

EU-China Tourism Year. An opportunity for traveling and doing business in Italy and Europe.

Edoardo Bonatti

16 febbraio 2018

The **2018 EU-China Tourism Year** (ECTY) is officially underway. The initiative announced in 2016 by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission and Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, aims at promoting and facilitating Chinese tourism in the EU. Europe as a whole is extending its hand to Chinese tourists, which still encounter many difficulties in reaching one of their most desired destinations.

Naturally, Italy is playing a pivotal role in this endeavour. The ECTY inaugurated on 19 January in Venice's Palazzo Ducale at the presence of the Minister of culture Dario Franceschini and the President of European Parliament Antonio Tajani. Speaking at the event Elżbieta Bieńkowska, European Commissioner responsible for tourism, reinforced how important the ECTY will be in attracting Chinese investments by taking advantage of increased tourist flows. Mirroring this event, the Delegation of the European Union to China, whose Ambassador was present in Venice, presented the ECTY in Beijing on 25 January.

Italy, one of the tourist and cultural superpowers of the world, is of course keenly interested in the ever-growing Chinese market. Collaboration between the two countries will be strengthened by the protocol signed in Venice between representatives of the countries. The common guidelines defined in the deal point towards the enhancement of sustainable and alternative tourism, the development of a common marketing strategy, the promotion of the western region of the Maritime Silk Road (with Venice at its centre) and the improvement of reception standards to ease mutual tourist exchange. Is worth noting, in regards to the latter aspect, that Welcome Chinese, ECTY partner for travel facilities certification working with the China Tourism Authority, was funded by Select Italy in 2013.

Of the 129 million Chinese outbound travellers only 12 million headed to Europe and 1.5 to Italy. Increasing these figures by 10% at the European level would bring at least 1 billion euros a year for the EU economy. For Italy, such a feat would mean confirming the upward trend registered in 2017: to do so catering to Chinese taste, needs and behaviours will be vital. Travellers bring not just their money but also better opportunities to establish business partnerships with Italian, and European, companies.

Investorvisa.it is acutely aware of the difficulties faced by a foreign national wanting to request a visa for Italy. We are offering our services to smoothen the necessary procedures and to build new synergies between Italian businesses and non-Schengen investors.

Source: Fondazione Italia Cina