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**ROLE, PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOURIST
INFORMATION CENTER (TIC)
AT THE PROCESS OF CROSS BORDER,
INTERREGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWINING CITIES**

This article deals with the question of development and operation of tourist information centers (TIC) in the regions of Ukraine, their status and property. The purpose of the article - to highlight the role, place and importance of tourist information center (TIC) in the process of cross-border and inter-regional cooperation and in the framework of the Euro-regions, operating in Ukraine today, but also to pay attention to the relationship between the twining cities in these areas and to the existing projects, the existing problems and to propose solutions. Exploring the specified topic was done via using of Ukrainian Internet resources.

Keywords: tourism, cross-border cooperation of partners, tourist information centers (TIC).

Formulation of the problem in general and its relevance to the important scientific and practical tasks. Organization and development of tourist information centers (TIC) is an important component of successful development of tourism industry in Ukraine. Implementation of the above, at the state level, is particularly relevant today, when one of the main indicators of the dynamic development of tourism is its information and advertising support. In addition to the tasks at national level, involving the adaptation of national legislation (in this area) to international standards, support programs for tourism development, etc., useful and prioritized for the industry is definition of the role, place and importance of the tourist information centers. It is important also in the process of cross-border, inter-regional relations, which actively participates Ukraine and its cities with partners such as the European Union. Thus, qualitative part of this collaboration is to study the experience of Creation, formation and development of tourist

information centers, solving common problems of tourism development in the region and deepen mutually beneficial contacts between the people of neighboring countries.

Analysis of recent studies which deal with discuss of the problem. The issue of cross-border cooperation development is devoted at the works of such scholars as P. Belenky, Z. Varnaliya, M. Dolishniy, E. Kish, S. Kostiuk, M. Lendel, N. Lutsyshyn, P. Lutsyshyn, Y. Makogon, N. Mikula, A. Mokiy, O. Perederiy, B. Pyla, I. Studennikov, R. Fedan, O. Chmyr and others.

Problems and features of tourism development are reflected in the research of domestic and foreign scientists: V. Azar, K. Borisova, J. Bouzna, V. Hlavatska, L. Hryniv, M. nether, V. Evdokim – Menkyo, I. Zorina, Kvartalnova V., V. Kyfyak, Kotler, V. Kravtsiva, O. Lyubitsevoyi, J. Maykenza, A. Miller, W. Miklovdy, N. Nedashkivsky M. Nudelman, Pavlova, G. Papiryana, M. Pityulycha, V. Senin, S. Kharichkov, O. Shabliy, I. Shkola and others.

Defining of unsolved aspects of the problem. At present, development of the Ukrainian tourist information centers, as well as the formation of a national network at Ukraine, almost at an early stage not only of research, but also establishment. Instead, the particularities in application of the tourism product, make it impossible to talk about a full market in the tourism industry without the proper marketing, information and advertising support, including through the operation of tourist information centers. Therefore, analysis of the existing TICs, the study of the basic processes of their emergence and activity, determine the causes, such as slow development of TICs and develop recommendations for improving the work in this direction - is particularly relevant.

The purpose of the article is to describe the role, place and importance of tourist information center (TIC) in the process of cross-border and inter-regional cooperation and in the framework of the Euro-regions, operating in Ukraine today, but also pay attention to the relationship between cities and partners on these issues and point to existing projects, existing problems and propose solutions.

The main material and presentation of results.

Role of tourist information centers in the field of tourism, especially in the modern world - cannot be overemphasized. The role

played by these structures, in fact - is the key to advanced, in terms of - communication in society. TICs, definitely - occupy practically the key place in the part of advertising and informing both with search and organizational activities of the tourism industry, in fact, in every developed tourist countries. As a European country - Ukraine has a unique opportunity not only to learn considerable experience in neighboring European countries (establishment of TICs in which started with the integration of the former socialist bloc countries to the European Union), but also use help, which often offer programs and projects carried out during the cross-border and interregional cooperation with Ukraine in the framework of the Euro-regions, with the cooperation partner cities and more.

