

## ТЕНДЕНЦИИ ВЪЕЗДНОГО ТУРИСТСКОГО ПОТОКА В РЕСПУБЛИКУ КРЫМ

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## TRENDS IN INBOUND TOURIST FLOW TO THE REPUBLIC OF CRIMEA

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**Аннотация.** В данной статье проанализированы статистические данные по количеству иностранных туристов в Республике Крым, изучена география мирового распределения иностранных туристов Республики Крым, рассмотрено развитие въездного туризма в Республике Крым. Раскрыты проблемы и даны перспективные направления развития въездного туризма в Республике Крым.

**Abstract.** This article focuses on statistical data on the number of foreign tourists in the Republic of Crimea, examines world geographical distribution of foreign tourists of the Republic of Crimea, analyzes the development of inbound tourism in the Republic of Crimea. The problems are revealed and promising directions for the development of inbound tourism in the Republic of Crimea are given.

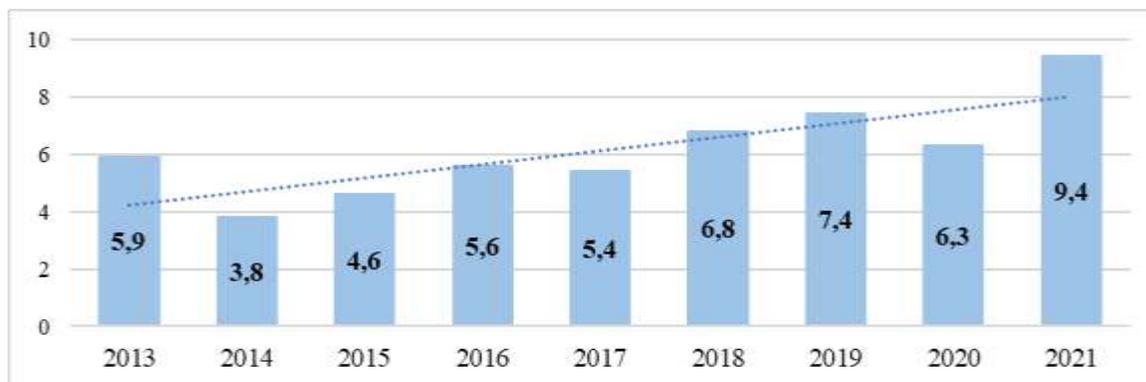
**Ключевые слова:** туризм, Республика Крым, въездной туризм, туристский поток

**Key words:** tourism, Republic of Crimea, inbound tourism, tourist flow

The relevance of the study lies in the fact that in recent years the tourism industry in the Republic of Crimea is experiencing strong changes which relate the dynamics of tourist flows. Processes of change are caused by a complex of both external and internal factors that determine significant and spatial, structural and functional shifts in the development of tourism.

The purpose of the research is to reveal the problems, to highlight the main scenarios for the development of inbound tourism in the Republic of Crimea, as well as to answer the question of whether the Republic of Crimea is a promising destination for foreign tourists.

The Republic of Crimea is one of the most dynamically developing regions of the Russian Federation which combines a powerful natural-climatic and historical-cultural potential. These features are the basis for the development of resort-tourist sphere. Let us pay attention to the factor that has a significant impact on the market of recreational services of the Republic of Crimea — the structure of tourist flow [3]. The data from 2013 to 2021 were analyzed. Based on the data, the dynamics is unstable (figure 1).



*Figure 1. Number of trips in the Republic of Crimea for 2013-2021, million, compiled by the author according to [1;4]*

Compared to 2013 the number of tourists in 2014 decreased sharply. This aspect is quite understandable since there was a complete restructuring of the Crimea as a part of the Russian Federation. Ukrainians stopped coming to the Crimea and there was no foreign flow. In 2017 we observe a slight decline as in 2016 the borders with Turkey were opened after the incident that occurred in 2015.

In 2018 the number of tourists to the republic increased due to the improvement of transport logistics including the new international airport in Simferopol and the Crimean bridge which were connected the peninsula with the mainland of the Russian Federation. By 2019 the number of tourists in the Crimea was already 7.4 million tourists. The dynamics

suggests that the state is taking all kinds of measures to attract tourists and show that the Republic of Crimea is no less favorable place for recreation and entertainment. In 2020 the comparison with 2019 of the number of tourists who spent their holidays is not correct and is due to the introduction of a high alert regime on the territory of the Republic of Crimea from March 17, 2020.

