



## Development Cruise Tourism and the Environment May 2007

Memo  
Development Cruise Tourism and Environment  
made for  
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# Development of Cruise Tourism and environmental issues

## 1. Background

Cruise Tourism to Northern Europe and Norway has developed considerably the last few years, and further growth is expected. There are both possibilities and challenges attached to cruise tourism.

Considerable growth over short time is due to many new operators entering the market. Not only are cruises *to* Norway on the increase, likewise the number of Norwegians choosing a cruise for their holiday. The general increase in interest for Cruise Tourism is also noticeable in media coverage.

Increasing growth and focus on Cruise Tourism has also brought about a growing awareness of environmental issues and concerns associated with the industry:

- Pollution
- Queues/congestion of tourists (and others), so-called “people congestion”<sup>1</sup>

Queues/congestion of tourists is seen as an increasing problem in some of the well-known destinations in the Mediterranean and Caribbean. In this respect Norway has little mass tourism and is largely protected from congestion (or this can be avoided with a little planning).

Pollution is increasingly frequently coming on the agenda due to the environmental debate surrounding global warming. Cruise ships, like all other forms of sea transportation, abide to international regulations covering pollution, regulations which gradually have been tightened.

Pollution from cruise ships is high on the agenda in Norway in connection with the government’s introduction of the so-called NO<sub>x</sub>-fee from 2007, which gives cruise ship operators considerably higher expenses for travelling in Norwegian waters.

## 2. Purpose

The intention of this report is to:

- provide an overview of the status of environmental issues concerning Cruise Tourism
- provide an overview of the different types of pollution and their possible consequences
- analyse environmental concerns within the context of the importance of Cruise Tourism for Norway
- briefly mention the consequences of relevant steps for the benefit of the environmental , especially the consequence of the NO<sub>x</sub>-fee.

This report was commissioned by Innovation Norway.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Popular cruise destinations are naturally are the same destinations ”land based” tourists want to visit. With an increase in tourism generally, this problem is also accentuated.

### **3. Cruise Tourism to Norway – brief on its development and importance**

#### **3.1 General**

In many respects the cruise industry is its own specialist area on the side of the rest of the travel industry. Specialist knowledge of the cruise industry is limited in Norway.

For many years the cruise industry has had a higher growth rate than the rest of the travel industry. There are about 270 cruise ships in the world, with about 250,000 beds (lower berths).

Cruise ships are increasing in size and there are currently approximately 35 ships being built or on order, (delivery due before 2010). These will take 2, 600 passengers in average. Capacity is also increasing because other cruise ships are being extended. The new building programme together with the extension of other ships mean there will be enough capacity to handle predicted growth – an annual increase of about 8% over the next few years.

A survey carried out by the European Cruise Council (ECC), February 2007, calculates cruise consumer spending in Europe to approximately € 8.3 million (figure from 2005).

#### **3.2 Norway an important cruise destination**

Norway comes 7<sup>th</sup> in line in Europe measured in terms of cruise consumption (ECC survey) with consumption at 2.3 million Norwegian crowns (€ 276 million).<sup>3</sup>

Norway had approximately 370,000 cruise passengers in 2006. These made over 1.5 million calls of port. Almost 60% of the passengers were in Bergen, whilst ca. 56% were in Oslo.

In contrast to the majority of other European countries Norway has over 30 active cruise harbours. Most countries only have one or at most a few harbours where cruise ships pay a visit. An estimated 1,500 calls of port were made in Norway in 2006.

There has been a marked increase in the number of cruise ships visiting Norway. Since 1997 the number of passengers has increased 2.6 times, and the number of calls of port increased by 1.5.

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<sup>2</sup> As part of a general industry report on the Norwegian cruise industry.

<sup>3</sup> This consumption comes from four different consumer sources: cruise passengers, ship owners' purchases relating to running the ships, wages to administration and crews for the running of cruise ships in Europe and for the new building and maintenance of ships (figures from 2005 from the ECC survey).

