

# The impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on tourism in France, Spain and Italy



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**Abstract** It is believed that various nations, including France, Spain, and Italy, have been impacted by the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Given its weak structure and vulnerability to even minor conflicts, it is uncertain how the tourism industry will respond to the current state of hostilities. Our analysis shows that the war's continuation, which began on February 24, 2022 (repetition), in Russia, which does not account for much of the demand for tourists in France, Spain, and Italy, did not have a significant impact on those countries' tourism. The objective of this study is to examine potential wartime consequences for France, Spain, and Italy's tourism relations. Additionally, recommendations were offered to the sector's players to maintain the growth of tourism in the abovementioned countries in the face of any potential impacts that could come from the study.

**Keywords:** impact of war, tourism of France, tourism of Spain, tourism of Italy, armed conflict

## 1. Introduction

Due to its contributions, which include reducing unemployment, fostering economic growth, and generating export revenue, the tourism sector is becoming a more significant part of the economies of various nations. While many economic sectors were slowed or destroyed by technical advancements, the tourism industry had robust and quick expansion thanks to its significance in international trade, which led to increased investment and created a more competitive market. The development and marketing of a tourism product will enable the state to distinguish between different forms of socioeconomic relationships at the local level, not only within the context of domestic regional policy but also within that of cross-border cooperation with other nations (Kirylov et al 2022). Developing nations with low production and high value-added goods opt to use their tourist potential to offset the disadvantage they have in international trade. Indeed, with their investments, developing nations' share of tourism, which was 45% in 2015, is predicted to rise to 57% in 2030 (UNWTO 2017; Sarkhanov and Tutar 2021). Fifty-three percent of all worldwide tourism-related pursuits, according to the World Tourism Organization, are done for leisure and travel. From this perspective, the historical monuments, geographic position, climate, and natural elements of France, Spain, and Italy all have significant tourism potential. It cannot be said that these countries are among the most visited nations in the world in terms of the number of foreign visitors. Even though there is no drop in the number of foreign visitors arriving from Russia due to the diversification of travel demand for France, Spain, and Italy among various nations in 2019, the proportion of Russian visitors makes up 6% for France, 1.9% for Italy, and 1.5% for Spain. Compared to the data from the previous year, the proportion of Russian visitors to France and Italy has slightly increased, yet it cannot be claimed that Russian tourists contribute significantly to the GDP of France, Italy, or Spain. In this instance, a partial decline in the number of Russian tourists visiting all three nations has no negative effect on the tourism industries of those nations. In this case, it is clear that Russia's contribution to the demand for foreign travel to France, Spain, and Italy is not particularly significant. Due to Russia's significance to the tourist demands of the three nations, the study aims to objectively research the factors that influence Russian travel to these countries. The available research finds that no study has examined the desire for travel to France, Spain, and Italy in Russia. The study is made more creative by the lack of an empirical investigation in terms of the methodology. In this context, the second section discusses the significance of travel and tourism to the economies of France, Spain, and Italy, while the third section provides a survey of the literature, and the fourth section elaborates the model, data, and approach. The estimation findings are provided in the final section.

## 2. Method

With the help of the document analysis approach, one of the descriptive statistical studies, a large number of textual and visual resources that might contribute to the study issue were obtained. As part of the research project, documents, publications, statements from influential figures in the tourism industry, press releases from the minister of tourism, official reports, statistical information from the World Tourism Organization, the OECD, Statista, news in the media, and interviews



were all examined. For this study, document analysis was utilized to search databases from WoS, SCOPUS, EBSCO, PROQUEST, SCIENCE DIRECT, EMERALD INSIGHT, DERGIPARK, and other worldwide sectors for information on tourism.

### 3. Literature review

Quite a few studies have been carried out globally to identify the variables that affect travel demand. Pandemics, climate change, political unrest, wars, terrorist attacks, and other incidents can all have an impact on tourism. The impact of the political aspects of the 2015 Turkey-Russia airplane crisis on Turkey's tourism was examined in the research. Research has shown Russia's political base in recent years, as well as the effect of the plane catastrophe on political relations and tourism activities between the two nations, independent of one's political views. It is easy to see that a \$76.635.130 total economic loss has occurred. The effects of this crisis will deteriorate due to the tourism sector's multiplier effect. If we calculate the tax on revenue loss for the year, which is \$19,158,782 on an average monthly basis (arithmetic), we can encounter a \$208.182.624 revenue loss after a full year. It is evident that the Russian travel industry has experienced a 53.1 percent decline, which is only the mathematical side of things, though. Because political variables change, this number has the potential to fluctuate (Yenisehirlioglu et al 2016; Bayramli and Sarkhanov 2021).

