

AUSTRIAN TOURISM: FOREIGNERS SPEND MORE BUT COME LESS



Foreign tourists spent more money in Austria in 2009 than in the previous year. The number of overnight stays however is going down.

Despite the economic crisis the latest statistics for 2009 show that Austria was among the market winners. **According to the data in 2009 international tourists spent more money in the country last year than in 2008.** The share of the foreign tourists' spending was 6.72 percent (6.16% in 2008) which was the best result since 1997, reported Traveller-online.at

The Minister of Economy, Reinhold Mitterlehner, was pleased by the statistics: "We managed to get a good market share in the crisis. With this growth Austria is only behind China, Turkey and Australia - that means the fourth in the world."

However, tourism revenues and the rest of the economy are two different things. In 2009 Austria's gross domestic product dropped by 3.6 percent. As in other European countries people were more careful and rather saved insecure about future developments.

During the winter season 2009/10 (November to January) Austria recorded a 2% drop in overnight stays compared to the previous season. Although the percentage actually increased for domestic tourists (+3.6% of overnight stays) the numbers for foreign visitors (-3.5% of overnight stays) shifted the overall results considerably downwards.

The minister is however optimistic about the developments in 2010: "We expect a slight increase in sales and overnight stays. If everything goes well we will reach at least the world average of 3-4 % growth," said Mr. Mitterlehner.

The current data for the first months of 2010 however do not suggest any radical changes. In January for instance the number of overnight stays was down 2% over January 2008, while the percentage of the overnight stays of foreigners was even greater (-4%).

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