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PRESS RELEASE

AN EXCELLENT SUMMER SEASON AND A PROMISING AUTUMN SEASON: HUNGARY WARMLY WELCOMES TOURISTS

According to available data, the tourism sector may see yet again record-breaking data following the bumper year of 2014 in Hungary. The massive growth of international and domestic arrivals observed in recent years was the result – in addition to state measures and development projects – of the hospitality and openness of Hungarian people as well as the hard work of tourism professionals. Contrary to the recent and sometimes misleading coverage of the migration situation by international media, Hungary and the capital city of Budapest are friendly and safe destinations where tourists are warmly welcome and where they are offered high quality services no matter where they come from.

At the joint press conference of the Hungarian Tourism Ltd and the Hungarian Hotel and Restaurant Association, on 11 September 2015, participants evaluated the situation resulting from the migration issue from the aspect of the tourism sector, and discussed proposals for common strategies, aimed at further boosting the dynamic expansion of Hungarian tourism.

Hungarian Tourism Ltd Deputy CEO **Tamás Glázer** stressed at the English-language press conference held for foreign and Hungarian press that the main objective was to present a true picture of Hungary, which continues to be a safe tourism destination. Tourism sights are far from the routes of migrants and tourism attractions continue to be available, well accessible and usable. There have never been any incidents against tourists, either. The Hungarian Tourism Ltd runs marketing campaigns in 37 countries, aiming to reach tourism professionals, the press and the wider public through on-line websites and representations abroad. The company has been keen to reveal the real situation and offset news presented by the global press. To this end, we regularly negotiate with professional tourism organizations and coordinate communication. As one picture can speak a thousand words, we prepare authentic, up-to-date images of the most highly frequented tourism sights in Budapest and they are published on our English-language websites. The world can see that Budapest is as safe as ever. For the same reason, we are also doing video messages and seek opportunities to present the real, peaceful and friendly Budapest and Hungary to foreign journalists visiting the country to cover the migrant issue. One thing is certain: this is what everybody coming to the country will find, the Deputy CEO said.

President of Hungarian Hotel and Restaurant Association **Dr Ákos Niklai** said:

In light of the survey conducted at the Association's member hotels, they have hitherto seen only a few cancellations. Accommodation establishments are still optimistic and well-prepared for the autumn season which is typically a busy season for conference and leisure tourism alike.

According to the latest data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the tourism sector achieved outstanding results in the first seven months of the year. Room occupancy ratios and turnover rose in each accommodation category, but the largest tourism traffic growth was registered at high-category hotels. Hotel revenues in the month of July were up by 20 per cent, year-on-year.

Hotel occupancy ratio data are also excellent, as they show average growth of 4.7 percentage points, rising to 66.7 per cent in July. Average hotel room prices also gained compared to July 2014, as the key market indicator – RevPAR – improved significantly. Room revenues at accommodation establishments totalled HUF 27.5bn, up by 19.9 per cent compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

In the first seven months of the year, hotels accumulated accommodation revenues of HUF 68bn, an increase of 12.6 per cent year-on-year. The number of foreign and domestic hotel guests rose by 5.4 percent (to 5.9 million) and 8.1 per cent (to 4.8 million), respectively. As a whole, the number of guests at hotels soared by 6.6 per cent in the period January-July 2015, year-on-year.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to the latest data published by the KSH, the tourism sector achieved outstanding results again in the first seven months of the year. Achievements, which highly exceed those of the previous year yet again, show that tourism traffic was higher in every Hungarian region in July.

The number of tourism nights at accommodation establishments rose year-on-year by 9.5 percent in July 2015, while gross room revenues at these establishments soared by 19.9 per cent. Within the former data, the number of tourism nights by foreign and domestic guests was up by 12 per cent and 7.5 per cent, respectively, compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

Tourist arrivals from the top six source countries showed double-digit gains; the number of German tourists, for example, rose by 15.7 per cent. The total number of foreign guest nights was 1.75 million in July 2015. The most dynamic tourism night growth figures were recorded for the United Kingdom and the United States (28 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively), while increases ranged between 15 per cent and 18 per cent for Polish, Dutch, German and Czech guests. These positive trends offset the 17 per cent drop in arrivals from Russia.

The 12 percent growth in the number of domestic guests has also contributed to the great tourism data. In the observed period, 760,000 domestic guests spent 2.19 million tourism nights at accommodation establishments, which constitutes an increase of 7.5 per cent year-on-year. Room revenues at accommodation establishments generated by domestic guests increased by 18.6 per cent, year-on-year. In the month of July, spending by SZÉP Cards totalled some HUF 3.058bn, up by 9.3 per cent, at 2249 accommodation establishments with card terminals.

Data from the initial seven months of the year are also highly promising; in the period January-July 2015, 5.79 million guests spent 14.4 tourism nights at accommodation establishments. The number of guests and tourism nights was thus up by 8.9 per cent and 6.7 per cent, respectively, compared to the same period of the previous year. In the observed, period, room revenues at accommodation establishments totalled HUF 115.8bn, up by some 13 per cent. SZÉP Card turnover rose by 3.9 per cent, reaching HUF 9.9bn.

According to the KSH report which presents data for international arrivals in the first half of 2015 (*which includes data of all foreign tourists, not only of those received at commercial accommodation establishments*):

In the first half of 2015, the number of foreign tourists arriving in Hungary (8.7 million) increased by 17.6 per cent in comparison to the first half of 2014, while respective spending soared by 12.3 per cent, to more than HUF 510bn. The number of foreign tourists on overnight trips showed even larger growth of 21 percent and totalled more than 5 million. Spending by these guests was up by 10.6 per cent compared to the first half of 2014 and it exceeded HUF 467bn. The number of those on a same-day trip was also higher by 13.6 per cent year-on-year, reaching 3.7 million. This category posted the most dynamic spending growth of 34 per cent, hitting almost HUF 43bn.

The positive tourism sector trend has been in place for the fourth consecutive year in Hungary; the number of tourism nights by both foreigners and domestic guests increased by several hundreds of thousands year after year. In 2010-2014, double-digit growth was recorded in the number of tourism nights by guests from Europe, America and Asia. 2014 was a bumper year for tourism in Hungary, as this sector expanded faster than the national economy as a whole.

Thanks to the latest development projects and successful country marketing campaigns, Hungary **has never received so much international recognition** as recently. In terms of certain indicators, Hungary recorded four times better figures than the EU average: while the number of international arrivals rose in 2014 by 4.4 per cent around the world and by 3.0 per cent in Europe, they surged by 13.7 per cent in Hungary.

About Hungarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (HHRA)

The Hungarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (HHRA) is the biggest nonpolitical trade association in the field of tourism and hospitality in Hungary. Founded in 1968, it has more than 500 members, including 387 hotels – 70% of the hotel capacity of the country with 34.000 hotel rooms – 7 hotel companies, restaurants, educational institutions and associated members. The HHRA is member of HOTREC representing 42 national associations of the hospitality sector of 28 different European countries.

Further information:

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