



Hacer Aydın, the Director of EMITT - East Mediterranean International Tourism & Travel Exhibition- which is one of the 5 top tourism exhibitions worldwide, stated that it is vital for the government to provide stronger support to overcome the crisis experienced in the tourism industry due to COVID-19 pandemic.

## Tourism Industry Needs Stronger Government Support

Tourism is one of the hardest-hit sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic, which first emerged in the first days of the new year in China and spread across the whole world in a very short time, leading to a global economic crisis. The representatives of the sector, which has created over one million direct employment opportunities and contributed \$34,5 billion to the country's economy in 2019 alone, are preparing to come out stronger for the 2021 season by surviving 2020, which is expected to be a tough year for the sector, with minimum damage. Hacer Aydın, Director of EMITT, an exhibition organized by international exhibition company Hyve Group, said that, according to the statements made by the Coronavirus Scientific Board, if everyone strictly follows the measures to be taken, they expect the pandemic to be brought under control in 2 to 3 months in Turkey. Aydın further added that the beginning of the tourism season, which was revised by the Minister of Tourism Mehmet Ersoy to be at the end of May, gives us clues about what awaits us in the sector in 2020 and 2021. Underlining the importance of keeping the sector alive with strong government support during this period, Aydın shared that losses can be compensated by the travel demand, which is expected to increase following the elimination of the risk of dying from the pandemic as of autumn 2020.

### The 2020 Tourism Season is Far From Reaching the Global Targets

Stating that "According to the World Tourism Organization, the number of people traveling before the outbreak was 1.4 billion. The outbreak reduced this mobility by 98 percent. We can say that the remaining 2% travel due to force majeure. It would not be right to expect everything to go back to normal when the outbreak is brought under control; rather, this will be the first step towards a new period. That is, even if the pandemic fades in June 2020, the times when people could leave their homes and travel safely will come much later. In other words, it is a remote possibility for other countries around the globe, as well as Turkey, to achieve their 2020 forecasts in terms of tourism revenues," Hacer Aydın also expressed that according to data obtained from TÜRSAB (Association of Turkish Travel Agencies), in the best-case scenario, the sector will be hit by losses up to 40% and the market, which depends on international tourist arrivals and defined as "incoming market," will realize significant losses in the first six-month period.

### The Most Optimistic 2020 Scenario for Tourism: 20 Million Tourists, \$20 Billion Revenue

Expecting that Turkey will host 20 million tourists in 2020 and tourism revenues will be narrowed down to \$15 billion compared to 2019 in the best-case scenario, Aydın continued her words as follows: "2 million online travel bookings, which are made every day globally, are no longer made. In other words, unfortunately, the best data we have suggests that there will be significant losses for the tourism sector in 2020. As you know, the tourism sector keeps up to date with the latest

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developments at international exhibitions and identifies the trends for the upcoming season and most popular destinations between January and April every year. Predictions are made regarding the amount of quota allocated for the domestic and international markets, and both hosted buyers and hotels sign agreements based on these predictions. We have been far behind our global targets due to the spread of COVID-19 and announcement of pandemic emergency and we, as Turkey, should forget our expectations in terms of international tourist arrivals.

### **Marketing Approaches will Highlight Hygiene Practices**

Stating that cruise tourism season is over before even it started for 2020, air travel demand will decline, or seating arrangement in airplanes will change and passengers will be seated with at least one empty seat between each other as on the buses, and in return, this will lead to an increase in the ticket prices and make the travel more expensive, Aydın added that tourism sector will adapt to a "new normal":

"The way big crowds enjoy their vacations in resorts, or five-star hotels will change. In other words, villa holiday alternatives of the same resorts will gain popularity and people will not prefer to share their swimming pool or vacation area with others. 'All-Inclusive' option will become a type of service that people will no longer prefer. Congress tourism will be severely affected in 2021. Conferences or congresses will be held through Skype or different platforms. People will prefer to travel with their private cars as much as their budget allows for holidays. For these reasons, while expecting an increase in camping & caravan tourism revenues, hygiene will become an important factor when it comes to deciding on the services provided and marketing approaches.

