

of some important economies create an environment in which MERCOSUR can function more successfully than any of its individual members.

### References

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**А.А. Радевич, Л.Д. Гайдук**  
БГЭУ (Минск)

Научный руководитель — Л.Д. Гайдук

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGROTOURISM IN BELARUS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Tourism plays a major role in the global economy, providing a tenth of the world's gross national product. This sector of the economy is developing rapidly and in the coming years will become its most important sector.

International tourism is an active source of foreign exchange earnings and affects the country's balance of payments. In addition to the impact on the economies of many countries, international tourism affects their social and cultural environment, ecology. The ecology, in turn, affects the tourists.

However, the growth of international tourism causes some negative consequences, such as inflation, environmental destruction and violation of the traditions of the local population. This is particularly evident in developing countries, where tourists from richer industrialized countries impose on their presence their inherent way of life and level of consumption.

Therefore, timely and comprehensive assessment of the effects of international tourism is a very important factor for the formulation of such economic and tourist policies that would make it possible to extract the maximum benefit and prevent the destructive impact of tourism.

*Agrotourism* is gaining popularity in Belarus. Agrotourism (rural tourism, green tourism, agro-ecotourism) rests in the countryside (in villages, farms). It arose as a result of the rapid development of the hotel industry in large resort areas (seaside resorts, ports, spa centers). This form of tourism has become attractive for tourists who prefer peace, true naturalness, and direct contact with local traditions.

Recently, agrotourism destinations are becoming more and more popular, and this business registers an increasing amount of sales from year to year, attracting an increasing number of businessmen to this field of activity in traditional rural labor.

It is a promising direction in the field of tourism business. Abroad, agrotourism takes up a quarter of revenue from general tourist destinations. But in Belarus, agrotourism is not yet sufficiently developed due to the following reasons:

- not all local villagers can invite guests to themselves;
- now everyone is accustomed to a comfortable rest;
- the presence of at least a comfortable location, transport, minimal equipment and amenities is an integral part of all green tourist requests.

One of the main factors contributing to the development of agrotourism in the Republic is that over 42 % of the territory is the agricultural land. Belarus has huge resources for agrotourism, but they are extremely inefficient in demand.

The goals that need to be set by the tourism committees, working with rural guest houses, are to provide rural people with work and to return rural youth in the countryside.

**П.А. Силивонец, А.В. Валежанина**  
*БГЭУ (Минск)*  
**Научный руководитель — А.В. Валежанина**

## **THE OPPORTUNITIES OF HOTEL CHAINS**

Globalization and integration processes as well as the industrialization of hotel services have caused the spread of large, well-organized, technically and technologically equipped hotel chains, uniting thousands of hotels around the world.

Hotel chains are groups of hotels that conduct collective business and are under the direct control of chain management. The hotel chain provides advantages to both the guests and the owners of the chain. The advantage of large hotel chains is the reduction of costs due to the growth of volumes. Advertising campaigns, the training of employees, bookkeeping, the purchase of necessary materials — everything is centralized for all the hotels of the network. It reduces costs significantly and makes it more profitable than for each hotel separately. Mistakes in the operation of one of the hotels can be covered by other companies in the chain. Therefore, we can talk about the stability of the hotel enterprises, which are included into international and national hotel chains. Nowadays there are more than 16 million hotels in the world; each fourth hotel is included into any network. The examples of the top global chains are InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), Hilton Worldwide and Marriott International [1].