

Eiffel Tower reopens after nine-month COVID closure



Paris, July 17 (RHC)-- The Eiffel Tower has reopened to visitors after nine months of shutdown caused by the COVID pandemic, the landmark's longest closure since World War II. The lifts of the "Iron Lady" again whisked tourists to its 300-metre (1,000-foot) summit and its majestic views of the French capital as a marching band played.

"It's a gift to be here. We really love Paris," said Ila, who came from Hamburg, Germany, and waited more than two hours with her daughter Helena to be among the first to the top.

"Tourism is coming back to Paris and we can again share the happiness, with visitors from around the world, of this monument and Paris," said Jean-Francois Martins, head of the tower's operating company.

The number of daily visitors to the tower will be limited to 13,000 a day instead of 25,000. And from Wednesday next week, visitors will need to show either proof of vaccination or a negative test, in line with recent government-imposed requirements as COVID cases again begin to climb.

“Obviously it’s an additional operational complication, but it’s manageable,” Martins told AFP news agency.

The opening came after France reopened to international tourists this summer, however, the rules vary widely depending on which country they are coming from. The number of visitors has been nowhere near pre-pandemic levels given continued border restrictions and virus risks.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo also welcomed the opening and encouraged visitors to “rediscover the emblematic monument.”

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