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# The Role of Staycation Tourism in Mitigating the Environmental Impact of Recreation in Ukraine

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**Abstract.** The study aims to provide an analytical review of the advantages and disadvantages of staycation tourism and to form practical recommendations for its development in Ukraine. The volumes of tourist arrivals were analyzed, and it was found that the share of tourism accounts for more than 5% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and 90% is the use of transport for tourist needs. By 2030, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from tourism are expected to increase by 25% compared to 2016, i.e. from 1,597 million tons to 1,998 million tons. Tourists visiting specific advertised powers result in 95% of the world's tourists visiting only 5% of a country's territory. This creates a substantial anthropogenic load on a certain ecosystem of popular tourist destinations. The potential advantages and disadvantages of Staycation tourism for stakeholders are analyzed, and recommendations are offered to overcome the negative aspects of this type of tourism. In Ukraine, supporting domestic tourism is necessary, which provides both safeties for tourists and contributes to reducing transport emissions and environmental impact.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism is an integral component of anthropogenic impact, as travels or excursion trips can be long-term. Tourism lies more in the plane of human recreation, which is not related to paid activities and involves temporary departure from one's residence. Tourism is a tool for expanding a person's life experience because when travelling, an individual sees something new and forms new ideas and knowledge in his worldview.

Under martial law in Ukraine, staying as a tourist is relevant for Ukrainian citizens, because:

firstly, the family cannot go on vacation abroad if there is a man aged from 18 to 60 in the family;

secondly, household incomes have decreased, including due to the increase in unemployment, so a small part of Ukrainians from the general structure of the population can afford a full-fledged comfortable 5-star vacation;

thirdly, regional authorities, local entrepreneurs, owners of tourist destinations with the development of digitalization are actively promoting their tourism products in social networks, i.e., currently Ukrainians have comprehensive information about potential vacation spots in their country and in their region;



fourthly, citizens' awareness of sustainable development is increasing. This involves the reasonable use of transport, avoiding excessive use of transport, and therefore holidays close to home will require fewer vehicles and less travel time, which will reduce the negative impact of transport in tourism on the environment;

fifthly, under martial law, people prefer to support their mental state through physical rest and agree to receive this rest not far from home (so that, if necessary, to be able to return home quickly, and also due to the fact that a person may have reduced vacation days (if male colleagues have been mobilized or female colleagues have gone abroad and there is no one to replace this specialist) and the employee will not have time to go far on vacation, for example, for two weeks, but only has 2 days for vacation with a certain interval);

sixth, there was an 85% drop in inbound tourism to Ukraine, with Ukraine's losses from inbound tourism in 2024 amounting to approximately one billion dollars. In such conditions, when there is almost no inbound tourism, it is necessary to direct attention to the development of domestic tourism.

In recent years, we have observed the development of both well-known types of tourism, for example, health, business, sports, religious, youth, and those that are gaining momentum in recent years, for example, extreme, green [1]. Although the global tourism industry has not yet returned to the volumes recorded by statistical bodies before the coronavirus pandemic, tourist operators claim a confident increase in the number of arrivals in domestic and international tourism. Moreover, this is understandable, because after a long forced stay in the walls of their own home, people have a strong desire to travel, individually or with their family, avoiding crowding and possible infections. Among the variety of types of tourism that consumers of tourist services can choose today, this study will analyze some modern trends in the tourist industry, and in particular, such a type of tourism that can be organized not far from a person's place of residence and which is called Staycation [2].

## 2. Theoretical framework

A staycation is a type of vacation when a person does not go anywhere but stays at home on vacation [3]. The government offered this type of recreation to the people back in 1944 in the USA (when there was an urgent need to save financial resources, the population's solvency was at a minimum level). However, it did not become popular then and in the following decades. During the financial crisis of 2008, Internet users' requests for vacations close to their place of residence increased dramatically, and tourists began to choose vacations in hotels close to home. Potential consumers of tourist services in the USA saw worthy tourist locations not far from their homes, which began to gain popularity among the local population. During the coronavirus pandemic (2019-2021), due to restrictions on movement, Google statistical data recorded a renewed demand for such a vacation as a Staycation in many countries [4].

