

## Spanish Tourism needs drastic change in order to maintain leadership, says OCDE

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The Spanish tourism industry needs a “dramatic” change to maintain global leadership in a global post-crisis time, said the director of the Center enterprise, SMEs, Local Development and Tourism of the OCDE, Sergio Arzeni.

According to Arzeni, the present situation of tourism in Spain cannot solely be explained by the economic crisis, but also because tourism sector’s growth in the past had always been linked with the construction sector (together both achieved a 25% contribution to Spanish GDP).

Arzeni, speaking today at a meeting organized by Exceltur (Alliance for Tourism Excellence) in the Summer Courses of the International University Menéndez Pelayo (UIMP), blamed the crisis with representatives of the tourism sector, adding that this merger between tourism and the construction is a lack of “intelligence” from Spain, so now something should be done to improve it.

Tourism in Spain has been driven by real estate and not by the human capital development which is one of its main drivers of quality, even more important than technology, being a service sector.



Spain, therefore, should make an effort “especially” human capital, not only in terms of employees but also from the side of employers, Arzeni warned.

The activity of Spanish tourism companies should be transformed, for which you need to leave behind the ideas that determined the sector up to now and move towards an innovative and diversified goal, putting in value the varied resources available to the country.

While this may assume that “perhaps fewer tourists come in the future, but more quality,” Arzeni nuanced, for whom cultural tourism, for example, provides an income two to three times the average than that generated by “sun and sand” tourists, a segment that represents 70% of the total in Spain.

Spain can not continue with the same tourism policy when recovery comes. While the global economy is expected to grow by 4% this year, the rate will vary from one country to another. In emerging markets it will be particularly high whereas the U.S. and Japan will see more moderate growth, and “minimal” in the Old Continent.

In this regard Arzeni recalled that the tourism market in Spain is very European and the best customers come from this continent, especially the United Kingdom, which is the cornerstone of world tourism and also the first source of tourists to Spain, but the financial and economic situation in the UK is “very bad”, so it will take time to recover.