

# Italian Catholic Church to pay property tax from next year

Posted: Thu, 15th Nov 2012

Italy's Catholic Church will be forced to pay taxes starting in 2013 after the EU pressured the country's government to pass a controversial law stripping the Church of its historic property tax exemption.

The Catholic Church in Italy is excluded from paying taxes on its land if at least a part of a Church property is used non-commercially – for instance, a chapel in a bed-and-breakfast. "The regulatory framework will be definite by January 1, 2013 – the start of the fiscal year – and will fully respect the [European] Community law," Italian premier Mario Monti's government said in a statement on Tuesday.

The move could net Italy revenues of 500 million to 2 billion euros annually across the country, municipal government associations said. The extra income from previously exempt properties in Rome alone – including hotels, restaurants and sports centres – could reach 25.5 million euros a year, *La Repubblica* daily newspaper reported.

On Monday, the Council of State, Italy's highest ranking court for administrative litigation, ruled against the new law. Authorities stepped in, arguing that everyone in Italy should pay property tax, including the Church.

The measure came after the country's leadership decided in February to alter Italy's property tax code, ending the Church's longstanding privileges due to the severe debt crisis.

Last December, after new austerity measures were adopted in the country, 130,000 Italians signed an online petition urging the government to strip the Church of its tax exemption.

"It was time that they paid, too, with all the exemptions they've had throughout the years," Marco Catalano, a 35-year-old shopkeeper in Rome, told the *New York Times* in February, adding that he goes to church twice a month. "They own the most beautiful buildings in downtown Rome, on Italian soil, and rent them out at market prices. They don't give them for free or at low prices for charity."

Two years ago, the EU began to investigate whether the tax privileges of some Church properties in Italy could be considered illegal state aid.

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Public services](#)

## Related Campaigns

- 

### **Keep public services secular**

Public services intended for the whole community should be provided in a secular context.

[Read More](#)

## **Related Articles**

### **NSS welcomes Network Rail decision to remove religious messaging**

Following NSS criticism, Islamic hadith calling for 'sinners to repent' removed from departure board at King's Cross station. [Read More »](#)

### **Regulator to investigate GP who led proscribed Islamist group**

Following NSS intervention, medical regulator says there are "potential fitness to practice concerns" over GP who led Islamist group. [Read More »](#)

### **Don't undermine secular nature of Remembrance, NSS urges government**

Efforts to make remembrance resemble a religious service should be rejected, NSS says. [Read More »](#)

### **NSS backs plan to decouple school spring break from Easter in Wales**

NSS says it is "increasingly anachronistic" to structure school holidays around Easter when less than half the population is Christian. [Read More »](#)

### **Resist calls for £50m a year for churches, NSS urges minister**

Churches trust also calls for churches to host NHS services. [Read More »](#)