

AMSTERDAM SAYS “STOP” TO CANNABIS TOURISM



Amsterdam is declaring war on cannabis tourism. The mayor of the Dutch capital wants to ban the sale of cannabis to tourists. The aim is to curb the numbers of visitors - but not too much.

Soon many holidaymakers could lose their reason to travel to Amsterdam. They are to be banned from buying cannabis since the green mayor, Femke Halsema, is campaigning for such regulations.

Amsterdam has long been fighting against overtourism in general and against the image of a tolerant but ultimately moral-free city, whose main attractions include the free use of cannabis and the notorious sex district, the Red Light District. After the Dutch metropolis has already introduced tourist taxes and banned guided tours through the Red Light District, it is time to focus on cannabis tourism.

According to media, the mayor commissioned a study to show what role the consumption of grass and hashish plays for tourists in Amsterdam. The results showed that 65 percent of the target group surveyed visit the coffeehouses for cannabis use, with 57 percent indicating that this is an important reason for choosing Amsterdam as a travel destination.

Moreover, 44 percent said they would visit the city much less often if these regulations were to come into force. Twelve percent said they would never travel to Amsterdam again if they were not allowed to buy marijuana.

Regarding the Red Light District, it turned out that 22 percent of those surveyed perceive this as an important element of attraction in the city, but only 1 percent state that this is the main reason for the city visit.

While many politicians would be wary of such results, Femke Halsema is extremely satisfied. A letter to the relevant Commission indicates that it would welcome fewer tourists to Amsterdam. The city authorities of Amsterdam will incorporate these results into the ongoing discussions regarding the possibilities and types of visitor control. The intention is clear: the congested city center has to be less frequented and tourists should behave better, for which the free consumption of cannabis and alcohol are not directly beneficial.

After all, **the capital city is experiencing more and more problems because of the enormous influx of visitors - mostly due to cannabis tourism.** According to the Netherlands Bureau for Tourism and Congresses, the number of visitors in 2018 reached 19 million while the population of the city is only 875,000 people.

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