*Development of Norway's 10 largest harbours*

Harbour	2006			2005			2004		
	calls	pax	pax pr ship	calls	pax	pax pr ship	calls	pax	pax pr ship
Bergen	249	218 185	876	246	190 000	772	226	153 300	696
Geiranger	157	152 000	968	159	153 000	962	160	116 000	725
Oslo	156	206 233	1 323	145	186 000	1 283	114	145 000	1 272
Flåm	138	115 342	836	131	91 500	698	115	78 000	678
Nordkapp	103	74 897	727	106	63 047	595	112	66 577	594
Tromsø	86	55 821	649	95	51 722	544	96	54 745	570
Stavanger	68	70 000	1 029	50	40 100	802	50	32 000	640
Lofoten Gravdal/Svolvær	65	34 590	532	82	37 000	451	76	34 000	447
Eidfjord	58	41 881	722	27	15 500	574	13	na	
Ålesund	54	41 821	774	57	40 633	713	47	31 265	665
<b>Sum</b>	<b>1 134</b>	<b>1 010 770</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>1 098</b>	<b>868 502</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>1 009</b>	<b>714 887</b>	<b>709</b>
Growth of the 10 largest harbours 2004 – 2006	12.4%	41.4%	24.8%						

In the above 3-year period the number of passengers in the 10 largest harbours has increased by 41%, the number of ship arrivals by approximately 12% and the average size of the ship increased by ca. 26%

### 3.3 Briefly on the industry's significance

The ECC survey referred to above estimates the cruise industry's consumer spending in Norway to ca. 2.3 billion Norwegian crowns. It is thought that ships', crews' and passengers' consumer spending in Norway together represents 2/3 of consumer spending in Norway – i.e. amounts to 1.5 billion Norwegian crowns. There has been further growth from 2005 to 2006.

Horwath Consulting has made two further detailed surveys about the significance of the cruise industry in collaboration with TØI; in spring 2006 a report "The significance of Cruise Tourism to the North Cape", (figures from 2005) and in December 2006 the report "The significance of Cruise Tourism for Oslo"<sup>4</sup>.

The North Cape report evaluated the importance of the order of the calls of port to and from the North Cape for the 106 cruise ships involved. Amalgamated consumer spending for the cruise ships, their crew and passengers were estimated to 560 million crowns in 2005.

<sup>4</sup> "Cruiseport Nordkapp – betydning og utvikling" and "Analyse av cruiseturismens betydning for Oslo". Both reports by Horwath Consulting with the financial assistance of Transportøkonomisk Institutt. The commissioner of the North Cape report was the local council of North Cape and North Cape Harbour. The commissioner of the Oslo report was the city of Oslo council.

The economic effect of Cruise Tourism in Oslo in 2006 was calculated to approximately 256 million Norwegian crowns.

To this one can add the effect of cruises to Bergen and the fjords (in addition to the cruises which are calculated into the North Cape cruises). No exact calculations have been made for this, but a rough approximation for this would be 640 million Norwegian crowns, bringing the total spending in Norway to approximately 1.5 billion Norwegian crowns (2005).

Both the North Cape and the Oslo analyses have estimated the financial losses due to (a harbour) lacking accessibility. This information can easily be used for calculating the effects of discontinuation as a consequence of for example increasing fees. See paragraph 4.2.3 below about NOx-fees.

## **4. The environment and environmental concerns**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Environmental issues have long been on the agenda for cruise ship owners. The RCCL logo “Save the Waves” has been known amongst employees and cruise tourists alike for years.

The current situation and reports covering global warming have also made environmental issues within Cruise Tourism more current. The fact that Cruise Tourism is a growth industry also gives the industry more attention – also with regards to matters of the environment.

In addition to concerns surrounding pollution Cruise Tourism (like tourism in general) faces the challenge of crowding/ tourist congestion. This is one of the consequences of mass tourism and effects of this have gradually been seen in well-known destinations in the Mediterranean.

The shipping industry is naturally aware of environmental issues, not to do so would be to shoot oneself in the foot. Environmental issues have therefore been high on the agenda in international Cruise Tourism conferences in recent years.

