

# ABTA STUDY: AUSTRIAN BUSINESS TRAVEL GROWING LARGER



A recent study, carried out by ABTA (Austrian Business Travel Association), has shown the growing importance of the business travel sector in Austria. Last year, Austrian businessmen took an impressive amount of 12,6 million business trips, the overall price of which was about €5.4 million.

About 47 percent of Austrian companies expect the volume of their traveling to slightly increase this year. Surprisingly the growth in the number of business trips is supposed to take place especially in handicraft, while the amount of traveling of people in pharmacology is supposed to stagnate. Furthermore, 53 percent of the respondents believe that this year's prices of business travel are going to increase a little.

Overall, in 2007 more than 12,6 million of business trips took place in Austria. Leisure travel is even more popular with 15,7 million tours last year. Three thirds of businesses send their employees on 2 to 3-day trips. Longer journeys as well as one-day business trips are quite rare on the other hand.

The choice of destinations confirms the position of Austria as a crossroads among West, East and Central Europe. These regions are among the most popular for Austrian businessmen. More than 50 percent of all business trips headed to Europe. The rest of the trips led out of the Old Continent. Especially Germany is highly important for Austrian companies. This is not surprising considering the identical mother tongue as well as the size of Germany and the number of its inhabitants.

Many companies also confirm the growing importance of traveling to India and China. The importance of these two large Asian markets for the international business is immense in all fields of business and is supposed to grow even more in the following years.

Based on these data, the ABTA president Christine Hafner stresses the importance of having a travel management department in every corporation with more than 1,000 employees. In the end, the cost of such department is much lower than the amount of money saved when the company does not have it. The experienced staff can easily find the possibilities to save money on the business trips and can thus decrease the company's expenses by up to 15 percent.

Although business travel increases every year, there are still areas where not only Austrian, but European businesses in general have much to improve. One of these areas is the travel insurance.

Numerous companies rely on the smoothness of their business trips and neglect the travel insurance. About 16 percent of Austrian companies, especially the small and middle-sized ones, have no travel insurance at all. More than 40 percent have at least some, but it is usually not sufficient in case of any serious trouble. The average length of a business trip is about 2,5 days. This means that every year the total of 31,5 million days of businessmen on the road are not insured properly.

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