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THE GREEK TOURISM INDUSTRY: A BEACON OF HOPE?

Katherine Prosswimmer

Introduction

The captivating landscape, celebrated history, and welcoming culture of Greece have attracted international visitors for centuries, inspiring work ranging from the classic poetry of Lord Byron to contemporary works like the musical Mamma Mia and The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants novels. These characteristics make Greece a world-renowned destination for travelers with a tourism industry that accounts for 15.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), and 18.5 percent of the job market, comprising the largest sector of the Greek economy (SETE). Given the current economic turmoil, many Greeks, including members of the Greek government, are looking to tourism as a lifeboat, while others fear it will not be enough to keep the country afloat.

This article begins with an examination of Greece’s burgeoning tourism industry after World War II as groundwork for an analysis of recent measures taken to bolster tourism as part of the effort to recover from the current economic crisis. Because it has consistently accounted for the highest portion of Greece’s GDP, the tourism industry is under pressure to help save a failing economy. However, the government’s failure to institute long-term plans has prevented the industry from achieving its full potential. This article makes the claim that the Greek government must consider comprehensive, forward-looking policies to help the industry mature from its roots as a “sun and sea” seasonal destination to a diverse, stable, and sustainable industry.

Background

History of Tourism in Greece since World War II

Organized tourism in Greece developed after the Second World War (Jafari, p. 262) and later experienced a rapid increase in arrivals beginning in the 1960s and 1970s and peaking
in the 2000s (Pirounakis, p. 242). International tourist arrivals doubled every decade from 1950 to 1990 (Dittmer and Griffen, p. 305). In the 1970s, decreased interest in Spanish resorts funneled tourists to alternative Mediterranean locations, including Greece (Buhalis, p. 440). Through the 1980s, Greece’s low cost of living relative to the rest of Europe made it an affordable vacation destination for lower-income tourists (Buhalis, p. 440). This increase in tourism brought with it a shift from the “wanderlust” model, which included the search for new cultures and experiences that tourists originally pursued during the 1950s and 1960s, to a “sunlust” model, or the pursuit of sun and relaxation (“Greek Tourism 2020”). This shift caused a change from “literary travelers” to full-blown mass tourism (Pirounakis, p. 243). Faced with a high demand, the government quickly began to construct hotels and highways, improve beaches, promote cultural festivals, and provide low-interest credit rates for tourism projects. Though these plans were sufficient for the short term, they were implemented before any long-term economic plan had been instituted (Candilis, p. 210).

Government efforts failed to keep up with increasing demand, and may even have slowed progress and development in some cases (Candilis, p. 210). For example, a study of Greek hotel quality in 1995 revealed that 70 percent of participating hotels had no “quality-measuring or quality-achieving system,” and 100 percent had not pursued consulting services and were unfamiliar with the international ISO-9004-2 system1 (Pirounakis, p. 233). Without a set standard of quality or dedication to service, Greek tourism failed to appeal to high-end tourists.

Despite these problems, the industry grew to the point where it provided a significant portion of the country’s GDP. In 1993, The Economist identified tourism as one of Greece’s few options for gaining competitive advantage during the European redistribution of labor (Weed, p. 158). With this forecast, Greece celebrated the announcement that Athens would host the 2004 Olympics, which promised to provide a mass influx of tourism both during and after the event. Additionally, Greece had an opportunity to re-develop and re-brand Athens, a city that had developed unplanned residential areas, traffic congestion, pollution, and an inefficient infrastructure as a result of the rapid growth from 1950 to 1980 (Weed, 166–67).

In the year leading up to the Olympics, one goal in developing Athens was to create an integrated ancient-and-modern public image of the country’s heritage (Weed, p. 162). This approach was assessed in a study by Elias Beriatos and Aspa Gospodini on “globalisation,” or the development of a city that integrates tradition with innovative design. The study assesses the effectiveness of Athens’ Olympic urban landscape development in prolonging increased tourism arrivals in the wake of the Olympics (Beriatos and Gospodini, p. 187). The authors criticize Greece for failing to create a post-Olympics plan and failing to revitalize declining urban areas (p. 192). Beriatos and Gospodini conclude that, though Athens focused on competitive landscape transformations, the scattered development of Olympic sites undermined their positive effects (p. 197).

