

THE CURRENT STATE OF EVENT TOURISM IN RUSSIA

Yulia Alexandrovna Kireeva^{1*}
Email: kireeva.y.a@bk.ru

Russian State University of Tourism and Service, Moscow, Russia

Abstract: *The article deals with event tourism. Event tourism is popular all over the world, and it is an independent type of tourism. In Russia, this type of tourism is under development. The state, regional authorities, tour operator companies, and individual entrepreneurs are interested in the development of event tourism. It is various events that attract the attention of tourists visiting Russian regions. According to statistics, their number amounts to 30% of the total number of visitors. The article presents the characteristics of the event tourism development in the world, as well as the parameters by which one can classify events, and identify types of event tourism. Analysis of various sources has allowed the authors to identify most accurately the wording of the term of event tourism, which is necessary for further consideration of this type of activity in tourism. Special attention is paid to the status of event tourism in Russia's major cities. The authors present the list of the most popular events and formulate the importance of event tourism for the city that is confirmed by relevant statistics. Event tourism performs certain economic, humanitarian, and socio-cultural functions, as well as encourages the development of small businesses. The presence of interesting events attracts additional tourist flow to the city and region, contributing to tourism development in general. From June 14 to July 15, 2018, the World Cup was held in Russia. During the Championship, the cities where the matches were held were visited by about 6.8 million people, including more than 3.4 million foreign tourists. The tourist flow to 11 cities involved in the Championship increased by more than 50% during the period of this sports event. The analysis of various materials has allowed the authors to draw certain conclusions about the current state of event tourism in the Russian Federation.*

Keywords: *tourism, event tourism, sporting event, event, Russian regions.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an essential element of cross-cultural communications. When traveling, people get acquainted with the culture and customs of other peoples, learn the features of contemporary life, and communicate with each other, enriching their ideas about the world. The year of 2019 turned out to be for the Russian tourism industry without serious shocks in terms of natural disasters or bankruptcies of significant market players, without a sharp increase or fall in demand in any economic area. Even the bankruptcy of Tomas Cook, the largest tour operator in the UK, and the unfinished purchase and sale of a share of the Biblio-Globus Russian tour company did not significantly affect the market situation. Despite the challenging economic situation, tour operators recorded an increase in tour sales for all types of tourism – domestic, outbound, and inbound. According to the statistical data published on the official

website of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR), in the first half of 2019, Russia was visited by 1,967,221 people who entered Russia for tourist purposes. This is by 24.97% more than that in the first half of 2018. In turn, the growth in domestic organized tourism, depending on the region of the Russian Federation, varied from 5 to 15% (Associaciya turoperatorov, n.d.). Thus, statistical data confirm the growth in tourist activity, and accordingly, the interest in Russia, which is noted by both foreign and domestic tourists. Positive dynamics of tourism development, interest in tours with tourist purposes in the territory of the Russian Federation on the part of foreign and Russian tourists, universal globalization, changing and increasing demands of tourists – these and many other factors exacerbate the importance and need to develop new types of tourism, tourist technologies, as well as forms, methods, and ways to meet the needs of tourists. According to experts, one of the most promising types of tourism in the current context is event tourism. Experts note that the proportion of event tourism in the contemporary tourist market is increasing every year.

Event tourism is based on diverse types of events, such as cultural, sports, ethnographic, etc. But not all of them can attract additional tourist flows, bring income to the local budget, and become in the future one of the factors of the region's attractiveness. Event tourism is one of the most developed types of tourism in most European countries. Events, such as the film festivals in Cannes and Venice, the music festival in Salzburg, the Christmas Balls in Vienna, the Oktoberfest beer festival in Munich, and others are well-known throughout the world and have long been the hallmark of the tourist destinations in countries where they are held. In Russia, event tourism is a new and actively developing area. Almost all regions of the Russian Federation organize festivals on a variety of topics, business events, including forums, exhibitions, fairs, entertainment events, and sports competitions. Each region tries to attract the tourist flow to its territory through an interesting event and various activities. In the contemporary world, tourism manifests itself in various forms and relationships, attracts the focus of the attention of scientists and specialists. The study of the term *tourism* shows that it is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. Today, one of the unresolved issues is the classification, as well as the identification of typical and unique characteristics inherent in this phenomenon.

