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Anna Romanova

Ph.D. (Economics), Associate Professor,
 Department of Marketing, PR-technologies and Logistics,
 Chernihiv National University of Technology;
 Member of the Parliament of Ukraine
 95 Shevchenko Str., Chernihiv, 14000, Ukraine
romanova.center@gmail.com
 ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7336-1032>



Tourists from Canada as priority customers of the Ukrainian tourism product

Abstract

Introduction. As a result of the revolutionary events and the military conflict in Donbas in 2014, the number of inbound tourists travelling to Ukraine has dropped almost twice - from 24.7 million in 2013 to 12.7 million in 2014. Ukraine has faced a challenge related to the need for reorienting and diversifying of inbound tourism flows and the need to enter new tourism markets. One of the top priorities is the outbound Canadian tourism market. Ukrainian Diaspora, long-standing strong international ties, visa-free entry for Canadian citizens and ratification of the Free Trade Agreement, intense diplomatic relations and the launch of direct flight create the basis for the growth of tourist flows from Canada to Ukraine. It is necessary to conduct professional and thorough research of the Canadian outbound tourism market in order to increase tourist flows, as well as the revenues to the Ukrainian economy from the tourism industry in the context of creating and promoting targeted Ukrainian tourism products for a Canadian tourist.

Purpose. The purpose of this paper is to examine the Canadian travel market in the context of the target audience consuming the Ukrainian tourism product and to define the recommendations for the «Canada-Ukraine» tourism flow.

Results. The article analyses the outbound tourism market of Canada as a priority target audience of consumers of the Ukrainian tourism product. The factors of the huge volume of the outbound tourism market of Canada have been presented. The state and growth rates of existing Canada-Ukraine tourist flows have been analysed. The competitive advantages of the Canadian tourism market in comparison with the Ukrainian one have been given, namely: safety, protection of natural resources and ecology, institutional capacity of tourism industry development. The favourable factors for increasing the inflow of tourist flow from Canada to Ukraine, such as numerous Ukrainian Diaspora, positive attitude of Canadians towards Ukraine, visa-free entry for the Canadian citizens to Ukraine; intensification of diplomatic and trade relations, the launch of the direct flight Kyiv-Toronto, have been defined and characterised. The peculiarities of a potential Canadian tourist, who is a representative of the Ukrainian Diaspora, have been analysed. The main channels of popularisation of the Ukrainian tourism product have been researched: the organisation of the Ukrainian community of Canada, the Ukrainian media in Canada. The main tourism exhibitions in Canada, fan trips and press tours for the Canadian tour operators and the Canadian media; hosting the «Days of Ukraine in Canada» in the main places where most of the Ukrainian Diaspora representatives live.

Conclusions. Recommendations for tourist travel agencies who plan to work with the Canadian consumer of the Ukrainian tourism product have been formulated. The resort and recreational types of tourism should not be the basis of Ukrainian tourist products for the Canadians because of their non-competitiveness in comparison with Canadian tourist products. A trip to Ukraine will be more in demand if tourism products combine Ukrainian and European tourist products («Ukraine +»). This may be a joint tourism product with neighbouring countries: Ukraine + Poland, Ukraine + Hungary, Ukraine + Romania, Ukraine + Slovakia. When forming a combined tourism product, it is necessary to take into account the availability of convenient logistics (direct flights ideally) and Canadian tourist traffic to the chosen European country/city.

Keywords: Canadian Tourism Market; International Tourism; Tourism Industry; Ukrainian Diaspora

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Романова А. А.

кандидат економічних наук, доцент,
 кафедра маркетингу, PR-технологій та логістики,
 Чернігівський національний технологічний університет, Чернігів, Україна;
 Народний депутат України

Туристи з Канади як пріоритетні споживачі українського турпродукту

Анотація

У статті проведено аналіз виїзного туристичного ринку Канади як пріоритетної цільової аудиторії споживачів українського туристичного продукту. Названо фактори гіпервеликого обсягу виїзного туристичного ринку Канади. Проаналізовано стан та темпи росту існуючих туристичних потоків Канада-Україна. Наведено конкурентні переваги канадського туристичного ринку в порівнянні з українським: безпека, захист природних ресурсів та екології, інституційна спроможність розвивати туристичну індустрію.