Norway differs from its European counterparts in having numerous calls of port destinations as opposed to just one or a few per country. In Norway there are over 30 active harbours and even more are working to obtain cruise harbour facilities.

### **4.2 Closer look at concerns about pollution**

#### **4.2.1 At sea**

- *Environmentally friendly ocean transport*

Sea transport per unit is more environmentally friendly than most other forms of transport and for several years the EU has been campaigning for increased

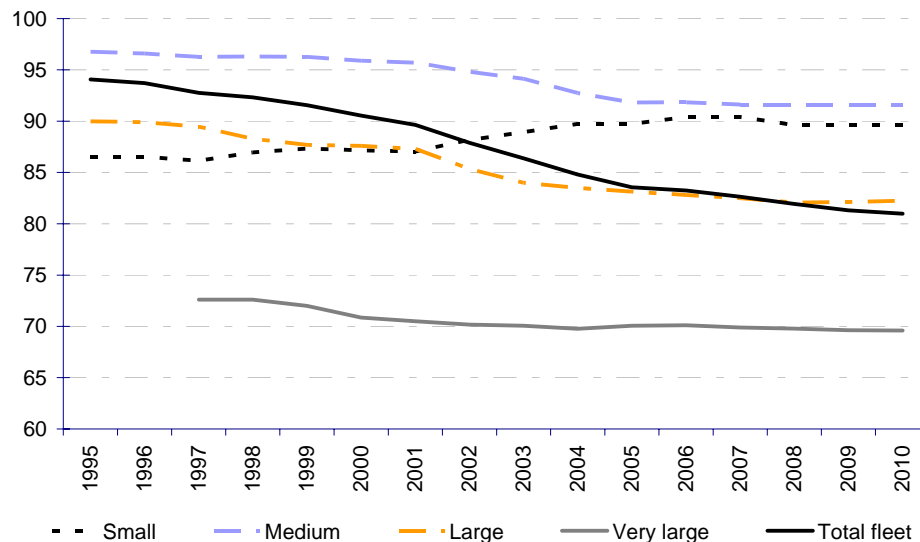
use of sea transport by moving traffic from road to sea (and other waterways) in the so-called Marco Polo programme (“Motorways of the Sea”). This programme supports ferry routes in the Mediterranean and the North Sea amongst others.

- *Modern ships pollute less*

Slip and pollution are complicated areas. Slip consists of unequal quantities of NO<sub>x</sub>, dust particles, sulphur and CO<sub>2</sub>. Measures to reduce one of these can result in increasing the quantity of one of the others. The effects can be local or global.

New technology combined with larger ships have resulted in less pollution and reduced fuel consumption per passenger. The spill pr passenger has also gradually decreased for many years.

**Fuel consumption per day per passenger compared to ship size**



Note: Small (2-10 tGT), Medium (10-30tGT), Large (30-100 tGT), and Very Large (100+ tGT).

Source: MSR-Consult & Lloyd’s Register Fairplay/Cruise Baltic

The line graph shows a gradual trend in fuel-efficient ships creating a decrease in fuel consumption per passenger per day. As there is a correlation between consumption and air slip the development of more effective ships creates a positive development (lower slip per passenger)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> According to the technical director of RCCL, Harri Kulovara (Teknisk Ukeblad 17/4-07) are the most recent and largest cruise ships belonging to RCCL (Freedom-class) 15% more energy efficient than earlier ships, whilst the next generation ship Genesis (2009) will be 25% more effective. He also informs that RCCL ships which have gas turbines (like Jewel of the Seas which comes to Oslo) use biodiesel, and that RCCL is the world’s largest consumer of biodiesel.

Naturally this effect has its counterpart in the number of cruise passengers rising. Cleaner slip has also been obtained through improved engine technology and special cleaning processes.

- *Quality bunker oil*

International demands for using only the purest quality bunker oil (sulphur) came into effect in 2006 (the Baltic/Norway) and in 2007 (The North Sea).

