

Tourism Minister visit reinforces contribution of the cruise sector to the UK's visitor economy

Julia Lopez, Minister of State for Media, Tourism and Creative Industries, recently met with Cruise Britain and CLIA onboard PONANT's *Le Dumont d'Urville* in London. During the visit, discussions centred around the economic benefits of cruise tourism to coastal and remote regions and islands that may be harder to reach by other means, supporting local services such as tourist attractions, restaurants, tour operators, and hotels.

Tourism Minister Julia Lopez, said: "The cruise industry plays a vital role in our first-class tourism offer, showing visitors from across the world the best of Britain while generating millions of pounds for the economy and bringing huge benefits to our coastal communities. We are committed to keeping our tourism industry ship-shape, so it was fantastic to meet today to hear about the brilliant work they do to promote the cruise industry in the UK and steer our vibrant visitor economy to success."

Olivier Narcy, PONANT's Chief EMEA Sales & Global Customer Relations Officer said: "We are delighted to welcome Tourism Minister Julia Lopez aboard *Le Dumont d'Urville*, fourth ship in the PONANT EXPLORER series, during her port of call in London. This presents a fabulous opportunity for us to introduce PONANT unique experience to our UK partners. We are committed to supporting the UK market. Three of our ships will sail to the UK this summer, in about 45 different ports of call including new ones such as Herm Island, Fowey in South Cornwall and the Hebrides."

Andy Harmer OBE, Managing Director, CLIA UK & Ireland, said: "Cruise is a vital part of the UK visitor economy, bringing economic and social benefits to port communities around the country. At the same time, tens of thousands of travel agents, on the high street or homeworkers, benefit from the UK being in the top three cruise markets globally."

The Minister also had the opportunity to see the initiatives taken to promote efforts towards more responsible tourism on board PONANT's *Le Dumont d'Urville*, a small-sized ship of 92 staterooms. Complying with the most recent environmental regulations, she is equipped with catalytic systems to reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and shore power connection systems in ports.

According to CLIA data, cruise passengers spend an average of £700 pounds during port calls throughout a week's cruise. More than 90% of passengers that sailed in past 12 months got off the ship at least at one port of call during their cruise. A distinct benefit of cruise tourism is how widespread its economic impact is felt nationwide. In 2023, UK ports welcomed 2.16 million transit passengers visiting by cruise. With each transit passenger being worth at least £70 to the local tourism economy every time they step ashore, the visitor figure for 2023 means a vital tourism injection of around £150 million to Britain's coastal economies. This is in addition to the economic benefit brought through cruise line and port operations.

Cruise tourism also brings economic and social benefits to destinations that extend beyond the cruise. CLIA's international surveys show that more than 6 in 10 people who have taken a cruise say they have returned to a destination that they first visited by cruise. Furthermore, cruise lines plan itineraries years in advance which can provide added stability to local economies and businesses that rely on cruise.