issues were becoming a deep concern for tourism sectors in the region. "We have a great responsibility to protect the environment," he told the conference. "Lately, in addition to this economic crisis, we have to fight the effects of the climate change while our industry contributes less than 2.5 percent of the total emission of CO2 worldwide." he added.

Aidi said despite the global economic and financial crisis, hoteliers continued to survive thanks to quick adaption to new travel trends. "Remember that people always need to travel. People will continue to travel. Tourism will not end and business travelers will not stop pouring into our hotels. "The only difference is, instead

of staying in a five-star hotel, they will go to four-star hotels; instead of staying two weeks, they will stay 10 days or week," he added. Aidi warned that independent hotels in the region will need to deal with low prices prompted by newcomers to the market. "We have problems with newcomers to compete with us, like Airbnb [which enables people to list or rent short-term lodging in residential properties] ... We need to resolve this issue very fast or it is going to be too late." Aidi said increasing numbers of Chinese tourists also offered opportunities. "We need to diversify our market. Sixty million people from China are travelling



this year. The Chinese government is actively looking towards new destinations and our Mediterranean region is very rich with various cultures and hundreds of exciting attractions that will appeal to this market," he said. The Mediterranean region is a major world tourist destination, with approximately 50 percent of total world arrivals, one-third of tourist income, and 20 percent of accommodation capacity worldwide, according to the UN World Tourism Organization. Around 100,000 Mediterranean hotels are located around one sea, across 24 countries. By 2020, it is expected that 420 million non-resident

tourists will visit the Mediterranean region. "We are leading our economies in several aspects by providing employment, paying competitive wages, providing excellent career opportunities to our people in our communities... In growing our hospitality industry, together we can make difference," Aidi added. Anadolu Agency is the event's Global Communication Partner. This is the second time the agency is participating in the event.



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*Best Western Citadel Hotel Leaning against the historical city walls of Istanbul, Best Western Citadel Hotel offers its pink and white colored facade to the fluorescent blue of the Marmara Sea. A wonderful location, the hotel is situated at Sultanahmet, the heart of Istanbul (Old City), 5 walking minutes from Blue Mosque, Topkapı Palace, St. Sophia. You will have a pleasant stay in our authentic, yet well-equipped 25 rooms and 6 suites. In these rooms with air-conditioning, minibar, cable TV, Wireless, direct dial phone, hair dryer, you will feel at home. An additional restaurant with 90 persons capacity continues in the millennia old building tradition of Anatolia. Marmara Cafe , with a stained glass roof and facade, offers a beautiful view of the Marmara Sea. Here you can enjoy the view while listening to the music of water splashing down from a magnificent fountain. The Best Western Citadel Hotel welcomes you with traditional Turkish hospitality*





# TURKEY REPRESENTS ITSELF WELL AT WTM LONDON

Turkey stands out at major UK tourism event. Tourism industry sources expect recovery in Turkey visitor numbers in 2017

Turkey's tourism sector hopes for a tourism recovery and visitor numbers by 2017. In WTM in London, General Director of the Turkish Tourism Ministry's Promotion Office, Irfan Onal was present among other dignitaries and Turkey's 800-meter-square stand drew a lot of attention from tourism traders. Key attractions of the country like Istanbul, Mugla, Antalya, Diyarbakir, Denizli and Konya cities were promoted. Onal said that in Turkey, maximum visitors are from the UK. Due to recent militant attacks and disturbance in the country, there was a drop in visitor numbers, but the situation is expected to be normal in 2017. Turkey is one of the countries that attracts the most tourists from the U.K. There was a drop in tourist numbers in 2016 but we are very hopeful for 2017... We have more than 50 tourism sector representatives here." Another stand with its authentic Cyprus House design belonged to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). TRNC Tourism and Environment Minister Fikri Ataoglu visited the Turkish Cypriot stand at the event, saying he was pleased with the representation of his country at the world's second-biggest tourism fair. The TRNC is ready to compete with the world," he added. Turkish Airlines was also present to promote its global network. At the WTM, there were more than 50 tourism sector representatives from Turkey. There was also another stand from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Needless to say, the stands drew a lot of attention at the world's second-biggest tourism fair. The Turkish Airlines was also there at the WTM to showcase its global network.



# FUEL SUPPORT FOR TOURIST FLIGHTS TO TURKEY TO BE EXTENDED TO 2017

The validity of the Culture and Tourism Ministry's decision to provide \$6,000 (TL 20,363) in financial assistance to a group of travel agencies for each charter flight carrying tourists to Turkey via scheduled and non-scheduled flights will be extended to 2017.