Before this it was possible to use oil of poorer quality (cheaper). More restrictive legislation is expected in 2010.

- *Renewal of fleet*

35 large cruise ships are currently being built, or are on order to be delivered before 2010. Half of these will be put to use in Europe. These are large ships with the latest in engine and waste treatment technology.

Demands from new international regulation applying to cruise ships have to be in place prior to 2011. One condition requires that the use of asbestos aboard ships be discontinued. Necessary amendments to meet regulation will not be worthwhile for most elder ships and these will be taken out of circulation.<sup>6</sup>

- *Waste disposal*

Treatment of waste and polluted fluids have long been subject to international regulation. Modern ships have very advanced technological solutions for the treatment and recycling of waste aboard. All harbours are enforced to provide an arrangement for the disposal of pre-sorted waste and recycling in general has come far further on board ship than “on land”.

An equivalent development (in terms of regulation and technology) applies to polluted fluids.

#### 4.2.2 In harbour

- *Air pollution*

In the course of the last two years there has been media coverage of air pollution in Geiranger because of smoke coming from cruise ships. This is largely a concern from smaller, elder cruise ships and is primarily a visual problem.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This will include amongst others the Fred. Olsen ship “Black Prince”.

<sup>7</sup> Statens Forurensningstilsyn (State Pollution Controlling Body) considers the slip to be under levels of concern, and not to be dangerous for nature/ecology of the fjord landscape.

The only known in-depth survey of harbour air pollution in a harbour comes from Copenhagen, and was covered by the Danish environmental authorities<sup>8</sup>. Copenhagen is the largest cruise harbour in Scandinavia (264 arrivals in 2004).

The report shows that air pollution from cruise ships is minimal and concludes that pollution levels from cruise ships whilst in port cannot fall above the EUs accepted pollution levels. Slip from dust was inconsiderable.

- *Noise*

Noise from cruise ships' in-harbour assistant engines is usually no problem.

Several ports (among them Oslo and Gothenburg) are working towards providing in-harbour electric mains facilities thereby eliminating in-harbour pollution and noise. This is considered the way for the future.

#### 4.2.3 NOx – a unique Norwegian surcharge from 2007

- *Introduction*

On the 1/1/2007 the Ministry of Finance implemented the NOx, an environmental surcharge and measure to follow up the “Gothenburg-agreement”. NOx is a surcharge of NOK 15 pr kilo of slip. The new charge caused reactions from the fishing industry and from coastal traffic but seemed to go virtually unnoticed by the Cruise industry<sup>9</sup>. This is probably due to the fact that the paper had a limited hearing and because the Ministry of Finance used the terminology “national traffic” to cover Cruise traffic, whilst cruise traffic is defined as foreign/international traffic, with different charges applying.

An important consideration here is the fact that cruise ship owners are not Norwegian. They therefore do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Norwegian Shipowners' Association (Norges Rederiforbund-NR) or the Norwegian Trade Union (NHO), though in retrospect the matter has been taken up, and the solution of the fund handled, by the European Cruise Council (ECC) and the NR.

The surcharge therefore came about as a surprise to shipowners who had already planned, priced, marketed and largely sold their cruises. The surcharge has therefore been considered like a tax hitting out on bottom line profits. Obviously sudden and unforeseen changes to business terms and conditions have caused considerable irritation<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Environmental Project nr. 978, 2005: Analysis of cruise ships' contribution to air pollution.

<sup>9</sup> Only in February 2007 did most cruise shipowners become aware of the surcharge. The provisions of the Act in English came later.

<sup>10</sup> In a letter of 14.04.07 to the Minister of Finance (copied to the Norwegian Department of the Environment and the Norwegian Department of Trade and Industry) the ECC requests the introduction of the surcharge to be postponed to 2008 in order to have time to review its consequences. The Norwegian Harbour Association in a letter of 25.04.07 to governmental departments also asked for a postponement of the surcharge in order to

It is difficult to calculate the full economic consequence of the surcharge, but its consequence will be considerable. The ships' size, its engine type and its itinerary all have to be taken into account. European Cruise Service (the largest cruise agency in Norway) thinks that the fee could be over NOK 100,000 a day for larger cruise ships. European Cruise Service has estimated the total charge for Norway to be at least NOK 70 million.

