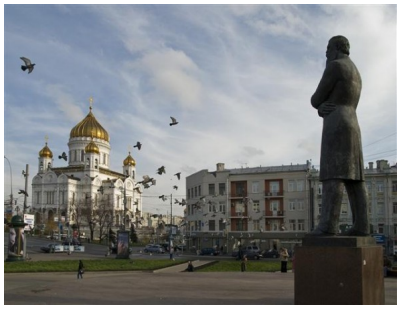
TOURISM SPENDING IN RUSSIA TO DOUBLE BY 2016



In the recent years Russia’s tourism shows slow progress in attracting international tourists. There are many reasons that make international travelers turn away from visiting Russia. Lack of proper infrastructure, unpredictable services quality, expensive accommodations, and Russia's bureaucracy are some of the reasons that make tourists skip the country when on holiday. In reaction to the slow growth of Russia's tourism industry, Hilton Worldwide recently published an in-depth report entitled "Balancing Russia's Tourism Deficit: A Report on the Future of the Industry." The report states that the number of inbound tourists can increase by up to 5 percent by 2016. With the 5 percent increment, it is expected that the amount of tourist expenditures can double in the next four years. However, there is lots of homework to do by the Russian government and the tourism industry if they want to attract more international tourists and increase tourist revenues. Among the many problems that need to be solved visa system should become a priority. The Russian government must be able to simplify the visa system as well as reduce waiting period and price for a visa. According to the report other improvements that need to be taken by the Russian government include investing in hospitality training and education to increase service quality, encouraging the growth of online retail businesses, investing in travel accommodation and transportation, increasing the number of budget airlines, and encouraging event tourism. It is also important that the government creates an appealing image of the country. Although all these changes may take years, immediate actions will bring positive impact for the Russian tourism in the future. If the Russian government takes all those steps, it is very possible that Russia can become one of the European countries that have the fastest growing tourism industry. The growth rate is predicted to be 7.4 percent from 2011 to 2016. During these years, the tourist expenditures are also expected to increase by up to $67.1 billion. Besides the opportunity to increase the revenue from tourism industry, outbound expenditures also give long term benefits to the local tourism industry. The report from Hilton Worldwide emphasizes that there is a huge opportunity for Russia to leverage its tourism industry to the next level. Russia has the potential to make its travel trade become more competitive. There are many areas that can be improved to make this country able to seize a portion of the increasing number of international tourists. Until now, big cities in Russia, such as St. Petersburg and Moscow, are the main magnet for international travelers. The authors of the report state that it is very important to develop ethnic, industrial, ecological and event-based tourism as well.

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