The study by (Cetin et al 2016) states that the Russian problem includes two distinct facets. A dispute between Russia and Ukraine, as well as a decline in oil prices on the global market, are outcomes of the Russian economic crisis. Because of the crisis, the value of the Russian ruble fell in relation to the US dollar, which reduced the purchasing power of Russians. This is our research's initial component. A political crisis between Turkey and Russia because of the Turkish army shooting down a Russian warship is the second dimension. The goal of this study is to ascertain how the Russian crisis has affected the Turkish travel industry. The study was restricted to the Antalya region (Cetin et al 2016).

The social aspects of the safe innovative growth of the tourist sector in the regional tourism destination of Ukraine were examined in the study by (Trusova et al 2022). Researchers concluded that it was presented and represented as an all-encompassing indicator of a secure state for the creative growth of local tourism attractions (Trusova et al 2022).

The subject of (Enikő 2020) research is Ukraine, a nation in Europe that has recently experienced violent demonstrations, regime changes, and military operations. Late in 2013 and early in 2014, an armed conflict in Ukraine broke out, and it quickly spread throughout the world. Daily coverage of the problem in the international media led to a significant number of avoidable deaths. Because this issue has mostly remained unsolved thus far, the nation has experienced a severe economic downturn. The populace's sense of security was shaken, and the inbound tourist flow was promptly stopped. This study looks at how the "hybrid war" in Ukraine and the subsequent events affected tourism there, both directly and indirectly. This study presents the changes that took place in the tourism industry based on the statistical data that are currently accessible (Enikő 2020).

According to (Tomczewska-Popowycz and Quirini-Popławski 2021). The goal of this study was to ascertain how political unrest affects foreign tourist arrivals in Ukrainian cities, the operation of tourism-related enterprises, and overall earnings from tourism. The results confirm earlier studies that short-term political unrest lowers tourist numbers. However, the outcomes of long-term perspective interviews with specialists from significant provincial cities have been somewhat different (Tomczewska-Popowycz and Quirini-Popławski, 2021).

The objectives of the study by (Sofiichuk 2018) are to identify and evaluate current threats to Ukraine's tourist sector, excluding the east, as well as to look at measures to reduce or eliminate these risks. Therefore, it is essential to enhance Ukraine's standing as a secure tourist destination. A study is being done on how the state manages the risks associated with the tourism industry. The primary hypothesis of the study is that the risks faced by tourism businesses and the level of tourist danger in Ukraine have an impact on the growth of tourism's contribution to the country's GDP (Sofiichuk 2018).

Research by (Kimani 2021) found that tourists will not travel to nations or regions inside large nations if they feel unsafe. Recent examples include the events of September 11, 2001, in the United States, the Bali bombing on October 12, 2002, and the Iraq war in March 2003 (and ongoing). When such events take place, they immediately and frequently interrupt travel within countries and regions, which has an effect on how well Africa's tourism industry performs (Kimani 2021).

### 4. Ukraine Russia War

Russia made the decision to start a military assault against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. According to Russian officials, this decision was made on the grounds that the Russian Federation is threatened by NATO's geographic expansion and the protection of the rights of Russians living in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. On the other hand, some political analysts said that the Russian Federation launched the conflict with the intention of reclaiming the SCBB's legacy. In fact, the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014 sowed the first seeds of this conflict.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported 14,844 civilian casualties in the nation between February 24, 2022, when the Russian Federation's armed war against Ukraine began, and September 25, 2022: 5,996 killed and 8,848 injured (Throssell and Shamdasani 2022).

