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## France Senator Urges Ban on Child-Free Hotels

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A French senator has sparked a national debate by calling for a ban on adult-only hotels and child-free holiday resorts, claiming they promote intolerance and exclusion.

Laurence Rossignol, a Socialist Party member and former minister for families, argued that excluding children from public spaces is discriminatory and incompatible with French values.

“Children aren’t troublesome pets,” she told French media. Drawing a comparison to pet restrictions, she said: “We can’t organise society by separating children off from ourselves in the same way some establishments don’t take dogs.”

Rossignol is pressing for a parliamentary debate, claiming adult-only resorts “institutionalise and legitimise intolerance” and encourage rejection of children in public life.

Her remarks echo those of Sarah El Haïry, France’s high commissioner for childhood, who warned last month that child-free venues run counter to family traditions. Speaking to *Parents* magazine, El Haïry said: “This is not what we want to see as the norm in our country.” She has since launched a “Family Choice” award to highlight child-inclusive destinations.

Both officials see the rise of child-free tourism as part of a cultural trend that sidelines children.

Supporters of adult-only hospitality, however, argue these venues meet a genuine demand. Vincent Lagarde, a business professor at the University of Limoges, said most clients are not hostile to children but need rest.

“There is a kind of physical and mental exhaustion in French society right now,” Lagarde explained. “Many holidaymakers are parents themselves, or teachers, or professionals who work with children. They’re not rejecting children, they just need time away from them.”

His research identifies three main reasons people choose adult-only holidays: rest, quality time with partners or friends, and the sense of luxury in quieter environments. Hotels often charge higher prices for this atmosphere.

A 2014 survey found that 56% of French parents had taken a holiday without their children, often for short breaks or romantic trips.

Despite growing attention, adult-only resorts remain rare in France, making up just 3–5% of the tourism sector, compared with a well-developed market in Spain. France traditionally promotes family-oriented tourism, with resorts offering children’s clubs, pools and activities.

Industry leaders have warned against restrictions. Véronique Siegel, president of the hotel section of the UMIH hospitality trade union, said a ban could drive travellers abroad. “If there are no adult destinations in France because we’re told it’s illegal, would people go to neighbouring countries, or further afield?” she asked.

No legal complaints have been filed against adult-only hotels in France, and Lagarde noted that current trade and anti-discrimination laws remain open to interpretation regarding child-free policies.

Anthropologist Jean-Didier Urbain, author of *What Our Travels Say About Us*, said holidays have long been a way to escape daily responsibilities. “There’s a trend in society to seek more comfort and relaxation, more time to pause,” he said. “Vacations, after all, are traditionally a moment where citizens can detach themselves from social obligations.”

The debate comes amid wider concern about France’s declining birthrate. President Emmanuel Macron has called for a “demographic rearmament,” promoting policies to support families and child-rearing.

A government-backed 2024 report also urged greater visibility for children in public life, calling for reduced screen time and acceptance of their “right to be noisy.”

Rossignol’s proposal has not yet advanced to legislation, but it has ignited discussion about how society balances personal leisure with collective values. Whether lawmakers act or not, the controversy highlights France’s struggle to reconcile private choices with policies that place children at the heart of social life