



## Occupancy rates soar at capital's hotels

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**Athens hotels** took the European lead in the growth of their occupancy rates and average revenues per available room last month, according to a British survey seen by Kathimerini.

This trend has continued into June thanks to increased tourism demand for the capital, the Posidonia international shipping exhibition and the organization of a number of international conferences.

According to the report by STR Global on the performance of the European hotel industry, which was published in London, the average occupancy rate at Athens hotels posted the biggest increase among European capitals, amounting to 36.6 percent compared with May 2013. The average occupancy rate among Athens hotels came to 83 percent, while average revenues per available room soared by 46.2 percent year-on-year to reach 95.40 euros.

Hotels across Greece also saw occupancy rates rise considerably, climbing 31 points within one year

to reach 70.3 percent, even though the Greek Easter was in May last year and in April this year.

Commenting on the performance of the Greek destination, the managing director of STR Global, Elizabeth Randall-Winkle, said it was nice to see healthy growth rates in Greece as demand for the country has returned.

Demand for Greek hotels since the start of the year has shown a 20.2 percent rise on an annual basis, one of the biggest across the continent, data show. The average occupancy rate in Europe added just 3.2 percentage points in the year to end-May, to reach 74 percent. Average revenues per room added 7.7 percent to reach 80.90 euros across Europe.

Such is the growth in demand for hotel rooms in Athens that the occupancy rate of its units reached up to 100 percent a few days ago owing to an international conference.

Taking into account the additional air seats available for Athens, the Association of Hellenic Tourism Enterprises (SETE) estimates that the capital is set to receive some 750,000 more tourists this year compared to



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2013. In August alone the top 15 airlines that operate international flights have increased their available seats by 25 percent, while for the whole of the country's airports the increase amounts to 23 percent.

The Greek presidency of the European Union, which led to a great number of side events and conferences, has helped Athens tourism, while the interest of the global tourism industry will return to the

Greek capital on August 2, when the World Travel Awards, also known as "tourism's Oscars," will have their ceremony in Athens. A record 180,000 seats will be available for that day for all of the country's airports.