

TOURISM AND TERRORISM – A SINGLE ACT WITH LIMITED EFFECT



The recent Barcelona and Brussels attacks have once again made many people fear the impact of such events. Especially tour operators and travel companies have quickly come up with statements about the safety of their destinations. Tourism and terrorism seem connected. However what are really the effects of terrorism? What was the impact of an attack that took place 4 months ago in Sweden.

“The latest attack will soon be forgotten again,” says a tourist analyst. Stockholm has lost nothing of its attractiveness.

Not long ago, Sweden’s capital Stockholm was struck by a terror attack. 5 casualties were registered after an act of a rejected asylum seeker from Uzbekistan in early April who drove a lorry into crowds of people. **Some would think it had an effect on tourism inflow, however, that is not the case.**

The figures for the month in the direct entourage confirmed this emphatically. With a plus of 15%, the flow of foreign visitors to the Swedish metropolis continued unabated. In the first half of the year, tourism has grown twice as fast as in the rest of Scandinavia’s largest country. “You can speculate a lot about it, but it was a very isolated act with limited effect, says the PR manager of Visit Stockholm.

In 2010, Stockholm witnessed another attack. The murderer had chosen a crime scene with a pedestrian and shopping area of the Drottninggatan, which is probably the most frequented part of the city. This narrow street is always filled with people. A suicide bomber fired his homemade bombshell just before Christmas 2010. Fortunately, other than the perpetrator, who died, no one was hurt. “No one remembers it at all today and the new attack will soon be forgotten as well,” says Hans Remvig, who analyses tourism and travel patterns for Resurs in Stockholm.

Everything as Usual

Apart from the brief memory of the people, he also points out the fundamentally unchanged image of Sweden as a safe country in order to justify the stable visitor numbers. “It is mainly Germans and Norwegians who still visit our country openly because of the similarity with their own culture. Even the accumulation of negative headlines in the recent months could not change this trend.

US President Donald Trump had contributed in his own way, tweeting against “massive immigration” in Sweden. International media reported broadly about dramatical increase in murders in southern Sweden. Sweden’s intelligence service Säpo also warned of a big increase in the number of violent

jihadists in their own country shortly before the summer holidays.

“This is extremely marginal for tourists,” says Remvig. In his view, in terms of fear of violence, Malmö is still clearly ahead of Chicago. **He walks along the Drottninggatan in these summer days and everything is felt as always and there is no change due to the attack in April.** Sweden’s summer capital, richly blessed with water and archipelagos, has probably lost none of its appeal by terror fear. “Stockholm has a great potential, but we need more hotels and, if possible, new attractions,” said the head of Visit Stockholm.

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