

CULTURAL TOURISM IN ITALY GROWING BUT NOT EVERYWHERE



Cultural tourism in Italy is on the rise, according to the 12th edition of Fedeculture Annual Report. The data show that in 2015 Italian families spent €67.8 billion on culture. This represents an increase of 4% compared to 2014. Since 2011-2013 the numbers have risen by 6%, with more than €4 billion more of spending in the period under review. Fedeculture is now ranked among the most efficient European public institutions working on development and management of culture.

However, cultural tourism expenditure is struggling. In 2015 there was just a 0.6% increase, which is still lower by 2% compared to 2013. **On the other hand, museums are more visited, with a 7% percent increase in ticket sales to 2.2 million. The same can be said about theaters (+4%) and concert halls (+6%).**

Over the two years the audience of theaters and cinemas increased by 8%. Museum visits rose by 18% and concert attendance by 11%. Only 18.5% of the Italian population admitted not have benefited from any kind of cultural entertainment. The number was 19.3% the year before.

According to ISTAT data, geography of cultural tourism in Italy is more or less as expected. In areas with higher GDP the expenditure on culture is higher. Trentino Alto Adige is in first place, with more than 203 euro per capita spent on culture per month. Emilia Romagna and Lombardy are right behind. In the poorest regions, the expenditures are much smaller, notably Calabria and Basilicata, where the cultural expenditure per capita amounts to 59 euros per month.

Cultural tourism in Italy also grew by 7% in terms of arrivals. The country has recovered 18 positions in the ranking of tourism competitiveness of the World Economic Forum. From 26th place in 2013 to eighth in 2015. However, as the report by Fedeculture explained, arrivals are still heavily concentrated only on some regions and the landmarks of the South especially are not adequately exploited. This is confirmed by the fact that **64.5% of foreign tourists spending comes from five regions (Lazio, Lombardy, Veneto, Tuscany, Campania)**. There are big differences among regions, for example, in Lombardy foreign tourists spent 6 billion euros, in Sardinia one-tenth of that, 600 million.

The same can be noted about the already mentioned museum visits. 86% of visits were registered in 5 regions - Lazio, Campania, Tuscany, Piedmont and Lombardy. Museums in Lazio welcome nearly 20 million visitors, while those in poorer regions such as Calabria record only a few hundred thousand.

Fedeculture discussed the data with the Minister of Culture, Dario Franceschini, who promised to begin a debate in the government about cultural reforms in cooperation with companies such as Symbola Foundation, but also cultural coordinators in the regions.

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