

ITALIAN TOURISM TARGETED BY THE MAFIA AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The Covid-19 pandemic is having a striking effect on the tourism industry worldwide. Many companies are struggling to deal with the situation, which opens up to very desperate solutions from their owner. This is, for example, seen in the context of Italian tourism, which is dealing with organized crime.

The turnover of organized crime deriving from the infiltration of the legal economy of the tourism sector exceeds 2.2 billion euros. 40 % of this amount is concentrated in the south of Italy. This was calculated in research conducted by the Demoskopika institution.

Italian Tourism Attracts Criminal Organizations

40 % of the total turnover is attributed to the 'Ndrangheta mafia alone, and almost 4,500 companies are at the greatest risk of money laundering associated with liquidity crises caused by the pandemic.

"Tourism on its knees due to the pandemic is tempting to the criminal organizations," says the president of Demoskopika Raffaele Rio.

There are six regional tourism systems that are most at risk in this context. These are Campania, Sicily, Lazio, Calabria, Lombardy and Puglia. On the opposite side, there are four regions with a lower vulnerability: Marche, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino-Alto Adige.

'Ndrangheta the Major Player

The lion's share of the 2.2 billion euros amounts to the 'Ndrangheta mafia with a turnover of 810 million. The group is followed by the Camorra mafia with 730 million (33%), while other groups amount to a 30% share of the total income.

With regards to the territorial aspect, 38% of criminal activities, equal to 825 million euros, are concentrated in the south. This is followed by central Italy (515 million), the north-western part of the country (490 million) and the northeast (370 million).

Minister Worried

"The investigation by Demoskopika on mafia infiltration in the Italian tourism sector is worrying. It is a phenomenon that heavily damages the sector made up of serious entrepreneurs, damaged by the pandemic," the Minister of Tourism Massimo Garavaglia said.

"The government is developing transparent financing formulas capable of supporting operators affected by the economic impact of the virus, in order to make it impermeable from mafia contamination. Minister Lamorgese [Minister of the Interior] has a clear picture and I believe she is already adopting initiatives aimed at curbing this type of infiltration," he concluded.

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