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A General Overview of Turkish Tourism

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Abstract

International tourist movements are increasing every year and tourism revenues are increasing accordingly. The effort to get more shares from this growing market brings competition. When the tourism movements in the country were examined, the revival of the tourism movements took place only in the 1980s, with a record increase in the number of tourists and tourism revenues between 1983-1989. As of 2017 Turkey has regained its sixth world status which it lost in 2016. The most improvement in the number and the ratio of the tourists who came to our country between 2014 and 2018 are from the former Soviet Union and B.D.T. countries. From these countries, Russia has become the country that sends the highest number of tourists to Turkey with 4 715 438 tourists in 2017, compared to 2016 with an increase of 444.35%. It is thought that our country will be among the top 5 countries in the world by giving more opportunity to the promotion of tourism places, and working on alternative tourism places. Especially, it is predicted that the number of foreign visitors will increase greatly by increasing the number of airports constructed in various places of our country, including Airport 3 in Istanbul. The investments made for the development and spread of the tourism in our country will increase the number of tourists coming in and it is thought that it will make a big contribution in the economic sense as well. In this research, it is aimed to present proposals for the development of tourism by examining the development of Turkish tourism in recent years in this direction.

Keywords: Tourism, Turkish Tourism, World Tourism, Alternative Tourism, Economy

[\(Extended English summary is at the end of this document\)](#)

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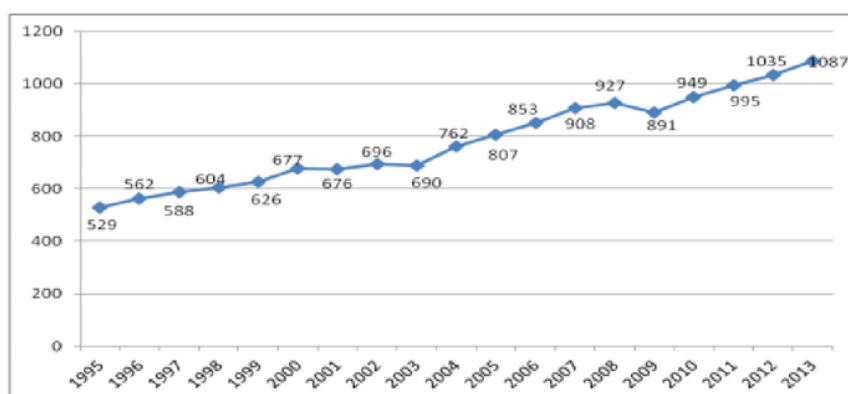
9 1. Introduction

10 Together with being a multidimensional concept tourism, in the most general sense can
11 be described as people's leaving the places where they live and going to domestic and foreign
12 regions temporarily for the purposes such as culture, rest, h⁷th, sports, hunting, sightseeing,
13 congress, recognition of other societies and communities (Soykan, 2004: 6, Kahraman and
14 *Türkey*, 2006: 1, Doğanay, 2001: 15, Özgüç, 2003:3, Sezgin, 1995:4, Ablak, Dikmenli and Çetin,
15 2014: 172).

16 Tourism mobility, has begun to develop especially in Western societies as today's
17 developed countries after ¹¹ World War II. With the increasing importance of economic
18 importance, it has become one of the fastest growing sectors. Today, in many developed and
19 developing countries tourism is seen as one of the most important sources of cultural
20 development, promotion of values, economic growth and development (Bahar, 2006).

21 International tourist movements are increasing every year and tourism revenues are
22 increasing accordingly. The effort to get more shares from this growing market brings
23 competition. In order to attract more tourists and increase tourism revenues, it has become
24 compulsory to turn to new market⁶ (Yıldırım, Gülsün, 2014,1). By showing a steady growth
25 within 60 years, tourism has been one of the fastest growing sectors in the world economy.
26 Despite the periodic shocks, international tour⁵ arrivals have increased almost without
27 interruption. International tourist arrivals reached 25 million in 1950, 278 million in 1980, 528
28 million in 1995 and 1,035 million in 2012 (Yıldırım, 2014:3; Sarı and Yıldırım, 2015). This
29 situation is shown in graphic 1.

