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Venise: une ONG dénonce le tourisme de masse, "menace" pour la lagune

ROME, 4 juil 2011 (AFP) - Une ONG italienne de défense de l'environnement, Italia Nostra, a dénoncé lundi le tourisme de masse à Venise, le jugeant à l'origine de la mort lente de la lagune, "menacée" aussi par de grands projets immobiliers et un réseau de transport inadapté à ses besoins.

"Selon une étude réalisée en 1988, le nombre maximum acceptable de touristes par jour pour Venise était de 33.000, or aujourd'hui on est à 59.000 touristes par jour en moyenne", a indiqué l'architecte Cristiano Gasparetto.

La présidente d'Italia Nostra, Alessandra Mottola Molfino, a estimé que ce chiffre "est trop élevé pour une ville aussi fragile".

Selon les experts de l'ONG, cette marée humaine a entraîné une forte croissance des transports aquatiques dans la ville, causant la destruction progressive de l'écosystème propre à une lagune, avec son mélange d'eau douce et d'eau de mer et ses fonds relativement bas sur lesquels vivaient des plantes capables d'oxygéner l'eau.

Le mouvement des hélices des navires, qui circulent à une vitesse toujours plus élevée, soulève la vase du fond qui se trouve aspirée par les marées, et Venise se transforme de plus en plus en une baie marine et est de moins en moins une lagune.

Selon le professeur d'hydrodynamique de l'université de Padoue, Luigi D'Alpaos, "en 70 ans, le fonds de la lagune a baissé en moyenne d'un mètre".

"Il ne faut accepter qu'un nombre très limité de groupes organisés de touristes et seulement sur réservation", propose Italia Nostra, même si l'ONG est consciente qu'une mesure de ce genre "entraînera momentanément une réduction des flux commerciaux et, en apparence, le déclin de l'économie locale".

L'ONG propose de développer d'autres activités (recherche universitaire, écotourisme) pour "créer une économie plus riche que celle basée sur le seul tourisme" de masse.

Italia Nostra dénonce aussi une "méga-spéculation" immobilière avec la volonté de la mairie de construire dans les environs de la Cité des Doges, une nouvelle ville, Tessera-City, avec entrepôts, bureaux, casino mais surtout avec une liaison TGV.

Cette dernière entraînerait la construction d'un tunnel de 9 km de long sous la lagune et abaisserait davantage encore le fond de celle-ci, selon l'architecte Gasparetto.

"Venise est vraiment en danger. Il faut trouver un point d'équilibre entre les nécessités immédiates et l'avenir pour parvenir à un développement durable", a ajouté Mme Mottola Molfino.

ljm/fka/juv

AFP 041418 JUL 11

Aftonbladet.se

"Turisterna tar död på Venedig"



Nästan 60 000 besökare -

om dagen. Det är dubbelt så mycket som Venedig tål, menar experter. Här turister på Markusplatsen. Foto:

Aftonbladet.se ansvarar inte för det som står i bloggarna.

Ny larmrapport: Antalet besökare måste halveras

Venedigs berömda lagun hotar att bli förstörd.

Och boven i dramat är känd.

Alltför många turister kan ta död på Venedigs ekosystem.

Redan 1988 gjordes en studie kring vad som är en acceptabel besökssiffra för Venedig och dess världsberömda kanaler.

Arkitekten bakom studien, Cristiano Gasparetto, konstaterade då att 33000 besökare per dag var det antal som staden och dess system skulle kunna tåla.

"Ett verkligt hot"

Drygt tjugo år senare är dock besökssiffran nästan den dubbla, eller 59000 turister per dag.

– Det är ett alldeles för högt tal för en så ömtålig stad. Venedig befinner sig under ett verkligt hot. Vi måste uppnå en balans mellan det dagliga behovet och en hållbar utveckling inför framtiden, säger Alessandra Mottola Molfino, chef för den mot regeringen oavhängiga organisationen Italia Nostra.

Båttrafiken en bov

På grund av den allt mer utökade båttrafiken riskerar Venedigs känsliga lagun att förstöras och i stället förvandlas till en bukt.

De växter på lagunens botten som syresätter vattnet är helt enkelt hotade av massturismen.

Italia Nostra föreslår en skarp begränsning av antalet turistgrupper som släpps in i Venedig, väl medvetna om vad detta i sin tur skulle betyda för den lokala ekonomin.

Bygger ny stad intill

"Vi borde satsa på ekoturism för att skapa en rikare ekonomi än den som enbart är baserad på massturism", heter det i ett uttalande från organisationen.

Italia Nostra motsätter sig också planerna på att skapa en närliggande stad, Tessera-City, med kontorsbyggnader, kasino, varuhus och en snabbtågsförbindelse till och från Venedig.

– Då behövs en nio kilometer lång tunnel under lagunen som ytterligare skulle sänka dess nivå, säger Cristiano Gasparetto, mannen bakom studien som slog larm redan för 23 år sedan.

Leif-Åke Josefsson

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http://www.aftonbladet.se/resa/resmal/europa/italien/article13277253.ab



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Italy heritage group appeals to U.N. over Venice

04 Jul 2011 14:13

Source: reuters // Reuters

Jul 4 (Reuters) - * Wants U.N. to put city on endangered list

- * Says Venice should be stripped of World Heritage title
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By Philip Pullella

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Italia Nostra (Our Italy) predicted a bleak future for the U.N. World Heritage site at a news conference, accusing Italian governments of underestimating the devastating effects of past and future development projects and tourism policy.

