

Tourism: despite the terrorist attacks, France remains the first destination

France still remains attractive as before. Jean-Marc Ayrault, who announced on 10 February that for the year 2016, **the country retains its position as the world's leading tourist destination**. And this, despite a drop in visits recorded due to Paris terrorist attacks of November 2015 and Nice in July 2016. Thus, according to the first Official estimates provided by the Government, between **82.5 and 83 million foreign tourists** traveled to France in 2016. This represents a decrease of 2.3 to 2.9% compared to the year 2015 (85 million foreign tourists).

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs believes "2016 will remain a memorable year, **due to terrorist attacks, inclement weather and social movements**", but that despite this particular context, France remained the world's first touristic destination, **ahead of the United States and Spain**. Jean-Marc Ayrault also reaffirmed the government's target of 100 million foreign tourists by 2020, a figure that had been decided in June 2014, before the wave of terrorist attacks that hit France and more Particularly Europe.

The return of the Empire of the Rising Sun

Among the reasons for these good results, the head of the diplomacy evoked an "obvious bounce-back ending 2016" in terms of recorded nights. Trends for the beginning of 2017 following the same trajectory with a 10.4% increase in air bookings to Paris in the first half of the year. The executive director of Atout France, the organization promoting tourism in France, confirmed that France "really started a recovery from September / October", and that the end of 2016 had been "better than expected".

Jean-Marc Ayrault also welcomed the "massive" return of Japanese customers who had shunned France from the end of 2015. Many tourists canceled their visit to France after the Paris terrorist attacks and later in Nice. According to Le Monde, Jean-Marc Ayrault welcomed "the 60% increase in airline bookings to Paris for the first quarter of 2017" concerning only Japanese customers. The government announced in November 2016 that it was releasing an envelope of about 40 million euros to support the French tourism sector. As security was a priority issue for France, some 15 million euros had been allocated specifically to the safety of foreign tourists.

Paris Recovery

If the recovery is confirmed from January and February, it is most noticeable in the capital. The **hotel industry in Paris suffered greatly as tourists turned away**, more than in provincial cities. The Quai d'Orsay recalling that the sector, only for nights, had recorded a 5.7% decrease rate. "2016 was a difficult year for our companies, especially in Paris and on the French Riviera," affirmed by Roland

Héguy, president of the main hotel organization, the UMIH. If the decrease in visits to France after the Paris and Nice attacks was expected, he however said that **it had been "contained"**.