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月刊



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Leaders in Trade



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Dresden is an Elegant Restoration



Song Yu, Secretary-General of WTCF hands over the WTCF flag to Ernest Wooden Jr., President and CEO of Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

To Launch a New Journey for the Development of World Tourism Cities

World Tourism Cities Federation Chongqing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2016 Grandly Opens in Chongqing

“ From September 19th to 20th, the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) Chongqing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2016 was held in Chongqing, China. About 400 guests from 89 cities, 57 tourism-related institutions and 6 international organizations attended this year’s summit. ”

From September 19th to 20th, the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) Chongqing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2016 was held in Chongqing, China. About 400 guests from 89 cities, 57 tourism-related institutions and 6 international organizations attended this year’s summit. Member attendance exceeded

80%. Representatives and officers from embassies and consulates attended the summit, including: the United Nations (UN), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC), the Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) and the

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Wang Anshun, Chairman of WTCF Council and Mayor of Beijing, delivers a speech



Tegegnetwork Gettu, Under Secretary-General of the UN, delivers a speech



Huang Qifan, Mayor of Chongqing, delivers a speech



Du Jiang, Vice Chairman of China National Tourism Administration, delivers a speech



Weng Jieming, Executive Vice Mayor of Chongqing, hosts the Opening Ceremony



Cheng Hong, Executive Vice Chairperson of WTCF Council and Vice Mayor of Beijing, presents a work report



Tan Jialing, Vice Mayor of Chongqing, hosts the Welcome Banquet



Xu Jing, Executive Secretary of the General Assembly and the Executive Council and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific of UNWTO delivers a speech



Pansy Ho, Vice Chairperson and Secretary-General of Global Tourism Economy Forum, delivers a speech



Mario Hardy, CEO of PATA, delivers a speech

the event. More than 120 news agencies from all over the world reported on the summit including Xinhua News Agency, China Central Television (CCTV), People's Daily, CNN、BBC and China Daily, which covers a number of countries and regions from around the world.

Brilliant Opening Ceremony and Closing Ceremony

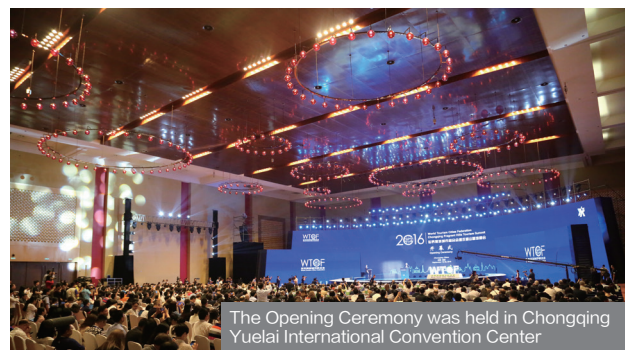
On September 18th, the Chongqing Municipal Government hosted a Welcome Banquet with Chongqing features. The evening variety show with the theme of "Beautiful Chongqing with Mountain and River" was held after the Welcome Banquet. On September 19th, the Opening Ceremony of the summit was grandly held in Chongqing Yuelai International Convention Center. Honored guests were invited to deliver speeches at the event, including Chairman of WTCF and Mayor of Beijing, Wang Anshun, Mayor of Chongqing Huang Qifan, Vice Chairman of China National Tourism Administration Du Jiang, Under Secretary-General of the UN Tegegnetwork Gettu, CEO of PATA Mario Hardy, and Vice Chairperson and Secretary-General of Global Tourism Economy Forum Pansy Ho. Furthermore, Executive Secretary of the General Assembly and the Executive Council and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific of UNWTO Xu Jing read out the congratulatory letter from Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of the UNWTO.

On September 20th, the Closing Ceremony was held with special Chongqing features. Director General of Chongqing Tourism Administration Liu Qi, WTCF Secretary-General Song Yu

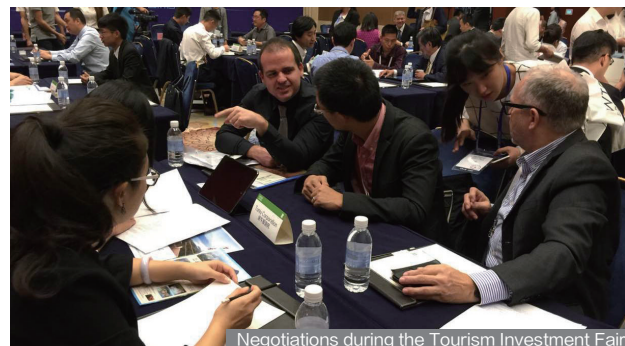
Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA); the Colombian Ambassador to China, the Austrian Ambassador to China, the British Consul General in Chongqing, the Consul General of Italy in Chongqing, the Consul General of Japan in Chongqing, the Consul General of the Netherlands in Chongqing, the Consul General of Cambodia in Chongqing, the Consul General of Hungary in Chongqing, the Consul General of the United States in Chengdu, the Consul General of Australia in Chengdu, Deputy Consul General of Israel in Chengdu, Commercial Officer of the Consulate General of France in Chengdu. Mayors and vice mayors from 20 cities around the world also joined



Berlin, WTCF Vice-Chairman Unit, signs a strategic cooperation agreement with the Travel Channel on behalf of WTCF



The Opening Ceremony was held in Chongqing Yuelai International Convention Center



Negotiations during the Tourism Investment Fair

and Ernest Wooden Jr., President and CEO of Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board attended and participated in the Flag Giving Ceremony. Chongqing National Orchestra delivered wonderful Bayu characteristics performances and the Chongqing cuisine also satisfied the guests.

New Council and Host Cities of 2017/2018 Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit Were Elected at the Council Meeting

The General Assembly was held and members of the Second Council were selected during the summit. Song Yu was appointed as the Secretary-General of WTCF. Beijing was designated as the Council

Chairman Unit for the second time; Wang Anshun, Mayor of Beijing, was reelected as Chairman of the Council; Cheng Hong, Vice Mayor of Beijing, was designated as Executive Vice Chairperson of the Council. Seoul, Berlin, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires and Cape Town were elected as the Vice Chairman Units of the Council. During the summit, the Council voted for the selection of 2017 and 2018 Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit host cities. Los Angeles and Qingdao won the hosting rights.