Approximately 20,000 Russian soldiers and approximately 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers perished in the conflict (Maishman and Jaroslav 2022). The death toll from the Russian Federation's annexation of Ukraine is thought to have been close to 40,000. The war's detrimental impacts on society do not stop there. Millions of Ukrainian residents fled their homes and nations as soon as the war began. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that since February, more than 13 million people have been forced to flee their homes. One of the nations that saw the most immigration during this mobility was Poland, which received approximately 6.7 million immigrants (Hayda et al 2022). As the conflict began, it is also believed that 100,000-200,000 Russian residents fled their home country out of fear of resisting it and of suffering worsening conditions after the sanctions. We might claim that there is a "brain drain" from Russia in particular and that those who left the country had more affluent and experienced workforces (Gilchrist 2022). We can infer that both nations' economies suffered significant losses when the Russian Federation declared war. Indicators of economic growth in the Ukrainian economy have significantly regressed. The Russian economy, which suffered this circumstance, indirectly contributed to economic instability worldwide. Fear of a global economic recession is sparked by rising energy prices, the food crisis, bank liquidity issues, and declining large company profits.

### 5. Russia was subjected to the sanctions' economic component.

Economic sanctions on Russia have been imposed by the European Union, the United States of America, and other nations since the start of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Nine different sanction programs, including one for the Crimean War, were put in place against Russia. Except for sectoral restrictions, 10,044 sanctions have been levied on Russia by Australia, Canada, the European Union, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States since the commencement of the conflict (Statista 2022). The financial, energy, defense, tourism, and transportation industries of Russia are typically subject to sectoral sanctions. Notwithstanding the detrimental impacts of sanctions against the Russian economy, Russia is attempting to overcome the challenges of financing the war by increasing its energy exports. The sanctions have a substantially negative impact on the Russian economy. In other words, trade investments have compelled Russia to reduce its energy income by limiting its energy exports to the EU. Furthermore, the EU's decision to halt exporting technical products to Russia created issues with these commodities, which Russia lacked, and negatively affected manufacturing. Obviously, this resulted in a drop in Russian production and a rise in pricing. The World Bank's research indicates that in 2022, Russia's GDP will have fallen by 8.9%. Although there are various indications of inflation rates from various sources, we may estimate the inflation rate at 22% using data from the World Bank. Foreign trade has also been adversely impacted by trade sanctions. The World Bank reports that in 2022, Russia's exports decreased by 30.9%, and its imports decreased by 35.2% (GSC 2022).

### 6. The Effect of Sanctions against Russia on France, Spain and Italy's Tourism

Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, declared that in retaliation for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Union would block Russian airlines and private aircraft from using its airspace. Italy and France are the two countries that are visited by Russian tourists the most frequently when travelling through Europe. It is unclear what undesirable consequences the disappearance of Russian tourists will bring about in these nations.

It is highly likely that many popular Spanish destinations for Russians will not see those travelers this year because of the unprovoked war unleashed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the sanctions that followed, which included the closure of EU airspace to Russian airlines and to any flight to or from Russia.

**Table 1** Russian travelers to France by year.

Years	Total Number of Foreign travelers to France (Mln)	Total Number of Russian travelers to France (thousand)	Percentage of Russian Tourists Arriving in France (share)
2021	48.4	N/A	N/A
2020	41.7	93	0.22%
2019	89	537	6%
2018	89.4	476	5.3%
2017	86.9	471	5.2%
2016	82.68	393	4.7%
2015	84.5	408	4.7%
2014	83.70	521	6.2%
2013	83.63	-	-
2012	81.98	-	-

Source: UNWTO (2021).

The average number of tourists visiting France between 2012 and 2019 was 85 million, and the average proportion of Russian tourists among 2014–2019 visitors was 467 thousand. This represents 0,54% of all tourists. The data are supplied in part because COVID-19 prevents the 2020–2021 figures from accurately reflecting reality. All EU airspace, including that over France, is currently off-limits to aircraft operated by, registered to, or owned by Russia. They will not be able to take off or land anywhere in the EU or fly through EU airspace. Both commercial and private aircraft are featured (Local 2022). However, there is not a travel embargo against Russia, so anyone can travel there from France on non-Russian carriers, as well as by land, air, and sea. On Monday, Russia placed a reciprocal ban on flights from 36 countries, including France. However, several European airlines, most notably Air France, had already stopped operating flights to and from Russia.

