

CRUISE TOURISM SELF-RESTRICTIONS IN EUROPE CONTINUE



Cruise tourism is a form of entertainment but can also cause big problems for those not using it for recreational purposes. This applies mainly to local citizens of top tourist destinations that are increasingly dissatisfied with the masses of tourists gathering in their cities.

One of the first to tackle this issue was Croatian port city Dubrovnik. In Venice, Valletta and elsewhere, **similar measures limiting cruise tourism are discussed, and Bergen in Norway is also planning to reduce the number of ships.**

Bergen is a city with over 200,000 inhabitants. It is a historic old town with the UNESCO-protected Hanseatic district of Bryggen. However, cruise ships are very popular in the city, causing various problems – over-tourism, traffic jams, smog issues directly influenced by the giant ships. In addition, prices of goods in the center, especially at the touristy fish market, have risen to uncontrollable levels.

This is too much for the city authorities. Last week, cruise ships start-up permits were capped for the second year in a row. Only a year ago, the city council, the port and tourism authorities agreed that a maximum of four cruise ships a day with a total of no more than 9000 people may enter. From 2019, this will be reduced to three ships with a maximum of 8000 passengers.

The basis for the renewed push by the political authorities in Bergen is a study conducted by Menon Economics. According to this report, the average expenditure per cruise passenger in Bergen amounts to a remarkable 1090 crowns (about US\$ 128). But one third of the expenditure accounts for 3% of the passengers. After deducting this, the average spending is still around 700 crowns (about US\$ 82).

These are still considerable sums of money, considering the amounts of passengers. **Only a comparatively small number of companies profit from this.** Some politicians prefer to have an electrification of the port, rather than limitations. The majority, however, are worried about the quality of life and believe that Bergen is not a place for mass tourism and that it should focus on quality rather than quantity.

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