No doubt that for Ukraine is positive use not only the idea of integration of the continent "from above", by combining states around common standards and criteria, but also experience a "bottom up" - through the formation of European regions and promoting cross-border cooperation in general as a model partnership respective territories for their effective socio-economic and cultural-humanitarian development [1]. In this context it should also consider the establishment and functioning in Ukraine - Tourist Information Centres (TIC). Relevance of the establishment and operation of various kinds of tourist information and marketing and advertising agencies, including networks of TICs - for Ukraine is extremely important, because it is a member of a number of projects, programs and institutions: cross-border, inter-regional, European scale, many Ukrainian cities are participants of agreements with the twinning cities from the European Union, the World and the CIS countries.

Illustrative is the fact that each administrative subdivision of Ukraine, which is a member and / or participates in cross-border cooperation, can be attributed to the resort and recreational or cross-border tourist regions: Transcarpathia region, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Bucovina etc). Moreover, in practice, in development programs or each of the four European regions with regions of Ukraine ("Carpathian Euroregion", "Bug", "Lower Danube" and "Upper Prut") - find items relating to tourism development, the use of recreational opportunities in the region , preservation and protection of nature and environment and so on.

Thus, for the implementation of the "Programme on the Euro integrative border cooperation and interregional relations of Odessa region for 2008" for practical participation in the activity of Euroregion "Lower Danube" at the Odessa Regional Council established an information center on CBC database for environmental protection, tourism, trade. In line is the establishment together with Romanian and Moldavian parties information center "Euroregion" Lower Danube ". In addition, it is enhanced the activity of Euroregion in such areas as tourism (organization of "vine" tours and "green" tourism, joint travel forums and conferences) [2].

Such actions are urgent and appropriate, through activation, in particular, of cross-border institutions in the field of tourism cooperation. Thus, the decision of the Council of the Euroregion "Upper Prut", among the proposals regarding the implementation of priority pilot projects in CBC is a point of cross-border tourism infrastructure (including folklore, cultural, ethnic, religious, rural, environmental ...) as one of the most effective ways to use the unique landscape and recreational potential, increase employment and rapid involvement of European experience and credits as well - the most favorable for the development of business cross-border transport links [3]. One of the main areas of Euroregion "Lower Danube" towards tourism - is to assist in establishing contacts between travel agencies at Euroregion to create a joint tourism network [4].

In order to develop recreational infrastructure and promotion of cross-border tourist routes Ivano-Frankivsk prepared for inclusion in the "State program for development of cross-border cooperation for 2007-2010" project: "Creating Interstate geographic information system (GIS), environmental security protected areas of Ukraine and Romania to develop tourism industry and environmental sanitation and the Hutsul Maramures". Since July 2007 the Tourist Association of Ivano-Frankivsk is implementing the project "Creation of cross-border network for development and promotion of tourism and investment opportunities in the Ivano-Frankivsk region of Ukraine and Maramures Romania." It is funded by the European Community under the Neighbourhood Programme "Romania - Ukraine" with the aim to create favorable conditions for development of tourism between the border areas in Ivano-Frankivsk region and Maramures County, which will

allow residents of mountainous areas receive income without much investment [5].

However, the programs of any of the Euro-regions that are currently in Ukraine - does not set out to create, or at least assist in the creation of tourist information centers (TICs). Among the reasons - probably is that creating TICs, at least at the beginning of Euro-regions, was irrelevant, because practically there were no users of such services. On the other hand, projects and programs carried out in the framework of Euro-regions are somewhat ambitious and strategically scale, which is practically "lost" marketing and information projects in tourism (which is essentially TICs), which, however, is extremely needed for development, such as tourism industry in Ukraine. Moreover, along with urgency unification performance on cross-border, inter-regional cooperation, Euroregions and relationships between partner municipalities or, for example, statistical data such need arises and in undertaking work on the organization, creation, and development, including in organizing already existing - tourist information centers (TICs) in Ukraine. Therefore, solving the above issues through the use of cross-border, inter-regional cooperation, as well as in the framework of the Euro-regions, operating in Ukraine - is relevant and appropriate.

