



## THE IMPACT OF ATTEMPTS, EPIDEMICS AND CLIMATIC CHANGES ON THE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

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### Abstract

*Global tourism industry maintains a cautious optimism before summer 2016, but the outlook is overshadowed by the fear of terrorist attacks. Professionals in the tourism sector assume most of the time, almost like a dogma of faith that tourism manages to piece itself back together in a matter of a few years after a catastrophe of all manner and sizes. As long as the proper safety measures are taken, tourists will continue to travel and the travel market will continue to grow.*

### Keywords

Global tourism, travel,  
international tourists,  
terrorist attacks

### 1. Introduction

Global tourism industry maintains a cautious optimism before summer 2016, but the outlook is overshadowed by the fear of terrorist attacks. We do not enjoy evil upon another, especially when it involves loss of life, but falling demand for Turkey this summer might bring more tourists on Romanian seaside.

According to the World Travel Market survey, 64% of managers believe that the tourism sector will see a "slight increase" next year, while 15% expect a "significant increase" in activity. In addition to the economic environment, one of the factors determining tourism companies to be optimistic about the years 2016 and 2017 the cheapening of aviation fuel, due to lower oil prices. Moreover, even WTM managers interviewed expect that within five years, intercontinental low cost flights to consolidate because of the lower prices of fuel.

However, the fear of terrorist attacks or the perception of insecurity in certain destinations due to the geopolitical situation will continue to have a significant weight when it comes to choosing the destination.

In this sense, according to the survey conducted among consumers in the UK, four in ten tourists admit that in 2015 they could not fully relax during the holidays, because at one time they were afraid of the possibility of suffering an attack. 2015 and 2016 will remain in the annals of tourism as a year marked by terrorism. Since the Islamic State declared war on tourism, in March 2015 began a period of uncertainty whose consequences will extend into future years. It should be recalled that the killing of 17 tourists in March 2015 in

Tunisia, took place after the large number of news about the atrocities committed by the Islamic State in Syria, Iraq and Libya. In fact, the Islamic State, Al Qaeda, the Front Al-Nusrat or Boko Haram is very different names to refer to organizations that have much in common: using terror to become visible, which succeeded in 2015 and this year, with the execution of numerous attacks worldwide. Acting in earnest in open conflicts such as in Syria or Iraq, or as unpredictable "lone wolves", jihadists succeeded to sow fear globally and become a threat to any corner of the planet.

One in four international tourists have changed their vacation plans last year because of concerns about safety or health conditions in the countries intending to visit. Terrorism is the main reason for canceling trips. This is evidenced by a study presented by the insurance company AIG Travel in collaboration with the companies CMO Council, Travelzoo and GeoBranding Center. The study is based on an online survey conducted among 2,107 consumers in North America (55%), Europe (39%) and rest of the world (5%) in October of 2015, before the attacks of 13 November in Paris.

The main reasons of tourists to avoid traveling to certain destinations are: 83% - terrorist activities; 49% - military conflicts; 33% - political convulsions; 31% - disease outbreaks. On the other hand, Ebola was the number one disease, with which most international travelers were concerned about (mentioned by 67% of tourists).

Prospects for 2016 complicate in the Turkish tourism sector after the attacks in Ankara in October 2014 that

killed 103 people, in Istanbul on 12 January 2015, that killed ten tourists, eight of whom were Germans, the conflict with Kurds (three of the 2015 attacks were directed against meetings convened by the left pro-Kurdish in the country), the proximity of the civil war in Syria and the travel restrictions to Turkey imposed by the Russian government, as after recent attacks. The explosion in Istanbul, which took place in a context that was already complicated for the tourism industry in Turkey, in the tourist center of the tourist city and that there were German and Norwegian tourists among victims seems to indicate that the impact will be greater in the issuing European markets, on the downside of tourist arrivals to Turkey on short and medium term.

The board chairman of tour operator TUI, stated that „it is the time when families make reservations for the summer holidays in Turkey, but many prefer to wait; we must live with uncertainty and to offer alternatives”.

Also, the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stressed that the country Eurasian "is the first priority of all terrorist organizations operating in the region, as Turkey fights against them decisively", noting also that the attack was committed by "a member of Dáesh (the Islamic State), a foreign citizen. " The attack produced a profound impact on the tourism industry, hitting the Turkish economic interests, because many reservations were canceled moments after the attack, said president of the Association of Tourism Sultanahmet in the daily newspaper Hürriyet.

In turn, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), through its Secretary General, Taleb Rifai, condemned "firmly" the attack in Istanbul: "This tragic event reminds us once again that we are facing a global threat that requires a coordinated response by all governments and the international community. Turkey is a leading tourist destination and we are sure it will continue to be".