There is also uncertainty around how the fee is to be charged in practice and the regulation for this. The charge can be based on shipping reports/ship owners' reports, combined with occasional spot controls by Customs & Excise<sup>11</sup>.

- *Very limited opportunities for measures to reduce NOx*

It is limited what ships/shipowners can do to reduce pollution slip further, (if they do not have good, cost efficient technology).

Terje C. Glørersen, working with NOx questions for Norway's Shipowners' Association thinks it can be difficult to justify NOx investments for cruise ships only sailing in Norway for a short period of the year. He says there are two chief ways in which NOx pollution slip can be reduced now:

- Modifying the engines can reduce slip by 25% on elder ships. For modern ships usually less.
- Adding water to air combustion, fuel or directly into the combustion engine. One possibility is the HAM solution which will reduce by up to 80-90%.
- Cleaning gas by using a catalyst and adding Urea, which can give an effective reduction of up to 60-70%.

Limitations to the last two solutions are the cost of investment and the fact that solutions require a lot of space. It is therefore not practical to solve this on the short term.

Some cruise ships use gas turbine engines which produce less NOx slip than other engines. The disadvantage of this solution however is an increase in CO<sub>2</sub> slip due to a lower degree of effectiveness.

- *Agreement for a "NOx fund"?*

The NOx surcharge affects all types of sea transport in Norway, as well as slip from industry and the petroleum industry. Many organisations (including the Norwegian Shipowners' Association and the Norwegian Trade Union) are in negotiation with the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment to set up a "NOx fund". Mr. Glørersen from the Norwegian Shipowners' Association believes

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cooperate with all affected parties and find a solution that can be incorporated in a wider environmental and political perspective.

<sup>11</sup> The surcharge does not apply to ships that sail solely in foreign waters. Ships travelling in a combination of national and international waters are allowed to sail 12 nautical miles into international waters before the surcharge becomes applicable. NR has requested that this method of calculating the surcharge is dropped.

this can be in place this autumn, but this is a very optimistic timescale, dependent on all parties agreeing before the summer, and also on the agreement being approved by the ESA.

The proposal is as follows:

- Ships should be exempt from the normal charge to the state (preferably taking backwards effect to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007), and instead pay a contribution of between 3 and 5 NOK pr kilo slip into the “NOx Trade Fund”.
- Joining the fund should be voluntary, however compulsory measures have to be taken to reduce NOx. The most cost-efficient measures will be financially supported by up to 100%. It is expected that for cruiseships the cost of measures to reduce NOx pr unit will be too expensive and therefore will not be prioritised. In this case cruise ships will be obliged (according the formation of the agreement and according to its success) to pay the lower fund contribution (not the surcharge).

- *Briefly about the consequences of NOx surcharge*

Because cruises are already planned, ordered and sold (and partly already effected) it is presumed this will have little effect for business in 2007 beyond considerable irritation to shipowners. The following has however been noted:

- Some changes/cancellations. For example Vik in Sogn has lost 3 ships from the large Holland-America Line because of savings that have to be made as a result of the NOx charge. The cruise ship Athena has cancelled 6 out of 7 cruises to Norway both in 2007 and in 2008. This effects both Bergen, Flåm and Eidfjord. There are other cancellations for which no reason has been given.
- Through complaints received by Innovation Norway is known that at least one cruise shipping company has placed the surcharge on the end user (customer) – ca. NOK 1,500 with the description – extra charge with reference to changes in the Norwegian tax system (presumably for 2 passengers).<sup>12</sup>
- The NOx surcharge will affect shipowners’ profitability considerably. Smaller shipping companies with a lot of traffic in Norway will be dramatically affected.