30 ¹⁰
31 **Graphic 1: International Tourist Arrivals Over the World**



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33 Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2013)

34 Although political uncertainties, economic troubles and security concerns all around the
35 world are causing short-term declines in some regions, it is observed that travel figures all over
36 the world are increasingly seen to date and it is expected to continue in the same way for the rest
37 of the world. The total number of people traveling in 2030 is expected to reach 1.8 billion (URL-
38 3). This can be shown as proof of how important tourism is in the world economy.

39 Turkey's taking place in a location that combines European and African continents
40 enables it to host various civilizations from the first periods of the history. Because of this
41 reason Turkey has a wide history and cultural richness. As well as the historical and cultural
42 richness, because of some factors like the diversity of landforms surrounded by sea on three sides

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43 makes Turkey a favorite attraction in terms of tourism. However, when the tourism movements
44 in the country were examined, the revival of the tourism movements took place only in the
45 1980s, with a record increase in the number of tourists and tourism revenues between 1983-1989.
46 (Çımat ve Bahar, 2003: 2; Yıldırım, 2014: 6) This has contributed to a large foreign exchange
47 inflow in the period when the country has experienced economic difficulties, thus contributing to
48 the reduction of foreign exchange demand, the reduction of unemployment, and the
49 improvement of the payments balance sheet (Çımat ve Bahar, 2003: 1).

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2. Types of Tourism

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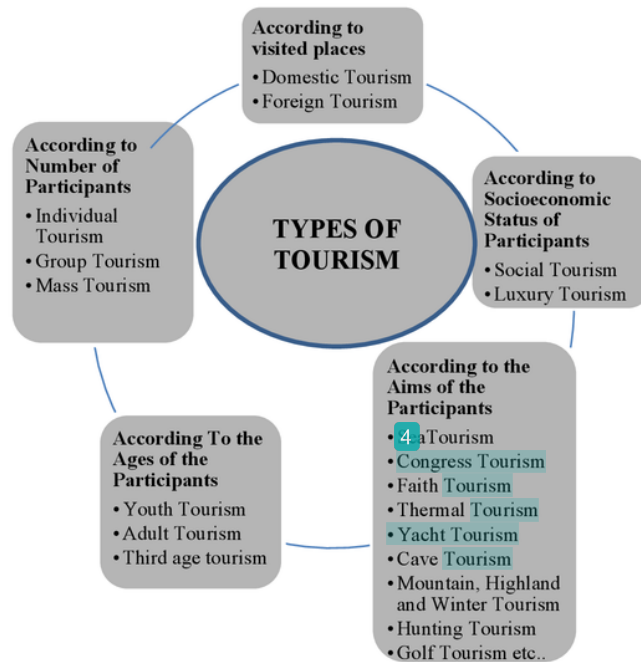
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Figure 1: Types of Tourism

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65 Source: (Sezer, 2014: 24).

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Ministry of Culture and Tourism classify the term tourism as follows: health tourism, winter tourism, winter tourism, cave tourism, cave tourism, hunting tourism, congress tourism, golf tourism, yacht tourism, silk road, faith tourism, air sports, mountaineering, river and rafting

69 tourism, underwater diving and 3d watching (URL-1). Our country has unique opportunities in
70 terms of tourism types such as alternative tourism (health and thermal tourism, winter sports,
71 mountain and nature tourism, rural and eco tourism, congress and fair tourism, golf tourism etc.)
72 as well as coastal tourism in our country. However, this potential can not be used in a rational
73 sense (URL-2).

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3. An Overview of World Tourism

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Table 1: Top Tourist Territory Country Rankings

ÜLKELER / NATIONALITIES	2016	2017	DEĞİŞİM CHANGE
1. FRANSA/ FRANCE	82,6	88,9	7,6
2. İSPANYA/ SPAIN	75,6	82,2	8,7
3. ABD/ USA	75,6	72,9	-3,6
4. ÇİN / CHINA	59,3	59,3	0
5. İTALYA/ ITALY	52,4	57,8	10,3
6. TÜRKİYE/ TURKEY	30,3	39,9	31,7
7. MEKSİKA/ MEXICO	34,9	39,3	12,6
8. İNGİLTERE/ ENGLAND	35,8	38,7	8,1
9. ALMANYA/ GERMANY	35,6	37,6	5,6
10. TAYLAND/ TAHİLAND	32,6	34,7	6,4
/ WORLD	1235	1322	7

