

REPUBLIC ACTION «CULTURAL CAPITAL OF BELARUS» AS A MEANS OF REALIZATION OF TOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF SMALL TOWNS

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The Republic of Belarus possesses unique historical and cultural objects that reflect the spiritual traditions of European and Byzantine-Russian culture and determine the vectors for the development of the country's cultural policy both on the international arena and in the post-Soviet area. The geopolitical location of the Republic of Belarus at the junction of Western and Eastern civilizations allows it to act not only as a center for tourist business, but also to influence the tourist policy of neighboring countries – the so called phenomenon of border areas. Such objects as the Augustow Canal, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Brest Fortress are a cultural brand of both our country and the European Union. The Republic of Belarus participates in various committees for the support and development of tourism as a separate branch of the economy.

Using the cultural potential of the objects of cultural and historical heritage, the Government of the Republic of Belarus develops programs that determine the development of the tourist industry in the country as a whole and in its regions. The Government has approved and is implementing such programs as: «Culture of Belarus» for 2016-2020 [2] and «Hospitable Belarus» for 2016-2020 [1], which determine the development of tourism in the country. The main objectives of the «Hospitable Belarus» program for 2016-2020 are defined by its developers as «the formation and development of a modern competitive tourist complex, increasing the contribution of tourism to the development of the national economy» [1].

As N.N. Korolev and E.V. Ryabova state, the Republic of Belarus is attractive for tourists not only thanks to its objects of historical and cultural heritage, but also thanks to the generation of a special resource, which is «original intangible cultural heritage, which includes rites, festivities, forms of people's self-expression, including language, knowledge and local customs. The essential feature of such values is that they represent masterpieces of the oral intangible heritage of humanity» [3, p. 65].

Treatment of the material and non-material culture of Belarusians as a

strategic resource and its use in creating a positive image of the country and the development of its tourist industry can be traced not only in the scientific works of domestic specialists and scholars of the post-Soviet area, but also in the curriculum development in institutions of higher education. For example, today in the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts such academic disciplines as «Regional Cultures of Belarus» (within the framework of the Master's program «Art Management»), «Library Religious Studies» (for students of the Faculty of Information Document Communications), etc. have been developed and are being implemented.

However, it should be noted that today no program aimed at the development of the tourist industry, pays sufficient attention to the potential of local lore activities of public libraries and the use of this unique resource in the formation of tourist routes in the regions of the Republic of Belarus.

To implement the regional cultural policy in the sphere of tourism, the Government of the Republic of Belarus initiated an annual action: «The Cultural Capital of Belarus», launched in 2010. Its goal is «to make the best achievements of the national culture more accessible to residents of all parts of Belarus, to promote the activities of regional cultural institutions and local authorities, to attract domestic and foreign tourists to the regions of the country» [3, p. 69].

The first town to get the title of the cultural capital was Polotsk, and in 2011 this title passed to Gomel. In 2012, the cultural capital of Belarus was Nesvizh, in 2013 – Mogilev, in 2014 – Grodno, 2015 - Brest. 2016 – Molodechno. The honor to be called the cultural capital of the Republic of Belarus in 2017 was awarded to the city of Bobruisk.

The first written references to Bobruisk date back to 1387. The development of the city was helped by the construction of industrial facilities, manufactories, highways and railways, which in turn contributed to capital inflow and population growth.

Bobruisk has a rich historical and cultural potential. More than five hundred cultural events are held in the city annually. Among the most famous is the International Festival of Folk Arts «Wreath of Friendship», in which representatives of 38 countries from five continents have already taken part, a regional festival of choreography «At the Origins of Dance», as well as an international ceramics plein-air «Art-Zhyzhal».

The landmark of Bobruisk is the museum of local lore which acquaints visitors with the archeology of the region and its rich history. The territory of modern Bobruisk at various times was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rzeczpospolita and the Russian Empire. The museum gives information about the commercial and industrial development of the region in the pre-Soviet period, the revolutionary events of 1917, the periods of the new economic policy, collectivization and industrialization, the difficult years of the Great Patriotic War (World War II), the restoration and post-war development of the region, the development of the city in the modern period as well as ethnography, culture and nature of the region.

