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Russian to Open Tourist Offices Abroad as Tourism Sinks

By The Moscow Times

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Tourism from most Western countries to Russia sank between 15-20 percent in 2014 compared to 2013.

Russia's federal tourism agency will partner with private firms to establish national tourism offices across a number of foreign cities, news agency TASS reported Thursday, as political tensions over the Ukraine crisis see the number of Westerns tourists decline.

"This scheme is very important for us given the limited financial means of both Rostourism and other participants," TASS quoted deputy head of Rosturism Sergei Korneyev as saying.

Tourism from most Western countries to Russia sank between 15-20 percent in 2014 compared to 2013, newspaper Kommersant reported in April, citing data from Rosturism. The number of tourists overall to Russia fell 3 percent.

The first Russian national office was opened in Dubai on May 17, and will be joined later in the next four months by offices in Helsinki, Berlin, Beijing and Rome, Rostourism head Oleg

Safonov said Monday, TASS reported.

The office in Helsinki will be financed solely by its commercial activities while the offices in Berlin, Beijing and Rome will be provided with some financial support from the state, according to TASS.

Of the countries that will now have tourism offices, the number of people visiting Russia from Finland fell 27 percent, from Germany 8 percent, and from Italy 9 percent. Tourism from China, meanwhile, grew 10 percent.

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