In most countries of the world, tourism is a high-income industry. According to research by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), which compared the economic effect of tourism with other key sectors (agriculture, mining, healthcare, automotive, retail, financial services, banking, and construction), the direct contribution of tourism to world GDP in 2018 reached USD 2.8 trillion (10.4%). Tourism was recognized as the fastest-growing economic sector in the world, which expanded by 3.9% (ahead of automobile manufacturing, and healthcare). It should be noted that in current economic conditions, tourism can be manifested in a variety of forms. The variety of forms is the basis for tourism classification, while each form has its typical and individual distinguishing features. Tourism classification is a logical operation for dividing a set into subsets on the appropriate grounds. The parameters for classifying types of tourism include the purpose of the trip, the characteristics of the trip participants (tourists), the resources used, the transport used, the role in currency transfers, and the seasonality. However, it is important to avoid the intersection of distinguishing grounds (Kvartalnov, 2001). Types of tourism, such as a mountain and business tourism, or water and youth tourism have different characteristics and classification grounds, so they cannot be put in the same row. It should be noted that the

tourism classifying parameters listed above are the starting point for designing tourist service programs and tours in general.

It should also be noted that the above listed most popular parameters for classifying tourism are quite incomplete. It is almost impossible to list all the parameters because new types and forms of tourism are constantly emerging due to the development of tourism and the tourism industry. Event tourism is the most striking example of emerging new forms and types of tourism. In several studies (Babkin, 2018; Birzhakov, Vorontsova, Metelev, 2000; Kireeva, 2010; Kireeva, Rassokhina, Seredina, 2018; Sharafanova, Pecheritsa, Zhitlov, 2014) it is noted that the history of event tourism development goes back to the distant past. The first mentions of human trips to participate in an event or watch those involved in the event dates to the era of Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece. These trips are associated with attending and participating in the largest sporting events in Ancient Greece, namely, the Olympic Games, as well as attending Gladiator fights in Ancient Rome which was called Roman gladiator games. Sometimes famous gladiators traveled to major cities, where they held fights which could be visited by all fans of such spectacles. In this case, the main motive to go on a trip was the desire of a gladiator to personally take part in a significant event.

In the Middle Ages (5th-15th centuries), the poor condition of transport infrastructure, feudal disunity, and barbarian attacks on travelers led to a reduction in the number of travelers. But, even despite these reasons, representatives of aristocratic families went on a journey, whose main motive was the desire to take part in important state and political events – coronations, weddings of representatives of Royal and aristocratic houses, and taking the oath. Such trips served as the basis for so-called political tourism. At that, not all interested persons could attend these events, because the exact dates were often unknown in advance. In the Middle Ages, to visit the fair was another motive to go on a trip. The first fairs appeared in Europe because of the development of industrial and trade relations. Since the 13th century, fairs have enjoyed great popularity, while their organization involved representatives of Royal families, and were patronized by representatives of the Church. Major European fairs were usually organized annually and lasted at least a month. During the Renaissance, carnivals became a new form of leisure. Carnival and events that took place during the days of the carnival were a kind of farewell to fun life and the beginning of the Great (Easter) lent. Carnivals were extremely popular in France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. In these countries, carnivals have acquired the status of specially organized feasts, which included theatrical performances, costumed processions, folk festivals, etc.

In the Modern Times, since the beginning of the 17th century, another kind of trip emerged, namely, congress tours or conference tours. These event trips were based on meetings of professionals from various fields of activity. The first such meeting was held in 1681; this was the International Congress of Physicians, which was held in Rome. Since the 19th century, many participants were attracted by exhibitions. During this period, the following largest exhibitions were the most popular:

- The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations called the Great Exhibition in London;
- The Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations in New York;
- The Exhibition of Agricultural, Industrial and Fine Arts Products in Paris.

