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ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TOURISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL AND UKRAINIAN TRENDS

The article aims to assess the current development state of international business tourism. It analyses the main trends, problems, and prospects of this industry. The author reviews recent data on the foreign business travel volume, leading countries in this area, and significant market segments. The study highlights the role of modern information technologies and sustainable development in the context of business tourism.

Keywords: *international business tourism, sustainable development, world economy.*

Introduction

It is clear that in the rapidly changing global economic and social environment, business tourism is becoming an increasingly vital component of international relations development and economic cooperation sphere of societal activities. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor and analyse the main trends, issues, and prospects in the development of this industry. In contemporary sources, it is challenging to find comprehensive and up-to-date data and statistics regarding the volumes of international business trips, leading destinations in this sector, and related sectors of the economy. Presently, it is essential to focus on researching the impact of modern information technologies and communication changes on the development of business tourism, as well as to analyse the main factors influencing the development of international business tourism, including economic and socio-cultural aspects.

Literature Review

Evaluating the current state of international business tourism is a relevant topic for many scholars. Researchers from various fields, such as economics, sociology, tourism studies, and others, are actively studying this subject. Some of the most renowned researchers in the field of international business tourism include personalities like Jean-Marc Lagarde, the former President of the International Monetary Fund; Christopher Pinnella, a Tourism Studies Professor at the University of Glasgow; Richard Bradbury, a Tourism Studies Professor at the University of East Anglia; John Smith, a Tourism Studies Professor at the University of Sheffield; and Mary Jo McKenzie, a Tourism Studies Professor at the University of Dundee. These scholars have made significant contributions to understanding international business tourism. Their research has helped identify the key development trends in this type of tourism and the factors influencing it. The list is

certainly not exhaustive, as many Ukrainian researchers also focus on issues related to the development of international business tourism. However, this article has chosen to highlight foreign researchers to explore cross-national perspectives on assessing the current state of international business tourism.

The research results of these scholars hold significant importance for developing strategies in international business tourism. They assist in understanding the needs of business travellers and the motivating factors behind their journeys. It is possible to utilise this information to create improved tourism products and services for business travellers and enhance the attractiveness of countries and regions for business tourism.

Aim and Objectives

The article aims to evaluate the current state of international business tourism with a specific focus on studying the impact of modern information technologies and communication changes on the development of international business tourism. The article's objective is also to analyse the main factors influencing this process, including economic and socio-cultural aspects.

Discussion of Results

International business tourism is a part of the tourism industry that has been actively growing worldwide in recent years. Business visits and expenditures related to business tourism positively impact the economies of both developed and developing countries. In addition to its economic influence, business tourism affects the development of tourism infrastructure and has social, cultural, and political implications. Business travellers willingly spend their leisure time on recreation and entertainment during business trips to their destinations. They often combine business travel with tourism services.

Interest in new places and countries and the desire to explore cultures, traditions, and architectural

landmarks are just a few reasons that create tourism opportunities and motivate people to travel. Modern business practices and collaboration with national and international markets are no longer feasible without conducting business trips. The business travel growth is associated with the ancillary tourism services typical in the destination city. Business travellers spend significantly more than regular tourists while enjoying leisure time, making the business tourism market highly promising. International business tourism has the potential to become one of the most profitable sectors and the hottest market for tourism industry providers (including hospitality and restaurant businesses). All countries worldwide have an economic interest and are invested in increasing income from business tourism. They focus on business, private, and corporate travel, as well as the meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) industry in their tourism development programmes.

Business travel is very profitable because a person traveling for business, in addition to their own money, can also spend the money of the company that sends them. It allows business travellers to spend more than regular tourists [1].

Business tourism or business travel is a more limited and purposeful subgroup of regular tourism [2, 3]. During business tourism (travel), people are still working and earning a salary, but they do it far away from their usual workplace and home [2].

