

GLOBAL TOURISM - A QUICK REBOUND AFTER THE PANDEMIC**Cosmin Virgil TILEAGA¹**¹*Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania, 0000-0002-7877-8096***Abstract:**

Even though the COVID 19 virus has negatively impacted travel and tourism throughout the world, the pandemic presents a chance to rebuild the industry with a sustainability-focused vision. The core of a vast economic ecosystem that significantly boosts income and job creation across all EU member states is the tourism industry. Most domestic and international travel has been halted because of the epidemic, which has significantly reduced income and caused liquidity issues for all tourist businesses. However, the figures seem decent. Is the tourist industry growing more quickly than we anticipated?

Until the pandemic is declared finished, the days of planning holidays based on where we want to go or what tourist sites we want to visit are over. Instead, the field industry, as well as visitors, will be considerably more concerned with meeting certain personal demands. As a result, post-Covid tourism will be more concerned with the individual than with locations. People are expected to make far more deliberate decisions when faced with the urge to travel as well as the hurdles to satisfying that goal. Tourists will be less ready to compromise on their future vacations in the post-Covid age. They will have higher expectations of the services provided by the hotel business. And, to meet expectations, the hotel sector will need to focus its experiences, facilities, and services centered on wellness, health, and overall well-being.

The crisis has provided a chance to use new technology, adopt green recovery measures, and transition to policies and business practices that better balance tourism's environmental, social, and economic implications. Policymakers should use the opportunity to relaunch the tourist industry on a more solid, equitable, and sustainable foundation. The crisis, and the recovery strategies that are being implemented, represent a once-in-a-lifetime chance to transition to more sustainable and resilient tourist development models.

Keywords: Global Tourism, Tourism Rebound, COVID Tourism, Tourism Recovery, Tourism Management

JEL Classification: M10, M11, M16, M20, Z32, L83

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourist industry due to travel restrictions and a drop in demand from potential visitors. The spread of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the tourist sector since various countries have put travel restrictions in place to attempt to stem the virus' spread, which has resulted in the closure of an entire industry. The pandemic's detrimental impact has been felt by the great majority of sectors worldwide.

Although several industries were forced to halt operations, they were able to continue operating on a limited basis. International tourism, on the other hand, was a very different story. Countries whose GDP is heavily reliant on the yearly influx of tourists have suffered economically, and the harmful impact on ecosystems constructed completely around tourism has not been hidden. Until the pandemic is declared finished, the days of planning holidays based on where we want to go or what tourist sites we want to visit are over. Instead, the field industry, as well as visitors, will be considerably more concerned with meeting certain personal demands. As a result, post-Covid tourism will be more concerned with the individual than with locations. People are expected to make far more deliberate decisions when faced with the urge to travel as well as the hurdles to satisfying that goal. Tourists will be less ready to compromise on their future vacations in the post-Covid age. They will have higher expectations of the services provided by the hotel business. And, in order to meet expectations, the hotel sector will need to focus its experiences, facilities, and services centered on wellness, health, and overall well-being. It must also meet the cleanliness requirements that tourists would definitely expect. As a result, it should come as no surprise that health tourism, wellness tourism, spiritual and potentially

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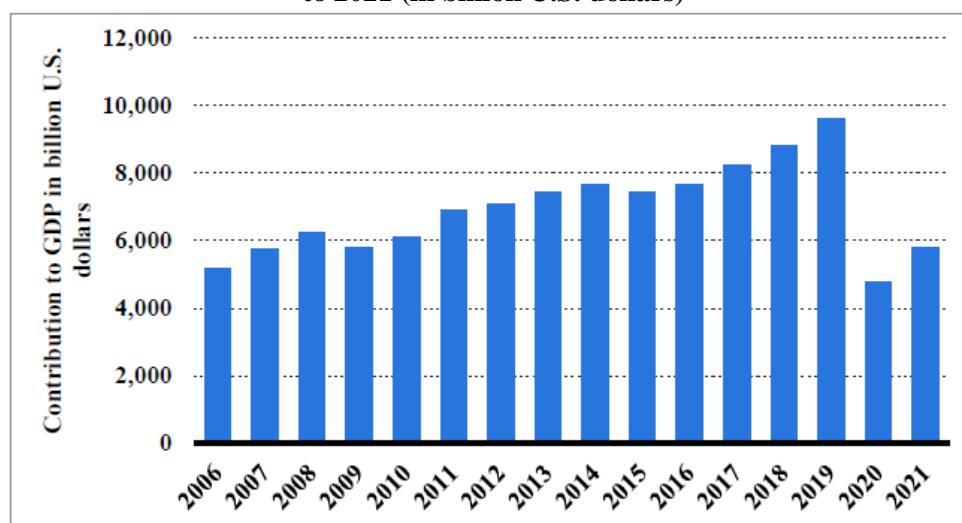
religious tourism are becoming increasingly popular. Because of the epidemic, travelers will pay more attention than ever to these requirements, whether it is health, luxury treatments, or pursuing objectives for physical, intellectual, and spiritual well-being following a year of constraints and lockdown. Finally, it is about rediscovering oneself.