A significant impetus to the development of event tourism in the 19th century was the proposal of the French public figure Pierre de Coubertin to revive the Olympic movement in 1894 at the Sorbonne. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), created

at Sorbonne University in June 1894, took over the organization of this great sports competition. At the turn of the 20th-21st centuries, visiting sports and other specially organized events is becoming popular. A whole industry has appeared, whose main purpose was not only to organize professionally and competently the event but also to correctly organize and ensure its visit by tourists. All this confirms the relevance and necessity of developing event management and event marketing. Within the framework of these activities, the issues of organizing and conducting events, analyzing the effectiveness of events, as well as promoting event tourism to the tourist market in present-day conditions are studied in this article. One of the first formulations of the term of event tourism was coined in Europe in the second half of the 20th century, and it sounded as follows: "Event tourism is an important alternative for destinations and local entrepreneurs, as well as the main activity of event organizers who want to increase their audience" (Kireeva, Rassokhina, Seredina, 2018). Analysis of various sources allowed identifying the most exact wordings of the event tourism as a term. Thus, according to different authors, event tourism is:

- a type of tourist activity that attracts tourists by diverse social events of cultural and sports life, contributing to the development of tourism infrastructure, integration of different segments of the population into society, and the formation of a positive image of the territory (Alekseeva, 2012);
- a type of tourist activity focused on a variety of significant social events, as well as rare natural phenomena that attract large masses of compatriots and tourists from foreign countries by their uniqueness, exoticism, and individuality (Babkin, 2018);
- a significant part of cultural tourism, focused on visiting destinations at a certain time, associated with a certain event in the life of society or community, or a rarely observed natural phenomenon (Birzhakov, Vorontsova, Metelev, 2000);
- a type of tourism focused on visiting a certain area at a certain time during the dates of an event (Dolzhenko, Shmytkova, 2007);
- a unique tourist offer that allows an individual to become an eyewitness and participant of an interesting event in the territory of a tourist destination (Kireeva, 2010);
- any trip associated with any event interesting for the tourist, taking place in any part of the world (Nikitina, Zinchenko, 2012);
- tourism activities related to a variety of significant social events, as well as rare natural phenomena that attract a large number of tourists from different countries with their uniqueness, exoticism, and individuality (Lakomov, 2013);
- attending dramatic and often unique events in cultural, sports, or business life in the framework of the region or the world; there are many reasons for organizing event tours (Oficial'nyj sajt Federal'nogo agentstva po turizmu, n.d.);
- trips to meet the need for attending a certain event (Frolova, 2010).

Having analyzed the approaches of scientists and specialists to the interpretation of event tourism, the authors came up with the conclusion that the most important factor in the development of event tourism is, first, a certain event. An event should be understood as a set of phenomena characterized primarily by the ambiguity that is important for society or humanity in general, for a particular social group, or individual. An event can be a unique phenomenon, held one-time or regularly, which can be attended to watch during a certain period, in some cases on pre-known dates. According to the classification of D.M. Genkin, all events can be classified by their subject and scale

(Genkin, 1975). In terms of subject, the event can be festivals and holidays, theatrical shows, fashion shows, auctions, various competitions, sporting events, and carnivals. In terms of scale, the events can be regional, national, or international. Professor of the University of Calgary (Canada), D. Goetz suggests classifying events as follows (Getz, 2005; 2008):

- cultural events (festivals and carnivals, religious feasts);
- political and public events (meetings at the highest level, official visits, elections);
- events in the field of education and science (conferences, seminars, student Olympiads; awarding of scientific prizes);
- art and entertainment events;
- sports events and competitions;
- social events (state holidays);
- private events (weddings and other holidays).

Even events such as weddings, Getz includes in the concept of event tourism since people from other cities can come to such a celebration; moreover, the wedding itself can be celebrated in another country (Getz, 2005; 2008).

METHODS

Currently, tourism is one of the largest actors of international trade in the nonresource sector. According to experts from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the export of the tourism sector is ranked 3rd in the world. This present article used the following general scientific theoretical research methods:

- analysis of literature on the history of event tourism development in the world and Russia;
- systematization of theoretical knowledge concerning the term of event tourism;
- generalization of statistical data on tourist flows in the framework of event tourism;
- the synthesis that combines the standpoints of tourism specialists concerning the type of tourism under consideration.

