



Getting Our Buses Back After the COVID-19 Shutdown



By Rico Pedretti

Editor's Note: Because of the Coronavirus last year, many tour bus companies were shut down. Buses were parked, insurance was cancelled on buses not being financed, and license plates were returned to the DMV. Many stayed parked for over a year and unfortunately, some went bankrupt. This is a story about one such company in Europe, and how it affected them and their passengers on their last trip before the shutdown.

Last Year

On March 7, 2020, I drove one of our tour buses, from Switzerland to Malaga (Spain) where I was scheduled to pick up a bus full of passengers to take them to Morocco for their vacation. By this time, the Coronavirus had already reached Italy. On March 12, 2020, the guests flew from Zurich to Malaga and I greeted them at the airport to start the tour.

On March 14, 2020, Coronavirus reached all of Europe. Flights were canceled, borders were closed, and ferry services between Spain (Europe) and Morocco (Africa) were canceled.

"Immediately cancel the trip!" These were the words I heard from our head office in Baden Rütihof through the mobile phone, into my ear at lunch while in Fes, Morocco. All European flights

were canceled. Everyone had to fly back home somehow, on the last flights before COVID-19 completely shut down air travel. Immediately Twerenbold (thanks to their super team) managed to rebook flights for our two groups from Morocco to get the passengers back home. "What a stroke of luck."

Now, it was time to cancel the city tour of Fes, return to the hotel, pack suitcases and drive the bus about five hours to Casablanca to return the passengers until the pandemic is over. We stayed overnight and the next morning at 5:00 AM we went to the airport to catch a flight booked for 8:30 AM. Thomas Rothschild's group had already flown out on the 13th. Now, it was up to him to accompany my group. The plane took off on time.

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