It's the domestic tourism of countries that began to develop actively. Governments of some countries (Slovenia, Ireland, Taiwan, Italy, Poland, Lithuania and some others) supported the Staycation initiative and introduced tourist vouchers with a denomination of up to € 500 or offered to pay from 25 to 50 % of the hotel stay in the country in order to manage tourist demand and save tourist industry in difficult times and save jobs [5]. It must be said that the local public began to actively look for vacation destinations specifically in the context of domestic tourism, in order to save money and invent something interesting and useful for themselves in their own country.

Tourists are encouraged to travel close to their homes by calls for the need to reduce the use of vehicles that pollute the environment [6]. In recent years, when a lot is being said and done around the world for the sustainable development of the planet, every inhabitant of the Earth must understand that any economic activity must be carried out in such a way that

economic interests do not threaten environmental consequences for society, resources must be consumed in such a way, so that they would be able to recover so that future generations would have access to all kinds of resources that are currently available. Sustainable development involves the harmonious development of all countries, all industries, every large and small enterprises, taking into account three important and interrelated components: economic, ecological and social one. "Green" technologies, the circular economy are being actively introduced, measures are being taken to increase the information awareness of ordinary citizens about what exactly is sustainable development and what are its main principles of building a healthy society of current and future generations.

Transport performs an important service function of moving goods and passengers between and within regions. At the same time it is transport that causes great damage to the environment. To prevent an environmental disaster, governments of various countries have been actively taken various measures in recent years – from large fines for the use of polluting engines to a complete ban on such vehicles. People is encouraged to switch to vehicles more loyal to nature – bicycles and scooters, but they have limitations in their use by consumers – their use must be suitable for favorable weather and the user's health. For medium and long-distance travel, it is advisable to use cars with zero emission of harmful substances into the air or the railway, which is the object of lower emissions of harmful substances into the air compared to road transport. As for water transport, it is certainly more attractive to use from the point of view of conservationists, but its development requires water resources and modern watercraft.

Mass media, with governments support, actively promote ideas of sustainable development in society. This indicates the importance of reasonable consumption of resources, the need to use alternative sources of energy, avoiding excessive consumption, including during the period of receiving tourist services. If we talk about tourism, in recent years, the organizers of tourist services have focused their attention of potential tourists on the fact that the services they offer actively support the principles of sustainable tourism, that is, they do not offer overtourism (excessive tourism, where there are many tourists and an excessive load on tourist objects), and moderate tourism, i.e. such that does not harm the environment. It should be noted that recently informed tourists are trying to choose moderate tourism and this means that information measures have achieved their goal of reducing the burden on natural, historical, cultural and other kinds of resources.

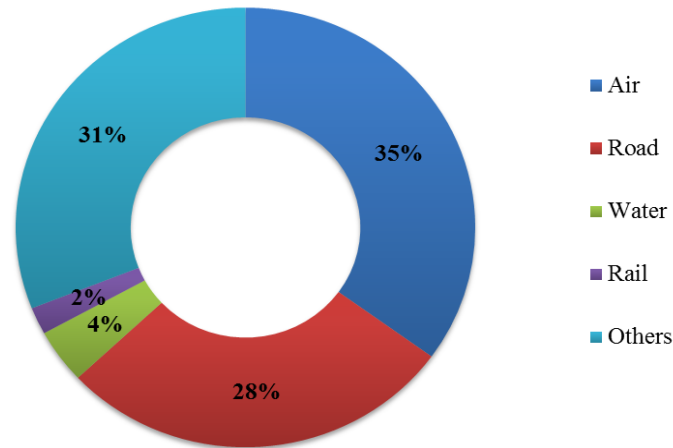
All these measures of an informational and financial nature contribute to the development of domestic tourism, which is reflected in numerous scientific works of foreign and domestic studies. At the same time, we record many scientific publications of home researchers on the development of various types of national tourism, such as: medical, railway, green, military, rural, recreational, youth, extreme, caravanning, virtual, jeeping, greyhound and other types. It should be noted that in the scientific studies of Ukrainian researchers in recent years, we did not find a thorough analysis of such a type of domestic tourism as Staycation.

### **3. Results**

Despite the positive influence of tourism on a specific person – a tourist, it is this specific tourist, that is, everyone who visits this or that area that creates an additional burden on the environment, excessive consumption of resources including fresh water. Researchers observe an increase in the load on the land use of certain areas (which are tourist locations), an increase in emissions of harmful substances into the air due to the active use of transport, and this, in turn, can lead to irreparable damage, namely: erosion and degradation of land, the disappearance of some species of plants and animals, depletion of natural resources, pollution of water bodies and air, increase in the amount of waste in a specific territory.