2. Global Tourism Rebound Impact on the Global Economy

There are still many unknowns about the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the extent of its dispersion, the severity of the epidemic in different countries, the duration of the outbreak, and if an initial decline would be followed by a recurrence. However, one thing is certain: the economic impact of this outbreak will be massive, dwarfing anything we've seen in recent memory. The current global economic shock is undeniably greater than the global financial crisis, and it is likely to be worse than the Great Depression. Even the two global wars of the twentieth century, although interrupting supply networks and destroying physical infrastructure and populations, did not impose the limitations on travel and economic activity that most nations now have. As a result, this is an unprecedented global crisis that necessitates unprecedented remedies.

This severe economic impact is partly due to the pandemic's control measures, which have ranged from relatively modest limitations on mobility and public meetings to total lockdowns (and lockdowns) that have brought most economic activity to a standstill. This meant attacking both supply and demand at the same time. During lockdowns, people (particularly those without formal job contracts) are deprived of money, and unemployment rises dramatically, resulting in massive decreases in consumer demand that last long after the lockdown is removed. At the same time, all but critical items and services are suspended, and even in these areas, supply is severely hampered by implementation issues and inadequate attention to the input-output links that permit production and distribution. Previous regional and global crises did not result in such a complete stoppage of economic activity. Because of the lethal mix of supply and demand breakdowns, this period is actually unique and must be managed differently.

Figure 1: Total contribution of travel and tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) worldwide from 2006 to 2021 (in billion U.S. dollars)



Source: Statista.com, July 2022

It is critical to highlight the new travel trends for 2021. We are interested in the tourist sector's development potential, which characterize the Covid period and will characterize the Post-Covid era in the future years. Resilience and flexibility are two essential attributes for the hospitality and tourist sectors to recover. It is vital to recover the destinations' economic, social, historical, and cultural value.

During this time, it has become critical to better understand passengers' goals and to forecast future trends. Analysts and research organizations are attempting to acquire as much information as possible on the web footprints of potential tourists. We must strive to grasp the preparatory stages of travel, namely the "dream" phase, where potential travelers are motivated to visit new places in the future. Even at the worst of the epidemic, tourists continued to study and arrange trips. The relaxation of limitations and the acceleration of vaccinations will mark the beginning of the return to travel. It is critical to be prepared. "From search to reservation" is a simple step.

Table 1: Total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in leading travel markets worldwide from 2019 to 2021 (in billion U.S. dollars), Leading global travel markets by travel and tourism contribution to GDP 2019-2021

	2019	2020	2021
United States	1979.1	1042.3	1271.2
China	1856.6	696.3	814.3
Germany	391.2	239.1	251
Japan	371.1	167.9	206.3
Italy	214.5	113	179
India	212.8	124	178
France	233.3	126.5	177.9
Mexico	199.6	136.6	168.8
United Kingdom	280.8	112.3	157.5
Spain	198.3	74.2	113.1

