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Turkey Tourism' Income Grows 8 Percent in Q1 of 2007

Number of tourists' arrival to Turkey surges by 17.38 percent, the country is set to become a thermal tourism destination by 2023

Dubai - May 02, 2007: Turkey's tourism industry generated \$2.16 billion in the first quarter of 2007, 8 percent more than the same period last year, according to the Turkish Statistics Institute (Turkstat) data based on exit and entry survey carried out on departing visitors and arriving citizens in the first quarter of 2007. Almost \$1.50 billion of this income is obtained from foreign visitors, while \$ 661 million from citizens residing outside Turkey.

"We have been working with the Turkish Tourism Board and Turkish Airlines over the past years, and have seen a gradual increase in the outbound traffic from the Middle East, specifically the GCC countries, to Turkey" said Mustafa Buyuk, The Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry Undersecretary. "We have witnessed as much as 85% increase of traffic from Qatar compare to last year, 68% from Kuwait and 45% from the UAE"

"But we still need to promote Turkey more effectively abroad, that's why the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry has opened culture and tourism offices in four countries: Bulgaria, Saudi Arabia, India, and in Pakistan, whose population regularly travels globally. With the newly opened offices, the ministry now has 40 tourism offices in 36 countries," Büyük added.

On another note, according to a thermal tourism master plan by Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry, Turkey is set to become a thermal tourism destination of the world in 2023.

Ozgür Ozaslan, promotion General Manager at the Ministry explained, "Turkey ranks seventh in world and first in Europe in terms of geothermal potential as its home to more than 1,500 geothermal resources with chemically rich thermal waters." He added, "Total of 500 thousand tourists comes to Turkey for health tourism annually and a growing number of patients from around the world prefer the health institutions in Turkey. Surgical operations performed by the world renowned Turkish surgeons with modern methods cost much less than those performed in Europe and the USA."

The thermal tourism master plan has two legs and at first works will be carried out to determine the geothermal features and tourism resources of the thermal centers as well as develop their tourism potential and technical infrastructure.

The ancient and underground cities as well as historical and natural treasures nearby will also be utilized for tourism. Some alternative 14-day tour programs have been prepared for tourists who come to these tourism centers in order to enable them to spend their free time in the best way. Second step will be for reconstruction development plans and details of investments.

The spa and thermal centers in Turkey provide beauty and health with cure methods dating back to the Roman period. Many spas have been built in Turkey since the ancient ages with the discovery of healing qualities of natural thermal waters which simply highlights Turkey as an



important spot for health tourism as well as culture and sea-sand-sun tourism.

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About Turkish Cultural and Tourism Office:

The Turkish Cultural and Tourism Office in Dubai is the official representative of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism. One of the main aims of the Tourism Office is to bridge the gap between cultures and foster relationships with the travel industry by organising promotional activities throughout the GCC. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism participates in travel exhibitions and conferences to position the country as a leading tourist destination. With its breath-taking views, unique historical and archaeological sites, steadily improving hotel and touristic infrastructure and a tradition of hospitality and competitive prices, it's no wonder Turkey is among the most sought-after travel destinations in the world.

The primary functions of The Turkish Cultural and Tourism Office in Dubai are:

- Supervises all promotional activities relating to Turkey in the GCC
- Liaise with travel agencies
- Organises roadshows to further promote Turkey as a destination for leisure, shopping, health, sports and invest in the MICE (meetings, incentives, conference and exhibitions) Middle East market.

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