It is clear that Greece intended to create an urban legacy, given that 95 percent of the structures built for the Olympics were permanent; however, the efforts of the development planning fell short (Weed, p. 167). From 2000 to 2004, Greece succeeded in adding approximately €9 billion to its GDP from tourism, but projections of increasing arrivals to 19–20 million were not reached (Weed, p. 168). It is revealing that “priorities for urban development in Athens” were identified in a study from 2006, while the development of Athens actually occurred several years prior; this discrepancy demonstrates a continued lack of long-term planning on the part of the Greek government (Weed, p. 168).

After the Olympics, international tourism arrivals increased until 2007, when they reached 16.2 million. They then leveled off and slightly decreased to 14.9 million in 2009 before increasing marginally again to 15 million in 2010 (Greek Tourism Basic Figures). Tourism

1The ISO-9004-2 system is a set of guidelines for services that ensure quality management and quality assurance, set forth by the International Organization for Standardization. The ISO is an international organization of 163 participating members that works to ensure “desirable characteristics of products and services such as quality, environmental friendliness, safety, reliability, efficiency and interchangeability—and at an economical cost” (ISO).
continues to supply approximately 15 percent of Greece’s GDP and provide employment for almost 20 percent of its workforce.

Tourism Organizations

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, established in 2004, is the governmental agency responsible for maintaining, protecting, and supporting the art and culture of Greece (OECD). The Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO), supervised by the Ministry of Tourism, is the primary organization in charge of tourism. Initially established in 1927, the GNTO fell under several different offices due to political turmoil and was ultimately re-established in 1950 (GNTO). The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the GNTO are responsible for coordinating the public and private sectors as well as regional and national planning, implementation, and promotion (Jafari, p. 262). The GNTO promotes Greece through advertising, communications policy, and participation in international exhibits and events (OECD). It also oversees authorities that implement and monitor tourism policy at the regional level (OECD).

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Greek Tourism Industry

The Greek tourism industry’s greatest strength is its natural assets. With monuments, archeological sites, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, as well as 300 public and private museums, Greece is rich in historical landmarks and artifacts that attract tourists (Organization for Economic ...). Tourists can also visit Greece’s many churches, monasteries, hermitages, and major religious festivals. With 16,000 kilometers of coastline and 3,000 islands, Greece is well-known for its beaches and favorable climate, which provide for beach and nautical tourism (GNTO). Greece’s nightlife, hospitality, and Mediterranean cuisine also set it apart from other destinations.

For many tourists, small business owners are the face of Greek hospitality. Relatively free of bureaucratic oversight, small- and medium-level tourism enterprises (SMTEs) have direct control over their businesses, which provides the flexibility to tailor products and services to tourists’ needs (Buhalis, p. 451). The warmth of the host population is often expressed through family-owned SMTEs, whose employees can provide a personal touch that is appealing to many tourists (Buhalis, p. 452). Greek hospitality is unique and cannot be created through the designs of a tourism agency.

Despite these abundant natural assets, the instability of governmental tourism agencies is one of the industry’s weaknesses. Between 1992 and 2010, there have been 48 different political leaders in the tourism branch (SETE) with an average term of fewer than five months (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 54). The constant shifting of leadership has prevented consistency in the recording of data such as tourism demand, which has hindered the development of long-term policy or reform (Buhalis, p. 443). The Ministry of Development and the National Tourism Organization have only mid-term policy objectives, including decreasing seasonality, increasing arrivals and competitiveness, improving services, appealing to high-income tourists, expanding to alternative forms of tourism, and constructing upmarket facilities (Jafari, p. 263). Most policies also focus on attracting a larger volume of tourists instead of targeting certain socio-economic populations; these new policies have led to a general increase in arrivals over the years, but also reduced expenditure per capita (Buhalis, p. 458).

Additionally, Greece’s infrastructure is suffering from an ill-planned allocation of resources. This inefficient planning can be seen in the dissonance between supply and demand of hotel rooms. Whereas in 2000, oversupply was equal to 15 percent of the country’s total room capacity, in 2009, oversupply reached 30 percent of capacity (SETE). Additionally, tourist activity has become concentrated in four main geographical areas, which prevents a widespread economic benefit, specifically for areas suffering from current economic turmoil (SETE).