**Table 2** Russia's Expenditure as a Percentage of France's Tourism Revenue.

Years	France's total tourism income (Bln)	Russian tourists' spending France (Mln)	Percentage of spending by Russians arriving in France (Share)
2021			
2020	35.96	28	0.07%
2019	70.78	174	0.20%
2018	72.52	386	0.53%
2017	67.72	367	0.54%
2016	63.56	302	0.47%
2015	66.44	321	0.48%
2014	67.4	419	0.62%
2013	66.05		
2012	63.98		

Source: WorldData n.d.

France's average annual tourism revenue from 2012 to 2019 was 66 billion, while Russian tourists spent an average of 285 million between 2014 and 2019. This is equal to 0,43% of all tourism-related revenue. The data are supplied in part because the statistics for 2020–2021 do not accurately reflect reality.

**Table 3** Russian travelers to Italy by year.

Years	Total Number of Foreign travelers to Italy (Mln)	Total Number of Russian travelers to Italy (Thousand)	Percentage of Russian Tourists Arriving in Italy (share)
2021	26.9	248	0.9%
2020	25.2	193	0.76%
2019	64.5	1.280	1.9%
2018	62.1	1.090	1.7%
2017	58.3	893	0.15%
2016	52.4	710	0.13%
2015	50.73	662	0.13%
2014	48.58	994	0.20%
2013	47.70		
2012	46.36		

Source: UNWTO (2021).

The average number of tourists visiting Italy between 2012 and 2019 was 53 million, and the average proportion of Russian tourists among 2014–2019 visitors was 937 thousand. This represents 1,76% of all tourists. The data are supplied in part because the statistics for 2020–2021 do not accurately reflect reality. European sanctions will prevent tourists from Russia, who make up 1.5% of Italy's annual visitors, from travelling there.

Italy's average annual tourism revenue from 2012 to 2019 was 44 billion, while Russian tourists spent an average of 505 million between 2014 and 2019. This is equal to 1,14% of all tourism-related revenue. Information is provided in part because, in the case of the pandemic, the 2020–2021 data do not fully reveal the truth.

The average number of tourists visiting Spain from 2012 to 2019 was 73 million, and the average proportion of Russian tourists among 2014–2019 visitors was 968 thousand. This represents 1,32% of all tourists. The facts are provided in part because the 2020 figures do not accurately reflect reality because of the pandemic. On February 27, the European Union barred all Russian aircraft from using its airspace as part of a fresh wave of sanctions against Russia in retaliation for the conflict in Ukraine. In retaliation, Russia barred 36 nations from using its airspace, including Spain (Dorsi 2022).

**Table 4** Russia's Expenditure as a Percentage of Italy's Tourism Revenue.

Years	Italy 's total tourism income (Bln)	Russian tourists' spending in Italy (Mln)	Percentage of spending by Russians arriving in Italy (Share)
2021	16	19	1,19
2020	20.46	102	0.50%
2019	51.91	694	1.33%
2018	51.60	600	1.16%
2017	46.72	463	0.99%
2016	42.42	355	0.83%
2015	41.42	338	0.81%
2014	45.56	582	1.27%
2013	43.83		
2012	40.94		

Source: WorldData n.d.

**Table 5** Russian travellers to Spain by year.

Years	Total Number of Foreign travelers to Spain (mln)	Total Number of Russian travelers to Spain (Thousand)	Percentage of Russian Tourists Arriving in Spain (Share)
2021	31.2	134	0.42%
2020	18.93	116	0.6%
2019	83.5	1.300	1.55%
2018	82.8	961	1.1%
2017	81.87	929	1.2%
2016	75.6	790	1.01%
2015	68.2	693	1.01%
2014	64.94	1.140	1.8%
2013	60.68		
2012	57.46		

Source: UNWTO (2021).

**Table 6** Russia's expenditure as a percentage of Spain's tourism revenue.

Years	Spain 's total tourism income (Bln)	Russian tourists' spending in Spain (Mln)	Percentage of spending by Russians arriving in Spain (Share)
2021	34.816	18	0.05%
2020	61.406	15	0.02%
2019	80.00	201	0.25%
2018	81.25	627	0.77%
2017	75.91	579	0.76%
2016	66.98	458	0.68%
2015	62.45	394	0.63%
2014	71.66	762	1.06%
2013	68.41		
2012	62.94		

Source: WorldData (2020).

