

Europe grapples with overtourism this Summer

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: As the summer travel season returns in full force, Europe is once again grappling with overtourism. In 2024, the continent welcomed 747 million international visitors—the highest globally—mostly concentrated in southern and western Europe, drawn by its rich culture, mild climate, and developed infrastructure.

Cities and destinations are implementing tough measures to manage the surge. Venice has reinstated and expanded its tourist access fees, Greece limits daily visitors to the Acropolis, and Mediterranean cruise ports have introduced disembarkation levies amid claims of systemic strain. Meanwhile, Louvre staff in Paris staged strikes, citing exhaustion from high visitor numbers.

Anti-tourism protests erupted across Europe in June, with demonstrators using water guns to cool down crowds at popular landmarks. Despite these tensions and broader global uncertainties,

tourism continues to boom, driven by cheap flights, AI-enhanced travel planning, and a positive economic outlook.

Italy's Tourism Minister Daniela Santanchè emphasized AI's potential to ease crowding, framing tourism as an opportunity for local communities rather than a threat. Spain is tackling overtourism by regulating platforms like Airbnb, forcing the removal of thousands of listings to protect housing availability, and pushing back against budget airline complaints.

Beyond local disruptions, some activists highlight tourism's environmental impact—responsible for around 9% of global emissions. Santorini's mayor warns against unchecked tourism growth that could ultimately undermine the island's appeal and economy.

With Europe's allure showing no sign of fading—unlike the recent earthquakes that shook Santorini—managing visitor flows remains critical to balancing economic benefits with sustainability and local quality of life.

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