

PANDEMIC: 68.3 PERCENT OF TOURISM REVENUE LOST FOR GIBRALTAR



The tourism sector has been one of the hardest-hit industries by the pandemic and Gibraltar is no exception. Tourism is the critical sector for “The Rock” and a very important source of income that has been seriously affected by Covid-19.

The Gibraltar Tourism Report 2020, prepared with information provided by the Border Agency, Customs and the Tourist Board, revealed the devastating data. The most concerning data are the amount of the lost tourism revenue. **The amount expended by tourists who visited the British colony fell to 97.51 million pounds, a decrease of 68.3 percent compared to 2019, when it was 307.57 million, the highest figure since 2010.**

The number of tourist arrivals by land, sea and air to the Rock fell sharply over the past year, standing at 5,437,728 people compared to 11,336,422 during the previous year, a reduction of 52 percent.

Arrivals to Gibraltar, excluding cross-border workers who cross daily, decreased 68.8 percent in 2019. A total of 2,342,295 visitors entered Gibraltar by land.

By sea, the numbers plummeted, especially those of cruise ships. On 13 March of the year in which the pandemic changed everything, the Government of Gibraltar stopped the arrival of cruise ships because of Covid-19, this measure has been maintained until last July. Only 10,002 cruise passengers arrived at the Gibraltarian port in 2020, a 97 percent reduction compared to the 328,057 cruise passengers that arrived in 2019. Tourist arrivals fell by 63.1 percent in the Gibraltar Airport with a total of 76,924 travelers arriving last year, a small number compared to the 208,368 travelers that arrived during the previous year.

When it seemed that the sector rebounded, the Covid-19 has returned to menace tourism again. The number of infections has soared for weeks in Gibraltar. There are hundreds of people in quarantine despite the fact that Gibraltarians were the first to return to the new normal on the mainland due to a rapid vaccination campaign that also included cross-border workers. The booster dose administration rate is also an important factor that is not helping to stop the infection trend.

"Gibraltar is experiencing an increase in active cases of Covid-19. **This is due to waning immunity from the initial doses of vaccine that were administered very effectively in February and March.** However, the very low rates of severe cases and hospitalizations in Gibraltar demonstrate that the vaccines continue to protect people to some extent. Gibraltar's booster dose programme is progressing well and booster vaccinations are being expanded to cover those over 40 years of age. The low number of cases in the +50 age group in Gibraltar is evidence that the booster programme is “working”, stated Gibraltar’s government.

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