

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM

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Abstract: *The Russian Federation state policy of internal and external tourism is quite active. The concluding Federal Target Program "The development of domestic and inbound tourism in the Russian Federation (2011-2018)" and the ongoing work on the project of the new program document prove that tourism is a priority of the Russian economy. The operating tourism industry and infrastructure have formed the basis for the development of various touristic programs and routes. The competition between destinations and tourist products is significantly on the rise. The tourist's satisfaction is becoming the key competitive advantage. In the face of the growing market and increased competition within the tourism industry, strategic approaches and operational activities for the promotion of the Russian national tourist product in the global arena and on the domestic market require the transformation and implementation of systemic and targeted management. The ability to offer to the traveler a tourist product that is not only interesting but also comfortable, safe and correspondent to the traveler's spiritual needs is the main factor in the success of the development of tourist companies. The article deals with the challenges of the realization of intercultural communications as a tool for forming a comfortable tourist environment.*

Keywords: *tourism, intercultural communications, source markets, cultural and religious characteristics.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of competition in the global tourism market causes the subjects of the tourism industry and the management of destinations to pay closer attention to the issues of service quality and ensuring a comfortable environment for travelers. One of the consequences of this trend is the integration of intercultural communications into the service means and the formation of a tourist product. Abroad, national tourist administrations and subjects of the tourism industry already have experience in transforming the service to meet the needs of the inbound tourist flow characterized by particular religious and cultural needs. Thus, the marketing campaign has increased the flow of tourists from China to the second-largest inbound market in New Zealand. Key efforts were the increase in the number of direct flights between China and New Zealand from 14 to 36 per week and the adaptation of hotel services to the needs of Chinese travelers. In Russian science, tourism was interpreted as a factor of intercultural communication (Galustyan, 2015; Sirotina, Tenkhunen, Gracheva, 2015) and the interdependence of the development of tourism and intercultural communication was examined by several authors (Apanasyuk, Egorova, 2017; Gapon, Komarova, 2015; Gosteva, Sereda, 2008; Davydenko et al., 2015; Levkicheva, 2012; Moshnyaga, 2012; Parfenyuk, 2016; Pokhodzei, 2014; Shaburov, Rodnina, 2017) but the research findings seldomly reached the practical plane of service design. In Russia, the application of

intercultural communications in tourism was usually considered exclusively in the aspect of business communication (Morozova, Arkhipova, 2015) or in the context of business tourism (Shuvaeva, 2014). Until recently, the questions about how to create a friendly environment for tourists from countries and regions with different religious and cultural characteristics have not been raised. The accumulation of experience in the implementation of intercultural communications for individual target segments of tourists (Kremenetskaya, 2017) has led to the transformation of views on this issue. The skills of intercultural communication for communicating with tourists, designing and implementing tourist services and forms of service (Antropova, Tryakina, Ivashchenko, 2012; Ivushkina, Dashkova, Shcherbakova, 2016; Karpovich, 2011; Sabanina, 2009; Yureva, 2012) are becoming a necessary element of staff training in the tourism sector.

METHODS

We used the methods of comparison and generalization for the analysis of intercultural communications for individual target segments of tourists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term intercultural communication appeared relatively recently. From the 1960s, the term has been increasingly used in various combinations including "culture and communication", "intercultural communication", "international communication", "intercultural understanding", "interracial communication", "interethnic communication" and "intercommunication". These terms were often used interchangeably. Attempts were made to fix the denotative meaning that referred to some aspects of the interaction between individuals and varies in the cultural, political or ethnic terms and was linked to the transmission of information across national borders. The area of intercultural communication and its boundaries are not clearly defined. The conceptualization of intercultural communication encompasses a wide variety of viewpoints expressed by specialists, ranging from those who consider intercultural communication a subsystem of interpersonal communication to those who view it as an independent area of research (Morozova, Arkhipova, 2015). The hypothesis of the study, some of the results of which are presented in the article, is based on the assumption that the ongoing structural changes in the inbound tourist flow necessitate the adaptation of services to the needs of tourists from countries with different religious and cultural characteristics. The purpose of the study is to substantiate the list of strategically important directions of inbound and domestic tourism for the further development of tourist flow, including from countries that are different from the Russian Federation in terms of culture, traditions and history (Sabanina, 2009).