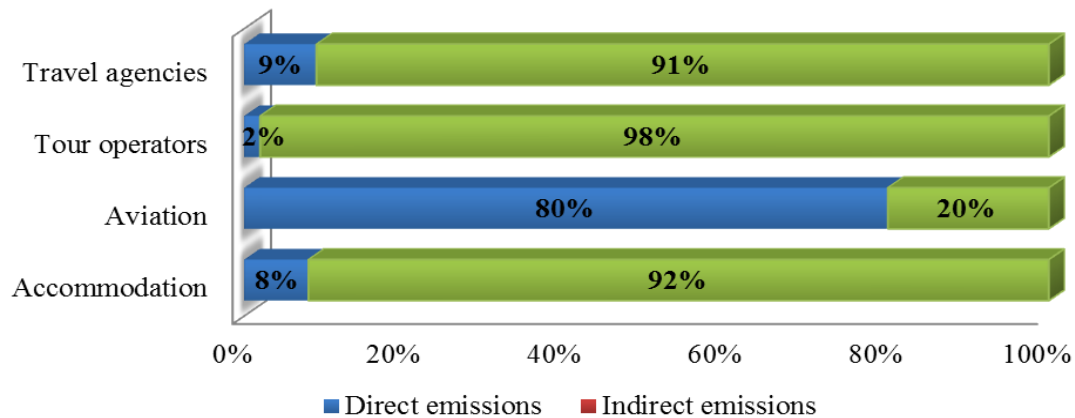
All this happens because tourists usually choose popular routes and tourist spots that are already overcrowded with tourists. Global statistics record 45 arrivals every second, and every year almost one and a half billion tourists reach their destination, that is, a place of rest or visit, and all these arrivals are made by various means of transport (Fig.1-2).

**The Share of Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Different Types of Transport**



**Figure 1.** The share of global greenhouse gas emissions from different types of transport [11].

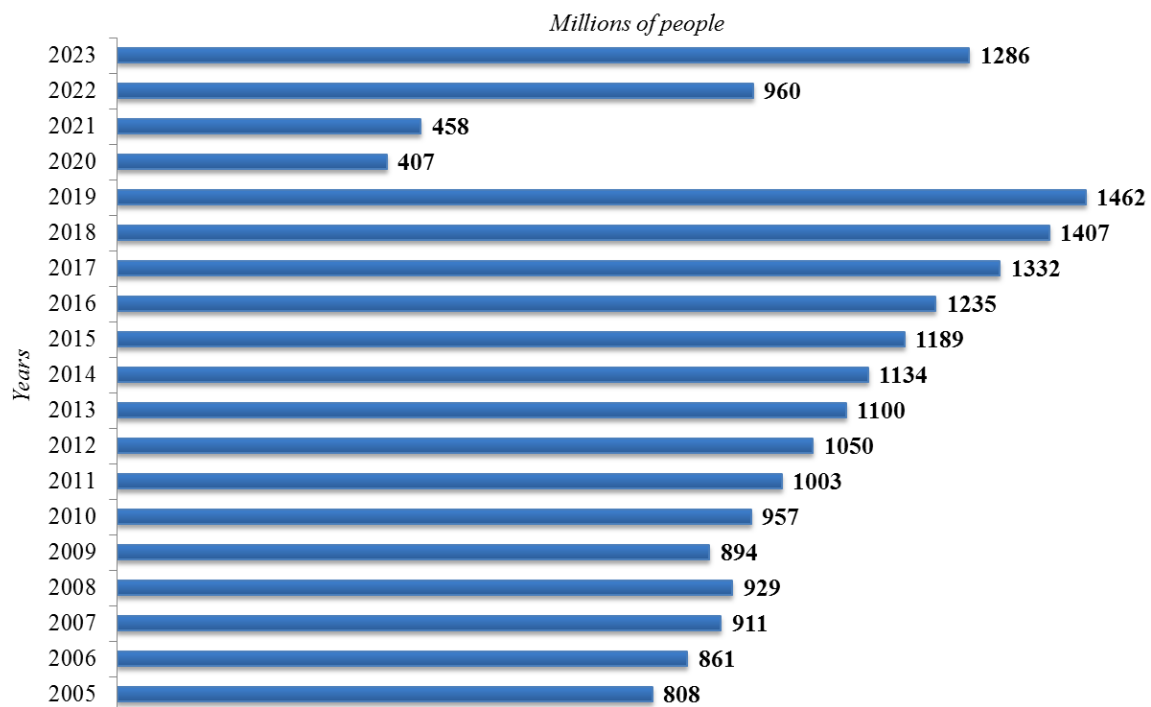
**Direct and Indirect Emissions from the Tourism Industry**