Summit Forums Received Much Attention

There were 4 forums during the summit. The theme of the main forum was "Opportunities and Challenges Brought by Sharing Economy to Tourism City Development". Topics of the other



Wang Anshun, Chairman of WTCF Council gives the award to Buenos Aires, Vice-Chairman Unit of the First WTCF Council



Meeting of Expert Committee



Li Baochun, Executive Deputy Secretary-General of WTCF hosts the Press Conference



Luo Xingqiang, Minister of Penang Tourism Department delivers a speech at the Tourism Presentation

sessions were “Sharing Economy and Chongqing Construction of International Tourism Destination”, “Sharing Economy: Allocation of Urban Resources and Region-wide Tourism” and “Innovation and Transition of Tourism in the age of Sharing Economy”. Song Yu, Secretary-General of WTCF, made a keynote speech. 38 experts and honored guests participated in the discussion and delivered speeches, including: Project Director of Destination and Quality Management of UNWTO Esencan Terzibasoglu, President and CEO of Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board Ernest Wooden Jr., Chief Expert of WTCF Expert Committee Wei Xiaolan, President of China Tourism Academy Dai Bin, President of CITS Yu Ningning, APAC Regional Director of Airbnb Julian Persaud. Furthermore,

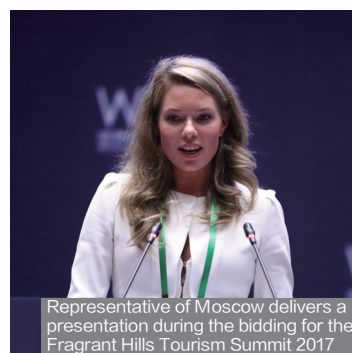
about 300 representatives and guests from major academic institutions, government departments, tourism cities and tourism-related businesses attended the forums.

Fruitful Tourism Promotion, Trade and Negotiations

During the summit, WTCF established its sixth sub-committee: the Committee of Investment. Committee of Tourism-Related Businesses, Committee of Civil Aviation, Committee of Cruise Industry, Expert Committee, and Committee of Investment held their respective meetings. Development of WTCF’s organization was further strengthened. During the summit, WTCF arranged



Experts contribute suggestions during the forum session



Representative of Moscow delivers a presentation during the bidding for the Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2017



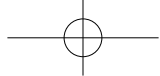
Yan Han, Deputy Secretary-General of WTCF, delivers a speech during the meeting of Committee of Cruise



The Council of Committee of Investment



Representatives listen to the presentations from bidding cities during the summit



Tourism Presentation, Tourism Marketplace, Tourism Investment Fair and World Tourism Cities Expo to promote communication & cooperation among members and development of tourism industry. More than 200 delegates from cities, enterprises and institutions attended the fairs.

During the Tourism Investment Fair, 105 cooperation projects were collected and intended investment amount reached RMB 107.31 billion (USD 16 billion). Contract amount was RMB 80 billion.

At the Tourism Presentation, 7 city members from China and abroad, including Nanjing, Los Angeles, Zhangjiajie, Zurich, Guilin, Penang and Bogota, were invited to promote their tourism resources and travel related products to famous travel agencies and media outlets of China. About 50 famous media and travel agencies from China and abroad were invited to attend the meeting as professional audience.

To Launch a New Journey Led by Sharing Economy for the World Tourism Cities

The summit was themed on "Sharing Economy and Development of World Tourism Cities". It was first time that the concept of sharing economy was introduced to the development of world tourism cities by WTOCF and was fully approved by delegates and guests at this summit. They all agreed that it helps to deepen tourism cities' understanding of sharing economy and launch a new journey for the world tourism cities. Chongqing Declaration of World Tourism Cities Federation was issued at the Summit. The Declaration explained sharing economy in detail, including definition, characteristics, trend, and its influence on the world tourism industry. WTOCF presented a six-point proposal to bring a new driving force to the development of world tourism cities by using the benefits of shared economy.

During the summit, WTOCF released various research reports



that focused on sharing economy and development of tourism cities, including Annual Report on Development of World Tourism Cities (Abridged edition), Market Research Report on Chinese Outbound Tourist (City) Consumption, and Best Example of Landlocked Tourism Destination: Chongqing to Build into a World-Class Travel Destination.

The theme of this summit was proactive. Many guests paid special attention, participated positively and gave good feedback. After the summit, hundreds of delegates wanted to further communicate with the guests of the forums or save the materials. They said they would pay special attention to the profound influence sharing economy has brought to tourism development, and they would introduce the developmental idea of sharing economy actively in construction and management of their cities.



All the Guests Reacted Enthusiastically

A platform for communication and cooperation among members was established during the summit, which improves future summits and the development of the tourism industry. "This year's summit is important, because we discussed relationship between sharing economy and tourism industry. Sharing economy is not only important to China or Chongqing, but also important to global industry. People will be benefited after the summit." Tegegnetwork Gettu, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations said.

Nigel David, Executive Director of WTTC, said: "It is an impressive and professional event. People from different places get together to communicate and seeking the cooperation opportunities. I think it is a great event."

Wei Xiaolan, Chief Expert of WTCF Expert Committee indicated that this year's summit is an international summit. International influence of WTCF is getting stronger because of the well-arranged activities. "I never had the chance to get to know this summit. This year, I saw many important figures, such as Mr. Tegegnetwork Gettu, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nigel David, Executive Director of Business Development of WTTC and I had an interview with them, which made me realize that the summit is not only an international influential event but also a great promotion to world tourism industry." David Lake, Chief Editor of Austar said.

After winning the 2018 summit bid, Wang Shujuan, Deputy Director-General of Qingdao Tourism Bureau said: "Thank WTCF. It is a great honor for Qingdao to host 2018 Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit. WTCF and the summit are both important platform to further introduce Qingdao's tourism resources to China and the world. WTCF builds an international influential platform for members to promote their resources to the world with limited cost. We have made presentations for two years in a row to bid for hosting the summit. WTCF provided opportunities for us to promote Qingdao. I want to thank WTCF again."

This year's summit revealed a hospitable, efficient, tolerant, open and inclusive city of Chongqing and is widely praised by global tourism cities, organizations and industries. 🟢

(source: WTCF)



Excellent performance during the Welcome Banquet



City member representative at the Opening Ceremony



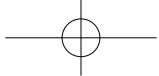
World Tourism Cities Expo attracts many tourists



Li Yundi, the summit's special guest, performs during the Welcome Banquet



Evening tour in Chongqing Liangjiang



Special Interview: Cheng Hong, Executive Deputy Chairperson of the WTCF Council and Vice Mayor of Beijing

“ On September 19th-20th, World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) Chongqing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2016 was held in Chongqing. About 400 guests from 89 cities, 57 tourism-related institutions and 6 international organizations attended the summit. It was a successful and fruitful summit.

