

## Anti-Mafia Market to Tour Italy

An anti-racketeering food market from Palermo, Italy is set to launch a national tour. The market only sells goods made by merchants who don't pay the *pizzo*, the mafia's tax for protection.



AFP

A sticker for Addiopizzo, one of the groups organizing the anti-mafia market tour.

Merchants in the Sicilian capital of Palermo are preparing to take a national stand against the Mafia -- food stands, that is.

An anti-mafia market that sells what it promises to be bribe-free street food in Palermo's central square is set to tour 22 Italian cities, beginning March 30 in Rome's Campo di Fiori.

The idea, according to Italian news agency ANSA, is to persuade businesses to stop paying the *pizzo*, the fee that mobsters demand from merchants for protection.

A recent report by an Italian retailer's association concluded that the mafia extorts €200 million (\$315 million) a day from Italian businesses, €80 million of it from shopkeepers alone.

The market gained popularity in Palermo -- where six out of 10 merchants are believed to pay the mafia tax -- after opening several months ago. For a fee of €10 (\$15.7), visitors are able to sample a variety of classic Italian fast foods with a guarantee that all the ingredients were produced *pizzo*-free.

Italy's Anti-Racket Federation organized the tour together with *Addiopizzo*, a organization whose name means "goodbye *pizzo*." *Addiopizzo* made headlines around the world when it recently launched another Mafia-snubbing endeavor -- a bribe-free supermarket that opened earlier this month in Palermo. The group formed four years ago during a secret campaign to plaster the city with anti-racketeering stickers.

Fourteen percent of the tour's proceeds will be donated to the Anti-Racket Federation. If it is successful in Italy, organizers hope to take it abroad, possibly to New York, Chicago, Moscow and Barcelona.

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