An additional source of income is the attraction of foreign tourist flow. Statistics on foreign arrivals to the Republic of Crimea as a separate branch of the study is absent. But it is based on the arrivals of foreign tourists in collective accommodation facilities. In 2021 the tourist flow to the Crimea was 9.4 million tourists which is 26% higher than in 2019 and 49% higher than in 2020. The demand for tourism in the Crimea remains high despite the opening of foreign destinations and the introduction of some additional restrictions. Domestic tourism in the country is now experiencing a boom thanks to government measures to support the industry as one of the most affected in the pandemic.

Based on the data the dynamics of foreign tourists visiting the Republic of Crimea is also variable (figure 2).

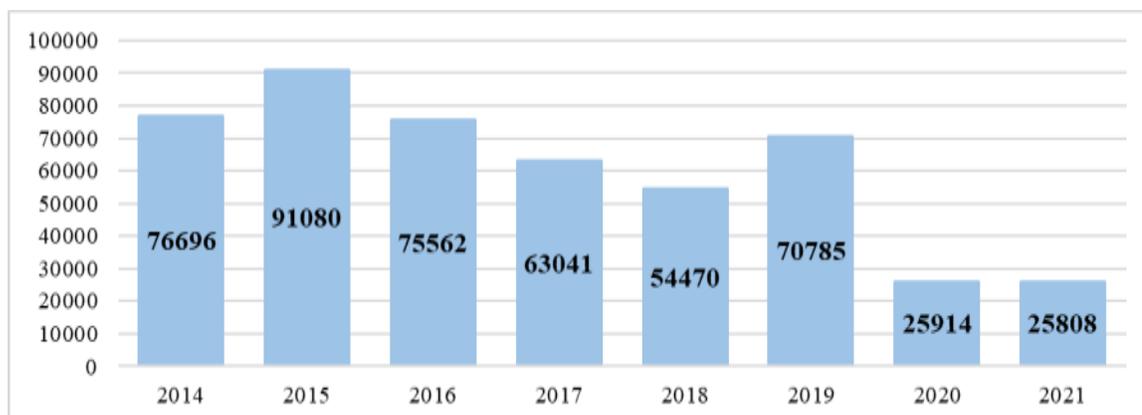


Figure 2. Number of inbound tourists placed in collective accommodation facilities of the Republic of Crimea for 2014-2021, compiled by the author according to [5;6]

According to the Federal State Statistics Service for the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol a high rate was observed in 2016 and 2019. In 2017 and 2018 there was a decline in indicators. In 2015 the indicator was maximal as tourism in the Republic of Crimea was under the great influence of political views and stereotypes concerning the belonging of the peninsula to a particular territory [2]. International tourists came to destroy myths and make sure that the Crimea is Russian territory. In 2019 and 2020 there was a high alert regime in the Republic of Crimea.

It is noteworthy that when the Crimea was a part of Ukraine the statistics on foreign arrivals was kept as a separate component.

According to Ukrainian statistics (Department of Finance and Economic Analysis) in 2013 the number of foreign tourists visiting the Crimea was 2.03 million. In 2014, the number of foreign tourists was 1.3 million.

Analysis of the structure of foreign tourist flow to the Republic of Crimea showed that foreign tourists come from different countries but by the number of arrivals these countries are distributed unevenly due to certain circumstances [6]. The data were analyzed for 2019 and taken from the Federal State Statistics Service for the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol. Based on the indicators of the geographical structure of inbound tourist flow we can classify countries into several categories: countries with high demand for tourist services in the Republic of Crimea, countries with average demand, and countries with low demand for tourist services.

The group of countries with high demand for tourism services in the Republic of Crimea includes Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Armenia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Germany and the Republic of Moldova. From these countries arrive 1,000 or more tourists. The largest number of tourists coming to the Republic of Crimea are citizens of Ukraine. In 2019 more than 30 thousand Ukrainian tourists arrived. This is primarily due to the topological accessibility. Many Ukrainians are used to rest in this region. After the Crimea was annexed to the territory of the Russian Federation this tendency has partly survived. Great interest in the Republic of Crimea is also shown by Belarus. In 2019 almost 13 thousand tourists arrived. Basically, Belarusian tourists come to the Republic of Crimea as they believe that the rest in this region is one of the most optimal in terms of cost. Belarusians also come here to work.