"Today, this exceptional place risks seeing the destruction of its character and what is left of its natural condition," said Lidia Fersuoch, head of Italia Nostra's Venice chapter.

She said the national group would ask the United Nations cultural organisation, UNESCO, to put the city on its endangered list and consider striking it altogether from its World Heritage sites "because the Italian government has not lived up to its commitment made to UNESCO to safeguard Venice and its lagoon".

Venice, whose majestic palaces and churches are built on low-lying islands, mud piles and stilts, has myriad social, environmental and structural problems.

High tides in the Adriatic regularly raise the level of the lagoon and the city's famed canals, flooding low-lying areas such as St. Mark's Square on about 80 days a year.

The water attacks already fragile structures, with destabilising humidity rising some 7 metres (yards) on the walls of St Mark's Basilica.

Conservationists say the lagoon's delicate eco-system has been severely damaged by landfill and construction, industrial ports, dredging, and the passage of huge tourist and merchant ships.

PLANETARY ALARM

They say a multi-million dollar project to use massive mobile barriers at the lagoon's three links to the sea, which would seal off the lagoon from the Adriatic during the highest of sea tides, is only a stop-gap measure.

"We need to launch a planetary alarm," said Alessandra Mottola Molino, Italia Nostra's national president, adding that scientists' projections see the level of the lagoon rising 50 cm (20 inches) by the century's end as the Adriatic itself rises.

"In 100 years the sea level will be such that the barriers will have to remain closed all the time, blocking the natural exchange of sea water that is its very life source," she said. "This will change Venice as we know it."

The group says long-term solutions such as revitalising the lagoon's natural eco-system, regulating tourism, and blocking construction had to be found.

Cristiano Gasparetto, a former member of the city's Commission to Safeguard Venice, said the proposed construction of a huge new satellite city on the mainland with an underwater subway linking the mainland to the islands would be an "ecological disaster".

"If we lose the lagoon, we lose the city," he said.

Tens of thousands of tourists invade Venice every day, making the city practically uninhabitable for its population of 60,000, down from 150,000 at the end of World War Two.

Italia Nostra wants a cap on the number of tourists allowed in each day, with large groups having to make reservations.

It also wants large ships to be banned from entering the lagoon and sailing into the Grand Canal because their wake damages the already delicate foundations of the city's historic buildings. (Editing by Tim Pearce)

World News Roundup

France

Comeback 'difficult'

Case against 'DSK' looms

PARIS, July 4, (RTRS): A French writer will file a legal complaint against former IMF chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn, also known as DSK, on Tuesday alleging that he tried to rape her during an incident nine years ago, her lawyer told Reuters On Monday.

The move comes just as a US case against Strauss-Kahn on charges of attempted rape and sexual assault of a



collapse after prosecutors acknowledged she had lied under oath and changed

maid

The turnabout in the New York case has prompted some calls for the former Socialist finance minister to make a political comeback in

France. Lawyer David Koubbi said the complaint by Tristane Banon, 32, would relate to an incident that took place when she went to interview Strauss-Kahn, a former French finance minister, in an apartment in Paris. She was 22 at the time.

"Tristane Banon will file a complaint on Tuesday for attempted rape in Paris," Koubbi said.

"These acts are extremely serious," he added. "These events were combined with a violence that was absolutely striking for these kinds of situations."

Doubted

The move by Banon, a journalist and author of a book and two novels, will follow Strauss-Kahn's release from house arrest in New York recently after prosecutors said they now doubted the credibility of his Guinean-born accuser.

Koubbi would not say whether the timing was affected by developments in New York. Until his May arrest, Strauss-Kahn was seen as the left's best chance of

winning the 2012 election. Under French law, attempted rape charges can be brought up to 10 years after an alleged attack, whereas sexual assault charges expire after three years.

Koubbi had said several times in recent weeks his client was con-Strauss-Kahn for the incident, which he said on Monday took place in early 2003, not in 2002 as had previously been reported.

However, he also said she did not wish to be associated with the US prosecution and would not respond to an appeal by the New York plaintiff's lawyer to testify.

Banon's mother Anne Mansouret, a Socialist councilor, has said she regrets talking her daughter out of filing a complaint at the time.

The incident first surfaced publicly in 2007, when Banon described it in graphic detail on a television talk show, albeit with Strauss-Kahn's name bleeped out by the broadcaster.

During the TV talk show, which was widely circulated online in recent weeks, Banon said he insisted on holding her hand during the interview before making advances that led to her fighting him off as he tried to undo her clothing.

Meanwhile, France's Socialist Party said on Monday its erstwhile star Dominique Strauss-Kahn is unlikely to enter the 2012 presidential race, despite the weakening of the sex assault case against him in New York.

Party spokesman Benoit Hamon said the idea that Strauss-Kahn could now run for the presidency was "the weakest" of all possible scenarios for the former IMF chief's political future.

However, if he opted to make a late entry in the Socialists' October primary, after the July 13 deadline for candidates to register, the party leadership would not block it, Hamon said.

