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A Sicilian offer some travellers won't be able to refuse

Addiopizzo Travel offers holidaymakers way to visit Sicily without fear of funding mafia

John Hooper in Rome

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A sticker made by Addiopizzo on a shop window in central Palermo, Sicily. Photograph: Giuseppe Piazza/Reuters

Not without reason, holidaymakers often leave Sicily with an uneasy feeling that they have been funding Cosa Nostra.

To ease their qualms a company to be launched this week will offer them a chance to do the reverse – visit one of the Mediterranean's most beautiful islands while contributing to the struggle against organised crime.

Addiopizzo Travel, the first part of whose name means "Goodbye protection money", is an offshoot of an organisation that brings together shopkeepers, restaurant owners, hoteliers and others committed to refusing the mafia's unrefusable offers. Until now, the only route open to tourists worried that they might be giving their custom to businesses owned, or extorted, by Cosa Nostra has been to consult Addiopizzo in person or through its website. But now its travel agency is planning to make things easier with tours guaranteed mafia-free.

Dario Riccobono, one of the founders, said some of the packages would be aimed at "those who just want to have a relaxing holiday, but want to be reassured that they are not subsidising organised crime". Others, though, would be tours with a "rich, broad programme" of anti-mafia activities. People will be able to dine in a pizzeria owned by the brother of a man who was killed because of his stand against Cosa Nostra, for example, and the next day visit land confiscated from the mafia, said Riccobono. "We find that all the tourists who come to Sicily ask about the mafia and the people who are fighting it."

Addiopizzo was founded five years ago. Its website lists more than 400 commercial organisations that have vowed not to give in to Cosa Nostra's demands for protection money.