

HOTEL RESERVATIONS AFFECTED BY CATALONIAN UNREST



Tourism contributes 15% to Barcelona's GDP. Hoteliers warn that the current instability caused by the independence movement in Catalonia may affect the hotel reservations and the profits of the industry.

The Barcelona Hotel Association announced that the operation of hotels is "completely normal", and that October and the last days of September are "similar to previous years".

"The occupancy forecasts are very high confirming the attractiveness of our destination, both in terms of leisure and business travel," said the spokesman of the association.

All that demand however was recorded prior to the black Sunday in which a referendum suspended by the Constitutional Court left almost 900 injured by police repression in Catalonia. Because of that a "slowdown in the amount of incoming reservations" is expected.

Two cruise ships of Tui Cruises changed the port of Barcelona for Valencia to avoid any tensions and danger for their passengers. The ships should berth on 1st and 3rd of October. Another ship is to skip Barcelona on 12th Oct - the day of the National Fiesta of Spain.

Enrique Alcantara, the president of the association of tourist apartments (Apartur), provided new impressions while waiting for the numbers to speak for themselves. He said, just like the Hotel Association, that "uncertainty and instability are not good for the business".

"We pine for political responsibility and a figure that provides tranquility to the city," Alcantara said. He admits that these days' perceptions are "worrisome" for the future hotel reservations - although he does not have figures to confirm or deny that. He claims that "there's a lot of fear when it comes to booking a hotel room".

"There have been no cancellations, but a halt in the demand is becoming more and more noticeable," he said.

A manager of a hotel firm with several branches told us that, so far, not one has called to cancel a reservation. "But let's see what happens in the next few days ..."

In Madrid, the Minister of Energy, Tourism and the Digital Agenda, Álvaro Nadal, said last week that there is a "slowdown" in tourism in Catalonia, which registered a year-on-year growth rate close to 10%. Until September, according to government figures, the cumulative growth increase was 2%.

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