On September 19th-20th, World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) Chongqing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2016 was held in Chongqing. About 400 guests from 89 cities, 57 tourism-related institutions and 6 international organizations attended the summit. It was a successful and fruitful summit. During the summit, the general election of the Council was held and Chairman City and Vice-Chairman Cities of the Council were elected. On September 20th, Cheng Hong, newly-elected Executive Deputy Chairperson of the WTCF Council and Vice Mayor of Beijing, accepted an interview from representatives

of Xinhua News Agency, China Daily, and other media organizations. She answered questions regarding this year's summit, development of WTCF and international tourism organizations.

Attraction Capability, Service Capability, Leadership and Influence - Five Years of Hard Work, WTCF Fulfilled Its Original Target.

Since the foundation of WTCF, its members has increased from original 58 to 174, including 117 city members and 57 institutional members. 70% of them are international cities

and cover most of the famous metropolises of the world and international influential tourism institutions. In addition, the 6 sub-committees, namely Committee of Expert, Committee of Tourism-Related Businesses, Committee of Civil Aviation, Committee of Media Organizations, Committee of Cruise and Committee of Investment, cover most of the key chains for urban tourism development to become international influential tourism organizations.

Cheng Hong summarized the development of WTCF in the past five years into “four capabilities”: “In my opinion, WTCF’s contribution to world tourism industry and



Representatives of WTOF and other international tourism organizations were met by Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang at the World Conference on Tourism for Development

city members can be summarized into 4 capabilities: attraction capability, service capability, leadership and influence.”

Ms. Cheng further explained. Firstly, the attraction capability of WTOF is manifested in number of members. It increased from 58 to 174, which means more than 20 new members every year. Secondly, it was manifested in the number of cities bidding for the Fragrant Hills Summit. She participated in the summit bidding for several successive years and she recalled: “After experiencing summit biddings recent years, I could feel that all the members are very active in the competition. In the 2014 Summit, there were 5 cities bidding for the 2015 Summit. Mayor of Washington D.C. gave the presentation himself, and they brought a large campaign team and well prepared materials in both Chinese and English. At last, Washington D.C. lost the bidding by a narrow margin. Contrary to Washington’s disappointment, representatives from the winning cities Rabat & Fez jumped, shouted and waved arms with great joy. It reminded me when China won the 2008 Olympics. The enthusiasm of application and the fierce competition showed attraction of WTOF and the Summit itself.”

Besides, the Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit member attendance fully reflected

WTOF’s attraction. The member attendance of the Summit was between 75%-80% every year. About 400 delegates from 89 city members attended this year’s summit.

Ms. Cheng attributed the enhancement of WTOF’s attraction capability to its improving services and guidance. “As a communication and cooperation platform, WTOF has been focusing on member cooperation for the past five years. We constantly promoted communication & cooperation between cities, between institutions, as well as between city and institution. On this year’s Summit, a good example is the cooperation contract between Chongqing and Washington D.C. municipal governments.”

The 2015 Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit was held in Rabat & Fez in Morocco. WTOF and institutional members including CITS and other famous travel agencies in China organized “Thousands of Chinese Tourists to Magnificent Morocco”. It enhanced the awareness of Morocco in the Chinese travel market, increased Chinese citizen’s choice of overseas tourism destinations, and enlightened our passion to Morocco. In June 2016, Morocco put forward the visa-free policy for Chinese citizens, which showed the value of Chinese market to Morocco’s national economic and social development.

With the assistance of WTOF, city members and institutional members carried out various communication and cooperation ventures in the past five years. WTOF facilitated its institutional member Air China to launch the new routes: Beijing-Budapest, Beijing-Washington D.C., Chengdu-Seoul and others. WTOF assisted Dalian to establish a strategic partnership with Budapest and Prague; supported Guangzhou in visiting member cities including London, Lisbon, and Dublin; promoted communication and cooperation among cities along the “One Belt, One Road” area; held themed forums including “Silk Road Tourism Cooperation Forum” and “International Forum on ‘One Belt, One Road’ and Tourism Cooperation 2016”.

Ms. Cheng said: “Each year, the summit will organize various communication and negotiation activities to provide better services to members, including themed forums, council meetings, sub-committee meetings, marketplaces, tourism presentations, and World Tourism Cities Expo. According to the secretariat, WTOF set up a total of 13,000 m² exhibitions in the last five year’s summits, attracted 469 organizations to the tourism marketplaces, achieved 4,500 intentional cooperation and trade amount reached RMB 2.3 billion (USD 360 million). The newly established Committee of Investment in this year’s summit



Chongqing Administration and Tourism and Visitor Services, Destination DC signs a strategic cooperation agreement



Chongqing Declaration of WTOF



Cheng Hong, Executive Vice Chairperson of WTOF Council and Vice Mayor of Beijing, gives the flag to the representative of Investment Committee during the Opening Ceremony



Initiation Ceremony for new members in 2014



WTOF participated in ITB Exhibition

increasingly expanded tourism investment & financing cooperation channel. During the investment fair this year, 105 cooperation projects were collected and intended investment reached RMB 107.13 billion (about USD 16 billion). In the summit, the city exhibition and trade negotiation were based on one-on-one practical cooperation, and made significant achievement every year.” Ms. Cheng then indicated that WTOF constantly offers services to members, attracted new members, and earned trust of old members.

Next, she introduced the academic research results of WTOF in recent years and said it was the specific embodiment of WTOF’s attraction. “These years, we launched a series of standards and reports. First is the Framework of Tourism Service Guidelines of Tourism Cities Development. It was launched at the first summit called Beijing Consensus. This is a service standard on elevating integral level of tourism cities and it set tourism developing improving tourism service as the key in developing tourism. It pioneered in improving overall software and hardware of tourism cities according to international standards. Members of the WTOF Expert Committee once took a special trip to the city

member Yangzhou for on-site consultation, and helped them to improve tourism work based on our standard. Second is launching evaluation system of world tourism cities development. This is a comprehensive system and is ranking cities based on the evaluation system. The third is launching the Market Research Report on Chinese Outbound Tourist (City) Consumption. The data of this report is very important for all international city members and is jointly launched with other tourism related organizations. As everyone knows, the Chinese tourist is considered as one of the most important travel resources for tourism cities around the world. Therefore, the tourism departments of many international cities are trying to understand consumption demand of Chinese tourists to better meet their needs. This report helps 'international tourism cities to conduct better tourism service for Chinese tourist. Secretariat of WTOF specifically organized the International Tourist Destination Cities and Marketing Promotion and Marketing Training Program' this year to introduce topics on 'How to do publicity and promotion in China', 'How to do marketing', and 'How to cooperate with Chinese enterprises and media'. Many

international city members actively participated and praised the course.” She stressed again that the increase of WTOF attraction capability is the object result of WTOF constantly improving service and guidance.

