

According to the foreign exchange inflow from tourism and the number of overnight stays, we have returned to the most successful tourist year, and a growth trend is expected in 2022 as well.

Based on the data we now have, Serbian tourism has already seriously recovered from the crisis brought about by the pandemic. If we keep in mind that on a global level, the number of tourist trips has gone back several decades, and we already have a season that is by all parameters just behind our best ever, in 2019, I think we can rightly say that, said Tatjana Matic, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications.

According to the National Bank of Serbia, the foreign exchange inflow from tourism in Serbia in 10 months of this year amounted to almost 1.3 billion euros, which is a growth of 49 percent compared to the same period in 2020. This, adds Minister Matic, shows that tourism in Serbia recovers very quickly and efficiently from the consequences of the corona virus pandemic, and that our country is recognized as a unique and authentic tourist destination. This year, when it comes to foreign guests who visited us, those from the region (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Northern Macedonia) are dominant, followed by tourists from Russia, Germany and Turkey. According to the Ministry of Trade, it is expected that this trend will continue in 2022.

According to statistical data, 6.5 million overnight stays were registered in Serbia in the first nine months, which is 28% more than in the same period last year. After the fall in January and February, tourist activity in March, and then during the second and third quarters, recorded better results. In that period, domestic guests realized 4.7 million overnight stays, which is 14.6 percent more than in the same period last year. And 72.4 percent of the total number of overnight stays. By the way, the number of stays of domestic tourists is 103.6 percent higher than in the same period in 2020. According to these data, foreign guests did not bypass our country either. 1.8 million overnight stays were recorded, which is an increase of about 83 percent compared to 2020. Most of them, of course, were during the summer months when the epidemiological situation was significantly better. Most visitors were in spas, where about 2.2 million overnight stays were realized, which is one third of the total number. The most visited spas were Vrnjačka and Sokobanja (about 1.4 million overnight stays). About 1.6 million tourist nights were realized in mountain places, and the most visited mountains were Zlatibor (about 526,000 nights) and Kopaonik (about 348,000 nights). In spas and mountainous places, the majority of visitors are almost 90 percent domestic guests. As expected, Belgrade was the most visited city in Serbia, and 1.1 million overnight stays were realized in it in the first nine months, and they were foreign tourists. Until September this year, Serbia was visited by guests from about fifty different countries. Most overnight stays were made by visitors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, India, the Russian Federation, Montenegro, Germany, Northern Macedonia and China. Tourists from these countries realized 52 percent of the total number of overnight

stays of foreign guests in the first nine months of 2021.

According to data from travel agencies and platforms for renting accommodation, a large number of foreigners can be expected around the holidays, especially in cities such as Belgrade and Novi Sad. When we add to that the fact that our country has not tightened epidemiological measures, and that most countries are closed to tourists, it is assumed that many will celebrate the New Year in Serbia. There is no doubt that the tourism sector will record earnings, and how that will affect the epidemiological situation remains to be seen, Politika reports.