

NEW MEASURES TO PREVENT CHAOS IN THE ACROPOLIS



The queues of tourists waiting to visit the Acropolis and Museum in Athens are becoming increasingly lengthy. The Greek Minister of Culture has declared that swift new measures will be taken to address this issue.

The Acropolis, a renowned 2,500-year-old monument, is a highly sought-after destination for visitors worldwide, causing an influx of tourists.

According to Greek Culture Minister Lina Mendoni in an interview, **there has been a significant increase in visitors to the UNESCO World Heritage Site this year.** In fact, visitor numbers went up by 80 percent in June and early July compared to 2019. This increase follows two years of limited travel due to the pandemic and a less busy 2022 travel year.

Bookable Time Slots and Special Visitor Zones

Visitors who purchase entry tickets often experience additional waiting time at the steps leading to the Propylaea - the main entrance monument. According to Ilias Patsarouhas, an Organization for the Management of Archaeological Resources (ODAP) representative, the number of visitors is often so high that the guards must restrict entry.

To address the issue, Culture Minister and archaeologist Mendoni has promised to implement measures to improve visitors' flow. In a radio interview, she mentioned the possibility of bookable time slots to distribute visitors throughout the day, fast lanes for groups, e-tickets, and special visitor zones. However, she did not elaborate on the specifics. "The new measures will be fully implemented by the end of July," she assured.

World Heritage Watch has attacked the Acropolis for inadequate visitor management. This non-governmental organization assists UNESCO in safeguarding and conserving World Heritage sites. The organization's chairman, Stephan Doempke, warns that the Acropolis, a globally significant site, is in danger if officials fail to draft a proper plan and comprehend how to handle tourists.

Reservations Required

Many tourist attractions, including the Acropolis, now require visitors to book specific time slots to manage overcrowding. This trend is not limited to famous landmarks, as even beaches implement similar systems. For example, **the Calanques, a series of stunning rocky coves with turquoise-blue seawater in Southern France, now require visitors to register on the park's website three days before their intended visit.** Reservations are mandatory, and the window opens promptly at 9 am. Only 400 spots are available, and they are quickly taken. This is the region's way of controlling excessive tourism. In addition, several Italian beaches restrict access.

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