

AMSTERDAM CONSIDERS A TOURIST BAN THAT WOULD HIT THE CANNABIS TOURISM



The beginning of 2021 brought some unwelcome news for all cannabis users. Amsterdam announced a plan to no longer allow foreign tourists into the coffeeshops. Such tourist ban would be a severe blow to the local cannabis tourism.

It is not the first attempt by Dutch authorities to impose a tourist ban on coffee shops. There are various reasons for such measures, one being the problem of smuggling, **another simply because the number of tourists in Amsterdam is too high.**

However, the tourist ban has never really gained any major support, because too many businesses in the Netherlands profit directly or indirectly from the foreigners who crowd into the coffeeshops and who, of course, also bring profits to the other stores, restaurants and accommodations. Naturally, there is fierce resistance to the new attempt to keep foreigners out of the legal or tolerated cannabis tourism trade.

Associations Launch a Campaign against the Tourist Ban

A major advertising campaign was launched in the Amsterdam newspaper Het Parool at the end of January, opposing the idea of a tourist ban. The originator and initiator of the high-profile campaign is, among others, the Amsterdam Coffeeshop Association (Bond van Cannabis Detaillisten - BCD). The message is clear, it reads "Don't do this to our city!" In the newspaper ad, the BCD makes it clear that Amsterdam's coffeeshops and their visitors are not a problem but an important ally in the fight against the city's illegal drug traffic.

Banning tourists would foster an economic downfall while strengthening the illegal drug traffic. The BCD's website also has the full ad text. The action is supported by the official drug counseling center of the VOC Foundation, the Foundation for Drugs Policy and the platform Cannabis Businesses Netherlands (PCN).

Cannabis Tourism Preventing Illegal Activities

Admittedly, locals point out that the crowds are sometimes beyond a level that one might call nice and pleasant, but still, the tourist ban measure seems neither appropriate nor suitable to solve this.

There are enough arguments at hand to make the idea that foreigners should not be allowed to shop in coffee shops seem absurd. **Within a very short time, a black market would be established on the streets, to name just one reason.**

Demanding and promoting cannabis legalization in other EU countries is probably the only method that could better distribute tourism and would not lead to drug-related crime. The liberal handling of cannabis should therefore rather be legally consolidated by the Netherlands and take the position of the pioneer within the European Union.

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