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KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI
Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM OF TURKEY THE HON. PROFESSOR DR. NUMAN KURTULMUŞ OUTLINES STRATEGIC VISION

Intercultural Dialog of Ideas and Values from Increasing Global Tourism the Key to Improving Compassion between Communities



(August, 2017) – The new Minister of Culture and Tourism for the Republic of Turkey, the Hon. Professor Dr. Numan Kurtulmuş, today announced his strategic vision of increasing travel and tourism as the engine for improving relationships between countries and cultures.

As Turkey’s tourism begins to recover in 2017, Mr. Kurtulmuş has set a target of 50 million international visitors to Turkey by 2023. While that goal is expected to generate \$50 billion in economic impact, Mr. Kurtulmuş said the most valuable result of increasing tourism is forming the foundation for a stronger global community through the better sharing of ideas and values between cultures.

“Recent developments have caused campaigns that tarnish the image of Turkey, which is why we see our cultural and touristic riches as a key to correcting the misperceptions created to damage our country’s international reputation and spark unjustified anger against Turkey. We strongly believe cultural and touristic endeavors can dissolve political conflicts and re-establish peace. Culture and tourism bind people together and are therefore powerful tools in turning crisis into peace projects.”

Mr. Kurtulmuş also criticized the futile efforts to reflect Turkey as an unsafe destination and highlighted, “Turkey is using every means to ensure safety for domestic and foreign tourists in touristic facilities of İstanbul, Antalya, Konya, Van and many other destinations. The famous destinations of Turkey are as safe as Berlin, Paris and Rome.”

“Few countries have as wide a variety of tourism and cultural attractions as Turkey, including – and, perhaps most importantly – its figurative and physical position as a bridge between East and West that embraces visitors from across the globe,” Mr. Kurtulmuş said.

“We see this strength as vital to our vision for bringing communities together, and we will invest heavily in public and private partnerships to ensure we are developing these tourism products to diversify our markets and audiences.”

Turkey has already made progress towards its goals this year, with tourism to the country up 14,05 percent during the first 6 months of 2017, and up by 43 percent in June this year compared to June 2016.

The country’s tourism assets are also being recognized in 2017 with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee adding the Ancient Ruins of Aphrodisias to the World Heritage List in 2017, and *The New York Times*’ naming the remote Aegean island of Bozcaada as one of its “Top 52 Places to Visit” this year.

“Turkey is one of the most diverse destinations in the world, with a richness of history, archeology, gastronomy and geography from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, combined with art and culture that spans the ages yet is at the forefront modern innovation,” Mr. Kurtulmuş said.

“I invite travelers from all over the world to discover the beauty of our country, whether the new UNESCO World Heritage site Aphrodisias, or the remote island of Bozcaada, which *The New York Times* called ‘a slower-paced way to see Turkey’. With so many varied characteristics, combined with Turkey’s history of hospitality from millennia of civilizations making the land their home, we have the potential to enrich our global community through cultural diplomacy.”

For more information visit: www.hometurkey.com

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About Turkey

Turkey is a modern country with a captivating blend of antiquity and contemporary of East and West. The cradle of civilization and centre of world history today stand as one of the fastest-growing tourism destinations in the world. Turkey was the site of the first human settlement; the seat of the Byzantine, Roman and Ottoman Empires; the birthplace of Homer and the last home of the Virgin Mary, just to name a few. Today Turkey, with its spectacular coastline, majestic mountains, cosmopolitan cities and quaint villages is one of the world’s most fascinating destinations.