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TOURISM IN UKRAINE: PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

Tourism is one of perspective ways of overcoming crisis. Ukraine tourism is one of the rapidly growing branches of the state economy. It was just a neglected part of the “sphere of services”. For a long time, foreign tourists were allowed to come to officially so to say “open” cities only. Practically no Soviet citizens were allowed to travel abroad. Today Ukraine tourism industry has entered the world tourist market confidently. Tourism in Ukraine has been recognized as an important economic factor. There is a good reason for this change. Can you image that the profit from one foreign tourist in Ukraine per day equals the income from exporting nine tons of coal. The tourist sector is a major source of currency for 38% of the countries in the world. Actually that is the matter of priorities. Nowadays it's vividly seen that a lot of things are changing in the Ukraine's tourist industry. The Cabinet of Ministers and the President have adopted several important Decrees concerning tourism. “The Program of Development of Tourism up to the year 2010” has already been launched. On October, 1997 Ukraine became a Full Member of the World Tourism Organization (WTO). World Tourism Organization has placed Ukraine in the top 25 most visited countries in the world. Ukraine's tourism attracts more than 20 million travellers every year. What are they looking for? Each of them has his plans and places of interest. But all of them will find some unspoilt spots in Ukrainian nature and culture which are still waiting to be discovered.

Here are only some facts illustrating Ukrainian's tourism attractiveness:

- The excavations of ancient towns Tira, Olviya, Chersonese, Panticapea, Sudak dating from the 5th century B.C. as well as magnificent fortresses built in the 14th-15th centuries by Italians from Genoa, are located in Crimea.

- Over 500 cities of Ukraine were founded more than 900 years ago, 4500 villages of Ukraine are more than 300 years old. Such as, Kamenets-Podilsky, Kiev, Lutsk, Lvov, Uzhgorod, Mukachevo, Chernigov and other where you can feel spirit of the glorious battles and fearless warriors of defensive fortresses.

- A lot of churches and cathedrals arranged on the territory of Ukraine.

- More than 150 thousand monuments of culture, history, archeology reflect the remarkable history of the Ukrainian people. 80% of monuments of Kyiv Rus epoch (IX – XII centuries) are concentrated on the territory of Ukraine. For example, the Golden Gates, Saint Sophians Cathedral in Kiev, Church of the Tithes, Church Rotunda and others.

- Ukraine has excellent geography, climatic conditions and scenic nature. That`s why the rest in Ukraine is wonderful in any season. In summer it`s better to visit a southern part of Ukraine: the coast of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, in winter you can go to Carpathian mountains because it`s an ideal place for mountain bicycling, rock climbing and diving.

Ukrainian state tourism committee is developing special tourism programs for the UEFA EURO 2012 according to the head of the department, Anatoly Pakhlya. He specified that 60 new tourists routes in 6 cities (4 of them will host the football matches) are already finished. These new routes include sites of national, cultural and natural heritage. The officials also plan to recommence a train service connecting Lvov and Krakov and possibly to simplify the boarder control for the visiting football fans.

Ukraine wants to attract as many football fans as possible. The goal is to persuade the visitors to stay 9—10 days in the same city and watch all the matches of their favourite teams. This strategy was successfully implemented during the last EURO in Austria and Switzerland as well as in Germany in 2006 .

The reason why the Ukrainian government struggles so hard to make the fans stay is quite understandable — the estimated amount spent by tourists could make €500—600 a day! However, if the fans simply come for the match and then leave the city they would spend only nearly €100 a day. The extra money is quite important for the country currently experiencing serious economic problems.

That is way the main profit should be from tourism. The tourism department plans to compensate for the lack of money in the budgets for 2010—2011.

Foreign investments play a key role in regional development and especially in Donbass, where more investment is required. A significant growth in investments is expected when Ukraine hosts the 2012 European Football Champions (Euro 2012). The rights to broadcast Euro 2012 alone are going to be sold for a billion euro`s, which is a record sum for Ukraine. By investing a few hundred millions euro`s, Ukraine has the potential to make a return of a couple of billions euro`s within a period of a few month, mainly due to the expected inrush

of tourists.