

Results for 2022: tourism is back in Cologne

Trend turnaround with 85 per cent overnight stays before crisis

- **3.2 million arrivals and 5.6 million overnight stays**
- **Nearby markets are strong**
- **Structural changes after recovery**
- **Focus in 2023: Profile enhancement and quality development**

COLOGNE, 03 March 2023 The visitor figures for 2022 show that tourism is back in Cologne. The State Statistical Office of North Rhine–Westphalia, IT.NRW, registered **3.2 million arrivals** and **5.6 million overnight stays** in Cologne hotels. This represents **85.3 per cent** of the overnight stays registered in 2019 — before the crisis. Cologne's rebound, which was largely thanks to its successful recovery measures, set a benchmark by comparison with other German cities such as Berlin (78 per cent) and Frankfurt (79 per cent).

“After two difficult years and numerous measures for revitalising tourism in Cologne, we’ve successfully reversed the trend,” states Dr Jürgen Amann, CEO of the Cologne Tourist Board. “The visitor figures are good, and Cologne hasn’t lost any of its appeal as a travel destination. It’s now up to us to take advantage of this opportunity for qualitative development.”

Changes in the tourism structure

The structure of this reinvigorated tourism has changed considerably. The trend is toward more leisure tourism from nearby markets and an overall decrease in business travellers. Promotable business trips such as trade fairs, business conferences and conventions are increasing once again, but the figures for traditional business trips will not return to the level that was reached before the crisis.

The most important source market is still **Germany**, which accounts for 69 per cent of the total overnight stays. The Netherlands are in second place with 4.2 per cent, a figure that significantly exceeds the level reached in 2019. The British market follows at 3 per cent, showing that the British are more eager to travel than they had been expected to on account of Brexit. The USA occupies fourth place, at 2.9 per cent.

Figures for hotel beds and event locations remain stable

The number of available hotel beds in Cologne was 35,905 in 2022 — 5.5 per cent more than in 2019. The wave of bankruptcies that had been feared didn’t happen.

The event market also made a significant rebound. A total of 40,800 events were held in Cologne last year, attracting 3.72 million participants in presence. The number of events in the MICE sector (MICE = Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Events) was 77 per cent of the pre-pandemic level, and the number of participants was 83 per cent of the figure for 2019. The figures for the event market are increasing — similar to those for the hotel segment. A total of 210 event venues were available in 2022 — a gratifying increase of 16 venues compared to 2019.

In 2022, the structural changes and challenges in this segment of business travel and tourism could be seen mainly in the dimensions and background structures of the organised events. The events were more regional than they had been in

2019, and the average event size was slightly larger. In 2022 the short time available for inquiries, as well as the concentration of events during certain periods, sometimes led to capacity bottlenecks for the providers.

The Cologne Convention Bureau as knowledge hub

In order to learn more about future success factors in the MICE segment, the Cologne Convention Bureau (CCB) of the Cologne Tourist Board continues to be active in the Future Meeting Space innovation network of the Fraunhofer Institute (IAO) and the German Convention Bureau (GCB). In its capacity as a knowledge hub, the CCB will collect information and know-how and pass it along to its partners in the sector, as well as promoting the interests of Cologne's MICE sector to external partners.

Starting in 2024, Cologne will significantly optimise its capacity for conventions and congresses thanks to its new conference and event location Confex. In addition, the overall visitor experience in the area of promotable business trips will become even more important in the future since there will be an optimal combination of business events and opportunities to experience our city. Cologne is well positioned in this respect.

"Together with our partners, we have successfully guided Cologne's tourism sector through two difficult years," says Amann. "In the future, the focus of our work will be on the qualitative development of tourism in Cologne. This requires us to enhance the profile of Cologne as a travel destination by strategically addressing selected target groups. This will enable us, together with our partners in the sector, to promote the sustainable development of value creation for our city of Cologne."

Photos at: www.cologne-tourism.com/plan-inform/newsroom/news/results-for-2022-tourism-is-back-in-cologne

About Cologne Tourist Board

Cologne Tourist Board is the official tourism organization of the city of Cologne and thus the first point of contact for visitors from all over the world, whether they're coming here on business or to spend their leisure time. Together with its partners, Cologne Tourist Board conducts marketing activities all over the world for Cologne as a travel destination and a convention venue. Its aim is to enhance the city's image and to position Cologne and its surrounding region as an attractive tourist destination and an outstanding convention location in the German and international markets. In the process, it aims to boost added value for the economy of Cologne and the surrounding region.

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