While some definitions of tourism exclude business travel [3], the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines tourists as individuals who 'travel and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes' [4].

The primary activities in business tourism are meetings, conferences, and exhibitions [5]. Despite the term 'business' in business tourism, when individuals from governmental or non-profit organisations engage in such activities, it is still classified as business tourism (travel) [2]. In fact, this type of activity is currently one of the most relevant for the modern realities that Ukrainian cities face during the military aggression of the Russian Federation.

Business tourism has become a significant sector of the economy in many parts of the world, and numerous regions, states, and local territories have identified business travellers' expenditures as potential sources of economic growth. Since these expenditures can contribute to the development of the local economy, many communities are keen on promoting business tourism and activities geared towards business travellers. A wide range of stakeholders is involved in assessing the economic impact of business tourism [6].

The field of business tourism is growing at a rapid pace. In 2019, the number of business trips worldwide

reached 4.5 billion, 3.7% more than in 2018 [7]. This growth is expected to continue in the coming years, with the number of business trips reaching 5 billion by 2024. Growth in the number of business trips and countries in 2023 is shown in Fig. 1.

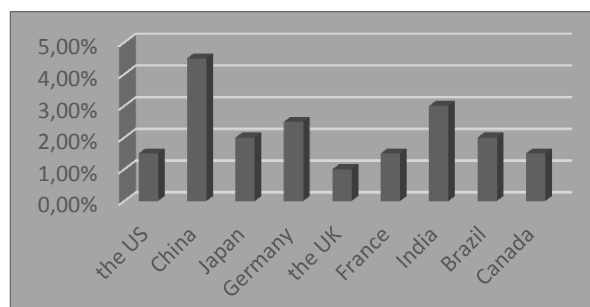


Fig. 1. Growth in the Number of Business Trips and Countries in 2023 (in percentages). Developed by the author based on the source [7]

The growth of business tourism is due to several factors, including economic globalisation, the development of information technology, and increased international trade. Economic globalisation has led to closer cooperation between companies and their partners from other countries, necessitating more frequent business trips. The expansion of international trade also contributes to the increase in business trips, as companies send their employees to other countries for negotiations and deal-making.

The leading regions for business travel worldwide are North America, Europe, and Asia. North America is the most popular region for business travel, accounting for approximately 30% of all business trips worldwide. Europe ranks second, with a share of around 25%, and Asia is in third place, with a share of approximately 20% [8].

The most popular cities for business travel include New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, and Singapore. New York is the most popular city for business travel worldwide, representing around 5% of all business trips globally. London ranks second with a share of approximately 4%, while Tokyo takes the third position with a share of about 3% [8]. Business tourism is susceptible to the influence of various events and economic factors. For instance, the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic led to a decrease in business trips. However, there has been a consistent growth in business tourism recently, driven by the global economic recovery and increased international trade.

An essential process that affects the business tourism industry is the development of information technology. The advancement of information technology has expanded the possibilities for remote work, which has led to a decrease in the number of business trips. However, many business professionals believe that personal meetings are still more productive and effective, thus contributing to the growth of business tourism.

For example, business tourism has been and remains one of the priority types of tourism for Kharkiv. According to the Tourism Development Strategy of the City of Kharkiv, of which the author of this article is one of the developers, we observed that most of the online business meetings organised by the Kharkiv City Council continue in the form of personal visits to Kharkiv by delegations from international foundations, foreign twin cities, organisations, and more. This finding undeniably confirms that the development of international business tourism in a specific location is closely linked to the international activities of local government bodies and underscores the importance of personal contacts in the 'offline' mode. International business tourism is a significant part of the global economy. It contributes substantially to the world's GDP, creates job opportunities, and stimulates entrepreneurship. International business tourism also contributes to infrastructure development and improves the quality of life in host countries.

International business tourism is indeed one of the largest sectors of the global economy. In 2019, it accounted for 1.4 trillion USD. By 2024, the international business tourism market is expected to reach 1.7 trillion USD [9].

