

# RUSSIAN INBOUND TOURISM FACING SERIOUS CHALLENGES



Lately, the Russian inbound tourism has been experiencing difficulties as it was tagged as a "disaster" in a recently held panel debate at the inaugural World Travel Market Vision Conference in Moscow Marriot Grand Hotel.

Vladimir Kantorowich, who is the president of the KMP Group, named the inbound industry of Russia as the "Cinderella of the Russian tourism industry". **He further claimed that the Russian Government did nothing to develop the tourism in Russia.**

Many nations around the world generate a significant part of income from tourism industry. In Russia, the government focuses on oil and gas. The beautiful localities in Russia, where no gas or oil can be produced, can profit a lot from tourism that will help sustain and add income to the local economy.

Kantorowich is also the vice president of the tourist board that is why he is so concerned with the Russian inbound tourism. He criticized the government of Russia for not keeping precise statistics of inbound tourism and making it hard for tourists or visitors to be enticed to come to the country and explore its cultural and scenic richness.

**Kantorowich also stated that the officials exaggerated the number of visits to the point of cheating the exact count of tourists who visited the country.** Some regions have more tourists than the population of the whole country according to the statistics.

Kantorowich also stressed some points regarding the visa entry requirements of Russia. Currently, it is easier to get tourist visa than business visa. Most businessmen that come to Russia to do business thus pose as tourists for the convenience of acquiring Russian visa immediately. As soon as they enter the country they remove their tourist masks and go about their business without any intention of visiting the rich tourist spots of Russia.

**Russia is set to see 20% increase in tourist visits over the next four years due to a different hosting of major events in the world of sports.** Inbound visitors are expected to increase to 28.3 million in the year 2016 from 23.7 million in the year 2012 due to the major sporting events such as World Athletic Championships in 2013 and Winter Olympics in 2014.

During the year 2010, the tourism in Russia recovered from the 2009 recession. Despite of that, it was still not at par as compared to world's average index for tourism in 2010 that registered at 7% while Russia has only 2%. In the first quarter of 2011, there was a significant increase of 5% in the number of tourist visits as compared to the same quarter of 2010.

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