
Results Of One-Year Study On International Travels To Armenia Presented

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Foreign tourists visit Armenia for the following purposes: to see their relatives and friends (44.8%), to do business (22.4%), and to spend their holidays (11.6%), the head of the balance of payment and foreign trade unit of the RA National Statistical Service Alexander Petrosian said at the March 31 press conference to discuss results of a one-year study on international travels to Armenia.

The study was conducted from September 2006 to August 2007 with joint efforts of the RA ministry of trade and economic development, the RA National Statistical Service, the Armenian Tourism Development Agency, and the USAID-financed Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) program.

According to A. Petrosian, tourists from North America, Western Europe, Japan and the Middle East make up the majority of those who come to Armenia for holidays and entertainment.

The study shows that tourists spend 19.6 days on average in Armenia, spending 36 dollars a day. Canadians spend the largest amount of money, while Japanese are in second place. 52.7% of tourists visit Armenia for the third time.

The main source of information for tourists visiting Armenia are their relatives and friends (52.4%), as well as their previous visits, which shows that Armenia is a country with a low level of tourism-oriented market progress.

Tourists mostly assess Armenia as good (on a 5-point scale), indicating sights and health resorts as advantages, while low quality of roads and the Armenian dram's appreciation against other currencies as disadvantages.

Armenians traveling abroad mainly go to Georgia (24.7%), Russia (44.9%) and Iran (5.9%). The average duration of a travel makes 49 days, with 21.4 dollars being spent daily.

The study represented a preliminary stage for introduction of "Tourism Satellite Balance" system, which will allow to have both quantitative data and information on geography of tourist trips, age, gender, preferences and impressions of tourists, purpose of visits, the amount of expenditures, which is important for the development and implementation of an efficient state policy on the tourism sector.

In the words of the head of the tourism department of the RA ministry of trade and economic development Mekhak Apresian, the study results will be used to specify the priorities of tourism development in Armenia. According to him, cooperation among the above mentioned structures for conducting studies will continue within the framework of the Armenian government-approved concept on tourism development. It is envisaged that the program of measures on implementation of the indicated concept will be approved in June or July of this year.
