

AUSTRIA'S TOURISM REACHES 140 MILLION MARK FOR THE FIRST TIME



The year 2016 brought many visitors to the Alps and to the Danube. However, for the hoteliers not everything is rosy. The start of the winter season was somewhat weak for Austria's tourism.

The hotel industry in the Alpine republic is flourishing. Austrian hotels managed to generate 140.85 million overnight stays in 2016. This is a 4.2% increase compared to 2015. **This figure is a new record for Austria's tourism and is above the 140 million mark for the first time ever.**

According to the provisional calculations carried out by Statistik Austria, there was an increase in terms of domestic visitors as well as foreign guests. Domestic overnight stays increased by 4.4% to 38.01 million, while overnight stays of foreigners grew by 4.1% to 102.84 million.

A new record was also reached in terms of arrivals. With a total of 41.45 million arrivals, 2016 is the first year in which the 40 million mark was exceeded. This represents an increase of 5.2% compared to the year before.

The main source markets for Austria's tourism developed very positively. In 2016, there were more overnight stays by Germans (+4.9%), the Dutch (+3.6%) and Swiss visitors (3.4%). On the other hand, there were declines in overnight stays by guests from Italy (-1.8%), USA (-2%), and Russia (-17.8%).

However, for Austrian hoteliers everything is not as rosy as it seems. Despite the current growth rates, the number of overnight stays by Germans, the most important source of income, fell by 6.5% to 52.64 million. The number of German overnight stays in 2015 was 56.30 million. While in 1996 the share of German overnight stays amounted to almost 50 percent of the total overnight stays, it amounted to only 37.4% in 2016.

In the same period, overnight stays by visitors from countries from central and eastern Europe (Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and Hungary) showed dynamic growth rates, which largely compensated the decline in the German market.

Looking at the number of overnight stays in the individual accommodation types, the trend towards high-quality services has slightly weakened in 2016. The number of overnight stays in 5 and 4-star hotels increased by 3.5%, but was 0.9% below the general increase rate in overnight stays. **Above all, commercial apartments showed a strong growth of 9.4%.**

In the current winter season, Austria's tourism started in a somewhat cautious way. In the months of November and December, 14.46 million overnight stays were recorded. This represents a decline of 4.2% for the winter season.

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