The Bobruisk fortress is of interest for the development of the tourist business in Bobruisk. Its construction started in 1810. The events of the Patriotic War (Napoleonic War) of 1812, which were the subject of regional studies, timed to the 200th anniversary of the Patriotic War of 1812, are connected with the history of the fortress. The Bobruisk fortress was recognized as the strongest defense structure of the Russian Empire during the Napoleonic invasion. In 2002, the monument of history and architecture «Bobruisk fortress» was included in the State list of historical and cultural monuments of national importance of the Republic of Belarus.

For years the town was known as a major publishing center.

The Bobruisk Regional Drama and Comedy Theater, founded in 1970 and named after Vincent Dunin-Marcinkiewicz, the founder of the Belarusian drama is famous for its productions and decorations.

In the city there are two cinemas, a park of culture and recreation with attractions for children and grown ups.

The sculpture of Beaver, installed in 2006 at the intersection of K. Marx and Socialist streets, became a symbol of the town, often reproduced on magnets and other souvenirs. (The name of the town is derived from the word «бобр» and can be translated as «beavertown»).

In 2011, the town executive committee established a special award named after Mikhas Lynkov, which is awarded to representatives of culture, art, education and media for significant achievements in the popularization of the Belarusian language.

In 2017 about 100 different cultural events are planned in Bobruisk, some of which are associated with the 630 anniversary of the founding of the city.

However, regardless of the cultural potential and geographic location of the town or city, in order to more fully implement the project «The Cultural Capital of Belarus», it is necessary to develop the so-called «Road Map», which will promote the development of marketing communications aimed at positioning and promoting the city itself as a cultural brand as well as products and services offered by institutions of the socio-cultural sphere. A road map is a visual representation of a step-by-step scenario for the development of a certain object. Road mapping links the vision, strategy and development plan of the system and builds in time the main steps of this process on the basis of the “past-present-future” principle. In our opinion, the road map should include the following points:

1. creation of a special site devoted to the history and culture of both the city itself and its district if it exists. The site should present such sections as: «History of the city», «Objects of historical and cultural heritage», «Cultural life», «Our Countrymen» or «Outstanding figures of the region», «What's On», «Libraries offer», «Museums» etc. The site must be «alive», that is it must be constantly updated with new sections and reports after each cultural event. It should be noted that the site for tourists should contain an interactive map or a guide to historical places and a tourist information card.

2. Creation of a special information center (possibly based in the central library).
3. Production of souvenir products with the symbols of the city and the republic. It is well known that various «fairs of masters», where you can buy objects of applied art with a regional flavor, are very popular with tourists.
4. Some thought should be given to the best way of delivery of city visitors to attractions. Parking places for sightseeing buses and cars of individual tourists should be planned. There should be clear road signs in the city and at the entrances to it and developed infrastructure.
5. There should be a tour agency and employees should be able to conduct a city tour for all comers, both groups and individual tourists.
6. Undoubtedly, the specialists involved in working with the city guests should speak not only the state languages of our republic, but also foreign languages. Advertising products (booklets, guidebooks, etc.) should also be duplicated in the main foreign languages.
7. Special attention should be paid to the organization of meals for the guests of the city. The options should be thought out for different groups of the population, in different price categories. It is a visit to a cafe or a restaurant that can improve or spoil the impression of a tourist about a city.
8. Recreation areas such as parks and public gardens should be put in order.
9. Tourists are also attracted to historic reconstructions related to the history of the city (knight tournaments etc.).
10. Among the important points, it should be mentioned that at various events in the city center, as well as in recreation areas city visitors should feel safe.

We believe that the creation and detailed development of the roadmap and the implementation of the proposed activities will not only ensure the promotion of a particular city or region of the republic and attract tourists there, but also promote cultural exchange, as well as preserve national and cultural self-identification, which is important nowadays in times of globalization and mixing of cultures.

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