

GERMAN CRUISE TOURISM BOOM CONTINUES AMID SAFETY CONCERNS ABROAD



Cruise tourism in Germany continues to boom, while the aviation industry is in crisis. Important source markets such as Turkey are in crisis, which raises a question, whether cruise tourism is a profiteer of political uncertainty and fear of terrorism?

Cruises are becoming increasingly popular among Germans. 2.02 million citizens booked a cruise trip last year. **This is an 11.3 percent increase compared to 2015.** Only USA has more cruise passengers than Germany.

The turnover of shipping companies also rose significantly, by 17.8 percent to 3.38 billion euros (though the overall turnover decreased slightly). According to the German Travel Association, the cruise industry generates around 13 percent of sales in the overall cruise market. And the CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association) expects the cruise tourism boom to continue.

At first glance it could be said that general uncertainty in the world has caused an increase in cruise demand, but that is not necessary the case.

“The big gains are mainly due to other reasons. The industry has been growing steadily in the recent years - regardless of whether there were attacks or political crises or not,” Helge Grammerstorf from CLIA noted. He also says that the most important reason for growth is the increasing supply of ships.

A Travelzoo survey supports this thesis. Only 4 percent of respondents said that they would opt for a cruise rather than another type of holiday, thereby increasing their safety.

“As a matter of fact, security is no longer expected on holidays, but is perceived as a quality element of a trip or a destination,” tourism researcher professor Torsten Kirstges from the Jade University in Wilhelmshaven added.

According to the Research Association for Vacation and Travel, the political situation is discussed more strongly as a criterion for destination selection. However, the total volume of journeys had not declined, though there were significant shifts in the travel currents.

Kirstges, however, thinks that **safety is an aspect influencing the success of cruises, though “not the sole or decisive reason”**. The effect is more highlighting, so that the cruises are now known to more and more people. The safety benefits give the guests a “lighter carefree holiday feeling”.

It is thus hard to say for sure, how relevant safety and current instability in the world is for the travelers and their choices. Presumably there is a connection, but it is probably not such an issue as portrayed by some.

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