It is important to note that international business tourism significantly enhances the growth of the economies of host countries. In 2019, international business tourism generated 2.7 trillion USD of value added to the global economy and supported 100 million jobs worldwide. By 2024, these figures are expected to increase to as much as 3.3 trillion USD and 110 million jobs [9].

This type of tourism also stimulates entrepreneurship in host countries. Business travellers often visit new places and meet new people, which can lead to new businesses and job opportunities.

International business tourism also contributes to attracting investments in host countries. Business travellers often stay in hotels, dine in restaurants, and use other services. It generates income for businesses that, in turn, can use these funds to expand their operations and create new job opportunities.

Furthermore, international business tourism promotes infrastructure development in host countries. Business travellers frequently utilise airports, roads, public transportation, and other infrastructure facilities. It necessitates investment in developing these facilities, thus improving the quality of life in host countries.

Business tourism is a rapidly growing sector of the economy that plays a significant role in the development of many countries. However, business tourism also faces several challenges that it needs to overcome to ensure its sustainable development.

One of the main challenges is competition from other tourism sectors, such as event tourism [10]. This sector offers a broader range of services and entertainment, making them more attractive to tourists. Business tourism must find a way to stand out from competitors by offering

unique and appealing services for business travellers.

Another challenge is to maintain sustainability and environmental responsibility [10]. Business tourism impacts the environment, primarily through transportation and accommodation. Business travellers need to be more aware of their environmental impact, and the business tourism industry needs to implement more sustainable practices.

On the other hand, taking the example of the business tourism sector in the City of Kharkiv, more and more programs and projects are aimed at sustainable development, environmental safety, and energy-efficient technologies. For instance, during the preparation of Kharkiv's City Development Strategy, significant attention was given to the experience of various cities and countries worldwide, indicating that it is essential to utilise the city's underground space to increase its comfort and functionality (e.g., creating a system of urban transportation links, tunnels, underground parking, storage facilities, and more), which will enhance safety and overall attractiveness, ultimately contributing to Kharkiv's sustainable development in the future since it will balance the use of the urban space through renewable and multilevel involvement of the said space when holding and organising events of various kinds.

Furthermore, during the development of Kharkiv's Master Plan, which involves the participation of the renowned architect Lord Norman Foster, experts engaged in the process have stressed the importance of energy independence. Having reviewed the documentation and visited Kharkiv in person, the experts have emphasised the significant need for energy self-sufficiency.

At the end of the spring of 2022, the Kharkiv City Council published the first ideas from a group of architects regarding the city's development. According to their suggestions, it is advisable to decentralise Kharkiv, making each district autonomous with its own centre, parking facilities, shelters, tunnels between the key objects, and more. Specialists have pointed out the potential for utilising existing spaces to meet new needs without expanding the city's boundaries.

The experts plan to create a new framework for the transportation system by modifying the existing radial-circular system through tunnels, viaducts, and other structures to ensure rapid connections between the new districts.

Additionally, architects will work on creating a 'green framework'. They believe that recreational areas should connect to water bodies, and bicycle and pedestrian paths should be arranged. Kharkiv may also feature a pedestrian art street and a large business centre. Plans also include creating unique, secure green areas with diverse architecture and low-rise buildings (maximum of 5 floors).

At the end of June 2022, the Mayor of Kharkiv, Ihor Terekhov, noted the need to transition to new technologies for water supply, water purification, heating, and gas supply, as well to use electric buses instead of old

buses, introduce new noiseless high-speed trams, and update the rolling stock of the underground [11].

These innovations and systemic approaches undoubtedly highlight the relationship between infrastructure development and business tourism.

It's also important to note that business tourism must adapt to changes in global politics and the economy. The global economy is becoming increasingly interconnected, leading to more business trips. However, changes in the political situation can result in a reduction in the number of business trips. Business tourism has to be flexible and adaptive to mitigate the consequences of such changes.

