



## Worldwide Development Tendency of International Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the economic and social importance of tourism, its relationship with other economic sectors, and development trends. Economic indicators and statistics were analyzed, and tourism recovery situations and forecasts were analyzed throughout the world.

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### INTRODUCTION

The fact that tourism is one of the most important sectors of the economy in the whole world was clearly demonstrated during the pandemic. Tourism, which is related to many sectors of the economy, proved that it occupies a significant place in the economic indicators of the country in this period.

"Millions of jobs and businesses around the world, in countries at all levels of development, depend on a strong and thriving tourism sector. Tourism has become a driving force for protecting natural and cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations" says Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization [1]

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimates that disruptions in the tourism

industry will reduce global GDP by 1.5-2.8 percent. In addition, the decrease in the number of tourists will cause up to 120 million people to lose their jobs.

A sharp and unexpected decline in the number of tourists has halted many of the social and economic benefits of this sector. The tourism sector, which makes up 80 percent of small business entities, including family businesses, takes every tenth job. At the beginning of the crisis, the UNWTO considered three possible scenarios, depending on the timing and size of the lifting of restrictions for the tourism industry in 2020. It is expected that the flow of global tourists will decrease by 70% compared to 2019.

The pandemic has not spared any country, including the tourism industry. However, the most obvious consequences of the crisis will be in countries where tourism is the main source of income for the population and the key to economic prosperity. Tourism plays a crucial role in the economy of many small developing countries and least developed countries, primarily in Africa. Tourism, on average, generates 30 percent of export earnings, and in some cases even more. For example, in the Republic of Palau, which became a member of the UNWTO in 2019, tourism accounts for 90 percent of all exports.

It should also be noted that tourism is one of the main areas of employment for women and contributes to gender equality. At the same time, tourism contributes greatly to the promotion and protection of endangered cultural and natural heritage, including ecosystems and wildlife that attract tourists to developing countries.

Statistics show that countries with a warm climate and access to the sea have traditionally relied on tourism and have been tempted not to develop other sectors of the economy. It should also be understood that in some countries the entire volume of exports is minimal. If the whole country is poor, the industry is not developed and does not export at all, the share of tourism there can be high, despite the fact that tourism in general is not very developed.

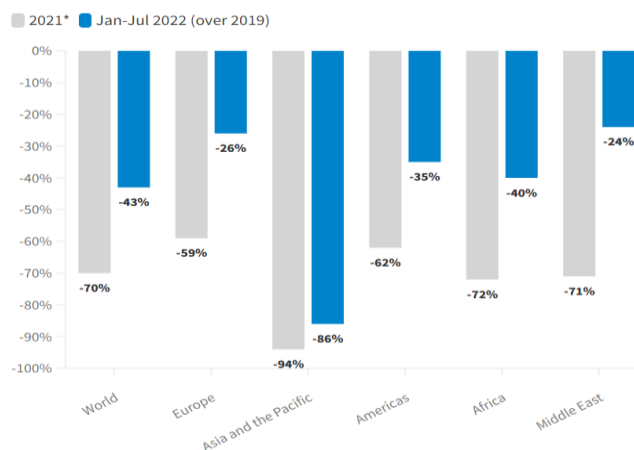
Therefore, the large value of the share in tourism exports may not mean anything at all. This reflects the importance of tourism in the country's economy in general, without evaluating the level of the economy itself. For example, France has been the world leader in the number of tourists received for many years, but at the same time has a minimal share of tourism income in total exports.

Countries whose economies are highly dependent on tourists are rarely countries with high levels of economic development, democracy and human rights. Economists' conclusions show that the economy of each country should be as diversified as possible and not depend on one industry.[3]

International tourism continued to show clear signs of recovery, with arrivals in the first seven months of 2022 at 57 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

According to UNWTO's latest World Tourism Barometer, the number of international tourists in January-July 2022 almost tripled (+172%) compared to the same period in 2021. This means the sector has recovered almost 60% from pre-pandemic levels. The strong recovery reflects strong demand for international travel, as well as the easing or lifting of travel restrictions to date (86 countries had no COVID-19 restrictions as of September 19, 2022).

During this period, 474 million tourists traveled around the world, and in the same months of 2021, this figure was 175 million. According to estimates, a total of 207 million international visits were registered between June and July 2022, which is more than double the number of the same two months last year. These months make up 44 percent of the total number of arrivals registered in the first seven months of 2022. Europe received 309 million such visits, which is 65% of the total number of arrivals.



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) @ \* Change over 2019 (provisional data)  
Data as collected by UNWTO, September 2022. Published: 26/09/2022

**Figure 1. International tourist visit**

### **Europe and the Middle East are leading the recovery**

Europe and the Middle East recorded the fastest recovery in January-July 2022, with arrivals up 74% and 76%, respectively, compared to 2019. Europe received nearly three times as many international arrivals (+190%) in the first seven months of 2021, driven by strong intra-regional demand and travel from the US.

