

Is (international) tourism sufficiently remunerative?

International tourism is an important sector of economic development in the Mediterranean region, classified as the 1st tourist region worldwide. By its currency contribution and by the induced cultural exchanges, it will be a factor contributing to sustainable development if the impact on the environment is reduced and the wealth that it brings shared out.

Between 1995 and 2006 most of the Mediterranean countries experienced an overall increase in international tourism receipts; but compared to GDP the situations are varied.

In the EU-15 Mediterranean countries (ES, FR, IT and GR), this rise has continued but has stagnated compared to GDP. The island states (CY and MT), very much dependent on tourism, with receipts equal to 22 % and 25 %, respectively, of GDP in 1995, have had a significant drop in receipts (stabilising around 15 % in 2006).

The Balkan countries have had a great increase in receipts and their situation now is comparable with the one in the 1970s. In Croatia receipts reached 19% of GDP in 2006.

Receipts from international tourism represent about 6 % of the total value of worldwide exports of goods and services. In the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, this share is much higher: between 18 and 30 % in most of the countries, over 38 % in Croatia, Albania and Lebanon.

The range of receipts per inhabitant is very wide. Receipts can be over 1000 dollars, reaching 2400 dollars in Malta and more than 3500 dollars in Cyprus.

Inversely, they are insignificant in Algeria and very low in Egypt, Syria, Libya (around 100 dollars).

Definition

Receipts from international tourism refer to the expenditure in the host country (or consumption) by tourists and by non-resident visitors as defined in the tourism satellite accounts in conformity with the UN Statistics Commission.

In the host countries, the international tourism receipts are assimilated as exports and include transactions carried out by tourists as well as by visitors who come for more than one day. However, they do not include the receipts produced by international services and transport purchased outside the country of residence of these travellers.

Precautions / Notes

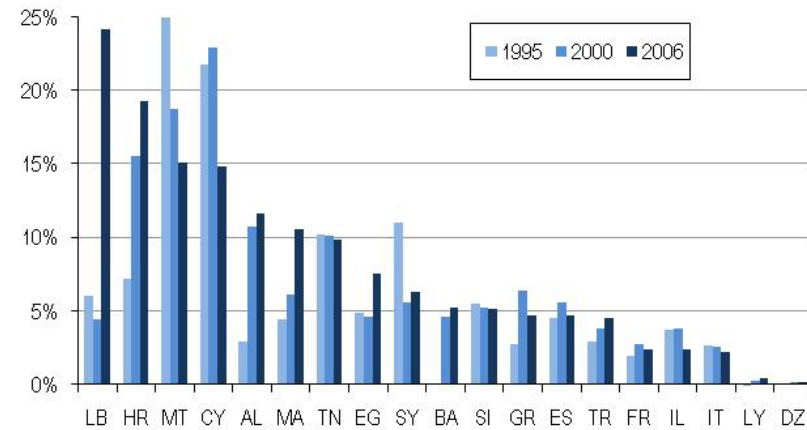
Low receipts as a percentage of GDP could indicate strong potential for the development of international tourism. Inversely, a high value is an indicator of mono-activity, often very sensitive to the international situation. A rise in international tourism receipts does not presume the effective spin-off for the host countries and the local populations. The spin-off should be studied case by case concerning the impact of tourism, on the situation of the local population, such as the creation of new jobs and an increase in income.

Sources / references

UN-WTO (World Tourism Organisation) and World Bank (World Development Indicators)

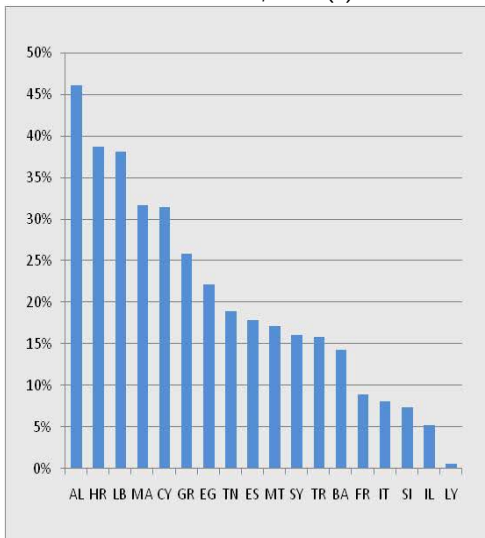
14. International tourism receipts

International tourism receipts, 1995-2006 (% of GDP)

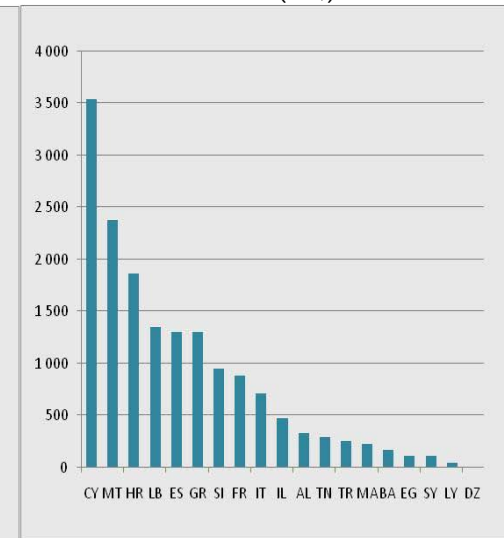


Source : WTO, WDI

International tourism receipts / Exports of goods and services, 2006 (%)



International tourism receipts per capita, 2006 (US \$)



Source : WTO, WDI