From 2008 and beyond shipowners have several alternatives. The same applies if the NOx fund is introduced (NOK 5 pr kilo also means an increase in costs):

- Swallow the expense/increase cruise prices and continue with similar offers as without the surcharge. More expensive cruises usually lead to a downturn in demand.
- Drop Norway, drop individual departures and/or move ships to other (NOx-free) alternatives.

The surcharge makes it less interesting to complete longer cruises in Norway. A cruise to the North Cape has on average 10 – 11 stops along the Norwegian coast on its way to and from the North Cape. It can now

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<sup>12</sup> European regulation makes it difficult to give passengers the expense after a cruise.

become relevant to consider a change in itinerary – a fjord cruise to Bergen and western Norway with fewer days in Norwegian harbours (tours with for example 4-5 ports of call). It can also result in avoiding Norwegian harbours altogether. Cruises to Spitsbergen can for example sail via Shetland and Iceland as an alternative to the Norwegian coast. Another alternative would be to change to the other main cruise destinations in Northern Europe, primarily Baltic cruises, but also partly to cruises between harbours in the British isles and Ireland, together perhaps with destinations further north and west such as Iceland and Greenland.

- Growth can taper off  
Another possibility is that previously envisaged growth does not occur (previously expected at 8-10% pr year in terms of increase in passengers).
- Economic problems  
Some of the smaller shipowners are presumed to operate with small margins and will presumably get into economic difficulty because of these problems. (Both in 2005 and 2006 there were bankruptcies among shipowners operating cruises in Norway).

This issue is new and there has been little public reaction from shipowners. Presumably they are now calculating the consequences of the charge, but British shipping companies Fred. Olsen and Saga have made it clear in an announcement to the press that this will effect their choice of cruising destinations forthwith as the Norwegian surcharge equates millions<sup>13</sup>.

It is important to note that many ships' operations in Norwegian waters are limited to a few cruises over a short summer season, this means interest on a possible NOx reducing investment will apply to only a short period of the ships' annual operations.

- *A possible scenario*

A possible scenario, with background in the above, could be:

- *Dramatic effect for the North Cape*  
As described above the surcharge applies each day a ship is in Norwegian waters, therefore a trip up and down to the North Cape will incur high charges.
- *Considerable effect on cruises to Bergen and the fjords.*<sup>14</sup>  
These are also cruises that operate over several days, usually a week or more, from European harbours up to the fjords on the west coast. These will also incur the surcharge which competing destinations do not have.

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<sup>13</sup> *Lloyd's International*, April/May issue 2007

<sup>14</sup> The knock-off effect can have several outcomes. The whole cruise might be dropped, there can be a reduction in the numbers of ports visited, for example a drop from 6 to 4 calls of port represents a downturn of 33%.

- *A slight downturn in business to Oslo*

Cruises to Oslo fall between the above. Two-thirds of all cruises to Oslo are Baltic cruises, and therefore coming from and on their way to international harbours. The last third are ships coming from and going to Norwegian harbours (the fjords or North Cape cruises) which will be effected.

- *Economic consequences of the surcharge*

- *General effects on cruise ships' arrivals*

Cruise calls give economic benefits through the ship's, the crew's and the passengers' consumer spending at calls of port. Research shows that a considerable number of visitors are on their first visit to Norway, and are so satisfied with what they have experienced that they could consider coming back as a tourist. In other words an important repeat of business opportunity.

Cruise ships can make a destination popular, in general both locals and tourists alike think that the call of cruise ships creates a positive profile.

Cruise ship calls are also important for local infrastructure. They contribute to economic growth in parallel attractions and also to transport companies all over the country.

Norway is a relatively important supplier of goods and services to the cruise ship industry. Several shipping companies and shipbuilders have solid roots in Norway.

- *Completed surveys*

Research surveys referred to in paragraph 3.3. may relatively easily be used to calculate the possible effects of introducing the surcharge.

Presuming that fjord cruises have approximately the same affect pr call of port as the North Cape Cruise – this information can be used to make a rough calculation of the financial down-effects to fjord cruises.

