

LVIV - THE TOURISM CAPITAL FACES GARBAGE DIFFICULTIES



Lviv is one of Ukraine's most beautiful cities. The Western Ukrainian city is often regarded as the tourism capital of the country, and rightfully so. Lviv has more than a millennium of history as a settlement, and centuries as a city.

Throughout its history, it had been part of many states, including Poland or the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That said, Ukraine's 7th largest city can boast a wide variety of cultural heritage. Some of the examples of the richness of Lviv are the Old Town, Market Square, the Black House, Armenian Cathedral and much more.

Limited Landfill Access

However, all is not so rosy for the tourism capital in the historical Galicia region. In the past year, Lviv has gained an unpleasant reputation due to its problem with waste and garbage. The city has struggled to dispose hundreds of tones of waste for months now. All started last May, when a fire broke out at a major landfill outside the city, killing four people. Now, the core of the problem lies in the fact that local trash collectors have only restricted access to the city's landfills, mainly out of fear that such catastrophes might happen again. Thus, space for garbage to be moved is now greatly limited.

This complication has resulted in mountains of garbage being piled up in various parts of the regional capital. As of now, about a third of Lviv's waste collection sites is full.

Easter with an Unpleasant Odor

Lviv's garbage issue is obviously not a problem for locals only. The city is annually visited by 2 million tourists, who expect only the best from their stay.

Easter is usually the ideal time to visit Lviv and Ukraine in general. Visitors, either Catholic or Orthodox Christian, can feel the tradition within the city. The weather is also fantastic, which makes traditional Easter folklore celebrations, fairs, concerts and theatre performances even more attractive for guests.

However, this year the experience is somewhat different in the tourism capital. The garbage issue has escalated and endless political disputes between regional and federal authorities are not exactly helping in the process to resolve the troubles. Should this absurd situation continue, the tourism-dependent Lviv region might be set for a major setback in terms of visitor numbers in the years to come.

Improvement on the Horizon

It seems that right now authorities, as well as locals, are trying to do as much as possible to prevent this issue from growing to an ecological catastrophe. An activist group Zero Waste Lviv has organized campaigns in the recent months. Some of the cities cafes have joined and are offering discounts to customers bringing their own containers etc.

But the most decisive step might have been taken on April 21. The Lviv regional administration signed an agreement with nearby towns and cities to accept the garbage. The **Lviv City Hall should now negotiate agreements with enterprises that maintain landfills for the following two years and allocate \$2.6 million for this purpose.** Meanwhile, the city awaits the construction of a new processing plant. This project is set to be funded by the French government and the European Investment Bank. Constructions are expected to begin this year.

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