Визначено та охарактеризовано сприятливі фактори для збільшення в'їзного туристичного потоку до України з Канади: чисельна українська діаспора; позитивне ставлення до України серед канадців; безвізовий в'їзд для громадян Канади до України; активізація дипломатичних та торговельних відносин; відкриття прямого рейсу «Торонто-Київ». Проаналізовано особливості потенційного туриста з Канади – представника української діаспори.

Детально розглянуто основні канали популяризації українського туристичного продукту: організації української громади Канади; українські медіа в Канаді; головні туристичні виставки Канади; фам-тріпи та прес-тури для канадських туроператорів та канадських ЗМІ; влаштування «Днів України в Канаді» в основних місцях, де проживає найбільше представників української діаспори (Торонто, Едмонтон, Оттава, Монреаль тощо). Сформульовано рекомендації для суб'єктів туристичної діяльності, які планують працювати з канадським споживачем українського туристичного продукту.

Ключові слова: канадський туристичний ринок; міжнародний туризм; туристична індустрія; українська діаспора.

Романова А. А.

кандидат экономических наук, доцент, кафедра маркетинга, PR-технологий и логистики, Черниговский национальный технологический университет, Чернигов, Украина; Народный депутат Украины

Туристы из Канады как приоритетные потребители украинского турпродукта**Аннотация**

В статье проведен анализ выездного туристского рынка Канады как приоритетной целевой аудитории потребителей украинского туристического продукта. Названы факторы гиперболического объема выездного туристического рынка Канады. Проанализировано состояние и темпы роста существующих туристических потоков «Канада-Украина». Приведены конкурентные преимущества канадского туристического рынка по сравнению с украинским: безопасность, защита природных ресурсов и экологии, институциональная способность развивать туристическую индустрию. Определены и охарактеризованы благоприятные факторы для увеличения выездного туристического потока в Украину из Канады: многочисленная украинская диаспора; положительное отношение к Украине среди канадцев; безвизовый въезд для граждан Канады в Украину; активизация дипломатических и торговых отношений; открытие прямого рейса «Торонто-Киев». Проанализированы особенности потенциального туриста из Канады – представителя украинской диаспоры. Подробно рассмотрены основные каналы популяризации украинского туристического продукта: организации украинской общины Канады, украинские медиа в Канаде; главные туристические выставки Канады; фам-трипы и пресс-туры для канадских туроператоров и канадских СМИ; проведение «Дней Украины в Канаде» в основных местах, где проживает больше всего представителей украинской диаспоры. Сформулированы рекомендации для субъектов туристической деятельности, которые планируют работать с канадским потребителем украинского туристического продукта.

Ключевые слова: канадский туристический рынок; международный туризм; туристическая индустрия; украинская диаспора.

1. Introduction

As a result of the revolutionary events and the military conflict in Donbas in 2014, the number of inbound tourists and international trips to Ukraine has dropped almost by half - from 24.7 million in 2013 to 12.7 million in 2014 (World Economic Forum, 2017). Thus, Ukraine has faced a challenge related to the need for reorienting and diversifying of inbound tourism flows, where previously the main share was Russian, and the need to enter new tourism markets.

At the same time, seeing the accession of Ukraine on the implementation of democratic values and geopolitical reorientation towards the countries of the Euro-Atlantic camp, new markets, including tourism, are opening. One of the top priorities, but not yet operational, is the outbound Canadian tourism market. The Ukrainian Diaspora, long-standing strong international ties between countries, visa-free entry for Canadian citizens and the ratification of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, intense diplomatic relations and the launch of direct flights create the basis for the growth of tourist flows from Canada to Ukraine.