Speaking at an event in Antalya, Turkey's popular holiday spot, Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı said they have discussed the issue with Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and the decision will be approved by the Cabinet on Monday. Accordingly, the earlier application of the amendment extending to the year-end has been extended to one more year. The tourism sector faced a downward trend in the number of tourists visiting after the Russian military jet downing crisis last November and several terrorist attacks in the country. As such, the government continues to take certain measures, such as providing financial support for flights, to support the sector to minimize the effects of the crisis. Described as a fragile sector, tourism, which experienced several negative events this year, saw a sharp decline in the number



Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı

of tourists. The number of tourists visiting Turkey decreased by 20.7 percent in the first six months of the year when compared to the same time period of the previous year. Relations between Russia and Turkey were frozen in November 2015 after Turkish jets downed a Russian Su-24 bomber near the Syrian border for violating Turkish airspace. In June, following the beginning of a normalization process between Moscow and Ankara, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the removal of restrictions on travel,

including a ban on tour packages. Russia's travel ban caused Turkey's tourism industry to lose what some estimate to be billions of dollars. The number of Russian tourists travelling to Turkey dropped by more than 90 percent compared to one year earlier. However, leaving behind a year in which many bad things occurred, the tourism sector is hopeful for 2017. Russia lifting its ban on chartered flights to Turkey, following the normalization process, is the main reason for this hope.

# Turkey most searched holiday destination on Yandex among Russian tourists: Company



Maxim Grishakov

Turkey is the most searched holiday destination on Yandex among Russian tourists, the search engine's commerce director, Maxim Grishakov, said at the World Tourism Forum on Dec. 10 in the southern resort of Antalya.

"When we analyze the holiday searches Russians have made, we saw that interest in Turkey has gained momentum. There has been a 32 percent increase in searches for Turkey in the travel category in 2016 compared to the same period last year. Turkey has become the most searched holiday destination in 2016, leaving Tunisia and Greece behind," Grishakov said.

Among the most searched holiday destinations in Turkey was Antalya's Kemer, followed by the province's Side district and the Mediterranean province of Marmaris.

Grishakov encouraged tourism experts to use Yandex's advertising platforms to contact their customers and emphasized the need for tourism ties between the two countries.

"There is a great tourism potential between Russia and Turkey. As Yandex, we are continuing to develop advertising solutions that focus on this potential. Both Russian and Turkish tourism companies can advertise their offers in the most productive ways by cooperating with Yandex. Yandex is being preferred by growing numbers of users in Turkey day by day. We are certain that we will be one of the most effective mediums in performance advertising fields in Turkish markets," Grishakov added.



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## TURKEY AIMS TO BOOST TOURISM WITH 2017 EXPOS DRIVE

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has announced that Turkey is planning to attend 112 expos in 56 different countries including Germany, Russia, Netherlands and UK, next year.

Attendance of the expos forms part of ministry attempts to publicize and market Turkey, which has experienced falling tourist numbers as a result of persistent security threats. It is hoped that representation at national and international tourism fairs will give Turkey a

broad platform to promote its historical and cultural values and in turn increase its tourist market share.

In addition to sea, sand, and sun based mass tourism adverts, Turkey will also promote its potential in culture, winter, highland, congress, health and golf tourism.

Diversification of Turkey's market and products will be the key aim.

According to the 2017 expo calendar published by the General Directorate of Promotion, Turkey will take part in 7 big expos, 75 expos as part of public and private sector cooperation, and 30 other expos via foreign delegations, bringing the total number to 112.

The ministry also aims to gravitate towards potential and developing markets such as the Middle East, South America, China, Japan and Southeast Asia, in addition to regular markets like Germany, Russia and UK. The Utrecht Tourism Fair held during January 10-15 in the Netherlands will be the first big expo which Turkey will attend.



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# China declares 2018 'Turkey Tourism Year'

China has declared 2018 as its "Turkey Tourism Year," in a move expected to boost ties between the two countries, Chinese Ambassador to Ankara Yu Hongyang said on Dec. 16.



China has declared 2018 as the 'Turkish Tourism Year' in China. This will increase the friendship between the two countries," Hongyang said at an event hosted by the Turkish Business and Industry Association (TÜSIAD) in Istanbul. He added that relations between the two countries have entered a period of "maturity and stability," which gave fresh development opportunities. TÜSIAD head

Cansen Başaran-Symes also underlined the importance of tourism relations between the two countries. "China has become the country that sent the most tourists abroad with 120 million people in 2015. The number of tourists going abroad in the next five years is estimated to reach 600 million. This is a very high figure. The rapidly growing Chinese population is in search of better quality products and services. Accordingly, besides

cultural tourism, different tourism areas such as shopping tourism, health tourism and golf tourism are becoming very popular among the Chinese people. Any efforts to attract Chinese tourists in these areas will create tremendous added value to the tourism sector in 2017," she said. Currently, Turkish Airlines flies to five cities in China and this number is expected to increase, according to officials.

