

# WEAK SUMMER SEASON IN BULGARIA



Hoteliers and restaurant operators in the largest Bulgarian seaside resort on the Black Sea, Slanchev Bryag (Sunny Beach), are disappointed with the preliminary balance of the first summer season after Corona. The ending summer season of 2023 has been shorter than expected and worse than forecast.

Tourism operators have complained about the low interest of holiday guests from Western Europe, far below their expectations, even before the Ministry of Tourism in Sofia released figures for the entire summer season. The primary reason for this development is the Ukraine war consequences.

During the cool and rainy months of June and July, the two biggest seaside resorts in the country, Slanchev Bryag and Zlatni Pyaszi (also known as Gold Beach), recorded a slight increase of about ten percent compared to last year. The total number of overnight stays during this period was 3.3 million.

The official record figures for the all-time best pre-Corona year 2019, with 5.8 million tourists from abroad, will likely be missed by a long way. In 2019, German tourists were still the largest holiday group on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, with 700,000 people. Only half of that is estimated for this year.

Tourism has significantly contributed to Bulgaria's economy, making up around 13 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) before the Corona pandemic. Hotel owners have offered substantial discounts since the end of August to improve this year's summer season. Given the tough competition from Greece and Turkey, they aim to attract more locals and travelers from neighboring countries to Bulgaria.

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