Italy stepping up tax and customs checks on private aircraft

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If you're planning a trip to Italy in a foreign-reg aircraft, be prepared for increased checks on the ground!

We're hearing reports of increased inspections by the Guardia di Finanza (Italian Financial Police), with **some aircraft reportedly detained while paperwork is checked.**

According to AOPA Italy, the checks are aimed at three main things:

- **Is the aircraft genuinely foreign owned, or is it being used by an Italian owner to avoid Italian taxes?**
- **Does the aircraft have the correct EU customs and VAT status, or is it legally operating under Temporary Admission?**
- **If the aircraft is company owned, is it genuinely being used for private flights rather than illegal commercial charter?**

Aircraft on foreign reg **(particularly N, T7 and HB reg aircraft)** appear to be attracting the most attention. AOPA Italy says the inspections have been most common in northeastern Italy, where some operators have also reported being asked to notify flights several days before arrival.

The inspections are linked to Italy's luxury tax rules that started back in 2011. AOPA says some operators have received substantial tax demands, and in some cases aircraft have reportedly been prevented from departing while the issues were investigated. AOPA also says it's pushing back, with several legal cases now underway and a complaint lodged with the European Commission.

But in the meantime, if you're flying to Italy in a foreign-reg aircraft (especially one owned by a company or with a more complex ownership structure!) **make sure you have the paperwork showing the aircraft's ownership, customs and VAT status, and that the flight is private rather than**

commercial!

Have you experienced one of these checks? We’d love to hear what happened. Email us at team@ops.group (we will keep it anonymous!)