

CRUISE: MARSEILLE PLANS TO BREAK RECORDS IN 2015



With 1,315,000 passengers, the cruise traffic in the French port Marseille will have increased by 11% at the end of 2014 compared to 2013. The Club Cruise forecasts an equivalent increase in 2015 and now aims to quickly reach the milestone of 2 million annual cruise passengers.

In only 15 years, Marseille has become a key port for cruise companies operating in France. **In 1997, Marseille recorded 66,000 cruise passengers (14,000 at the terminal and 52,000 in transit). 2014 should end with 1,315,000 passengers (+ 11% vs. 2013),** including 450,000 in terminal. Meanwhile, the cruise traffic was multiplied almost 20 times in Marseille.

"We reached a very important level," states Dominique Vlasto, Deputy Mayor of Marseilles in charge of Tourism. "It is a work that has been carried out jointly by all the local economic partners, the mayor and ship owners."

For Jacques Truau, President of the Cruise Club Marseille Provence, it is especially the 25% increase between 2013 and 2014 of the number of terminus travelers that is significant. Among the highlights of 2014, the President of the Cruise Club cites the first arrival of Liberty of the Seas (Royal Caribbean International), the inauguration of Diadema (Costa Cruises) and that of the Armonia (MSC Cruises).

With 174,000 passengers, a new monthly traffic record was broken in October 2014. "This is huge," said Jacques Truau enthusiastically. "The previous record was around 130,000. We also expect 140,000 cruise passengers for November 2014. "

1.4 million Passengers Expected in 2015

The momentum is expected to continue in 2015 as the MPCT (Marseille Provence Cruise Terminal) is since June 2014 using a third terminal (Terminal B). It is thus now able to accommodate 7 ships simultaneously and has a capacity of 1,000 parking spaces for travelers.

According to the consolidated forecasts published on November 14, more than 1.4 million passengers, of which 490,000 in terminal, are expected in Marseille next year. There should be more than 190,000 passengers in the month of October, 2015.

During the next season, Princess Cruises will return to the city. The company has scheduled 12 stops there for the whole of the year. In April 2015, the Form 10 ship repair, currently under renovation, will open. "We will have the capacity to accommodate the largest cruise ships in dry dock in the world," said Jacques Truau.

Dominique Vlasto believes that "what is left to do now is to introduce the world of cruises to the French. The market potential is huge." A potential advantage for "the entire French territory, not just Marseille," says Franck Recoing, Vice-President of the CCI Marseille Provence.

Each cruise participant will spend on average EUR 148. Which would represent EUR160

million of benefits in 2013 and a total of EUR 1.2 billion and 9 million passengers since 1996.

With a budget of € 35 million that has just been approved for the Port of Marseille (GPMM) to allow them to expand its 'Digue du Large' (dike) to offer more comfort to the boats, the Cruise Club Marseille Provence is now aiming for 2 million annual cruise passengers.

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