The influence of WTOF lies on the results of its development in last five years. In 2013, WTOF and the International Health and Environment Organization co-hosted round table meeting themed on “Urban Sustainable Development and Tourism” at U.N. Headquarters; In 2014, WTOF signed strategic cooperation agreement with Pacific Asia Travel Association; In 2015, WTOF signed MOU with the Global Tourism Economy Forum and a strategic cooperation agreement were also signed during the Summit that year. The two sides are now actively carrying out the performance research project of the city tourism industry. All these are concrete achievement that WTOF, as an international organization, has been playing a leading role in world tourism industry, building a cooperation and exchange platform for tourism cities and promoting development of international tourism industry. In 2015, WTOF won the World Tourism Industry Leadership Award issued by the World Travel Market, which has received wide attention from global industries.

“With five year’s development, WTOF is gradually recognized as an international tourism organization by the world.” Cheng Hong said, “Last year, more than 300 members from 42 countries and regions attended the summit held in Rabat & Fez, and over 120 international and Chinese media participated in the follow-on reports of the summit. Representatives from International organizations and ministers and mayors from world city members all came to Morocco for the summit; and the host Morocco, as a developing country, prepared and held the summit successfully. Undoubtedly these show the recognition and influence of WTOF as an international tourism organization by the world.”

Cheng Hong concluded that WTOF has essentially fulfilled its original development goals and the functions to be realized in the beginning stage with the gradual promotion of the four capabilities, and even exceeded expectations on some aspects.

Achievements of WTOF—China Makes a Difference and Has Strong Responsibility

As the global economy continues to worsen in recent years, the global tourism industry stands alone as an important driving force for boosting the global economy and promoting the employment. In 2014, the

direct tourism investment in China reached RMB 680 billion with a year-on-year growth of 32%. "WTCF plays an irreplaceable role in promoting the sustainable development of the world tourism industry and making a difference as a great nation." Cheng Hong said, "Tourism city is a fine starting point for WTCF. It helps them to avoid some cooperative mechanism difficulties as well as some complex and sensitive issues involved in state ideology and diplomacy."

"The flourish of WTCF is mainly due to the development of world tourism industry, a leading economy. As the new hope of global economic recovery, tourism industry is one of the most significant industries at present, and also an emerging industry to achieve industry transformation, develop service industry, keep balance between economic development and ecology and promote employment. While focusing on the development of world tourism industry, WTCF has discovered some problems that tourism cities are facing and received great supports from all member cities in the aspect of exploring cooperation." Cheng Hong added.

"China's voices in many industries are still weak, but we could grasp the opportunity to issue industry standards to the world as the biggest tourism resource and make a voice belonging to China, which is very meaningful to our future's development. We need to take root in this field and give full play to the role of the platform so as to raise the influence of China."

Other matters help to increase China's influence includes: The headquarters of WTCF is in Beijing; the official language is English and Chinese; member cities need to prepare Chinese application materials. All these are important factors to boost the dissemination of Chinese characters, cultures and influence. "The bidding cities need to study Chinese culture when preparing their bidding materials to show a kindness and friendliness gesture." Cheng Hong said.

Look to the Future, Strengthen Organization Construction

When answering the questions about the future development of WTCF, Cheng Hong said, "There is still a lot of room for WTCF to strength advantages and play more important role in world tourism industry. Externally, implement our important strategies through communication channel of cities and internally form cohesion among member cities, expand coverage and standardize the internal management. Next step, WTCF needs to further improve its international influence, representativeness and normalization as new council was just elected; further develop membership, expand coverage and improve the organization of internal committees. For example, Europe is a very mature tourism market, with about 400 tourism cities of all sizes. WTCF has 41 members from Europe right now, so the next step we need to strength our efforts to absorb more members in Europe. The more cities are involved,

the more cooperation opportunities we can get and the better win-win solution we will achieve."

Cheng Hong said that to better serve members, WTCF is considering to establish branches offices in other important international cities, or to gather the strength of all cities around the world by recommending the council candidates in each continent respectively during the General Election of the Council.

When talking about "Sharing Economy and Development of World Tourism Cities", the theme of this year's summit, Cheng Hong said that this theme conforms to the development trend of Internet economy. In the information age, the new patterns and formats of the economy have a profound impact on all walks of life, especially the tourism industry. "All of our members should be aware of the opportunity that sharing economy brings to us and objectively face the challenge it brings while following it up. We also advocate learning more patterns and formats of sharing economy and using new technologies to realize the new development of tourism industry."

At the end of the interview, Cheng Hong, gave thanks to all members and media for their enthusiastic support and active involvement for the last five years. She showed in full confidence that WTCF will serve the members better and make more contributions to the development of the global tourism economy in the future. ➤

(source: WTCF)





Cruise Industry: Germany And UK Benefit The Most

“ The cruise industry in Europe has been experiencing significant growth for many years now. Especially in Germany, where there is the largest cruise passenger base. The country economically benefits the most from the cruise boom. Last year nearly 6.6 million Europeans bought a cruise – 3.1 percent more than the year before, as announced by the CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association). ”



This represented about 30 percent of all cruise passengers worldwide. The largest group of European passengers came from Germany: about 1.8 million tourists opted for a sea voyage. Thus, German tourists constituted 27.5 percent of all European passengers.

Just behind Germany there is the United Kingdom and Ireland with a combined market share of 27.2 percent. Then comes Italy, France and Spain. These large European countries represent 83 percent of the cruise industry market.

In an extensive analysis, the association examined the costs and values related to cruise tourism. The result was a sum of almost 41 billion euros. This includes not only direct costs of shipping companies, passengers and crew, but also taxes and indirect effects. As a whole the cruise industry in Europe creates more than 360,000 jobs.

Shipyards and their suppliers are also among the big winners of the boom. Overall, the cruise business brings Germany direct revenues of about 3 billion euros. In Europe, only Italy (4.6 billion euros) and the UK (3.3 billion euros) benefit more from the current cruise industry boom.

Cruise Tourism Boosted By Germans

Although cruise tourists visited almost 40 Norwegian ports in 2014, passengers and port call numbers have registered a decrease since the previous year.

While most of the tourists chose to visit Bergen, nine other ports in Norway can brag about large numbers, with 100,000 daily cruise visitors. Out of those, the majority hailed from Germany and the UK, Norway's primary cruise markets.

Bergen registered 442,759 cruise tourists in 2014 with a 2 percent decrease from 2013's 453,015. The numbers are however much higher compared to years like 2009, when 282,500 tourists visited the Norwegian port. Second on the list is Geiranger with 301,174 in 2014 and a 4 percent decrease compared to the year prior. Stavanger took the biggest hit with a 24 percent decrease in 2014.

