

EU HOTEL SECTOR: OPTIMISM WITH WORRIES

The travel and tourism sector is a key driver of European economic growth and local employment, and after the tourism and accommodation sector plummeted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2022 we have seen a recovery adapted to the "new normal".

Booking in collaboration with Statista, presented the **European Accommodation Barometer, a study that reflects the business situation, identifies challenges and assesses the economic sentiment and overall progress of this key sector.** It was conducted between August and October last year and involved 1,000 executives and managers from the European tourism accommodation sector.

The study reveals a general feeling of caution about the future of the EU hotel sector among the hoteliers, although many of them are optimistic that the economic recovery will continue to improve.

How to Tackle the Energy Crisis

In the short term, hoteliers are concerned about the energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine and the economic challenge. An overwhelming majority (80%) of hoteliers indicated that the cost of energy is one of the biggest challenges they face.

They were also concerned about the general economic situation (48%), although to a less significant extent, and about staffing costs (42%) and keeping staff (43%).

The data show that energy costs are the most pressing issue for the EU hotel sector. Hoteliers from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal were particularly affected by rising energy prices, with almost 90% of respondents in these countries citing it as a challenge, above the European average.

Digital and Sustainable Transformation of Hotel Businesses

European accommodations are also being forced to look to the future and prepare for digital and green transformations in order to remain relevant and competitive.

Hoteliers' enthusiasm for digital transformation is moderately high. The majority of respondents (59%) indicated that they are quite ready for digital transformation, while only 12% were dissatisfied with their digitization efforts.

In an effort to digitize their businesses, social media marketing stands out as the most important tool to hoteliers. Compared to their overall digital transformation work, **European hoteliers are not as up to speed when it comes to sustainability-related challenges, as only 2 in 5 respondents felt they were well prepared for the challenges of sustainability** and decarbonization, and 1 in 5 felt that such preparation was quite insufficient.

As a result, more than twice as many respondents (29%) plan to invest more in sustainability and decarbonization in the next 6 months than not (13%).

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