From our perspective, it is important to the creation, development and operation of tourist information centers (TICs) and in the relationship between the twinning cities, both in the country as also from abroad. First of all it concerns European cities, which already operate similar institutions, as part of the tourism infrastructure and willing and able to provide methodological advice and practical assistance to its partners in Ukraine. That such cooperation can not only share experiences, but also solves a number of issues, such as the expansion of local TICs, can unify similar service and services, or even promotes close relationships between such centers by creating a grid TICs.

It should be noted that relations between Ukrainian and foreign partner cities are governed by Protocol number 2 to Madrid Convention (1998). The provisions of this protocol is the norm that international relations can enter, depending on national legislation, not only regions that are hierarchically below the central government, but also other

territorial entities and government bodies at lower levels and are not necessarily adjacent areas (cross-border cooperation) [6].

In this regard, noteworthy examples of cooperation agreements between the partner cities: Uzhhorod and Svalyava (Ukraine) and the Czech Lipa, Jihlava and Židlochovice (Czech Republic), respectively. Practically in each of the protocols of intentions or cooperative agreements is a clause providing information and guidance and other assistance from the Czech cities to create tourist information centers in Ukrainian cities? On November 29, 2000, signed an agreement on cooperation between Uzhgorod and the Czech Lipa, where one of the items envisaged cooperation in science, culture and tourism [7]. In June 2006, signed a protocol on cooperation between cities Svalyava (Ukraine) and Židlochovice (Czech Republic), from one of which was provided "to facilitate the speedy development of programs to share with tourists and vacationers. City Židlochovice consider their opportunities to provide information and guidance to Svalyava help in creating its own information and tourist center" [8].

These kinds of memoranda, protocols and agreements on cooperation with partner cities, not only in Europe but also, for example, from far: China, Israel, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc. can boast of almost every city or town in Ukraine. For information about the list of municipalities hosted almost every web resource of a Ukrainian city. However, the agreement between the parties, generally for the most part: munitsypalino-economic, cultural, cognitive or mass sporting relations or exchange and, very rarely - in tourism, not to mention specific points. It is interesting in this regard may be an international project "Partnership of small cities of Ukraine and small cities of Visegrad countries (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary)", which carries Institute of Society Transformation, with the active support of the International Visegrad Fund [9]. However, this is a topic of another study.

It should be noted that the interest parties agreed not always limited to only promote the creation of a purely tourist attraction, but also other information structures urgency in the occurrence of which was dictated by the needs of life. In February 2010, during a meeting between the Czech delegation led by David Pavlatoyu - Consul General of the Czech Republic in Lviv, in February 2010, and heads mayor of

Uzhgorod, with the head of the Czech charity fund "Visa" - Zdeněk Kadlec was agreed to establish an information center CBR [10]. You agree that specified information center although not strictly a tourist, but the data that will be accumulated in this institution will no doubt be used for the needs of the tourism industry in the region. Thus, already in March 2010, the leadership of Jihlava, on your own website, informed the public about the new Eastern partners - Uzhgorod and be filled with hope for cooperation in the areas: exchange of experiences, mutual residence, exhibitions and tourism development [11] . Agreement is cooperation between communities Uzhgorod Ukrainian and Czech Jihlava, was concluded in October 2010 [12].

In contracts and approving programs for tourism development between subjects, such as - municipal community, there is help in the creation of tourist information centers on the initiative of individual programs of the European Union and by a number of international institutions operating in Ukraine. Thus, in July 2006, started a new project in the framework of the EU "neighborhood Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine INTERREG III A / TACIS», entitled "Creating regional tourist information center in the Transcarpathian region." The project was implemented Ukrainian-Hungarian Regional Development in cooperation with the General Directorate for European Integration, Foreign Relations and Tourism Transcarpathian Regional Administration and partners from the region Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (Hungary). New Tourist Information Center opened November 17, 2006 in Coastal [13]. In late 2009, the Center of the Ukrainian-Hungarian Regional Development Support CJSC Corvinus (Hungary) began a project that involved the creation of a tourist information center in Transcarpathia to placing it in the regional center. The project was formed database that contains information about tourist organizations and the services provided by them. Opening the tourist information center and showroom "Treasures of Transcarpathia" held December 19, 2009 in Uzhgorod. Today TIC cooperates with other information centers and agencies from Hungary and Ukraine, with local and foreign tourists and tour operators [14].

