

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE EXPECTED TO INCREASE THE VISITORS NUMBER IN KIEV



Kyiv is set to host the Champions League final on May 26 and there are a lot of expectations in the Ukrainian capital. The city will take the baton from Cardiff, which hosted the event last year. And the Welsh capital registered some impressive revenue and visitors numbers after hosting the final between Real Madrid and Juventus.

According to official statistics, a total of 314,264 people arrived in Cardiff to experience the atmosphere of the Champions League final 2017 last June. As a result, the economic impact of tourism on the city was £1.30 billion. This was an increase of 7% on 2016. **The city also registered an increase in visits by 5% to 21.30 million and earned a total of 53 million euros in revenues thanks to the club competition final.**

Predictions of visitors number vary among Ukrainian sources. According to the National Bank, 50–70 thousand people will arrive in the capital for the Champions League final between Real Madrid and Liverpool. It is also estimated that an average of 1.2 million people will have come to Ukraine in May. The same source estimates daily expenditure of \$100–150 per person on the day of the event. Other news report about 100 thousand visitors, with more than 600 million television viewers all over the world.

Meanwhile, preparations are finalizing, but with a number of issues arising just a couple of days before the match. Many hotels in Kiev are charging much higher than usual fees for May 26 and English fans have been outraged by this conduct. Some hotel prices even sky-rocketed from \$51 per night to \$2,800. This is somewhat paradoxical, considering that Kiev was listed as one of the cheapest travel destinations in a 2018 study from company Hoppa.

Spanish fans of Real Madrid are dealing with similar issues. Flight tickets are very expensive, as well as the match tickets themselves, not to mention the same issues with accommodation. As a result, over two thousand fans have returned their tickets. Also some family members and friends of Real Madrid players, who consider the trip, refused to travel to the event – “too expensive for an uncomfortable journey”.

However, this is not the only issue connected to the approaching event. The British Embassy in Ukraine has warned English fans from Liverpool about possible attacks against foreigners in the capital.

“Most of the trips in Ukraine do not cause difficulties, however, there have been cases of violent attacks against foreign citizens in Kiev and some of them could have occurred on racial grounds, so be very

careful and be vigilant all the time,” the embassy wrote.

Diplomats have also recommended to be wary of the current political situation. They advised to avoid any kind of provocations connected to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

It remains to be seen, whether the Champions League final will go on without any major issues. But Kyiv and Ukraine expect a lot from the event, with a general view of a more open approach to Europe from the country in recent years.

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