The purpose of the study includes the following successive steps (Fig. 1).

1. Determine the sustainability of tourist demand and the prospects for its development for visiting destinations of the Eurasian continent based on the analysis of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) data on global tourism. Describe the trends in tourist spending from leading source destinations.
2. Preliminarily group the countries according to the trend of changes in the outbound international tourist flow according to the World Bank.
3. Determine the list of the most sustainable markets in terms of tourist spending on foreign travel based on the analysis of UNWTO data.

4. Determine the structure of entries into the Russian Federation in terms of: source countries in general; tourist trips; foreign citizens in places of collective accommodation.

5. Determine the significance of prices in the fluctuations of demand from foreign tourists.

6. Determine the strategically important destinations for the further development of tourist flow: inbound tourism from the countries of traditional source regions for Russian inbound tourism; inbound tourism from the countries different from the Russian Federation in culture, traditions and history; domestic tourism.

Fig.1 shows the planned actions and results according to the stated purpose, objectives and program of the study.

The sustainability of tourist demand and the prospects for its development for visiting destinations of the Eurasian continent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Determination of the sustainability of global tourism in modern geopolitical and geo-economic conditions •Determination of the place of Eurasian continent destinations in the structure of modern tourist demand •Description of trends in tourist spending from leading source destinations
Grouping the countries according to the trend of changes in the outbound international tourist flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Preliminarily grouping of the countries according to the status and prospects of changes in the outbound tourist flow
The list of the most sustainable markets in terms of tourist spending on foreign travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The list of the most significant source market according to tourist spending
The structure of entries into the Russian Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>Determination of the key inbound flows regardless of the purpose of the trip <input type="checkbox"/>Determination of structural changes in the key inbound tourist flows
The factors of the demand fluctuations from foreign tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Substantiation of the relevance of increasing cost- and non-cost factors of the competitiveness of Russian tourist products for the increased loyalty and attraction of foreign tourists
The strategically important destinations for the further development of tourist flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>inbound tourism from the countries of traditional source regions for Russian inbound tourism <input type="checkbox"/>inbound tourism from the countries different from the Russian Federation in culture, traditions and history; <input type="checkbox"/>domestic tourism

Figure 1. The directions of actions and the expected results of determining the strategically important directions of inbound and domestic tourism for further development of tourist flow, including the countries that differ from the Russian Federation in culture, traditions and history (Parfenyuk, 2016). The Russian Federation state policy of internal and external tourism is quite active. However, it is worth noting that in the face of the growing market and increased competition within the tourism industry, strategic approaches and operational activities for the promotion of the Russian national tourist product in the global arena and on the domestic market require the transformation and implementation of systemic and targeted management. The main argument in favor of this approach is the constant and progressive development of global tourism, in which the destinations of the Eurasian continent remain the most in-demand in the segment of international tourism.

Statistic data show that the steady growth of global tourism is due to the growth of tourist interest in new destinations in: Asia; the Pacific Region; America; Africa (Karpovich, 2011).

The steady growth of tourist interest in European destinations, while considering the total tourist flow, shows the significance of this direction in the international tourism market. One must emphasize that for the first time the Russian Federation became part of the TOP-10 most visited countries in the world. In recent years, considerable experience has been accumulated in promoting Russia as a tourist destination, both in the global market and domestically, but still, no solution has been found a solution for such tasks as:

1. Determination of priority countries and regions for the promotion of the national tourist product.
2. Determination of the types of markets with the identification of the expectations of the target audience and the subsequent selection of work methods to build loyalty including the most efficient communication channels.
3. Determination of the specifics of promotion campaigns according to the national features of inbound and domestic tourism directions.
4. Creation of brand loyalty programs with high awareness and level of trust.
5. Formation and implementation of complex promotion campaigns in the countries and regions of priority directions that would be built according to the principle of multiple stages and consistency from the regional to the federal level.

