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DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN THE WORLD ECONOMY:
SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT UNDER CONDITIONS
OF UNCERTAINTY, OVERCOMING GLOBAL CHALLENGES
AND NEW TRENDS

ДИНАМІКА МІЖНАРОДНОГО ТУРИЗМУ У СВІТОВІЙ ЕКОНОМІЦІ:
СТІЙКІСТЬ РОЗВИТКУ В УМОВАХ НЕВИЗНАЧЕНОСТІ,
ПОДОЛАННЯ ГЛОБАЛЬНИХ ВИКЛИКІВ ТА НОВІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ

Summary. The Covid-19 pandemic posed an unprecedented challenge to the global economy, delivering a severe blow to the international tourism sector. Across the world, including countries in Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East, pandemic-related restrictions, border closures, and quarantine measures led to a sharp decline in tourist flows and significant economic losses. In 2020, global tourism experienced a drop of over 70% compared to previous years, threatening the survival of millions of jobs and businesses dependent on the tourism sector. The aim of this article is to analyze the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war on international tourism at a global level, as well as to examine recovery measures for the tourism industry and new trends that emerged in response to the challenges of the pandemic. The research will help identify key factors that contributed to both the decline and gradual recovery of the tourism sector in different regions of the world. This analysis is important not only for understanding the economic consequences of the pandemic but also for developing new approaches to fostering sustainable and safe tourism in the face of global challenges. Studying these changes will help better prepare for potential future crises and adapt the tourism sector to new realities, ensuring resilience and safety for all industry stakeholders.

Key words: international tourism, tourism industry, Covid-19, uncertainty, tourist flows, tourist arrivals, Russian-Ukrainian war, online bookings, digitalization, sustainability of development, sustainable tourism.

Problem statement. The Covid-19 pandemic had a profound impact on international tourism,

resulting in strict travel restrictions, border closures, and a dramatic drop in tourist arrivals. As one of the most vulnerable sectors to global disruptions, tourism experienced significant economic setbacks, widespread job losses, and the urgent need to adapt to evolving circumstances. Although tourism has been steadily recovering, the emergence of new trends requires thorough scientific analysis. These include shifts in tourist behavior, the integration of new technologies, the digital transformation of the industry, and increasing demands for safety and environmental sustainability. It is crucial to explore both the factors driving the recovery and the challenges the industry faces in the post-pandemic landscape.

Literature review. According to the UNWTO report, international tourism continued to grow in 2019, albeit at a slower pace compared to 2017–2018. Key factors hindering growth included geopolitical and trade tensions, uncertainty surrounding Brexit, and a slowdown in the global economy. The sector experienced significant disruptions due to the collapse of the Thomas Cook travel group and several budget airlines. At the same time, international tourism expenditure increased, particularly in France (+11%) and the USA, which led in absolute figures (+\$8 billion). However, the Covid-19 crisis drastically reduced global tourist flows in 2020.

An analysis conducted by UNWTO (2020) confirms that international tourism in Europe declined by 70% in 2020 compared to previous years, marking the sharpest contraction in modern tourism history [1; 2].

According to Gössling et al. [3], the Covid-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented reduction in global tourist flows. The study's authors emphasized that countries in which tourism constitutes a critical economic sector, particularly within the EU and beyond, experienced substantial economic losses.

The effects of Covid-19 on international tourism and its recovery have been widely examined, with a particular focus on sustainable development and the industry's future. For example, studies by Bhuiyan and Darda [4], along with C. Marques et al., offer significant perspectives on the pandemic's impact on tourism in Europe and suggest strategies for a sustainable recovery. Bhuiyan and Darda [4] emphasize the need for sustainable practices, while C. Marques et al. examine the potential for incorporating social and environmental considerations into tourism policies. These works highlight the necessity of rethinking conventional tourism models and adjusting to new realities in the post-pandemic era [4; 5; 6].

