



PRESS RELEASE

Tourism Governance in Europe

Negative impact on Spain's competitiveness of Royal Decree 933/2021

Brussels, 11 July 2025 – Since the start of this year, Decree 933/2021 requires travel and tourism service providers to collect and report more client data than any other European country.

It harms competitiveness, adds friction within the value-chain and increases costs. Together with partners we have made repeated representations to the relevant Ministries with no response. Due to concerns about the Decree's compatibility with EU data protection regulation, the European Commission has been notified. This is serious, and it is also avoidable.

The impact is felt across the intra-European ecosystem of operators, DMCs, agents and hoteliers, as well as by those selling Europe in global markets. Business ranges from large B2B and B2C operators to FIT and niche specialists in small groups business delivering tourism across the continent throughout the year. Spain remains popular, but it is harder for operators to work with due to the extensive client data collection and reporting requirements imposed by the Decree.

For the domestic supply chain in Spain, especially small businesses, the Decree poses an impossible dilemma: risk non-compliance with EU regulation and consequent fines or comply with the exceptional demands of the Royal Decree. Regulation must be necessary, rational and proportionate. On current evidence, the decree is none of these and is harming a value-adding ecosystem that secures Spain value export revenue.

To illustrate the practical impact as 2025 progresses, below are some perspectives from Spain's hoteliers, and from operators working with Asian and North American markets. For them, Spain is now an outlier in terms of business complexity. That is a risk. Where is the benefit?

MIKI TRAVEL

Miki provides tourism services across Europe from Asian and other international visitors, with Spain being a key destination. In 2024, our cultural tours in Spain generated almost 80,000 room nights (258,000 in 2019) across multiple regions and cities in the country. Our success relies on trust in international operations and strong, lasting partnerships. However, recent operational challenges have arisen in Spain due to the Royal Decree (933/2021). Its unique demands have increased complexities, legal and security requirements and workload for Miki, our clients, and partners. These compliance issues are creating business uncertainty and straining our value chain. The long-term competitiveness of Spain as a destination is at risk unless a different approach is identified. <https://miki.travel/>



We sell tours to North American travellers who wish to engage in meaningful travel and have fun, affordable trips that broaden their perspectives while teaching the culture of Europe. This year we're scheduled to send 114 groups with around 3,000 tour members to Spain. These groups will amount to over 3,600 room nights in 13 cities using 40+ hotels across the country, including smaller communities who offer a distinctive local flavour for our small groups.

Many of the hotels we work with are independent, family-owned and run. They tend to hire local people, work with local suppliers, and otherwise help us manage our impact in a positive way. From our perspective, the decree has added complicated and time-consuming processes which do not apply for other countries we work with. For both us and our Spanish partners, the decree has already made a noticeable, negative impact in the amount of staff and time it takes to manage each group's information. I can imagine it is even harder for some of our hotel partners, and other small businesses, who don't have spare resources to dedicate to additional bureaucracy.

Combined with the increased difficulty securing tickets to major sights and attractions throughout Spain (Alhambra, Royal Palace, Sagrada Familia, Guggenheim, to name a few) and anti-tourism sentiments in pockets of the country, the decree is yet another unfavourable consideration when planning our program. <https://www.ricksteves.com/>



"Spanish hoteliers and travel agents have been the strongest critics of this government-imposed regulation, which, over the past six months, has replaced a well-established and widely accepted framework that had been in place for more than 40 years. The previous regulation was instrumental in ensuring safety and stability for both the tourism sector and our visitors.

The newly introduced Royal Decree not only lacks precision, but in our view, also violates European regulations. While no sanctions have yet been imposed for non-compliance, the sector demands clear, enforceable rules that are exclusively focused on enhancing safety.

This regulation appears to be a reaction to the uncontrolled and disproportionate growth of tourist stays in private dwellings – an area now exceeding the combined capacity of hotels, aparthotels, campsites, rural lodgings, and guesthouses in Spain. We fully support efforts to curb illegality in the sector, but the procedures established in this Royal Decree are themselves unlawful and must be repealed. Any new framework must be developed in agreement with all legal actors within the tourism industry."

Ramón Estalella, General Secretary of CEHAT - La Confederación Española de Hoteles y Alojamientos Turísticos.

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