

TOURISM & COVID-19: WILL THE 7TH WAVE IMPACT THE SECTOR?



Just when it seemed that Covid-19 had disappeared, the virus is knocking on the door again. Europe is once again plunged into a wave of infections which, although not yet too alarming, is starting to worry the authorities and especially the tourism and travel community, which does not want to see a new high season compromised.

On last week's Friday, 639,827 cases have been reported in the European Union. France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Belgium have seen small and steady increases, while **the Netherlands has already recorded a peak in cases**. This data is not yet meaningful, but there is already concern that this is the genesis of a seventh wave.

Tourism & COVID

After Omicron, responsible for the January epidemic wave, "we have a variant of Omicron, BA.2, which is even more contagious. This means that it will be difficult to escape it," according to modelling by the Pasteur Institute, this epidemic recovery should not create a large wave. "The good weather is arriving, which means that we will be outside and there is less risk."

There are no worrying signals in the intensive care units: "the most important risk is for the most fragile and the non-vaccinated. This is why we invite them to wear their mask and to do their booster vaccination".

Tourism entrepreneurs have expressed concern about this "resurgence" of Covid-19.

Although it seems that the current variant is much less deadly than the previous ones and does not cause hospitalizations, there are already fears that restrictions will be back on the agenda, just as countries are plunging into a massive reopening of their borders.

Promising Season Ahead

This bad news comes at the worst time for tourism. In about 20 days, Easter weekend is here, and spring is traditionally an active time in tourism. **We are also at a key time for summer season bookings**. Therefore, a seventh wave would be another blow to this already hard-hit sector.

A resurgence of the pandemic, along with the war in Ukraine, which is already affecting airlines, shipping companies, hotels, etc., and resulting in soaring fuel prices and the impact on traveler confidence, could wreak havoc on the coming months, with devastating consequences if the conflict drags on.

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