Kotova and Vasylychuk [7], it is noted that the tourism industry suffered not only from Covid-19 but also from the Russian invasion on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, which became a defining factor in global geopolitical upheavals. Despite these challenging circumstances, Ukraine's tourism sector continues to develop, contributing to economic growth and regional infrastructure development.

The aim of the article is to analyze the recovery of international tourism following global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war, to identify key trends that have emerged as a result of these crises, and to assess their impact on the modern tourism industry.

Presentation of main material. The decline in tourist numbers due to the Covid-19 pandemic had a profound effect on the economies of numerous countries, especially those where tourism plays a major role in GDP. Countries with a high dependence on tourism, including Spain, Greece, Italy, Thailand, Mexico, and the Caribbean Islands, experienced sectoral losses amounting to 9% to 15% of their GDP. Furthermore, the pandemic resulted in widespread job cuts across industries such as hospitality, transportation, food services, and entertainment, deepening the economic downturn.

In response to the pandemic, nations across the globe adopted diverse strategies to support the tourism sector and accelerate its recovery. Among these measures were the introduction of digital Covid certificates and vaccination passes, which enabled smoother travel by verifying vaccination status or negative test results. For example, the European Union (EU) launched its digital Covid

certificates to streamline travel within its member states.

Similarly, countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore implemented analogous systems to promote international travel and revitalize tourist flows.

These measures helped revive tourism in many regions as lockdown restrictions were lifted. The recovery of the tourism industry was marked by a gradual increase in tourist arrivals, though a full return to pre-pandemic levels took several years. Overall, the pandemic served as a catalyst for new approaches to the development of international tourism, fostering trends such as increased demand for ecotourism and sustainable tourism, as well as adaptations to new travel conditions, including the global digitalization of the tourism industry.

Furthermore, governments of various countries introduced financial incentives to support tourism businesses, such as wage subsidies for workers and tax breaks for tourism enterprises. For instance, Italy implemented the "Bonus Vacanze" program, which provided financial support to families for domestic travel, stimulating internal tourism.

In 2022, the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war prompted the relaxation of previously imposed international travel restrictions, driven by the large-scale movement of refugees from Ukraine, initially within Europe and subsequently on a global scale. This was a critical step in restoring normal conditions for tourism activities and reestablishing connections between countries amidst new geopolitical realities. This period witnessed not only the recovery of tourist flows but also significant adjustments in the management strategies of tourism infrastructure, reflecting European countries' responses to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Below, we analyze the trends in global tourist flows by region during the period from 2018 to 2023.

From 2018 to 2023, the number of tourist arrivals in various regions of the world underwent significant changes.

In 2019, all regions experienced growth in tourist arrivals, with Europe and Asia leading the way at 742.4 million and 362.67 million arrivals, respectively. However, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a significant decline across all regions. Tourist arrivals in Europe dropped to 239.44 million, while Asia saw a sharp decrease to 58.95 million.

The recovery process began in 2021, with arrivals increasing to 300.95 million in Europe and 26.63 million in Asia, though these numbers remained well below pre-pandemic levels. Recovery continued in 2022, with Europe experiencing the

