

Italy – the promised land

Jul 06, 2011

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ITALY (eTN) - It is encouraging to learn that Italy may recover from its early 2011 inconstant tourist economy thanks to a confirmed increase in spending of over 2.8% versus the first quarter of the previous year, according to the findings of the Bank of Italy. This reversal trend is due to the efforts of Mr. Matteo Marzotto and Paolo Rubini, Director General and CEO of ENIT (Italy's national tourism agency).

Cultural tourism recorded the highest rate of satisfaction among guests originating from overseas, while "sun and beach" is foreseen to top the choice of guests during the Italian summer. The Veneto and Lazio regions are the highest in demand, while Lazio and Tuscany are leaders of overseas guest demand, according to the barometer of tour operators.

The findings have been conducted by ENIT through its foreign offices who have gathered information from the 118 major tour operators dedicated to the sale of tourist packages to the Italian destinations. German tourists, historical patrons of Italian tourist destinations, is under constant recovery (foreseen +10-25%) concentrating the demand on the northern and central areas of the Adriatic coast and the Garda lake district. Italian areas easily accessible by air, like the central area of Italy's mainland and Apulia and the islands of Sardinia and Sicily, are rampant on the list of preferences.

Also, the demand for Italy from Britain, Spain, Swiss, and Austrian France is on the increase, according to ENIT research. As for the western European markets, Russian tourists are recording an increase in the purchase of packages, up from 60 to 90%. Their preference is for beach destinations, such as Veneto, Sicily, the Neapolitan southern coast, and Sardinia Island coasts.

Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary follow suit in minor proportion. The emerging markets (BRIC - Brazil, Russia, India, and China) have also recorded double-digit increases: China is up from 30% to 70%, India is up from 10% to 35%, and Brasil is up from 15% to 45%. USA tour operators have recorded an increase of sales for packages to Italy ranging from 15% to 40%, with the art cities, such as Tuscany, at the top of the list.

The UAE tourists give their preference to tailor-made packages mainly for couples and multi-destination packages to Europe other than Italy. Japan, now on the recovery, is showing interest towards UNESCO destinations in Italy, however, it is still a guess as to what the summer flow will hold as compared to the previous year.

Thanks to its geographical position and environment, Italy remains a privileged tourist destination, stated Mr. Matteo Marzotto, President of the ENIT agency. He added: "While undergoing a period of

readjustment following its severe economic revolution, Italy confirm its importance, particularly towards the foreign markets, proposing its brand and its high potentialities.”

Italy is back in business, according to ENIT. “Italy need to maintain its position (in each single market) and the winning strategies applied. Plus a plan of refreshment, which involve[s] ideas and funds, of which ENIT is penalized, and forcing to streamline our ongoing [efforts], which we [are] try[ing] to optimize in order to keep up with our plan.”

The views of Mr. Paolo Rubini, CEO of ENIT, are positive regarding the increase in the demand for Italy from the foreign markets, and he considers it a reward from the efforts of the ENIT team. “We are now operating on a ‘Club of Product,’ which places our attention on strategies of segmentation of the international demand and propos[es] a coherent and personalized package of the national product. Our future strategy will be to penetrate the most important areas of Brasil, India, Russia, China (BRIC) applying effective slogans such as: ‘Italy Comes to You’ and ‘Art and made In Italy,’ on which we rely upon to stimulate the tourists ‘attention towards our country”.