In the context of restrictive political and economic measures imposed on Russia, with the stabilization of the Russian ruble against major world currencies, as well as a certain likelihood of stabilization and an increase in purchasing activity due to stagnation and progressive processes in the Russian economy, one should outline the strategic goals and objectives in the field of tourism in the leading directions for a five-year period. It is advisable to develop an operational plan for a one-year interval with mandatory monitoring of efficiency for a six-month period (Morozova, Arkhipova, 2015; Moshnyaga, 2012; Musin, 2016). The methodological basis for determining the strategically important directions of inbound and domestic tourism for the further development of tourist flow, including from countries different from the Russian Federation in culture, traditions and history, according to the provisions of the project statement, consists of the methods of statistical and strategic analysis, forecasting methods, as well as methods of typology and grouping.

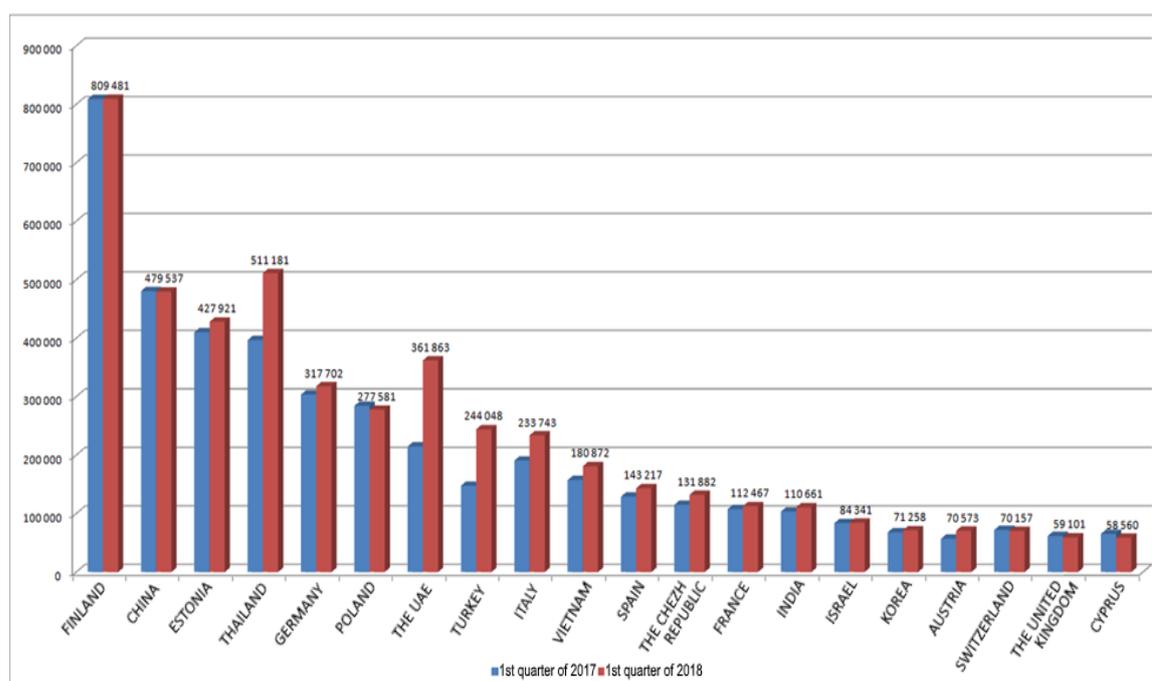


Figure 2. Outbound tourist flow in the first quarter of 2018 (Source: ATOR Analytical Service)

In the first quarter, **Finland** was in the lead in terms of outbound flow – almost 810 thousand trips by Russians (this is 1% less than the previous year). In Finland, based on the calculations by VisitFinland, almost 70% of the Russian inbound flow to the country are one-day visits to the country by residents of Russian border regions (mainly for personal shopping). Moreover, these are most often multiple trips during a quarter so the number of trips is significantly higher than the actual number of people who entered. Nevertheless, it is in winter that the share of tourists is the highest in Finland. On average, about 19% of Russians visit Finland as part of a tourist trip while only 4% buy package tours there. In January – March, Russian citizens made 479.5 thousand trips to **China** (a decrease of 0.02% compared to January – March 2017). The main tourist beach destination in China popular in winter among Russians is Hainan Island. The share of tourists who went on vacation there in the outbound flow from Russia to China is rather difficult to calculate with acceptable accuracy (Hainan statistics for the first quarter has not yet been published). However, based on the growing popularity of Hainan (an increase of 245% in 2017) and the number of Russian tourists from Russia on the island in 2017 (280 thousand), we can cautiously assume that out of 479.5 thousand, the number of Russian tourists is 20-25%.

