

Destination Germany

German travel market again exceeds expectations



Petra Hedorfer

CEO, German National
Tourism Board

Following another record year for the German travel industry, the German National Tourism Board will be using ITB Berlin to further push the boundaries of its "Destination Germany" brand. Petra Hedorfer, CEO of GNTB, describes the importance of ITB Berlin for the local travel industry, and outlines the strong recent performance of the Germany travel market.

In 2015, we recorded almost 80 million overnight stays by visitors from abroad – a record result for Destination Germany for the sixth year running. The rate of growth was well above our forecasts. Year on year, the volume of overnight stays went up by more than 5%, meaning that we outperformed both the European and global average.

Which German travel markets are performing well and promise continued growth?

In general terms, we are continuing to see steady growth in the larger source markets, while the emerging markets are expanding at a particularly dynamic rate.

Europe has traditionally been the most important source market for inbound travel to Germany. Guests from European countries account for almost three quarters of all overnight stays by foreign visitors in Germany. In a country-by-country comparison, the Netherlands is still comfortably the number one source market for Germany. Its 11.2 million overnight stays equate to a 14% market share. The USA continues to be the most important overseas market and, with

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The Asian markets are currently showing strong momentum, most notably China with growth of 24.8% in 2015 and the Arab Gulf States with an increase of 17.7%. ■

Hall 12 / Stand 102

With around 80% of foreign travellers utilizing the internet to plan their trips, the website www.germany.travel is available in 30 languages and is the main medium for promoting Destination Germany. It is a platform on which theme-based campaigns are presented and it is also the primary means for the German travel organisation to communicate with the international travel industry.

Amazingly Fast Free Public Wi-Fi?

A dream? Not in Lithuania, where the service allows tourists to connect in innovative new ways

Lithuania has spent recent times investing in free public Internet and provides the world's best free public wireless Internet services.

Visitors can test the service in Vilnius by trying the interactive cultural-educational project 'Talking Sculptures': 15 sculptures in Vilnius Old Town will invite you for a conversation on the phone in which you get to know the real characters immortalised in the sculptures and also the cultural, historical and architectural heritage of Vilnius.

Packed with UNESCO heritage that is rare and noteworthy, and also boasting natural untouched beauty, Lithuania is putting its best foot forward at ITB Berlin as a key destination to visit in 2016.

The capital of Lithuania, Vilnius, and its Old Town – one of the largest (360 ha) and the prettiest in Central and Eastern Europe, a Baroque masterpiece – earned Lithuania one of its entries on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Vilnius is considered as one of the greenest capitals in the world and is often described as a city in the forest. Green zones account for 46% of the

area of the capital city. It may be best appreciated from a bird's-eye view – Vilnius is one of the few European capitals to allow hot air ballooning above the city.

Narrow streets of Vilnius Old Town accommodate many designer boutiques and high-end handicraft shops, lively pubs and bars, hidden terraces and romantic restaurants. Vilnius is becoming a modern city of gastronomic tourism and offers an increasing number of small restaurants with the food prepared using local organic produce.

Meanwhile, the Canopy Walkway erected in Anykščiai Regional Park has become an exceptional tourist attraction. In December 2015, it was recognized as the world's most innovative tourist attraction by the UNWTO. The 300-metre walkway meanders above the treetops and leads to a 35-metre tower that serves a good vantage point to admire the picturesque Forest of Anykščiai. ■

Hall 18 / Stand 126b



● Vilnius Old Town, Kestutis Petronis