**Figure 2.** Direct and indirect emissions from the tourism industry [11].

Figures of tourist activity, from the point of view of environmental impact, are impressive: if in 1950 25 million international tourist arrivals were registered, in 1970 – 166 million, in 1990 – 435 million, in 2018 – 1.442 billion. By 2030, experts predict 1.8 billion tourists annually (Fig. 3). Tourism share is for more than 5 % of global greenhouse gas emissions, from which 90 % is the use of transport for tourism goals. By 2030, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from tourism are estimated to increase by 25 % compared to 2016, i.e. from 1,597 million tons to 1,998 million tons.

### Dynamics of international tourist arrivals for the period 2005-2023



**Figure 3.** Dynamics of international tourist arrivals in 2005-2023 [14].

Visiting tourists to specific advertised places leads to the fact that 95 % of tourists in the world visit only 5 % of the territory of a certain country. This puts a huge strain on a number of popular tourist destinations. As a result, local residents suffer from significant inconvenience - from high prices to the impossibility of long-term renting an apartment, because it is more profitable for apartment owners to rent housing for a short-term period - and even moving to another area [7]. Local residents of famous resorts (Paris, Bali, Kyoto, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Athens, Mount Fuji, Rome, Venice, Boracay Island in the Philippines, Komodo Island in Indonesia, Bay in Thailand, and others) suffer greatly from tourists and even organize actions against visiting tourists at their places of residence. For example, more than 120,000 people left Venice for the mainland over the past half century [8].

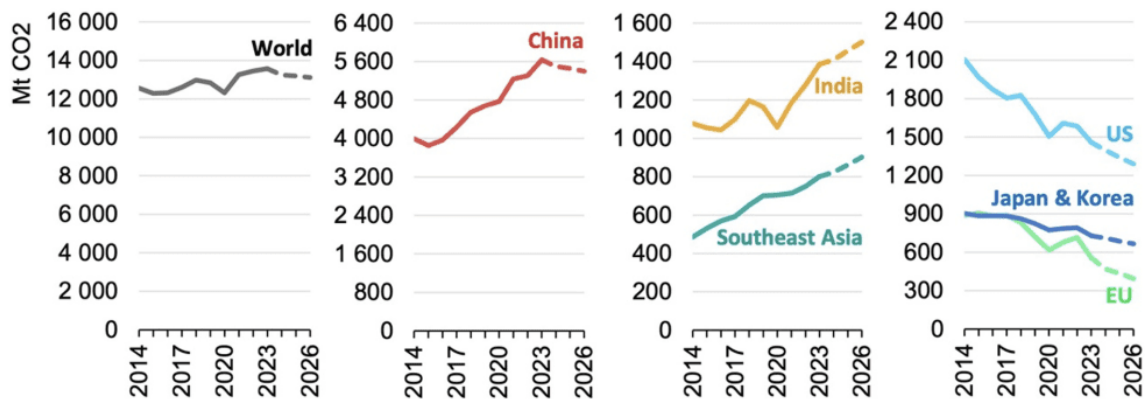
Europe is experiencing a significant influx of tourists - in 2024, it is expected that 758 million tourists will visit Europe [9]. Sagarmatha National Park receives approximately 100,000 visitors annually, while Mount Everest is already known as the highest garbage dump in the world, because tourists leave large amounts of garbage every day, and as a result, according to experts, about 10 tons of garbage accumulated on the mountain [10].

The situation can become catastrophic if governments of countries do not conduct a powerful information campaign to support and develop domestic tourism, as well as to support Staycation tourism, which will encourage tourists to use less transport and, accordingly, reduce the environment impact. In addition, it is necessary to stimulate organizations that offer green tourism or use "green" technologies in the provision of tourist services, and vice versa, fine or limit or even ban activities of those business entities that introduce excessive tourism for their own economic benefit [12-13].

