

## **The Land of the Pharaohs Remains One of the Leaders**

H.E. Dr Ezzad Saad El Sayed, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt, answers Diplomat's questions about what Egypt has to offer Russian tourists.



Q. Your Excellency, Egypt has been among the most popular destinations for Russian tourists for several years now. Why is Egypt so popular?

A. There are many reasons why Egypt is one of the top tourist destinations, not only for Russians, but for many other nationalities as well. Egypt, the land of the Pharaohs, is the cradle of one of the most important civilizations in history, and the innumerable monuments associated with its legacy speak for themselves, making Egypt as we like to say “an open sky museum.” Egypt is also privileged to have some of the most famous religious landmarks for all three God sent religions. Furthermore, Egypt is an all year round paradise for those seeking a holiday for relaxing and enjoying the sun in the Mediterranean or the Red Sea, or in the Oases, with our booming number of resorts that cater to every budget.

While the list of attractions and entertainment available for tourists on the Egyptian market is constantly growing because of our determination to provide the largest possible number of alternatives for every taste, whether it be, for example, cultural, historical, health and wellness, safari tourism. Moreover, I would like to highlight the hospitality, friendliness and warmth of the Egyptian people, which I consider to be among the most important factors attracting tourists, as they feel at home away from home. I would like to add that the excellent political and economic cooperation between the governments of both countries, and the historical ties that go back a long way, have created a special affinity of Russian tourists to Egypt and vice-versa.

Q. What is the Embassy doing to increase the number of Russian tourists coming to Egypt?

A. Promoting tourism in Egypt is one of the top priorities of the Embassy, especially with the increasing competition on the Russian and international markets. We have a permanent dialog with the Russian authorities. We also have a bureau for tourism affiliated to the Embassy, which keeps close contacts with the tour operators and regularly updates our marketing campaign. We participate in all major travel fairs organized in Russia, including the annual IntourMarket. We try as much as we can to be creative and innovative in our marketing approach. We listen very carefully to the needs and wishes of potential tourists, and take very seriously all comments of tourists who have visited our country, out of genuine concern to always provide a better service

and make sure that Russian tourists are satisfied with their trip, hoping that they will have pleasant memories of their vacation.

Q. How many tourists, do you think, will come to Egypt in 2009?

A. First I would like to say that Russian tourists have been the largest number of foreign tourists visiting Egypt for the past two years, as we received over 1.5 million Russian tourists in 2007 and over 1.8 million in 2008. We are still hopeful to be able to increase that number to over 2 million Russian tourists this year, though it is going to take a lot of effort, innovation and creativity from both governments and all our partners in the tourism sector in Russia and Egypt, especially with the negative impact of the world economic downturn. (END/2009)