However, the problem is that Ukraine has not yet taken systematic and strategic steps to increase tourist flows from Canada. Anxiety is caused by the lack of official recognition of the Canadian outbound tourism market as a major priority in the Strategy for the Development of Tourism and Resorts in Ukraine until 2026 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2017). In particular, there is a lack of in-depth research on the market for outbound Canadian tourists in the context of developing a targeted national tourism flow.

Therefore, in order to increase tourist flows, as well as the revenues to the Ukrainian economy from the tourism industry in the context of creating and promoting targeted Ukrainian tourism products for a Canadian tourist, it is necessary to conduct professional and thorough research of the Canadian outbound tourism market.

2. Brief Literature Review

Today's leading economic organisations in the world are engaged in research of the Canadian tourism market. International reputable organisations, such as the World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2017), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2019) and the World Travel & Tourism Council, (The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 2019) publish reports on the state of the global tourism industry development annually, where the analysis of Canadian tourism flows is a compulsory and important section. In addition, the research of the Canadian Research Institute of Tourism (CTRI), which provides reliable economic forecasts and models for the Canadian Travel and Tourism Industry, is valuable and useful (CTRI, 2019).

Considering the statement that tourism has been the fastest growing industry in the last decades, the relatively new field of tourism history research is expanding rapidly. There is still no general history of tourism in Canada. Yet, a fundamental study of the history of the formation of the Canadian tourist product belongs to Ben Bradley, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Alberta (Canada), and Jack Little, a professor emeritus at Simon Fraser University (Canada) (Little & Bradley, 2016).

Among contemporary researchers, we can identify those who have focused on certain types of tourism. For example, Leigh Turner has studied the peculiarities of the development of Canadian medical tourism. Research conducted between 2006 and 2011 resulted in the identification of thirty-five Canadian businesses marketing various kinds of medical travel (Turner, 2012).

As for the Canadian national parks as an important component of a tourism product, it is worth mentioning Adam Shoalts (2011) with his «How our national parks evolved» and «A short history of Canada's national parks».

After 2008, rebranding exercise known as Brand Canada, Simon Hudson and Brent Ritchie conducted a research focusing on tourist experience and marketing messages to the potential travellers (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009).

The contribution of the Canadian government and tourism organisations to providing high-quality analytical data on the development of the national and local tourism industry should be noted (Porges, 2014). They also study the economic challenges and opportunities for Canadian tourism (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2012) (Tourism Industry Association of Canada, HLT Advisory, 2012), as well as the future of travel and tourism in Canada (National Travel and Tourism Coalition, 2010). The Research Services of Tourism British Columbia have studied the travel activities and motivations of Canadian residents (Research Services Tourism British Columbia, 2007).

However, today there are not enough researches concerning the peculiarities of mutual tourist flows with such countries as Ukraine. Considering the Ukrainian Diaspora being one of the largest in Canada, the theoretical and methodological problems of tourism development with Ukraine should be worked out.

A relatively small number of Ukrainian scientists and researchers have been engaged in the problems of the Canadian tourism industry. Certain amount of work has been devoted to the pedagogical aspects of training for the tourism industry of Canada. For example, N. Zhomyak (2012) and I. Sandovenko (2013) explored the features of Canadian tourism education. A. Parfinenko (2015) has studied the development and formation of the Canadian tourism industry.

3. Purpose

The main goal of this paper is to examine the Canadian travel market in the context of the target audience consuming the Ukrainian tourism product and define the recommendations for the Canada-Ukraine tourism flow.

4. Results

According to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 Ranking, Canada positioned the ninth place in the ranking of tourism competitiveness by the World Economic Forum (WEF). For comparison, Ukraine took the 88th place (World Economic Forum, 2017). One of the competitive positions of the Canadian tourism industry in comparison with other countries in general and Ukraine, in particular, is the safety and security of tourists, unique preserved natural reserves and developed tourism infrastructure.

However, due to the strong diversified economy and the vast resources of minerals, the tourism industry takes only about 2% of Canada's GDP. Out of 11 jobs, one belongs to the tourism sector - in total more than 1.7 million seats. The share of domestic tourism is USD 72 billion. Over the next five years, Canada will invest USD 13 million (approximately USD 3 million a year) to improve the tourist statistics collection system in order to obtain better tourism data (UNWTO, 2019).

