

CRUISE LINES STILL FAIL TO SHOW TRANSPARENCY



Cruise lines are apparently trying to improve their sustainability. However, not everything is as it seems, and data on the sustainability-oriented efforts of cruise companies is hard to dig up, leaving the situation up for speculation from the outsiders.

Friends of the Earth, an environmentally friendly organization, has recently released a report card on cruise sustainability which suggests that **most cruise lines are only moving towards increased sustainability and information transparency on paper.**

The best ranked lines with respect to environmentally friendly efforts are the Disney Cruise Line, the one with the greenest operations of those listed, followed by the Cunard and Holland America Cruise Lines.

Disney Cruise Line's transparency was also rewarded, as it was the only of the ranked lines to receive an A rating in this category, something which probably helped its overall rating immensely. It is important to note, however, that this rating was also possibly influenced by the fact that this company was the only one to provide data on air pollution reduction, compliance to Alaska's water quality regulations, and sewage treatment technology.

The installation of new pollution reduction technologies may have gathered a lot positive attention for the cruise industry, but the report card still gives it an F for transparency overall, suggesting that innovations like those may be more of a smokescreen than an actual effort towards increasing the industry's sustainability.

Furthermore, Friends of the Earth go as far as accusing these lines of failing where air and water pollution are concerned, in spite of the media attention generated by the new technologies allegedly implemented and the new rules for circulation in the United States, which call for the installation of scrubbers.

However, while the report card would lead one to think the opposite, major cruise lines such as Carnival Corp and Royal Caribbean have actually been quite transparent about their sustainability efforts, or so it seems, as they have been very forthcoming with the release of such information. The latter has even gone as far as creating a partnership with the World Wildlife Foundation.

The bigger issue at play here is that there is no global regulation and control over the cruise companies' practices and their reports on sustainability. In fact, the data from late 2015 estimates that only 13% of global travel companies have ever released such reports in any shape or form.

The issue of transparency has been highlighted by yet another recent report, which suggests that every other segment of the travel and tourism industries has made bigger and better efforts towards becoming more transparent when releasing information about their sustainable practices. With no actual global regulations to enforce it, only 4% of cruise lines have reported on sustainability practices in 2014, a number that leaves a lot to be desired.

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