Despite all the challenges, business tourism has significant development prospects. It is a crucial driver of economic growth and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and technology. Business tourism should continue to evolve and become more sustainable to ensure its long-term well-being.

Here are a few specific steps on how to develop business tourism:

- investing in infrastructure that would be attractive to business travellers, such as airports, hotels, and conference facilities;
- developing new business services that meet the needs of business travellers, such as event and meeting planning services, translation and interpretation services, training, and workshops;
- promoting business tourism in international markets, strengthening the positive international image and destination recognition;
- maintaining sustainability and ecological responsibility in business tourism;
- collaborating with other sectors of the economy, such as transportation, trade, and various types of tourism (event, recreational, and others).

To facilitate effective collaboration with other sectors for developing international business tourism in Ukraine, it is necessary to establish partnership relations between the state, educational institutions, enterprises, and international organisations. The aim is to improve the data collection system by implementing modern methodologies, transitioning accommodation facilities to the European HORTEC categorisation system, developing and implementing state policies, an effective marketing strategy for promoting business tourism, and advancing the professional training and retraining of personnel in the field of business tourism, among other things. Doing so will enable additional revenue, job creation, and increased budget revenues.

Today, there are several associations in the field of business tourism that operate on both international and national levels. Here are some examples.

The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) is one of the world's largest and most influential associations, bringing together

professionals in the business tourism sector who specialise in organising conferences, meetings, and other events. It conducts research, develops standards and norms, enhances expert qualifications, and addresses other issues related to business tourism [8].

ICCA has observed a promising and sustainable growth pattern in the association meetings market year after year. The ICCA database currently includes 21,000 regularly held series of meetings, 260,000 meeting editions, and 12,000 international associations. Number of meetings per year can be seen in Fig. 2.

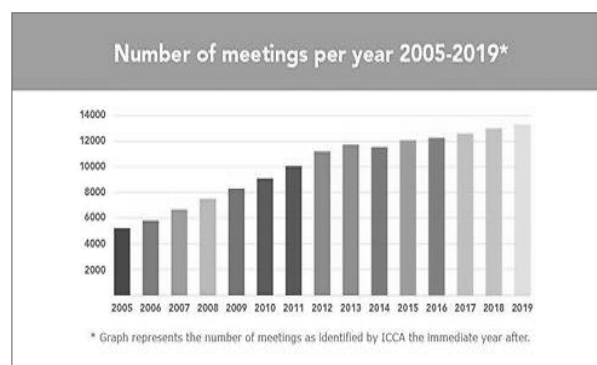


Fig. 2. Meeting Statistics in ICCA [8]

The annual ICCA rankings of countries and cities, which are highly regarded worldwide for comparing the effectiveness of destinations in attracting international meetings, are in high demand within the meetings industry.

The Chief Executive Officer of ICCA, Senthil Gopinath, stated, 'ICCA's annual statistical report is one of the few that compares global meetings performance, offering deep insights into global trends within the meetings industry. Given the current circumstances, it is fantastic to, once again, highlight the consistent growth in the number of association meetings worldwide. These figures demonstrate the need and importance of personal events and, therefore, the significant role the industry will play in global recovery when the time comes'.

Another example is the World PCO (Professional Congress Organisers) Alliance, an alliance of leading event organisation and business tourism professionals worldwide. They collaborate to enhance the quality and standards of event organisation and promote the industry's development.

The main goals of the World PCO Alliance are as follows:

- to collaborate and ensure the effective promotion and marketing of members' events in their regions and globally;
- to collectively share and exchange knowledge, such as education, technology, latest discoveries, and other information and experiences for mutual benefit and industry development;

- to further create and develop business leaders, particularly in the association meetings industry;
- to establish high-quality local partners for PCOs who may not have a regional presence except through the World PCO Alliance, thereby attracting more business interests and creating a broader presence with a better support network.

The Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP) is another association that represents the interests of professionals in the business tourism and event organisation sector in the United Kingdom. It contributes to the development of the industry and fosters collaboration among various stakeholders.

Associations like these work to raise standards, advance professional expertise, and promote connections and cooperation in business tourism on both international and national levels.

In our country, it is possible to examine such associations' effectiveness through analytical data related to the Business Travel Association of Ukraine (BTAU) activities.

Business Travel Association of Ukraine (BTAU), as mentioned on its website (<http://btaukraine.com/>), is a national association that unites professionals in the field of business tourism in Ukraine. The main goal of BTAU is to develop business tourism in Ukraine, enhance its quality, and improve its competitiveness in the international market.

BTAU is working to promote Ukraine as a potential destination for international events and attract foreign investors to the business tourism industry.

The association's website also features a list of member companies, indicating its continuous growth and development. BTAU actively works on improving the standards and quality of business tourism in Ukraine and promotes international connections and cooperation with other business travel associations.

BTAU plays an active role in fostering international connections and cooperation with other business travel associations, aiming to facilitate the exchange of experiences and enhance service quality.

The association's website provides information about the working group creation for developing the 'Smart InterCongresses Ukraine' project, aimed at enhancing Ukraine's competitiveness in organising congresses and other business tourism events.

Within the framework of the memorandum of cooperation between BTAU and Hoteliero, the HotelMatrix team collected statistical information regarding the performance of hotels in Ukrainian cities in January 2022.

Let's compare the occupancy rates with the previous period:

- Kyiv's occupancy rate in December was 52%, while in January, it was 45%;

- Kharkiv's occupancy rate in December was 45%, and in January, it decreased to 34%;
- Odesa's occupancy rate in December was 34%, and it slightly dropped to 30% in January;
- Lviv's occupancy rate in December was 53%, and it increased to 55% in January;
- Bukovel, a resort region, had an occupancy rate of 59% in December, which significantly increased to 84% in January.

During this period, the Bukovel region maintained its leading position with an 84% occupancy rate, considerably higher than in December. Lviv saw a slight increase in occupancy. However, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odesa experienced a decline in their occupancy rates, as shown in Fig. 3.

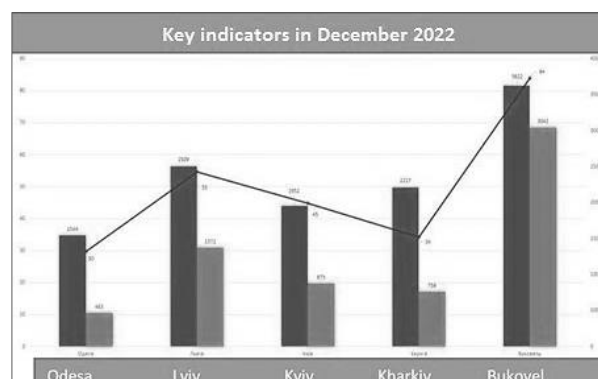


Fig. 3. Key indicators for 2022 [12]

Thus, in Bukovel and Lviv, the ADR indicators have increased. Over the last three months of 2022, Bukovel has seen a rapid increase in turnover. Recall that in November, the ADR in Bukovel was 1,355.00 UAH; in December, it rose to 2,845.00 UAH; in January, it reached 3,622 UAH. In Lviv, the ADR was 2,239 UAH in December and increased to 2,509 UAH in January. In other locations, the results are lower than in the previous period. The high level of occupancy and ADR in Bukovel also significantly impacted the high RevPAR indicator in January, which amounted to 3,042 UAH. Similar to December, this region shows the best results.

At the Ukrainian Hotel & Resort Association (UHRA) Cold Start-2 conference, the results of hotel activity in 2022 were presented. It is evident how the war affects the hotel industry, depending on how far the region is from the front line of hostilities. We provide our interpretation of the results: the temporary emergence of a new segment, the 'forced tourist' who displaced the traditional tourist for the time being.

