



Press release

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10 Tourism

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Statistics on tourist accommodation in December and year 2015

Overnight stays declined by 0.8% in 2015

Neuchâtel, 23.02.2016 (FSO) – **The hotel sector registered 35.6 million overnight stays in Switzerland in 2015, representing a decline of 0.8% (-305,000 overnight stays) compared with 2014. Foreign demand generated 19.6 million overnight stays, i.e. a decline of 1.7% (-331,000 units). 2015 was marked by the end of the minimum exchange rate for the Swiss franc against the euro. This measure has certainly influenced foreign demand, particularly that from Europe. Swiss visitors registered 16.1 million overnight stays, i.e. a stable result (+0.2% / +26,000 overnight stays). During the month of December 2015, 2.5 million overnight stays were generated, corresponding to a marked decline of 5.6% (-147,000 overnight stays) compared with December 2014. These are the final results from the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).**

Decline in European overnight stays, increase in demand from other continents in 2015

During 2015, overnight stays by Swiss visitors registered a stable result (+26,000 overnight stays / +0.2%) compared with 2014. For foreign visitors, European overnight stays were characterised by a decline of 1.2 million overnight stays (-9.3 %). With a total of 11.8 million overnight stays in 2015, one would have to return to 1958 to find a lower result for European customers. Germany registered a marked decline of 541,000 overnight stays (-12.3%), representing the largest absolute drop of all countries of origin. Marked decreases were also registered for the Netherlands (-98,000 overnight stays / -14.4%), France (-83,000 / -6.2%), Italy (-77,000 / -7.6%) and Belgium (-59,000 / -9.5%). The strong franc against the euro following the end of the minimum exchange rate decided by the Swiss National Bank (SNB) on 15th January 2015 has certainly contributed to these marked declines.

Russia (-164,000 overnight stays / -30.7%) also recorded a marked decrease. The economic situation of this country may provide one explanation for this drop. The United Kingdom similarly recorded a decrease in overnight stays (-27,000 / -1.6%).

With a sharp increase since 2009, the Asian continent registered record growth in 2015 with an additional 744,000 overnight stays (+18.6%), therefore exceeding the 4.0 million overnight stay mark for the very first time. The greatest absolute increase in overnight stays was from Chinese visitors

(excluding Hong Kong) with an additional 344,000 overnight stays (+33.3%). This was followed by the Gulf countries (+159,000 overnight stays / +20.6%), India (+107,000 / +22.0%) and the Republic of Korea (+54,000 / +20.5%). By contrast, Japan registered a decline of 45,000 units (-10.3%). The American continent registered an increase of 4.7% (+109,000 overnight stays). Among the countries from this continent, the United States recorded an increase of 94,000 overnight stays (+5.7%). The continents of Africa and Oceania registered increases of 21,000 (+7.5%) and 11,000 overnight stays (+3.4%) respectively.

Contrasting trend in overnight stays in the tourist regions in 2015

Seven out of fourteen tourist regions registered falls in overnight stays. Graubünden recorded the largest absolute decline (-335,000 units / -6.6%). This was followed by Valais (-149,000 / -3.8%), Ticino (-133,000 / -5.7%) and Eastern Switzerland (-93,000 / -4.7%). By contrast, urban regions held up well with the Zurich Region taking the lead (+208,000 overnight stays / +3.9%). Similarly, increases were also registered for the Basel Region (+22,000 overnight stays / +1.5%) and Geneva (+13,000 / +0.5%). The Lucerne/Lake Lucerne Region (+152,000 units / +4.4%) and the Bernese Oberland (+38,000 / +1.0%) also posted increases.

Slight decrease in the length of stay in 2015

The duration of stay was 2.0 nights in 2015 whereas it was 2.1 nights in 2014. For Swiss visitors it was 2.0 nights, whereas foreign visitors registered 2.1 nights. Among the tourist regions, Graubünden recorded the longest duration of stay with 2.8 nights, followed by Valais (2.4 nights). The shortest length of stay was registered in the Fribourg Region with 1.6 nights.

Net room occupancy rate in 2015

During 2015, the net room occupancy rate was 51.5% (compared with 52.0% in 2014). Of all tourist regions, Geneva showed the highest rate at 64.6%. This was followed by the Zurich Region with a rate of 63.3%. The lowest rate was 37.3% which was recorded in Eastern Switzerland.

Marked decline in overnight stays in December 2015

In December 2015, the Swiss hotel industry registered 2.5 million overnight stays, which corresponds to a decrease of 5.6% (-147,000 overnight stays) compared with December 2014. Domestic visitors generated 1.2 million overnight stays, representing a decline of 1.4% (-16,000 overnight stays). Foreign demand generated 1.3 million overnight stays, i.e. a decline of 9.1% (-131,000 overnight stays). The particularly poor snow conditions in December may explain this result.

As far as country of origin is concerned, visitors from Germany registered the largest absolute decline, a decrease of 61,000 overnight stays (-18.8%) compared with December 2014. Next were guests from the Netherlands with a decline of 14,000 overnight stays (-23.4%) and Russia with a decrease of 12,000 overnight stays (-28.8%). Belgium came next with a decline of 7700 overnight stays (-15.0%). Visitors from the Gulf countries, for their part, registered the largest absolute increase, with an additional 7400 overnight stays (+26.4%). Next were visitors from the United States with a growth of 3500 overnight stays (+3.8%) and from India (+1800 overnight stays / +12.1%).

Ten out of fourteen tourist regions posted decreases in December 2015 compared with December 2014. Graubünden showed the largest absolute reduction, i.e. a decline of 76,000 overnight stays (-14.7%). Valais registered a decrease of 26,000 overnight stays (-7.4%) followed by the Bernese Oberland (-16,000 units / -7.0%) and the Basel Region (-14,000 / -11.6%). In contrast, the Lake Geneva Region (Vaud) posted the largest absolute increase with 6500 additional overnight stays, representing an increase of 3.8%. This was followed by the Zurich Region with an increase of 6100 units (+1.5%).

Tourist regions

As of January 2015, the Aargau region joined the existing thirteen tourist regions. The creation of this new region has resulted in a new division of the communes. The four regions affected by this are the Zurich region, the Lucerne/Lake Lucerne region, the Basel region and the Bern region. This change is due to the new geographical distributions decided by the Swiss Conference of Regional Tourism Directors (RDK/CDR).

For a detailed list of all tourist regions please see:

<http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/themen/10/11/def.html> (in French)

<http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/10/11/def.html> (in German)

Validity of results

The figures in this press release are final. They therefore differ from the provisional results published previously.

Duration of stay

Number of overnight stays divided by the number of arrivals.

Net room occupancy rate

Number of occupied rooms divided by the total net room capacity of the period under review, as a percentage. (The net room capacity is the number of available rooms of an establishment during the month under review multiplied by the number of days this establishment is open during this month).

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Information:

Lisa Joly, FSO, Tourism, tel.: +41 58 463 63 79, email: Info-Tour@bfs.admin.ch

FSO Press Office, tel.: +41 58 463 60 13, email: kom@bfs.admin.ch

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Further information and publications in electronic form are available on the FSO website:

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This press release has been established on the basis of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which ensures the independence, integrity and accountability of national and community statistical offices. Privileged access is supervised and under embargo.

Swiss Tourism (ST) received this press release five days before its release in order to prepare the press conference. The Swiss Tourism Federation (STF), hotelleriesuisse (HS), GastroSuisse (GS) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) received it 24 hours before in order to carry out their tasks.