"Let's leave Dominique Strauss-Kahn some breathing space and let him speak once he is ready," he told a news conference.

Strauss-Kahn had been viewed as the left's best chance of defeating conservative President Nicolas Sarkozy in April 2012, but his shock arrest in mid-May on attempted rape charges has meant the Socialists have had to press on without him.

The two main contenders to emerge are former party leader François Hollande and former Labour Minister Martine Aubry, who headed the party until she declared her candidacy last

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Demonstrators protesting construction of a high-speed rail linking Italy to France are targeted with tear gas during clashes with police in Giaglione, Italy, July 3. Around two hundred people, mainly police officers, were injured as officers clashed with masked protesters at

In this Dec 3, 1936 file picture

Archduke Otto von Habsburg poses in uniform of a captain of the

Tyrolean rifleman's regiment at an

unknown place in Austria. (AP)

Mladic

Europe

Mladic ejected from court: UN

arraignment Monday after the former

Bosnian Serb military chief shouted at

them, defied their orders and refused to

enter any plea to 11 charges of mastermind-

ing the worst atrocities of the Bosnian war.

With Mladic's chair in the courtroom

line with the war crimes tribunal's rules for

Mladic's contemptuous display drew

empty, Presiding Judge Alphons Orie

suspects who refuse to plead.

entered not guilty pleas on his behalf, in

anger from survivors of the 1992-95

Bosnian war and raised the prospect of

offer victims more heartache than jus-

Mladic is accused of commanding troops who in 1995 killed some 8,000 Muslim

men and boys in Europe's worst massacre

since World War II, survivor Fadila Efendic

called Mladic's behavior salt in her wounds.

Belarus on Monday opened the first trials

of the almost 300 people arrested in a mas-

regime of strongman President Alexander

The Vyasna rights group said that 200

people were arrested in the capital Minsk

during Sunday's protests while another 80

were arrested in other parts of the country

including the regional centres of Grodno,

Gomel and Mogilev.
The first legal proceedings against the

detainees were starting Monday at five dis-

trict courts in Minsk, Vyasna said, with the

Responding to calls for a rally by the

Internet-based group "Revolution through

the Social Network", the protesters defied

warnings and state jamming of websites to

turn out in reasonable numbers Sunday

protesters facing up to 15 days jail on

charges of hooliganism.

Crackdown nabs 'almost 300':

Independence Day protests against the

sive nationwide crackdown on

Lukashenko.

another turbulent UN court trial that may

In Srebrenica, the Bosnian town where

judges threw Ratko Mladic out of his own

a rally against a high-speed rail link in northern Italy Sunday, police said. Clashes between protesters and police left at least 188 officers and about a dozen demonstrators hurt, said officials, after a small group stormed a tunnel which was part of the work site at

Chiomonte, west of Turin. Police arrested at least five people and Italy's President Giorgio Napolitano condemned the violence. Police blamed the trouble on hundreds of masked leftist 'black block' extremists from Italy and neighbouring countries. (AP)

Obituary

'He was a towering personality'

tto von Habsburg dies at 98

BERLIN, July 4, (AP): Otto von Habsburg, the oldest son of Austria-Hungary's last emperor who saw the end of his family's centuries-long rule and emerged to become a champion of a Europe united by democracy, died Monday. He was 98.

Habsburg died in his sleep at his home in Poecking in southern Germany, where he had lived since the 1950s, with his seven children nearby, spokeswoman Eva Demmerle

told The Associated Press. Habsburg used his influence in a vain struggle to keep the Nazis from annexing Austria before World War II, then campaigned against the Soviet empire in the decades after the war.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, he used his seat in European Parliament to lobby for expanding the European Union to include former Eastern bloc

"My father was a towering personality," Habsburg's oldest son Karl Habsburg-Lothringen told the Austria Press Agency. "With him we lose a great European who has influenced everything we do today beyond meas-

Born in 1912 in Austria, Habsburg witnessed the family's decline after the empire was dismantled and Austria became a republic following World War I. He became head of the family at his father's death in 1922 and continued to claim the throne until the 1960s.

He was a member of the European Parliament for the conservative Bavarian Christian Social Union in

southern Germany and also served as president of the Pan-European League from 1979 to 1999.

Role

In that role, he was instrumental in helping organize the Pan-European Picnic peace demonstration in 1989 on the border of Austria and Hungary. The border was briefly opened in a symbolic gesture, which created the opportunity for 600 East Germans to flee communism months before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

It was the first time an Eastern European nation had opened its borders, and is widely seen as the start of the fall of communism.

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso mourned the passing of "a great European ... who gave an important impetus to the European project throughout his rich

life". "He made a central contribution to the opening of the Iron Curtain and the peaceful reunification of our continent that had been divided for too long," Barroso said in a statement. "I will particularly remember his strong stance against all forms of totalitarianism and on Europe's fundamental

Hungarian lawmakers held a minute of silence in parliament honoring Habsburg's memory, where he was remembered for his support through speeches given around the world of Hungary's failed 1956 revolution against Soviet occupation and for his backing of the country's efforts to join the European Union.

