

The most pressing problems for foreigners are:

- high price of airline tickets;
- lack of time to inspect everything;
- weak knowledge of the population of foreign languages;
- there are not enough signs in English;
- in the evenings the streets are empty and quiet;
- there are not enough institutions with Belarusian color and original food.

Also, this trend was revealed, among the responses on the establishment of a visa-free regime, that many tourists are ready to spend money in Belarus, but they are not included in the list.

Thus, it can be concluded that, despite the general success of introducing a visa-free regime, there are a number of problems that need to be addressed. First of all this is improving the quality of service in the tourist industry.

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TRANSIT TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Modern transboundary position of the Republic of Belarus in European travel route predetermines its vital influence on economic connections of Western and Central European countries with Russia and Asian States, as well as Scandinavian countries with southern regions of Europe and Asia. Due to the above listed tendencies one can observe the appearance of a modern type of tourism: transit tourism. The notion “transit tourism” can be described as a pass of any foreign resident through the territory of one state (the Republic of Belarus) with the aim of reaching another, bordering state. Within the last five years the number of tourists, having visited our country is constantly growing.

Because of the fact that since January the 9th 2017 a visa free entry was introduced the number of tourists coming to Belarus has increased enormously. In the year our country was visited by 16 017 traveller on visa free basis. Among all the countries Germany took the leading place with 2152 tourists, the second place was taken by Poland — 1844 and the third by Italy — 1625 travellers per year [1].

But unfortunately the research shows that the potential of transport communication in Belarus as transit country is used not to its full extend. There are several reason for it: difficulties in customs organization, visa free regime conditions, the lack of developed travel infrastructure.

Nowadays a traveller from Poland or Lithuania cannot pass through the territory of Belarus on his way to Russia as transit without visa. While visa free regime works officially for residents of 80 countries for 5 days

stay, but only on the condition of coming to Belarus from the National airport. So travellers who want to pass our country as transit by other means of transportation can't experience the option of visa free stay in Belarus. As a result travellers who plan a transit trip through the territory of Belarus by another means of transport, can't use such a way, because from September 2016 the customs of Russia introduced the rule according to which travellers from EU who go by car cant cross the Russian boarder as there is no actual international admission points at the border between Russia and Belarus.

The problem connected with the lack of developed travel infrastructure as well as lack of information source. The most developed road service is located at the Brest part of arterial highway M1 (E30), but unfortunately this very road part leaves much to be desired.

To our mind the following measures can be the solution to the above listed problems:

- 1) creation of tourism centers close to the main transport passageways;
- 2) development of close to roads infrastructure which will give the opportunity to organize a proper rest for several days;
- 3) increase in the number of customs admission points, as well as visa formalities simplification and visa cost decrease;
- 4) simplification of transit for foreigners;
- 5) creation of Internet infobase for the hitchhiking tourists and publishing directories and historic literature in foreign languages;
- 6) improvement of transit tourism legal support.

In conclusion we would like to point out that the existing rules of transit tourism for foreigners in the Republic of Belarus contradict the National Programme of Tourism Development. We believe that the introduction of migration cards, limited time of transit stay, impossibility to deviate from the international route and some other rules only hinder the arrival and stay of foreigners in our country and as a result influence negatively the development of transit tourism in the Republic of Belarus.

References

1. Численность организованных туристов, посетивших Республику Беларусь и выехавших из Республики Беларусь за рубеж [Электронный ресурс] // Национальный статистический комитет Республики Беларусь. — Режим доступа: <http://www.belstat.gov.by>. — Дата доступа: 22.02.2018.