

VENICE WITHOUT TOURISM REVENUES IS AT THE MERCY OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS



While Florence or Naples reopen their museums, in Venice the Carnival was supposed to start this week but was canceled.

"The doors are historical, therefore a little fragile," says a manager of the Florian cafe, in Saint Mark's Square, 300 years old but now closed. Usually, the manager Renato Costantino sees 2,000 people pass by.

"We make a turnover of 8.5 million euros a year, normally... In 2020, we made 6 million less, and the state gave us only 160,000 euros. We ask for more consistent aid because we have to pay fixed costs, rent... Without tourism, Venice dies!" Constantino summarized the loss of tourism revenues that local businesses experience.

Hopeless and despondent, Renato Costantini closes the doors of the cafe. A few steps away, another institution, La Fenice, is also empty but at work, as the orchestra gives a few free concerts on the Internet.

A rehearsal on the pianoforte, before Fortunato Ortombina, the theater's superintendent and artistic director, arrives on stage, also worried: "I am much more afraid for 2021 than for 2020. Economically, it will be a difficult year, because a third of our resources come from ticket sales. So, we have to compensate, we have to find a system to have a viable season. But we don't have hope, it's very difficult...".

Without tourists, Venice doesn't have a penny: it represents 3 billion euros per year in tourism revenues, and last year it lost 2.5 billion, according to Claudio Scarpa, the director of the Venetian Hotel Association. **He sees Venice, fragile, at the mercy of investors not always recommendable.**

"They call us from France, Germany, Austria, and that we accept," he admits. "But there can also be illicit capital! Recently, we had an alert about the Chinese, but frankly, they worry me much less than the Ndrangehta of Calabria and the Casalesi of Campania [two mafia organizations]. The Public Prosecutor's Office has done an exceptional job, and has uncovered mafia infiltrations: and that's really scary!"

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