

Beat: Travel

## **FITUR, a trip around the world**

### **The fair is held in Madrid**

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**USPA NEWS** - King Philip VI and Queen Letizia of Spain inaugurated on Wednesday the 35th edition of FITUR International Tourism Fair, held through Sunday in Madrid. This year, the number of participants has increased by 12% to the 9,107 companies, 686 exhibitors and 165 countries.

The kings of Spain toured the exhibition halls on a unique journey around the world. FITUR, one of the most important international tourism fairs, is the showcase where cultural, gastronomic, natural resources are shown and, this year, also trade of nearly 86% of countries on the planet. "It is no coincidence," Philip VI said, "that this show is the initiative of Spain, a world tourism power of first order, and which occurs in our country".

Tourism, said the monarch, is a "potent generator of wealth and employment". He added: "I can say that it is an honor to see how Spain, Tourism, remains an indisputable power, growing, innovating, improving its attractiveness and image and more competitive". The data demonstrate the sector recovery last year, when Spain received nearly 65 million tourists. Are "the best evidence of our tourism in recent years", said Philip VI. But not only in Spain where the sector is experiencing a good time. Last year, more than 1,100 million people worldwide out books.

In this edition of FITUR, the fair, organized by IFEMA (trade fair of Madrid), incorporates two new segments, "such as health tourism and shopping tourism" that "allow professionals to expand their business strategies" said the monarch. The fair opens for professionals on Wednesday and Thursday, and the public during the weekend. Organizers hope to overcome the barrier of 220,000 visitors which closed last edition.

FITUR 2015 has the support of key industry players, the World Tourism Organization, WTO; the Spanish Ministry of Industry, in addition to companies and organizations represented on the Organizing Committee. The budget allocated by IFEMA for Fair organization and development of the various forums, platforms and initiatives that shape the agenda and the potential of this global sectorial meeting, amounted to € 10.5 million, of which, 30% has been earmarked for international promotion and invitation to buyers (agencies and tour operators) worldwide. FITUR, that will attract to Madrid around 200,000 visitors from around the world, of which 120,000 professionals, will generate benefits estimated at over € 200 million city.

The highest growth recorded by direct participation in the Fair, which rose 12%, with 686 exhibitors, while the net area rose 4%, with 56,233 square meters of exhibition. Furthermore, the national area companies increased by 24% over the previous edition, and the international area highlighted by the increased presence in the Middle East, which grew by 24%; Asia Pacific, 19%; Europe and Israel, both with increases of 9%; Africa, 2% and America, which grew by 17%. To this positive data from the incorporation of 12 countries with official participation, including Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Chile, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iceland, Luxembourg, Sudan and Togo formerly present is added only to Empresarial representation .

The contribution of contents of the UNWTO will be a significant year. Coinciding with the new section of FITUR SHOPPING, the World Tourism Organization held the First International Conference on Tourism Shopping, reflecting the growing importance of segment in the tourism sector and the overall economy. FITUR also host the second consecutive year the UNWTO Awards which will present the 14 finalists for the 11th edition of Ulysses Awards for Innovation in Tourism, one of the three categories of UNWTO Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism.

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