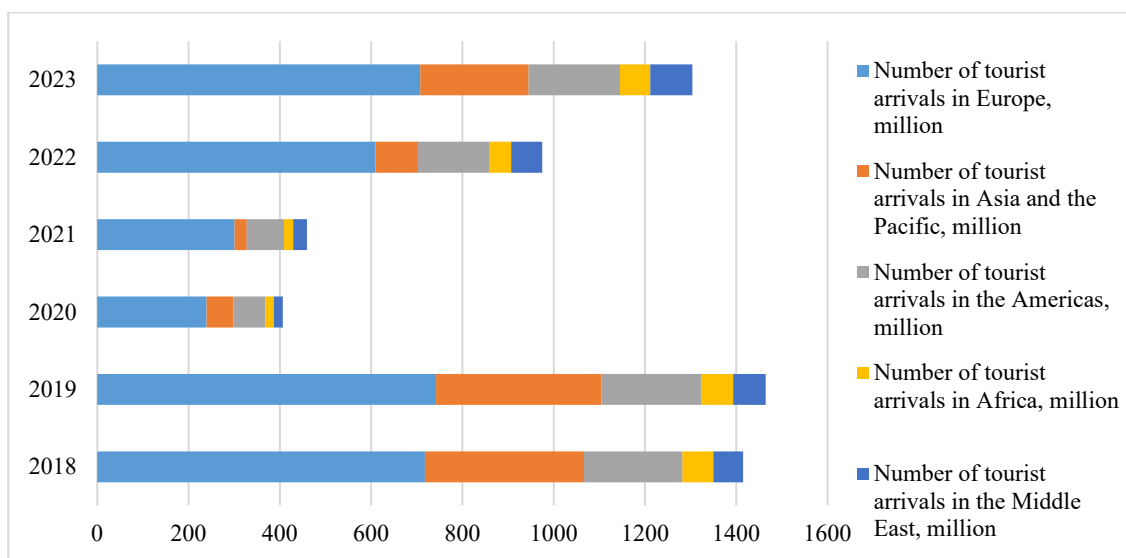


Figure 1. World tourist arrivals by region in 2018–2023 (million people)

Source: compiled by the authors based on [8–9]

most significant growth, reaching 609.59 million arrivals, followed by Asia with 93.33 million. The Americas also showed improvement, with tourist arrivals rising to 157.15 million.

In 2023, this upward trend persisted, with arrivals increasing further in all regions, notably to 707.86 million in Europe and 237.24 million in Asia. At the same time, tourist arrivals in Africa and the Middle East also grew, reaching 66.36 million and 92.28 million, respectively.

The data indicate that after the sharp downturn in 2020, global tourist arrivals began recovering, steadily approaching pre-pandemic levels.

As tourist flows continue to grow, there is potential for further recovery and even surpassing previous records, provided that stability is maintained and positive momentum persists.

Despite the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry and shifting travel trends, the top 10 most visited countries in the world remained consistent in 2023 compared to 2019. This underscores the resilience and lasting appeal of these destinations. However, while the rankings stayed unchanged, the number of tourist arrivals in each country showed some variation.

European Union countries such as France and Spain continued to dominate the rankings, albeit with a slight decrease in visitor numbers. This reflects their enduring popularity but also indicates a modest decline influenced by global factors.

The United States demonstrated strong recovery and growth in tourist arrivals, signaling positive post-pandemic momentum. Conversely, a drop in tourist numbers in China points to prolonged pandemic-

Table 1

Comparison of the top-10 most visited countries in the world in 2019 and 2023

№	Top-10 most visited countries in the world in 2019		Top-10 most visited countries in the world in 2023	
	Country	Number of tourists (million)	Country	Number of tourists (million)
1	France	90,2	France	89,4
2	Spain	83,8	Spain	83,7
3	USA	78,7	USA	79,3
4	China	67,5	China	65,7
5	Italy	64,5	Italy	64,5
6	Turkey	52,5	Turkey	51,2
7	Mexico	44,9	Mexico	45,0
8	Thailand	39,7	Thailand	39,8
9	Germany	39,4	Germany	39,6
10	Great Britain	36,9	Great Britain	39,4

Source: Compiled by the authors based on [8]

related challenges or other socio-economic factors affecting its tourism sector.

Countries such as Italy, Mexico, Thailand, Germany, and the United Kingdom have shown stable or positive trends, reflecting the resilience and adaptability of their tourism markets to new conditions.

It should be noted that, beyond Covid-19, the Russian-Ukrainian war also significantly impacted tourism, particularly causing a marked reduction in flights, especially in Eastern European countries.

