



Tangible signs of tourism growth from foreign markets

Over a million more passengers than last year are expected to fly to Greece from foreign markets this tourism season, the head of the Association of Hellenic Tourism Enterprises, Andreas Andreadis, told a Bank of Greece shareholders' meeting on Monday.

Andreadis expressed optimism for the season, with figures showing that the British market is reporting a rise of 20 percent, and the markets of Germany, France and the Scandinavian countries displaying growth of 15 percent. Developing tourism markets such as Russia, Ukraine, Israel and Turkey are also showing a rise in demand, leading to an increase of more than 20 percent in the number of seats available.

Andreadis stressed, however, that there are concerns about the markets of Italy, Spain and Bulgaria, as the financial troubles may not allow the emergence of growth trends toward Greece. He did add that

there has been increased interest in maritime and cruise tourism, though incoming conference tourism remains somewhat lackluster owing to the image of Athens and Thessaloniki as destinations.

Domestic tourism, on the other hand, remains a major cause for concern, as last year it stood at just 50 percent (or 1.5 billion euros) of where it was in 2008, Andreadis said, with a further decline expected this year – albeit a rather small one.

Andreadis added that the targets of 17 million foreign tourists and 11 billion euros in revenues from tourism are likely to be attained or even exceeded. Should a few crucial measures be taken, he noted, Greek tourism could in the next two to three years reach up to 20 million visitors, adding some 3 percentage points to the country's gross domestic product and tens of thousands of new jobs

Three in ten Greeks facing poverty risk

Thirty-one percent of the Greek population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2011, according to a report released by Eurostat on Tuesday. According to the report's figures, the percentage of Greeks at risk of poverty was above that of the European Union average which stood at 24.2 percent.

The report also pointed to 30.4 percent of children under the age of 18 being at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared to the EU's average of 27 percent. In the 18 to 64 years old age group the percentage reached 31.7 percent, compared to 24.3 in the EU, while in the senior citizen category the figure stood at

29.3 percent, compared to the EU average of 20.5 percent.

Education was a pivotal factor when determining the risk of poverty the report showed: Children whose parents had a low level of education faced a 50.2 percent risk of poverty, compared to the 49.2 percent average in the European Union.

Children whose parents had a medium level of education had a 28.7 percent poverty risk, compared to the EU average of 22.4 percent, while children whose parents had acquired a high level of education faced a 7.9 percentage of risk of poverty, compared to the EU's 7.5 percent.



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