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Resource: URL3

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As of 2017 Turkey has regained its sixth world status which it lost in 2016. According to a report published by the World Tourism Organization, in 2016 as far declined 10 Turkey, through the rise again in 2017 and moved back to 6th place. As a result, expectations for 2018 are higher in Turkish tourism, which closed 2017 with an increase of around 30%. The average 30% increase in arriving reservations is raising the expectations that the growth rate in 2017 will continue to increase in 2018 as well. According to this, 36 million tourists are expected to visit Turkey and the tourism incomes are foreseen to be 30 billion US dollars by increasing 25% in 2018 (URL-3). Although we are in the 6th place in the world in total number of tourists in the same rapport, based on the income from tourists, we are in the lower order. This situation also emerges as a separate phenomenon that needs to be considered, analyzed and therefore, solutions must be produced.

102 **4. Tourism and Economic Reflections in Turkey**103 **Table 2:** Comparison of Foreigners who came to Turkey between 2014-2017 based on
104 nationality

Comparison of Foreigners who came to Turkey between 2014-2017 based on nationality (January-December)											
NATIONALITY	YEARS				NATIONALITY RATE(%)				CHANGE RATE(%)		
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014 2015	2015 2016	2016 2017
German	5 250 036	5 580 792	3 890 074	3 584 653	14,2	15,4	15,3	11,0	6,30	-30,30	-7,85
English	2 600 360	2 512 139	1 711 481	1 658 715	,06	,93	,75	,12	3,39	31,87	3,08
Greek	830 841	755 414	593 150	623 705	2,26	2,08	2,34	1,92	-9,08	-21,48	5,15
Bulgarian	1 693 591	1 821 480	1 690 766	1 852 867	4,60	5,03	6,67	5,72	7,55	-7,18	9,59
Total of Europe	19 443 455	19 102 424	13 161 876	13 148 492	52,7	52,7	51,92	40,5	-1,75	-31,1	-0,10
American	784 917	798 787	459 493	329 257	2,13	2,20	1,81	1,02	1,77	-42,48	-28,3
Japanese	170 550	104 847	44 695	49 323	0,46	0,29	0,18	0,15	38,52	-57,37	10,35
Korean	248 910	228 694	106 904	120 622	0,68	0,63	0,42	0,37	-8,12	-53,25	12,83
Total of others OECD	1 591 453	1 628 522	851 248	688 545	4,3	4,49	3,36	2,12	-2,27	-47,73	-19,1
Azerbaijani	657 684	602 488	606 223	765 514	1,79	1,66	2,39	2,36	-8,39	0,62	26,28
Russian	4 479 049	3 649 003	866 256	4 715 438	12,1	10,0	3,42	14,5	18,53	-76,26	444,35
Georgian	1 755 289	1 911 832	2 206 266	2 438 730	4,76	5,27	8,70	7,52	8,92	15,40	10,54
Ukrainian	657 051	706 551	1 045 043	1 284 735	1,78	1,95	4,12	3,96	7,53	47,91	22,94
Total of CIS	8 850 923	8 134 242	5 670 686	10 618 403	24,0	22,4	22,3	32,7	-8,10	-30,29	87,25
Libyan	267 501	234 762	72 01	99 395	0,73	0,65	0,28	0,31	12,24	-69,32	38,02
Algerian	160 052	171 873	176 233	213 333	0,43	0,47	0,70	0,66	6,87	2,54	21,05
Tunisian	100 612	102 341	100 185	111 627	0,27	0,28	0,40	0,34	1,68	-2,11	11,42
Egyptian	108 762	100 040	94 871	100 971	0,30	0,28	0,37	0,31	-8,01	-5,17	6,43
Total of Africa	888 107	885 887	666 733	794 252	2,41	2,44	2,63	2,45	-0,25	-24,74	19,13
Iraqi	857 246	1 094 144	420 831	896 876	2,33	3,02	1,66	2,77	27,63	-61,54	113,1
Arabian	341 786	450 674	530 410	651 170	0,93	1,24	2,09	2,01	31,86	17,69	22,77
Iranian	1 590 664	1 700 385	1 665 160	2 501 948	4,32	4,69	6,57	7,72	6,90	-2,07	50,25
Total of Asia	5 708 656	6 160 925	4 787 777	6 922 910	15,5	17,0	18,89	21,3	7,92	-22,29	44,60

