

LISBON ASSOCIATION PROPOSES MEASURES FOR THE TOURISM SECTOR TO SURVIVE



Opening all activities, without restrictions on schedules and occupancy, is one of the measures proposed by the Lisbon Tourism Association for the tourism sector to survive in Lisbon.

The continuation of the pandemic crisis is bringing the economic fabric of tourism in Lisbon close to collapse, says the Lisbon Tourism Association (ATL), proposing several measures to create conditions for the sector's survival.

The working group of the ATL Board of Directors believes that preserving the economic fabric of tourism and the structural requirements for its work are essential, so that **the sector can once again play a decisive role in the country's development, with a qualified workforce and essential services, while providing a positive experience for tourists.**

Regardless of the pandemic crisis, the Lisbon brand has not been affected. The desire to travel remains, according to ATL, emphasizing the need to start a new phase that allows creating conditions for the tourism sector to survive. Such activity may contribute decisively to the economic and social recovery of the city, region, and the whole Portugal, underlining the following aspects:

Considering the progress in the vaccination process, the massification of tests and the knowledge already acquired, the strategy to fight the pandemic must enter a new paradigm, based on the opening of all activities, without restrictions on schedules and occupancy. According to ATL, companies cannot be held responsible for carrying out any type of test or specialized health act. The exemption of terraces from fees should be extended until the end of the pandemic. Cafés and restaurants should be able to transform their temporary terraces into permanent ones.

The measures demanded by the sectoral associations and the CTP to preserve companies and employment, to which the government has committed itself to respond, must be quickly approved and implemented. The aim is to preserve the economic fabric of tourism, employment and to prevent the workforce from moving away from tourism activity, compromising its future recovery.

The measures in question promote job preservation, address the issue of moratoria, support rental costs, provide liquidity support, and ensure the recapitalization of companies, preventing an increasing debt that will jeopardize the future.

The recovery support should be maintained until April 2022 for all companies with a sharp drop in sales. This makes it possible to help active employment, supporting the revenues and capitalization of companies, enabling the economic recovery of companies and the economy, with vocational training opportunities. The capitalization measures and the fight against debt must have a strong non-refundable component.

Regarding the Lisbon airport issue, it is urgent to find and start implementing an adequate solution

to serve a city and region that is a modern and competitive European capital.

It is also necessary to consider the geographical specificity of Lisbon and the country. This makes the airport issue more decisive, which must be considered in national and European strategic options, especially environmental issues.

In its statement, ATL highlights that, in the years leading up to the pandemic, Lisbon was the fastest-growing region within the group of equivalent destinations. In national terms, it was the destination that grew the most, increasing its market share.

In the current tourism crisis, Lisbon was the most affected European and national destination. This situation is due to several factors, in particular, the product structure and the fact that the destination is mainly accessed by air. During the pandemic period, no progress was made to solve the main structural problem of tourism: the lack of an adequate airport offer that is worthy of a modern European capital.

Moreover, tourism experts warn that Portuguese tourism numbers are likely to get worse this summer compared to summer 2020.

“For 2021, there has been a lot of contradictory information about the evolution of Portuguese GDP during the year. Pandemic-related economic constraints seem excessive, but there have also been fickle recommendations from abroad, and we admit that the tourism summer of 2021 will be worse than that of 2020,” says the Forum for Competitiveness on the second quarter of 2021.

Furthermore, the aid for recovery from the Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Programme (PRR) “is very late” and “despite being very focused on the economic situation, it has a much slower timetable than Spain’s, which is a contradiction”.

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