

THE IMPACT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ON THE NATIONAL ECONOMY OF BELARUS

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Despite the fact that Belarus does not have such significant tourism resources as the sea and mountains, it has a number of advantages in comparison with other countries. Among them: proximity to Western Europe, Scandinavia – a tourist market with high financial potential; neighborhood with the Baltic countries, Russia and Poland - an important resource for the development of cross-border tourism; ancient history and original culture (15 thousand objects of historical, cultural and architectural significance, of which 4.8 thousand are of national importance). [1]

Tourism development has a significant impact on the economy of the host country or region. First of all, we are talking about inbound and outbound tourism: in the process of creating a tourism product additional income is generated, there is an increase in GDP and employment, the state budget is replenished through tax revenues, etc. The costs of foreign tourists taking the form of non-commodity exports in relation to the host country are also an important source of foreign exchange earnings. When analyzing the impact of tourism on the economy, its direct and indirect effects are distinguished. Direct influence takes place in sectors of the economy directly related to tourism (hotels and restaurants, transport, the entertainment industry, etc.), the indirect influence of tourism covers a much wider area, including construction, trade, banking and insurance, food processing and other fields of industrial and social infrastructure.

Traditionally, in tourism statistics there are two main sections: statistics of tourist flows and statistics of tourist expenses and incomes. One of the most important indicators characterizing tourist flows is the number of tourist arrivals. In accordance with the international concept of tourism statistics developed by UNWTO, two indicators are used - visitors and tourists, the difference between them is the category of so-called one-day visitors. A visitor is considered to be any person who travels outside the place of permanent residence for a period not exceeding one year, for any purpose, with the exception of activities paid from the source at the place of visit. A visitor who spends at least one night at the place of stay is considered a tourist, otherwise they are classified as a one-day visitor or excursionist. [3]

The number of organized tourists and excursionists from the countries of the European Union in 2018 in Belarus almost doubled. This information is from the statistical information posted in the Belstat newsletter on tourism development in 2018, BelTA news portal reports.

So, if in 2017 70 089 people came from the EU countries to Belarus as tourists and excursionists, in 2018 there were 135 059 of them.

Statistics take into account those who went to Belarus on tickets purchased from travel agencies. [4]

The main indicator characterizing the impact of the tourism sector on the country's economy is its contribution to the creation of GDP. Data published by WTTC contains two categories, the first of which is Travel and Tourism Direct contribution to GDP. It represents GDP created in industries directly related to tourism (such as accommodation facilities, activities of tour operators, passenger transport services, as well as restaurants, leisure services, etc.). The basis for calculating this indicator is internal tourism consumption minus purchases of imported and intermediate products by tourism industry enterprises. Thus, this indicator is an estimate of the value added created in the economy through tourism consumption, and characterizes the direct impact of tourism. The second, wider category is Travel and

Tourism Total contribution to GDP characterizes the contribution of the tourism industry to GDP, taking into account its indirect impact. This indicator, in addition to the direct contribution of tourism to GDP, described above, includes an indirect impact due to factors such as investment in tourism and travel, government spending on non-market services (tourism support and coordination, tourism product advertising and promotion, provision activities of tourist information centers and other types of government spending at all levels to support the tourism industry), the procurement of goods and services by enterprises of the tourism sector and the hospitality industry, as well as the impact of the additional costs of those industries that are indirectly engaged in tourism services. [3]

Gross domestic product is an indicator of the state of the national economy. The influence of any of the sectors of the economy is considered significant when its share exceeds 10%. In Belarus, the share of the tourism sector in national GDP in 2012 was 2.1%, while the global average was 5.2% - this is the 145th position in the rating of 184 countries.

According to the WTTC forecast, in 2023 Belarus will invest only 2% of the total investment in the tourism sector.

However, an analysis of tourism development indicators showed that, nevertheless, more tourists leave Belarus than enter. The amount of money brought into our country by foreigners is almost 2 times less than that taken out.

There are certain factors that inhibit the development of inbound tourism in the Republic of Belarus:

- a small number of tourist class hotels (2-3 stars) with a modern level of comfort and a range of services, as well as a higher class (4-5 stars) for business tourism; slow development of roadside service;
- inconsistency of the quality of the tourist product with its price, which is comparable to that offered in Turkey, Montenegro, and higher than in Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine but with a lower level of quality;
- lack of information and advertising of the Republic of Belarus as a country rich in tourism resources;
- lack of practice in creating favorable conditions for investment in tourism infrastructure;
- low level of training of employees and lack of experience of quality service in market conditions, lack of specialized scientific institutions in the field of tourism.

The market capacity in our country is very small, there are no Belarusian companies with large capital, and basically all offers are tourist products of foreign operators. At the same time, the market offers a wide variety of directions; there are offers for every taste and budget. However, the demand for expensive holidays, individual tours and exotics is much less in our country than in our neighbors', where there are more wealthy tourists and companies have more opportunities, including organizing economical vacations. So, in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States there is high competition in the market of carriers, low-cost air carriers work. [1]

The impact of international tourism on all spheres of human life is great. Tourism not only expands trade, scientific, technical, cultural ties between countries, but also strengthens trust between peoples, makes them more open to each other, actively develops international relations [2].

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