Similar processes take place in Crimea. So, in Sevastopol in November 2010 with the support of the international project "Local Investment and National Competitiveness U.S. (USAID LINC)" at the

Tourist Information Centre of the city of Sevastopol was the seminar "International standards of tourist information centers" [15]. Noteworthy about that for a decade of experience, this utility company, recently had prepared thousands of high quality guides. In June 2011, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Ukraine have joined forces to create a tourist information center in the town of Bakhchisaray (Crimea), under the "Local Investment and National Competitiveness." At the same time, USAID has provided equipment and training of staff undertook center. The Center established bilingual information terminal with interactive map Bakhchisarai, which helps travelers plan itineraries for exploring the city. Visitors can also get information about hotels, restaurants, and historical sites Bakhchisarai. Similar terminals with touch screen also installed at the railway and bus station. Within targeted assistance core sectors Crimea project helps enterprises tourism industry to identify and implement new opportunities to extend the tourist season [16]. Overall, the entire region has just over a dozen tourist information centers, most of which are located in major cities of autonomy. Typically, the founders of TICs, acting municipal authorities, local communities, utilities cities [17] or NGOs, but not the subject of tourism businesses and their associations. However, most of these centers do not even have their own web page [18]. This is due to several reasons, including - no need for such, due to the limited service, purely tourist services offered through enough and organized excursions and spa area since Soviet times. However, realizing the lack thereof, resort information center under the auspices of the Ministry of Resorts and Tourism Ministry, in June 2011, the airport "Simferopol" opened an information center [19].

Good opportunity to enhance the work of creating tourist information centers definitely should be considered Ukraine's preparations for Euro 2012 organization. Thus, for the comfort of Kyiv will create a network of 20 tourist information centers in places the crowd of fans. In the city of Donetsk, the newly established tourist information center, will organize excursions, services of guides and more. At the airport, railway and bus stations and the central streets of the city will implement a network of 40 interactive information terminals. The project "Creation of tourist information infrastructure in Lviv" booklets published in four languages (English, Polish, Russian,

Ukrainian) and pocket cards that will be distributed free of charge via the Infocenter [20]. Overall, the Euro 2012 will open 49 such centers in Kiev, Donetsk, Lviv and Kharkiv, which was registered in the State target program. For now, as informs Information Centre "Ukraine-2012" - operates 61 tourist centers, though not all of them conform to European standards. Instead, the State Tourism and Resorts provides two possible paths network TICs: creating a "reference" private entrepreneurs or local budgets. In the first case the financing (providing logistics and payment of staff) TIC will be done at the expense of entrepreneurs who provide essential services, list, rules, terms and quality of which is regulated by the central authority. The state provides all centers of information products that will be allocated some funds from the budget [21]. Unfortunately, it should be noted that the relatively centralized, tourist information centers in Ukraine actively created only in connection with the Euro-2012 and then only actually four Ukrainian cities of Kiev, Donetsk, Lviv, Kharkiv. In other cities of Ukraine of TICs not a system, even with the adoption of Ukraine, already mentioned, the European Championship. This is despite the fact that Ukraine joined the top three countries that tourists must visit (in NBA) in 2012 [22].

Thus, it should be noted that despite the emergence, especially in recent years, tourist information centers, their number in Ukraine - is negligible, and, certainly - not enough, especially considering the needs of the tourism industry and in comparison with others, such as European countries. This is despite the fact that the number of foreign visitors only, for example, in 2010 slightly decreased to less than 20 million [23]. Thus, the State Service for Tourism and Resorts stated that in 2009, 20.7 million visited Ukraine entry (foreign) tourists, up 18%, or 4.6 million less than in 2008, "[24], which is the highest figure in the CIS. For comparison, for example, in 2010, the Russian Federation visited, only 2 million foreigners, against 12 million, vacationing abroad [25]. However, this is subject of other studies.

