

People-in-Travel

Tracking Travel's Leaders



From Travel Business Analyst

Visitor-Chief Sound Bites

• Katarzyna Sobierajska, minister of tourism, Poland:



-In 2012 we will co-host with Ukraine what has been called the most important tourism event in the world, the Euro 2012 soccer competition.

-The new football stadium in Warsaw includes a congress centre and offices; it will be the biggest in the city. There will be a new autoroute Berlin-Warsaw; Germany is our most important visitor market.

-The payment to Messe Berlin to be ITB Berlin's 2011 'partner country' was included in a US\$21mn (at US\$1 to €0.72) budget. Other parts included spend on outdoor promotion in Berlin, which we estimate would represent US\$7mn.

-We now need to work on promotion for post Euro. Will promote MICE in the new stadiums. And this month we are due to open a visitor promotion office in Beijing. But the problem is that there is no direct flight; LOT may fly there in about two years' time.

-There will be 1mn visitors for the Euro 2012, including 30,000 by plane for the first match (in June).

-[In answer to our question, the minister has no figures for those that would not visit Poland at the time (just before until just after) of Euro 2012, but said those not interested in soccer would not visit at that time. Over that 3-week period around 3.5-4.0mn visitors would normally visit Poland; we estimate up to 200,000 will forego a trip at this time – but may, of course, visit at other times.]

• Taleb Rifai, head of the WTO (World Tourism Organization):

-We have signed a new cooper-

ation agreement/JV with WTTC. We are serious about building a coherent case for tourism. [He offered no further explanation; we do not know what this means.]

-Governments find [the travel business] a tempting target for taxes.

-We have been approached to put travel advisories from governments on our website. We are against that, because they are issued by others. Because it would indicate that we endorse those. But we are doing this for Egypt and Tunisia - not for others.



We disagree 100% with Rifai. The WTO should be the source of travel information, not promotional travel information. If there was an advisory that the WTO thought unsatisfactory, it could add its comment to the foreign-government advisory.

And, of course, its website already runs information from other sources – travel statistics being the simplest example.

We believe in reality. But the WTO seems to fear reality, preferring promotional travel information. As a result, Rifai seems unlikely to achieve the credibility he would like for WTO or what the WTO calls 'tourism'.

-[At a news conference, two of Rifai's three presentations were about new WTO meetings. For the WTO, another meeting qualifies as 'news'. The outcome of the meeting has less relevance.]

• Mariyam Zulfa, minister of tourism, Maldives.

Yes, we could mandate resorts to follow the Soneva-Fushi with seawater-powered air condition-

ing*. But I don't want to impose another requirement on developers; they are already investing a lot; it costs US\$80-100mn to build a resort.

We also disagree 100% with the minister. If there is any place in the world where environmental measures must be incorporated, it is the Maldives.

**An idea copied from the Bora Bora InterContinental, but with shallower thus warmer seas, Six Senses has not yet been able to get its airconditioning system working properly.*



Hotel CEO Sound Bites

• Kurt Ritter, Reizidor. When Carlson gave us the Regent brand we were not too keen. When Four Seasons pulled out of the Regent Berlin we managed to get the lease payment cut 50%. We thought that if we can't make money at half the price, then we must be idiots. Well, we were idiots; we just did not have access to that market segment. Formosa [new owners of Regent] has asked us to continue with management in Europe.

• Jean-Gabriel Peres, Movenpick. When we get to 100 hotels (now we have 70), maybe we will look at an additional brand name. But not 'Grand', 'Royal' as we did at Meridien; it does not work (owners don't like it; public does not know). Maybe the best is to buy another company and take that brand.

[None of this is planned; just casual comment.]



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