"His life and fate carried with it the history of the 20th century," parliamentary speaker Laszlo Kover said. After the fall of communism, "he personally did much to strengthen the process of our European integration." Many in Hungary also respected

Habsburg because of his ability to speak the famously difficult native language. The House of Habsburg rose to

ower in Europe at the end of the 13th Century and at its height ruled much of the continent. Born in 1912 in Reichenau,

Austria, Otto von Habsburg became crown prince when his father, Charles I, was crowned emperor in 1916, during World War I. But after Austria and Germany lost

World War I, the Austria-Hungarian

Empire was dismantled, Charles I had to abdicate and Austria went on to become a republic. In 1919, Charles and his family had to leave the country for what turned out to be permanent exile in several

different countries, including Switzerland, Belgium, and France. After his father's death in 1922, the

nine-year-old Otto officially took over as the head of the House of Habsburg.

Fight

Otto tried to negotiate his return to Austria in 1935 and again in 1938 when he even sought to become chancellor to fight the expected invasion by Hitler's troops, but could not gather enough support.

Instead, he found a channel through

the US embassy in Paris to contact President Franklin D. Roosevelt and later claimed to have prevented Allied bombings of a number of Austrian cities by pleading with the US mili-

He was also credited with having helped about 15,000 Austrians, including many Jews, escape the Nazis. At the same time, as he told the Austrian paper Die Presse in 2007, he negotiated Austria's postwar fate with Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle.

"Otto von Habsburg was one of the great personalities of modern European history," said Karl Hafen, head of the German chapter of the International Society for Human

"Habsburg was a great defender of freedom rights, a defender of minorities and ethnic groups and an influential statesman. His resistance to the Nazis, like his commitment to reconciliation and the unification of Europe influenced and inspired people."

From early in World War II in 1940 to after the Allied invasion of France in 1944, Habsburg lived in Washington DC, before returning to Europe to live in France, and then in Poecking, Germany after 1954.

Still, he was not allowed to return to Austria until 1966, five years after he officially renounced the crown. He later claimed to be baffled by the hostility and criticism he faced in his home country.

Habsburg's wife, Regina, died last

Vatican rejects China ordination:

The Vatican on Monday rejected as illegitimate the unauthorised ordination last month of a priest as bishop by China's state-run Catholic Church. Paul Lei Shiyin was ordained as bishop

on June 29, in a move the Holy See said

was divisive and looked set to dampen recently improved ties between the Vatican and China's Communist Party. "Rev. Lei Shiyin, ordained without the

Papal mandate and hence illegitimately, has no authority to govern the diocesan Catholic community, and the Holy See does not recognise him," a statement said.



A tourist rests on a bench at the Carrousel square, in front of the Louvre Museum buildings, on July 4, in Paris. According to French Tourism ministry sources, spending by French tourists increased by 6.8 percent and spending of Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Netherlands tourists increased by 3.9 percent during the 2011 first five months. (AFP)

"The effects of the sanction which he has incurred through violation of the ... Code of Canon Law remain in place," the Vatican added, referring to excommunication.

Tymoshenko slams 'rushed' probe:

Group appeals to UN

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tourism policy.
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Former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, complained Monday that the judge in her trial for abuse of power was rushing proceedings and not giving her defence team enough time to prepare their case. The stop-start trial, which began June 24, was again adjourned for two days until Wednesday. But Tymoshenko had asked for a month so her lawyers could read thousands of pages of documents in a case she has called unfair. Famed for her braided hairstyle,

Tymoshenko served as prime minister after the 2004 Orange Revolution and has been charged over a deal on gas prices she signed in 2009 with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Kiev prosecutors argued the deal was

unfavourable and should not have gone through without government permission, while Tymoshenko has countered that she was authorised to act alone and negotiated a lower rate than in most of Europe.

In argumentative mode on Monday, she refused to stand up to address the judge, telling him this was a "sign of protest against an unfair trial", while her supporters shouted in the courtroom, television footage showed. "If the judge gives a defence lawyer one day to read 4,000 pages, this means he does not want the defence to be prepared ... and that I will not be able to defend myself during this made-to-order trial," she complained to the judge.

Tymoshenko faces up to a decade in jail if convicted in a trial she has condemned as a vendetta initiated by her bitter rival President Viktor Yanukovych, who beat her in the final round of presidential polls last

evening. (AFP)

Chicago Tribune

Breaking News, Since 1847

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Philip Pullella Reuters

9:15 a.m. CDT, July 4, 2011

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Courrier de l'Ouest

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Monde-express

Canular sur ObamaLes services secrets américains ont annoncé hier qu'ils enquêtaient sur le piratage informatique du compte Twitter de la chaîne de télévision Fox News, sur lequel ont été envoyés de faux messages annonçant l'assassinat du président **Barack Obama**.Ben Ali condamnéL'ex-président tunisien Ben Ali a été condamné, hier, par contumace à 15 ans et demi de prison pour détention d'armes, de stupéfiants et de pièces archéologiques.

182 affaires, dont les homicides de 300 personnes durant la révolution, sont instruites par la justice contre l'ancien président.

Les autorités saoudiennes ont ignoré toutes les demandes d'extradition de Ben Ali.On se serre la ceintureLa partie des dépenses de la reine Elizabeth d'Angleterre (photo) couvertes par contribuables a été réduite de plus de 5 % l'an dernier « conformément» à l'austérité décrétée par le gouvernement.