Total of North America	14 666	17 719	13 368	15 597	0,04	0,05	0,05	0,05	20,8	-24,56	16,67
Total days of America	202 520	248 969	153 902	158 666	0,55	0,69	0,61	0,49	22,9	-38,18	3,10
Total of America	227 614	277 819	174 899	182 698	0,62	0,77	0,69	0,56	22,0	-37,05	16,67
Total of foreigners	36 837 900	36 244 632	25 352 213	32 410 034	100	100	100	100	-1,61	-30,05	27,84

105 Resource: URL-4

106 When Table 2 is examined based on the nationality, there has been a decrease in the
 107 number and proportion of European tourists coming to our country; especially there is a surge in
 108 demand in B.D.T. countries and Asian countries, Germany, which has the highest number of
 109 tourists to our country, has lost this advantage to Russia in 2017, and the decline in the number
 110 of German tourists since 2015 is significant.

111 According to 2015 data, the number of German tourists coming to Turkey was
 112 5,580,792, and in 2016 this number dropped to 3.890.074, and the decline in the number of
 113 German tourists has been -30.30%. The decrease in the number of German tourists, which
 114 declined to 3 234.653 in 2017, was -7.85% compared to 2016. Since 2014, there has been a
 115 decline in the number of tourists coming to Turkey from all European countries. The number of
 116 European tourists, declined from 1944 to 455 in 2014 to 13 148 492 in 2017 and a decrease of
 117 32.37% was detected.

118 The most improvement in the number and the ratio of the tourists who came to our
 119 country between 2014 and 2018 are from the former Soviet Union and B.D.T. countries. From
 120 these countries, Russia has become the country that sends the highest number of tourists to
 121 Turkey with 4 715 438 tourists in 2017, compared to 2016 with an increase of 444.35%. As it is
 122 known, the shooting of a Russian plane in the borders of our country on 24th November 2015
 123 caused tension between the two countries and the number and ratio of Russian tourists who
 124 came to our country suddenly decreased due to this tension in 2016. The number of Russian
 125 tourists, from 3 649 003 in 2015, dropped to 866 256 by 2016, and the tourist rate of 2016-2015
 126 declined by -76.26. Moreover, falling oil prices, sanctions imposed on Russia, and subsequent
 127 problems with Ukraine, caused a major crush on the Russian economy and this caused a huge fall
 128 in the consumption potential of Russian citizens. For Turkey, these events led to a sharp decline
 129 in the number of Russian tourists visiting our country experienced in Russia, one of the most
 130 important markets, in 2015 and 2016 were also negatively affect the Turkish tourism. Following
 131 the Turkey's downing of Russian warplane, Turkey was totally banned for the Russians during the
 132 period -nearly 1 year-(URL-3). The number of Russian tourists who visited our country with the
 133 revision of the bilateral relations reached record levels again in 2017. Here we can see that
 134 political relations directly affect tourism.

135 The number of tourists coming to Turkey by year, tourism income, the average amount
 136 of spending and their rate in gross national product (GNP) are presented in Table 3.

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143 **Table 3:** The number of tourists coming to Turkey by year, tourism income, the average amount
144 of spending and their rate in gross national product (GNP)

YEARS	TOTAL			
	The number of tourists	tourism income (1000 \$)	the average amount of spending (\$)	rate in gross national product (%)
2003	16 463 623	13 854 866	850	4,4
2004	20 753 734	17 076 607	843	4,151 152
2005	25 045 142	20 322 111	842	4,1
2006	23 924 023	18 593 951	803	3,4154 155
2007	27 239 630	20 942 500	770	3,1
2008	31 137 774	25 415 067	820	3,3157 158
2009	31 759 816	25 064 482	783	3,9
2010	32 997 308	24 930 997	755	3,2160 161
2011	36 769 039	28 115 692	778	3,4
2012	37 715 225	29 007 003	795	3,3163 164
2013	39 860 771	32 308 991	824	3,4
2014	41 627 246	34 305 903	828	3,166 167
2015	41 114 069	31 464 777	756	3,7
2016	30 906 680	22 107 440	705	2,469
2017	37 969 824	26 283 656	681	3,1
2018 (*)	18 917 033	11 469 828	667	172

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174 (*) : January-December

175 Resource: URL-5

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177 When Table 3 is examined, compared to 2003 in 2017 showed more than twice the
178 number of tourists visiting Turkey increased and reached nearly 38 mill2. However, tourism
179 incomes are doubled. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that despite the increase in the number
180 of tourists compared to the same years, the average amount of spending and the GNP decline
181 rate. This may be due to exchange rate changes in US dollar. When the issue is evaluated in this
182 respect, it can be said that the change in the currency affected the average expenditure amount
183 and GDP ratios in tourism incomes. However, the highest number of tourists coming to Turkey
184 was detected in 2014. It is understood that this situation is reflected in the tourism income in a
185 similar way. Considering the number of visitors coming from Russia in 2016, the decline in
186 tourism incomes is also affected by this process.

