

PROTESTS AGAINST OVERTOURISM AND DIGITAL NOMADS INTENSIFY



According to the UN Tourism Report, last year global tourism set a new record with more than 1.5 billion overnight guests. This year, it is likely to reach the next level. However, the popularity of travel is associated with increased protests against overtourism.

The main reasons are the growing number of tourists and their impact on the local population. The representatives of different communities suffer from noise, lack of space, and higher prices. Moreover, **digital nomadism is viewed by some as an intrusion of privacy**. Nevertheless, despite the growth of the backlash against the global tourists, the demand for visiting different countries remains high.

Spain: Epicenter of the Backlash

Spain is one of the countries that suffer the most from an unreasonable number of tourists. It managed to attract more than 100 million foreigners in 2022. For the first time this year, crowds of locals gathered in Ibiza to protect their beach from the mass of visitors. Protesters distributed watermelons to passers-by and blocked the road for foreign tourists.

Recently, residents of Mallorca sat on folding chairs in a row for several kilometers to symbolically show how long the queue is to get an apartment in Palma. They also demonstrated in the city by the slogan 'Mallorca at the limit'. In addition, the population of Barcelona tries to prevent the construction of a new airport that will be able to host 70 million passengers per year. Locals demonstrate with signs saying 'Not a single tourist anymore' and attack tourists with words and sometimes with stones.

Portugal: Housing Crisis in Lisbon

In Lisbon, the prices for renting an apartment are among the highest in Europe, but the residents' wages are among the lowest. According to the article, the price of a room in a shared apartment in Lisbon exceeds EUR 500, which is only slightly above the minimum wage. Therefore, many locals are frustrated by the fact that people can invest in real estate and take advantage of Airbnb services.

The local authorities introduced restrictive measures at the end of last year. In any district, no more than 10% of the housing stock can be in the private short-term rental sector, and approximately 40% of property cards have been revoked this year. Many landlords offer long-term leases to digital nomads, as they can afford to pay higher rent. This factor also provokes a backlash against tourists.

Greece: Purchasing Power Crisis Amid Record Tourism

The number of tourists is at a historical peak in Greece. More than 25,000 residents of Thessaloniki joined the protests against overtourism.

Greece has several problems similar to the ones in Spain and Portugal. These are the rapid development of platforms like Airbnb and Booking and the introduction of special visas for investors.

Many Greeks are forced to leave their homes because of high real estate prices. There are also mass protests against cruise tourism. In June, the bus drivers in Santorini blocked the roads as a part of a protest. This island is picturesque but very busy with tourists. It has about 15,000 permanent residents and 3.4 million visitors per year. As a result, the streets are too crowded, water is scarce, and the garbage is not removed. The authorities introduced a system of entrance fees for cruise ships and limited the number of tourists to 8,000 disembarking per day, as well as prohibited new hotel construction.

France: Overrun Destinations and Rising Tensions

France is the most visited country in the world in terms of international tourism. The popularity of social networks like TikTok and Instagram has increased the number of visitors to cities like Marseille. According to the business newspaper Capital, a violent rebellion broke out in Marseille in mid-August against the deteriorating quality of life. There are more than 13,000 Airbnb apartments in Marseille. Crowds of tourists fill up beaches, there is a shortage of parking lots, and prices for food are growing.

In Paris and Nice, residents have held several mass protests this year. Locals blame tourists for destroying the character of their towns making narrow streets and squares inaccessible to residents. People have also demonstrated in opposition to the construction of new luxury hotels. In retaliation, tourists sabotage property boxes with keys to Airbnbs.

Italy: Young People and Heritage Under Pressure

There are mass protests in Italy, especially in the cities of Milan, Bologna, Rome, and Florence. The youth is dissatisfied with the high cost and lack of availability of housing. Milan is considered the most expensive city in Italy, where there is almost no affordable real estate for young people. As a result, the government has changed the law in such a way that citizens who offer more than three apartments on Airbnb are considered entrepreneurs and must pay taxes. This was done to reduce the number of properties offered for rent. Rome, Venice, and Florence are protesting against the destruction of their cultural heritages due to the high tourist influx.

Japan: Records and Protective Measures

Japan has a record number of tourists, which is explained by the weak yen. In spring, the mayor of Fujiyoshida, a town famous for its cherry blossom festival, announced that it would be cancelled this year. This decision was made due to the stress residents experienced from the large inflow of tourists during the holiday season. This year, **barriers have been built near a popular viewpoint of Mount Fuji to stop tourists** from getting in the way.

Mexico: Displacement by Foreign Investment

There are protests in Mexico City and along the coast of Mexico. Mexicans suffer from the fact that their country has become a popular destination for digital nomads. Foreign residents buy large real estate, which is then rented out locally at inflated prices.

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