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Spain emerges unscathed from Madrid bombings

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DOHA: The Spanish tourism industry has, for the moment, managed to elude far more successfully than expected the effects of the March 11 terrorist bombing of Madrid, especially when compared to other cities that were victims to similar terror attacks such as New York, Bali, Djerba and Moscow, among others, a survey conducted between March 15 and April 8 by Exceltur, a new lobby group in Spain, has revealed.

The research and its findings were disclosed by Jose Luis Zoreda, CEO, Exceltur, at the special breakfast session on the World Travel and Tourism Council's National Initiatives during the 4th Global Travel and Tourism Summit.

The research states: "The general opinion of Spanish tour operators shows a short-term limited impact on the Spanish tourism companies overall. The survey, covering about 1,200 tourist businesses and establishments among various sub sectors, show that only 34.4 per cent had noted an effect on their sales in the days following the attack, while the remaining 65.6 per cent did not notice any effects and carried on their activities as normal. In a similar positive vein, for almost half of the 34 per cent of the companies surveyed whose sales were effected by the events of March 11, the impact was less than five per cent, while scarcely a quarter of them suffered losses of sales of more than 10 per cent."

The report however points out that the brunt of the terror attacks was borne by tourism to Madrid while interior parts of Spain and its islands were largely unaffected. "While in Madrid, in the short term, 82 per cent of tour operators suffered a fall in sales and in 30.1 per cent of the cases, this was greater than 30 per cent in the two destinations which annually combine to capture 50 per cent of the total international tourist market in Spain, mainly the Balearics and the Canaries, the short term impact of March 11 were scarcely affected," it states.