The rest are non-tourist cross-border movements of residents of Russia's border regions with China for the purpose of shopping and commerce. Number three among the leaders in the first quarter is Estonia with almost 428 thousand trips (an increase of 4.40% compared to the previous year). According to VisitEstonia, 74 thousand tourists from Russia were registered in the country in the first quarter (an increase of 17% year-on-year). These figures show that tourists account for only 17% of the Russian outbound flow to Estonia, while most of Russians' trips to Estonia, as in the case of Finland, fall on cross-border non-tourist movements (shopping, commerce, etc.). On the 5th and 6th places are **Germany** and **Poland** (317.7 and 277.6 thousand trips, respectively). In annual terms, the growth of the outbound flow to Germany (its significant share is business

tourism) amounted to 4.4%, while Poland (where, as in the case of Estonia and Finland, non-tourist one-day visits prevail, mainly from the Kaliningrad region) showed a decrease in the flow by 2.3%. The information framework of the research was made up of secondary data published by: World Bank (<http://mecometer.com>); UNWTO; Rosstat; Russian Federal Agency for Tourism; RATA-NEWS (with reference to the Border Service). The destinations of the Eurasian continent take the leading place in the structure of modern tourist demand in terms of the size of the attracted tourist flow. Consistent growth rates allow destinations to maintain this leadership in the short-term strategic perspective.

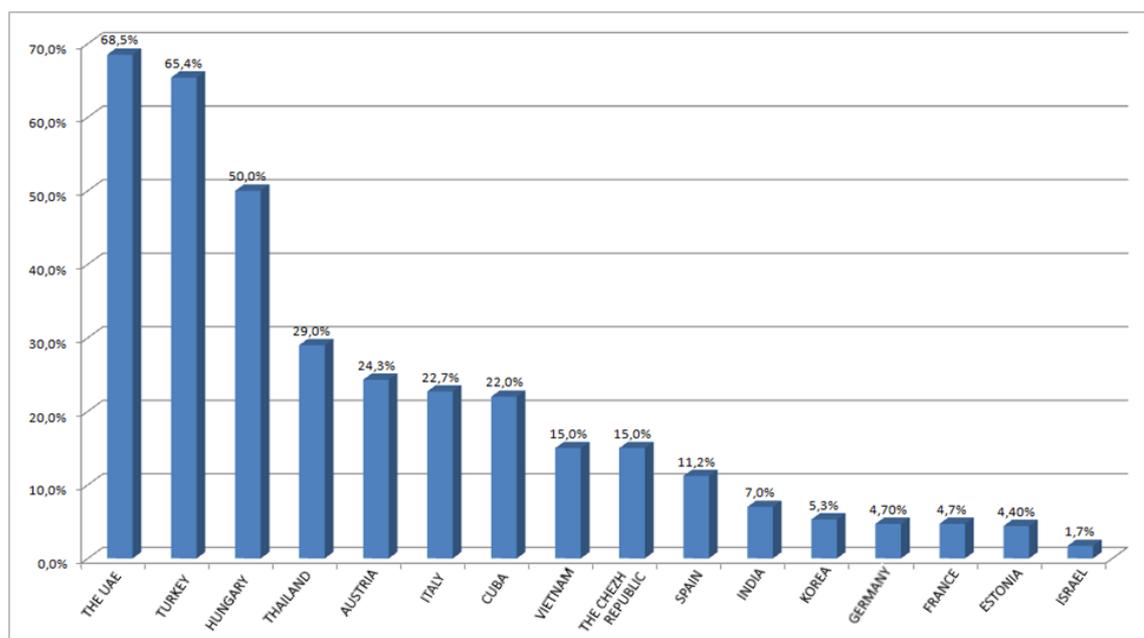


Figure 3. Leaders in the increased tourist flow from Russia among the TOP-25 countries in the first quarter of 2018, % annualized (Source: ATOR Analytical Service)

