

FORMATION OF KEY DEVELOPMENT FACTORS OF TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE DURING THE PERIOD OF PANDEMIC IN GERMANY

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the most actual topics for more than one year already. The virus has an impact on all types of human activity and the tourism industry is not an exception. During the past year some countries have opened their borders, but the majority still remains closed for tourists, including Germany.

The purpose of this article is to research the tourism infrastructure in Germany during the pandemic.

As well as around the world, Germany also witnessed increased demand for domestic tourism. More than half (56%) of all tourist trips the Germans made inside the country in 2020. Whereas such high rates haven't been recorded since the 1970s, outbound tourism was poorly developed [6].

According to the National Tourist Office of Germany ((Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V. (DZT)), the share of tourists from neighboring countries has grown from 42,5% to 56,6% of all international night stays in 2020. The most active suppliers of tourists to Germany were Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, Denmark and Austria [3].

According to data from the website of the Federal management of statistics of Germany (destatis.de – Statistisches Bundesamt) from April, 13, 2021: «Tourism in Germany in February 2021: 76% less overnight stays, than in February, 2020». The number of overnight stays decreased in establishments of placing of internal guests, comparatively to February, 2020 by 73,6% to 6,4 million. The number of overnight stays of guests from abroad diminished by 86,2% to 0,8 million [10].

Citizens of countries that are not included in the EU and Schengen Area are not allowed to go to Germany with touristic purposes: for example, Ukrainian visa-free regime is not applicable at the moment. Only foreign citizens that have a certificate of temporary residence, students of German universities and schools, workers with working contracts in Germany are currently allowed to enter Germany. Citizens of countries that are not included in the EU necessarily must get a visa for an entrance to Germany, while all touristic visas are currently suspended due to the pandemic. The time frame to obtain a visa takes much longer than before the pandemic as the amount of possible interviews in consulates is reduced, alongside their working hours [13].

Similar to the rest of the world, it is necessary to give a negative test on coronavirus prior to entering to German. But further restrictions depend on a country, where the traveler has visited within the last 10 days. For Germany other countries are divided into 4 types:

- 1) territories that are not risk zones;
- 2) countries/regions that are marked as zones of risk;
- 3) areas with a particularly high risk;
- 4) area of variants of concern (i.e., with new dangerous strains).

The lists of countries are constantly updated and it is always possible to find actual information on the web-site of the Institute of Robert Koch (Robert Koch Institut). According to the rules mentioned on the web-site of the Federal ministry of health of Germany (Bundesministerium für Gesundheit), travelers are generally required to proceed directly to their own home, or other suitable accommodation, immediately upon arrival and remain exclusively at this location for a period of 10 days (or 14 days following a stay in an area of variants of concern) after their entry into the country (quarantine) [1; 8].

A pandemic contributed to the acceleration of significant changes in tourism and other areas of economy. Nevertheless, a forced delay of all-round processes led to creation and realization of innovations.

Sustainable development is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is exactly the goal of Germany.

Alternative energy sources no longer count as a niche product. Transport companies see a large prospect in ecological innovations for tourism.

In this way, for example, the German railway business regarding «Deutsche Bahn» on internal routes uses exceptionally ecologically clean electric power. And already 80% of routes will take place with the help of renewal sources till 2030.

Clean busses. The German transport sector also already applies on the rank of the most ecological transport in tourism. The level of vaporization of greenhouse gases from the German busses is 31 grams per passenger-kilometer. And the general ecological spendings of buses (construction, maintenance, utilization and fuel supply) also decreased through permanent innovations.

The global pandemic only secured a serious attitude toward such steady development of tourism. During the last year, social-and-ecological responsibility of travelers grew up considerably. In accordance with recent research of the National tourist office of Germany, 80% of respondents consider that the pandemic will result in strengthening of principles of steady development in tourism. The brightest example of this was shown by travelling under age 54 [7].

Another factor that is key to developing tourism is Artificial Intelligence. Additions on the base of such intellect help to control and correct tourist streams effectively. Further development of virtual tourism opens the new measurements, emotions and impressions for the potential guests of Germany. For example, the media platform «Deutsche Welle» invites all interested persons to the Neuschwanstein castle in Bavaria to attend virtual tours.

Thanks to the 360 degrees video-technology, the tourist decides for himself what he wants to see. During such a virtual excursion the tourist is accompanied by a guide that tells interesting information about this sightseeing. There are also available excursions to «miniature wonderland» in Hamburg, to the zoo in Munich, walk by a

city Dresden and many other directions. The German museum in Munich on the website offers the review of exhibitions of 36 different subjects with a very comfortable interface and possibility to take advantage of audio guide. Also many virtual museum exhibitions are widely accessed on «Google Arts and Culture» [2; 5; 7; 11; 12].

Furthermore, one of the most widespread aims for touristic journeys to Germany before the pandemic, were fairs and various exhibitions. In 2019, Germany once again took the 1st place in rating of the European countries with the most favorable conditions for realization of different conferences and congresses. However, Christmas fairs were not opened in 2020 because of imposition of tough quarantine measures. Therefore, congresses and conferences were held online [9].

The ideas of sustainability are examined as a stimulus for development of profile segments. Rests on nature became very popular. 55% of foreign respondents consider that this type of rest is foreground for them. In recent years, approximately every fifth overnight stay of foreign guests was registered in rural regions. Within the strategy of tourism recovery, Germany has high possibilities for combination of growing interest in environmentally friendly trips with promotion of its regions. It will help to divide the flows of tourists all over Germany evenly and will compensate the number of tourists in urban areas [4].

This article allows us to make a conclusion that even in the conditions of pandemic, tourism exists and develops. Internal tourism and international tourism from the nearby European countries prosper in Germany. The pandemic gave an opportunity for realization of innovations in environmental friendliness of tourism, which is quite actual in the 21st century. In addition, technical progress provides an opportunity to see museums, sights of architecture or just walk the streets of foreign cities without leaving home. Tourism is a very flexible sphere of human activity that can adapt to any external terms.

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