

CRIMEAN AUTHORITIES PLAN TO PUSH THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS TO AN ALARMING LEVEL



The speaker of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea, Vladimir Konstantinov, has announced that the government aims to attract 19-20 million tourists to the region by 2030. According to local media reports, the ambitious plans are outlined in the Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Crimea until 2030.

The document outlines the target indicators for growth until 2030, including:

- A 3.5-fold increase in the number of tourists visiting Crimea.
- Increase of the number of beds in year-round accommodation facilities from 63.4 thousand to 66 thousand;
- An increase in the number of equipped beaches from 283 to 460.

According to official data, **only the number of equipped beaches has been achieved**, with 446 beaches in operation this year.

The tourist flow in the Crimea peninsula is a complex issue that cannot simply be attributed to political or logistical problems. The region's inability to accommodate such a number of visitors is complicated in many ways.

In 2017 a strategy was developed using the previous year's figures, where 5.5 million tourists visited Crimea. Based on this, Crimean authorities estimated that the number of tourists would increase to 19.25 million if multiplied by 3.5.

However, experts have repeatedly pointed out that the peninsula is not prepared to handle such amounts of visitors since most are concentrated in small regions of the Crimean coast - Koktebel, Sudak, Alushta, and Yalta.

The Crimean Peninsula faces multiple challenges that hinder its tourism growth:

- Water scarcity is a pressing issue.
- Electricity consumption is increasing, straining regional resources.
- The peninsula is struggling to cope with the rising waste tourists generate.

Moreover, Crimea's capacity to accommodate tourists is limited. There are only 1,108 official accommodation facilities in the republic, with a capacity of approximately 160,000 beds. Assuming all facilities operate year-round, and each tourist stays only for a week, the maximum number of tourists accommodated is 8.5 million. If the average stay is two weeks, the number decreases to just over 4 million.

Finally, the land area of Crimea cannot safely welcome 10 million tourists. Local experts have calculated that **the peninsula can only sustain up to 8 million tourists based on the available beaches and mountain forests**. Overcrowding the region would have a detrimental impact on its

environment.

Despite warnings from experts, the Crimean authorities persist in making grandiose plans. However, this growth may only exist on paper. Anyone who comes to the peninsula, even Crimeans who return from the mainland, is recorded as a tourist. This number may also include all residents of the peninsula who travel back and forth, vacation by the sea, and explore the mountains and forests. They, too, can be considered tourists. However, this would only add 2 million to the total number of tourists.

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