

OVERTOURISM IN GERMANY: TOURISTS UNWANTED?



Living where others go on vacation - that's nowhere near as attractive as it sounds. At least where many people like to spend their vacations. Even before Corona, the phenomenon of the beauty of a place becoming a burden for its inhabitants occurred not only in Venice, Amsterdam or Barcelona, but also in Germany.

The trend toward vacationing in one's own country during the pandemic fueled the conflicts: **day tourists in the foothills of the Alps were insulted, and on the island of Sylt, locals lobbied for a limit on the number of guests.**

But the feeling of being welcomed with hospitality is a key factor in the attractiveness of a vacation destination. And so more and more of those responsible in the regional tourism organizations are coming to the realization that it is not only the guests' wishes that should count - but also the quality of life of the people who live where others spend their vacations.

To ensure that the debate is not only determined by perceived truths, the Tourism Acceptance Study of the German Institute for Tourism Research at the West Coast University of Applied Sciences is to provide empirical data. Representative surveys have been taking place throughout Germany for this purpose since 2019: What positive and what negative effects does tourism have on the place of residence, on one's own life?

"We are asking about perceptions, not about the actual effects," explains project manager Sabrina Seeler. Because there is no definition of what is "too much." It depends very much on the local conditions as well as on personal attitudes.

Mrs. Seeler presented some interim results. The more guests, the lower the acceptance - that, for example, cannot be said as a general rule. **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, a popular destination especially in summer with its Baltic coast, has "an extremely high level of tourism acceptance.** In Bavaria, however, it is below the national average - 10th out of 16.

Most annoyance among locals is caused by traffic jams and overcrowded parking lots - and crowds of people thronging the same place at the same time. But: Only for ten percent of those surveyed in Bavaria are there actually "too many"; for 50 percent, on the other hand, it's "just the right amount" of guests.

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