



EACT Opposes Rome's Plans for its 2016 Jubilee

EACT, the European Alliance for Coach Tourism with members representing coach tour operators in Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Ireland, Sweden, Hungary as well as the United Kingdom, opposes the proposed rise in coach permits during the Jubilee in Rome in 2016. EACT members consider that the decision by the authorities in Rome to impose a fivefold increase on the existing €200 daily permit is out of all proportion. This decision threatens prepaid contracts for travel in 2016 and beyond and is yet another cost that is making Rome an expensive and unpredictable destination. Under these proposals a visitor in a group of 40 people staying in a 4 star hotel would be paying €33 in local taxes a night.

EACT members are naturally, having to reconsider how they structure their Italian product for 2016, how much time they spend in Rome and where they stay on their itineraries. It should be remembered that they have already had to contend with a doubling of accommodation taxes at very short notice; that they are now being asked to incorporate such an extra cost in less than three months' time illustrates a total disregard for how the coach tourism business which is vital to Rome's economy functions. It is also counter to the express aim of the Rome jubilee event to attract visitors from around the world in this special year.

The *assessore* has said that this increase is designed to act as a deterrent and force groups to travel on existing public transport to the various sites within the centre of Rome, a move that had disastrous consequences when previously tried in the Jubilee of 2000. We argue that instead of seeing coach tourism as part of the problem, it should be seen as part of the solution and as an extension of public transport. If there is a stress on the city of Rome from coach transport, it is not because these 'monsters of the road' are 'invading' the city, but because a proper plan has never been put in place to accommodate them effectively and efficiently.

EACT believes it is still possible to save this Jubilee year from the outcome of 2000 and strongly recommends that all parties to work together to deliver a good experience for visitors from around the world. This can be achieved by real consultation and collaboration. That window of opportunity is still open but will soon be gone and with it many jobs and much revenue will be put at risk in one of the few strong performing sectors in the Italian economy.



Stephen Smith Chairman of EACT, added, “Tourism by coach is the most environmentally effective way of bringing tourists into the heart of any city. They accommodate 50 people who would otherwise either not have visited the city or would have arrived in 25 cars whilst the coach only occupies 15 metres of road space the same as 3 cars. Encouraging more people to arrive by tourist coach would therefore reduce congestion on Rome’s already heavily congested streets and with an effective plan in place to pick up and set down tourists and park near central attractions will put less pressure on the Rome local public transport network.”

“The success of the tourist coach plan for the 2012 London Olympics shows what can be achieved when all parties work together and involve the coach industry and this Jubilee event gives Rome the ideal opportunity to test out solutions in support of its bid for the 2024 Olympics. EACT would urge the Rome authorities to grasp this opportunity”

Stephen Smith

Chairman European Alliance for Coach Tourism

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