The weekly stopovers cruise of company MSC Cruises in the cities of Istanbul and Izmir, from 29 March 2016, will be replaced, for the moment, with stops in the Greek capital, Athens, and Mykonos, one of the most popular Greek islands.

The largest European tour operator, TUI Group, admitted shortly after the attack that the destination will fall significantly.

Regarding the safest destinations considered for tourists to enjoy a vacation, stands the Pacific Islands. Recently, summer destinations in Western Europe, particularly in France, Spain and Italy, are under terrorist threat.

The situation of conflict or disorder (military conflicts or illness) is "very low" for countries such as Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Scandinavia.

In any event, terrorism kills daily in countries like in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan but aims to achieve a global media impact through heart attacks in the richest countries and of course, safer. Other acts of extreme violence last year occurred in places like: Madiguri (Nigeria), Biyi (Iraq), Kunduz (Afghanistan), Kerawa (Cameroon), N'Djamena (Chad) or Al Kadih (Saudi Arabia) with hundreds dead. Only in Syria, in four years since the start of the war, the death toll has exceeded 250,000, many of them in terrorist actions.

France went through a dramatic and unprecedented episode in January 2015 by killing 12 of the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo cartoonists, by brothers suspected Al-Qaeda militants. Following this strategy, it was woven the biggest terrorist attack in the history of France on 13 November 2015, when several jihadists of the Islamic State have sown terror in Paris with automatic weapons and explosives in coordinated attacks.

There were 129 dead and 80 seriously injured, and the French capital was paralyzed and the army took to the streets. Jihadists succeeded in both instances to violate mainframe security systems of one of the most important European capitals, as they did in other cases in different parts of the country, all streamed live on hundreds of television channels and social networks around the world, the goal being to media affect immediately. Following these attacks France finally declared war to jihadism. Five months after the terrorist attacks of 13 November in Paris, the French capital's tourism sector is still suffering the consequences of those attacks. The city is less crowded than usual and the visitors decrease was observed in hotel occupancy and decreasing the number of overnight stays. For now, hotels have been reluctant to lower their prices, although offering more promotions, such as a discount of up to 30% for a stay of one or two nights or even vouchers for meals year-end. However, establishments which suffer most are those heavily dependent on travelers from distant destinations, as it was observed a significant decline in tourists from China, the US and Japan. Occupancy rate of flights between airports in Japan and the French capital reached from 80% to 40% following the attacks, the company said. In total, reservations for flights to travel to Paris for Christmas fell by 13% over the same period last year, according to the GDS sites managed by market research company ForwardKeys. Countries that have declined the most bookings after bombings were China (-131%), Italy (-115%), Brazil (-115%) and Spain (-113%).

In fact, after the attacks from the 13 N, request to travel to Paris fell sharply during the following week.

Thus, *the "net bookings"* (considering both daily reservations and cancellations) *decreased by 101%*

over the same period last year, *between November 14 and November 21.*

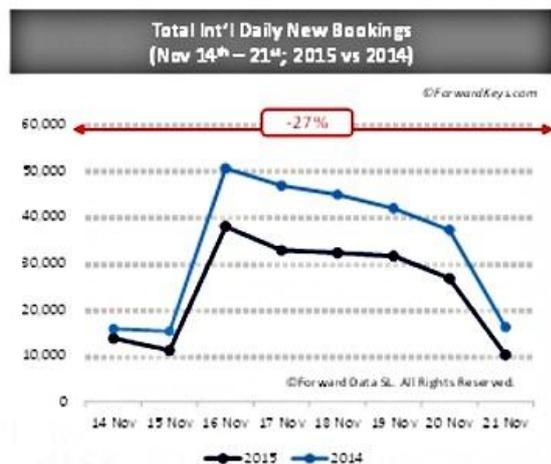
Countries that have the most numerous declined bookings after the attacks were *China (-131%), Italy (-115%), Brazil (-115%) and Spain (-113%).*

The analysis of GDS's data shows that cancellations after the attacks were made *"on the last moment of immediate travel plans, especially among business travelers"* explains company founder ForwardKeys.

"The cancellation period has ended, which means that the storm already stays left behind, but *the bookings trend still does not show signs of recovery,*" said Olivier Jager.

In fact, the total number of new bookings for traveling to Paris in the coming months is *27% below* the volume registered in the same period last year.

In the week after the attacks, the restaurants in Paris have recorded a decrease of 50% of customers and the hotels a decrease of 22%.



Source: Hostel.com, 2016

Figure 1.