187 The distribution of tourism incomes and the average amount of spending in terms of
188 foreign and Turkish citizens is given in Table 4 and Chart 2.

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193 **Table 4:** The distribution of tourism incomes and the average amount of spending in terms of
194 foreign and Turkish citizens

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YEARS	Foreign ¹		Turkish citizens ²	
	TOURISM INCOME (1000 \$)	THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF SPENDING (\$)	TOURISM INCOME (1000 \$)	THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF SPENDING (\$)
2003	10 141 116	740	3 600 411	1 384
2004	13 061 118	759	3 862 552	1 262
2005	15 725 813	766	4 374 383	1 214
2006	13 918 757	722	4 463 614	1 153
2007	15 936 347	692	4 703 850	1 121
2008	19 612 296	742	5 418 439	1 191
2009	19 063 702	697	5 690 629	1 222
2010	19 110 003	670	5 558 366	1 231
2011	22 222 454	709	5 638 484	1 168
2012	22 410 364	715	6 354 378	1 241
2013	25 322 291	749	6 760 180	1 252
2014	27 778 026	775	6 289 260	1 130
2015	25 438 923	715	5 843 074	970
2016	15 991 381	633	5 964 853	978
2017	20 222 971	630	5 908 752	903
2018 (*)	9 284 571	629	2 127 316	877

210 Resource: URL-6

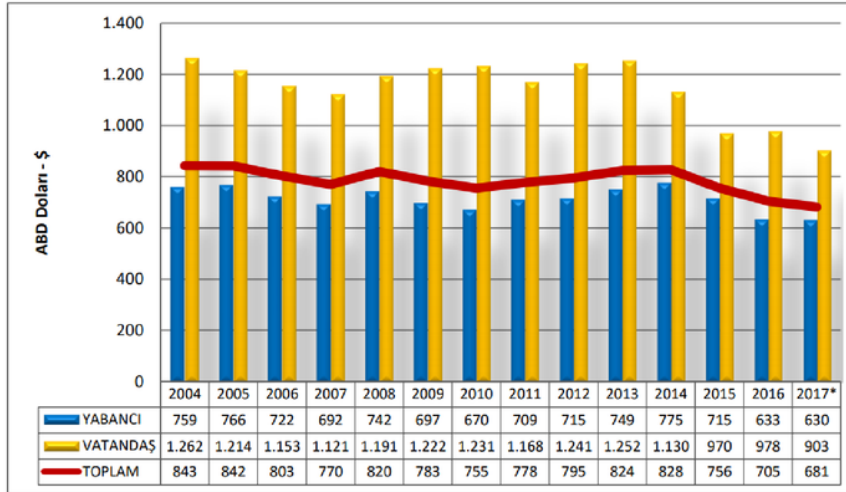
211 When Table 4 was examined, it was understood that the tourism income of foreigners
212 was about four times higher than that of Turkish citizens in 2017, whereas the percentage of
213 Turkish citizens is higher in terms of the average expense amount. This shows that tourists from
214 countries with different income levels visit Turkey. Also, it can be said that Turkish citizens
215 residing abroad have a higher income level than foreigners. For this reason, it was needed to
216 variate our tourism policy for low-income citizens residing abroad and Turkey. Also, tourism
217 incomes for foreigners seem to have increased in 2017 compared to 2003. On the other hand, it
218 is understood that the increase rate of Turkish citizens residing abroad in the same years is less.
219 In this context, the studies are effective in terms of foreign tourists visiting Turkey. Similar
220 studies can be used to increase the number of local tourists. In addition, it was understood that
221 there was a decrease in the number of tourists from Russia by half compared to the year 2015.
222 However, when the incomes of foreigners in 2017 was reviewed, it was understood that the
223 figures for the years 2011-2014 were not reached. The reasons should be investigated in further
224 research.

