

FIGHTING MASS TOURISM - SALZBURG TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF HOTEL BEDS



2019 was the next record year for tourism in Salzburg. The overnight stays rose by 5.3 percent to 3.31 million and arrivals by 4.9 percent to 1.91 million. The tourism sector is extremely important for the city, but on the other hand, the approval of the locals is dwindling due to the constantly growing mass tourism. The city, therefore, plans to limit the number of hotel beds to 15,000.

"The acceptance of the locals for tourism must be given. Because if acceptance starts to tilt, we'll have a problem," said Salzburg's mayor Harald Preuner. He also explained where the strong plus came from: "This is mainly based on an increase in the number of hotel beds." Two hotels have been added to the station area in the past year.

This means that there are now 14,088 beds in the city, almost eight percent more than a year ago. But growth should no longer continue unbridled. "We believe that with 15,000 beds we have reached an upper limit," said Preuner. However, the city has only limited control over the development of the hotel industry.

Only in the case of hotels with 120 or more rooms does an administrative decision need to be taken for approval. The mayor wants to change this in cooperation with the state: "We have to get away from the definition of rooms and move towards beds because that is more meaningful. To this end, it was necessary to define regional areas where development was still possible and where it was not. Otherwise, we'll come in the same direction as the coaches," said Preuner.

There were numerous protests by the population against the increase in the number of coaches in the city. The city then introduced a reservation system with fixed slots for the coaches. In 2019, 38,090 coaches arrived in the city, which corresponds to a decline of five percent in the comparable period from July to December.

Other figures also developed in the direction desired by the city. Despite new hotels, room occupancy remained at just under 80 percent. This puts Salzburg in the first place in an Austria-wide comparison with Vienna and Innsbruck, and Salzburg also has the highest average room prices after Vienna. 108.6 euros is the average cost of a room per night in Salzburg, in Vienna, it is 109.3 euros.

It was not the only step of the city towards quality tourism. **The length of the stay also rose minimally by 0.5 percent.** Vienna and Graz also had an increasing or constant length of stay in 2019, but for the whole of Austria, there was a decrease in terms of the length of stay.

Analyses of this are still pending. One possible explanation is that in the cities the bottom has probably already been reached. Because there the length of stay is between 1.7 and 2.2 nights. Austria-wide it is 3.3 nights.

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