

ITALIAN TOURISM IS STILL 6.9% BEHIND THE SUMMER SEASON 2019



A summer full of clear recovery, even though the expectations at the season's beginning - unfortunately - remained unfulfilled and the increase in energy costs drastically reduced the hospitality businesses' margins.

Italian tourism industry had hoped to realign itself to 2019 levels by summer 2022; but the contagions' wave seen at the end of June, expensive fuel, airport chaos and soaring inflation weakened the economic request.

Based on the information collected, there was an increase in overnight stays in the summer quarter (June-July-August) equal to + 15.5% over 2021. For the national component, the increase was + 5.1%, while the number of foreign tourists grew by + 35.4%. In absolute terms, there are approximately 49 million tourists registered in the accommodation facilities in Italy, for a total of 198.8 million overnight stays, with a decrease of -6.9% compared to 2019.

This is the scenario that emerges from the Assoturismo Confesercenti survey, carried out by the Florence Tourist Studies Center, on a sample of 1,694 hospitality entrepreneurs.

Therefore, the quarter that has just ended marked the return to the "normality" of summer holidays and an important consolidation of the growth in tourist flows. Relevant results emerged for foreigners, even though still below the 2019 levels (-20.2%). The hospitality businesses mainly hosted German tourists, but also visitors from France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, the United States and the United Kingdom.

The most significant increases were recorded above all in the regions of the North West (+ 18.5%), the North East (+ 16.8%) and the Center (+ 16.2%). For the southern regions and islands, the estimated growth is + 10.3%. Overall, the seaside and mountain resorts recorded growth of approximately + 11% among foreigners and Italians compared to 2021, +21.9 for companies in the lakeside resorts, + 20.5% for rural and adventure tourism, + 18.1% for the thermal areas. However, the most significant recovery of Italian tourism was that of cities and art centers, the destinations most penalized by the health emergency: compared to last year, the growth in overnight stays was + 31%.

After the summer season, the entrepreneurs' interest relies on the season's extension, even in September. In absolute values, the expected change for September 2022, compared to the same period last year, is over +2.7 million overnight stays, for a total of 44.3 million. The companies in the cities of art with + 15.9% of bookings signal greater optimism.

"Electricity and gas bills have practically tripled costs, and this has reduced the margins for Italian tourism companies, since the packages for the summer season were sold before the increases. The almost return of tourism to the pre-pandemic levels is certainly very good news, but" - the president of Assoturismo Confesercenti, Vittorio Messina comments - "without concrete interventions in businesses' support, thousands of accommodation facilities and activities in the sector will no longer be able to handle the expenditure for the energy and they will be forced to shut

down”.

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