

## Inter-national Factors Affecting Tourism Demand among Balkan Countries and Turkey

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Besides having land in Balkans geographically, Turkey has strong historic, cultural and political ties with Balkan geography. Those relations that were established during the reign of Ottoman Empire in the region have been developing during the Turkish Republic as well. Although there was a considerable amount of migration to/from Balkan countries and Turkey, there still is a large amount of Turkish origin citizens in Balkans.

Besides cultural ties; international politics and economic relations are important factors affecting tourism flows between countries. In this context Turkey has been playing a pioneer role in establishing stronger relations with Balkan countries. This paper explores impact of political and economic agreements on incoming tourism in the light of Balkan countries and Turkey within the past decade.

Over the last ten years both Turkey and Balkans have been undergoing a major transformation both economically and politically. Turkey and Balkan countries have also been enjoying rapid tourism growth for the past decade, despite global problems such as economic crises (e.g. mortgage funds), acts of terrorism (e.g. 9/11), wars and conflicts (e.g. Iraq), epidemics (e.g. H1N1) an extreme weather conditions (e.g. volcanic ash clouds). The current situation and reasons behind the development of bipolar tourist movements within these countries are discussed based on economic and political facts and tourism statistics.

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