The war in Ukraine has significantly impacted on logistics in Eastern Europe, leading to a sharp decline in shipments. Other regions, particularly Central and Western Europe, have shown steady growth, partially offsetting the negative effects. It is projected that by 2024–2025, Europe will return to pre-crisis shipment levels due to the adaptation of logistics systems and economic stabilization in other regions.

The graph below provides a more detailed illustration of the percentage changes in the number of flights in European countries most affected by the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

An analysis of the decline in flights across Europe from February 24 to May 11 in 2022, compared to 2019, reveals the significant impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Ukraine's airspace was completely closed, leading to the suspension of all flights. Moldova also experienced a substantial

decrease due to its proximity to the conflict zone. Reductions in Slovenia (-42%), Latvia (-38%), and Finland (-36%) were driven by geographic proximity to the conflict and a post-pandemic decline in aviation. In Central Europe (Czech Republic -35%, Austria -30%, Germany -28%), the drop in flights reflects global trends such as reduced demand, restrictions on eastbound flights, and the economic consequences of the pandemic.

The largest declines occurred in countries directly or indirectly affected by the war, such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Latvia. Significant losses were also observed in Finland and Central European countries, where the restrictions on flights over Russia and post-crisis changes in air transportation were impactful.

The overall reduction in flights reflects not only the impact of the war but also the long-term consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, which significantly disrupted global air travel for an extended period.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused not only a sharp decline in the tourism industry but also substantial shifts in tourist behavior, leading to new trends and accelerating the digitalization of the tourism sector. One notable trend has been the growing popularity of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. According to Stogniichuk [12] (2024), tourists increasingly prefer travel to remote regions and natural sites, avoiding large crowds and reducing the risk of infection. These changes reflect a broader trend toward seeking new forms of travel that align with updated