Greece’s management of basic local conditions has also come under criticism. Dimitrios Buhalis suggests that Greece does not have the infrastructure to support the pressures on transportation, water supply, sewage systems, and police and health services during the peak season (p. 449). According to an article written by W.F. Lever in the Handbook of Urban Studies, the conditions of a city must
be maintained and monitored by local authorities, rather than the central state (p. 278). These findings indicate that the regional authorities responsible for local conditions are ineffective, and the current bureaucratic structure needs to be adjusted.

The Greek tourism industry also suffers from ineffective product distribution. Domination by the sun and sea model after the 1980s caused the industry to develop into a limited, one-dimensional, seasonal product that forced the government to rely on distribution channels mainly composed of tour operators (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 39). At present, the tourism product is distributed through 800 European tour organizers (Buhalis, p. 451). Since these tour organizers are not based in Greece, they cannot be called upon to help transform the industry. Minister Nikitiadis attributed the development of party-based sun and sea tourism, pursued by tourists in their early twenties, to these non-Greek operators: “Many times it is the system, the tour operators who co-ordinate these bar crawls, which makes these kids act in this way. It’s a pity because we don’t want tourists to leave with this experience. Our country has so much more to offer” (Smith). The sun and sea model promoted by tour organizers has perpetuated the seasonality, which restricts the profit-making season to three key months. Seasonality has increased over the past decade, from 51.2 percent of arrivals occurring from June to August in 2000, to 55 percent of arrivals from June to August in 2010 (SETE Basic Figures).

Greek tourism is also suffering because the target market has not been adjusted to meet increased costs. As mentioned earlier, with the evolution of the sun and sea model, Greece attracted tourists looking specifically for economical options (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 39). Demand for low-cost and typically low-quality options increased with the growth of Greece’s tourism industry, and infrastructure was designed to meet this demand. However, increased costs of living, especially after Greece’s entrance into the Eurozone in 1981, shifted the demand by pairing low quality with increased cost. While costs have increased, the target tourist demographic has not changed, leading to a steady decline in the average per capita tourism expenditure, totaling €813 in 2000 and dropping to €640 in 2010 (SETE Basic Figures). Though arrivals have continued to increase, the amount of money each tourist spends in Greece has declined. If a new demographic of high-income tourists were successfully targeted, the average per capita tourism expenditure could be elevated, increasing the total revenue of the industry. Currently, the Greek infrastructure does not support a high-income tourist target; as of 2010, 62 percent of hotels in Greece fell into the one, two, and three star categories (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 46). These accommodations do not attract the high-income tourists the industry needs.

**Current Efforts to Promote Tourism**

While no official long-term plan has been released outlining the state’s plan for capitalizing on the success of the tourism industry, the GNTO has taken several steps to widen its impact. For example, in the late 2000s, the GNTO launched a new branding strategy that highlights nine types of Greek tourism: city breaks, seaside, nautical, cultural, wellness, outdoor-rural, touring, conference and business, and luxury tourism. The aim of this strategy was to market Greece as a diversified tourist destination with many alternatives to the sun and sea model.

The GNTO launched national and international advertising campaigns to promote tourism to Greece. A 2009 campaign featured a series of advertisements depicting tourists experiencing health-and-wellness, nautical, leisure, cultural, city breaks, traditional beach, and recreation tourism. They were displayed through outdoor, print, and electronic and online media, and at national and international tourism exhibitions (GNTO). In place of a crisis communication management campaign to mitigate negative media coverage of the economic crisis in 2010, the GNTO launched “You in Greece.” This campaign featured an interactive online forum on the GNTO’s website that offered images, videos, and testimonies from recent visitors to promote the unique and enriching experiences provided by Greek Tourism (GNTO).