# TURKISH AIRLINES AMONG THE BEST IN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



The best and worst performing airlines have been listed in a new consumer survey, for short-haul journeys, Turkish Airlines was rated as the best airlines with five-star ratings for its meals and seats while Vueling Airlines took place at the bottom of the list.

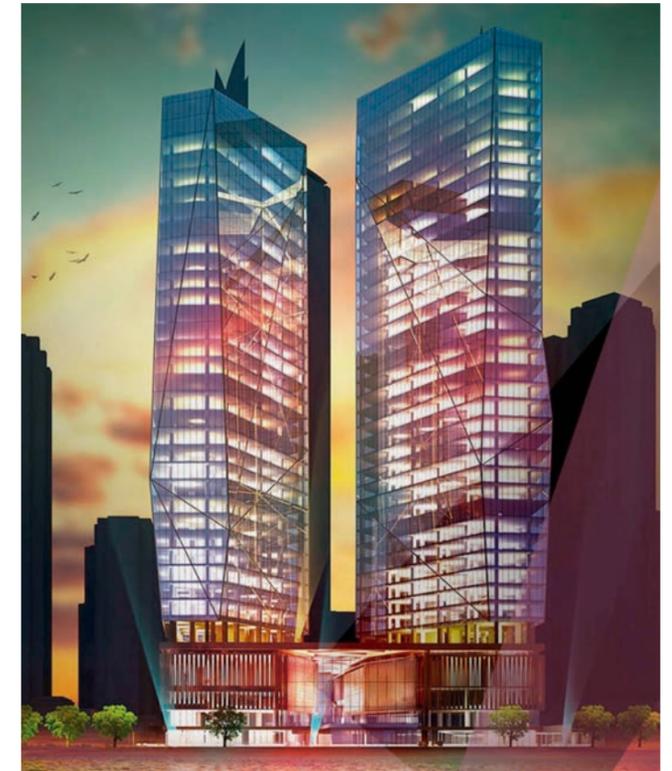
In the long haul category, Singapore Airlines was voted as the best, followed by Emirates and KLM. United Airlines came last. Over 7,500 Which? members scored airlines across several categories such as seat pitch, boarding, punctuality, food and drink, cabin comfort, customer service and seat comfort. For short-haul trips, Turkish Airlines took the top spot, with a customer score of 80 percent. It was followed by Guernsey carrier Aurigny Air Services in second with 76 percent and Scandinavian Airlines, which took third place with 75 percent. Spanish airline Vueling was ranked bottom of the short-haul carrier list. Rated as the best for the long haul survey, consumers awarded Singapore Airlines with a score of 91 percent overall, followed by Emirates and KLM with 82 percent and 78 percent respectively.



# TURKEY'S RIXOS TO OPEN 2ND DUBAI HOTEL NEXT YEAR

Rixos Hotels, a Turkish hospitality group, will open its new flagship hotel in Dubai's Jumeirah Beach Residence next year.

The Rixos Jumeirah Beach Dubai will be part of the Al Fattan Group's Crystal Towers. Rixos Hotels senior vice president of operations Erkan Yildirim said it decided to open its second hotel in Dubai as it is the most popular tourism destination in the Middle East and increases the market share. The company will open another hotel on Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island in 2018. It already operates two hotels in the UAE - Rixos The Palm Dubai and Rixos Bab Al Bahr, Ras Al Khaimah. The company is also expanding in newer markets such as Jeddah, Muscat, Salalah and Maldives. "Oman is another potential tourism destination and, in my opinion, Rixos Hotels will flourish in a country with such beautiful surroundings and scenic landscapes," Rixos Hotels senior vice president of operations Erkan Yildirim said. Established in 2000, Rixos Hotels has 27 hotels in countries such as Turkey, the UAE, Croatia, Switzerland, Egypt and Kazakhstan. It expects to add 32 new projects globally by 2018.



# Foreign tourist arrivals to Turkey drop 21 percent

The number of foreign arrivals to Turkey dropped by 21.3 percent to 1.35 million in November, compared to the same month in 2015, temporary data from the Tourism Ministry showed on Dec. 29.



