

eak breaks record: 20 million visitors welcomed since 2009



- The Sentier des cimes Laurentides, close to Montreal, Canada, is the newest facility of Erlebnis Akademie AG. Further projects are planned.
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In summer 2024, Erlebnis Akademie AG writes corporate history. More than 20 million guests have visited the market leader's Treetop Walks since the opening of the first location.

Bad Kötzing. Almost 2.4 million visitors in 2023 at 13 locations around the world: despite the ups and downs of the tourism industry and the capricious weather, Erlebnis Akademie AG (eak) is presenting impressive figures. In July 2024, the eak Group has written company history: the treetop walks of the company from Bad Kötzing in the Bavarian Forest have welcomed more than 20 million guests since the opening of the first treetop walk in 2009. In addition, there are well over half a million visitors to the five adventure forests, despite a much later opening. But figures are one thing, says Bernd Bayerköhler, CEO and Spokesman of the Management Board. What lies behind them is at least as important.

First and foremost, that would be all employees, he says. "From early in the morning until late at night, seven days a week, our team does an outstanding job - whether with customers, in the office or in the technical department. Our colleagues, who go about their work every day with care, diligence and exceptional friendliness, have made the 20 million visitors possible in the first

place. On behalf of the entire management team, I would like to thank each and every one of them from the bottom of my heart for their commitment.”



Visiting eak facilities promotes environmentally conscious behaviour

Bernd Bayerköhler also refers to eak's mission statement. “Exceptional nature experiences in harmony with economy and ecology. For us, this is not just a phrase, but the common thread that we have been pursuing since our foundation in 2001. We're not jumping on the bandwagon of any trend, but have been achieving truly impressive results here for more than two decades in terms of environmental education and the sustainable development of our biosphere. If every one of the 20 million guests has taken away just a spark of new knowledge or a small impulse to protect our nature... When you think about what we have achieved here, I personally can only be proud and optimistic about the future and am already looking forward to the next 20 million guests.”

Christoph Blaß, CFO of eak, is also delighted with the success and adds that the treetop walks and their complementary facilities, such as adventure forests, restaurants and shops, are constantly perceived and rated positively by guests. “In addition to the environmental awareness surveys, we conduct up to ten visitor surveys per location each year. In particular, we collect data on customer satisfaction and the intention to return.”

In 2023, 87 per cent of respondents - across all facilities in Germany, Austria, Alsace, Canada and Ireland - said they wanted to visit the treetop walk they had visited again. 92 per cent also want to visit another treetop walk.

Guest satisfaction confirms: Sustainable tourism is a success model

According to Christoph Blaß, these high values for the intention to return speak for a stable demand for eak's nature experiences with educational and sustainability aims. “They are also underpinned by the high satisfaction ratings resulting from the evaluation of the individual offers and the overall programme. In 2023, but also in previous years, all eak locations received average scores of more than 9 for the overall offer in customer surveys - on a scale of 0 to 10.”

Plans: Creating new impetus for existing locations and new facilities in Europe

Resting on success? Not an option for eak. “We are driven by the positive feedback from our guests,” says Bernd Bayerköhler. There are already concrete plans: “New locations, for example in Hungary, Croatia and Slovakia, are currently planned with construction starting around 2025.” Expansions and events at the existing locations are also planned and have already been realised in some cases. “Whether it's the LÂ-HAUT acrobatics show at Sentier des Cimes in Canada, the bear enclosure in Krkonoše or the winter

Press Release

Bad Kötzting
18th of July 2024

Page 2 of 3

- Whether via interactive panels along the trail, such as here at the Chemin des Cimes Alsace/Treetop Walk Alsace, guided tours or educational games, such as the Comic Rally, which is organised by the non-profit eak subsidiary DoNature gGmbH: At all eak locations, a visit combines unique experiences with undogmatic environmental education.

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illumination, which will offer special guest experiences at several locations in the off-season. I don't want to reveal too much or go beyond the scope here. It's worth taking a regular look at our events calendar at www.treetop-walks.com!"



i Transparency note: At which location did it happen?

Who was the 20 millionth visitor and where was he a guest? Unfortunately, it is not possible to say exactly due to the amount of work involved. This would have required, among other things, a parallel, manual count of guests in each facility. The data therefore comes from a retrospective analysis of visitor numbers.

Press Release

Bad Kötzing
18th of July 2024

Page 3 of 3

- Christoph Blaß, Chief Financial Officer (left) and Bernd Bayerköhler, Spokesman of the Executive Board - were probably the 'first visitors' to each site. Since then, eak has welcomed more than 20 million guests to its facilities.

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About Erlebnis Akademie AG

Erlebnis Akademie AG was founded in Bad Kötzing in the Upper Palatinate in 2001 and is now one of the leading providers of nature-based leisure and adventure centres in Germany. To date, the company has built 13 treetop walks, including additional facilities, with a total investment of more than 85 million euros. The five German sites are located in the Black Forest, in the Bavarian Forest National Park, on the islands of Rügen and Usedom and at the Saarschleife. Erlebnis Akademie is also represented with locations in the Czech Republic [Lipno nad Vltavou (2012); Krkonoše (2017)], Slovakia [Bachledova/Hohe Tatra (2017)], Austria [Gmunden, Salzkammergut (2018)], Slovenia [Pohorje (2019)], France [Alsace (2021)] Ireland [Avondale Forest (2022)] and Canada [Laurentides (2022)]. The company has also already realised a total of four adventure forests at selected locations. The educational content was implemented in cooperation with renowned partners such as the German Federal Environmental Foundation. In 2023, a total of more than 2.4 million visitors visited the treetop walks and adventure forests of the eak Group (including minority interests). In addition to planning - under normal conditions - an average of two to three new adventure facilities per year, there are additional concrete growth prospects through the expansion of existing facilities, expansion of merchandise, catering offers and cooperation marketing - as well as the prospect of concept transfer to other nature adventure worlds.

www.treetop-walks.com

Another important component of Erlebnis Akademie AG is DoNature gGmbH. The non-profit organisation is committed to the sustainable development of our living environment by combining education and outdoor experiences. DoNature gGmbH is responsible for environmental education at the German locations and also organises seminars, events and team training (s.e.t.) with sustainable and nature-oriented aspects.

www.do-nature.de
www.eak-ag.de

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