



Tourism beating expectations

Arrivals from abroad to add up to a record 21.2 million in 2014 including cruise passengers, SETE estimates

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 Kathimerini

Foreign tourists visiting Greece this year are expected to add up to a record 21.2 million, including cruise visitors, Andreas Andreadis, the president of the Association of Hellenic Tourism Enterprises (SETE), said yesterday.

The head of tourism professionals in the country explained that demand is growing far above the orig-

inal estimates, and that the figures to be recorded this year had been set as the targets for the next four years.

He added that in this context investments for the creation of more top-category hotel units need to be accelerated while the infrastructure of regional airports needs upgrading.

Andreadis expects cruise passenger arrivals to remain at last year's levels – 2.2 million – and even considers SETE's latest estimate for 19

million international tourists as "rather conservative," having recently revised the figure from the previous forecast for 18.5 million.

Athens alone is set to receive some 750,000 more visitors than last year, which is indicative of the momentum that the Greek capital is enjoying.

Demand from Russia is expected to drop by no more than 5 percent, while visitors to Greece from Ukraine are expected to decline by 50 percent.

Cruise companies have reduced their schedules for the Eastern Mediterranean but are operating larger vessels, while they are already preparing to increase the number of cruise liners sailing in the region next year.

In order to satisfy future demand for beds in Greece, SETE has set a target for the creation of an additional 250,000 by 2021 at high-category hotels (four- or five-star), of which some 150,000 will be new and 100,000 will

come from the upgrade of the existing capacity. This will require the implementation of investment programs adding up to 24 billion euros.

Some 3 billion of that is expected to come from the state and the rest from the private sector.

Another key point is the creation of new installations at regional airports, some of which are easily saturated during peak times in the summer season in terms of handling flights.