

The opinion poll also showed that if the above-mentioned changes were introduced to potential hotel clients, they would be ready to reconsider their opinion. In respondents' judgment, bringing such innovations into service would be reasonable as everyone wants to live in comfortable conditions, to be sure that their expectations will be met and get value for money.

This brings us to the conclusion that introduction of such "golden standard" policies can help Belarusian hotels meet competition.

A.A. Наумик

УО БГЭУ (МИНСК)

TRENDS IN THE TOURIST SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

As the branch of the global economy, tourism is now second only to the trade of oil and weapons: its annual growth of 7% outstrips that of the global economy overall, while around 10% of all investments are found in this sphere. One in eleven people are employed in the tourist industry, which creates 4% of global GDP (reaching even 11% taking into consideration other related branches).

The importance of the need to develop tourist sphere in Belarus is explained by the fact that every foreign tourist spends around \$200 – 250 in Belarus on products and services; moreover, eight tourists create enough revenue to validate a new job position. So our country should develop its tourist sector more persistently, since it has a potential to generate revenue and employment.

The most visited sights in Belarus are:

- sanatoria and spas;
- national parks and hunting farms;
- rural guesthouses;
- sights which are included into UNESCO World Heritage List (Belovezhskaya Puscha, Mir Castle, Nesvizh Palace and Gardens and a part of the Struve Geodetic Arc);
- sights related to the heroic past (especially to World War II) such as Brest Hero-Fortress, Khatyn Memorial and Victory Square in Minsk.

A priori two types of tourism are believed to generate the most profits, namely holiday-making at sea resorts and cultural tourism. All other types of holiday-making altogether, be it medical tourism, eco or exotic tourism, cannot be even compared to the first two either in the number of tourists or in profits. In Belarus, for instance, although the number of foreign visitors in sanatoria, hunting farms and national parks has been growing, the increase is still insignificant. It is not customary to see foreigners walking along the streets of Belarusian towns, and tours along Belarusian scenic routes are booked by Belarusians mostly. But why does such a situation take place? Here are some reasons:

- not all the sights have the infrastructure needed;
- investors are reluctant to invest in the development of this infrastructure, preferring low-cost projects;
- high visa cost for foreign visitors;
- a small number of tourist class hotels (2-3 stars), as well as a higher grade (4-5 stars), slow development of roadside service;
- lack of sufficient information and advertising of Belarus as a country rich in tourism resources.

Summing up, it should be said that further development of the tourist sector should become one of the most important targets in the policy of the Republic of Belarus to make the country famous and recognizable in the world.

М.М. Фомягина

УО БГЭУ (МИНСК)

SELF-DRIVE HOLIDAYS IN BELARUS – CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The basic subject matter of the research paper under consideration is such a phenomenon in tourism industry as self-drive holidays. Self-drive holidays are also known as fly drives, road trip holidays or multi-centre holidays. The aim of this research work is to analyze the present situation in this sphere of tourism in general