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Venice and the New Year

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On November 12, 2019 the highest tide of the " acquagranda ' (big water) in over 50 years flooded St Mark's Square and many of the ancient city's alleyways in Venice.
"Return to Venice, the city is alive, as always beautiful and welcoming, and in a few hours it returned to normal." A little bit over a month after the exceptional event an appeal came

from the Venetian Hoteliers Association, AVA, directly from the headquarters of the Foreign Press in Rome, to avoid further damages to the images that the submerged city had on tourists and public from all over the world.
"From mid-November – declared the Venetian Hoteliers Association president, Vittorio Bonacini - we are experiencing an unprecedented drop in bookings, with a drop that it is not registered even after the attack on the Twin Towers. In the first month we had a 45% peak in cancellations "with an unstoppable bleeding" even in the first months of 2020, including cancellation of events, conferences and other important events

scheduled in the city until spring. If Christmas has never been a sold out period, a striking figure is that of the New Year: last year the occupation was 100%, this year it is under 50".
The images, with the water that went into San Marco, the wind that broke windows and overturned gondolas, went around the world.
"High water is an ordinary passing phenomenon, which has always been part of the life of Venetians - continued Bonacini – But that tide has reached an exceptional level due to a very rare coincidence of four absolutely sporadic and extraordinary factors. What is not told is that all that violence lasted one hour and a half, that after three hours the tide left

Venice and that the city quickly regained its life ".
"With my collaborators - stated AVA vice-president, Stefania Stea, hotelier (owner of the Ca' Nigra hotel) present at the meeting, "we eliminated the water at night and the customers at breakfast had not even noticed what it was happened. People settled their shops and recommenced their lives. The market was open the next day and today only eight wharves don't work. All the rest of the city, does. "The drastic drop in bookings has affected the 400 Ava hoteliers, as well as B & Bs and chain restaurants, merchants, artisans and all related tourism sectors . In particular, on the run, said the AVA director, Claudio Scarpa,

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" are the American and English markets, our first customers".
With the French they represent around 40% of the city's tourist turnover. And they are the customers who spend the most". To this is added the calculation of the damages: "on December 19th the Municipality said 400 million €, but the deadline for the submission of compensation claims is January 31st". And then, Bonacini continued, "6 million to the museum system and 30 million to hotel structures".
The damage to the Basilica of San Marco alone is estimated at 6 mn. €.

Ms. Stea also informed that, precisely to encourage the return of visitors, the hotel facilities are proposing large discounts, visible on the websites of all the hotel. Contradictory situations and false information such as "letters from customers who tell us they have an 8-year-old son, 125 centimeters tall, also ask if Venice is not too dangerous for him, if he risks drowning - Scarpa says -Others cancel ' because of the earthquake. But the earthquake leaves serious damage. The high water retreats.
" And then there is the count of the responsibilities and the daily problems of a tourist destination like Venice, from Mose to mass flows,

to large ships. "Often Venice is jammed with one day hit and run tourism," said Bonacini. According to AVA data, they are 2 out of 3 of the city's 30million tourists a year.
"Residential tourism is very different, stopping, going to the Fenice for concerts and discovering our cultural offerings. The problem - he added - is managing the flows and starting to quota access for commuter tourism at San Marco alltogether, at the same time.

As for large ships, he concluded, "we have seen what can happen and must not be repeated. Agreements must be found with shipping companies for serious planning and scheduling of access to the port of Venice, as happens in the rest of the world".
The accommodation facilities in Venice, all the interconnected market, have therefore decided to face this critical contingency face-to-face, and wanted to inform the media around the world that Venice is alive and functioning, and that it is ready to welcome international journalists just to touch the dynamic and solid reality of a city that does not give up and does not stop.

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