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## **ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN UKRAINE: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

Nowadays tourism has become one of the largest and fast growing service industries in the world. It has already proved to be a very effective tool for engaging the existing tourist destinations in the tourism development in the most economically advanced countries, but it has failed to deliver the promised pro-development changes in many developing countries, including Ukraine, which direct contribution to GDP, according to Turner R. [2], was UAH 30.8 bn (2.3 % of GDP) in 2013 and is expected to grow by 4.3 % to UAH 49.0 bn (2.4 % of GDP) by 2024.

We have every reason to believe that Ukraine is one of the best undiscovered hidden gems among the European countries, because it has enough valuable nature, historic and cultural resources, necessary for the development of recreational sphere. However, the image of Ukraine as a tourist destination has suffered enormous hardship in recent years.

For many people positive issues, related to this country, remain buried under the following preconceived notions: the poor tourism infrastructure and the radioactive fallout of Chernobyl 29 years ago. Taking into consideration this fact, the Ukrainian government got involved in the development of the tourism image of the country abroad during the last decade, especially through promotion campaigns, but each unsuccessful attempt was associated with ignoring the real problems like the lack of coordination and coherence of the policies in the field of tourism promotion or poor tourist infrastructure quality. The last year has proved to be a damaging period for the Ukrainian tourism industry, with inbound arrivals and occupancy levels falling to the unseen depths below, that is why the country represents a significantly higher risk for investors than other countries in the region. In this regard, the recovery

over the next few years is expected to be slow.

Despite its unique cultural and historical potential, Ukraine has not yet become a fully developed participant in the global tourism arena. Nevertheless, there are still many attractions, worth to be seen, where everyone can feel the spirit of the glorious battles and touch harmony of nature and design at one of the most picturesque places, created by human hands. All these places are interesting and have a lot to offer that will keep domestic and international tourists excited for a long period of time.

On the basis of the above considerations, it's reasonable to assume that there are three important and unique aspects of the relationship between tourism and sustainable development: interaction, related to the nature of tourism, which involves a considerable amount of interaction between visitors, host communities and their local environments; awareness, which indicates that tourism makes people become far more conscious of environmental issues and differences between nations and cultures; dependency, implying that tourism is based primarily on visitors' seeking to experience intact and clean territories, attractive natural areas, authentic cultural traditions, and welcoming hosts with whom they have a good relationship [1].

To draw the conclusion, it should be mentioned that economic and political instability, as well as the lack of policy and planning are the key problems in the tourism development in Ukraine. That is why national tourism developers should make every effort on increase of efficiency of resources use, increase of promotion and advertisement and international experience implementation. All these measures being taken are impossible without a proper tourist destination management, based on the effective strategy, able to expand tourism as it has been over the last decade.

### **References**

1. Making tourism more sustainable: A guide for policy makers (2005), United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization, Accessed at: [www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=DTI/0592/PA](http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=DTI/0592/PA)
2. Turner R. (2014), Travel & Tourism: Economic impact 2014, Ukraine. World Travel & Tourism Council. 24 p.