

International Seminar with the support of EU on Tourism Development in the Black Sea Basin



Making presentation at the seminar

TRANSLATED BY KETEVAN KVARATSKHELIYA

The major aim of Georgian tourism strategy is to launch a guide which will contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism industry, growth of income and increasing of the importance of the field.

Whereas, the government is tasked to design and implement a plan, which will transform the rich natural and cultural resources into a global-scale tourist product and create the possibility for obtaining unique and unforgettable impressions. The abovementioned is to attract tourists with higher payment capabilities from European countries, North America, as well as the Middle East and Asia.

From 2009 to 2015, the visitor inflow in Georgia was one of the highest in the world: the total number of international travelers increased by 293% and exceeded 5.9 million (2009, 1.5 mln). The profit obtained from the tourism industry increased rapidly from \$476 million to \$1.9 billion.

The international seminar-presentation, financed by the EU project "Development of Sustainable Cultural Tourism in the Black Sea Basin" CULTOUR-BSB, EMS number: BSB 117" and taking place on May 11-12 at the Cruise Hotel in Tbilisi, was dedicated to resolving the given issues.

The heads of the international project are as follows: Lead Partner - Sozopol Municipality (Mrs. Petya Chapevova, Vice-Mayor of Suzopol, Radina Bayanova, business consultant, Simona Valchanova, Tourism Expert, Bulgaria) Bulgaria and Project Manager of CULTOUR-BSB Bulgaria), Project partners: Constanta Municipality (Georgiana Petre, Communication officer PB2, Cristina Sapunaru Tourism Expert, Roman), NNLE - Ecocenter For Environmental Protection (Georgia), Agency of Sustainable Development and European Integration "Lower Danube Euroregion" (ASDEI), (Ukraine), Executive committee of Izmail city Council (Ukraine) and Düzce Governorship (Turkey).

Heads of the governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professors and specialists in tourism from a number of universities, as well as organizations and tour operators from different regions and municipalities of Georgia, participated in the seminar.

International guests from the countries implementing the project, have also traveled to Georgia to participate in the seminar: Mrs. Petya Paseva, Communication Officer, LP - Sozopol Municipality, Bulgaria and Project CULTOUR-BSB, Mr. Serhii Luzanov Executive Committee of Izmail City (Ukraine) Council, Communication Officer, Mr. Viorel Babaian, Communication Officer, Communication Officer, (Ukraine) "Lower Danube Euroregion", Mrs. Tetiana Pasmarnova Tourism Expert, ASDEI "Lower Danube" Euroregion" Ukraine, Mrs. Hanna Bilobrova, Tourism Expert, Executive Committee of Izmail city Council, Ms. Zeliha Oraloglu, Communication Officer (Turkey), Ms., Elif Berna Bakir, Duzce Governorship.

Special booklets, triplets, banners and other informative material, aimed at the promotion of the international project, were given to the seminar participants, guests and students interested in the tourism industry.

The seminar was officially opened by Givi Gavardashvili, Director of the Ecocenter for Environmental Protection, Doctor of Technical Science, Professor and Supervisor of the international project "CULTOUR-BSB, EMS number: BSB 117" from Georgia. Mr. Givi Gavardashvili spoke regarding the significance of the project for the development of the Black Sea tourism, which is to contribute to the sustainable progress of the tourism industry in Georgian and increasing the profit.

The speaker strongly focused on the assimilation of new tourist routes in Georgia, as well as their promotion across Europe, noting that this process will increase the tourist inflow in Georgia and as a result help the stable growth of the country's economy.

At the seminar, welcoming speeches were delivered by: Mr. David Buijashvili, Head of the EU Assistance Coordination and Sectorial Integration Department Directorate General for European Integration Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ms. Rusudan Mamatsashvili - First Deputy Head of Georgian National Tourism Administration, who noted that the project is of strategic importance for Georgia in terms of the development of tourism in the Black Sea Basin and expressed their support towards the implementation of the project, which is to contribute to the progress of tourism as business in the country.

The following participants addressed the audi-



From the right - Mr. David Buijashvili, Head of the EU Assistance Coordination and Sectorial Integration Department Directorate General for European Integration Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and prof. Givi Gavardashvili, Director of Ecocenter for Environmental Protection

ence at the seminar: Mrs. Gulnaz Surmanidze (Association Executive director) - Mtirala and Machakhela Protected Areas Friends, Professor Soso Surguladze - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tourism Department, Company "Hi Georgia" Ms. Nehayat Aleso, Public Relations Manager - Gvantsa Kordzakhia, Company "Mtskheta Cruise", Ms. Nino Kekelidze Director of Company "Discover Georgia", Prof. Giorgi Begadze - Tourism Management center of Ilia State University, Mr. Irakli Maisashvili - Tourism center of Tskaltubo, Prof. Kakhaber Jakeli - International Black Sea University, Tourism Department, Mrs. Ketevan Zautashvili (Head of department) - Foreign Relations, International Projects and Tourism Department of Kvareli Municipality (Kakheti region), Mr. Gocha Khorava (Head of department) - Tourism Department of Baghdadi municipality (Imereti region), Mr. Alexander Khmaladze - Director of Company "Discover Signnaghi", Ms. Lali Giguri - Director of Company, "Georgia holiday", Ms. Makvala Rikrikadze - Director of Company "Travel-georgiari", Ms. Khatuna Chagazia Director of LTD "Turalux", Mr. Giorgi Didebulidze - Director of LTD "Gland travel Georgia" e.c.

Along with the issue of developing Black Sea tourism, the speakers also accentuated the importance of sophisticated educational programs in business administration. It was also stated that it is vital to enable students to obtain education in accordance with the modern requirements, which will create a solid basis of different business administration areas, including marketing, management and more.

Tourism was emphasized at the meeting. The main aim should be to prepare tour agencies, bureaus, etc., to better operate in the industry.

Meetings and discussions also took place during the seminar coffee-breaks as follows: Discussion with representatives of local tourism agencies of Georgia, as well as the tourism experts, participating in the project "Development of Sustainable Cultural Tourism in the Black Sea Basin" CULTOUR-BSB, EMS number: BSB 117"; professor Giorgi Meladze, academic doctors - Tamriko Supatashvili, Natia Gavardashvili, Petya Paseva, Sergey Luzanov, Zeliha Oraloglu, Viorel Babaian and others.

During the working process of the seminar, the target groups were offered specially designed survey comprising of questions for three types of organizations regarding the current situation in the tourism industry, challenges, as well as future perspectives. More than 60 representatives from the various organizations participated in the survey.

The Ecocenter for Environmental Protection, as the partner organization of the international project, "Development of Sustainable Cultural Tourism in the Black Sea Basin" CULTOUR-BSB, EMS number: BSB 117" from Georgia is currently processing the surveys completed by the tourism experts and will distribute the results to the lead organization - Suzopol Municipality shortly.

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Filling in the questionnaire

