

TOURISM IN BARCELONA - HOTEL INDUSTRY NOT HARMED



The suspension on new hotel licenses, which has been effective in Barcelona, seems not affecting the profitability of the hotel business in the city. The hotels reported a significant increase in the price of rooms in 2015. These are the findings of a study on the hotel market over the past year and the first half of 2016, released by BRIC Consultancy. Thanks to growing tourism in Barcelona, the study ranks the Catalan capital as the most profitable city in Spain's tourism sector.

In 2015, tourists in Barcelona paid 91 euros per room, 12% more than in the previous year. This figure is a proof of the consolidation of its profitability, boosted by the steady growth in the number of visitors recorded since 2010. **This trend also strengthened in the first quarter of 2016, which has recorded a 12% increase in visitors.**

According to the annual data of the city tourism authorities, in 2015 Barcelona welcomed a total of 8.3 million visitors, 52.5% of whom were second-time visitors to the city. El Prat Airport received 13.4% more passengers during the first four months of 2016, and hotels accommodated 6.3% more guests, which is a promise of an optimistic outlook for this year.

The study on tourism in Barcelona. also shows that the city is the third European destination in gross expenditure and the second globally in expenditure per capita, recording in the past four years a 30% increase in tourist spending in the city. However, forecasts point to a 3.6% reduction at the end of this year, according to a MAFRE study.

As for investments, 14 new hotel openings in 2015, coupled with hotel expansions, among other activities, came mostly from local capital, reaching a total investment of 323 million euros. These generated a 37.5% increase in the first quarter, an increase arising particularly from the increase in tariffs during the Mobile World Congress. In addition, in 2015 the hotel sector employed 42,837 people, up 5.7 per cent.

According to Juan Gallardo, a partner at the consulting firm, **the moratorium, which has led to the suspension of 29 projects which, according to the firm, could have generated about 640 jobs "could lead to the stagnation in the sector,** as excess demand can only be covered by unregulated accommodation," which, on the other hand, suggests that "there is no easy solution."

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