In response to challenges to the nautical tourism industry, the GNTO has taken steps to increase cruise traffic and revenue. Though
nautical tourism has been successful in the past, drawing 1.8 million visitors to Greece per year, crew restrictions on non-Greek vessels traveling between Greek ports have limited potential business and income from the international cruise line industry (Worldwide Travel & Cruise Associates Inc.). Additionally, the Cabotage Law prohibited embarking and disembarking at the same country without visiting another country in between, a stipulation that complicated the cruise-line process and prevented cruise lines from including Greece in their itineraries (Worldwide Travel & Cruise Associates Inc.). Taking these obstacles into account, Minister Nikitiadis had made “the rise of Greece as a top cruise destination” a priority for tourism. He attended the Second Seatrade Winter Cruising Forum in December 2011 and announced Greece's plan to establish a committee devoted to cruises and tourism (Toli). He discussed steps Greece has taken to facilitate nautical tourism, including an amendment to the Cabotage Law allowing cruise lines to embark and disembark passengers in keeping with a three-year agreement with the Greek government and agreeing to certain stipulations, including minimum capacity, trip duration, and dock time for loading and discharging passengers (Worldwide Travel & Cruise Associates Inc.). The amendment resulted in a 5.1 percent increase in ships docking at Piraeus in the first quarter after the restrictions were lifted, and the total number of passengers to Piraeus alone rose by 58 percent (Tugwell). Longer-term effects of lifting the Cabotage Law can be seen in the 25 percent increase in Piraeus arrivals and departures in 2011 (Embassy of Greece Beijing). Greece is also exploring other means of developing nautical tourism. At a conference on Shipping and Tourism in September 2011, Minister Nikitiadis discussed his hope that the new sea tourism development plan, currently in progress, will effectively establish Greece as a major port for the sea cruise industry, a move that could potentially increase GDP by four percent (Embassy of Greece Beijing).

The GNTO has focused on promoting domestic tourism, which increases revenue, redistributes wealth from metropolitan to rural areas, and decreases the emigration rate of island residents by providing employment opportunities (Buhalis, p. 443). Greece subsidized two major domestic programs under the direction of the GNTO and Worker's Social Benefits Organization (Détenete Consultants, p. 2). Both the “Tourism for All” program, created by the GNTO in 2006, and The Social Tourism program, established in 1983 by the Worker's Social Benefits Organization, provide discounted coupons to qualified beneficiaries to help stimulate overnight stays and participation in educational, cultural, and recreational activities (Détenete Consultants, pp. 2, 6).

While these programs are meant to benefit both domestic institutions and businesses, subsidized travel may not be the best solution. Through the “Tourism for All” program, payment of fees for services provided to social tourists is delayed for six months, which can cause cash-flow problems for tourism-based businesses (Toli). The “Tourism for All” program may also be lacking in marketing, as the GNTO’s website, the sponsoring agency, does not even advertise this program.

**Partnering with other Countries**

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has recently expressed interest in creating “package tours” that include visits to multiple countries. Tourism and Culture Minister Pavlos Geroulanos said, “We are seeking collaborations with other countries of the region in order to offer products that exceed our borders.” He explained that packages that include Cairo or Istanbul in addition to Athens are more attractive to travelers from China or India than trips restricted to Greece alone (Ekonomeast Media Group). Package tourism is a growing industry; in 2010, it made up one third of all Greek tourism (SETE). The lifting of the Cabotage Law restrictions was a factor in this growth as demonstrated by the 73 percent increase in package trip cruise stops at Piraeus after the law was amended (Tugwell).

Greece has already entered into several partnerships to facilitate European tourism through social programs aimed at promoting travel for senior citizens. Among these programs are “Network '55 Without Borders,” a partnership between Germany, Finland, Slovakia, Italy, Portugal, Estonia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, and Greece, and “Travel AGEnts,” a project funded by the EU European Network of Envi-
rnonmental Authorities for the Cohesion Policy (Détente Consultants, p. 2). Most recently, the GNTO has demonstrated interest in the Calypso initiative, one of 21 actions the European Commission has outlined in the quest for a more sustainable and competitive European tourism industry (European Commission). This initiative targets those who are excluded from leisure and education travel due to age, income, or disability, and provides the means for them to travel, specifically during the off-season of European tourism, which coincides with the off-season of Greek Tourism (European Commission). This strategy has the potential to stabilize the tourism industry for Europe, and, subsequently, Greece.

