

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CRUISE INDUSTRY IS MORE THAN OBVIOUS



In 2013, Spain launched a campaign, called "Blue Carpet", to encourage the development of cruise tourism. Five years later, with its 28 authorized ports, the country has become the first in the Mediterranean Basin to receive cruise ships. Barcelona was in the lead with 2.7 million cruise passengers in 2017 (for a city of 1.6 million inhabitants).

Around the Mediterranean, the number of cruise ports has doubled in ten years. **And yet the region is only the third market worldwide regarding cruise industry: the most developed destinations are the Caribbean and Asia Pacific.**

In total, the number of passengers is expected to be about 27.2 million in 2018 worldwide, up from 24.7 million two years earlier, according to the Cruise Line International Association (CLIA). This exponential growth is not about to slow down, with 106 new ships expected to enter service in the next ten years, according to Cruise Industry News.

However, this phenomenon has negative impact on the ecosystems. A cruise ship that docks in a port often represents several thousand people disembarking for a few hours. For example, a Royal Caribbean Cruises boat has an average of 3,042 berths. And yet, the economic gain for local tourism stakeholders is limited, as full board is included on board. In contrast, ocean liners are very energy-intensive.

Worse, cruise ships cause serious air pollution in the port cities where they dock. The scientist Axel Friedrich, who revealed the "dieselgate", warns against the fumes of these liners. "These are very small particles that penetrate the lungs and can cause heart disease, heart attacks," he explains.

France Nature Environment and the German NGO Nabu have carried out measurements in the city of Marseille: in the port and in particular on cruise ships, the density of fine particles is 70 times greater than in the city.

The air pollution is now obvious. "Non-smoking people in our neighborhoods are dying of respiratory disease," says Wilfrid Robion, president of Cape Town North, an association that brings together residents of the 15th and 16th arrondissements of the city, which points out that the ships are burning cheap fuel oil cheaper."

The bitterness in these disadvantaged neighborhoods is all the greater as the inhabitants do not benefit much from the economic benefits generated by the cruise activity.

The environmental cost of more than 500 cruise ships that dock here is unbearable. **However, the 1.5 million cruise passengers that visit the city don't pay any tourist tax which might compensate for the environmental harm.**

According to a study conducted by the Marseille-Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry, cruise tourism generated 310 million euros in economic benefits in 2016, equivalent to 2,000 full-time jobs, created or retained. It also helped boost ship repair in the second largest city in France, which had been dismantled by the oil crisis and the emergence of Asian competition.

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