As can be seen from Figure 4, carbon dioxide emissions in 2026 in the world as a whole are estimated to decrease thanks to the active introduction of "green" technologies. At the same time, some countries and regions, for example, India and South Asia, will increase CO<sub>2</sub>

emissions, so it is important to support these regions with tools for the mass use of environmentally friendly technologies.

#### CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electricity generation in selected regions, 2014-2026



**Fig. 4.** CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electricity generation in selected regions 2014-2026 [15] (IEA. Licence CC BY 4.0).

Such a type of tourism as Staycation began to develop in 2008 in the USA after the financial crisis due to the need for citizens to save, including on travel. There was a need for tourism within the residence region. Citizens in those days began to actively look for interesting locations for recreation, which are located not far from their own homes.

The second wave of the development of this type of domestic tourism was observed during the coronavirus pandemic in 2019-2021, when almost all countries recorded a sharp increase in travel for the purpose of tourism within the country, because borders of the countries were closed and any movement required additional agreements, starting from mandatory quarantine upon arrival at a certain destination before the need for vaccination against coronavirus, etc. [3].

Currently, under martial law in Ukraine, when men aged 18 to 60 cannot go abroad on vacation with their families due to restrictions on movement, when the population's ability to pay has fallen and there is a need to find an affordable type of recreation, when there is a need to study and develop and popularize their own region, when for security reasons people do not want to leave their homes for a long time and for many other objective reasons, Staycation tourism can develop in Ukraine very quickly, provided that it is properly organized in the first place, with compliance with security conditions and a powerful advertising and information company from interested parties [16].

Taking into account the rapid development of digital technologies and the increase of persons working online, they too can become digital nomads, working in a remote format, while arranging an interesting vacation in a more or less familiar area in their free time. For example, if a digital nomad does not work from home, but went to a camp, works from there, rests on the beach or goes fishing or explores local attractions, this is also a manifestation of Staycation tourism. Digital nomads are an additional source of income for local budgets, because they spend funds in the area where they are currently located, funds received from another state. At the same time, digital nomads are not competitors on the labor market for local residents, because they do not apply for jobs in the place of stay. In our opinion, local authorities and individuals and organizations involved in the field of tourism organization should focus their efforts on providing preferences to digital nomads in order to attract them to their own region.

Also, such a type of tourism as Skip-gen is developing all over the world. In our opinion, it is Staycation tourism and Skip-gen tourism that go very well with each other, because such trips are more comfortable for all parties [17]. Staycation domestic tourism has certain advantages and disadvantages for all stakeholders. The main ones are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Advantages and disadvantages of Staycation tourism for stakeholders.

<b>For tourists</b>	<b>For local business entities</b>
Travel safety	Opening of new jobs
Absence of language barriers	Expanding the range of services
Absence of culture misunderstanding, the food is familiar	Focus on improving the quality of services
Possibility of an urgent return home in extreme necessity	Increase in profitability due to the increase in tourist arrivals to their location
Opportunity to decide on the holiday budget in advance	Receipt of additional funds to the region budget
Possibility of early booking	The appearance of positive information in social networks about the region as a potential investment object
Expanding one's own horizons, visiting locations useful for the tourist	Attraction of investments for the development of innovations
Close relatives, having information that you are at home or not far from home, can ask to perform various actions	May not know how to effectively conduct a advertising and information campaign in the digital environment to attract customers
A person may not have complete information about tourist locations that are useful and interesting for residence	They may not be ready to provide visitors with a high level of service

In this context, we should be adding that it is extremely important for Ukraine to enhance the image of a reliable partner and a location in which investors should invest. Unfortunately, for now (we are talking about 2024), the level of investment attractiveness in Ukraine is quite low, it is approximately 2.5 points out of 5 possible. At the same time, the attractive investment market has an indicator of 4 to 5 points. Of course, investors carefully analyze the country, the industry, and a specific project before making a decision to invest, and this is understandable, because an attractive business environment, the absence or minimal number of risks of losing business, a quick payback period for invested funds, high profitability are important for every investor. In the conditions of martial law in Ukraine, no one can provide investors with safe business conditions, so this objective factor is needed, why the volume of investments in various industries in Ukraine, including tourism, is still quite insignificant.

