

REPORT SHOWS POSITIVE GROWTH OF EUROPEAN CITY TOURISM



The network that is responsible for increasing competitiveness and performance in Europe's leading cities, European Cities Marketing, is scheduled to release its yearly Benchmarking Report in June. Early 2014 figures indicate an increase in European cities hosting bednights, with a startling intensification for the Chinese market. It also appears that long-lived source markets like Spain and Italy are recovering.

In the initial sample consisting of 63 cities, comparative data shows a 4.3% raise for international bednights from the previous year. **International bednights have continued to grow in a quicker year-on-year growth rate than the domestically-sourced nights, which only grew 2.9%.** This figure represents a little over 65% of all 235.1 million bednights.

London and Paris, yet again, recorded the most international bednights, with only small increases compared to the previous year. Some other cities made more noteworthy leaps in their internationally-sourced bednights. Four out of the top ten cities experienced growth in international bednights from 4% to 6%, Berlin grew by 6.4%, and Amsterdam grew significantly, with an increase of 10.4%.

The UK, Germany, and the USA hosted almost a quarter of all international bednights in European cities for the year of 2014. All of the source markets experienced growth by 4-6%. Italy and Spain again resumed their growth rates, after steady decreases over the past several years.

China's growth was impressive, with an increase of 13.2% so that they now make up about 1% of all bednights spent in Europe's cities. Japan, on the other hand, continued to decline (-4.1%), and Russia decreased even more (-7.9%) after 2013's 9.4% growth. Russia's source market was anticipated to decline because of the drop in oil prices, ruble devaluation, and because of the sanctions against Russia because of the conflict in Ukraine.

The President of ECM (European Cities Marketing), Ignasi de Delàs, believes that the results are crucial in understanding the competition in European cities. He says that internationalization is becoming a key word in tourism development in many countries, and that this Benchmarking Report demonstrates the growing success rates of Europe's city tourism are based on the plethora of source markets.

International bednights have grown roughly 1.9 times faster than domestic tourism in Europe's cities in 2014. China, a BRIC market, is still experiencing tremendous growth in bednight numbers over 2013. **Through Spanish and Italian market recovery, European cities are capable of coping with the decline in Russian and Japanese markets.** Ignasi de Delàs also said that, in spite of all of the economic and political factors, cities' current concentration on international visitors has been the primary reason for the cities' victory. This provides City Tourism Managers with good reason to believe in European tourism's strength.

The ECM's 11th edition of the Benchmarking Report is going to be presented at the European Cities Marketing Annual conference on June 3-5, 2015 in Turin.

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