

## TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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**Abstract.** The article considers the trends in the development of domestic tourism in the Republic of Belarus. The dynamics of the development of domestic tourism for the period 2015-2021 and the main factors causing the growth of it is presented.

**Keywords:** tourism, domestic tourism, trends, hospitality, tourist industry, development.

The concept of «**domestic tourism**», proposed by the World Tourism Organization, is characterized as a journey of residents of any country in their own country. The Law of the Republic of Belarus «On Tourism» in Article 3 states that *domestic tourism* - tourist travel of citizens of the Republic of Belarus, as well as foreign citizens and stateless persons permanently residing in the Republic of Belarus, within the territory of the Republic of Belarus [1].

*The tourism goals* of citizens are most often recreation, health improvement, as well as cognitive, educational, pilgrimage, business and other purposes without employment, business, or other gainful activity.

The main feature of domestic tourism is the promotion of sustainability and balance of the national economy, due to the redistribution of national income between the regions during the travel of tourists in the territory of the Republic of Belarus.

This type of tourism develops faster than, for example, outbound and inbound tourism. In comparison in 2021, the number of organized tourists and excursionists - citizens of the Republic of Belarus, sent abroad by organizations that carried out tourism activities, amounted to 478,8 thousand people, and the number of citizens, sent on tours within the territory of the Republic of Belarus, for the same year amounted to 1187,9 thousand people [2]. This example shows that the indicator of domestic tourism is almost 2,5 times more than the indicator of outbound tourism. That is why this type of tourism has become one of the promising areas of tourism development in the Republic of Belarus. The main factors contributing to the growth of domestic tourism in the Republic of Belarus should be considered.

*The main reasons* that determine the future trends in the development of domestic tourism:

**1. The Covid-19 pandemic** has had a significant impact on the economy of Belarus, in particular on the share of services in the country's GDP. Before the pandemic, the share of tourism in the GDP of the Republic of Belarus was 2,2 per cent, and in 2020 the indicator had a negative trend [3]. Most of the population of the Republic of Belarus prefer to travel abroad after the pandemic. The data presented in table 1.1 show how many organized tourists and sightseers - citizens of the Republic of Belarus, went on tour routes within the territory of the Republic of Belarus for the period 2015-2021.

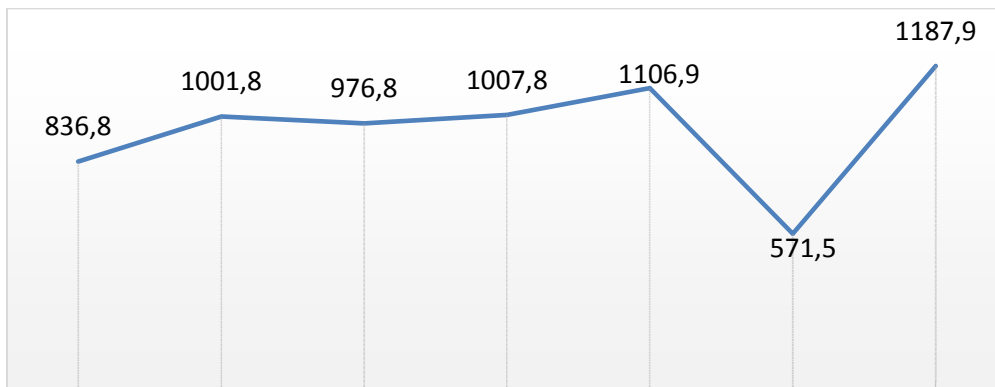
Table – Indicators of domestic tourism in the Republic of Belarus for 2015-2021

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of tourists, thousand people	836,8	1001,8	976,8	1007,8	1106,9	571,5	1187,9

Note - source [own production based on statistics]

Table shows the main values of indicators of domestic tourism in the Republic of Belarus for 7 years. In 2021, the number of tourists - citizens of the Republic of Belarus, traveling in the country, doubled in comparison with 2020, and in comparison with the base year 2015 - almost 1,5 times.

The dynamics of domestic tourism in the Republic of Belarus is shown in figure 1.1.