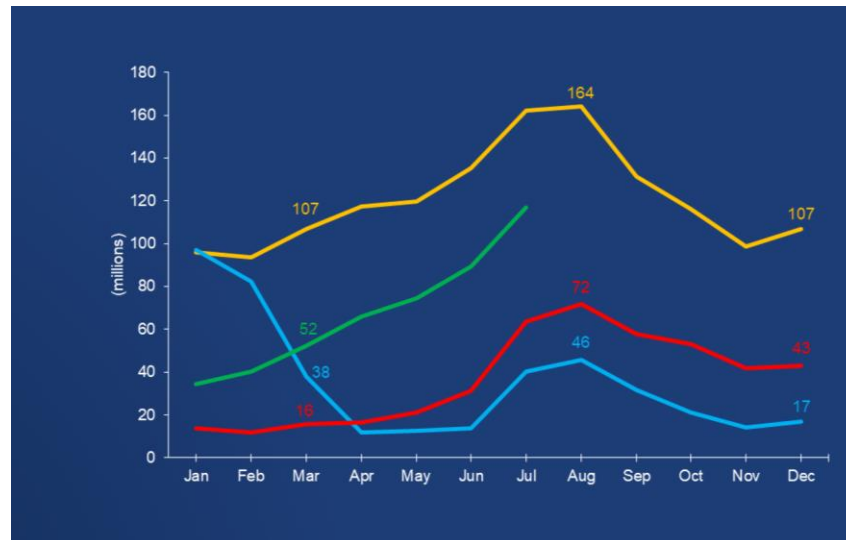
The region saw particularly large numbers in June (-21% compared to 2019) and July (-16%), reflecting the summer season. July arrivals rose to about 85% of 2019 levels. The lifting of travel restrictions to a large number of destinations also contributed to these results (as of September 19, 2022, 44 European countries had no restrictions related to COVID-19).

The number of international arrivals in the Middle East in January-July 2022 increased by almost four times compared to the same period last year (+287%). In July, arrivals exceeded pre-pandemic levels (+3%), as evidenced by the impressive results reported by Saudi Arabia after the Hajj (+121%).

The Americas (+103%) and Africa (+171%) also recorded strong growth in January-July 2022 compared to 2021, reaching 65% and 60%, respectively, compared to 2019. In Asia-Pacific (+165%), arrivals doubled in the first seven months of 2022, although they remain 86% below 2019 levels as some borders remain closed to non-essential travel.[4]

The forecast for the rest of the year is cautiously optimistic. While the results are expected to be above average, tourism experts pegged the September-December 2022 period at 111, down from 125 in the previous four months, indicating a drop in confidence. Almost half of experts (47%) see a positive outlook for September-December 2022, 24% do not expect major changes, and 28% believe it could be worse. Experts also believe in 2023, as 65% of tourism is expected to perform better than in 2022.

About 61% of experts now see international visits likely to return to 2019 levels in 2024 or later, while those who believe they will return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 have fallen to 27% from 48% in the May survey.[5]

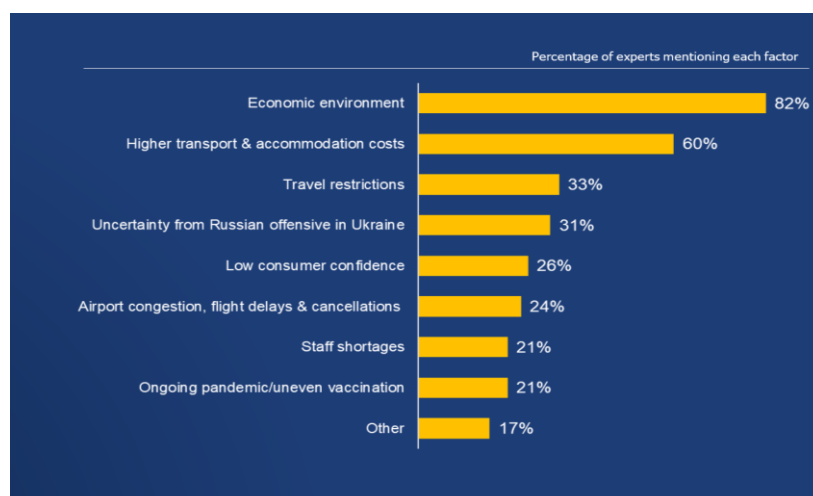


**Figure 2. The number of tourists in the world by year**

**Slow and uneven recovery.** The pace of recovery remains slow and uneven in different regions of the world due to varying degrees of travel restrictions, vaccination rates and traveler confidence. Europe and the Americas recorded the highest results in 2021 compared to 2020 (+19% and +17% respectively), but both are still 63% below pre-pandemic levels.

By subregion, the Caribbean performed best (+63% from 2020, but down 37% from 2019), with some destinations approaching or exceeding pre-pandemic levels. The Southern Mediterranean, Europe (+57%) and Central America (+54%) also grew significantly, but still below 2019 levels at 54% and 56% respectively. North America (+17%) and Central Eastern Europe (+18%) also exceeded 2020 levels.

Meanwhile, arrivals in Africa in 2021 increased by 12 percent compared to 2020, although this is down 74 percent from 2019. Arrivals in the Middle East are down 24 percent from 2020 and 79 percent from 2019. Asia-Pacific arrivals are still 65% below 2020 levels and 94% below pre-pandemic levels as many destinations remain closed to non-essential travel.[5]



**Figure 3. Asian factors affecting the recovery of international tourism**

Experts have determined the main factors affecting the recovery of international tourism, analyzing the political and economic situation in 2022. According to him, the economic environment has the most significant influence on the recovery of international tourism with an 82% indicator. High transportation and accommodation costs also have a direct impact on tourists' ability to travel (60%). Rising inflation and soaring oil prices are driving up transport and accommodation costs, while putting pressure on consumers' purchasing power and savings. Russia's and Ukraine's military actions, travel restrictions, and low consumer confidence rank at 33%, 31%, and 26%, respectively, with confidence and trust building the most important priority in the current recovery. The number of trips is expected to increase only if people feel that they can travel without risking their health and life. In addition, the recovery of international tourism is affected by airport congestion, flight delays and cancellations by 24%, staff shortage by 21%, and the ongoing pandemic by 21%.

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