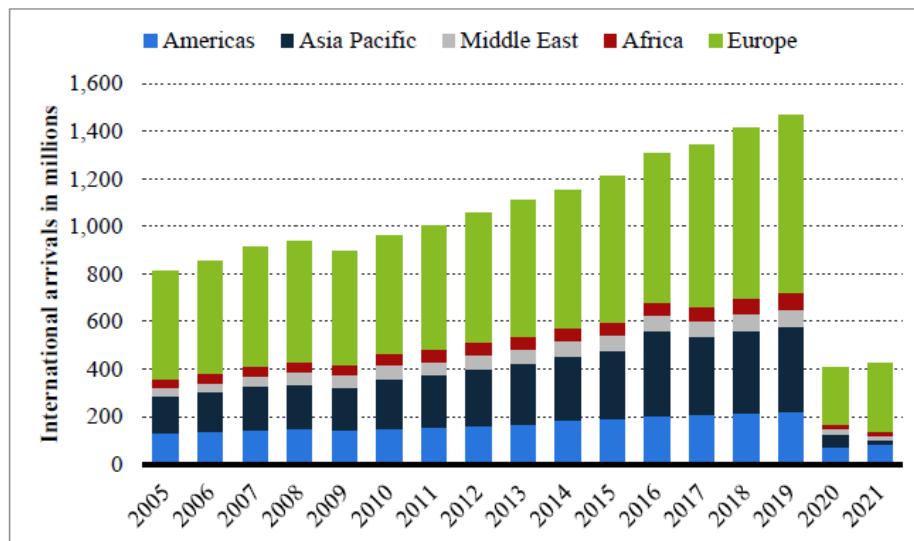
Source: Statista.com, July 2022

Despite significantly increased economic and geopolitical challenges, particularly in recent months following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, international tourism continues to show signs of strong and steady recovery more than two years after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the World Tourism Barometer, produced by the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO - The World Tourism Organization). According to the organization, Romania is one of the nations whose international travel markets have entirely returned to 2019 levels.

On the European continent, international arrivals were more than four times higher than in the first five months of 2021 (up 350%), boosted by strong intra-regional demand and the lifting of all travel restrictions in a whole larger than countries. The Europe region recorded a particularly strong performance in April (+458%), reflecting the busy Easter period.

In North and South America, arrivals doubled (+112%), but the strong rebound is measured against the extremely weak results of 2021. International arrivals generally remained significantly weaker than in 2019, with 36% and 40% below 2019 levels in North America and South America, respectively. The same pattern is observed in other regions. Strong growth in the Middle East (+157%) and Africa (+156%) failed to offset declines during the pandemic, with markets remaining 54% and 50% below 2019 levels, respectively. The Asia-Pacific region nearly doubled international arrivals (+94%), but numbers were 90% lower than in 2019 as some states in the region remained completely closed to non-essential travel since early 2020 when the pandemic began. The recent easing of restrictions can be highlighted in the better results for April and May.

Figure 2: Number of international tourist arrivals worldwide from 2005 to 2021, by region (in millions)

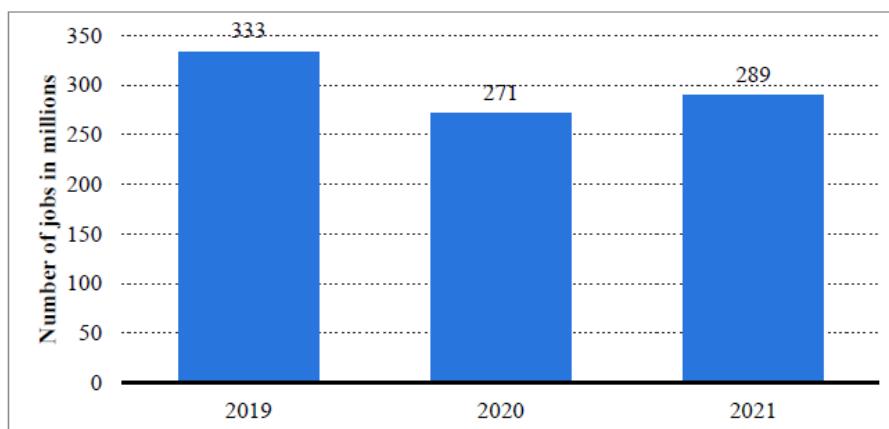


Source: Statista.com, July 2022

At the sub-regional level, the Caribbean and Central America have recovered between 70% and 80% of pre-pandemic levels, followed by the southern Mediterranean, western and northern Europe. Some locations, including the US Virgin Islands, Sint Maarten, the Republic of Moldova, Albania, Honduras, and Puerto Rico, outperformed in 2019. The rise in tourist expenditure in key marketplaces corresponds to the reported increase in visitor numbers. International tourist expenditure in France, Germany, Italy, and the United States is at 70% to 85% of pre-pandemic levels, while spending in India, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar has already exceeded 2019 levels.