Concerning the positive experience of organizing domestic tourism in other countries, this type of tourism fully deserves to take a leading position in comparison with international tourism. In our opinion, more attractive for local residents of a certain location may be Staycation tourism, which aims to rest close to home, approximately at a distance of one to three hours by car. Staycation tourism, like any other type, has certain advantages and disadvantages. Among the most positive moments for tourists in this type of recreation, one can highlight the possibility of careful planning and avoiding the risks of receiving various unpleasant surprises – from unusual food (and subsequent health problems) to excessive expenses. Regarding the negative side of this type of recreation, one can name the psychological unpreparedness of potential tourists to look for tourist locations close to home, as if, according to established traditions, recreation should be far from home, and even better, in another country. We believe that if the population is well-informed about the possibility and modernity of traveling in their own country and even their own region, it is normal, the psychological

barriers of tourists regarding not choosing tourist destinations close to their own home will be overcome.

For tourism organizers, the advantages of organizing Staycation tourism are obvious – from increasing recognition in the tourism market of one's own brand, one's own travel company and, as a result, an increase in the number of visitors to an increase in profits.

For local authorities, supporting such projects from the very beginning, that is, investing in tourism innovations and Staycation tourism projects, will have long-term positive prospects in the form of additional revenue for the region's budget. In addition, new tourist destinations will require the organization of places for tourists to stay or spend the night, places to eat, entertainment, etc., so there will be a need to create new jobs, and this is another tool to keep people in a specific area, because if they have work and means for existence, they will not leave this area in search of work in another region or even country.

Organizers of tourism activities together with local authorities should join forces in order to obtain international grants for the development of a specific regional tourist destination in conditions of chronic underfunding from the state.

Staycation tourism as a type of domestic tourism has every chance of rapid development in Ukraine. There are all the prerequisites for this - namely: tourist sites that can be interesting to visit, a sufficient number of accommodation facilities, developed transport infrastructure. In recent years, we have observed an increase in the number of domestic tourists arriving at tourist locations.

The opinion regarding the further development of domestic tourism is also supported by leading experts in the tourism sector, who, in particular, highlight the following trends in the tourism sector, which will overtake other preferences in the coming years:

- 1) Growing demand for individual and family tours, rather than group tours;
- 2) Short-term planning and booking due to the impossibility of planning something for a long time in advance (martial law does not allow making precise strategic plans);
- 3) The tourist location must be safe, have communication, shelter and be within relative reach of the tourist's home;
- 4) Growing demand for health tourism so that tourists can rest both soul and body.

According to the State Agency for the Development of Tourism in Ukraine [18], the amount of taxes paid by representatives of the tourism industry in the second year of the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine, i.e. in 2023, increased by 32 compared to the shocking year 2022 for the entire country and all industries % and amounted to more than 2 billion hryvnias. However, this figure has not yet reached the pre-war level and makes up 92 % of tax revenues from the work of enterprises involved in the tourism industry in 2021. In 2023, the tourism business paid over UAH 2.04 billion in taxes, which is 32 % more than in 2022 and 8 % less than in 2021. It should be taken into account that it is quite difficult to reach the pre-COVID and pre-war level of income due to a variety of objective and subjective reasons, from the departure of almost 10 million people abroad due to the war in Ukraine to the drop in the real solvency of the population and the impossibility of traveling and renting hotel rooms, which certainly, taking into account inflation, had to raise prices.

Most of all income was from hotels, i.e. accommodation facilities, and this is not surprising, because the lion's share of funds in a tourist trip is spent on overnight stays. In the second place in the overall structure of taxes are taxes from the activities of tourist operators, and this too cannot help but please, because it is the tourist operators who can provide the potential tourist with qualified informational support regarding the preparation for the trip, the conditions and rules of rest during the trip itself and the conditions for returning home after the end of the tour. When planning independently, a tourist, due to incompetence in the field of tourism, may not fully calculate potential risks, as a result of which he incurs additional costs or gets a bad mood and a spoiled vacation [18].

At the same time, popular tourist locations, as in previous years, were Kyiv – the capital of Ukraine, locations in the west of Ukraine, where the mountains are located, and locations in the Odesa region with the sea coast [18].

More than 99 % are tax revenues from accommodation facilities or from the services of travel agencies and tour operators. At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the direction that is quite developed in many countries of the world, but in Ukraine it is not developed at all, namely: caravanning.