Les dépenses officielles de la souveraine se sont élevées à 32,1 millions de livres (35,6 millions d'euros), lors de l'année fiscale 2010-11.

Un procès historiqueUne peine de vingt ans de prison a été requise hier à Turin contre l'ex-propriétaire du groupe suisse Eternit et un ancien actionnaire belge d'Eternit Italie dans le cadre du plus grand procès jamais organisé sur le drame de l'amiante.

Les deux hommes sont accusés d'être responsables de la mort d'environ 3 000 personnes en Italie, anciens ouvriers ou simples habitants.

Prison pour les opposantsPlus de 20 opposants au Bélarus ont été condamnés, hier pour la plupart, à des peines allant jusqu'à 15 jours de prison, au lendemain de l'interpellation de près de 400 personnes lors de manifestations silencieuses contre le autoritaire du président Alexandre Loukachenko. Une alliance contre l'OtanLe président russe a rencontré hier son homologue sud-africain en marge d'une réunion du Conseil Otan-Russie, consacré notamment à la Libye, où Moscou et Prétoria pourraient appeler l'Alliance à cesser ses raids aériens contre le régime du colonel Kadhafi.

La lagune menacéeUne ONG italienne de défense de l'environnement, Italia Nostra, a dénoncé hier le tourisme de masse à Venise, le jugeant à l'origine de la mort lente de la lagune, « menacée» aussi par de grands projets immobiliers et un réseau de transport inadapté à ses besoins.

Mladic s'entêteL'ancien chef militaire des Serbes de Bosnie Ratko Mladic a refusé de plaider coupable ou non coupable hier devant le TPI pour l'ex-Yougoslavie avant d'être évacué de la salle d'audience.

Il est poursuivi pour onze chefs d'accusation de génocide, crimes contre l'humanité et crimes de guerre.Un logo pour cadeauLa compagnie sudafricaine South African Airways a dévoilé hier le premier avion de sa flotte, marqué du logo de la journée dédiée à Nelson Mandela, le 18 juillet, à l'occasion du 93eanniversaire de l'icône de la lutte anti-apartheid.

Mail Online

Venice tourist warning: 'Cap visitor numbers to avoid environmental catastrophe'

By Catherine Eade

Last updated at 10:51 AM on 5th July 2011

An Italian heritage group warned yesterday that Venice is facing an irreversible environmental catastrophe unless visitor numbers are capped.

The acceptable maximum number of tourists for Venice is 33,000, a study found. In 2011 the average number of visitors to the city daily is 60,000.

Alessandra Mottola Molfino, head of the Italia Nostra non-governmental organisation, said the number of tourists visiting Venice daily 'is too high for such a fragile city', and warned that mass tourism is slowly eroding the Venice lagoon.



Endangered: An Italian heritage group says Venice faces environmental catastrophe if visitor numbers are not capped

The organisation says that as a result of this human tide, water transport has soared in the city, causing the gradual destruction of the lagoon ecosystem.

Propellers push up the underwater silt which is sucked in by tides, meaning Venice is increasingly becoming less of a lagoon and more of a bay, says Luigi D'Alpaos, a professor of hydrodynamics at Padoa University.

In 70 years, the laguna bed has dropped by about three feet, and the water now possesses a salinity level nearly as high as that of the Adriatic Sea, he added.

Italia Nostra proposed a sharp reduction of the number of tour groups, even though it said that such a step would lead to a drop in trade flows and even a 'decline of the local economy'.

The group suggested developing other activities such as university research or ecotourism 'to create a richer economy than one solely based on (mass) tourism.'

Italia Nostra also criticised plans by Venice authorities to build a nearby city, Tessera-City, complete with offices, a casino, warehouses and a high-speed rail link.

The rail link would require construction of a 9km-long tunnel under the laguna and would further lower its bed.

'Venice is really under threat. We must find a balance between immediate needs and the future to ensure sustainable development,' said Mottola Molfino.

Read more: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-2011361/Venice-tourism-Cap-visitor-numbers-face-environmental-disaster.html#ixzz1REgka24K

LINK ALL'ARTICOLO:

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-2011361/Venice-tourism-Cap-visitor-numbers-face-environmental-disaster.html



04 July 2011 - 16H46

Mass tourism threatening Venice lagoon, say ecologists



A gondola sails along a canal in Venice. An Italian environmental group has warned that mass tourism is slowly eroding the Venice lagoon, which it said is also threatened by major real estate development and an inadequate transport network.

AFP - An Italian environmental group warned on Monday that mass tourism is slowly eroding the Venice lagoon, which it said is also threatened by major real estate development and an inadequate transport network.

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The group's experts say that as a result of this human tide, aquatic transport has soared in the city, causing the gradual destruction of the lagoon ecosystem, with its mix of sea and fresh water and its relatively shallow bed which is home to plants which can oxygenate water.

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"Venice is really under threat. We must find a balance between immediate needs and the future to ensure sustainable development," said Mottola Molfino.

LINK ALL'ARTICOLO:

http://www.france24.com/en/20110704-mass-tourism-threatening-venice-lagoon-say-ecologists

Herald Sun

Stories start here

Mass tourism destroying Venice, study



A vaporetto, or public water bus, plies the Grand Canal in Venice.