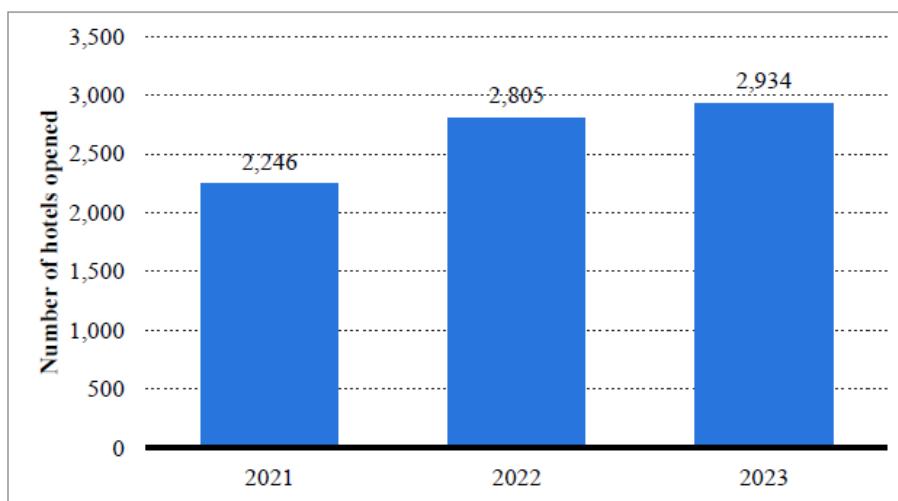
Solid demand throughout the Northern Hemisphere summer season is expected to boost these positive results, especially if more tourist destinations relax or abolish travel restrictions totally. As of July 22, 62 countries and territories (including 39 in Europe) had abolished Covid-19 restrictions, with further Asian tourist destinations following suit. According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the global loss of international air transport capacity in 2022 would be limited to 20%-25% of the capacity provided to airline customers in 2019. Similar values are seen in accommodation occupancy rates.

Figure 3: Number of travel and tourism jobs worldwide from 2019 to 2021 (in millions)



Source: Statista.com, July 2022

Figure 4: Number of hotels opened worldwide in 2021, with a forecast for 2022 and 2023)



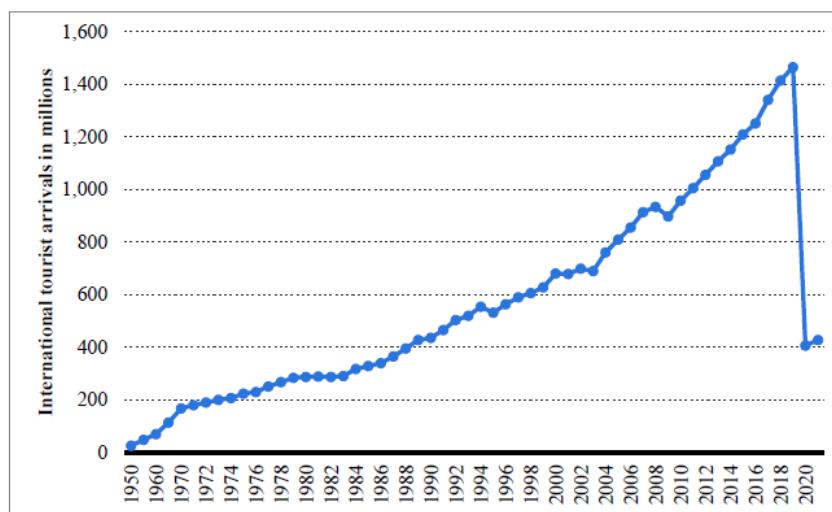
Source: Statista.com, July 2022

According to the UNWTO Outlook Scenarios, issued in May 2022, foreign arrivals would be 55%-70% of pre-pandemic levels in 2022. The outcomes are determined by the evolution of events and political decisions made by each nation, mostly involving changes in travel restrictions, the situation of price hikes and inflation - including the evolution of energy costs.

Other elements to consider include the progress of the war in Ukraine and the hygienic condition associated to the epidemic.

Recent issues, such as personnel shortages and heavy congestion at some of the main airports, which have resulted in aircraft delays and cancellations, may have a significant influence on the final results for foreign tourism this year. According to regional projections, Europe and the Americas will have the greatest tourist results in 2022, while Asia-Pacific will lag behind due to more restrictive travel regulations. Depending on the conditions, foreign visitor numbers to Europe might rise to 65%-80% of 2019 levels, while visits to the Americas could rise to 63%-76% of current levels. Because of more rigorous health laws and constraints than in other parts of the world, international arrivals in Africa and the Middle East might reach 50% to 70% of pre-pandemic levels, while Asia-Pacific arrivals could remain around 30% of 2019 levels in the best-case scenario.

