

# TOURISM RECOVERY IN MILAN IS STILL FAR AWAY



The world of tourism has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and while some destinations are heading towards tourism recovery, others are still far away from returning to the 2019 levels in travel flow.

One of these is also the Italian city of Milan, as tourism businesses in the Lombardian capital remain very sceptical about the improvement of the situation, according to a recent survey conducted by Confcommercio Milano.

## **Tourism Recovery Not Expected**

As per the survey, 60 % of businesses said that they do not believe that tourism and attractiveness can see a decisive recovery in the next months, while 64 % still struggle to detect positive effects in business with the decrease in infections and the gradual return to normality.

When asked when the turnover will be able to return to pre-Covid levels, almost all respondents (90 %) believe that the climate of uncertainty does not allow any predictions.

A very small minority of 8 % say that it will be possible to return to 2019 levels by the end of 2022, for 1 % in the first half of this year, while another 1 % has already returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The greatest criticality indicated by businesses is the decline in tourism (61 %). In Milan, 54 % of the tourism sector's activities identify smart working, with changes in city flows, as one of the brakes on recovery.

The percentage rises to 73 % in catering businesses. But the postponement of trade fairs and congresses (50 %) was almost equally as important, first of all, the Milan Furniture Fair, postponed to June.

## **Companies Asking for Support**

At the same time companies in the sector demand aid in terms of energy costs (69 %), the extension of tax deadlines (56 %), the renewal of the Covid fund (46 %) and the moratorium on bank debts (43 %)

According to the general secretary of Confcommercio Milan, Marco Barbieri, the path to return to pre-Covid levels is still very uncertain for Milan. The losses suffered, the unprecedented expensive energy and international tensions weigh heavily.

“In this still very critical phase, it is essential to support companies with greater resources and to renew tax and credit moratoriums,” Barbieri said.

## **Critical Situation in Rome**

In Rome, meanwhile, the situation is probably even more critical. 410 hotels out of 1200 are

currently closed in the Eternal City, while others are ready to lock their doors given the low tourist flows.

“We are faced with reopening and recovery but nevertheless the impact on an art city like Rome is so strong that relying solely on tourism recovery would be insufficient. Even more so today, in the face of this international scenario, our concerns are strengthened,” the mayor of the capital, Roberto Gualtieri, said.

### **Glimmers of Hope for Tourism**

However, speaking more generally, there are several glimmers of hope for the tourism industry in Italy that indicate that the situation could improve in the future.

Firstly, **the government has cancelled swabs and quarantines for those arriving in Italy from abroad** and has abolished the lists of “off-limits” countries and the “Covid-free” tourist corridors.

Nevertheless, for an effective recovery more needs to be done, according to experts. For this reason, stakeholders are calling for the government to abolish the green pass to access hotels and other tourism facilities.

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