As we can see in Fig. 4 below, nearly 70% of the hotels in Kyiv were not operational in March, April, and May 2022.

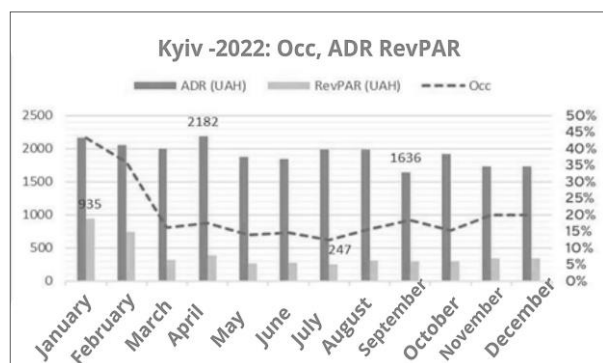


Fig. 4. Hotel occupancy statistics in Kyiv [12]

During the same period, Lviv hotels had a 90% occupancy rate. The increase in non-targeted expenses (voluntary accommodation of internally displaced persons) and forced investment in generators, the presence of which is generally considered mandatory in hotels, were key issues. The crucial aspect is that the alternative source has become the primary one this year, increasing operational costs. In Lviv, November and December 2022 approached the figures of 2021, which may indicate a decrease in demand from forced tourists. The ban on government officials traveling abroad for leisure creates additional conditions for demand for recreation in Western Ukraine for family vacations (recovery).

Comparison of indicators for the cities of Kyiv and Lviv is shown in Fig. 5.

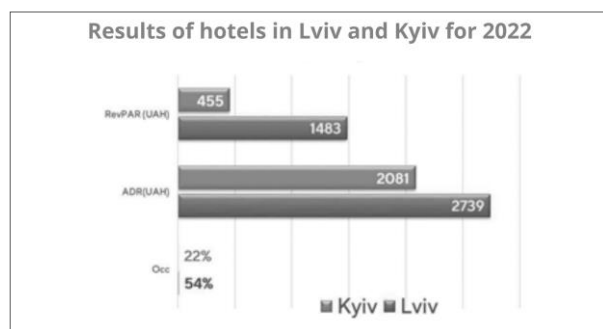


Fig. 5. Comparison of indicators for the cities of Kyiv and Lviv [12]

Membership in the Business Travel Association of Ukraine (BTAU) provides additional opportunities for professionals in the business tourism and MICE services market. Those include active business interaction and collaboration, promoting their services within Ukraine and beyond, and facilitating the integration of member companies into the organised tourist community.

Business Travel Association of Ukraine (BTAU) offers its members the opportunity to pursue various directions, including:

- protecting the interests of the international

business tourism and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) services market and each member of the association in interactions with governmental, public, and business structures;

- coordinated promotion of the interests of member companies in the business tourism and MICE services market;

- strengthening the image and business reputation of participants;

- participation in a wide range of projects and events;

- utilising expert resources, statistical information, and databases of the association;

- facilitating the establishment of business relationships with foreign partners and more.

It is also worth considering the engagement of partners with the association who are members of the association without paying the membership fee and who do not have voting rights and other privileges of a full member. Partners of the association can include non-profit organisations, industry associations, international organisations, government bodies, and media partners. Association partners participate, support, and promote the association in every possible way, as well as the development of the business tourism and MICE industry in Ukraine and abroad.

The main activity of the Business Travel Association of Ukraine (BTAU) focuses on the development of business tourism in Ukraine and the improvement of quality and standards in this industry.

After analysing the activities of BTAU and similar associations worldwide, we consider it to be reasonable and essential to establish a separate direction for BTAU's activities that primarily focuses on the development of international business tourism by engaging international partners and foreign organisations in the process of revitalising and sustaining the growth of business tourism in Ukraine. It is possible to create such direction in the form of the 'Development of International Business Tourism in Ukraine' project within BTAU's activities.

