

MORE AND MORE SPANIARDS ARE FED UP WITH MASS TOURISM



Despite high inflation, Spain is on track to break its 2019 tourist record with bustling cash registers this year. However, locals are increasingly frustrated with mass tourism.

"Tourismophobia"

Many locals in Barcelona are overwhelmed due to ever-increasing tourism. Although not everyone expresses their anger as much as others, the term "turismofobia" (phobia of tourism) has become increasingly popular in Spain - a top destination for Germans and British travelers.

Mass tourism is increasingly rejected not only in Barcelona and Catalonia but also in Mallorca, Galicia, and the Canary Islands, sometimes with violence.

Residents organize protest demonstrations in many places. However, there are also spectacular imagined actions. For instance, in Mallorca, a group of activists called Caterva attempted to scare foreign tourists away from the East Coast beaches in August by putting up deceptive-looking billboards. These billboards indicated in English that swimming was forbidden or warned against "dangerous jellyfish" or falling rocks, which were all false and invented.

Santiago de Compostela, the final destination of pilgrims in Galicia, has many complaints about visitors. These visitors not only roam the streets until the early hours of the morning, drinking and making noise. However, they also sleep outside and relieve themselves in public, resembling Ballermann's behavior.

Is there a limit to tourism?

The political and economic authorities know the issue's magnitude and are not downplaying it despite potential disagreements on the reasons and resolutions. "The growing fear of tourism in the Canary Islands should prompt cause for concern," warned the newly appointed regional Minister of Tourism, Jessica de León.

The competent services have estimated that Spain is preparing to reach another record year with many foreign visitors never seen before. It is expected that 85 million tourists will visit Spain this year, 1.3 million more than the previous record recorded before the pandemic outbreak in 2019. The tourism sector accounts for twelve percent of Spain's gross domestic product and about a third in the Canary Islands or Balearic Islands.

Even those who benefit from high tourist numbers cannot ignore the reality of the situation. Pedro Marin, the president of the association of hoteliers in Playa de Palma, Mallorca, has spoken out about the issue. He stated that residents should not feel unsafe while walking in the area. This summer, rape, stabbings, robberies, and drugs made it a disastrous season. The hotelier expressed the need for more police and stricter measures to attract decent tourists to the island.

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