Spain's average annual tourism revenue from 2012 to 2019 was 71 billion, while Russian tourists spent an average of 503 million between 2014 and 2019. This is equal to 0,70% of all tourism-related revenue. Information is provided in part because, in the case of the pandemic, the 2020-2021 data do not fully reveal the truth.

**Table 7** Russia's expenditure as a percentage of Spain's tourism revenue.

Years	France's GDP (trillion dollars) and Russian visitors' share in GDP	Italy's GDP (trillion dollars) and Russian visitors' share in GDP	Spain's GDP (trillion dollars) and Russian visitors' share of GDP
2021	2.94/-	2.1/0.009%	1.43/0.0012%
2020	2.63/0.001%	1.89/0.005%	1.28/0.0011%
2019	2.73/0.006%	2.01/0.034%	1.39/0.014%
2018	2.79/0.013%	2.09/0.028%	1.42/0.043%
2017	2.6/0.014%	1.96/0.023%	1.31/0.044%
2016	2.47/0.012%	1.88/0.018%	1.23/0.037%
2015	2.44/0.013%	1.84/0.018%	1.20/0.032%
2014	2.86/0.014%	2.16/0.026%	1.37/0.048%

Source: World Bank (2021).

To base transparency on the expenditures of Russian tourists in GDP, the 2020–2021 pandemic period, as well as the 2019 statistics, must be taken into consideration. In these statistics, the share of Russia, which is 2.73 trillion dollars in 2019 France's GDP, is 0.006%, Italy's GDP is 2.01 trillion dollars, the share of Russian tourists is 0.034, Spain's GDP is 1.39 trillion dollars, and the share of Russian tourists here is 0.014.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The reason our research was conducted in these three countries is that all three countries are suitable for sun and sea tourism and play a locomotive role in the abgargos position in Russia. In terms of economic growth, jobs, and the balance of payments, the tourist industry is crucial to the economies of France, Italy, and Spain. As a result, changes in these nations' tourism demand have a large impact on their economies. Russia plays a significant role in the global demand for travel. The number of Russian tourists visiting EU countries, on the other hand, was greatly influenced by the warfare between Russia and Ukraine in 2022. Therefore, the study's goal is to discover the variables that affect Russians' desire to travel to France, Italy, and Spain. The number of Russian tourists arriving in France was 537 thousand, the number of Russian tourists arriving in Italy was 1.28 thousand, and the number of Russian tourists arriving in Spain was 1.30 thousand in 2019. The GDP of France was 2 trillion 73 billion, and the share of Russian tourists in GDP was 0.006%; Italy's GDP was 2 trillion, and the share of Russian tourists in GDP was 0.034%; and Spain's GDP was 1 trillion. 39 The share of billions and Russian tourists in GDP was 0.014%, which shows that before the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, the expenditures of Russian tourists in the GDP of France, Italy, and Spain were not high. When we consider everything for the year 2022, it does not appear that the travel industries in France, Italy, and Spain will be significantly impacted by the sanctions against Russia. However, in today's global economy, your ability to survive depends on how many challenges you can overcome and keep moving forward. Spain, France, and Italy are frequently mentioned when people consider taking a trip to Europe because they normally draw the most visitors. Numerous hotels in the abovementioned countries have predicted that tourists will not visit during the summer of 2022. The Russian government's unwavering stance strongly suggests that there will not be any Russian tourists over the entire season. Since businesses have shifted to their own domestic markets and made the required improvements to welcome additional European tourists, as discussed above, the consequences of the crisis will likely be less severe today. In this regard, it is crucial for hotels to recognize their own weaknesses and make the necessary corrections to become stronger and more resilient over time. It would not be accurate to state that the current problem cannot be resolved by members of the tourism sector because the current crisis is entirely governmental and is a situation where lawful investments are allowed. Whatever steps corporations take, the Russian government will not be able to abolish the "prohibition to access Europe" unless they leave Ukraine.

### Ethical Considerations

Not Applicable.

### Conflict of Interest

We declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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