

internet site review

www.unwto.org/

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)



The World Tourism Organization is the world leading international organization in the field of travel and tourism today. Although this web site has already been elaborated in our Journal (Vol. 43 number 5, Vol. 47 No. 1 and Vol. 48 No 1), due to its great contribution to global tourism development and significant improvements in the content of the UNWTO web site we have decided to devote additional attention to this web site.

In 2003 the World Tourism Organization has become a specialized agency of the United Nations. Because of its former confusing abbreviation with the World Trade Organization the organization abbreviation has been changed into the UNWTO and their web address has been changed accordingly. Furthermore, the UNWTO has improved, upgraded and modernized its web site so that in the last decade it is constantly a rich and reliable source of information on a range of tourism related issues.

The UNWTO is intergovernmental organization whose membership in 2007 is comprised of 157 state governments and more than 300 affiliate members from the travel and tourism industry representing local tourism authorities, tourism associations, educational and scientific institutions and private sector. Transforming the WTO to UN agency has not changed its initial task to develop responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism stimulating business and economic

development worldwide by minimizing its negative social and environmental impacts. Still the UNWTO serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know – how.

The UNWTO's web site is well organized, modernly designed and its main advantage is fast loading. The home page has horizontal main menu, in the centre of the home page there are UNWTO's top news with different menu on the left and right side of the home page. For the first time visitor the home page, can be somewhat confusing because of the plenitude of information, but it is understandable due the wide range of aspects that UNWTO is engaged into. For these visitors there is a "Search" button available at right side of the home page.

The horizontal main menu of the home page has five buttons: "About UNWTO", "Member States", "Affiliate Members", "Programmes" and "Regional Activities". Historical overview of development of the World Tourism Organization from initial initiative in 1925 on the International Congress of Official Tourist Traffic Associations to the present UN agency dedicated to tourism is described in section "About UNWTO". Button "Regional Activities" is devoted to tourism development in Africa, America, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, South Asia and in the Middle East. Section "Programmes" (in horizontal main menu but also at the left side menu) have sections about affiliate members and partnerships, UNWTO conferences, coordination initiatives in destination management, development assistance, technical cooperation activities, sustainable tourism development, education and knowledge management, information and communication and market trends in tourism.

The main advantage of this web site is that it is very reliable and favored source of information for all tourism researchers and professionals. At the same time abundance of information can be a bit confusing for

the inexperienced visitors which can be considered as the main disadvantage of this web site. At the home page there are buttons for several different languages (English, Spanish, France, Russian and Arabic) although in this moment only a few articles are in the other languages besides English.

Section named "Facts and Figures" is definitely the most beneficial because it provides information on international tourism worldwide, from the latest available statistics on international tourist arrivals, tourism receipts and expenditure. This section is not emphasized enough at the home page. It is located at the right side main menu somewhere at the end of the page. Hereafter in this section there are eleven buttons on the left side: historical overview of world tourism, tourism in the world economy, tourism highlights, tourism barometer, tourism market trends, tourism vision 2020, tourism indicators, UNWTO publications, methodological notes etc. These data are all free of charge. Overview of international tourism flows is available for the period between 1950 and 2005 for the different tourism regions and for the world. The publication named "UNWTO Tourism Highlights" is a brief publication in pdf format (about ten pages of information concerning international tourist arrivals, receipts and expenditure in the tourism regions and in the world). It includes statistics and analysis on international tourist arrivals, international tourism receipts, a summary of tourism results by region, top tourism destinations by arrivals and receipts, outbound tourism by generating region and the ranking of the top tourism spenders. The data in the last published "UNWTO Highlight 2006 edition" are for the year 2005, due to the problem of collecting the international data in tourism sector. Some more recent data are published in their publication named "UNWTO World Tourism Barometer". Section "Tourism Market Trends" is the WTO's regular series of reports whose objective is to present international tourism trends in the world as well as in each region, subregion and country. "Tourism 2020 Vision" is the UNWTO's long-term forecast and assessment of tourism

development up to the first 20 years of the new millennium. An essential outcome of the Tourism 2020 Vision is quantitative forecast covering a 25-year period, with 1995 as the base year and forecasts for 2010 and 2020.

One of the most interesting parts of the UNWTO web site "Facts and Figures" section is the part named "Publications", located on the right side of the UNWTO's homepage. Today the UNWTO library offers about 650 books in English, French, Spanish, Russian or Arabic. Every year this list is extended by some 30 or 40 titles. These titles are sorted in categories - for example: ecotourism, education and training, ethics, finance, sustainable development, tourism forecast, market trends, market research, quality etc.

Top news at the UNWTO's home page are related to the World tourism day project, to the climate change and its influence on tourism, tourism satellite account, sustainable tourism development, eliminating poverty and bringing jobs to people in developing countries by tourism. Additionally, the "SOS travel" section is related to the regions infected by avian flue to protect tourists on their journeys, and here is announcement about upcoming UNWTO's conferences and events etc.

Section "World tourism day" is in this year dedicated to women's achievements in the tourism. The project is celebrating on 27th September each year by appropriate events on selected themes.

What are the actual tourism trends in the world? In the top news UNWTO experts indicate that the year 2007 has started on a higher than expected note for global tourism. From January through April, international tourist arrivals worldwide rose by over 6 percent to 252 million, representing an additional 15 million arrivals as against the same period in 2006.

In summary, this UNWTO's web site gives valuable information for the entire tourism industry and we kindly recommend to our readers to visit it.

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