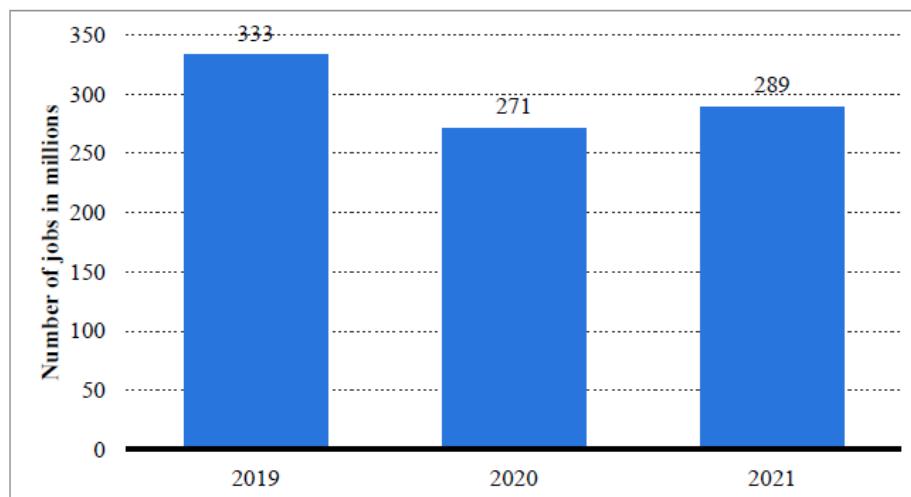
Figure 5: Number of international tourist arrivals worldwide from 1950 to 2021 (in millions)



Source: Statista.com, July 2022

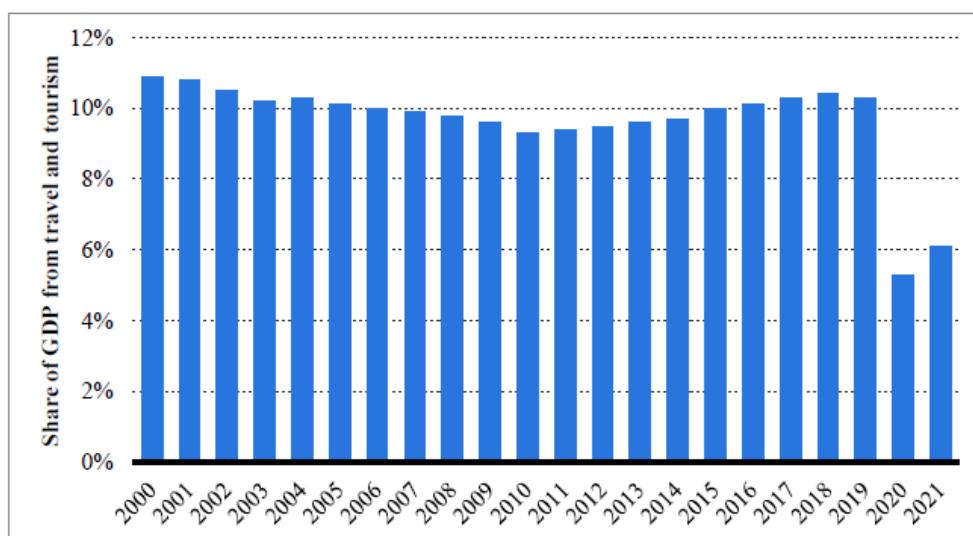
The worldwide travel and tourism industries are expected to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 and increase faster than global GDP growth. Tourism contributed a tenth of global GDP and jobs in 2019, but the coronavirus pandemic ravaged the \$9.6 trillion industry, reducing its production value and displacing 62 million people. The GDP of the travel and tourism industry is expected to reach \$8.35 trillion this year and \$9.6 trillion in 2023, returning to pre-pandemic levels. Tourism employment is expected to rebound to 300 million this year and 324 million in 2023, close to the 333 million recorded in 2019.