European ski destinations also showed decent growth in the first quarter of 2018 (although, of course, not all the outbound flow from Russia to these countries in the first quarter was associated with skiing). Sales volumes this winter from the tour operator PAC Group were distributed as follows: Italy – 45%, France – about 25%, Austria – about 23%, Switzerland – about 10%. Among some other companies, Austria was in the lead in terms of skiing. The only direction that did not show a clear positive trend was Switzerland. This is supported by the total outbound figures. Thus, according to the results of the first quarter, Italy was on the 9th place in the TOP-10 in terms of the volume of outbound tourist traffic (233.7 thousand trips of Russian citizens, an increase of 22.7% year-on-year). Tourist agencies noted the decent number of advance bookings and activity in booking ski tours to Italy until the end of March, which was facilitated by the fact that the price level in euros remained at the level of the previous year. In the first quarter, France showed the growth of the Russian tourist flow by 4.7% (112.5 thousand trips), taking 12th place in the TOP-25 countries. In the winter, tourist agencies noted a significant increase in the sale of premium ski tours to France. With the 17th place in the outbound rating (70.6 thousand trips, an increase of 24.3% year-on-year), Austria, was also noted by tour operators this winter as a booming area of ski demand, mainly in the budget and middle segments. There was also an increase in demand for guided and combined tours to this

country. Switzerland showed a drop in tourist traffic in the first quarter (18th place, 70.2 thousand trips) by 2.4% year-on-year. Apart from the aforementioned countries from the TOP-25 countries with the highest volumes of outbound tourist traffic from the Russian Federation, the growth of tourist traffic in the first quarter of 2018 year-on-year was also demonstrated by Hungary (growth year-on-year +50%), Cuba (+22%, confirmed by Cuban statistics), Spain (+11.2%), the Czech Republic (+15%), India (+7%), South Korea (+5.3% according to the Russian Federal Security Service (FSS) and about + 14% according to Korean statistics which is explained by different calculation methods, however, the absolute figures of the departments are the same) and Israel (+1.7% year-on-year). Conversely, the drop in tourist flow from Russia in annual terms in the 1st quarter of 2018 from the TOP-25 was demonstrated by China (-0.02%), Switzerland (-2.4%), Poland (-2.3%) and several other tourist destinations. Thus, the flow of tourists to Cyprus, according to the Russian FSS Border Service, in January – March 2018 fell by 10% year-on-year (according to Cyprus – by 5%), the USA – by 5.7%, to the Dominican Republic – by 4%, to the UK by 3.8% and the Netherlands by 3.5%.

