FRENCH STRIKES THREATEN TOURISM RECOVERY

The images of garbage piled up in the streets of Paris and overflowing are known all over the world. The ongoing strikes threaten tourism recovery in the country according to experts.

Despite price increases at all levels (accommodation, gasoline, restaurants, food shopping, ski passes...), 27% of French people traveled during the February school vacations, compared to 25% in 2019. **Almost 80% stayed in France, allowing hoteliers to record a good start to the year.**

In January, RevPar, the sector's key indicator, rose by 17.5% compared to 2019 and by 12.6% in February, again compared to 2019. Experts point out that the figures for the winter tourist season in France are positive and show that despite inflation, the French still went on vacation and international customers have returned to France.

According to the National Observatory of Mountain Resorts at the beginning of March, the occupancy rate of accommodation reached 82% (compared to 87% last year), a good performance given the general context. At this stage, the forecasts are rather encouraging for the coming months: according to experts, almost six out of ten French people are planning a stay before the summer.

After a strong recovery in 2022, these figures are reassuring about France's renewed attractiveness. But the repeated strikes over pension reform are a cause for concern. The images of garbage piled up in the streets of Paris and overflow are being seen worldwide. Last week there were 740,000 demonstrators in the streets.

The excesses of violence in recent weeks have already had a direct impact on the economic situation of French companies in the retail, hotel and restaurant industries, and in tourism as a whole. Already, some professionals are seeing cancellations for Easter.

95% of Parisian hotel and restaurant professionals recorded a drop in attendance in their establishments, according to a survey conducted by the Paris Ile-de-France Hotel and Restaurant Association. In an already complicated economic context, this is the final blow for professionals. On average, the hotel and restaurant sector has a 21% cancellation rate.

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