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228 **Graph 2:** Distribution of Average Expenditures of Foreign Visitors and Citizens from Abroad by
229 Years
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232 Kaynak: URL-7

233 5. Conclusion

234 Tourism, which has improved its investments and business volume, has a significant
235 contribution to the payment of external debts, affects social and cultural life, constitutes new
236 employment areas and has a significant social function in politics has caused the concentration of
237 countries to concentrate on this area. In particular, the economic impact of tourism on the
238 overcoming of the economic problems faced by the developing countries has led these countries
239 to attach more importance to tourism (İnan, 2009: 161).

240 From the perspective of Turkey, Turkey is a developing country and in this respect,
241 tourism is a very important state economically (İnan, 2009: 161). Especially after 1983, it made
242 important leaps in the tourism sector as it was in other sectors and became one of the most
243 important sectors (Cengiz, 2005: 173). In particular, thanks to providing employment and foreign
244 currency earnings has been a comforting sector in which the economic difficulties in Turkey. At
245 this point in nearly 30 years, Turkey has in possession the attractive factor with world tourism in
246 hand and foreign currency earnings and has entered into the top 10 countries in terms of the
247 number of tourists (İnan, 2009: 161). First of all, it is necessary that tourism policies are planned
248 to increase the tourism sector in the country. While tourism investments are being made, it is
249 necessary to carry out studies aimed at ensuring economic and social development that will
250 develop tourism in the regions where tourism is spread all over and tourism potentials have not
251 yet been sufficiently handled (İnan, 2009: 163). Culture and Tourism Ministry has prepared a
252 booklet as "2023 Turkey's tourism strategy, action plan 2007-2013". In this action plan, it seems
253 that a plan similar to the concept of "regional plan" is considered. Turkey, dedicated to the
254 development of tourism and it is observed that some strategic action plans for each. This
255 situation is considered important for the targeted tourism revenues to be reached. It is foreseen
256 that if this report, which is also discussed in alternative tourism facilities, is developed and
257 applied, it will provide important opportunities for our country.

258 It is seen that Turkey has settled in the 6th place for tourists' preferred category of
259 countries in the world ranking. It is thought that our country will be among the top 5 countries
260 in the world by giving more opportunity to the promotion of tourism places, and working on

261 alternative tourism places. Especially, it is predicted that the number of foreign visitors will
262 increase greatly by increasing the number of airports constructed in various places of our country,
263 including Airport 3 in Istanbul. Moreover, although there is a one-year loss period with Russia,
264 the growing economic, political and cultural relations indicate that there will be significant
265 increases in the number of tourists coming from this country. This is an important situation in
266 the development of more tourism and the development of our country.

267 The following suggestions can be made for the development and spread of tourism in our
268 country:

- 269 • First, historical and cultural values can be revealed through academic research. In
270 addition, social awareness should be built on these values.
- 271 • The infrastructure and environmental problems that have arisen in tourism concentrated
272 areas should be solved in cooperation with the local administrations and the troubles
273 experienced by tourists should be minimized.
- 274 • It is also seen that the demand for qualified staff to communicate with tourists coming
275 to our country is also increasing. It is recommended that the number of departments that
276 provide education in these languages in universities be increased. Considering the
277 increasing number of Russian tourists, in particular, it is thought that it will be beneficial
278 to increase personnel who speak Russian and Turkish by making a business association
279 with universities such as Ahmet Yesevi University and Manas University.
- 280 • Tourism cooperatives should be established that will strengthen the tourism activities of
281 local people in developing and tourism areas with different tourism potentials (eg,
282 Kartepe and Agva) (İnan, 2009: 164).
- 283 • For our citizens with a low-income level, necessary work should also be done in order to
284 provide tourism opportunities.
- 285 • Considering the increasing number of Arab and Asian tourists, especially those who have
286 come to our country in recent years, it will be beneficial to increase investments in culture
287 and highland tourism.

288 Taking into account the suggestions expressed, the development in tourism should be
289 made sustainable in a planned manner. Making tourism sustainable depends on bringing forward-
290 looking policy and a sound management philosophy between the local sector, the private sector,
291 and governments, including building a harmonious relationship with natural and economic
292 growth (Swanson & Edgell, 2013, p.176-180). In order to achieve this, it can be argued that there
293 is a need for longer-term plans in which coordination of all tourism-related subsidiaries and
294 public institutions is coordinated.

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