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Russian Outbound Tourism Suffers Sharpest Drop Since 1998

By The Moscow Times

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The Russian outbound tourist flow decreased by 31.3 percent last year, the largest drop in 18 years, the Interfax news agency reported Wednesday, citing the Russian Tourism Industry Union.

A total of 12 million international trips were made by Russians in 2015, the Tourism Industry Union spokeswoman Irina Tyurina told Interfax, citing Rosstat state statistics data.

Before 2015, the sharpest drop in outbound tourism was registered in 1998, when the number of Russian tourists traveling abroad dropped by 24.4 percent when compared to the preceding year.

The Russian Tourism Industry Union believes 2015 was the most difficult year in the history of the private tourism business in Russia, which has made the tour companies in Russia considerably reduce the volume of their business.

In 2014, the outbound tourism in Russia shrank 4 percent compared to the previous year, Tyrina said.

The decline in the number of Russian tourists traveling abroad resulted from the weakening of the Russian currency as well as the ban on flights to Russia's two most popular international tourist destinations — Turkey and Egypt.

Among the hardest hit by the drop of tourist flow from Russia in 2015 was Indonesia, that saw 96.6 percent less Russian tourists, Tunisia that saw the 83 percent reduction in the number of Russian tourists and Dominican Republic that was visited by 82.5 percent less Russian travelers last year.

In Europe, the sharpest decline in the number of travelers from Russia - 48 percent- was registered in Greece. Greece is followed by Bulgaria, Spain and Croatia that saw Russian tourist flow drop by 41 percent in 2015, Interfax reported, citing data from The Russian Tourism Industry Union.

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