

# ITALY: NEW TOURISM STRATEGY BASED ON DIGITALIZATION



Italy has officially presented the 2017-2022 program for tourism. Technology will play an important role to increase the quality and integration of policies with the project called Industry 4.0 to revive the country. The slogan of the new Italian tourism strategy is “Efficiency and Sustainability”.

The tourism strategy, that was adopted last February by the Council of Ministers, is based on the integration of tourism policies with those of Industry 4.0 and the adoption of advanced technologies to improve the supply of services.

Italy’s Minister of Culture, Dario Franceschini, has identified actions and priorities. **Italy needs sustainable tourism, not only the environmental variation.** The country’s Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano said: “We worked together with the Ministry of Culture. It is a very positive period in terms of impact of tourism. The tourism sector accounts for 12% of the country’s GDP and 13% of the employment. The Italian tourism strategy needs to build on these trends,” he said.

“We want to strengthen the industry by focusing on economic diplomacy, digitalization, and enhancement of the 51 Italian UNESCO sites. And we must not forget that we live in a time in history that is challenged by an unprecedented threat from the point of view of safety. It affects tourism, because safety has become crucial when choosing the holiday destinations. Our country can be proud to have been able to combine solidarity and security, putting the right side of history and helping Europe to stand on the right side. We saved half a million people and at the same time we are a safe country,” Alfano added.

On June 30, the Standing Committee on Tourism will give its first operational guidance on the tourism strategy. For Giovanni Lolli, Vice-President of the Abruzzo Region and Coordinator of the Tourism Committee, “the strategic plan for tourism creates a decisive break with the past. It creates a synergy that meets the new trends of tourists who are no longer interested in a single destination”.

“A season in which all protagonists together decided to revive the industry by giving it a strategy has begun,” Lolli said. The Italian tourism strategy was created by the State, involving all relevant ministries. It also involves and engages various crossroads and the Regions. Regions have fundamental competences in this matter entrusted by the Constitution. These competences will be exercised together with the state and network of municipalities in a more shared and stringent optical.

“It is often said that it is difficult to sell Italy because it has a fragmented supply. But this is not a defect but a great strength. Visitors experience the lives of immersing Italians, because we are great people from the outside. This is especially true for the small villages. This is also a very important economic sector, the only one that cannot be delocalized,” said Fabio Maria Lazzerini, director of the Italian Tourist Board.

**Lazzerini has also reminded that Italy is the top country in the world in terms of photographs on Instagram, with 54.4 million images.** It is also the top country in Europe in terms of engagement on Facebook, with 52.6 million views in 2016. The real question, according to

Franceschini, is the infrastructure. "I think in strategic terms we should have a high-speed train that arrives in Palermo, one that goes from Taranto to Bologna and that passes all the airports. Just so we can be connected and integrated. In an age of fear and threat we have to build bridges, not walls," he concluded.

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