

# ITALIAN REGIONS PREPARING FOR THE SUMMER SEASON



As the summer season approaches, countries are looking for ways to save the tourism industry after months of suffering. The upcoming months are crucial especially for countries heavily dependent on the sector - like Italy.

In this context, tour operators on the Apennine Peninsula have mixed feelings with regards to the upcoming season. It must also be noted that the mood varies significantly across the country and while some regions are optimistic, others are somewhat worse off.

## EU Green Pass to Revive Tourism

**The slight optimism in some regions is mainly connected to the recent initiative launched by the European Union, which has also been confirmed in more detail by the Minister of Tourism of the country, Massimo Garavaglia.**

According to his words, "this special document at European level will allow Covid-proof holidays as much as possible". Garavaglia also confirmed that the intention of the European tourism ministers is to start the so-called green pass before the summer.

This pass will have multiple functions. Firstly, it will show if an individual is vaccinated against Covid-19 or not. Secondly, it will confirm whether an individual contracted the virus in the past and thirdly, it will show if a person has been tested negative for Covid-19.

## Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna Optimistic

In the meantime, resorts and tourism facilities are preparing for the summer season. Emilia-Romagna is expecting a sold-out summer this year. According to the regional councilor for tourism, "in July and August, everything will be sold out both on the Riviera and on the Apennines, especially for domestic tourists".

The same can be said about Tuscany. Especially in Versilia, one of the capitals of Italian seaside tourism and a reference point for the region. The optimism is mainly linked to the success of the vaccination campaign, but also to a growing number of reservations in the past couple of weeks.

## Rome and Campania in Difficult Situations

In Lazio, prices have increased by almost 40 % for holiday homes in the most popular locations on the Lazio coast. The same can also be said for luxury villas already booked before Easter for the summer. The most popular destinations are those in lower Lazio, like Terracina or San Felice Circeo.

The situation in Rome, meanwhile, is somewhat more complicated. Many accommodation facilities are closing for Easter due to the absence of reservations and tourists and it is also uncertain what the situation will look like in the upcoming months.

Campania also appears to be in a more problematic position in view of the summer season.

According to experts, the situation is very confused, and the forecasts are not positive at the moment.

### **Uncertainty in Sardinia, Puglia and Sicily**

In Sardinia, in the meantime, the tourism industry has resigned on any progress in the months between April to June. First reservations can be noted from mid-June.

According to experts in the region, a drastic acceleration in planning will be necessary for the upcoming days, otherwise, a disaster will happen in Sardinia and many companies will be forced to go through a similar holiday season as in 2020.

On the other hand, Puglia is still suffering from few air connections due to the limitations imposed that have forced carriers to drastically reduce flight numbers. While the region usually boasts 18-19 million tourist arrivals per year, today it seems impossible to reach such figures.

Regional experts say that there is some interest in Salento, Valle d'Itria and Gargano, but the reservation numbers do not give the industry certainty. The situation seems even worse than last year, when the sector was mainly saved by the domestic market.

**Sicilians are also dealing with a lot of uncertainty, with some experts in the industry describing the situation as “absolutely blocked”.** Some even go as far as to speak of a collapse “beyond all imagination” mainly due to the fact that Sicily cannot offer international guarantees compared to other regions.

All in all, the above-mentioned very evidently shows that the regions of Italy are far from uniform in terms of prospects for the upcoming summer season. Some are more optimistic, while others are more restrained or pessimistic. What is certain, however, is that things can change very quickly based on many factors, varying from governmental and regional policies to the success of vaccination campaigns.

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