Figures from the Innovation Norway Tourism Survey reveal that tourists who prefer cruises are usually older, go about booking their cruise well in advance and many have never been to Norway before.

German Tourists Are of Great Economic Importance

The feedback from cruise tourists is by-and-large positive. They are much more prone to recommend Norway as a tourist destination than visitors who arrived by land. Visitors who enjoy activities that are cultural in nature will spend larger amounts of money while those who like their trips to be more physical, much less.

The majority of cruise tourists are German. In 2014, 210,279 German tourists arrived in Norway's ports, the number revealing a 23 percent increase from 2013. Figures in regards to UK visitors show only a 12 percent increase while for the US we see an 8 percent decrease as only 34,724 tourists chose Norway as a destination by cruise. In total, Norway's cruise tourism industry saw a 7 percent decrease in 2014.

The Norwegian Industry Gets 2.3 Billion

While in Norway, during the summer of 2014, cruise tourists have spent roughly 12 billion Norwegian kroner. About 2.3 billion of that amount has been reinvested and kept within the industry. The remainder of the earnings went beyond Norway's borders.

Tourists who arrive by cruise ship spend 3,945 kroner on average for their entire stay, or about 860 kroner daily while on land. The ones that arrive from land spend much more, with an average of 13,470 kroner or 1,285 daily while in Norway.

Cruise Tourists and Age

Data reveals that not only are tourists pleased with Norway as a destination, but also most of them would return by going on another cruise. Cruise tourists are 8 years older on average (58.3 to 49.6) than the ones that choose other means of transportation. Those coming from the US are the oldest. US also offers the biggest age discrepancy between different types of visitors. The youngest hail from the south of Europe, with an average of 54.1 years.

The First Time for Many

Out of three tourists coming by way of cruise, only one had previously visited Norway. A higher proportion of land-based visitors have been to Norway before, proving that cruise tourism is doing well. Out of all nationalities, Germans are the ones that have been to Norway the most often, while US citizens are more prone to visit by land.

European Cruise Market is Growing

European cruise market is growing fast. Record results have been announced. Last year the cruise industry generated EUR 40.2 billion in sales, which is 2.2 percent more compared to the previous year, according to the Association of International Cruise Lines CLIA.

10,000 new jobs were created in Europe thanks to the increase in the cruise industry. Across Europe, 349,000 people are employed in the industry. Germany, the UK, Italy, France and Spain are the top five source markets in Europe.

Italy, the market leader in the construction of cruise ships and one of the most popular destinations of cruise tourists, benefited greatly from the boom in the industry. The Italian cruise industry generated EUR 4.6 billion welcoming 842,000 passengers in 2014. In total 102,000 people are employed in the industry.

The Italian cruise company Costa Crociere, mother of the US group Carnival, benefited greatly from the positive trend. "We are growing strongly, particularly in France, Spain and Italy," said Neil Palomba, CEO of Costa Crociere.

A similar situation can be seen with Royal Caribbean Italia. "The trend for this year continues to be positive," the director of Royal

Caribbean in Italy, Gianni Rotondo emphasized. Uncertainty about the future prospects of the cruise ships to pass through Venice, burden the cruise traffic in the Adriatic region. In Venice declining sales were reported by the cruise traffic in the amount of EUR 40 million. Throughout the Adriatic region, the decline was EUR 113.5 million.

Meet Fathom – The New Cruise Line Of Social Impact Vacations

Carnival Corp., parent company over subsidiaries Carnival, Holland America and Princess, is reshaping the cruise industry with its recently announced seven-night social impact cruise vacations. Slated for a 2016 debut, the new brand, named Fathom, will set sail to the Dominican Republic, where over two million residents do not have piped water, and other developing nations that will be announced in the future.

Under Fathom is one ship, the Adonia, which is a 710-passenger liner that currently operates under P&O Cruises. According to Arnold Donald, CEO of Carnival Corp., Fathom is geared toward socially-conscious consumers who wish to positively impact the world and experience self-growth, but do not know where to place their efforts.

Upon Fathom's launch, the Miami-based Adonia will set sail every other Sundays on a biweekly schedule and dock on Tuesdays in the Dominican Republic. Instead of the typical tourist activities, passengers may choose to volunteer during their three-day stay in ways such as creating water filtration systems, growing cacao plants and teaching English to students. During travel time to the Dominican Republic, on-board activities will include creative workshops, basic Spanish lessons, impact activity training and a Dominican Republic country orientation.

Carnival Corp. states that although the Fathom brand's objective is similar to volunteer vacations offered by GlobeAware and other non-profit organizations, Fathom takes this concept to a larger scale. With more than 700 passengers arriving every other week, 18,000 people will rack up 55,000 volunteer days in the brand's first year, collectively.

Tara Russell, operator of Fathom, says that in addition to the sheer volume of volunteer time, another distinctive feature of Fathom is its focus on the entire region instead of just one village. Although Adonia will dock in the Amber Cove port, which is located in the Dominican Republic's Puerto Plata region, all volunteer opportunities are reachable within two hours by vehicle from the port.

In order to make a sustainable impact, Fathom will work with the Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo, Inc. and Entrena, both of which are Dominican Republic-based non-profit organizations with a track record of helping the local community.

Market research by Carnival Corp. shows that about 1 million North Americans are interested in this type of cruise experience, and interest is especially growing among the 20-year old to 60-year old people. Carnival Corp. anticipates that Fathom will draw in all groups of people as well as those who are new to taking cruises.

Russell states that Fathom's goal is to create a sustainable, for-profit business model in order to make a long-term commitment to the people of the Dominican Republic. To be financially-viable, 37,000 passengers per year are needed to fill the one ship in Fathom's line.

A percentage of revenue from ticket sales will be given to the Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo, Inc. and Entrena to fund on-the-ground expenses as well as the organizations' general mission. The fare for one person to travel in a double-occupancy room on week-long Dominican Republic social impact cruise is \$1,540. The price includes on-ship meals, three on-ground volunteer activities, port fees and taxes. Other on-shore activities are not included in the price. ➤

(source : tourism-review)

Austria: Tourism Boom Helps The Economy

“ According to a study of Austrian tourism, the real tourism exports increased by 4.2% (nominal +6%), which makes it one of the pillars of the Austrian economy. The high growth rate of real tourism exports in 2016 was well above the stagnation trend since 2000. As a matter of fact, it is the highest number since that year and as such is considered a real tourism boom.

”



“Given the rather moderate economic recovery in the EU, domestic tourism developed surprisingly favorably,” the Report on the tourism and leisure industry in Austria in 2016 noted.

