

TOURISM: VIENNA WANTS TO SUSPEND LOCAL TAXES



"The city hotel industry continues to be hard hit," says Markus Wölbitsch, chairman of the Vienna ÖVP (the New People's Party). If you walk through the streets, you see significantly more tourists than in the summer of 2020, but it is still far from the pre-crisis level. Local hotels reported an occupancy rate of 40 percent.

Together with Markus Grießler, ÖVP councillor and tourism chairman in the Vienna Chamber of Commerce, he presented a **three-point plan to strengthen tourism including the suspension of local taxes.**

The politicians demand that the local taxes be suspended this year. Hotels should be allowed to collect it, but would not have to pay it. In non-crisis years, 30 million euros are collected annually; last year, the figure was only one-third, at ten million.

The revenue from the local taxes is earmarked for a specific purpose anyway, says Grießler, and benefits Vienna Tourism. Poor vaccination coverage is also a problem for tourism, he said, as travel warnings due to the insecure situation discourage tourists from coming.

Similarly, SPÖ leader Pamela Rendi-Wagner, put forward monetary incentives for vaccination. While Rendi Wagner suggested a one-time payment of 100 euros, Wölbitsch and Grießler demanded a "leisure time hundred". This would be used for concerts and events.

As another measure, an employee offensive was demanded. The industry is struggling with the lack of staff. **In addition, there are 40 percent fewer enrollments in tourism schools, according to Grießler.** The politician, therefore, wants faster retraining measures in order to obtain more qualified personnel in a short time.

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