



Tourism industry warned of climate challenges

CYPRUS MAY LOSE APPEAL AS A SUMMER DESTINATION AS TEMPERATURES RISE

By **Paul**

The tourism industry in Cyprus, along with the rest of the Mediterranean, should prepare to confront climate change and plan a management system to cope with its negative effects.

According to Jos Lelieveld, professor of atmospheric sciences at the Energy, Environment and Water Research Centre of the Cyprus Institute, there is an urgent need for the tourist industry to adapt to global temperature change, as tourism is sensitive to climate conditions. "There is some uncertainty over the changes that global warming will bring, but we do know that a temperature rise of a few degrees is expected in the Mediterranean by the end of the century."

Tourism is an industry of major importance for the Cyprus economy but the hot summer climate and sandy beaches that

draw in around two million tourists a year may lose appeal as the planet gets hotter.

"With even a slight increase in temperature the summer season may become too hot for many tourists," says Lelieveld. "Egypt, for example, is a very popular tourist destination but the soaring summer temperatures are not a selling point for many visitors and this may be something Cyprus has to deal with in future." Cyprus' tourism industry can also expect to face competition as Northern Europe begins to see a surge in popularity as temperatures rise.

"It will take lengthy planning and an assessment of the services the tourism industry has to offer in order to maximise on the effects of climate change instead of

being economically disadvantaged by it," says Lelieveld.

While Cyprus' sun and sea appeal rates the island as a leading summer tourist destination research states that temperature increase may cause the winter season to become more attractive to certain tourist markets.

The message, according to Lelieveld is clear - climate change will affect tourism, and the consequences for the economy could be serious if measures are not taken. Titina Loizidou, head of the Cypriot Women in Tourism Association, said scientific research would have to be taken into account if the industry is to survive in the next century.

"Climate change is inevitable and we need to ask ourselves if warmer weather will reduce holiday bookings to Cyprus and how our economy is going to cope.

For the last 50 years Cyprus has been promoting itself as a sun and sea destination but scientific

data now suggests that summers in the Mediterranean will become longer and hotter".

Global Scientific research asserts that efforts to adapt tourism to temperature change have to be carefully planned and assessed as they require a multidimensional approach.

"It's important that the industry remains flexible in order to meet tourist demands and it's foreseeable that we will begin to shift marketing focus to other types of tourism during different seasons of the year".

According to Loizidou, Cyprus may need to look beyond the tourist markets that have traditionally visited summer destinations and shift focus to mountain, cultural, and historic tourism.

"Most importantly, we will need to diversify our services and products to appeal to a wider range of tourists."



CLIMATE CHANGE: The global rise in temperature may cause Cyprus' summer season to become too hot for many tourists



INEVITABLE: Scientists say that temperatures in the Mediterranean will rise by around 4°C before the end of the century