Consequently, when implementing the mentioned project, it is necessary to understand that effective communication and collaboration with project partners play a significant role in the development of the industry. Regular meetings, forums, and electronic communication channels will facilitate efficient information exchange and strengthen professional relationships. Additionally, conducting research and industry analysis will help understand the needs and challenges of project partners, allowing the adaptation of programmes and services to meet their requirements.

Conclusions

Thus, we can emphasise that business tourism is crucial in the modern world. It contributes to economic

growth, job creation, knowledge and technology exchange, and cultural interaction. Business travellers encounter new cultures, customs, and traditions, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among people from different countries.

International business tourism is a significant part of the global economy with considerable development potential. By taking the correct steps, we can ensure the sustainable growth of business tourism and make it even more appealing to business travellers. International business tourism requires special attention and involves engaging foreign partners and international experts in creating and implementing industry projects.

Our proposed 'Development of International Business Tourism in Ukraine' project, within the framework of activities of the Business Travel Association of Ukraine, can serve as a unifying platform for all stakeholders and interested parties focused on advancing international business tourism in Ukraine, gathering the latest approaches and industry development trends.

Prospects for further scientific research, in our opinion, may be the study of the application of the pilot version of the project and the evaluation of its effectiveness on the development of international business tourism in Ukraine and the tourism industry in general within the context of modern challenges and the orientation of the global business community towards business practices that contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

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ОЦІНКА СУЧАСНОГО СТАНУ МІЖНАРОДНОГО ДІЛОВОГО ТУРИЗМУ: ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ СВІТОВИХ ТА УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ТЕНДЕНЦІЙ

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Стаття присвячена оцінці сучасного стану розвитку міжнародного ділового туризму. У швидкозмінному глобальному економічному та соціальному контексті діловий туризм стає все більш важливим фактором міжнародних відносин та економічного співробітництва. Важливим елементом, який підкреслено у статті, є той факт, що діловий туризм відіграє вирішальну роль у сучасному світі за рахунок глобалізації та розвитку технологій. Він сприяє економічному зростанню, створенню робочих місць, обміну знаннями, проєктами та технологіями, а також культурній взаємодії між різними соціальними групами та верствами. Діловий туризм як швидко зростаючий сектор економіки відіграє значну роль у розвитку багатьох країн та дестинацій. Однак діловий туризм також стикається з низкою викликів, які необхідно подолати для забезпечення його сталого розвитку. Але автор дослідження підкреслює, що, незважаючи на всі виклики, діловий туризм має значні перспективи розвитку. Він є важливим рушієм економічного зростання і сприяє всебічному обміну знаннями та технологіями. Діловий туризм повинен продовжувати розвиватися і ставати більш стійким, щоб забезпечити своє довгострокове благополуччя та сталість. У статті проаналізовано основні тенденції, проблеми та перспективи цієї галузі. Автор дослідження розглядає актуальні дані та статистику щодо обсягів міжнародних ділових подорожей, країн-лідерів у цій сфері та важливих сегментів ринку. Особливу увагу приділено впливу сучасних інформаційних технологій та змін у сфері комунікацій на розвиток ділового туризму. Проаналізовано ключові фактори, що впливають на розвиток міжнародного ділового туризму, включаючи економічні та соціокультурні аспекти. У статті також висвітлено роль сталого розвитку в контексті міжнародного ділового туризму. Зазначено, що діловий туризм повинен адаптуватися до змін у світовій політиці та економіці. Діловий туризм повинен бути гнучким і адаптивним, щоб пом'якшити наслідки різних змін, які все більше впливають на сучасний світ, іноді докорінно змінюючи його.

Ключові слова: міжнародний діловий туризм, сталий розвиток, світова економіка.