

IIMS AGM - Regional Report - Italy  
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Italy was badly hit by COVID-19 disease in the first months of 2020, one of the first western countries to face this challenge.

The reaction of the Government was initially confused and then very strict.

The infection was detected first on 30 January on two Chinese tourists, soon followed by others. On 31 January we officially entered emergency status. Mid February saw the first domestic clusters, basically in Northern Italy.

As of the beginning of March we entered in lock down and we were obliged to stay at home. No activity was allowed, with the exception of critical ones. Even the business was seriously impaired. It was not even allowed to leave our homes to reach relatives or friends, no question on boats!

Lock down continued in this way till the beginning of May.

Although shipyards and boatyards were theoretically allowed to continue their business, in practice all of them closed, due to increasing precautions to be adopted and restrictions in movement of personnel, suppliers and clients.

In the meanwhile, the first relaxation about the nautical and boating industry came in mid April, when it was allowed the delivery of hulls close to completion. This caused quite a lot of confusion, because just professionals were allowed to board, whilst owners and privates were not.

I personally wrote various messages to local, national Government and newspapers, warning about the risk of thousands of boats left in the marinas without any control to their mooring and watertightness, not to mention the fire risk, but I did not obtain any change in the restrictions.

Businesses officially re-opened on 18 May, but we were allowed to travel just from 3 June.

Summer was more or less normal, but tourism, including nautical one, was at the minimum since decades.

All the exhibitions, regattas, were cancelled, with the only exception of the International Boat Show in Genoa in September.

We remained in some way suspended until October, when everything started again.

Italy was divided in regional areas with three types of categories (yellow, orange, red), depending on the seriousness of the infection.

Basically in yellow regions we are allowed to travel within the region, in orange ones we have to remain within the city borders, in red ones we have to remain at home.

The categorization was updated weekly, so in practice no planning was possible.

We are still in this condition.

In practice, 2020 was deleted from our lives.

Unfortunately, this was repeated for the first 3 months of 2021 and we might expect something better in the second half of the year only.