RESULTS

Event tourism in Russia is a type of tourism associated with visiting certain events held on a one-time or regular basis in Russia or abroad, which have a certain significance and are oriented at a certain social segment or individuals (Associaciya turoperatorov, n.d.). Certain areas of event tourism were developed as early as in the Soviet era (Birzhakov, Vorontsova, Metelev, 2000). For example, the parades held in honor of May 1st and 9th on Red Square attracted millions of citizens from all over the Soviet Union. In 1935, the first Soviet carnival was organized, which gathered 120 thousand participants. The 6th World Festival of Youth and Students held in 1957 gathered delegates from 131 countries, the total number of participants amounted to 34 thousand people. Participation in the Festival of youth from foreign countries served an impetus to increase the interest of foreign tourists in the USSR (Birzhakov, Vorontsova, Metelev, 2000). The Scarlet Sails graduates' holiday organized in Leningrad on June 27, 1968, on the initiative of the city's school graduates was another vivid event. After 1991, the holiday was terminated, and only since 2005, the holiday is held annually again.

Today, up to three million people take part in this festival every year. On the days of the festival, the number of tourists coming to St. Petersburg increases by an average of 2.5 times (Gorodskoj informacionnyj portal Sankt-Peterburga, n.d.). The structure of event tourism in Russia has changed after the collapse of the USSR (Birzhakov, Vorontsova, Metelev, 2000). Tourists were attracted by popular gastronomic festivals, fairs, and historical reconstructions. However, the feasts listed, and associated events were undeveloped. After the collapse of the USSR, many feasts and events were conducted by nonstate structures, while the state practically ceased to control them. It was after the collapse of the Soviet Union that many events were held for commercial purposes.

Table 1 lists the most significant events that have had significant influence on the development of event tourism in Russia. Today, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Sochi, and Yekaterinburg are the leaders in holding various events in Russia at the highest level (Oficial'nyj sajt Federal'nogo agentstva po turizmu, n.d.). Moscow Government decree No. 476-PP of 07.10.2011 approved the state program of Moscow "Development of the urban environment". At present, the recent version with changes made by the decree of the Moscow government No. 635-PP of 04.06.2019 is in force. As part of this program, the authors have created a line of events, different in their topics, status, duration, location, and several participants. The developed event line is based primarily on events that have become famous both in Russia and abroad. These are events, such as Night at the Museum, the International Tchaikovsky Competition, World Press Photo, Spasskaya Tower International Military Music Festival, Times, and Epochs International historical festival in Kolomenskoye, etc. The above-listed events are annual, their dates are known in advance, therefore, for specific dates, tour operators develop tours and make appropriate service programs to visit the selected tourist event. Vivid and memorable events form the image of Moscow as a tourist destination that is favorable for visiting. In turn, the positive image of the capital contributes to the favorable image of the entire country in general. The tourist flow to the capital increases every year: in 2010, 12.8 million people visited Moscow, in 2016 – up to 17.5 million, in 2019 – 25 million tourists (Associaciya turoperatorov, n.d.). In many ways, the active development of event tourism contributes to the increase in tourist flow.

Table 1. Events that had significant influence on the development of event tourism in Russia

No.	Year	Events
1	2011	The first Fair of Youth Event Tourism was held in Moscow
2	2011	An online magazine "Event Review" was issued, which was the first specialized magazine devoted to event tourism
3	2012	The all-Russian open fair "Russian Open Event Expo" was organized for the first time, which was focused on the development of event tourism
4	2012	The national "Russian Event Awards" was established
5	Since 2013	The all-Russian competition in the field of event tourism is held regularly
6	2013-2014	A national calendar of events has been created which included significant events in the Russian Federation in the fields of culture, music, history, and sports
7	2014	The Tourism Development Strategy of the Russian Federation up to