However, Euromonitor forecasts show that, although there may be some slowdown in the whole country, France will continue to grow this year and next because its bid far exceeds Paris, representing 18% of total international arrivals. Tourism is very integrated in all regions and acts as a buffer to the impact of the capital, the report said.

France is the first tourist power receivers in the world, with over 84 million international tourists in 2014 - ahead of the US with over 74 million and Spain with almost 65 million - according to the World Tourism Organization. And much of the success is due to the strong attractions of Paris throughout the world - is the fifth city in the world globally as the number of international arrivals, is one of the most visited destinations in the world, with 15 million international

tourists in 2014 and adding over 32 million domestic tourists.

"However, uncertainty about safety - and possible policy responses to counterattacks - that city the now lives, can make tourism to decline in the medium and long term," says head of Euromonitor International Travel Division.

Some of its main issuing markets such as Britain and the United States showed declines, and the trend could worsen from now, especially for visitors from North America, that are possible to choose other European destinations. Russian tourism, also very common in the shopping tourism and luxury segment in this city, has seen a sharp drop last year due to the recession crisis in Ukraine and in Russia.

Among foreign visitors that increased their presence in the city, stand Asians, especially Chinese, representing 1.5 million visitors.

Among Europeans, Britons, Germans and Italians call the main major emitters. Although most visitors are leisure, Paris has a large representation of business travelers, which in 2014 accounted for 38% of international arrivals. This segment is very sensitive to security risks, according to the study conducted by Euromonitor, which could cause companies to choose alternative destinations, with the subsequent decline in the short term MICE sector. The climate of uncertainty created after the attacks worldwide from Paris affected the most the main tour companies listed on stock exchanges.

In the week after the attacks, the restaurants in Paris have decreased by 50% customers and hotels decreased by 22%. Meanwhile, Parisians still go to bars, restaurants and concerts, a gesture of determination against the threat of global terrorism, in a city where they grew significantly the security measures.

Attacks, such as the guerrilla Al Shabab in April in Garissa, Kenya, with about 200 students dead, or the attacks in Tunisia, the first against iconic Bardo Museum in the capital, and later against two hotels in the coastal town of Sousse, the over 100 dead of bombing in Ankara against a march for peace called by trade unions, leftist students and Kurdish and the airplane with Russian tourists, sabotaged before collapsing in Sinai (machine took off from Sharm El Sheikh with 229 people on board), related to the existence of very young or foreign victims in these events, amplified the media echo.

ISIS has claimed responsibility also at the terrorist attack in Brussels, 22 March A.C. following which have killed had lost persons also over 230 were injured in Zaventem international airport. Jihadist groups have succeeded, according to analysts, to transfer citizens, especially those from Western countries, the feeling

that danger lurks around every corner and no one is safe.

Terrorist attacks will generate a number of direct consequences on the global tourism sector: first, the entire industry in all destinations, will need to be used to new safety routines and protocols to prevent terrorist threats; just as travel companies have included a lot of routine tasks related to energy saving, cleanliness, customer management and theft prevention, should include also the day-to-day new patterns of work and protocols related to security terrorism; acknowledged a growing demand (people assume that when traveling on vacation or are in busy places, they are a "soft target" or an easy target poorly protected for terrorists); all tourist destinations in Europe, especially in urban areas, but also beach resorts and sun, will have to urgently review plans for crisis management and emergency situations.

In any case, attacks in Paris on 13 November and in Brussels on March 22 would cause a drop in tourism the European cities receive, given that the markets issuing long distance, Europe is perceived as a whole, has warned Touring director of Barcelona. Two out of ten international tourists traveling the world are moving towards an urban destination, according to the ITB World Travel Trends Report, prepared by market research company IPK by order of the fair ITB Berlin. According to experts consultants, urban tourism will be ordinarily beyond, terrorist attacks, shortly.

"Urban tourism is the type of tourism which is the fastest growing international market of travel," the experts of the Forum in Pisa consulted for ITB World Travel Trends Report estimate that "despite the effects of the terrorist attacks in Paris, the expectations for this segment remain positive". In this regard, the head of division of Messe Berlin stated that: "international research shows that the attacks took effect only during a relatively short period of time and that in general, the tourism industry has exceeded the moment".

The consulting firm Roland Berger published the report "European city tourism 2015", which analyzes and compares the key tourists' indicators in 45 major cities of the Old Continent. The report sets out *three categories of cities*. First, the 13 European cities that has more than ten million hotel overnights per year.

In the second category are grouped 17 cities that record between two and ten million hotel overnights per year.

In the third category are the other 15 cities with more than two million overnight stays.