Focus on New Markets

Currently, 12 million people annually travel to Greece, though officials believe that is only a fraction of visitor potential. In the past decade, Greece’s main tourism market has been Western Europe, including Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Italy (OECD), but recent statistics show that the number of visitors from these countries is decreasing. From 2005 to 2009, travel to Greece from Germany, Great Britain, and Italy decreased by 1 percent, 3 percent, and 2 percent respectively, despite the fact that the most popular holiday market was “sea & sun” (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 67). This change can be explained by the changing demographics of the European population; by 2020, the European middle class is projected to shrink from 36 percent to 22 percent of the population (“Tourism Leads to the . . .”). If the middle classes of Greece’s main geographical markets are shrinking, so is the general demand for a lower-quality product. The Western European market is still clearly interested in the sun and sea model, but they may no longer be happy with the product Greece offers. This development leaves Greece to face the options of altering its current product or looking to new markets.

Greece was voted China’s favorite tourism destination in 2005, introducing a strong potential new market for Greece (Moys, p. 1). While Europe’s middle classes are shrinking, Asia’s middle class is projected to grow from 28 to 54 percent (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 34). Asia’s middle class tourists are a potential market for low-budget product that incorporates traditional activities such as sight-seeing and shopping, a demand that holds enormous potential to increase arrivals and decrease seasonality by focusing on non-seasonal activities such as beach tourism (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 34). In 2010, Minister of Culture and Tourism Pavlos Geroulanos announced, “We wish to create stronger relations to the Chinese market, taking advantage of the excitement following the Olympic Games in Athens and Beijing,” demonstrating that Greece is capitalizing on this demographic shift by focusing on China (Tong). Greece is also using its embassy as a hub for marketing new travel opportunities for Chinese tourists by providing information about Louis Cruises, a Mediterranean cruise line with cruises specially designed for Asian tourists (Embassy of Greece Beijing).

Greece is also looking to establish a stronger Russian market. During a trip to Russia in 2010, Deputy Minister Nikitiadis talked with tourism authorities about a plan to facilitate Russian travel to Greece (Greek Campaign to Attract . . .”). The plan could include opening more visa centers in major Russian cities, appointing a Russian government official in Greece to assist traveling citizens, and supporting more charter flights from Russia in order to establish Greece as an annual destination for Russian citizens. These measures are estimated to increase Russian arrivals from 300,000 to 1 million (Tourism and Aviation). Deputy Minister Nikitiadis said that specialized forms of tourism such as sports, religious, conference, and agrotourism would be encouraged for Russian tourists, all of which, if established, could decrease seasonality (Tourism and Aviation). With these efforts, the Russian market has begun growing; according to GNTO records, Russian arrivals increased by 20 percent from 2009 to 2010 (GNTO).

Looking Toward the Future with SETE

While expansion and improvement of the Greek tourism industry has fallen primarily to the public sector, alternative plans have also been developed in the private sector. The
Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1991 by a group of entrepreneurs to represent the concerns of the private sector about the state’s inability to solve chronic problems in the industry (SETE). Headed by Andreas Andreadis, SETE focuses on improving the competitiveness of the Greek tourism industry and demonstrating its importance to the Greek economy. SETE has pursued many avenues of research and has devoted itself to providing information about Greek, European, and world tourism. In its first two decades, SETE has become an effective and reputable entity, functioning as an active member of organizations such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the European Economic and Social Committee (SETE).

SETE completed a comprehensive study of Greek tourism in an effort to develop a plan for long-term success and sustainability of the tourism industry, precisely what the Greek government has yet to do. The study, sponsored by Eurobank EFG, utilized information gathered by the University of the Aegean Laboratory for Tourism Research and Study (SETE). SETE used the study results to formulate a comprehensive development plan that calls for a “mentality change” and addresses key issues that threaten the industry's growth (SETE).

The plan is based on the fundamental idea that Greece’s core tourism product is exceptional, but the added value is lacking. The main issues include: the inconsistency and instability of the current bureaucratic systems, seasonality and lack of diversity in the sun and sea model, concentration of regional tourism activity, low quality of the tourism product, improper management, the outdated approach to tourism demand, future factors that could affect the industry such as climate change, environmental degradation, changing demographics, a shifting middle class, an ill-trained labor market, and the lack of collaboration between other peripheral tourism industry sectors (“Greek Tourism 2020,” pp. 1–107).