		2020 has been approved, in which event tourism was highlighted as an individual priority area
8	2015	The National Association of Event Tourism was established, which is an industry association, whose main tasks are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing standards for organizing and conducting events; • lobbying the interests of stakeholders at all levels of bodies of power; • advancing and promoting event tourism among tourists, local population and professionals
9	2016	The First all-Russian tourist educational forum "Eventful Russia" was held
10	Since 2018	Intourist travel company has increased the number of both individual and group package tours involving visits to various events held in the regions of the Russian Federation
11	2019	The Tourism Development Strategy of the Russian Federation up to 2035 has been approved

Event tourism in Moscow is developing rapidly, which is largely facilitated by the developed calendar of city holidays and festivals, which includes a variety of events. The Journey to Christmas Festival, held from mid-December to mid-January, is the largest winter event in Moscow. In 2017, the Festival was visited by more than 4.8 million guests, in 2020 –by more than 5 million, including tourists from St. Petersburg, Crimea, Tatarstan, Bashkiria, Tyumen Region, and other regions of Russia, as well as from Germany, Italy, France, and China (Oficial'nyj sajt mera Moskvyy, n.d.). In 2019, during the Journey to the Christmas Festival, additional revenues of city hotels, retail enterprises, and restaurants amounted to RUB 147 billion (Oficial'nyj sajt mera Moskvyy, n.d.). The Moscow event calendar is regularly updated and supplemented. For 2017-2018, it included more than 1,500 events. Usually, the main sections of the event calendar are as follows: Festivals and holidays, Art exhibitions, Professional exhibitions and forums, Sports, Metropolitan life, and Holidays with children. The calendar contains basic information, i.e. addresses, prices, and days of free visits about museums and other tourist sites (Oficial'nyj sajt mera Moskvyy, n.d.).

The administration of all regions of the Russian Federation gives attention to the development of event tourism. The most famous events in St. Petersburg are the Scarlet Sails holiday and Town Day. These events are held with the active support of the city administration. But other events, such as festivals, exhibitions, forums, etc. are no less interesting. In 2017, about 1,000 festivals were held in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region. As a rule, the most popular events are those that take place in the summer (Gorodskoj informacionnyj portal Sankt-Peterburga, n.d.; Neva.Today, n.d.):

- Flower festival, held in June, attracts best Russian and foreign florists; the Festival program also includes concert and competition.
- River Carnival, held in July, aims at reviving the traditional carnival on the city's canals, the carnival program includes onboard theatrical and concert performances on water vessels, as well as an exhibition devoted to cruise programs starting in St. Petersburg;

- Festival of orchestras is held in August; the Festival program includes a procession of orchestras along Nevsky Prospekt with several stops for solo performances.

Due to the active development and promotion of event tourism in 2019, 10.4 million people visited St. Petersburg (by 10% less in 2018), while the average duration of tourists' stay in the city was from three to five days, and a hotel occupancy amounted to 75-78%. It is predicted that tourist flow will continue growing at least 10% in 2020 (Gorodskoj informacionnyj portal Sankt-Peterburga, n.d.). Holding the World Student Games (Universiade) in 2013 served a starting point for Kazan to develop not only event tourism but also tourism in general. Holding the Universiade also helped to increase the city's awareness among Russian and foreign tourists, as well as to create a positive image of the city, which can hold sports competitions at the highest level. More than one and a half thousand modern sports facilities are located today in the territory of Kazan. In 2008, 850 thousand tourists visited Kazan, in 2014 – 1,750 thousand people, while in 2019 – 3.5 million tourists. These figures confirm an increase in the tourist flow, which is 15% on average. At the same time, the number of so-called returning tourists has increased by up to 40% (Gosudarstvennyj Komitet Respubliki Tatarstan po turizmu, n.d.).