"Those cities that did not provide comparable or insufficient data were excluded from this selection," explain the report's authors.

However, this study emphasizes the *growth patterns* of each city (according to overnight stays and hotel

capacity) and *highlights those "successful in creating value"* (measured in revenue per available room).

The authors add that the report *did not take account of "friction" caused by growth*, due to problems such as overcrowding, "due to a large number of visitors in cities".

Thus, the evaluation model of this study combines *quantitative and qualitative criteria* based on the expert's judgment: increasing overnight stays, increasing hotel supply, RevPAR, the percentage of foreign tourism, direct flights, number of congresses.

### In cluster 1, Istanbul, Amsterdam and Paris score best – Brussels leads cluster 2 while Dubrovnik leads cluster 3

Cluster results – Top 10 cities per cluster



Note: cluster 1 consist of 13 cities, cluster 2 of 17 cities, cluster 3 of 15 cities

Source: Roland Berger

Roland Berger\_City Tourism\_final\_201515.pptx | 15

Source: The Roland Berger Urban Tourism 2015 Report

Figure 2.

In the table we see that Paris, Istanbul or Brussels are located in the top of the charts, being the most vulnerable to acts of terrorism.

Between 2007 and 2014, the number of international travels, having as destination cities, increased by 82%. Thus, the share of urban tourism has come to represent 22% of international tourism. In Europe alone, international trips taken by Europeans were 15% of the total in 2007, and today represents over 20%. Cheaper flights, expansion of a cheaper offer, as well as new tourist attractions that have been added to the cities in recent years, are some of the reasons explaining this increase.

United Nations (UN) approved the designation of 2017 as International Year of Sustainable Tourism Development in order to increase the sector's contribution to economic growth and improve social and environmental.

The resolution, approved recently, recognizes "the importance of international tourism and in particular the appointment of a year of international sustainable tourism, to promote a better understanding among people everywhere, leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and to lead to a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thus contributing to strengthening peace in the world".

"This proclamation is a unique opportunity to expand the tourism sector's contribution to the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) and raising awareness regarding the true dimensions of a sector that usually is underestimated", said the general secretary of UNWTO, Taleb Rifai. According to the release, this decision comes at a very important moment, the international community adopted Agenda 2030 and the new Sustainable Development Goals (ODS), approved by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. Tourism appears among the targets of three objectives: promoting sustained economic growth, inclusive and sustainable full employment and productive and decent work for all; sustainable consumption and production; conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The general secretary of UNWTO asked the government to regulate "collaborative economy in a smart way, without killing it." During the general meeting of the organization held in Medellin, Colombia, in September 2015, the countries have recognized that this phenomenon is unstoppable, although each tourist destination adopt their own strategies to address this global trend. But, as the general secretary of UNWTO, "the question is, how does this tendency effect each country and how is the collaboration economy approached at each destination, so that they can benefit from the best elements of this phenomenon and the negative aspects be avoided altogether...We want to approach this phenomenon with a more balanced view, because the collaboration economy has positive sides: for example it further popularized trips, it can contribute to lengthening the stays of tourists and distributing the revenues of tourism towards more layers of society". On the other hand, the collaboration economy's boom shows aspects to which we should take a closer look, for instance the equity between different service providers".

Therefore, the general secretary of UNWTO concludes that "there will be necessary a reglementation of this phenomenon is a smart, imaginative, honest way and without killing it. This will be the challenge to more and more countries". Taking into consideration the current events, at the next UNWTO gathering, the consumer

protection's field treaties will be passed, so will be the ethic code.

Asia and North America will be the emitting markets that will experience the highest growth in 2016. According to the ITB World Travel Trends Reports, the number of international travels will grow by 4.3% during this year, and the largest growth will happen in the emitting countries in ASIA (+6.1%), followed by North America (+5.1%), the growth of the Chinese people's buying power, along with the relaxation of visa policies in many countries for tourists from this country were the main factors that led to this growth that is 13 time larger than the one recorded in 1998. China already passed the United States in 2011 as the largest emitting market in the world and maintained this position, managing for the first time to reach 100 million passengers per year in 2014. The number of trips abroad from the European emitting markets will show a slower growth of 2.8%. In the Latin America region there is expected a growth of 1.9%.

## 2. Conclusions

Professionals in the tourism sector assume most of the time, almost like a dogma of faith that tourism manages to piece itself back together in a matter of a few years after a catastrophe of all manner and sizes.

As long as the proper safety measures are taken, tourists will continue to travel and the travel market will continue to grow, thanks mainly to the middle class of Asia, albeit at a slower rate.

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