The plan emphasizes two major reform ideas. The first proposes a new organizational structure for the governmental branch that handles tourism. SETE suggests the creation of an independent Ministry of Tourism run by the Secretary-General of Tourism, who will serve for a minimum of five years, and a Tourism Secretariat in all “co-competent ministries” (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 101). The new governmental structure will be divided into seven different geographical regions of Greece. Each region can focus on the specific types of tourism that best fit its resources (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 56). Within each region, a Destination Management Organization (DMO), made up of a team of executives who are experts in the field, would facilitate effective communication between the regional unions and the public and private sectors to ensure effective oversight and quality control in each region (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 57).

This part of the plan also proposed restructuring of the current system of product distribution. To combat Greece’s dependence on foreign Tour Operators, SETE recommends several solutions, including the establishment of a marketing company devoted to the promotion of Greek tourism. According to SETE, past marketing attempts have been based on the aesthetic preferences of each minister, a strategy that has proved to be ineffective. This company would create an expanded and integrated internet presence as a major medium for advertising. Additionally, SETE supports the development of strategic relationships with airline companies to establish flights between Greece and other major international cities, since airlines provide a direct response to tourist demand (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 29).

SETE also proposes changes in the current approach to demand, recommending a varied mix of base markets to provide different types of support to the market. This strategy would include continuing to promote domestic tourism to help reallocate wealth within the state, continuing to provide the sun and sea product for the current target market, and providing new and differentiated products to draw in new markets, such as cultural tourism for the Chinese market, and the holiday home for the Russian market (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 45).

The second major reform idea proposed by SETE is to maximize the economic benefits Greece reaps from the tourism industry. This includes the “intersectoral approach,” which operates on the idea that tourist consumption affects 60 percent of Greece’s eco-
nomic sectors, a statistic that demonstrates the potential impact an incorporated approach to tourism could have on other sectors of the economy that may be struggling. SETE aims to harvest this potential through spectrum economies, an approach that is “primarily aim[ed] at taking advantage of demand created by other sectors/branches increasing productivity through the use of influxes, infrastructures, human resources and capital funds from other sectors/branches, [and] taking advantage of distribution channels, marketing structures and brand names” (SETE). Through this method, SETE aims to create a collaborative relationship between tourism and other industries with the dual purpose of decreasing seasonality and spreading tourism’s financial success.

SETE’s plan also proposes reform in employment to maximize the industry’s benefit to Greece. It recommends more employment subsidization measures, such as reducing non-wage taxes as an incentive to increase employment opportunities and relieving operational costs to create more demand (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 95). Additionally, education and training should be enhanced to elevate the status of tourism employees and attract young, bright Greeks to the industry. SETE looks to achieve this objective by providing online e-learning educational programs and developing an apprenticeship program for secondary school graduates looking to enter the tourism industry (“Greek Tourism 2020,” p. 96). Better trained and educated employees will also improve the quality of the tourism product, eventually increasing demand.

Conclusion

Greece is a renowned tourism destination, but its natural appeal is devalued by the nation’s lackluster approach to promoting and distributing its tourism product. The inconsistency of government leadership has prevented the implementation of vital long-term reforms. For the past decade, Greek tourism has remained almost stagnant. After the Athens Olympic Games, the Alpha Bank predicted foreign visitors “may reach 19–20 million by the end of the decade” from 13 million in 2004 (Weed, p. 168). However, international arrivals totaled only 15 million in 2012 (SETE Basic Figures). Minister Nikitiadis himself recently acknowledged this unreached potential, saying, “We haven’t achieved even 20 percent of what we are able to achieve as a country, which makes me optimistic. If we work hard we can easily reach 25m arrivals per year which, in turn, will bring in revenues and mean more work for everyone” (Smith). This arrival target for 2020 is consistent with Alpha Bank’s prediction for 2010, further illustrating Greece’s stagnancy. The problems discussed in the early 2000s are still being discussed a decade later.

While no major reforms have come to fruition, some of the small steps taken by Greece give hope for the future of the tourism industry. The next step is for Greece to commit to a long-term plan like “Greek Tourism 2020,” which addresses issues like seasonality, marketing, infrastructure, intersectoral success, and policy. Only then will the tourism industry begin to reach its full potential and contribute to Greece’s economic recovery.
REFERENCES