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Start of sidebar. Skip to end of sidebar.

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LINK ALL'ARTICOLO:

http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/325483/mass-tourism-threatening-venice-lagoon-say-ecologists



Mass tourism threatening Venice lagoon, say ecologists

July 5, 2011, 12:22pm



(AFP Photo)

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http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/325483/mass-tourism-threatening-venice-lagoon-say-ecologists



By INet Bridge, AFP, Updated: 2011/07/05

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Link all'articolo:

http://news.za.msn.com/mass-tourism-threatening-venice-lagoon-ecologists

The Gazette

Montrealgazette.com

Venice has bleak future, heritage group says

Plea to UN; Wants city placed on endangered list

By PHILIP PULLELLA, Reuters July 5, 2011 6:06 AM



Stefano Rellandini REUTERS Italia Nostra wants to put a cap on the number of tourists allowed into Venice each day. Mass tourism, environmental neglect and construction are eroding the city's delicate ecosystem.

Photograph by: STEFANO RELLANDINI REUTERS, Reuters

Italy's leading heritage group on Monday urged the United Nations to put Venice on its endangered list, saying mass tourism, environmental neglect and rampant construction were sounding the death knell for the lagoon city.

Italia Nostra (Our Italy) predicted a bleak future for the UN World Heritage site at a news conference, accusing Italian governments of underestimating the devastating effects of past and future development projects and tourism policy.

"Today, this exceptional place risks seeing the destruction of its character and what is left of its natural condition," said Lidia Fersuoch, head of Italia Nostra's Venice chapter.

Venice, whose majestic palaces and churches are built on low-lying islands, mud piles and stilts, has myriad social, environmental and structural problems. High tides in the Adriatic regularly raise the level of the lagoon and the city's famed canals, flooding low-lying areas such as St. Mark's Square on about 80 days a year.

Conservationists say the lagoon's delicate ecosystem has been severely damaged by landfill and construction, industrial ports, dredging, and the passage of huge tourist and merchant ships.

They say a multi-milliondollar project to use mobile barriers at the lagoon's three links to the sea, which would seal off the lagoon from the Adriatic during the highest of sea tides, is only a stop-gap measure.

"We need to launch a planetary alarm," said Alessandra Mottola Molino, Italia Nostra's national president, adding that scientists' projections see the level of the lagoon rising 50 cm by the century's end as the Adriatic itself rises.

"In 100 years, the sea level will be such that the barriers will have to remain closed all the time, blocking the natural exchange of sea water that is its very life source," she said.

"This will change Venice as we know it."

Italia Nostra wants a cap on the number of tourists allowed in each day, with large groups having to make reservations.

It also wants large ships to be banned from entering the lagoon and sailing into the Grand Canal because their wake damages the already delicate foundations of the city's historic buildings.

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Mass tourism destroying Venice, study luglio 5, 2011 08:15AM Page 1 of 2 View as a single page

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Italy heritage group appeals to U.N. over Venice



Mon Jul 4, 2011 7:43pm IST

Jul 4 (Reuters) - * Wants U.N. to put city on endangered list

- * Says Venice should be stripped of World Heritage title
- * Demands long-term action to save city and its lagoon

By Philip Pullella

ROME, July 4 (Reuters) - Italy's leading heritage group on Monday urged the United Nations to put Venice on its endangered list, saying mass tourism, environmental neglect and rampant construction were sounding the death knell for the lagoon city.

Italia Nostra (Our Italy) predicted a bleak future for the U.N. World Heritage site at a news conference, accusing Italian governments of underestimating the devastating effects of past and future development projects and tourism policy.

"Today, this exceptional place risks seeing the destruction of its character and what is left of its natural condition," said Lidia Fersuoch, head of Italia Nostra's Venice chapter.

She said the national group would ask the United Nations cultural organisation, UNESCO, to put the city on its endangered list and consider striking it altogether from its World Heritage sites "because the Italian government has not lived up to its commitment made to UNESCO to safeguard Venice and its lagoon".

Venice, whose majestic palaces and churches are built on low-lying islands, mud piles and stilts, has myriad social, environmental and structural problems.

High tides in the Adriatic regularly raise the level of the lagoon and the city's famed canals, flooding low-lying areas such as St. Mark's Square on about 80 days a year.

The water attacks already fragile structures, with destabilising humidity rising some 7 metres (yards) on the walls of St Mark's Basilica.

Conservationists say the lagoon's delicate eco-system has been severely damaged by landfill and construction, industrial ports, dredging, and the passage of huge tourist and merchant ships.

PLANETARY ALARM

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"We need to launch a planetary alarm," said Alessandra Mottola Molino, Italia Nostra's national president, adding that scientists' projections see the level of the lagoon rising 50 cm (20 inches) by the century's end as the Adriatic itself rises.

"In 100 years the sea level will be such that the barriers will have to remain closed all the time, blocking the natural exchange of sea water that is its very life source," she said. "This will change Venice as we know it."

The group says long-term solutions such as revitalising the lagoon's natural eco-system, regulating tourism, and blocking construction had to be found.

Cristiano Gasparetto, a former member of the city's Commission to Safeguard Venice, said the proposed construction of a huge new satellite city on the mainland with an underwater subway linking the mainland to the islands would be an "ecological disaster".

