

Together We Are Stronger - Standing Together In The Crisis

The Corona crisis hits hoteliers with all its harshness. The BWH Hotel Group Central Europe, with its privately managed hotels, is relying on mutual support and central assistance as well as a comprehensive package of measures.

Eschborn, 30 March 2020. Around four weeks after the start of the corona crisis, it is becoming increasingly clear that the hotel industry is facing an unprecedented crisis. Now it is time to stand together and overcome the crisis together - this is the guideline of BWH Hotel Group Central Europe. "Only together are we strong - especially in these times, it is evident what advantages there are to master the crisis together as a group. Thus, exactly those things that form the soul of our group and that make the idea of cooperation of the BWH Hotel Group with the hotels of Best Western Hotels & Resorts and WorldHotels Collection so clearly: We hold on together closely in this crisis, we help each other, think of others and are stronger together. Hoteliers are exchanging information, sharing their knowledge and experience and giving each other advice on necessary measures to deal with the crisis - and can count on the full support of our team in Eschborn and our global colleagues," explain Carmen Dücker and Marcus Smola, CEOs of BWH Hotel Group Central Europe GmbH, which is responsible for around 300 hotels in the ten countries Germany, Croatia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Consequences Of The Corona Crisis Affect All Hotels

"The effects of the Corona crisis are devastating for the entire industry and the fatal economic consequences are getting worse every day. Since private travel has been banned by most of the states, which has deprived hotels of most of their business base and has also made business trips or even conferences effectively impossible, hotels are simply fighting for their survival. Many of our hotels have also had to temporarily close their hotels completely or have registered for short-time work," says Marcus Smola. Around 100 hotels in the BWH Hotel Group Central Europe have already been forced to close their business, while almost all the others have announced short-time working. For March and April there was a massive wave of cancellations and hardly any new bookings. "As an end to the crisis is not yet in sight, it is not yet possible to estimate or quantify the economic losses and the overall damage to our hotels in their entirety at the present time," says Smola.

Support For Hotels - Package Of Measures

A comprehensive set of measures was immediately introduced at the hotel group's headquarters in Eschborn and the crisis was given top priority at all points: "As a service provider for hotels, we at the headquarters are supporting our hotel partners in this difficult time with all the means at our disposal - we are providing advice on operational matters, helping with communication measures and sales issues, sharing important information and trying to get through this crisis together as a strong community. All marketing measures that are currently dispensable have been postponed, hotel contributions have been cut and short-time working has been applied for at headquarters. In addition, the global organization is supporting the hotels with various measures to mitigate the slump in sales of our hotels. Moving closer together is a good way and a chance to survive such a crisis," explain the two European CEOs.

Strong Community – Best Practices And Creative Ideas

"In this crisis, we are currently observing many positive things, despite all the existential fears. Creativity and

solidarity can be seen in many places: Actions by our hotels, such as donating food or making hotel rooms available for aid workers or for donating blood, are exemplary. But also in general, all hotels deserve respect when they hold their doors open during these times: for people who currently have to travel and need overnight accommodation, such as field staff, auxiliary staff, nursing staff, doctors on call, police or fire brigade - people who support the whole country so greatly during these times. But also creative offers from the hotels, such as making rooms available as home offices or for long-term rental, are positive examples of not resigning," says Smola. His fellow CEO Carmen Dücker adds critically: "But the crisis also shows who are the true partners of the hotel industry. For example, the intervention of some large hotel booking portals in the hotel terms and conditions and the arbitrary modification of cancellation conditions without coordination with the service providers cannot be tolerated."

Fast Help Of Government Is Necessary

The BWH Hotel Group Central Europe reiterates the demands of the industry associations that concrete government aid measures for hotels must now be implemented quickly and unbureaucratically if a diverse hotel landscape is to continue to exist after the crisis. "Effective liquidity support with a 100 per cent indemnity against liability and with a long-term repayment, the possibility of tax deferrals and tax relief as well as an extensive effective aid program in the form of direct financial aid are needed, especially for the hotel industry," Dücker and Smola are demanding. "We are a group of medium-sized hotels - it is important for these entrepreneurs to be able to save the business beyond the times of crisis and thus to sustainably secure jobs. This can only be achieved with a state emergency aid program for the entire industry. If a state withdraws the business basis for hotel companies by means of travel bans - which are understandable from a health policy point of view - then corresponding compensation payments and immediate aid are needed, because all running costs such as rents and leases as well as wage costs continue to burden the hotels, even though there is no more turnover in the hotels. It is important to prevent the death of an entire industry", say the both CEOs.

The following press picture is available for download:

Caption: "Standing together and mastering the crisis together with our hotels", is the motto of Carmen Dücker and Marcus Smola, CEOs of BWH Hotel Group Central Europe GmbH, in the current Corona crisis.

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About BWH Hotel GroupSM:

*The BWH Hotel GroupSM is an international hotel group headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, and the umbrella brand for the three global brand families including Best Western Hotels & Resorts, WorldHotels Collection and SureStay Hotel Group with a global network of approximately 4,700 independent hotels in over 100 countries and territories worldwide. * BWH Hotel Group offers a total of 18 hotel brands worldwide that suit the needs of hotel developers and guests in every market: Best Western®, Best Western Plus®, Best Western Premier®, Executive Residency by Best Western®, VÄ«b®, GL , Aiden®, Sadie®, BW Premier Collection® and BW Signature Collection® as well as WorldHotels® Luxury, WorldHotels Elite, WorldHotels Distinctive and WorldHotels Crafted. SureStay®, SureStay Plus®, SureStay Collection® and SureStay StudioSM complete the group's brand portfolio. ** BWH Hotel GroupSM offers hoteliers operational services, sales and marketing support, multiple award-winning online and mobile booking options as well as the customer loyalty programs Best Western Rewards® and WorldHotels RewardsSM with more than 40 million members.*

BWH Hotel GroupSM Central Europe GmbH, formerly Best Western Hotels Central Europe GmbH, based in Eschborn, supports a total of around 300 hotels in ten countries, including Germany, Croatia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Further information: www.bwhhotelgroup.de www.bestwestern.de and www.bestwestern.com

** Numbers are approximate, may fluctuate, and include hotels currently in the development pipeline.*

*** All Best Western, WorldHotels and SureStay branded hotels are independently owned and operated. In Europe, SureStay Hotels are managed with the brand Sure Hotels.*

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