Anyway, it is obvious that in Ukraine, in the event of need tourist information centers originated with the formation and development, with domestic tourism (domestic tourism) and consequently the need for such, especially - in the tourism industry. This is due to the much larger territory of Ukraine (unlike a number of Central European countries,

where there TIC mainly to inform foreign tourists) that allows you to organize familiarization visits to other regions in the regime, such as "Weekend" and the need for recreation and resort rehabilitation, for example, residents of Central and Eastern parts of Ukraine in health spa vacation, it is in the South (Crimea, Odesa region) and Western (Lviv, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk region) regions. Thus, in 2009, the number of holidaymakers in Crimea totaled 5731.0 thousand people (calculated by the method NAPKS), while in sanatorium establishments and tourist complexes - rested 1,263,900 people. And despite the fact that out of 132 workers tourist complexes of the Crimea, the occupancy rate was - 21.5% (29.2% - 2008) [26]. Instead, it is indicative that the trend growth (in percent) in the number of tourists, for example, Ternopil, Chernivtsi and Ivano-Frankivsk regions where growth in 2001 was 2% in 2002 - 20%, in 2003 - by 36% in 2005 - 57%, in 2006 - 73%, in 2007 - 98%! The number of tourists increased in 2008 compared with 2000 to 8 times [27]. And this is without taking into account data on Lviv and Transcarpathia, one of the major areas - recreation and tourism in the Carpathians.

One of the main "causes" the revival and development of domestic tourism, can be considered a fact and the introduction of visas for citizens of Ukraine - potential travelers from its nearest, neighboring European countries (2000 - Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2003 - Poland and Hungary, 2004 year - Romania and Bulgaria) and, logically, reducing attendance Ukrainian, such as the European Union. Furthermore, the abolition, from Ukraine unilaterally visas for most countries in Europe, USA, Canada, Japan (in 2005) and for the citizens of Romania and Bulgaria (in 2007), contributed tangible increase the flow of inbound tourism (inbound tourism) and, consequently, interest in domestic travel and tours, and logical information needs by region, facilities and amenities or treatment of such.

That the above trends, especially those specifically related to tourism and recreation in Ukraine, and ascertain a number of cross-border and inter-regional programs and projects, including Euroregions to participate in Ukraine are appended. However, assistance or help creating TICs in Ukraine, it is through cross-border and inter-regional programs and projects, including Euroregions unfortunately are over - mediocre. And despite the fact that foreign participants latter have not

only extensive experience in the creation, development, categorization, etc. tourist information centers, but no visa barriers for most European citizens and, consequently, cannot see the benefit and need information on regions, facilities and amenities in Ukraine. Especially useful for Ukraine, can be categorized already existing, local TICs, assistance which may give one or another cross-border or interregional program / project, including the Euroregion. The experience TICs categorization, such as the Czech Republic, in detail highlighted in the publication The establishment and development of tourism in the Czech Republic and its expediency of its use in Ukraine [28].

However, with the expansion of TICs in Ukraine characteristic is that a large part of them not only prepares its Web page, but also trying to duplicate your web-site on one or more world languages, which significantly extends not only information in particular, the possibility of tourist areas, but also recreational and medicinal and other features of a region, in general. Moreover, with the emergence of a number of tourist centers, logically there is a need and feasibility of a co-operation of their activities and even combine in a kind of network. Thus, in 2011, in the Transcarpathian region held a similar association and a network of 14 tourist information centers, whose representatives signed a corresponding agreement between [29].

Thus, the origin, formation and development of a network of tourist information centers in the country is under certain circumstances dictated, usually internal conditions for tourism development in Ukraine. The second condition and difference of Ukrainian TICs be called, active assistance in this process, typically by a number of cross-border and inter-regional programs and projects, including the Euroregion and agreements on cooperation between Ukrainian and foreign partner cities. The third features Ukrainian TICs should include the acceleration of the latter, in preparation for the Euro in Ukraine - 2012.