This was the smallest shrinkage in foreign arrivals in the last eight months, as Turkey's tourism industry struggles amid political and security concerns. However, the plunge in arrivals from Europe continued in November, according to temporary data. The number of foreign people visiting Turkey declined to 24.05 million in the first 11 months of 2016, a 30.8 percent drop compared to the same period of 2015, after a series of bomb attacks, a diplomatic crisis with Russia, and the failed July 15 military coup attempt. The number of Russian tourists visiting Turkey saw a 77.3 percent decline in the first 11 months of the year, plummeting to 822,159. However, a visible increase has been seen in arrivals since normalization started in bilateral ties between the two countries. Georgia became the top largest tourist sender for Turkey, with more than 173,968 tourists visiting the country in November. Germany followed Georgia, with more than 131,217 Germans visiting the country in November, with an average 49 percent fall in arrivals from this country. In the first 11 months of the year, Germany, Georgia and the United Kingdom were the top sources of foreign arrivals to Turkey, according to data.

## MT ERCIYES RECEIVES TRIPADVISOR'S CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

Honoring accommodations, restaurants and attractions that consistently receive great traveler reviews on TripAdvisor, the travel website's Certificate of Excellence has recently been presented to Erciyes Ski Resort, in the central province of Kayseri.

As the highest mountain in central Anatolia, located in the Cappadocia region, with its summit reaching 3,916 meters (12,848 ft.), Mount Erciyes hosted 2 million local and international tourists last season, all while achieving high customer satisfaction. Murad Cahid Cingi, the chairman of the board of Erciyes A.Ş., said the center is proud to receive the award. The ski resort area on Mount Erciyes houses 10 hotels, with an almost 1,500 bed capacity, and offers a cozy atmosphere to families. The cable car system eases transportation issues, and the region hosts several international winter sports festivals, with its 34 ski tracks extending 102 kilometers (63 miles). Scheduled for March of next year, the International Ski Federation (FIS) Snowboard World Cup will be taking place in Erciyes. Around 120 snowboarders from around the world will compete in the tournament, which will be broadcast live to millions across the world. TripAdvisor is a comprehensive travel website that allows its visitors to join forums and share their comments, remarks and photos. The website is similar to a detailed travel guide as it offers its visitors data, information and options for accommodation, tourist attractions, must-see places and social events.



## 'LOST YEAR OF GROWTH'

Travel agency holiday sales declined by 5% this year, representing a 'lost year of growth', and winter bookings are still weak so far, according to the latest GfK market survey.

The German organised travel market has recorded its first revenue drop for years, with a 5% fall in holiday sales in the year ending October 2016, the market researchers said. Summer revenues dropped by 7%, its latest monthly analysis of bookings by 1,500 travel agencies found. The GfK figures are similar to those presented by the German Travel Association (DRV) at its recent annual conference in Berlin. According to the DRV figures, German tour operators saw their combined revenues drop by 4% to €26.3 billion in the

year ending October 31 while travel agency sales dropped by 2-3% to about €23 billion, with lower leisure travel sales and stable business travel sales. "The travel agency sector has effectively lost a year of growth," GfK commented. The main reason was an overall 29% fall in sales of holidays in the Eastern Mediterranean, which outweighed growth in Western European and other destinations. The DRV had put the fall in package holiday bookings for Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia at between 40% and 60%. Demand for winter holidays is also weak

at present, with an 11% drop in bookings compared to October 2015, leaving accumulated bookings so far for winter 2016/17 down by 8%, according to GfK. However, there was some light on the horizon for next year. Early bookings for summer 2017 are 1% ahead of the same period last year, and they accounted for nearly 47% of total revenues last month, 10 percentage points higher than in October 2015. Meanwhile, Germans are continuing to book more cruise holidays than ever before, with a dramatic 43% rise in bookings last month compared to October 2015, according to the monthly sales survey of some 2,500 travel agencies by IT services company TATS. They are now running at an overall 12% increase. In response to these trends, travel agents are currently more optimistic than in recent months after writing off this year and looking ahead to 2017, the latest fw 'sales climate index' conducted in early November showed. About one quarter now expect rising sales in the coming months and about half expect stable revenues, which is higher than the comparable figures one month earlier.



## NEW GENERAL MANAGER AT ISTANBUL CVB

Hicran Ozbuk has been appointed as the new General Manager of Istanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau (ICVB).



