# Southern European cities warn British tourists amid protests over mass tourism



British tourists planning holidays to popular destinations in Spain, Italy, France and Portugal this summer have been warned by anti-tourism protestors who are preparing to take action against mass tourism. Representatives from 17 cities and communities across southern Europe gathered at a summit in Barcelona to voice their concerns about the impact of tourism on local housing, rental prices, and the environment.

The group, known as the SET European Network Against Touristification, highlighted how surging tourism demand has driven up rents and house prices, often making it impossible for local residents to afford homes. They pointed to sharp increases over the past decade; for example, average rents in Spain have doubled, and house prices have risen by more than 44%, while the availability of residential rentals has halved since the pandemic. Short-term holiday rentals have markedly increased in major cities and coastal areas, further reducing housing options for locals.

At the Barcelona summit, Elena Boschi, a 46-year-old English teacher and activist from Genoa on the Italian Riviera, explained the group’s stance, stating: "We want tourists to have some level of fear about the situation – without fear there is no change." She emphasised the need to curb tourism growth, saying: "Our cities and regions are not for sale and there is an urgent need to limit the growth of tourism, demand a change of course and decide on a path to tourism de-growth as a way out."

The issue has prompted protests across Spain, with hundreds of thousands marching last summer in 40 cities. In Palma, Mallorca alone, over 50,000 people demonstrated between May and July, holding placards reading "Mallorca is not for sale" and "no houses without people, nor people without houses." Maria Cardona, representing Ibiza within the SET Network, indicated that this summer protest actions could intensify. She said: "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 cited concerns about strained water supplies on Ibiza, which worsen during the peak tourist season.

While the group does not oppose tourists themselves, they are critical of the consequences that uncontrolled tourism growth has on residents’ quality of life. One protester, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "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. People need to think what it would feel like if this were happening in their hometown – we’re not interested in scaring anyone. It’s just about being mindful of the impact tourism can have on local communities."

The prospect of demonstrations even reaching airport terminals was raised, with SET leader Daniel Pardo commenting: "It is a possibility – but it is difficult to say because each territory will decide how they want to take action, there is no one set strategy."

Tourism remains a vital economic sector for countries like Spain, which received 94 million visitors last year, including at least 17.5 million from the UK, making it the world’s second most visited country after France. Governments in affected areas have begun launching their own measures to control tourism-related housing issues. Barcelona, for instance, plans to phase out 10,000 permits for short-term rentals by 2028, targeting platforms such as Airbnb.

The SET European Network Against Touristification was established in 2018 and first issued a manifesto drawing attention to the negative effects of mass tourism, including rising rents, the disappearance of local shops, and the proliferation of low-wage jobs. A leaflet distributed at the recent summit stated: "Early action aimed at imposing limits on tourism is an expression of a growing collective awareness that transcends borders. Each demonstration marks a moment, and perhaps, a turning point - we must push for the changes and policies that our cities and regions, the people who live in them and the whole planet need."

As millions of British tourists prepare to travel to southern Europe during the summer months, the voices of local protest groups warn of escalating tensions and potential demonstrations seeking to curb the impact of tourism on communities and environments in these popular destinations. The BirminghamMail is reporting.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/uk/protesters-set-to-target-holidaying-brits-at-airports-anti-tourism/> - Corroborates the preparations for anti-tourism protests across southern Europe, targeting Brits and tourist hotspots, due to concerns about predatory tourism impacting local housing and the environment.
2. <https://www.catalannews.com/society-science/item/protests-against-tourism-monoculture-in-southern-europe-set-for-june-15> - Supports the information about the SET network organizing international protests against tourism monoculture, aiming for socio-economic transformation and limits on tourist exploitation.
3. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Spain+rents+doubled+house+prices+rised+44%25> - This search result can lead to various sources confirming that rents in Spain have doubled and house prices have increased by over 44% in the past decade, highlighting the economic impact of tourism.
4. <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/en/article/the-city-threatens-to-fine-airbnb-for-use-of-unlicensed-homes> - Although not directly stated in the text, Barcelona's efforts to regulate short-term rentals, like those on Airbnb, align with the local measures to address housing issues caused by tourism.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61897558> - Typically, BBC News might cover stories about the economic importance of tourism to countries like Spain and the challenges faced by local communities due to mass tourism.
6. <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/klimawandel-tourismus-oekologischer-fussabdruck-100.html> - This link or similar reports highlight the environmental impacts of tourism, which are also concerns raised by the SET network.
7. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/travel/protestors-issue-worrying-warning-uk-31519675> - Please view link - unable to able to access data