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L. Daubaras, lecturer, Ms Eng.
(Kaunas Forestry and Environmental Engineering University of Applied Sciences)

ACTIVE TOURISM FOR ENGLISH - SPEAKING GROUPS IN BELARUS IN THE YEAR 2018

Some largest British and world tourism associations, mostly dealing with English – speaking tourists, forecast a boom of international tourism in Belarus in the year 2018. They indicate 2 main reasons for that: Belarus being a „new“ country in the middle of Europe, and visa – free entrance for 5 or 10 days to particular parts of the country. Safety issues are also of high importance, and Belarus is considered to be a country with quite strict rules – thus making it safe.

Responsible tourism ideas, like protecting local environment, eating local simple food, using smaller family – owned hotels, are being accepted by a wider range of tourists every year, and Belarus can benefit from this too, having quite good examples of responsible tourism.

For becoming more visible in world tourism, it's recommended for Belarus to provide World Economic Forum with data on tourism for calculating Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index for the country. In report of the year 2017 Belarus is missing.

Main reasons of the rising interest in active tourism are: general awareness about the positive influence of physical activity upon human's health, ageing population and rising living standard of Western countries.

English – speaking tourists form a big part of world tourists, because English is a mother tongue for the people of some very big countries. Also tourists from some small non – English speaking countries are used to communicate in English, because their languages are not widely known.

Belarus is usually advertised as a country, having UNESCO protected sites, clean nature and impressive Soviet heritage (especially architecture and urban planning). Cycling trip of a particular travel company is based mainly on these objects. There are only 3 days of cycling, with 2 days left for arriving and leaving Belarus – in order not to exceed 5 day visa – free regime.

Strong sides of Belarussian tourism are: quite good road infrastructure, very good quality of bike paths in Minsk, a lot of unusual names of the streets and settlements, reminding Soviet past, and also Jewish heritage.

Potential problems of developing tourism are: lack of good English – speaking guides and tour leaders, strict law on tourism, not allowing foreign guides to work in Belarus, Cyrillic alphabet in public spaces and local population, mostly not speaking English.