"If we lose the lagoon, we lose the city," he said.

Tens of thousands of tourists invade Venice every day, making the city practically uninhabitable for its population of 60,000, down from 150,000 at the end of World War Two.

Italia Nostra wants a cap on the number of tourists allowed in each day, with large groups having to make reservations.

It also wants large ships to be banned from entering the lagoon and sailing into the Grand Canal because their wake damages the already delicate foundations of the city's historic buildings. (Editing by Tim Pearce)

Sina english (China)

Mass tourism threatening Venice lagoon: ecologists

2011-07-05 06:51:33 GMT2011-07-05 14:51:33 (Beijing Time) SINA.com



A gondolier rows his gondola with tourists in a canal in Venice in this May 7, 2011 file photo. (REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini)



Gondoliers row gondolas with tourists in a canal in Venice in this May 7, 2011 file photo.(REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini)

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"Venice is really under threat. We must find a balance between immediate needs and the future to ensure sustainable development," said Mottola Molfino.

(Agencies)

Link all'articolo:

http://english.sina.com/life/p/2011/0704/380012.html



Mass tourism threatening Venice lagoon: ecologists

by Staff Writers

Rome (AFP) July 4, 2011

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LINK ALL'ARTICOLO:

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Mass_tourism_threatening_Venice_lagoon_ecologists_999.html

THE AUSTRALIAN

THE HEART OF THE NATION

Mass tourism destroying Venice, study



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Link ALL'ARTICOLO:

http://www.theaustralian.com.au/travel/news/mass-tourism-destroying-venice-study/story-e6frg8ro-1226087757922



Mass tourism threatening Venice lagoon: ecologists

AFP

Tuesday, 5 July 2011

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Venice

Venice 'risks losing its soul due to mass tourism'

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Venice faces an "irreversible" environmental catastrophe unless visitor numbers are capped and cruise ships are restricted, a leading Italian heritage group has warned.



High tides, particularly during the winter, already flood much of Venice Photo: REUTERS



By Nick Squires, in Rome 5:27PM BST 04 Jul 2011



The lagoon city risks "losing its soul" as it struggles to cope with 60,000 tourists a day, nearly double the number it can sustain, according to Italia Nostra (Our Italy).

Campaigners say Venice should discourage mass tourism and instead court high-spending visitors. The city could also encourage activities like university research and technology.

The environmental group said the threats faced by 'La Serenissima', as the Venetian republic was once known, were so grave that UNESCO should consider striking the city off the World Heritage list.

"The Italian government has not lived up to its commitment made to UNESCO to safeguard Venice and its lagoon," the organisation said. Alessandra Mottola Molino, Italia Nostra's president, said: "We need to launch a planetary alarm."

Sea level rises and more frequent storms are expected to increase the level of the Venetian lagoon by 20 inches by the end of the century, threatening to undermine the foundations of centuries-old palaces and churches and swamp some parts of the city altogether.

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High tides, particularly during the winter, already flood much of the city, including St Mark's Square, the focus for millions of tourists.

The situation was exacerbated by the increasing number of giant cruise



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 Italian Riviera: readers' tips, recommendations and travel advice ships which visit Venice - their wake erodes the delicate mud banks and wooden piles on which the city is built, Italia Nostra said.

Dredging, landfill and the construction of a huge new satellite city on the Italian mainland, a few miles from Venice, are radically changing the lagoon's ecosystem and posing enormous risks to the survival of one of the world's most beautiful urban environments.

Cristiano Gasparetto, a former member of the city's Commission to Safeguard Venice, said the proposed construction of a six-mile-long underwater subway linking the mainland to Venice risked becoming an "ecological disaster".

"If we lose the lagoon, we lose the city," he said.

In an attempt to save the city, Italians are building a £3 billion flood barrier, named Moses, consisting of 78 giant steel gates across the three inlets through which water from the Adriatic surges into Venice's lagoon.

The project, due to be operational in 2014, will like its namesake literally turn back the waves, regulating the flow of water from the sea.

But for all its expense and technological sophistication, it will only be a stopgap measure, environmentalists fear.

"In 100 years the sea level will be such that the barriers will have to remain closed all the time, blocking the natural exchange of sea water that is (the lagoon's) very life source," said Lidia Fersuoch, the head of Italia Nostra's Venice chapter.

"This will change Venice as we know it."

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Under seige by tourists, Venice faces catastrophe if visitor limits aren't imposed

By **Jayne Clark**, USA TODAY

Updated <1m ago



Venice is "under siege" by tourists and faces "irreversible" catastrophe if limits aren't imposed on visitor numbers, warns a report released Monday by Italy's leading heritage group.

Italia Nostra (Our Italy) accused the Italian government of "underestimating the devastating effects of past and future development projects and tourism policy," Reuters reports.

The group will ask UNESCO, the United Nation's cultural organization to place the city on its endangered list and consider removing it from its list of World Heritage Sites. The lagoon city is besieged by 60,000 tourists a day, including many from an increasing number of cruise ships that come to call, says Reuters.