### **All Payments and Debts of the Tourism Sector Should be Suspended for 3 Months**

Stating that the Economic Stability Shield is an important step taken by the government, Aydın underlined that it is critical for the government to rapidly implement broader economic support packages for the tourism sector in this regard. One of the most important efforts made by the Minister of Tourism, Mehmet Ersoy together with the Minister of Treasury and Finance, Berat Albayrak in the recent period is related to the refund periods of hosted buyers. Following the draft regulation in process expected by all sector members, the refunds of the package tours will be paid to the consumers 2 months and 14 days after the relevant airline company restarts its flights," Aydın said that the hosted buyers will be relieved with this regulation. Saying that the amount of support provided should be increased radically, Aydın emphasized that broader subsidies are vital for the sector to end 2020 with minimal damage. Aydın continued her words as follows: "The 3-month moratorium on all repayments and debts of the tourism sector, which contributes most to Turkey's foreign exchange earnings, is a step that needs to be taken urgently. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism's budget allocated for the promotion of Turkey for 2020-assuming that promotion processes probably will be postponed- can be used for suspension or postponement of debt payments of the sector. It is necessary to prevent layoffs affecting 150,000 people working in the sector, to suspend all taxes to be paid to the government (SSI, Withholding, and other taxes), to suspend and defer bank loan repayments and interest rates of these loans, and to restructure these debts. It is vital to

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provide a "lifeline" for the tourism industry, which has contributed significantly to the foreign exchange earnings of Turkey.

### **Tourism Boom is Expected After Pandemic Ends**

As well as sharing the near term forecasts related to the crisis, Aydın stated that the tourism sector may have a massive boom if everything will be brought under control, and it will be possible for Turkey to break all records in both domestic and foreign markets. Aydın stated the following on the matter: "If this crisis will subside with the waning of the pandemic in June 2020, I predict that only domestic tourists will contribute to the tourism sector during summer. When it comes to the other scenario, if COVID-19 will completely fall off the global agenda around September 2020 and we reach the days when it is 100% safe to go out, then I can expect a big boom in the tourism industry. This boom will affect EMITT quite positively. Like in other countries around the world, tourism destinations, hosted buyers, agencies, hotels, and all the players in the tourism sector will use all their resources for promotional purposes since it is crucial to tell people that adaptation to a "new normal" is achieved in a sector that encompasses 1.4 billion people. In our 25th year, I believe that there will be huge participation in EMITT since it will be the first exhibition of the sector in 2021 and the sector will reach a peak. Undoubtedly, the realization of this prediction totally depends on the virus pandemic to be completely left off our agenda until September at the latest and encouraging traveling in a 100% safe world. Holidaymakers will be very hungry for traveling. For this reason, world tourism will see a strong growth momentum at the end of the crisis. People who get frustrated sitting at home will throw themselves down on the streets and start traveling, which will increase the demand rapidly."

### **About Hyve Group**

Hyve Group is an international exhibition company that organizes more than 120 events in the world with 17 global offices in 14 countries with more than 1,000 experienced personnel. Hyve Group is a next-generation global events business whose purpose is to create unmissable events, where customers from all corners of the globe share extraordinary moments and shape industry innovation. Hyve Group plc was announced as the new brand name of ITE Group plc in September 2019, following its significant transformation under the Transformation and Growth (TAG) program. Our vision is to create the world's leading portfolio of content-driven, must-attend events delivering an outstanding experience and ROI for our customers. In Turkey, Hyve Group organizes the leading exhibitions of Turkey in the industries of construction (**Yapı - Turkeybuild İstanbul**), tourism (**EMITT**), cosmetics (**BeautyEurasia**), food (**WorldFood İstanbul**), rail systems and logistics (**Eurasia Rail**), by drawing its strength from global network in the region.

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