

Diaspora tourism: needs analysis in Latvia

University of Latvia

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Outline

Diaspora....

Expert interviews

Needs

Lessons learned

Diaspora

Diaspora implies both a historically embedded social formation of quasi-permanent residents and their descendants abroad, and also a **‘community of practice... an idiom, a stance, a claim’** (Brubaker 2005: 12).

Diasporans are, by virtue of the definition of diaspora, oriented towards the improvement of their homeland, and therefore disposed to make a contribution to its development.

Latvians, non Latvians, relatives and friends, affinity diaspora, network and affective economy

Expert interviews

14 interviews (15 respondents): municipalities, hotels, services, manor-houses, experts in tourism policy and practice etc.

Semi-structured interviews, needs analysis

- **Willingness to work with diaspora:** state/municipal/private BUT lack of information, especially about travel habits of recent emigrants
- **State branding, image. Question of the Eastern Europe**
- **High quality souvenirs, printed materials etc.**

Events

- Visiting relatives and friends mobility
- Large-scale cultural events, gatherings (towns)
- Conferences, large-scale events
- Heritage tourism (manor-houses, graveyards); genealogy tourism
- Medical tourism
- Specialised events, e.g., wedding, birthdays, family reunion
- «Sveika, dzimtene!», «Heritage Latvia»

Sectoral

Transport

- Airlines
- Ferries
- Private cars
- Busses
- Rental cars in Latvia

Other

- Hotels
- Museums
- Shops (niche economy)
- Restaurants, bars
- Real estate

Needs: Summary

- Policy and infrastructure (e.g. airlines, routes to important destination countries, high quality systems)
- Positioning Latvia as a centre, at least for diaspora communities in Europe
- Linkages between local tourism and diaspora tourism: spending vacations in Latvia
- Data, Statistical information
- Needs for certain services
- Forecasts, dynamics in recent emigrant communities
- Class, taste differences
- Affinity diaspora

Lessons learned

- Individualised approach
- State's approach
- Economic gain and human value
- Broader links to return migration
- Broader understanding that we have to think about tourism differently



Latvijas Universitātes
Diasporas un migrācijas
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Thank you!

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