

Dear...

Our attention has been drawn to the plans of the City of Rome to increase the city entry tax for visiting coaches from 200€ to 1000€.

If media reports happen to be true, this would not only harm European coach operators, who are expected to send more than 6 million tourists to Rome next year, but also represent a severe blow to the reputation of the City of Rome as a leading tourist destination.

Indeed, such a plan, elaborated without any consultation whatsoever with the representatives of the European travel and tourism sector, will harm in a dramatic way not only European group tourism businesses, but it will affect severely seamless city mobility and indeed the entire Roman hospitality industry.

Allow me to draw your attention to the fact that no other city in Europe imposes or plans to impose such drastic entry fees to entering the city centre, as those reportedly planned for the City of Rome. If such access fees are ever to be introduced by a city authority, it will immediately lead to a large number of operators cancelling already signed contracts with customers, with all the consequences this would imply, including cancelling their Rome tourist routes. The short notice for this increased tax and the impossibility to purchase entry passes for trips scheduled after the date of 30 November 2015 already raise serious operational problems for the industry.

In addition, we believe that such a plan is not consistent with sustainable mobility planning. Touring coaches are widely recognised as the environmental, safety and comfort champions among all transport modes. Restricting them in the way reportedly planned, will directly lead to more car traffic, congestion, more CO₂ emissions and more accidents – in short, it will have the opposite effects to the aims of such a plan.

This is the reason why we are asking you that no formal proposals are submitted or decisions are taken on this matter, before a proper discussion and consultation with interested national and European stakeholders has taken place.

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