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**TRENDS AND NEEDS**

**FOR TOURISM HIGHER EDUCATION IN UKRAINE**

The importance of tourism in Ukraine is not only in its economics. While revenues produced by tourism are important for the country, its main significance lies in social and environmental impacts. Tourism facilitates recreation for people, thus contributing to establishing a healthy way of living and playing a mediator role between different cultures; it also strengthens tolerance. Tourism may facilitate employment, regional balancing and increased knowledge among the people.

Nonetheless, the economic impacts of tourism are also important due to its capacity to cover trade deficit. Although the tourism trade suggests that over 10 % of the GDP are provided by tourism, the data are not necessarily accepted in other fields of public administration in absence of appropriate and exact survey figures

[4, p. 118].

Simultaneously, the Law on Higher Education regulates the professional training of Ukrainian citizens and sets the legal, organizational, and financial basis for the national higher education system. The Parliament of Ukraine provides a general outline of the State policy in the field of higher education, based on the following principles:

─ merit-based access to higher education for all Ukrainian citizens;

─ independence of higher education institutions from political parties and public and religious organizations;

─ pursuit of the international integration of Ukrainian higher education, while preserving the achievements and traditions of the national system;

─ state support for training specialists in fundamental and applied research;

─ raising the educational level of Ukrainian citizens and widening the prospects for higher and other forms of post-secondary education;

─ availability of student loans;

─ granting special rights to students at higher education institutions;

─ adequate support for the education of the disabled;

─ the modernization of the Ukrainian higher education system [1, p. 18 – 19].

High education and training for tourism in Ukraine, in fact, evolved since the country gained its independence. The formation of the contemporary system of education and training for tourism was pioneered by the Chair of Regional Geography and Tourism of Geography Faculty at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The chair was established at Geography Faculty of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv in 1990. From then till now the chair and its scholars actively participates development of professional training, research on tourism and practice of tourism industry in the country. The scholars of the chair participated in the elaboration of the scientific grounds for national tourism market development and it organizational formation. In 1995 the Law on Tourism of Ukraine was adopted, the state governance (in contrast with direction) body was established. The State Committee on Tourism at that time had in practice the authority of sector ministry [2, p.52].

Contemporaneously, high education institutions started to introduce corresponding specialty. It was a kind of a boom of high schools embracing education for tourism emergence. This trend called for improvements in education system and coordination of curricula and training plans. The private institutions of specialized education in tourism came into leaf. The public high schools established chairs and big departments combining training on tourism, hospitality management and guides-interpreters. The curricula followed the basic branch of the high school: geographic, technical, economic, humanitarian basis. Indeed, tourism operates in junction with different spheres, thus, various high institutions found their own ‘niche’ in education for tourism. The geographic component, however, remained in the framework of curricula not dependent of the high school specialty. As a minimum the disciplines included “Recreation geography”, “Geography of tourism”. The extended version included “Excursions business” “Domestic area studies” with solid geographic approaches, “Geography of Ukraine”, “Physical Geography of the world”, “Economic and social geography of the world”. Established in 1997 the Association of High Schools in Tourism and Hospitality Education coordinated curriculum and programmes and professed the first branch standard of bachelor vocational training in tourism in 2004. This marks the third stage of tourism education system in Ukraine [2, p. 52].

From the other hand, tourism basically demands a considerable labour force and offers a high job supply for both highly and less qualified manpower. An indispensable factor in developing the tourism sector is a professional client-oriented attitude, a basic product component being personalised service.

Currently, however, some deficiencies may be observed both in skills and in handling clients. It is, at present, a quite common contradiction that young people graduate from schools involved in tourism education, whereas businesses need qualified professional manpower with practical experience.

Ukrainian tourism training and education opportunities are continually expanding and training programs performed in foreign languages are also available in secondary and tertiary education. Tourism education, however, became student market oriented, which resulted in overeducating in certain fields with shortages in others [4, p. 134].

The number of those graduated in tourism tertiary education exceeds labour market demand, explained by the interests of the institutions being maintained on a market basis as well as by the inflexibility of the education sector.

Nevertheless, tourism is still a fashionable profession; it is also quite popular among those young people who wish to carry on with their studies but do not have a specific choice of profession. A considerable number of qualified tourism experts continue their careers outside the profession [4, p. 156].

In Ukraine, tourism education is absent from formal university education. The education system has not yet reacted to the demands emerging from EU accession. The training programmes are still catering and hotel dominated, while no progressive programmes have so far appeared capable of keeping pace with the demand trends across the world [1, p.11].

Tourism policy of Ukraine on international tourism market is based on active marketing strategy focused on promotion of inbound tourism based on safe and comfortable stay. This is backed by introduction of simplified visas regulations, development of tourism industry and improvement of services quality in accordance with European standards. Ukraine traditionally participates fairs and exhibitions, among which London WTM, Berlin ITB, Madrid Fitur, Warsaw, Moscow MITT. This allows to represent the national tourism product and promote it on world and regional markets [2, p.54].

Moreover, Euro-2012 in Kiev, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Lviv improved tourism infrastructure and quality of tourist services

[2, p.54].

To sum up, the survey results draw our attention to the fact that education and training programmes in Ukraine must be rearranged in accordance with the changing supply of products. There is a gap between the labour force demand for tourism and the supply of those graduating from schools [3].

Consequently, more practical training programmes must be introduced. Systems of exchange, facilitating acquisition of practical experiences abroad, must be developed, since tourism expects its manpower to be familiar with as many cultures and languages as possible. With the rapid growth of health tourism, 1 500 animators and wellness specialists will soon be needed. It seems a grave mistake not to provide the qualifications appropriate to the everyday practice of tourism and give trained students to other economic fields [3].

EU accession and the expansion of the labour market will, it is hoped, bring about the alignment of tourism education principles within the EU.

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