**Figure 1. - Dynamics of the number of citizens of the Republic of Belarus traveling within the territory of the Republic of Belarus for 2015-2019, thousand people**

Note - source [own production based on statistics]

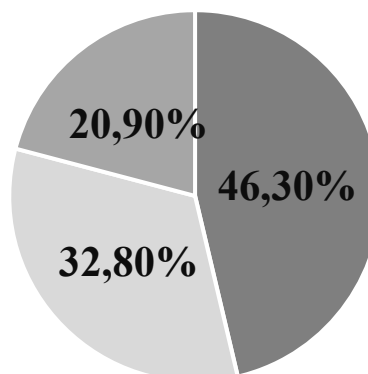
Dynamics as shown in figure 1.1. clearly shows the situation of development of domestic tourism in the Republic of Belarus during the period from 2015 to 2021. From 2015 to 2020, the dynamics was almost constant, but can be seen in view of the pandemic in 2020 the number of tourists dropped significantly, which led to a drop in domestic tourism. In 2021, the index was the highest in all presented 7 years. Compared to 2020, the increase was +107%.

**2. Natural and geographical factors.** The natural and climatic complex of the Republic of Belarus has all conditions for the development of natural tourism, as well as the popular agrotourism in the Republic of Belarus. According to the Ministry of Taxes and Duties, in 2020, the number of agro-ecotourism entities in the Republic was 2,936 units, the services of which were used by 433,3 thousand people. This segment of domestic tourism was the least affected by coronavirus due to the substitution effect. The number of tourists who used the services of agro-estates, decreased by only 15% compared to 2019 - for such a difficult year, this is a fairly good indicator [4].

As a tourist region, the country is divided into natural provinces, differing from each other. The northern part is occupied by the lake groups (Braslav Lakes, Naroch Lakes, etc.) connected by river systems and streams. At the same time, using artificial canals, it is possible to make tourist transitions from the basin of the Western Dvina to the basin of Berezina and the entire Dnieper river hydrographic system, from the Neman basin to the Vistula system (on the Augustowski Channel) and on the Dnipro-Bugsky waterway you can travel from Kiev to Mozyr, Pinsk, Brest.

Belarus has sufficient natural potential to develop ecotourism. Landscape and ecological assessment of the territory of the country showed that 46.3% of the natural-territorial complexes (PTK) are typical, 32,8% - valuable and 20,9% - unique. Typical landscapes are mainly within Central and Southern Belarus, valuable landscapes are found in the northern part of the country and marginally in Central Belarus. Unique landscapes have a limited range in the Belarusian Lakeland, as well as in Polesie.

Figure 1.2 clearly shows the structure of the landscape-ecological assessment of the country's territory.



**Figure 2. – The structure of natural-territorial complexes in the Republic of Belarus, %**

Note - source [own production based on statistics]

Figure 1.2 clearly shows that a larger percentage in the structure is occupied by typical natural-territorial complexes, and the smallest - by unique complexes, therefore, it is necessary to invest most of the funds in the development of infrastructure and improving the state of unique natural-territorial complexes.

**3. Cultural and historical factors.** As of 2020, more than 5000 cultural organizations were operating in the territory of the Republic of Belarus. The composition of these organizations includes: libraries, museums, clubs, professional theatres, circuses, zoological parks, etc. Thus, in 2020, the attendance of 160 museum institutions of the Ministry of Culture system amounted to 3236 thousand people.

The most visited were the Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War (280000 people), «Brest fortress-hero» (215000 people), the museum-reserve «Nesvizh» (201000 people), Gomel palace-park ensemble (174000 people), «Castle complex «Mir» (152000 people) [5].

Thus, it is possible to generalize *the general trends* in the development of domestic tourism in the Republic of Belarus:

1. Growth of the number of tourists traveling directly through the territory of the Republic of Belarus.
2. Increase in the number of sites included in the list of cultural and historical heritage of the country, mandatory for tourists.
3. Development of hotel infrastructure, similar accommodation, as well as hotel and tourist hotel complexes for tourists.

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