

# **ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE TOURISM SECTOR IN SPAIN**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Climate change is already happening and causing profound changes in many natural systems. Moreover, it also presents, in a greater or lesser extent, economical effects in nearly every sector of activity. In this context, the tourism will be particularly affected [1; 2]. There will be regional and seasonal shifts in global tourist flows, leaving some countries more vulnerable to shifting climatic conditions [3]. European Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, will be most negatively affected within the EU [4]. The much higher temperatures that would have during summer would make Spain an unpleasant destination for many tourists [5]. Moreover, the snow-based tourism will be affected because of the unavailability of natural snow [2].

The tourism industry represents more than 10% of the Spanish GDP and more than 13% of the employment in 2008 [6]. Additionally, it also presents synergies with important key sectors such as transport, building, accommodation or leisure.

Although the economical costs of climate change in tourism remain difficult to quantify, most studies indicate that increasing temperature would have largely negative consequences in Spain. There will be a loss of beaches, wetlands, water resources and a sea level increase that will affect existing facilities. It will affect the most important touristic destinations of the country [7]. South-eastern Spain hosts some of the most popular destinations for tourists from the UK and other European countries. According to the IPCC [8], Spain could lose 40% of its German tourists and up to 100% of its British tourists. Hein [5] estimates that climate change would lead to a reduction of 20% of total annual tourist flow to Spain between 2004 and 2080; Hein, Metzger and Moreno [9] obtain an average decrease up to 14% in 2060 compared to 2004 - result of higher losses in summer and slight increases in the remainder of the year-.

Nevertheless, some studies offer a more positive outlook. According to the Fundación Empresa y Clima [7], the tourist seasons will be lengthened and the North littoral could receive new flows of tourists, so it will be able to take advantage of new opportunities of business.

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