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EVENT TOURISM OR «UKRAINE: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU»

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Annotation. *Events are activities that belong to the group of created attractions, which every destination that plans the successful development of tourism should have. Some types of event tourism though, namely war tourism, being an attraction for some travellers, cannot complement the tourist supply of a particular destination.*

Key words. *Events, event tourism, tourism attractions, war tourism*

The increase of the global tourist flow – 1.184 billion people in 2015 [7] and receipts in destinations worldwide from expenditure by international visitors on accommodation, food and drink, entertainment, shopping and other services and goods, reached an estimated US \$ 1245 billion worldwide in 2015 [7] against the background of global development of the industry at a constant amount of production factors has sharpened the need for the development of tourism in Ukraine. Creation of a tourism country brand in 2013 (fig. 1) became an important component which was called to help the world understand the diversity of the culture of the Ukrainian people, country's rich history, reveal its tourist attraction and consolidate the European vector of development.

The event tourism is a relatively new direction which attracts people wishing to visit a definite event. There are not many organised event tourists in Ukraine so far, but this niche is growing rapidly (3-6 % per year according to the UNWTO [7]) as more and more people are keen on value added type of tourism. To be more exact, the contemporary world tourism trends are aimed at increasing the interest in learning about cultures, customs and traditions of different countries and the event, as the tourist product, is the best manifestation of this tendency through the tourist supply.



Figure 1 – Ukrainian tourism logo [6]

Nowadays events hold the central position in culture and have a very prominent role in the society being one of the world's leading tourist products with an unlimited potential, which is primarily associated with the maturity of destination countries in innovative planning and implementation of events. Events are activities that belong to the group of created attractions, which every destination that plans the successful development of tourism should have [2].

However, some events turn out to be not quite opposite to the described above. Thus, political and economic instability of Ukraine (fig. 2) against the background of disagreement with Russia (17 rank – High rating in Political Risk (Dynamic Index), have changed the tourism trend in Ukraine. During this period the country has lost control of its largest recreation destination – Crimea and this has changed the quality of the inbound tourist flow. The main purpose of the visits has become the attendance of certain significant events in the country. This type of tourism along the characteristic falls in the classification of Major event tourism, known as the peripatetic events defined by their scale and appeal to attract and influence large scale of international audiences and extensive media coverage, and to deliver economic impact and significant visitor numbers for the host destination [4].

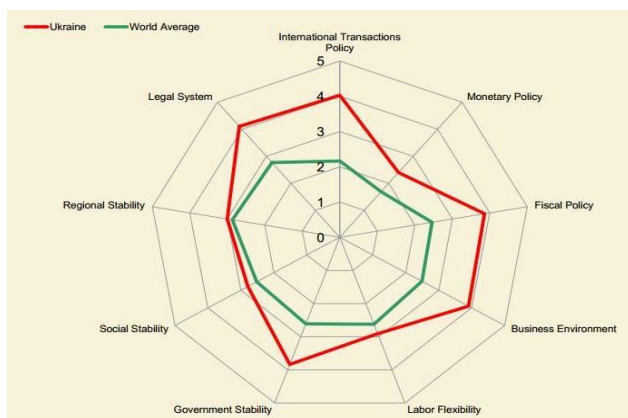


Figure 2 – Political Risk Summary for Ukraine, 2014
(Score 1– best to 5 – worst) [3]

The top «event» in Ukraine has become a war conflict at the east of the country that attracts the attention not only of the investors who are concerned about the preservation of the invested capital but also tourists wishing to experience the breath of war in the center of Europe.

Till now, the interest to the military tourism has been mainly observed in Iran, Syria and Israel. Thus, tourists are visiting the Golan Heights on the Israeli-Syrian border to watch the smoke rise. From there people can sit back, relax, and watch the explosions from the Syrian civil war – all from a safe distance [5]. At the same time Israel's rapidly growing tourism industry nosedived during its blistering July war with Hamas, the number of visitors falling 26 percent to its lowest level in seven years.

Speed of the war tourism growth and visiting battlefields in Iran is more than that of all tourism types. On the basis of the informal statistics, about 5 million people visit these battlefields though many groups travel to southern zones and through some caravans to the west [4].

Statistics of war-event attractors in Ukraine are absent as the tourist product is in its formative stage. Thus, those who are interested in this type of entertainment are offered several areas: the organization of trips to the military training grounds, firing a grenade launcher, a flight on the real fighter or a trip on a tank. However, the organization of this subspecies of event tourism is illegal in Ukraine, moreover, a

visit to the military units or polygons are prohibited by law. At the same time these «excursions» are held by the people without a license for this type of activity for a tax-free «reward». Multiplication effect of this type of tourism, in addition to scientifically recognized, can be explained not only by the corrupted military but also by the low or complete lack of legal income of the population.

The foregoing leads to the conclusion that the military tourism is quite a controversial form of tourism intensification of which, in terms of real hostilities, leads to a decrease of the tourist attractiveness of the area – Iran, Israel. The development of the tourism industry in the direction of increasing the share of military tourism means encouraging conflicts and social tension that contradicts the international law. In contrast, the popularization of the summits and the media coverage of the diplomatic «wars», raising the level of education of the nation, political literacy and communicative competence will realize the constructive function of event tourism.

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