

AMSTERDAM TOURISM AUTHORITIES FACE IMPROPER BEHAVIOR OF TOURISTS



Amsterdam tourism authorities are displeased with numerous incidents of locals complaining about the behavior of tourists in the city center. Many times, the visitors are drunk, noisy, and messy. The city has thus launched a campaign against such inappropriate behavior with the aim to achieve a positive change.

Amsterdam's streets have gained negative reputation especially on Saturday evenings. One can witness tourists with cameras standing in front of sex clubs, noisy parties in the streets, drug use. Dangling tourists sit on the edge of the canals, where garbage and empty beer cans drift.

In 2016, the municipality called the so-called downtown offensive to life fighting the improper behavior of tourists. More police were used to make the city more loveable. **Interim reports from the community indicate that street crime such as pickpocketing and drug trafficking has since declined.**

In the meantime, however, more complaints about noisy visitors have occurred. In the De Wallen area alone, 581 reports were received by the municipality and the police in the last quarter of 2017. This is significantly more than the 325 reports received during the same period in 2016.

Recently, a new campaign was launched by Amsterdam Marketing to counteract the boorish behavior of tourists which might impact the Amsterdam tourism itself in the long term. The action is aimed primarily at young men between the ages of 18 and 34 from England and the Netherlands who are in Amsterdam for pub nights and bachelor parties. They usually stay only a few days, spend the night in cheap hotels and use the money to buy drugs. According to residents and business owners, these groups are causing increasing problems and conflicts.

The campaign aims to raise awareness among young men of their behavior and the associated penalties. During their stay in Amsterdam they should be confronted with posters of the campaign as consistently as possible. The ads can be found on Dutch and British websites for cheap hostels, bachelor parties and airline tickets.

In addition, the campaign uses the so-called "Geofencing" using GPS. Once the target group encounters these advertisements, they will learn that they may be fined 140 euros. The message behind the campaign is that while Amsterdam is an open and tolerant city, visitors to the city cannot do what they want.

Residents advocate the campaign. They admit that it is necessary to take into account that it is a tourist area and one needs to be used to noise. But the excesses cannot be tolerated. The new campaign is a good signal for the neighborhood with a view of giving the city a different image. **However, it is necessary that the fines mentioned on the posters are actually collected.**

The new city administration wants to spend more money on the existing problem in the coming years. While in 2018, there are still 9 million euros available for such a campaign, by 2021 it should be 25 million euros. Whether the campaign really leads to improved behavior of tourists, is not yet

foreseeable. Amsterdam Marketing suggests that it will take a lot of time and money and to achieve any positive change.

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