The increase in the number of tourists coming to Kazan resulted from a well-thought-out policy of the local authorities, attracting investment for tourism development, developing new routes, building new and modernizing existing infrastructure, and increasing material resources. These efforts resulted in the appearance of new brands, such as "Kazan is the third capital", "Kazan is the place where Europe meets Asia", "Kazan is the sports capital", associated with this city (Gosudarstvennyj Komitet Respubliki Tatarstan po turizmu, n.d.). The Kazan events calendar lists more than 20 events which include national holidays, historical reenactments, and demonstrations of local traditions. The events, most popular among tourists are the International Opera Festival named after Fyodor Chaliapin, ARENALAND Zima Youth festival, Rakhlin Seasons international festival, an International festival "White Lilac" named after Sergei Rachmaninoff, Night Cycling festival, Tatar folk festival "Sabantuy", etc. In 2014, the International Olympic Committee decided to hold the 22nd Olympic Winter Games and 11th Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi. These were the first Olympic Winter Games in the history of Russia. Preparation for the organization and holding the Games has prompted the modernization of existing facilities, as well as the construction of new ones, including roads, accommodation facilities, and communications. Special attention was paid to the construction of new sports facilities to hold competitions in all winter sports disciplines. A total of 2,800 athletes took part in the 22nd Olympic Winter Games, while 1,200,000 spectators attended the competitions. In total, 1.5 million tourists visited Sochi during the Games (Oficial'nyj sajt Krasnodarskogo kraya, n.d.).

Due to the availability of sports facilities for various sports that meet the requirements of international standards, Sochi has become a year-round resort where tourists come from all over the world. For Sochi and other cities located on the coast, this circumstance is of great importance. Today, Sochi annually hosts events such as the Kinotavr Open Russian Film Festival, the New Wave International Contest of Young Pop Singers, "Vivat Russia" and "Pearl of Russia" ballroom dance festivals, "Black Sea" festival of jazz music, attracting tourists from all over the world. The event calendar of Sochi includes about 400 various festivals. Due to exciting events, developed

infrastructure, and modern sports facilities that meet the requirements of international standards, and the availability of appropriate recreational resources, Sochi has become not only a place of traditional recreation but currently a city of sports and entertainment.

In 2019, the city of Sochi hosted 6.5 million tourists and took third place in the ranking of the most visited cities in the Russian Federation after Moscow and St. Petersburg (Oficial'nyj sajt Krasnodarskogo kraja, n.d.). Due to the organization of various events, Yekaterinburg, which until 1990 was a restricted-access city, has become a center of business and cultural life. For the third year in a row, Yekaterinburg occupies a leading position in the rating of event and business tourism in the regions of the Russian Federation, published at the Eurasian Event Forum (Informacionnyj portal Ekaterinburga, n.d.). In 2017, Yekaterinburg hosted more than 30 events of various types: music, sports, business, and theater. Because the city has been closed to foreign tourists for a long time and restricted for Russian tourists, the negative image of the city, the lack of a comprehensive approach to tourism development on the part of the administration, and poor investment attraction, most events were held in relatively recent years but even in a short time, they became famous and popular all over the world (Informacionnyj portal Ekaterinburga, n.d.). This concerns the following popular events:

- City music festival "Night of music", held annually since 2015;
- International "Barbecue festival", held annually since 2011;
- International festival of architecture and design "Eurasian award", held annually since 2014;
- Vienna music film festival held annually since 2010;
- Ural music night, held annually since 2015;
- International tourism forum "Big Ural", held annually since 2015;
- International festival "Tsar's days".

Due to various events that are regularly held in Yekaterinburg since 2014, the city has been visited by more than 200 thousand Russian and foreign tourists.

CONCLUSION

1. Various events, such as masquerades, city festivals have always existed as an important part of human society. Today, events and activities held in the regions of the Russian Federation are very diverse and held throughout the calendar year.

2. The importance of events for tourism should not be underestimated. Event tourism has significant impact on the industry in general, affecting a wide range of human activities, such as politics, the environment, socio-cultural, and other aspects.

3. The main purpose of tourist events is to increase the tourist flow to the region, attract attention to the region and its resources.

4. Events can also help in creating a positive image of a tourist destination, promoting the region and its resources, positioning, and branding around the world.

5. The appearance of new events and their inclusion in a single calendar contributes to economic growth and helps to solve the unemployment problem.

6. The development of event tourism in the territory of the Russian Federation is very important for all participants of the tourism industry, because accommodation facilities, catering establishments, and transport companies are involved in servicing all

those tourists who come to the event. Thus, all enterprises are activated, and all participants receive income.

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