# European locals plan anti-tourism protests over housing and environmental concerns



British holidaymakers heading to popular European destinations this summer may encounter anti-tourism protests, including potential demonstrations at airports, as local residents express growing frustration with the effects of mass tourism on housing and the environment.

Representatives from 17 cities, islands, and communities in southern Europe, spanning Spain, Italy, France, and Portugal, have formed the SET European Network Against Touristification to campaign against what they describe as "predatory tourism." The network held a three-day summit in Barcelona, where members voiced concerns about soaring rents, housing shortages, and environmental degradation attributed to the rapid expansion of short-term tourist accommodation.

Elena Boschi, a 46-year-old English language teacher and campaigner from Genoa on the Italian Riviera, addressed the Mirror during the summit, saying, “We want tourists to have some level of fear about the situation – without fear there is no change.” Daniel Pardo, the network's leader, indicated that protests at airports are being considered, though he explained to the publication that “each territory will decide how they want to take action, there is no one set strategy.”

The network highlighted alarming trends in Spain, where average rents have doubled and house prices have increased by over 44% in the last decade. Meanwhile, the availability of residential long-term rentals has halved since the 2020 pandemic, as many properties have been converted into holiday lets. This situation has made affordable housing increasingly scarce for local families in cities and coastal areas renowned for tourism.

SET Network member Maria Cardona, representing Ibiza, described the island’s acute challenges: “The housing situation is really dramatic, there are hundreds of people living in tents and in cars so I think a lot of protest groups will be prepared to take more decisive action.” She also pointed to water shortages aggravated by the summer influx of visitors, saying, “On Ibiza, we also have a shortage of water and this is a problem in the winter, so you can imagine in the summer when there is triple the number of people on the island.”

Despite these warnings, many members of the network emphasised that they are not opposed to tourists themselves but are concerned about the impact tourism has on local communities. One spokesperson told the Mirror, “We are not against tourists, but what we don’t welcome is a way of being in our cities and regions that turns it into a place that is no longer nice to live in for us.” They called for greater awareness of how tourism can affect everyday life for residents.

Spain is one of the world’s leading tourist destinations, with 94 million visitors last year and at least 17.5 million from the UK alone. Local authorities have already begun measures to regulate the tourism sector; Barcelona, for example, plans to gradually reduce its 10,000 short-term rental permits by 2028, many linked to platforms like Airbnb.

The SET European Network Against Touristification was established in 2018. It aims to push for policies limiting tourist growth to protect local housing markets, preserve natural areas, and maintain quality of life. Protest actions planned by the network will commence on 15 June. Locations taking part include prominent Spanish holiday spots such as the Canary Islands, Ibiza, Mallorca, Barcelona, and San Sebastian, as well as cities in Italy, France, and Portugal like Genoa, Marseille, Milan, Naples, Lisbon, and Venice.

With Europe hosting 747 million tourists last year, making it the destination with the highest international arrivals worldwide, the network’s campaign reflects a wider movement across the continent seeking to balance the benefits of tourism with the needs of local residents.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)