

BUSINESS TOURISM IS CRUCIAL FOR BARCELONA'S HOTELS



The year 2019 provided great benefits to Barcelona's tourism sector, but all areas suffered a great slump with the COVID-19 pandemic. After this, the industry in Barcelona and in other cities is staging a remarkable comeback in its activity.

In fact, Barcelona's hotels are already reaching occupancy figures similar to those before COVID. Hospitality experts are quite optimistic about 2023. **In this sense, the good condition of business tourism is one of the reasons why they are more confident.**

It is worth remembering that the first quarter of 2022 was not so good, at that time between 20% and 30% of the hotel plant was still closed. So much so that in January occupancy stood at 33%, while in February it jumped to 55% and already in March it stood at 65%.

The president of the Barcelona Hotel Association, Jordi Clos, stated that "this strong recovery of activity in Barcelona from April onwards, this rapid take-off, was not the same in the whole of Europe, which shows the vitality of the city".

To make this growth possible, the main factor was business tourism activity. "For two years many congresses, fairs and large events were postponed, which in 2022, with the reactivation of the activity, have been recovered and during the year many events have been held in a tight schedule," explained the president of the Barcelona Hotel Guild. Business tourism is expected to bring important figures also during 2023.

Of course, it should also be noted that there has been an increase in the average prices of stays, these have risen by 8.7% compared to the year before the pandemic. "This is not exclusive to Barcelona, but is widespread in Europe and is mainly due to the significant growth in costs due to the increase in energy and food prices. In our case, the cost deviation is 6%," justified Clos.

For instance, about a week before the start of the Mobile World Congress (MWC), to be held from Monday 27 February to Thursday 2 March, **the average price of accommodation in Barcelona for those dates has increased by 227%**, according to data from eBooking. The occupancy is already approaching the figures of 2019, when accommodation bookings in Barcelona reached 100% capacity and MWC attendees had to look for rooms in other nearby municipalities.

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