Canada should be considered first and foremost tourist hypermarket, a country-provider of outbound tourists, due to the following factors: a large 36-million population of Canada, high incomes (according to the IMF, the country ranked 21st in the world in terms of GDP per capita (IMF, 2019), a severe cold climate that makes travelling to warmer countries and unlimited opportunities for travelling for Canadians (the Canadian passport allows visa-free entry to 185 countries out of a possible 218 possible (International Air Transport Association, 2019).

Almost 55 million departures of Canadian citizens were registered in 2017, and the total travel expenditures amounted to USD 31.8 million (UNWTO, 2019). Although the number of Canadian tourists' trips abroad decreased by almost 20% compared to 2013 (10.8 million trips) due to the development of domestic tourism and the increase in domestic travel, as well as the reduction of incomes, the Canadian outbound tourist flow still remains quite attractive for many countries of the world (Figure 1).

Regarding the number of Canadian citizens entering Ukraine, the tourism flow remains consistently low and does not match the potential, given the number of Canadian Ukrainian Diaspora representatives and the positive attitude towards Ukraine in general. That is, the Canadian tourist flow to Ukraine in 2017 was only 0.06% of the total outbound tourist flow (Figure 2). The untapped tourism potential of Ukraine clearly shows the arrivals of Canadian tourists to Poland, which is almost four times the number of arrivals to Ukraine, reaching 116 thousand and 30.8 thousand arrivals respectively (UNWTO, 2019).

Positive factors for increasing the inflow of tourist flow to Ukraine from Canada:

- 1) large Ukrainian Diaspora;
- 2) positive attitude towards Ukraine among Canadians;
- 3) visa-free entry for citizens of Canada to Ukraine;
- 4) intensification of the diplomatic and trade relations (ratification of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (Government of Canada, 2016);

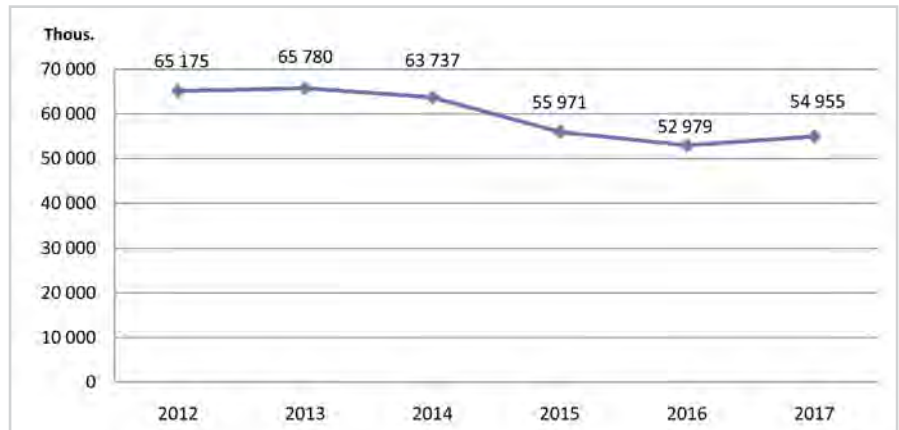


Fig. 1: The number of Canadian citizens' departures abroad in 2012-2017, thousand people

Source: Compiled by the author based on data by UNWTO (2019)

