Europeans Turned Off Visiting Russia by High Costs, Low Awareness – Survey

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European tourists tend to avoid Russia. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Europeans avoid Russia because of low awareness of the country as a tourist destination and high costs of travel, according to a survey by the Moscow-based NAFI research center.

Two-thirds of those polled told NAFI they had not encountered media information about tourist attractions in Russia.

"The lack of information contributes to the spread of negative opinions among European tourists about Russia as an unsafe country for travelers," the research center said.

"Low awareness leads to a drop in interest in our country. Nearly every European talks about lack of interest in Russia as a travel destination," it added.

One-fifth of the European respondents who had plans to visit Russia said they were turned off by high travel expenses. Another 17% said they were attracted by "more interesting destinations," while 15% said Russia was too far away.

Among those who had already visited Russia, most respondents (37%) said they were turned off by underdeveloped infrastructure and the service sector. Another 15% criticized the local population's "unfriendliness" and 14% "danger in traveling," NAFI said.

NAFI said the survey was designed to analyze the experiences of foreign travelers in order to "develop an effective strategy for attracting European travelers" when coronavirus restrictions are eventually lifted.

NAFI carried out the survey among 2,106 nationals of 27 European countries in late 2019.

The Boston Consulting Group's 2019 survey obtained similarly negative responses, with international tourists saying they avoid visiting Moscow because they think it's too expensive and unsafe.