Existing problems and their solutions.

It is important to point out some problems concerning the origin, formation and functioning, Ukrainian tourist information centers.

One of them is - lack of tourism industry in Ukraine, which is almost 20 years worked practically at checkout citizens abroad is carried outbound travel (outbound tourism). This was due to several reasons,

first of all: politics (during the USSR) limited out citizens abroad neglect (due to cessation of funding, privatization, etc.), or lack of appropriate infrastructure tourism industry in the country and, because of the rather favorable, various offers operators foreign tourism (which quickly and quite skillfully used the travel agencies, tour operators and tour agencies of Ukraine). And even in no way contributed to the development of domestic tourism, the introduction in 2005 mindless, 20% VAT rate on inbound tourism, which significantly reduced the entry tourist flows and led to fewer companies involved in inbound tourism, shadowing their activity.

However, as market saturation foreign proposals compatriot, over time, began to search, and found - to meet your requirements for quality rest and recreation and proposals, particularly on decent sanitation, directly, in Ukraine. However, at this time, the organizers of the reception of tourists and domestic tourists (hotels, motels, farms, homes, motels, tourist centers, etc., providers of transportation services, operators: travel agencies, tour operators and tour agencies, etc.) to fully feel the need Tourist information of their activities, including using modern means of communications and information, including unsurpassed opportunities worldwide network - the Internet. Instead, members of the tourism market in Ukraine, today, are experiencing significant difficulties in their activities and tourist information centers in particular. First, is the lack of a systematic approach to developing the network TICs Ukraine, through misunderstanding of their importance and relevance for the development of tourism industry, the lack of state-level legislative and regulatory framework and the experience of creating and running TICs, lack / absence of specialists and / or low level of human resources Related to this issue in the regions; neglect and misunderstanding of the real possibilities of such centers at the local level as well - relevance and present challenges for such institutions, lack / inadequate care (for example, methodological advice, privileges, facilities, privileges, etc.) or financing (co funding) from local communities, municipal associations and the state in general. An example is the fact that almost every European city or region, on its website, is not primarily a place, city information, or regional tourist resource, usually - center.

To solve the above problems, today, is to use a number of cross-border and regional cooperation between, opportunities and projects agreements between partner cities, and if necessary - to supplement the above programs, projects and agreements on the following items. In addition, a number of proposals should be reduced to the concerted efforts periodically prescribed in the State program of development of cross-border cooperation with the measures envisaged in the State program of tourism development. Separate item worth noting not only the establishment of the national network of cross-border information centers, incidentally - regional information and promotional structures [30], but also tourist information centers, using models of public-private partnerships and international technical assistance, local communities, municipal associations and state. Moreover, given the importance of information-analytical support of practically every project on cross-border, inter-regional cooperation, implementation of international technical assistance work of the Euro-regions, as well as to develop and successfully functioning - tourist information centers, we must recognize the importance of exclusive to organize Web sites for each of these. The same, almost - fully applies and binary agreements between partner cities. In addition, it is essential to fill the newly created activity: Kiev, Donetsk, Lviv and Kharkiv TICs, "a specific event" - Euro 2012, after the completion of the latter.

In addition, issues of cooperation in the tourism sector in general and the creation and development of tourist information centers, in particular, is important for Ukraine - the maximum use of the capabilities and experience of international, inter-regional and other institutions. Noteworthy programs, projects, grants, etc., such as the Visegrad countries (Visegrad Group), Foundation (International Visegrad Fund), Central European Initiative - CEI (Central European Initiative), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - OECD) and others.

The novelty of this study is to analyze the cooperation between the municipalities in the tourism sector and the establishment and operation of tourist information centers in particular. In addition, studies favored the emergence and development TICs and networks of, for example - in the Transcarpathian region, with a number of international

institutions, such as: cross-border and interregional cooperation projects and agreements between partner cities and more.

Subjects may be useful not only for tourism professionals, or a wide range of professionals working in the field of tourism, but also for representatives of legislative initiatives and other governmental bodies in Ukraine.

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