

FRANKFURT: HOTELS FACE STAFF SHORTAGE



More and more new hotels open in Frankfurt every year. The industry finds it increasingly difficult to find employees.

The hotel construction boom in Frankfurt continues unabated. Although the number of beds on offer grew by a record figure of almost 4300 in the past year alone, investments remain strong. This year alone, according to figures from the industry initiative Frankfurt Hotel Alliance, which is made up of 60 hotels, **eight new hotels with a total of 1566 rooms are coming onto the market.** In 2020 and 2021, six new hotels are expected to open, and at least four hotels in 2022. According to the figures, 6173 rooms can be added by then alone. And this includes only hotels in the first-class and luxury segments.

The increase in the number of rooms has not yet had any effect on the occupancy rate, given the increase in the number of overnight stays in recent years. This is constantly around 70 percent. Conversely, the fact that hotel capacity will continue to increase means that the number of overnight stays will have to continue to increase as well so that the occupancy rate does not fall.

The president of the Hotel Alliance, Thomas R. Hilberath, calculated that figure of overnight stays would have to be more than twelve million by 2022. Last year, Frankfurt's hotels sold 10.15 million overnight stays.

The boom in overnight stays continues. These have now risen nine times in a row. And the first two months of the year already point to another possible new record. More than 907,000 guests have already stayed overnight in the 298 accommodation establishments in Frankfurt in January and February, according to figures from the Tourism and Congress Society. The total number of overnight stays sold was 1.6 million, an increase of 4.9 percent. Room occupancy declined slightly. For the first time in a long time, the number of guests from China and Japan declined slightly.

Despite the growing competition, the industry alliance does not believe that the city will limit the construction of new hotels. Hilberath said that a capacity increase of five to six percent could be handled. For the smaller hotels and the privately managed houses, however, it will be more difficult, according to him.

Instead of complaining, the Alliance is supporting the city's tourism and congress society by marketing the location, for example by trying to attract even more large congresses to the city, said Vice President Bernhard Haller. There is still potential in this area. Christian Henzler, a board member with a focus on human resources, said the bigger challenge than attracting more guests was to find the number of employees needed to cope with the strong growth. This staff shortage of skilled workers is already a burning issue for the hotels. This is why, for example, training in hotels is promoted in schools and at job fairs.

The Food, Beverages, and Catering Union had recently criticized the increasingly extreme working

hours in the industry. Nevertheless, the Alliance rejected this criticism. **The fact that young people no longer opt for a career in the hotel industry is due, for example, to the trend towards academic studies instead of vocational training.** In addition, companies in other industries are attracting large numbers of hotel employees due to higher salaries.

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