In the First Half of the Year, Domestic Tourism Recorded New Highs in Arrivals and Overnight Stays

The start of the summer season was also successful. According to statistics Austria experienced an increase of 4.2% to a total of 70.8 million overnight stays.

On the one hand, Austria offers a wide range of offer and it is constantly being expanded thanks to investments from enterprises. On the other hand, it also shows the tendency that in times of crisis the travel radius narrows.

A particularly strong group of guests are German tourists, who often come back to Austria – their six million overnight stays in summer pre-season represent an increase of 2%. Other overnight stays increases registered were those from Switzerland (+1.2%) and the UK (+1%). This means that the declines from other countries such as the Netherlands, Italy or Russia can be offset in the overall balance. The number of visitors from Turkey, India and the Czech Republic increased highly, albeit the total numbers were low.

The tourism boom in the Austrian capital Vienna is particularly spectacular. In July a 4.1% increase of overnight stays compared to last year was registered. This increase also helped to exceed the previous record of overnight stays by 1.5 million stays. From January to July this gives 8.139 million overnight stays and an increase of 4.8%.

Sales in the first six months grew by 2.8% and amounted to about €327.4 million. Therefore, Vienna is now well above the result of the

record year 2016 and is fully “on track” to reach 20 million overnight stays per year by 2020. As it seems, every category of Viennese hotels benefited from the tourism boom in July, except five-star hotels. The average bed occupancy rate increased to 67.5% (in July 2016 around 81%). The room occupancy rate increased to 86% (in 2016 81%). However, from last year the Viennese hotel capacity has reduced from last year by 400 beds to 64,500 (-0.7%).

An important factor for the tourism business to stay competitive is the willingness to invest. This can be achieved with the use of subsidized loans. In July alone, three dozens of loans totaling more than €63 million were released by the ERP Commission for tourism. Thus, the awarded loan volume has already risen this year to the peak value of around €100 million, which represents a doubled figure compared to the previous year. The triggered investment thus amounts to around €178 million. With these subsidized loans guest rooms, spa facilities are modernized and expanded. The hotel infrastructure is improved and also the staff rooms are improved and modernized.

Austria Getting Ready For a Successful Summer Season

The Alpine republic benefits from many people’s desire to visit nature and escape from the daily bustle. The fresh mountain air also attracts more and more Chinese visitors who travel to Austria in increasing numbers. The authorities expect a positive summer season.

“For years there has been an upward curve and we are once again optimistic,” said the spokeswoman of the “Österreich Werbung”, Ulrike Rauch-Keschmann. In the summer of 2016 (May to October) the country recorded an increase in arrivals of 6.3 percent to 22 million and in overnight stays by 3.3 percent to 70 million.

For stressed people, mountains and nature are a compelling way of disconnecting from the outside world. For several years now there is also generally stronger willingness to spend more money on vacation, as stated by Rauch-Keschmann.

Revenues of the Austrian tourism in the summer of 2016 reached around 11.7 billion euros, an annual increase of 4.3 percent. Germans were by far the largest group of visitors – followed by the Dutch, Swiss and Italians.

The summer season is also a prosperous period for cable cars. 80 percent of the 253 cable car companies are in operation and provide transport services to the Austrian Alps to about 16 million people who travel to Austria mainly for hiking and other adventure activities.

According to Rauch-Keschmann, tourism development in Austria’s largest cities such as Salzburg, Innsbruck and Vienna is above average. Furthermore, the Chinese are becoming a promising target group. They are not interested in the big cities only, but also in nature.

A publicity campaign under the motto “Nature and Good Air” in Beijing, where smog negatively influences the daily life of many people, had been very successful.

“This way we stroke a chord with the people there,” said the tourism expert. In the summer of 2016 there was an approximate increase of 50 percent of Chinese visitors to the Alpine republic compared to the year before.

MICE Industry In Austria Is Steadily Growing

Continuing the trend of the previous years, in 2016 the Austrian MICE industry kept growing. 18,172 events (+ 6.7%) with approximately 1.46 million participants were organized in the country. These are the findings of the latest Meeting Industry Reports Austria, presented by

the Austrian Convention Bureau and the Austrian National Tourism Center (Österreich Werbung).

Overall, the conference industry last year generated around 3.1 million overnight stays (+ 10.9%) in the country. For the first time since 2010, the amount of overnight stays of events participants increased from 2.1 to 2.3% of overnight stays by all tourists.

More and Longer Events

Corporate meetings represent 46.9% of the events, well ahead of congresses and seminars.

“While the congresses in 2016 represent only a quarter of all the events, they generated more than half of all participants and three quarters of all overnight stays,” commented Petra Stolba, the managing director of the Austrian Tourism Center.

The MICE industry recorded a total of 4,328 conventions last year, which was an increase of 12.6%.

“While the average attendance of conferences, corporate meetings and seminars since 2010 steadily decreases, the duration of the events goes up. In 2016 the events lasted on average 2.1 days,” said Christian Mutschlechner from the Austrian Convention Bureau.

Small Conferences with Large Market Share

Small and medium-sized conferences dominated the year of 2016 with a market share of 94.5%. Especially congresses with fewer than 100 participants – these represented 61.3% (+30%) of the entire congress business and around 16% of participants.

International events have been of particular importance for the Austrian MICE industry. “The participants of the international congresses bring four times more of the overnight stays compared to the participants of the national conferences,” said Mutschlechner.

In 2016, business and political events had the biggest share (30%) regarding the type of the meetings. Conferences on the subject of human medicine were in slight decline of almost three percent, but still held more than 20% of all meetings. Humanities and IT & Communications are becoming increasingly important for the MICE industry. The segment of corporate events experienced a boom last year with an increase of more than 20% in terms of the number of events, 16% regarding the amount participants, and almost 18% with respect to the overnight stays.

Green Meetings & Events

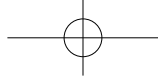
The Austrian eco-label for Green Meetings and Events was launched in 2010 and has established itself as a recognized label for sustainable events. In 2016, there were 329 green meetings organized in Austria.

Whole Austria Benefits from the MICE Industry

The number of events taking place throughout Austria – excluding the federal capital – increased by 20.7%. Vienna remained the meetings industry leader with 39.2% of all events organized in the capital. Salzburg solidified its position as the second largest conference destination in Austria. Regarding the number of events, Lower Austria took the third place.