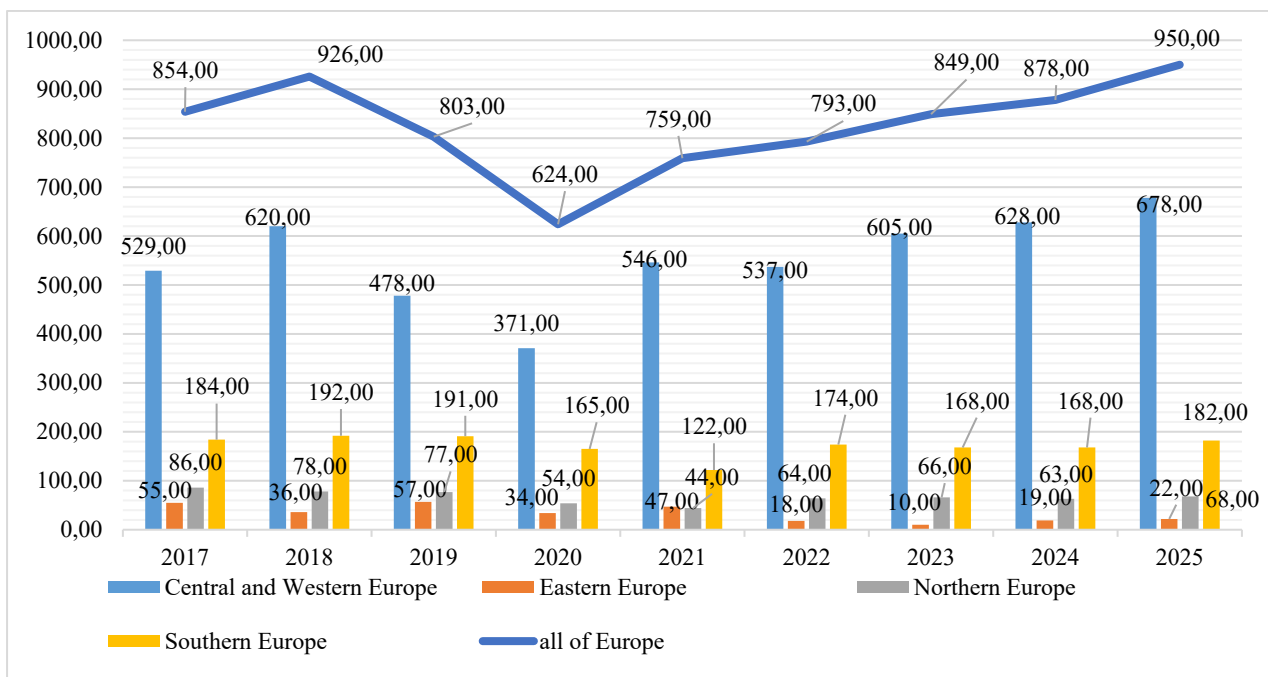


Figure 2. Dynamics of air flights in Europe by region (2017–2025)

Source: compiled by the authors based on [10]

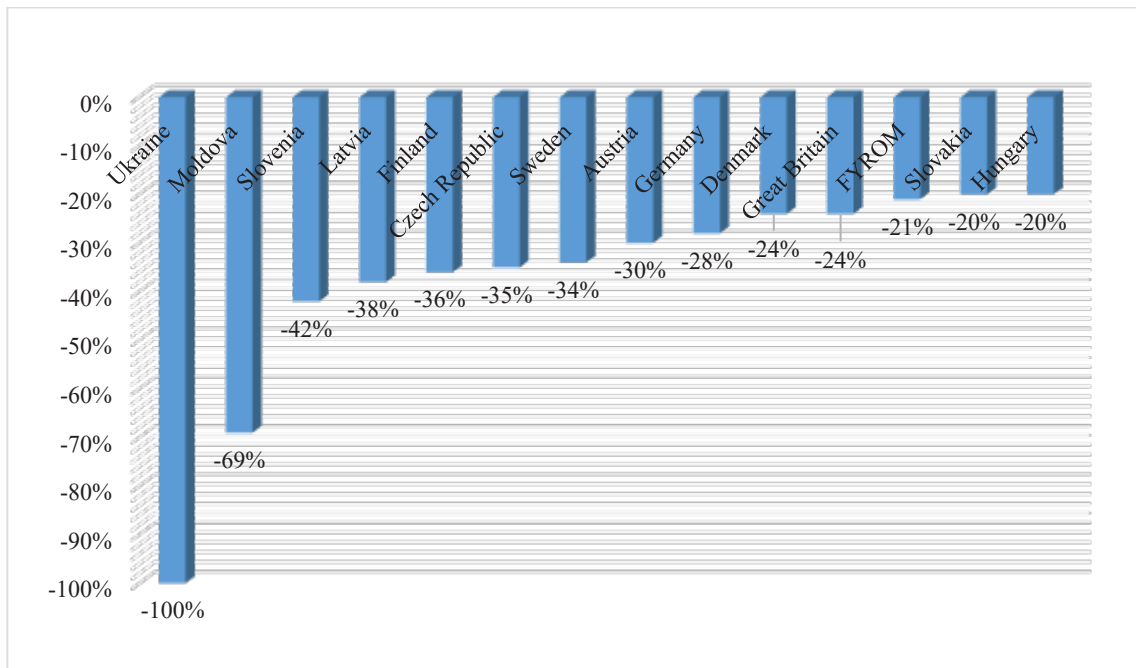


Figure 3. European countries with the largest decrease in the number of flights (February 24 – May 11, 2022, compared to 2019)

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Statista data [11]

health and safety standards while addressing the need to preserve the environment.

A key change in overcoming the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the digitalization of the tourism industry, particularly the introduction of contactless services to minimize physical interactions between tourists and staff. This includes contactless check-ins and check-outs, digital room keys in hotels, and automated registration terminals. The adoption of such technologies not only reduces the risk of infection transmission but also enhances convenience for tourists, who can now avoid queues and delays.

Additionally, the pandemic significantly altered approaches to organizing and consuming tourism services. One of the most transformative changes has been the rapid integration of digital technologies into the tourism industry. Although this process began before the pandemic, it gained new momentum due to the need to ensure safety and convenience during a global crisis.