Figure 6: Number of travel and tourism jobs worldwide from 2019 to 2021 (in millions)



Source: Statista.com, July 2022

Figure 7: Share of the total gross domestic product (GDP) generated by travel and tourism worldwide from 2000 to 2021



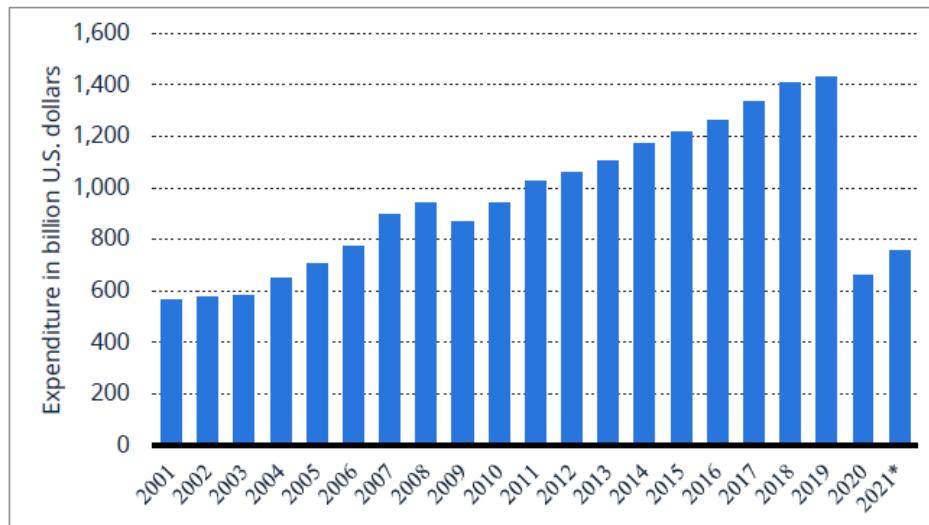
Source: Statista.com, July 2022

The COVID-19 situation has been a big shock to the tourist industry, affecting people's lives, towns, and companies severely. The exact scope of the pandemic's impact is unknown.

Returning to "business as normal" is improbable. Governments must learn from the crisis in order to establish a better, more resilient tourist industry in the future. While it is too early to predict what these will be, a few basic lessons are presented.

- Nations must collaborate since the acts of one government affect travelers and companies in other countries, as well as the global tourism system. Countries must build cross-border collaborative mechanisms to restart safe travel, restore traveller and corporate trust, boost demand, and speed tourism recovery. To respond to future shocks, more efficient international coordination structures are also required.
- Tourism has reaped significant benefits from broad economic stimulus efforts. It is, nevertheless, one of the worst affected industries, and its influence on the larger macroeconomic recovery in many countries will be enormous. Parts of the tourist ecosystem that have yet to reopen and where demand is expected to remain low or constricted for some time, as well as destinations and small companies struck the hardest and most vulnerable, will require special attention.
- Destinations and tourism businesses require help in order to be prepared to provide tourism services when the economy recovers. It will be vital to work with tourist businesses to maintain their long-term viability after assistance ceases, as well as to begin addressing the crisis's long-term implications. Measures should become increasingly reliant on broader environmental, economic, and social objectives.
- The pandemic has once again brought attention to the tourist industry's structural problems and its susceptibility to external shocks. To better prepare for upcoming shocks, solve enduring structural weaknesses, and stimulate the digital, low-carbon changes necessary to move to stronger, fairer, and more sustainable tourist growth models, it is vital to diversify and increase the tourism economy's resilience.

Figure 8: Expenditure of business tourists worldwide from 2001 to 2021 (in billion U.S. dollars)



Source: Statista.com, July 2022

3. Conclusions

The tourist business is in a rare position to consider its future. If it wants to make a difference, it must prioritize providing cheap, high-quality experiences that put the client first. Promoting specific locations or iconic sites, regardless of when tourism returns in the post-pandemic world, has no place. Furthermore, if there are still limits or transit routes that vary their layout, it may be challenging. The tourism industry has little choice but to alter their trips to match the needs of its clients.

The crisis has provided a chance to use new technology, adopt green recovery measures, and transition to policies and business practices that better balance tourism's environmental, social, and economic implications. Policymakers should use the opportunity to relaunch the tourist industry on a more solid, equitable, and sustainable foundation. The crisis, and the recovery strategies that are being

implemented, represent a once-in-a-lifetime chance to transition to more sustainable and resilient tourist development models.

The cost of leisure travel is expected to soar, with the increasing trend being further fueled by the demand for human connection following months of lockdowns. The billions of dollars in household savings that have accumulated in the top economies during the time when there was almost anything else to spend money on save supermarket home delivery will also provide households more money to spend on trips.

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Disclaimer:

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