"The Italian government has not lived up to its commitment made to UNESCO to safeguard Venice and its lagoon," the environmental organization said. Alessandra Mottola Molino, *Italia Nostra's* president, was quoted in <u>London's Telegraph</u> newspaper as saying, "We need to launch a planetary alarm."

A \$4.8 billion flood barrier (named Moses) is under construction to contain tidal surges from the Adriatic into the city's lagoon. But it isn't due to be operational until 2014 and some environmentalists fear it's only a stopgap measure.



Jul 4 (Reuters) - * Wants U.N. to put city on endangered list

By Philip Pullella

ROME, July 4 (Reuters) - Italy's leading heritage group on Monday urged the United Nations to put Venice on its endangered list, saying mass tourism, environmental neglect and rampant construction were sounding the death knell for the lagoon city.

Italia Nostra (Our Italy) predicted a bleak future for the U.N. World Heritage site at a news conference, accusing Italian governments of underestimating the devastating effects of past and future development projects and tourism policy.

"Today, this exceptional place risks seeing the destruction of its character and what is left of its natural condition," said Lidia Fersuoch, head of Italia Nostra's Venice chapter.

She said the national group would ask the United Nations cultural organisation, UNESCO, to put the city on its endangered list and consider striking it altogether from its World Heritage sites "because the Italian government has not lived up to its commitment made to UNESCO to safeguard Venice and its lagoon".

Venice, whose majestic palaces and churches are built on low-lying islands, mud piles and stilts, has myriad social, environmental and structural problems.

High tides in the Adriatic regularly raise the level of the lagoon and the city's famed canals, flooding low-lying areas such as St. Mark's Square on about 80 days a year.

The water attacks already fragile structures, with destabilising humidity rising some 7 metres (yards) on the walls of St Mark's Basilica.

Conservationists say the lagoon's delicate eco-system has been severely damaged by landfill and construction, industrial ports, dredging, and the passage of huge tourist and merchant ships.

PLANETARY ALARM

They say a multi-million dollar project to use massive mobile barriers at the lagoon's three links to the sea, which would seal off the lagoon from the Adriatic during the highest of sea tides, is only a stop-gap measure.

"We need to launch a planetary alarm," said Alessandra Mottola Molino, Italia Nostra's national president, adding that scientists' projections see the level of the lagoon rising 50 cm (20 inches) by the century's end as the Adriatic itself rises.

"In 100 years the sea level will be such that the barriers will have to remain closed all the time, blocking the natural exchange of sea water that is its very life source," she said. "This will change Venice as we know it."

The group says long-term solutions such as revitalising the lagoon's natural eco-system, regulating tourism, and blocking construction had to be found.

Cristiano Gasparetto, a former member of the city's Commission to Safeguard Venice, said the proposed construction of a huge new satellite city on the mainland with an underwater subway linking the mainland to the islands would be an "ecological disaster".

"If we lose the lagoon, we lose the city," he said.

Tens of thousands of tourists invade Venice every day, making the city practically uninhabitable for its population of 60,000, down from 150,000 at the end of World War Two.

Italia Nostra wants a cap on the number of tourists allowed in each day, with large groups having to make reservations.

It also wants large ships to be banned from entering the lagoon and sailing into the Grand Canal because their wake damages the already delicate foundations of the city's historic buildings. (Editing by Tim Pearce)

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An Italian environmental group warned on Monday that mass tourism is slowly eroding the Venice lagoon, which it said is also threatened by major real estate development and an inadequate transport network.

Architect Cristiano Gasparetto said a 1988 study indicated that while the acceptable maximum number of tourists for Venice is 33,000 daily, today the average figure is 59,000.

Alessandra Mottola Molfino, head of the Italia Nostra nongovernmental organisation, said the figure "is too high for such a fragile city".

The group's experts say that as a result of this human tide, aquatic transport has soared in the city, causing the gradual destruction of the lagoon ecosystem, with its mix of sea and fresh water and its relatively shallow bed which is home to plants which can oxygenate water.

Propellers of ships cruising at ever greater speed push up the underwater silt which is sucked in by tides, with Venice increasingly becoming less of a lagoon and more and more a bay.

The Venice lagoon is an inlet of the Adriatic Sea, with access to sea waters largely restricted by a series of sand bars at the lagoon's entrance.

Substantial freshwater inputs used to flow through the lagoon as well, but over the past several centuries most of the freshwater has been diverted directly to the Adriatic.

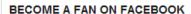
The lagoon's water now possesses a salinity level nearly as high as that of the Adriatic.

Luigi D'Alpaos, a professor of hydrodynamics at Padoa University, said that in the space of 70 years, the laguna bed had dropped on

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Italia Nostra proposed a sharp reduction of the number of tour groups, even though it realises that such a step "would momentarily lead to a drop in trade flows" and apparently to a "decline of the local economy".

It suggested developing other activities such as university research or ecotourism to "create a richer economy than one solely based on (mass) tourism".

Italia Nostra also slammed excessive real estate speculation, including plans by Venice authorities to build a nearby city, Tessera-City, complete with offices, a casino, warehouses and a high-speed rail link.

The rail link would require construction of a nine-kilometer-long tunnel under the laguna and would further lower its bed, according to Gasparetto.

"Venice is really under threat. We must find a balance between immediate needs and the future to ensure sustainable development," said Mottola Molfino.

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