
SOUTHERN EUROPE ACTIVISTS JOIN FORCES AGAINST MASS TOURISM

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Neighbourhood associations and activist groups from 14 southern European cities formed a network to join forces in their fight against mass tourism which was presented Thursday (26 April) in Barcelona.

The SET network of cities of southern Europe against tourism plans to stage joint protest actions to pressure governments to establish limits to the tourist industry and even promote its decrease.

The networks first action was to release a manifesto denouncing how mass tourism causes rents to soar, local shops to disappear, creates low wage jobs and generates pollution.

For the moment the network is made up groups from ten Spanish cities including Madrid, Barcelona and Palma de Mallorca as well as Lisbon and Venice. It also includes Spains Canary Islands and Malta.

The creation comes as cities across Europe have stepped up their efforts to crack down on home-sharing sites such as Airbnb as concern mounts over the side effects of their increasing popularity amid fears of a housing shortage for local residents.

International tourist arrivals grew by 8.0% in the European Union last year, to reach 538 million, or 40% of the worlds total, according to Madrid-based United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

Speaking to the Guardian, UNWTO secretary general Taleb Rifai said the rise in anti-tourist sentiment is a very serious situation that needs to be addressed in a serious way. If managed correctly, tourism can be the best ally to conservation, preservation and the community, he told the British newspaper in August last year after demonstrations in Spain.

It should not be given up for the sake of mismanagement, Rifai said. Ensuring that tourism is an enriching experience for visitors and hosts alike demands strong, sustainable tourism policies, practices and the engagement of national as well as local governments and administrations, private sector companies, local communities and tourists themselves, he said.

In a 2015 resolution, the European Parliament declared that European tourism must make a transition from a model of quantitative growth to a qualitative model leading to steady and sustainable development, with a focus on qualified jobs, diversification of tourism in rural and coastal areas, and sustainable employment.

France remains king of tourist destinations

France retained its position as the worlds favourite tourism destination in 2016, the UNs World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) said on Wednesday (2 August), defying concerns over terror attacks. UK tourism decreased after the pound fell in value after the Brexit vote.

Kaynak/Source: