

RUSSIAN OUTBOUND TOURISM FINALLY GROWING

For the first time in four years Russian outbound tourism has shown growth, the Russian Union of the Tourism Industry (RST) reported. The Union notes that since 2014, the outgoing tourist flow has only declined.

According to the RST, in the first months of 2017 the Russian border service recorded 6.2 million trips abroad specifically for the purpose of tourism. **This is 56.5% more than in the same period last year.**

According to the press secretary of RST, the numbers are much higher than indicated by Rosstat. Rosstat's version suggests that tourist trips abroad in the first half of the year increased by 30%. Among the top ten countries Russians travel to are Turkey, China, Thailand, Abkhazia, Kazakhstan, but even Ukraine, Finland and Estonia or Poland. The RST also adds that there are no competitors in the dynamics of the increase in tourist traffic to Turkey.

1.7 million trips to Abkhazia were registered in the first half of the year. The border service recorded only 10.9 thousand of them as tourism-related. 1.3 trips were registered to Kazakhstan with 28.3 thousand tourism-related, while 999 thousand Russians visited Ukraine, with only 64 tourist trips. In South Ossetia, ranked 22nd in Rosstat with 196 thousand trips, the border guard recorded 42 trips with the aim of tourism.

Generally, only Tunisia (-24.6%), Finland (-21%) and Bulgaria (-3%) showed negative dynamics with respect to the outbound tourism. Even Montenegro, undeservedly offended by the statements of the Russian Foreign Ministry, managed to keep the tourist flow from Russia and grew by 10.6%. Thus said, the trend in general is encouraging. Though it seems that the second half of the year will not be so optimistic. The statistics will show more.

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