Whether new or used, motorhomes on wheels must still be made affordable for the average Ukrainian. Accordingly, camping sites for tourist cars have not yet been set up en masse to receive tourists because there is no need for it, i.e., there is no demand for these services. If Ukraine launched a program of informational support for caravanning tourism that would help those who wish to convert their cars or trailers to spend the night in tourist campsites, interest in the part of the population would increase significantly. Undoubtedly, tourists who have tourist cars would be interested in tourist locations and the availability of campsites, and the demand would contribute to expanding the range of services provided by campsite organizers.

To attract tourists and get additional revenue for the budget, all regions try to offer tourists something interesting and useful for potential visitors. To do this, they organize both their own advertising company for these locations, as well as transfer information about potential tourist locations to the State Agency for Tourism Development to draw up an interactive tourist map with the designation of tourist magnets, that is, places that are potentially attractive to tourists.

This agency already has almost 200 tourist magnets of the country with a full description and 3-D video of the objects. Given the development of digital technologies, the modern consumer of any services, including tourist services, perceives information in the form of illustrations or short videos better than plain text. Therefore, photo and video reviews of tourist locations are necessary in today conditions to attract tourists.

As we know staycation costs take up the lion's share of tourists' expenses, so more attention should be paid to this issue. Under martial law, objectively, it will not be possible to attract investments in the development of tourism, because business may face a large number of risks. For supporting the accommodation of tourists in Ukraine the authors' suggestions are as follows:

- 1) to develop railway tourism (on narrow and wide gauge tracks, to offer tourists trips from 1 to 14 days, while tourists are expected to stay on the train, which will significantly reduce tourists costs and the burden on local hotels). Ukrzaliznytsia needs to attract investors under the terms of a concession for the development of railway routes (at the same time, the railway infrastructure must be modernized – the transition to Eurorail) and the rolling stock must be renewed – trains must be tourist ones, with comfortable beds);
- 2) in regions where there are tourist locations, if the number of hotels is insufficient, it is advisable for local authorities to allocate funds for the location of modular houses for tourists;
- 3) to oblige employers to annually provide employees with travel vouchers in the amount of ₾ 10,000, which can be sold only within the borders of Ukraine;
- 4) to grant government subsidies for the development of green technologies to enterprises that provide or plan to provide accommodation facilities for tourists (if these enterprises are subject to submit substantiated business plans);
- 5) local authorities should contact sister cities located abroad and ask for financial support for the development of domestic tourism in Ukraine;
- 6) The State Tourism Development Agency and other institutions of various levels should be more active in attracting financial foreign grants, both from large funds, and to try to

find a dialogue with small foreign business entities that would like to help developing domestic tourism in Ukraine.

Today, there are significant barriers that can hinder staycation tourism. Among them, the following can be distinguished:

- obsolescence of main funds of staycation facilities, i.e. the conditions for accommodation of tourists in hotels, hostels or other accommodation facilities are in most cases morally and physically outdated;
- in some regions where tourist accommodation facilities are located, there may be an unstable Internet connection, and for a modern tourist to have a constant connection is a very important point;
- most of the existing staycation tourist facilities are designed only for the stay of healthy people, and do not have various facilities that are necessary for tourists with special needs – from the absence of ramps or elevators to the absence of toilets for persons with disabilities;
- in the autumn-winter period, most accommodation facilities may have problems with the availability of electricity or heat due to Russian aggression against Ukrainian power plants and, as a result, the owners of accommodation facilities do not have alternative energy sources.

#### 4. Conclusions

It is necessary to emphasize once again the importance and necessity of tourist activity in a person's life, because tourist activity of a person, regardless of its duration, even if it is a day or even a month, benefits the physical and, accordingly, the mental. the health of a vacationer or traveler.

A person's motives for traveling can be different, among the main ones we can distinguish: economic (if a person has a surplus of funds that he/she can afford for this or that trip or vacation), cultural (learning the culture of his/her own people or other countries), natural (perhaps, a person dreams of making a trip to the mountains or chooses a beach vacation or a gastronomic tour, etc.), psychological (the desire and need to restore one's mental strength); among the additional motives, the following can be distinguished: the opportunity to relax with children, the opportunity to relax for the elderly, the opportunity to relax for people with disabilities, the opportunity to relax with pets, the opportunity to receive additional bonuses, for example, deepening the knowledge of a foreign language or mastering diving, etc.

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