

**Coronavirus, Rossi: “Free treatment, prevention and assistance for foreign tourists, students, and scholars.”**

Today, the President of the region of Tuscany, Enrico Rossi, signed a new ordinance. With this layout, all foreigners staying in Tuscany for study, research, teaching, or tourism will have access to the prevention and treatment methods for the Covid19 virus established by the current national and regional ordinances already put into place. These foreigners will be subject to the same conditions as Italians who come from areas subject to quarantine, who have been in close and prolonged contact with a positive case, and with obvious flu and respiratory symptoms.

“For them,” states President Enrico Rossi (who is head of the regional crisis team for the Coronavirus health emergency) “we will also guarantee the same health coverage, the same assistance, and the same treatment defined and assured to all Tuscan citizens.”

“For these people, of which eight thousand a year are here for study or research alone, plus over 40 million foreign tourists, there is no clear national policy for defining coverage and health care. It is a gap that we are trying to fill with this provision.”

“This order,” continues Rossi, “was founded for two reasons. First of all, health is an individual and collective question that is not bound by borders nor geographical origins. Secondly, there is an economical reason. As demonstrated by an IRPET study, foreign universities alone generate employment (at least three thousand jobs) and an economic impact of almost 150 million euros per year, which, in the event of blockage or suspension of activities, would risk leaving thousands of people at home. Even more significant, are the tourism numbers which generate over 4 billion euros a year and include over 40 thousand jobs. For this reason, in the cases identified by the national ordinances, we as the Region of Tuscany will be the buffer for these categories of visitors. Moreover, not having access to a family doctor, we will provide a contact number for information and to take on their cases if needed.”

“Unlike other countries,” Rossi concludes, “the Italian health system is free and accessible for everyone – a value that here in Tuscany we do not intend to give up in any way. Even in these extreme circumstances, we will ensure care and services for all of those who are in our territory. These services are provided free of charge, net of any private or public insurance policies, with partial and total coverage.”