

THE INFLUENCE OF MAJOR GEOPOLITICAL FACTORS ON A REGION'S TOURIST INDUSTRY AND PERCEPTION BY TOURISTS. CASE STUDY: CRIMEA

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Abstract

Periodically certain countries or regions of the world are affected by various types of political unrest, such as wars - including civil, revolutions, power struggles etc. In some cases, these regions have significantly developed tourist industries. In case these political events are violent, the result is predictable: a complete or almost complete halt of tourism in the region, most often accompanied by the destruction of the tourist infrastructure. But when these events are not violent, the effects on tourism may vary. As of 2015, the Crimean Peninsula is one of Europe's geopolitical hotspots and one of the world's disputed territories. This reputation comes from the fact that in March 2014 the territory switched sovereignty from Ukraine to Russia, following what many other states have qualified as an invasion and/or an illegally-held referendum. The purpose of this article is to examine the effects this series of events has had on the area's tourist industry. But before we proceed to understanding the present situation of this territory, it is vital to understand its past, which along the centuries has been shaped by various peoples and other factors, and its geography and natural resources as well. It is important to point out that much of Crimea's tourist potential has its roots in the region's history. The article features the results of a research based on a survey, which was meant to evaluate the respondents' perception of the region. This survey was conducted among subjects from numerous European and former Soviet countries. The results have shown that there are certain differences in the perception of Crimea between Europe and the former Soviet states. These differences have the potential to shape the tourist industry of the region in the near future.

Keywords

Crimea, Russia, Ukraine, influence of politics on tourism

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