

AMSTERDAM TAKES NECESSARY MEASURES AMID CRUISE TOURISM BOOM



Amsterdam plans to move the central cruise terminal further away from the city center as a measure against the tourism overload.

The explosive growth of the travel sector is mainly felt in the area of cruise tourism. In 2016, 121 ships with a total of 281,907 passengers were received in the city. **In 2017, 144 ships with 340,000 passengers are expected, while for 2018 already 170 ships have applied for charter permits.**

“Amsterdam is no longer clear,” said the deputy mayor Kajsa Ollongren, whose scope of responsibility includes, among other things, shipping and aviation in Schiphol. In her opinion, it is particularly dangerous that the cruise terminal, the “Passenger Terminal Amsterdam”, lies directly in the city center.

The Amsterdam city center is now relatively old and narrow. This has a charm, but with the high tourist volume it somewhat fades away. The cruise tourism in Amsterdam is killing the atmosphere of the charming city center.

The PTA bosses of course disagree with transfer of the terminal farther away from the center. According to them, the passengers arrive anyway, regardless of their berth. In addition, cruise passengers account for only 2% of the tourist traffic in the city. Strictly speaking, however, river cruise passengers have to be counted as well, since they arrive in the PTA. These passengers currently represent higher numbers than ocean cruise passengers. With around 1900 arrivals and 500,000 passengers, these make up 3% of the total tourist volume in Amsterdam.

Although no new location has yet been defined for the terminal, the move appears to be a settled matter. It is conceivable that smaller cruise liners as well as river cruise vessels remain at the PTA and large cruise ships are handled at the new terminal, presumably west of the city. According to Ollongren, several variants are conceivable.

Ollongren defends herself against the perception as a tourist preventer. She explained that she supports strong cruise tourism in Amsterdam because it is important for the city’s economy and jobs.

But with the intensive growth, regulations are necessary. And growth is guaranteed, thanks to the new sea lock in IJmuiden, which will open for shipping in late 2019. This will enable Amsterdam to operate 24-hour for cruise tourism as well as access to larger vessels. By 2030, 250 ship arrivals per year are expected.

In five to ten years the new terminal should be available. Cruise tourism companies are consulting the definite location with the PTA and the city of Amsterdam. Thus, if tourists are keen to visit Amsterdam’s city center on a cruise ship, it will be necessary to book the cruise in the next few years.

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