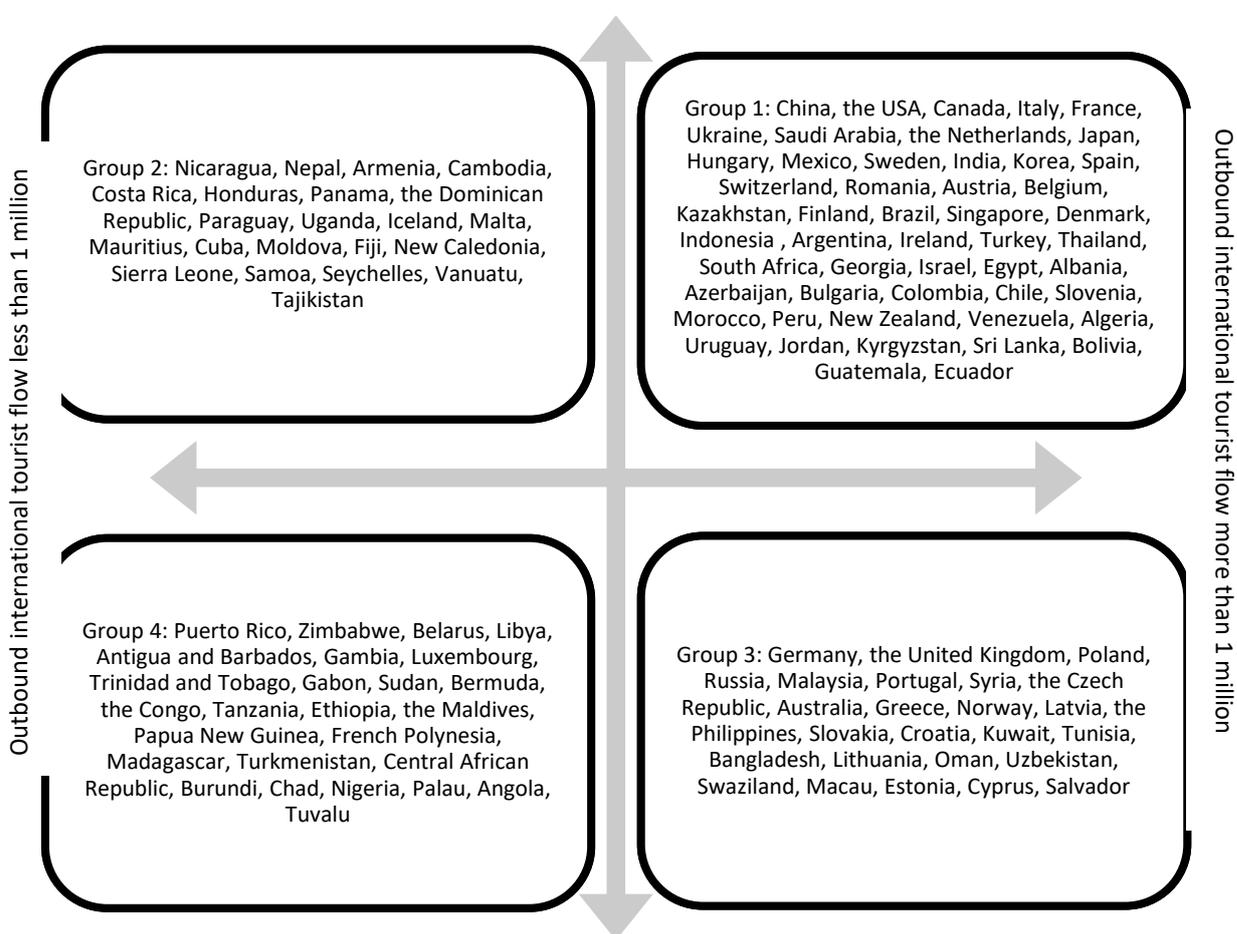


Figure 4. Groups of countries according to the trend of changing international tourist flow according to the World Bank

The trends in tourist spending from the leading destination destinations show that China, the USA, Germany, the United Kingdom and France should be considered the most sustainable source markets in terms of tourist spending on foreign travel. Apart from the leading countries in terms of tourist spending on travel abroad, nine more markets should

be included in the list of the most significant destination markets in terms of tourist spending that, according to UNWTO TOP-50, showed double-digit growth in spending in 2016: Vietnam (+28%); Argentina (+26%); Egypt (+19%); Spain (+17%); India (+16%); Israel (+12%); Ukraine (+12%); Qatar (+11%); Thailand (+11%). Therefore, foreign statistical data allow us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The growth of global tourism in modern conditions signifies the preservation and growth of the population's interest in tourist trips to other countries. Demand trends in global tourism show an increase in tourist interest in new destinations and directions. The Eurasian continent remains the leader in arrivals. Obviously, in these conditions, competition is increasing both between destinations and among the subjects of the tourism industry.

2. The growth in the global tourist flow is accompanied by an increase in tourist spending abroad. The expansion of the tourist flow and the attraction of additional tourist spending determine the movement of non-price factors to first place among the competitive advantages – the originality and authenticity of the tourist product, the quality of service, the correspondence of the services provided to consumer interests and preferences and the customization of service.

3. 2018 was the first time that the Russian Federation became part of the TOP-10 most visited countries in the world. However, Russia was not included in the TOP-10 beneficiaries (recipients of tourism expenses). This indicates that there are significant prospects for the development of inbound tourism to the country and also speaks in favor of measures aimed at increasing the duration of tourists' stay in the country and saturating tourist programs.