The digitalization of the sector has also expanded the possibilities for online booking. Many tourism-related companies and services, such as hotels, airlines, and tour agencies, have increasingly adopted online booking platforms. These platforms allow tourists to easily compare prices, check availability, and make reservations from home, which is especially relevant in the context of travel restrictions.

Between 2017 and 2019, the online travel market saw consistent growth, rising from \$436.86 billion to \$489.13 billion. This expansion was fueled by technological advancements, the increasing use of mobile applications, and the growing trend of online bookings. However, in 2020, the market suffered a dramatic decline to \$225.16 billion, more than halving its value from 2019. This downturn was primarily due to travel restrictions, lockdowns, and widespread concerns about the risk of infection, which severely impacted the tourism industry and online bookings.

With the rollout of vaccinations and the gradual easing of restrictions in 2021, the market began its recovery, reaching \$326.11 billion. By 2022, it had returned to its 2019 level of \$495.14 billion and continued to grow, reaching \$599.27 billion in 2023. This rebound was driven by pent-up demand for travel and advancements in technology.

The online travel market is expected to continue expanding, projected to reach \$727.52 billion by 2026. This growth will be supported by ongoing digital transformation, easier access to international travel, and increasing demand for convenient online booking platforms. Key growth factors will include emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, personalized travel services, and a stronger focus on environmental sustainability. The market is also anticipated to become more

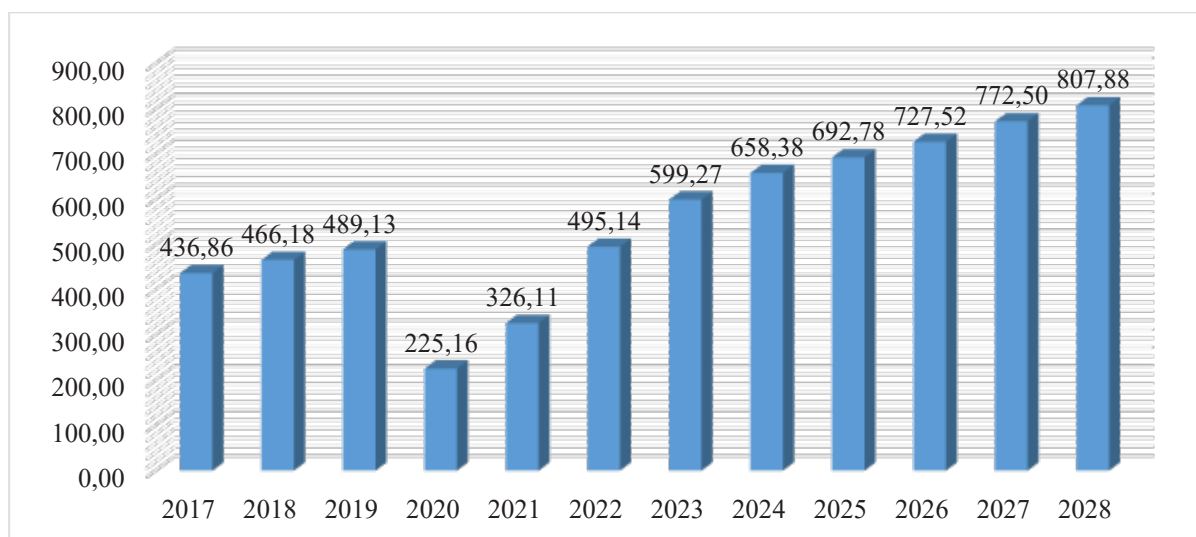


Figure 4. Global online travel market size 2017–2028 (USD billion)

Source: Compiled by the authors based on [13]

diversified, with a greater emphasis on sustainable and eco-friendly travel options.

After the pandemic-induced decline, the online travel market is demonstrating rapid recovery and consistent growth. It is forecasted that new digital solutions and changes in consumer behavior will drive further expansion of the market in the coming years.

