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"European cruise industry manages growth in difficult economy FRANKFURT, June 25 (Reuters) - Europe's
cruise lines
managed to eke out growth in 2012 despite a difficult
economy
and lingering memories of the Costa Concordia disaster, luring new customers with bigger ships and even heavy metal concerts.
A record 6.2 million Europeans booked a cruise last year, growth of just 1.3 percent and a far cry from the increases of over 10 percent registered for four of the last 6 years, according to a report published by the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) on Tuesday.

The report also showed the cruise industry contributed almost 38 billion euros ($50 billion) to Europe's stuttering economy in 2012, a 3.1 percent increase on 2011.

"There's a sense of pleasure that we have grown despite everything," David Dingle, CEO of Car nival Corp
& Plc's Carnival UK, who was speaking on behalf of the CLIA, told Reuters.

One of the ways cruise lines have been trying to battle the economic downturn is by attracting younger travellers and ensuring their ships offer as many entertainment options as possible.

"We need to appeal to new customers and the younger we get them, the more cruises they will take during their lifetime," Dingle said.

TUI Cruises offered a week-long Full Metal cruise in May, while Carnival brand Cunard is selling tickets for a five-day cruise in November starring German rocker Peter Maffay.

"We're building ever larger ships, we can now offer a different restaurant for every night of your cruise and you can have heavy metal at one end of the ship and a string quartet at the other," Dingle said.

However, the CLIA figures reflected a split in Europe's economies.

In powerhouse Germany, the cruise industry contributed 2.95 billion euros to the economy, a 17 percent increase on 2011 and helped by increased shipbuilding, passenger spending and pay rises for staff.

By contrast, the contribution for France and Spain declined by 12.9 and 3.3 percent, respectively, while Italy recorded a 0.2 percent increase.

Dingle said Italy was able to partially compensate for its domestic economic woes thanks to its position as Europe's top cruise destination and the fact that it has the largest cruise shipbuilding industry in Europe.

According to the report, spending on ship building and maintenance at European shipyards stabilised at 3.85 billion euros in 2012 after three successive years of declines."

Consultez la source sur Veille info tourisme: La croisière une manne pour léconomie européenne - Selon un rapport CLIA présenté par Reuters la contribution totale de l'industrie mondiale de la croisière à léconomie européenne a atteint un chiffre record de 37 9 milliards deuros en 2012