- *Closer evaluation of the economic consequences*

The effects of the surcharge on the reduction in arrivals and passengers are uncertain, though key persons in the cruise industry think the consequences of the surcharge will be substantial.

Using the reports mentioned above as an indication there is reason to predict something of the economic consequences, if the reduction of the number of calls was known. Presuming that there will be a downturn we have calculated possible consequences to illustrate the significance of the surcharge.

Below is an example of the economic consequences calculated on figures from the surveys (rough figures):

<b>Cruise segment</b>	<b>Downward trend</b>	<b>Sum</b>
North Cape cruise	30%	149 mill. kr.
Bergen/Fjord cruise	20%	152 mill. kr.
Oslo	10%	34 mill. kr.
<b>Sum lost consumption to Norway</b>		<b>335 mill. kr.</b>

Calculating on a 30% downturn in North Cape cruises it is presumed this will only have consequence in the north Norwegian ports of call, whilst the harbours in southern Norway are only effected by half of this (a 15% downturn).

The table is linear, and the consequences of using other downward figures will be the same.

The 335 mill. kr calculated with these predictions represents an accumulated downturn of about 22% meaning a loss of cruise-related consumption valued at approximately 1.5 billion.

### 4.3 Human congestion

Queues and congestion can be a problem at well-known destinations where crowds from land-based tourist traffic meet cruise passengers – as in some of the most well-known destinations in the Mediterranean. It can also be a problem when cruise ships come to a small destination.

This concern is partly self-regulating since cruise agencies are naturally very concerned that their passengers should enjoy their trip. They will therefore try to avoid queues and congestion.

In Norway queuing and congestion is a small problem. This is because:

- Norway does not have mass tourism
- Cruise traffic is spread over 30 destinations (and there are at least 30 more that can be developed)
- A high proportion of cruise passengers go on excursions. With the exception of the largest towns very few passengers chose to go out on their own. When the majority of the passengers out on excursions the destination can control logistics effectively. (The destination can naturally also choose to turn down a call of port, if it believes there will be crowding problems).
- The cruise season is relatively short in Norway and even the largest cruise harbours do not have arrivals every day.

Cruise ships queuing for harbour space is another concern.

Cruise tourism is an important share of the economic foundation of several of Norway's largest tourist attractions. At North Cape cruise passengers represent 25% of all visitors. During the peak of the high season record numbers arrive at North Cape towards midnight to view the midnight sun. A new development is to visit North Cape outside this peak time, (preferably with midnight sun sailing around North Cape).

Oslo's largest attraction, Holmenkollen, in 2006 had about 95,000 visitors from the cruise market. This represents 14% of all summer visitors. Holmenkollen says they have no problems managing these numbers. Holmenkollen will take an even larger numbers of visitors when the area is redeveloped in preparation for the Ski World Championships.

## 5 Other

Cruise tourists are generally first time visitors to Norway. Surveys from Lofoten (2005), and Oslo (2006), show that a considerable number of these would consider returning to Norway on a later occasion. In this respect cruises are like a familiarisation tour and more important for the Norwegian travel industry than most people reflect over. Most cruise tourists participate in organised excursions from the ports of call.

Cruise ships in harbour create positive profile-building and effect. Tourists feel that they are in the right place. Locals are interested in the cruise ships and follow the schedule of calls to see which ships are in harbour, on their way in or out. Pictures of cruise ships in harbour are frequently used in travel advertising or in other contexts. For example one of the restaurants at Aker Brygge (seafront in Oslo) runs an advertising campaign which includes a picture of cruise ships in the harbour. It is generally assumed that most people have a positive attitude towards cruise ships, though some may consider their sight to be visual pollution. This attitude can be seen in context with misconceptions about cruise ships – for example that they are large polluters, or perhaps by the observer having little understanding of their significance.

Over 80% of cruise tourists in Norway are Europeans. The two largest cruise countries to Norway (England and Germany, representing 68% of all cruise tourists in 2005) start their journeys from “home”. In this respect the majority of cruise passengers to and from Norway have an environmentally friendly solution.