Conclusions. International tourism has undergone significant changes due to global challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war, which led to a large-scale reduction in tourist flows, economic losses, and decreased demand. Border closures, the introduction of quarantine measures, and the general fear of travel strongly impacted the tourism industry, which had been one of the primary sources of income for many countries before the pandemic.

The Russian-Ukrainian war also negatively affected the tourism sector in the region, particularly in European countries. Geopolitical instability, security risks, rising energy prices, and associated inflationary processes significantly reduced tourism demand in Eastern Europe and placed additional pressure on the economies of neighboring countries. Due to significant population movements in the region, including temporary refugees, the resource base for domestic tourism also experienced changes.

However, due to active government measures, including financial support for tourism businesses, the introduction of new technologies (such as digital Covid certificates), the digitalization of the sector, and the gradual lifting of restrictions, the recovery of the tourism industry has begun and is actively ongoing.

The prospects for the development of international tourism in the post-crisis period largely depend on the sector's ability to adapt to new conditions, particularly changes in consumer preferences and security requirements. Key aspects of recovery will include innovative solutions, such as new formats of travel and improvements to digital booking platforms, as well as a focus on sustainability and safety. The growing demand for ecotourism, sustainable tourism, and safe travel will play an important role in setting new standards for the tourism industry. For successful recovery, it is necessary to continue developing sustainable tourism strategies, taking into account new realities. This includes integrating environmental practices, adapting to changes in consumer behavior, improving safety measures, and supporting innovations that can ensure flexible and resilient functioning of the sector under conditions of unpredictable crises.

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Анотація. Пандемія Covid-19 стала безпрецедентним викликом для глобальної економіки, завдавши серйозного удару по сфері міжнародного туризму. У всьому світі, включаючи країни Європи, Азії, Америки, Африки та Близького Сходу, пандемічні обмеження, закриття кордонів і карантинні заходи призвели до різкого скорочення туристичних потоків і значних економічних втрат. Так у 2020 році світовий туризм зазнав падіння на понад 70% у порівнянні з попередніми роками, що створило загрозу для існування мільйонів робочих місць і підприємств, які залежать від туристичного сектору. У статті представлено аналіз наслідків пандемії Covid-19 та російсько-української війни для розвитку міжнародного туризму на глобальному рівні, процесів його відновлення та нових тенденцій, що виникли у відповідь на виклики пандемії. Узагальнено, що перспективи розвитку міжнародного туризму в посткризовий період значною мірою залежать від здатності галузі адаптуватися до нових умов, зокрема змін у споживчих уподобаннях і вимогах до безпеки. Ключовими аспектами відновлення галузі визначено інноваційні рішення, такі як нові формати подорожей та вдосконалення цифрових платформ бронювання, а також фокус на сталому розвитку та безпеці. Швидка інтеграція цифрових технологій змінює підходи до організації та споживання туристичних послуг. Зокрема, активно впроваджуються безконтактні послуги для мінімізації фізичної взаємодії

між туристами та персоналом. Узагальнено, що зростаючий попит на екотуризм, сталий туризм і безпечні подорожі є тенденціями відновлення міжнародного туризму після пандемії Covid-19, і це відіграє важливу роль у встановленні нових стандартів для туристичної галузі у цілому. Представлений аналіз має велике значення не лише для розуміння економічних наслідків пандемії, але й для розробки нових підходів до розвитку міжнародного туризму в умовах глобальних викликів. Вивчення цих змін допоможе краще підготуватися до можливих майбутніх криз і адаптувати туристичний сектор до нових реалій, забезпечуючи стійкість і безпеку для всіх учасників галузі.

Ключові слова: міжнародний туризм, індустрія туризму, Covid-19, невизначеність, туристичні потоки, туристичні прибуття, російсько-українська війна, онлайн-бронювання, цифровізація, сталий туризм, стійкість розвитку.