24th March, 2015 – The popularity of river cruises has continued to grow with the number of UK passengers taking a holiday on waterways in Europe and further afield growing by 6% in 2014, according to figures released today by CLIA UK & Ireland.

The number of British travellers taking a river cruise grew by almost 8,000, taking the total number to 139,400 in 2014.

Europe remains by far the most popular region for UK travellers to take a river cruise accounting for 86% of all passengers. Within the Continent, the River Danube’s popularity continued to soar, growing 41%, whilst cruises on the Danube and Rhine rivers grew 37%.

Cruises on Russia’s rivers grew in popularity too, climbing 15%, whilst further afield, cruises on rivers such as the Mekong are up 55%, and in India, rivers including the Ganges and Brahmaputra are up 24%.

A key reason for the growing popularity of river cruises is the evolution of the holiday experience with the arrival of new, larger ships with greater on board amenities. A third of European river cruise ships have been built within the last ten years - a quarter within the last five. These offer the kind of multiple dining venues, spa facilities and range of cabins with balconies which have already combined to transform the experience offered on many ocean cruise ships.

The cruise industry’s investment in new ships is set to continue with 16 CLIA member river vessels due to be launched in 2015 alone.

Andy Harmer, Director of CLIA UK & Ireland, says: “With the continued investment in new, more innovative ships and the ever-increasing choice and diversity of itineraries in Europe and further afield, it’s no surprise that more UK passengers than ever are opting for river cruises as their holiday choice.”

Later this week, CLIA UK & Ireland will launch its first ever River Cruise Weekend. Running from 26th – 30th March, 2015, it has been created to raise the profile of river cruise holidays
and the diversity of great destinations available. Some of the world’s leading river cruise lines are offering a host of exclusive deals and added-value offers on a range of 2015 and 2016 cruises.

Consumers and travel agents are also being invited to post their photos of river cruise destinations and reasons to love river cruise holidays with the hashtag #lovecruise. The photographs will be placed on CLIA’s Facebook page, with a winner selected at random at the end of CLIA River Cruise Weekend who will receive an iPad mini.

Further information on the 2015 CLIA UK & Ireland River Cruise Weekend can be found by visiting www.cruiseexperts.org

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About Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) – One Industry, One Voice
Celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2015, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is the unified voice and leading authority of the global cruise community. As the largest cruise industry trade association with 15 offices globally, CLIA has representation in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australasia. CLIA’s mission is to support policies and practices that foster a safe, secure, healthy and sustainable cruise ship environment for the more than 23 million passengers who cruise annually, as well as promote the cruise travel experience. Members are committed to the sustained success of the cruise industry and are comprised of the world’s most prestigious ocean, river and specialty cruise lines; a highly trained and certified travel agent community; and other cruise industry partners, including ports, destinations, ship developers, suppliers, business services and travel operators.

For more information, visit www.cruising.org, www.cruiseforward.org or follow Cruise Lines International Association on the CLIA Facebook and Twitter fan pages.

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