Nearly two-thirds of all congresses, corporate meetings and seminars took place outside of the main cities, which means that the smaller cities and rural areas increasingly benefit from the meetings industry as well. ➤

(source:tourism-review)



Dresden is an Elegant Restoration

“ There are few city silhouettes more striking than Dresden’s. The classic view from the Elbe’s northern bank takes in spires, towers and domes belonging to palaces, churches and stately buildings, and indeed it’s hard to believe that the city was all but wiped off the map by Allied bombings in 1945. ”



Dresden's cultural heyday came under the 18th-century reign of Augustus the Strong (August der Starke) and his son Augustus III, who produced many of Dresden's iconic buildings, including the Zwinger and the Frauenkirche. While the devastating 1945 allied firestorm levelled most of these treasures, their contents were safely removed before the bombings and now take pride of place in Dresden's rebuilt museums.

The city has had a few tough years of late, however. In 2014, a populist protest movement called PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West), was founded here and quickly became a nationwide phenomenon. But although the city, once known as the 'Florence of the North', gave birth to this anti-Islamic movement, the overwhelming majority of Dresden's residents do not agree with its message. It's hard to find a single museum, cultural institute or university here that isn't bedecked with large signs declaring support for multiculturalism, welcoming migrants and generally subverting the PEGIDA message, which itself seems to have lost public support in the intervening period. Dresden and its surroundings may have been nicknamed "the valley of the clueless" under communism (due to locals not being able to pick up West German TV), but its public institutions now proclaim themselves "für ein weltoffenes Dresden" ('for a Dresden open to the world'). Take some time to get to know this fascinating, contradictory city.

Dresden: a Synonym for Culture

There are many ways to interpret or define culture. But it can be easily summarised with just one word: Dresden. The sheer abundance and splendour of the city's cultural treasures are enough to take your breath away. And since Dresden also just happens to be set amidst a stunning river landscape, your amazement is soon accompanied by pure delight.

Though the attribute 'world famous' is dished out all too readily, it is a befitting term in the case of Dresden. The city is famed not only for its three major landmarks –Zwinger Palace, Semper Opera House and the Church of Our

Lady – but also for Brühl Terrace and the Royal Palace, for the Elbe palaces on the Loschwitz hillside, for the exclusive villas of Blasewitz, the garden city of Hellerau and, of course, for the twelve Dresden State Art Collections. And not forgetting the city centre's prime position on the western bank of the Elbe, at the apex of one of the river's gently sweeping meanders.

Dresden's no. 1 world-famous building has to be Zwinger Palace, widely considered a masterpiece of baroque architecture. The glorious Church of Our Lady, resurrected from the rubble, is arguably the preeminent church of the Protestant faith, and the imposing Saxony State Opera House, designed in the Italianate High Renaissance style by its eponymous architect Semper, is undoubtedly one of the world's most beautiful music theatres. The gardens of Brühl Terrace, or the 'Balcony of Europe' as it is known, provide magnificent views of the Elbe and across to Neustadt on the bank opposite; lined with prestigious buildings including the Academy of Fine Arts and the Albertinum Museum with its New Masters Gallery and sculpture collection, the terrace is another of the city's cultural must-sees. Dresden boasts superb museums that add to its cultural prowess, including the Green Vault – the world's largest treasure chamber – at the Royal Palace as well as the Turkish Chamber and the Old Masters Gallery where Raphael's Sistine Madonna is displayed.

For almost 700 years, Dresden has also been famed for its music. It is not only the Opera House that enraptures audiences but also the State Orchestra, the Dresden Philharmonic and the Kreuzchor boys' choir. The cultural calendar is packed all year round, with the city hosting international festivals, captivating theatre and dance productions and other popular events such as the Semper Opera Ball. And what would Dresden's music scene be without its jazz? The city's International Dixieland Festival is Europe's biggest old time jazz festival. Traditional highlights include the Riverboat Shuffle, the Jazz Mile along Prager Strasse and the Dixieland Parade through the old quarter. The festival season is rounded off with open-air events, including the riverbank film nights, the Elbhangfest and concerts in the romantic parkland of the Elbe palaces.

“ Dresden's No. 1 world-famous building has to be Zwinger Palace, widely considered a masterpiece of baroque architecture. ”

But Dresden is more than just a city of history and heritage, as evidenced by its modern architectural masterpieces. Notable examples include the New Synagogue and the deconstructivist UFA Kristallpalast cinema designed by celebrated Austrian architects Coop Himmelb(l)au. At the main train station, Norman Foster has covered the historical iron framework with a translucent Teflon membrane. There's also the Military History Museum, which has recently undergone a radical extension and redesign by Daniel Libeskind. A bold design move in its day was the 'Blue Wonder', Europe's first bridge without river piers. The construction is both a feat of engineering and a spectacular vantage point.

If you happen to be in Dresden in December, be sure to visit the Striezelmarkt. Germany's oldest Christmas market, first documented in 1434, remains to this day a celebration of lights, colours and inviting aromas. Enjoy the peaceful, festive atmosphere while indulging in glühwein, spiced gingerbread and hot chestnuts, and discover another Dresden speciality in the shape of striezel, as the locals call their traditional Christmas cake. There are only two words that do this delicacy justice: world famous.

Sightseeing in Dresden

Dresden is a very beautiful, light-spirited city, especially in summer, when you can appreciate the serene setting of the historic centre. Although Dresden is larger than Munich when measured by area, the historic centre is quite compact and walkable.

1 Frauenkirche. The original Church of Our Lady was completely destroyed during WWII; however, it has been reconstructed. The City of Coventry, which was raided by the Luftwaffe in WWII, donated the golden cross for the dome of the church. Check out some ruins in the basement. Do not miss the tower visit and bring good shoes to climb in (otherwise you will not be admitted!).

2 Zwinger Palace (tram 4, 8 and 9 Theaterplatz and tram 11 am Zwingerteich). The baroque palace features a nymphaeum, many sculptures of Permoser, a bell pavilion and famous art collections. Do not miss the "Alte Meister" - you'll find the famous Madonna Sistina of Rafael there including the well known angels. There is also a very nice museum on the arms of Saxon kings, the "Rüstkammer". Entry is free to the palace but to see expositions you need a €10 ticket (€7.50 discount).

3 Residenzschloss (Royal Palace Dresden), Schloßstraße at the corner of Taschenberg. The Grünes Gewölbe (Green Vault) is Europe's most splendid treasure chamber museum.

You can see the biggest green diamond and the court of Aurengzeb and its precious crown jewels. This is actually two museums, each requiring a separate ticket: Historic Green Vault (Historisches Grünes Gewölbe) is famous for the splendours of the historic treasure chamber as it existed in 1733, while the New Green Vault (Neues Grünes Gewölbe) focuses attention on each individual object in neutral rooms.