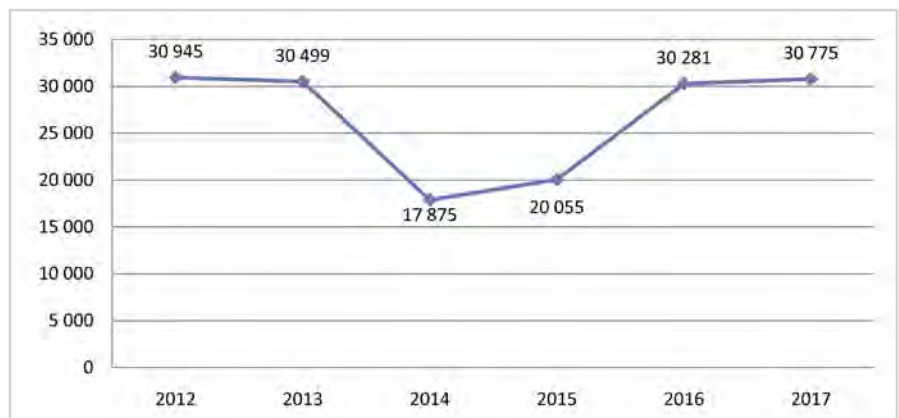


Fig. 2: The number of entries of Canadian citizens to Ukraine in 2012-2017

Source: Compiled by the author based on data by State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2017)

5) new direct flight «Kyiv-Toronto» (carried out by the Ukrainian International Airlines (UIA) starting June 6, 2018) (UIA, 2017).

According to the Canadian Statistics Agency as of October 2017, approximately 1.4 million Canadians identify themselves with Ukrainians (Ukrainian Canadian Congress, 2018). That is, the number of ethnic Ukrainians is 3.68% of the total population of the country, the tenth largest national minority in Canada. By its size, the Ukrainian community of Canada is the second largest in the world (after the Ukrainian community in Russia).

The largest Diaspora population lives in the provinces of Ontario (376,000 people or 3% of the province's total population) and Alberta (369,000 people, 10.1%), Manitoba (180,000 people, 14.7%), and Saskatchewan (143,000 people, 13.5%), and respectively in the cities of Toronto, Ottawa and Edmonton (Figure 3). As of December 2017, 50 people received certificates of a foreign Ukrainian in Canada (Embassy of Ukraine to Canada, 2019).

However, only 10% of Canadian Ukrainians are Ukrainian, and according to studies by the Ukrainian Hospitality Industry Association, more than 40% of the Ukrainian Diaspora have never been to Ukraine (an Internet poll was conducted in February-April 2018 based on a sample of 600 respondents, with a marginal error of the sample being 4%). Consequently, the potential volume of the Canadian tourism market, a subject to the development of tourism products for the Ukrainian Diaspora, may amount to about half a million additional tourists. In addition, due to the research, it was possible to identify the features of a tourist product for the representatives of the Ukrainian Diaspora in Canada.

Features of a potential traveller from Canada who is a representative of the Ukrainian Diaspora

A possible trip to Ukraine should be based on national patriotic themes. Most representatives of the Canadian Diaspora associate with Ukraine the aspiration for national identity,