It is worth noting that in the Republic of Crimea arrive foreign tourists from Central Asia. These are such states as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The main purpose for citizens of these countries is to find a job. It is noteworthy that citizens of these countries do not require a visa which greatly simplifies their travel.

Countries with average demand include various countries and are distributed very unevenly. From these countries arrive between 500 and 1000 tourists. For example, tourists from Turkey travel to the Republic of Crimea because of their close proximity.

The group of countries with low demand is much more extensive. These are countries with less than 500 tourists. Most of the countries in this group are in the European region. This group also includes Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines.

A region that belongs to a group of countries with low demand for tourist services is the African region. The main part of tourists comes from Egypt, Morocco and the Republic of South Africa. In 2019 the Republic of Crimea was visited by 42 people from Egypt, 23 from Morocco and 22 from South Africa. From the rest of Africa tourists came no more than 17 people, for example from Libya, Algeria and Congo. Some countries did not use tourist services in the Crimea at all.

The bulk of foreign tourists come for personal purposes, not for business or professional purposes. They go to the Crimea for entertainment and recreation as well as treatment and recovery, preferring to visit the peninsula for 1-4 nights [6].

They are located unevenly across the territory mainly in the southern part of the peninsula. Thus, there is a problem of uneven loading of the tourist and recreational complex and low loading of other regions.

The distribution of tourist flows in the Crimea as a whole depends on the degree of favorability of natural conditions in a particular area.

International demand for holidays in the Crimea is unstable. This is due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the geopolitical situation is complicated. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it is extremely saturated with numerous interstate conflicts and disputed territorial problems both between the states of the region and between the major world players. Secondly, it is not known about the peninsula's tourist potential in the international market. Even when planning a trip to the Crimea foreign tourists try to find information about the peninsula and its attractions on the Internet but they do not succeed as there is very little information. At the moment no action is taken to create an image of the region on the world tourist market. Thirdly, the emergence of difficulties in tourist formalities such as obtaining a visa or sanitary and epidemiological checks.

Existing stereotypes formed among European tourists prevent from visiting the Republic of Crimea. For example, lack of confidence in safety. Thus, tourists are afraid to come to the Republic of Crimea because they believe the geopolitical situation on the peninsula to be unresolved. There is a stereotype concerning the language barrier. Foreign tourists do not come to the Republic of Crimea because they believe that it is necessary to know Russian language, and they also assume that there are no people who know English language in the Russian Federation in general which is also just a stereotype.

The essence of the above comes down to the fact that there are a number of problems that limit foreign tourists to travel to the Republic of Crimea. They should be divided into problems related to the quality of service (internal) and problems that prevent visiting the Republic of Crimea (external) (figure 3). The main problems here are the imposition of sanctions by other states, unstable political situation and the restrictions due to COVID-19. The topics remain one of the central and topical in the international arena.