4. The list and ranking of leading countries in global tourism in terms of outbound tourist flow are relatively consistent.

5. In the TOP-50 largest markets according to the UNWTO, the leaders in the growth of tourist expenses abroad include countries that differ from European countries and the Russian Federation in terms of national and religious characteristics.

6. Therefore, one should expect the preservation and growth of tourist interest in destinations within the Russian Federation. At the same time, it is feasible to consider this trend through the lens of changes in the structure of tourist demand, defining priority directions, primarily from countries different from the Russian Federation in terms of national and religious characteristics.

This trend confirms the conclusion made above about the growth of inbound tourist traffic to the Russian Federation as well as the prospects for the development of this tourism sector.

We should stress that the indicator characterizes the number of foreign citizens living in collective accommodation facilities i.e. this is the size of the tourist flow without the excursion component or day trips. Considering the growth including for the period of 2014 and 2015, one can conclude that geopolitical and geo-economic conditions are not a significant critical limiting factor for the manifestation of tourist interest in the tourist product of the Russian Federation. As for the distribution of the inbound tourist flow in the federal districts of the Russian Federation, we can note the unevenness:

- the leader, both in terms of the volume of the tourist flow and the rate of its growth in recent years has been the Central Federal District, which is due to the high concentration and variety of tourist attractions that are traditionally the subject of tourist interest of foreign tourists;

- the second place during the period under review is consistently occupied by the Northwestern Federal District which also has tourist attractions that traditionally cause high tourist interest among both domestic and foreign tourists;
- the Southern Federal District is in third place is due to the high tourist attraction of the Krasnodarski Krai facilities;
- the difference between the Far Eastern, Siberian, Ural and Volga Federal Districts is not as significant as the delta separating them from the top three districts, however, these destinations (except for the Ural Federal District) differ in the increase in the number of foreign tourists in 2016;
- foreign citizens were the least inclined to travel to the tourist facilities of the North Caucasian and Crimean Federal Districts.

Therefore, in the Russian Federation, there are regions with traditionally sustainable demand from foreign tourists. The analysis of statistical data for the period 2017-2018 shows the predominance of "other" purposes in travel in the final figures of entry. Considering tourist trips, one should also note the consistent growth of tourist interest in the Russian Federation. Consequently, the change in the methodology for calculating the tourist flow that took place in 2014 did not have a fundamental impact on the assessment of development trends in the demand for tourist trips to the Russian Federation. In accordance with the Rosstat decree dated 12 Aug. 2014, the official statistical methodology for assessing the number of inbound and outbound tourist trips was approved. The methodology was developed to generate statistical information that complies with the international recommendations of the UNWTO.

PROPOSED TOOLS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Experience indicates that marketing programs and friendly projects are sufficiently efficient in increasing the service quality and attracting tourists from individual source markets that differ in their cultural and religious characteristics. At the same time, the rapid changes in the tourist demand and the geographic reorientation of tourist flows foster new tourist markets which makes the management of companies in the tourist industry look for new destinations. The development of intercultural communications in the Russian tourist industry can be implemented through a combination of tools: marketing campaigns aimed at promotion and increased informational availability on the local source markets; systems of voluntary certification that most friendly-projects operate within; information events aimed at developing intercultural communicative competences in tourist services for specialists from various companies and organizations.

CONCLUSION

The need for monitoring control and observation of the dynamics of changes in key factors in the development of intercultural communications in tourism which are the priority in the formation of a comfortable environment for foreign tourists (from target consumer segments) during their stay considering the national and religious characteristics: target consumer segments, their motives, preferences and behavioral features when visiting the Russian Federation; • national and religious characteristics of target consumer segments that influence the composition and content of tourist services

and the communication system in the B2B and B2C segments in relation to the communication channels, the visual and text content. The development of intercultural communications in tourism should not hurt Russian national and local traditions, norms and customs or cause negative attitudes from the local population. That is why the proposed events aimed at forming a comfortable environment for foreign tourists (from target consumer segments) during their stay considering the national and religious characteristics should include the work with the local population as well as correspond to the goals and objectives of tourism development on the national and regional levels.

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