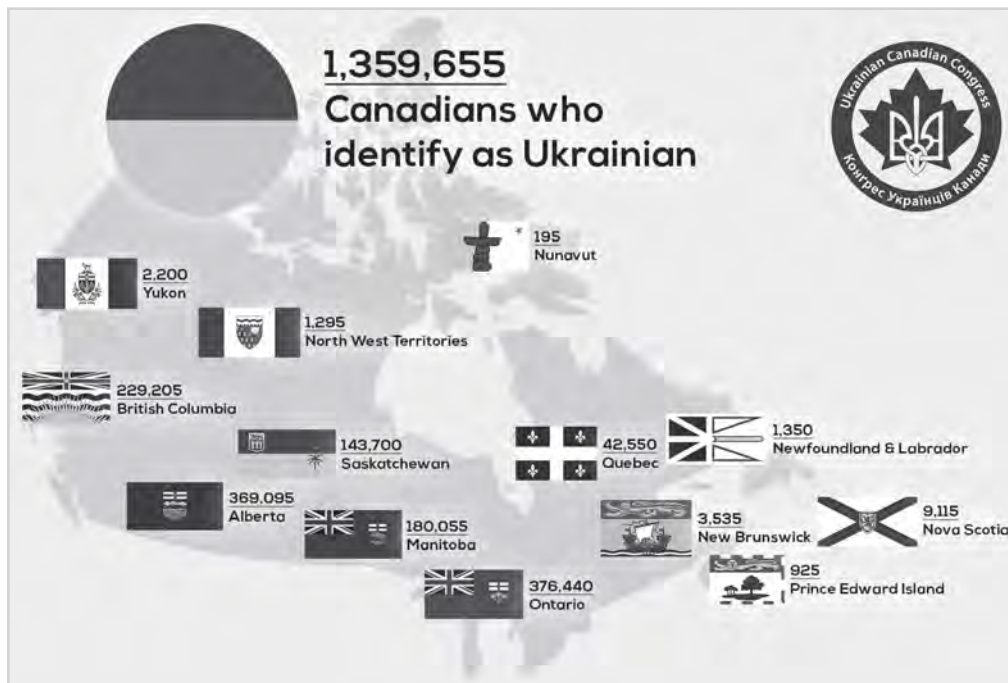


Fig. 3: The number of Canadians who identify themselves as Ukrainians, by provinces
Source: Compiled by the author based on data by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (2018)

sovereignty and independence. Therefore, the topics of the tours should cover the significant historical places associated with the struggle of Ukrainians for statehood (Kyivan Rus, places associated with Khmelnytsky Uprising, Shevchenko places, Kruty, Kholodny Yar, shelters of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, etc.). The Ukrainian language and English language skills of the tourist guides are important, while the use of the Russian language is not welcome because of the ideological ambiguity of perception.

The geography of travel to Ukraine should necessarily include Kyiv as the capital of Ukraine and Western Ukraine. Taking into account the fact that most representatives of the Ukrainian Diaspora are from Western Ukraine (Lviv region, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Bukovina and Ternopil region), it is expedient to include visits to these regions, using the Ukrainian International Airlines (UIA) loyalty program combining flights from Toronto to Kyiv - Lviv/Chernivtsi/Ivano-Frankivsk.

The tourism product should be constructed based on a sentimental type of tourism, covering the excursion program associated with the national liberation movement. The best thing is a tourist product for Canadian tourists - «Open the land of your ancestors».

The resort and recreational types of tourism should not be the basis of Ukrainian tourist products for the Canadians because of their non-competitiveness in comparison with Canadian tourist products.

A trip to Ukraine will be more in demand if tourism products combine Ukrainian and European tourist products («Ukraine +»). This may be a joint tourism product with neighbouring countries: Ukraine + Poland, Ukraine + Hungary, Ukraine + Romania, Ukraine + Slovakia. When forming a combined tourism product, it is necessary to take into account the availability of convenient logistics (direct flights ideally) and Canadian tourist traffic to the chosen European country/city.

Tourist products and their promotion should include references to the most famous Ukrainians. The most famous Ukrainians include Taras Shevchenko, Lesia Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, Volodymyr the Great, Princess Olha, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Ivan Mazepa, Hryhorii Skovoroda, Mykola Gogol, Olena Teliga, Gnat Hotkevych, Stepan Bandera. The first three of the most prominent Ukrainians for the Diaspora are represented by the then President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, singer Ruslana Lyzhychko and boxers Volodymyr and Vitalii Klitschko. Among others, there are Andrii Shevchenko, Yulia Tymoshenko, Sviatoslav Vakarchuk, Onuka, Milla Kunis and Milla Jovovich.

Tourism products should encompass potentially attractive historical, architectural and museum attractions. The research has revealed that the Independence Square, the Khortytsia Island and the castles of the Lviv region are considered to be the most interesting places to visit by the representatives of the Ukrainian Diaspora. Among other interesting destinations are St. Vladimir Cathedral, St. Sophia Cathedral, the Golden Gate, Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, the Holodomor Museum, the Museum of Folk Architecture and Life in Pirohovo, Kyivan Rus Park, the National Taras Shevchenko Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet of Ukraine, the Lviv National Solomiia Krushelnytska Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the Museum of Corruption (Mezhyhiria), the village of Petykivka, the National Dendrology Park «Sofiyivka» and others.