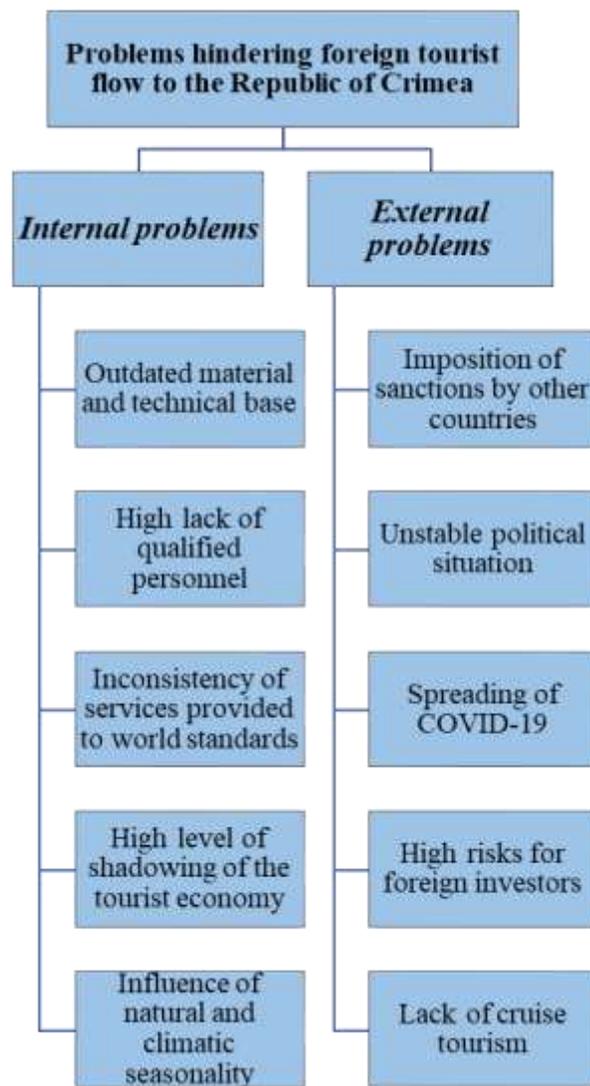


Figure 3. Problems restricting the foreign tourist flow to the Crimea, compiled by the author

Among the main areas of attracting foreign tourists to the Republic of Crimea, even though new sanctions are created and there are a number of previously listed problems, we can highlight:

- 1) the creation of federal programs to modernize the beach infrastructure, transport infrastructure, accommodation facilities;
- 2) improving the quality of tourist services to a level that meets international standards;
- 3) improving the qualifications of workers in the tourism and hospitality industry;
- 4) development of information field for popularization of tourist products of the Republic of Crimea and implementation of this field in the foreign information portal;
- 5) creation of new tourist products to form year-round resorts and solve the problem of seasonality;
- 6) creation of unique tourist products demanded by foreign tourists.

Thus, based on the above information, you can foresee several scenarios for the development of foreign tourism in the Republic of Crimea. On the one hand, with the partial or complete removal of sanctions, the number of foreign tourist arrivals will increase. There will be an opportunity to carry out transactions. After all, many banks (PHKB) in the peninsula are under sanctions, so in principle they cannot make transactions in dollars and euros. Due to the risk of blocking of counterparties' funds during foreign currency transactions the acceptance and sending of payments in dollars and euros is suspended.

At the moment it is not possible for foreigners to get a direct flight to the Crimea. A transfer is necessary, at least in Krasnodar, Moscow or St. Petersburg. This is the problem of transport accessibility of the region. In addition, there are currently no mobile operators in the Crimea that would be able to serve foreigners.

Sanctions affect the foreign flow of tourists to the Crimea and at the moment the only solution is to bypass these sanctions by offering crooked schemes to inbound tourists in order to get to the peninsula. But, on the other hand, the

sanction restrictions may be in place for many years. In this case, we should develop the traditional types of tourism inherent in the Republic of Crimea: beach holiday, cultural tourism, historical tourism, scientific tourism, gastronomic tourism, active tourism and extreme tourism. Now there are gaining popularity interregional tourist routes. For example, an interregional tourist route "Golden Ring of the Bosporan Kingdom" which was created by the Krasnodar region and is being developed together with the Republic of Crimea, the Rostov region, city of Sevastopol and the Russian Geographical Society. It is a route to the places where in ancient times were located the cities of the ancient state. The project is the first time Russia is positioned on the international scene as one of the unique centers of ancient culture and civilization. The route includes 14 cities. The project has already received wide support from the professional community. Also, the objects of the "Golden Ring of the Bosporan Kingdom" were included in the tour program of the liner "Prince Vladimir" whose cruise formed the basis of the water route of the project. The liner is going by the route Sochi – Novorossiysk – Yalta – Sevastopol – Sochi with stops in the cities of destination.

To sum up, today among the priorities of the state are not only the creation of national projects and federal programs, promotion of interests of Russian regions on the federal and regional levels but also the promotion of national and regional tourist products in priority world tourism markets and simplification of visa formalities for foreign tourists. However, the development of inbound tourism is difficult under the current restrictions and situation in the world, for example, the closure of borders. In future years tourism may take a slightly different turn: when the tourism industry will be able to begin to restore its activities including the possibility of introducing the Republic of Crimea to the world tourism market as one of the potential tourist destinations of the Russian Federation.

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