

# ITALY'S TOURISM PROTESTS AGAINST MANDATORY TESTING



Italy's tourism industry fears negative repercussions due to the newly introduced Corona testing requirement for people entering the country from outside the EU.

Italy introduced a Corona testing requirement for those entering the country from outside the EU since December 16, 2021. **Anyone who wants to travel to Italy must test negative for the virus before leaving their country of origin, the health ministry announced.** Unvaccinated visitors would need to undergo the test as well as five days in quarantine.

Italy's tourism now fears a decline in the number of visitors from abroad and opposes the new restrictions: "The new regulation will penalize tourism. Tourism is one of the engines of our economy, which can make a significant contribution to the national gross domestic product. It cannot be penalized like this," protested Massimiliano Schiavon, president of the Hoteliers Association of the Northern Italian region of Veneto.

"With winter tourism just beginning and kept in a fragile balance only thanks to domestic tourism, and cultural cities depending practically only on neighboring foreign countries in recent months, this further hurdle seriously undermines any hopes of recovery for the entire sector," Schiavon warned.

He said that Italy's tourism sector is already suffering cancellations of trips booked for the Christmas holidays due to concerns about the Omicron variant of the coronavirus. "The Omicron variant is scaring travelers. More than half a million Italians are forgoing travel over the Christmas holidays. In recent weeks there have been countless travel cancellations," lamented Ivana Jelinic, president of Fiavet, the association of Italian travel companies.

Italy's tourism sector demands additional support measures from the government to counteract the negative consequences of the Omicron variant. **Hoteliers in Rome are registering a 70% drop in bookings for the Christmas season.** The organized tourism sector has been the only sector to come to a complete standstill throughout the pandemic, said representatives of tourism associations. The future of 13,000 businesses employing 86,000 people is at risk, they said.

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