

SEX TOURISM IN PATTAYA DOCUMENTARY CONCERNS THAI AUTHORITIES



Thai tourism officials are concerned about the potential negative impact of a recent German documentary on sex tourism in Pattaya.

The documentary has further highlighted Pattaya's reputation as a destination for sex tourism, and the private sector is worried about the potential consequences this could have on the entire tourism market. **Although Deutsche Welle (DW) published the documentary on YouTube, its content is blocked in Thailand.**

Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi, the president of the Thai Hotel Association (THA), reported a similar incident of sex tourism in the city that occurred in Germany about 20 years ago. According to Ms. Marisa, this incident severely damaged the confidence in tourism, as the number of travelers from this market dropped significantly.

Experts suggest that relevant authorities should improve law enforcement, which has been the main problem in Pattaya and many destinations in Thailand for decades, to tackle the problem of sex workers.

Even though Pattaya has developed various tourism products for families and the MICE segment (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions), and is no longer just famous for its red-light district as it once was, it is difficult and perhaps impossible to erase the perception of sex tourism from the city entirely.

Solutions to address this problem include promoting other products and activities that attract different segments and gradually replace sex tourism in Pattaya with other attractions.

Pattaya is a diverse city that welcomes people from all over the world, regardless of nationality. It has local communities popular among tourists, such as the Takhian Tia tourist community. Additionally, the city is a thriving hub for MICE, as it has convention centers, an airport, and the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) project nearby.

Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi agrees with tourism operators in Pattaya that late opening hours until 4 a.m. should not be applied to the entire province.

The Pattaya Municipality should regulate proper zoning for entertainment to ensure that other segments of visitors, especially families with children, are not disturbed by loud noise. It is important to note that not everyone visits Pattaya for entertainment or sex tourism. Allowing all entertainment venues to open until 4 a.m. will affect most city residents. Experts suggest that the city should be stricter in maintaining the quality of infrastructure.

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