The tourism product should rely on positive emotions, and the amount of negative feedback from tragic pages of Ukrainian history (national liberation movement, Bolshevik repressions, Holodomor, The World War II) should be eliminated by positive travel moments so that the main impression and the emotional background after the trip remain positive.

The popularisation of the tourism product should be carried out by:

- the organisation of the Ukrainian community of Canada;
- the Ukrainian media in Canada;
- the main tourist exhibitions in Canada;
- fan trips and press tours for Canadian tour operators and Canadian media;
- the Days of Ukraine in Canada in the main places where the largest number of representatives of the Ukrainian Diaspora (Toronto, Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal, etc.) live.

Let us review the main channels through which the Ukrainian tourism product can be popularised.

Ukrainian Canadian Community Organisations

Ukrainian Canadians have created and hold over 1,000 ethnic organisations, including public and religious associations, dance ensembles, Ukrainian choirs, amateur theaters, financial institutions, sports clubs, etc.

Most Ukrainian political, social, cultural and religious organisations of the first three waves of migration are united into a national coordination council, known as the Congress of Ukrainian Canadians (CUC) headquartered in Winnipeg (Manitoba Province). Currently, the CUC President is Paul Grod, who was re-elected in September 2016 during the third annual meeting of the Congress.

Due to the size and influence of the Ukrainian Diaspora, Canada and the City of Toronto in particular take a seat of the headquarters of the World Congress of Ukrainians (WCU), which aims to coordinate the activities of the Ukrainian Diaspora around the world.

Toronto is also the venue for the headquarters of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUWO), which brings together 23 non-profit organisations from 12 countries. WFUWO supports cultural, educational, humanitarian and social programs. The Federation has a consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and UNICEF.

All of the abovementioned organisations need to be involved in order to create a specific tourism product for the target audience, promote Ukrainian tourism products, collect travel groups to Ukraine, organise Days of Ukraine in Canada, and resolve urgent issues that arise during the preparation of travel, lobby the opening of new direct flights from Canada to Ukraine and so on.

Media resources

The Ukrainian Canadian community also has a number of print media, as well as television and radio programs. Most newspapers in the Ukrainian community are issued in two languages: English and Ukrainian. National Canadian bilingual newspapers include *New Way* (Toronto) and *The Voice of Ukraine* (Toronto). The National Canadian TV channel OMNI-TV produces two weekly half-hour Ukrainian-language programs called «Contact» and «Worldview». On the Rogers-22 channel, which is distributed through a cable network, a half-hour program «Ukrainian Profile» is issued every two weeks. There are also Ukrainian radio programs on the territory of Canada, the vast majority of which are in Toronto. It is advisable to

start a series of programs on tourism opportunities of Ukraine on these TV channels, as well as to involve representatives of mass media in press tours to Ukraine.

Canada hosts two largest international tourist exhibitions each year, featuring countries from around the world who are interested in Canadian outbound tourism:

- «Eco Traveller. World of Taste» (each year in early April, Toronto, Ontario) (Ecotraveller, 2018);
- International Tourism & Travel Show (every year at the end of October, Montreal, Quebec) (International Tourism and Travel Show, 2018).

5. Conclusions

Taking into account the opportunities of potential tourists from Canada and effective channels of communication, it is recommended to develop a targeting Ukrainian tourism product and form a strategy for its promotion.

It is important to test such a tourism product with regard to the representatives of Canadian tour operators and travel agencies through the organisation of the so-called fan-trips to Ukraine with further surveys and personal interviews of the tour participants concerning the level of their satisfaction with the tourism products and the proposals regarding the improvement of the relevant products.

When creating and promoting tourism products, it is necessary to consider the interests of all stakeholders including airline staff, Ukrainian tour operators, representatives of the Diaspora, local authorities, owners of accommodation establishments and tourist facilities, etc.

In order to popularise tourist products, it is necessary to create bilingual promo materials (both in English and Ukrainian, yet not in Russian due to the specifics of the Diaspora).

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