4 Semperoper (Saxon State Opera and concert hall) (tram 4, 8 and 9 Theaterplatz). Guided tours in English daily 15:00; Adults: €10, concessions: €6, families: €20, photo fee per person: €3 (but they don't check if you have it). Tours in German throughout the day. One of the most beautiful opera houses in the world. The acoustics and the Staatskapelle orchestra, are marvellous. Its history saw many operas of Wagner and Strauss having their first nights there. Make sure to book tickets in advance. Some last-minute tickets are available from the box office shortly before the performance starts. Seats which do not have a good view are very cheap, and you can sit on benches behind the seats, right at the top of the auditorium, for free.

5 Fürstenzug (Altstadt, near Brühlische Terasse). This biggest porcelain painting of the world shows (almost) all Saxon princes, electors and kings on their horses and splendid parade uniforms. (There is only one female person at the painting, find it.) It leads to the "Stallhof" - the last preserved tournament place contained in a European castle. In Winter, the Stallhof is the location of a medieval style Christmas market with a big fireplace.

6 Neue Synagoge, Hasenberg 2 (Tram 3 and 7, Synagoge). The New Synagogue stands on the site of the former Semper Synagogue. The old one was designed by Gottfried Semper, famous for many other important buildings in Dresden. Erected in 1840 and destroyed in 1938 during the Kristallnacht. Unlike the buildings in the Altstadt destroyed during the war, it has not been rebuilt in the original style, but replaced by a starkly modern construction in 2001. Despite appearances, the "stones" are not sandstone but rather concrete made to look alike. The cubic warship hall is accompanied by a lower service building across a stone plaza. The design is striking in an austere way both on the outside and the inside. There are 60 minute guided tours from Sunday to Thursday (except on Jewish religious holidays). Guided tour per person - €4, reduced - €2.50. ➤

(source: Lonely Planet & Wikitravel)

Carnival Cruise Line Named 'Most Trusted Cruise Line in America' by Reader's Digest

For the second consecutive year, Carnival Cruise Line has been named Most Trusted Cruise Line in America by Reader's Digest. The award is based on a poll of more than 5,000 Americans nationwide who were asked to rate products they trust across 40 different categories in areas such as quality, value, and reliability. Carnival received more votes than any other cruise line. The awards are featured in the October issue of Reader's Digest. Carnival continues to enhance its onboard offerings, building upon its brand promise of providing fun, memorable vacations at a great value while keeping up with consumer trends and exceeding the expectations of its guests.



Earlier this year marked the debut of the line's newest, largest and most innovative ship, Carnival Vista, which offers such groundbreaking features as the SkyRide aerial attraction, the first IMAX Theatre at sea, the RedFrog Pub & Brewery that includes the line's first on-board brewery and the fleet's largest water park highlighted by the 455-foot-long Kaleid-o-Slide.

Carnival has also expanded upon its exclusive partnerships with Food Network star Guy Fieri with plans to roll out the new Guy's Pig & Anchor Bar-B-Que Smokehouse on several ships and Dr. Seuss Enterprises, serving as the Official Seagoing Headquarters for The Cat in the Hat's presidential campaign, part of the fleetwide Seuss at Sea program.

Carnival is also a major supporter of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, raising more than \$10 million for the hospital since launching its Care to Play: Carnival for St. Jude Kids program in 2010. As part of its Honor. Family. Fun. program honoring Operation Homefront, an organization that assists military families, Carnival will be hosting an exclusive shipboard concert for military families by seven-time Grammy Award-winning country music superstar Carrie Underwood aboard the new Carnival Vista when it makes its U.S. arrival in November.

The Carnival Journeys enrichment series is also expanding with more than 20 voyages visiting spectacular ports throughout Alaska, Hawaii, the Caribbean, and other destinations.

Rome's Spanish Steps Reopen After Restoration

Rome's iconic Spanish Steps officially reopened to the public Thursday after a cleaning and repair job financed by luxury jeweler Bulgari, the latest in a series of privately-funded restorations of Italy's cultural treasures.

The reopening had been beset by controversy over Bulgari's insistence that the city better protect the newly pristine monument from drunks, tourists and others by fencing off the staircase at night. But Mayor Virginia Raggi said Thursday she didn't think a fence was needed.

"It's fundamental to let people use cultural heritage sites," she said, adding that visitors and Romans alike must be educated to use them responsibly.

Raggi said the city would make sure the steps aren't abused.

Bulgari's flagship store is on the glitzy street that leads to the Piazza di Spagna. In proposing the fence, the company cited damage to the steps over the years and, more recently, the piazza's fountain by visiting soccer hooligans.



The restoration is one of several that Italian authorities have allowed private sponsors to fund amid government budget shortfalls and the unending need to care for Italy's crumbling monuments and artworks. Shoemaker Tod's footed the 25 million euro bill for the Colosseum restoration, and Italy has begun offering generous tax breaks for donations to help public museums and monuments.

But Bulgari's insistence that the Spanish Steps now be better cared for was evidence of a certain sense of entitlement that these private sponsors are able to exert. Over the summer, for example, fashion house Fendi, which restored the

Trevi Fountain, was able to parlay its generosity into a first-ever fashion show featuring models essentially walking over the Trevi Fountain's water.

London Scoops Award for Best City at the 2016 Times Travel Awards

London has been named as the best city to visit in the prestigious Times, Sunday Times and Sunday Times Travel Magazine Awards. It's the fourth year in a row that London has scooped Best City, ranking ahead of New York, Venice, Paris, Sydney, Las Vegas and Dubai.



Jane Knight, Times Travel Editor, said; "Despite stiff competition from the likes of Paris, Barcelona, Venice and New York, London came out on top. It just goes to show how much the capital has to offer and how it continues to regenerate itself and create a buzz - from the new Tate Modern to the bustling stalls selling artisan products at nearby Borough Market and the hip bars, restaurants and vintage cloth shops of Shoreditch. Cool new hotels mean there are more interesting places to stay, and room rates are kept competitive. With exciting new productions in the West End and art exhibitions, there's always another reason to visit."

Although the summer season is now coming to an end, London continues to offer a jam packed autumn season of culture. Major exhibitions include the highly anticipated; You say you want a Revolution at the V&A, Rodin and Dance: The Essence of Movement, at the Courtauld Gallery and South Africa: The Art of a Nation at the British Museum.

Record numbers of tourists continue to travel to London each year to sample the capital's world-class attractions. The city received 31.5 million visits from all over the world in 2015 including 12.9 million tourists from Great Britain. A recent survey by London & Partners, the Mayor of London's promotional company found that 90 per cent of American visitors (and 80 per cent of UK visitors), who'd travelled to the capital in the last two years, rated London's cultural attractions as the best in the world.

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