

CROATIAN TOURISM REPORTS ABOUT 20% OF THE USUAL NUMBER OF GUESTS



Croatian tourism is expecting a drastic 75% drop in revenues this year which is a sharp contrast to last year's record in revenues from foreign tourists of 10 billion euros. The number of guests dramatically decreased. This represents a big blow for a country, whose tourism industry amounts to 20% of the GDP. The numbers were reported by a broker company CapitalPanda.

"Given the historical data and the different Covid-19 situation across countries, Croatian tourism considers it crucial how Germans, Slovenes, Austrians and Czechs, in particular, want to spend their holidays this year," commented Jozo Peric, CapitalPanda's chief analyst.

Germans Are Essential, Czechs May Be an Important Source

Last year, Germany accounted for almost a quarter of the number of guests from abroad coming to Croatia with less than 3 million tourists. Although the Czech Republic was behind Great Britain and Italy last year in the top 10, thanks to a better-managed crisis, Czechs could become a new strong source for the Croatian tourism income.

"Croatia appreciates news, such as the recent announcement by the Czech company Regiojet, which launched a train connection between Prague and Rijeka. At the beginning of June, they sold approximately 4,000 tickets. According to the company, the reservation system had to process a record volume of reservations immediately after the timetable was issued," Peric said.

Croatian Companies Very Negative

However, despite some minor positive news, the overall picture is still somewhat dire.

According to a survey conducted by the Croatian Chamber of Commerce in mid-April, 66% of Croatian companies felt the negative impact of the pandemic on their business and 53% reported a decline in profits and revenues. The biggest losses were suffered by travel agencies and accommodation and catering companies.

Even for the coming months, tourism is the most pessimistic of all sectors. 92% of Croatian travel agencies expect negative long-term effects on their business.

A fifth of the Usual Numbers

Currently, only a fifth of the usual number of tourists is in Croatia. 115 thousand holidaymakers are currently vacationing in the country, which is only 20% of the number at the same time last year. The regions of Istria, Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Zadar are the most visited.

Of these 115 thousand, almost half (45%) are domestic tourists, 34% came from Slovenia, 15% from Germany and 12% from Austria, according to the Croatian news agency Hina.

The downside in Poor Marketing

Despite the fact that the number of guests and bookings is increasing, according to the Croatian

Minister of Tourism Gari Cappelli, the situation could perhaps be better. Why? Due to the country's poor marketing of itself as a holiday destination.

The Croatian National Tourist Board's full focus is set on regional markets: Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. There are some promotional campaigns planned in Italy, France and the Netherlands but otherwise no initiative whatsoever. Important markets such as Switzerland or neighboring Balkan states like Bosnia or Serbia have been completely neglected. Not to mention the poor promotion of domestic tourism in such a specific context.

Besides the scarce quantity of tourism promotion, the country's tourism authorities have also not been communicating clearly with regards to the revival of travel. This has resulted in confusion and chaos in foreign media regarding the entry requirements to Croatia. Perhaps this, and marketing as a whole, is also an aspect to review for the Croatian tourism industry in these troubling times for the sector.

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