Ms. Ozbuk is also the General Manager of Istanbul Shopping Fest, a position she has held since 2014 and she will continue managing both positions. She graduated in Geophysical Engineering from Istanbul University and took her masters' degree both in Contemporary Management Techniques from Marmara University and European Integration from the Middle East Technical University (METU). She started her work life in 1995 and has been working in different sectors in management positions such as textile-fashion, pharmaceutical, logistics and tourism. She has also worked abroad in places such as New York and Tashkent. She will combine the many advantages of her experiences working in different sectors and regions with her new position at Istanbul CVB.



## Rezidor Hotel: Signs Radisson Blu Trabzon in Turkey

The Rezidor Hotel Group, a member of the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, has signed the Radisson Blu Hotel, Trabzon in Turkey.

The newly built hotel is the latest addition to the group's Turkish portfolio of 22 hotels in operation and under development. The hotel will open in Q2 2018 featuring 162 rooms, meeting rooms and a spa equipped with a swimming pool. The Radisson Blu Hotel, Trabzon will also have a large rooftop bar and café with views over the city and Boztepe Park, adjacent to the hotel. Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group executive vice president and chief development officer Elie Younes said in the statement: "This signing is in line with our growth strategy in Turkey where we are a leading player. We are pleased to enter the Trabzon market which is lacking internationally branded hotels and

offers great opportunities. We look forward to further supporting travel & tourism in the city and the country together with our experienced partners." Karadeniz Orme Sanayi Ve Dis Ticaret A.S, owner of the Radisson Blu Hotel, Trabzon added: "With the successful opening of the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ordu, and addition of the new Radisson Blu Hotel, Trabzon, we are

pleased to expand our portfolio with Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. As the main city on the coastline of the Black Sea, Trabzon offers enormous potential as a business and leisure destination. The city is a major trade centre as well as the capital of the Trabzon province, and thus a perfect fit for a global upper upscale hotel brand like Radisson Blu." Trabzon's cultural highlights include several museums, the Trabzon Castle as well as the home of the first Turkish president - all open for visitors. There are also several monasteries of interest in the local area and the hotel is located very close to the city centre. There are development plans in Trabzon, including building an artificial island to further attract tourism to the Black Sea.



## TURKISH TOURISM REPRESENTATIVE EXPECTS 3 MILLION RUSSIAN TOURISTS IN 2017

Over 3 million Russian tourists are expected to visit Turkey in 2017, with the tourism sector already experiencing some relief after the normalization of ties between the two countries, according to a leading tourism representative.

The head of the Professional Hotel Managers Association (POYD) noted that 2016 was a year of losses for the sector, but some recovery has started to be seen with the normalization of bilateral relations with Russia.

"The number of Russian tourists visiting Turkey increased [in the final months] to around 800,000 over this year, up from almost zero. This rapid increase makes us very optimistic about the coming year," said POYD head Hakan Duran.

Saying that Turkey saw sharp losses in the number of European arrivals this year, Duran said more campaigns should be conducted in order to recover Turkey's image. "Several significant image-building campaigns need to be carried out without any interruption ... We also need to visit all



12 billion in tourism revenue compared to 2015. "We always need to look to the future. We have already started to reap the yields of our campaigns to new markets, including China, India and Far East Asian countries," he said. The number of foreign arrivals to Turkey dropped by 25.8 percent to 2.45 million in October, compared to the same month in 2015, temporary data from the Tourism Ministry showed on Nov. 29.

European countries and tell their people how comfortable vacationing in Turkey still is. Foreigners who have visited our country could also make a contribution to these campaigns," he noted. According to Duran, Turkey will likely close 2016 with a decrease of around 40-45 percent in tourist numbers and losses of \$11-

This was the smallest shrinkage in foreign arrivals in the last seven months, as Turkey's tourism industry struggles amid political and security concerns. In the first 10 months of the year, Germany, Georgia and the United Kingdom were the top sources of foreign arrivals to Turkey, the ministry's data showed.

## NUMBER OF RUSSIAN TOURISTS TO TURKEY EXCEEDS FORECAST

Over 300,000 Russians spent their holidays in Turkey between September and October: Association of Tour Operators of Russia

The number of tourists from Russia to Turkey has exceeded our forecast for the last two months, head of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, Maya Lomidze, said on Thursday.

Speaking in a press conference in Moscow, Lomidze said over 300,000 Russians had spent their holidays in Turkey between September and October, tripling their expectations of 100,000 tourists for the period.

Tourists from Russia had stopped coming to Turkey after the Turkish military downed a Russian fighter jet in November last year; Russia had imposed sanctions ranging from tourism to investments on Turkey.

Lomidze said Turkey had again become a favorite destination for Russian tourists after the ban on charter flights was revoked at the end of August.



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