

WINTER TOURISM: FRENCH RESORTS WERE FULL THIS WINTER



The balance of activity of French ski resorts this winter is "very good". This is the announcement made by the Observatory of mountain resorts. The number of visitors is even higher than before the pandemic.

The February 2022 vacations, which have just ended, are traditionally the time for the first figures. As far as this season is concerned, the indicators are good with an occupancy rate for all accommodation close to 90%, a clear increase compared to the winter tourism season of 2019-2020. **The resorts have once again filled up despite a very uneven snow cover.**

All the mountain ranges took advantage of the four weeks of school vacations. The Northern Alps came out on top with a fill rate of 87% of capacity, followed by the Southern Alps and the Pyrenees at 84% and 83% respectively, i.e. practically the same volume.

In terms of clientele, the British have regained first place in terms of international visitors. The podium is completed by Dutch, Belgian and French customers. The ski professionals can therefore say a big thank to foreign customers.

Before the summer, there is still spring vacations. The National Association of Mountain Resort Mayors (ANMSM) is cautious because, for the moment, spring reservations are lower than last year.

But the real issue is the future. Faced with climate change, low and medium altitude resorts must reinvent themselves today. Snow is becoming increasingly rare each year. It has been calculated that up to 2,000 meters above sea level, the duration of snow cover has dropped by one month since 1970 and several weeks will be added to that over the next decade.

The winter tourism activity represents over 80% of the turnover of the mountain regions. Some resorts have already begun their transformation by expanding their range of activities: four-season sledding, mountain biking, etc. At least 300 French resorts are concerned by this rapid change in business model, which will require new investments that are sometimes very costly.

Even a recent parliamentary report warns of the impact of global warming on mountain tourism and recommends a voluntary diversification of activities while respecting the particularities of each region.

However, it would be difficult to completely do without skiing, an extremely important engine for the local economy and employment (120,000 jobs depend on the opening of ski areas in France).

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