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## SOVIET HERITAGE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF LITHUANIA

*More than one billion of international tours are related to cultural aspects, especially to cultural heritage. This branch of tourism industry promotes employment, the growth of private business sector, the development of infrastructure, the increment and regeneration of regional economy. However, the spread of tourism all over the world forces separate regions to compete in order to attract more tourists. For this reason, each region has to find something that would ensure its competitive advantage in global tourism market. So far, Lithuanian tourism supply has never been formed on the basis of that principle, therefore, in order to ensure the effective development of regions, as well as the recovery of those Lithuanian districts that became the 'victims' of mass industrialisation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to survive in the rising competition by attracting tourists, tourism products must be unique. The Soviet heritage in Lithuania, especially architectural and industrial, may become this unique cultural product. This article analyses the topics of the Soviet heritage in scientific discourse and presents the results of the study, delivered in 2013 in Lithuania, with the intention of exploring the possibilities of using the Soviet heritage for tourism development.*

*Keywords: tourism, Soviet heritage, competitive advantage, Lithuania.*

## РАДЯНСЬКА СПАДЩИНА І РОЗВИТОК ТУРИЗМУ: ПРИКЛАД ЛИТВИ

Радзявічюс М., Юренієнє В.

*Більше мільярда міжнародних турів пов'язані з культурною спадщиною. Ця галузь індустрії туризму сприяє зайнятості, зростанню приватного бізнесу, розвитку інфраструктури, прирощенню і регенерації регіональної економіки. Проте, поширення туризму в усьому світі змушує окремі регіони конкурувати з метою залучення більшої кількості туристів. З цієї причини кожен регіон повинен знайти те, що забезпечить конкурентну перевагу на світовому ринку туризму. Досі туризм у Литві не був сформований на основі цього принципу, тому, щоб забезпечити ефективний розвиток регіонів, відновити ті литовські райони, що стали "жертвами" масової індустріалізації у другій половині 20-го століття і щоб вижити в зростаючій конкуренції за рахунок залучення туристів, туристичні продукти повинні бути унікальними. Радянська спадщина в Литві, особливо архітектурно-промислова, може стати таким унікальним культурним продуктом. У статті аналізуються питання радянської спадщини в науковому дискурсі і представлені результати дослідження, проведеного в 2013 році в Литві з метою вивчення можливості використання радянської спадщини для розвитку туризму.*

*Ключові слова: туризм, радянська спадщина, конкурентні переваги, Литва.*

## СОВЕТСКОЕ НАСЛЕДИЕ И РАЗВИТИЕ ТУРИЗМА: ПРИМЕР ЛИТВЫ

Радзявичюс М., Юрениене В.

*Более миллиарда международных туров связаны с культурным наследием. Эта отрасль индустрии туризма способствует занятости, росту частного бизнеса, развитию инфраструктуры, приращению и регенерации региональной экономики. Тем не менее, распространение туризма во всем мире заставляет отдельные регионы конкурировать в целях привлечения большего числа туристов. По этой причине каждый регион должен найти то, что обеспечит конкурентное преимущество на мировом рынке туризма. До сих пор туризм в Литве не был сформирован на основе этого принципа, поэтому, чтобы обеспечить эффективное развитие регионов, а также восстановить те литовские районы, которые стали "жертвами" массовой индустриализации во второй половине 20-го века и чтобы выжить в условиях растущей конкуренции за счет привлечения туристов, туристические продукты должны быть уникальными. Советское наследие в Литве, особенно архитектурно-промышленное, может стать этим уникальным культурным продуктом. В статье анализируются вопросы советского наследия в научном дискурсе и представлены результаты исследования, проведенного в 2013 году в Литве с целью изучения возможности использования советского наследия для развития туризма.*

*Ключевые слова:* туризм, советское наследие, конкурентные преимущества, Литва.

**Introduction.** Heritage tourism is one of the most rapidly growing sectors of global economy. Moreover, it is an area that strongly and in most cases positively contributes to the regenerative processes of economically or socially weak regions of the world, thus it highly encourages industry both on global and local levels: the growth of gross domestic product created by tourism makes a relatively lower negative impact on the environment than other industries, the process of emigration and depopulation of the lagging country regions in a country is slowed down due to the jobs created in tourism industry, cultural tourism promotes the perception and conservation of heritage value, and rural tourism - the continuity of traditions and the reduction of regional development disparities.

On the other hand, tourism, as well as any other economy sector, use resources and some of which are non-renewable. Improperly planned and executed activities in heritage tourism can damage the heritage, degrade the quality of living environment, induce the loss of traditional culture and increase social injustice - everyone involved in tourism has a great responsibility for the actions and impact. Therefore, the development of tourism and heritage in the world is an integral part of sustainable development.

Despite the ancient history of Lithuanian state, the country is still developing as an international tourism region. International transport corridors that are crossing Lithuania and great neighbouring tourism industries are important factors in the development of international tourism. Heritage tourism not only creates an opportunity to know the history of a region, traditional way of life, customs, traditional crafts, but it is also a good basis for various regional tourism infrastructure and tourism industry development. Heritage tourism very often helps to preserve the endangered cultural values, adapting them to recreational uses. In addition, heritage tourism and the income it generates is also a great tool for promoting regional economy, which is particularly important

during the post-crisis period. However, successful and sustainable heritage industry development requires reasonable and clear heritage tourism management practice / model that would clearly distinguish the interested parties and take into account their interests. Thus, the purpose of this article is to present the results of the study performed in Lithuania concerning the use of the Soviet heritage for the development of cultural tourism and to introduce a heritage management model.

**The Soviet Heritage and Tourism Management.** In order to ensure the sustainable development of heritage tourism, it is necessary to solve two key problems. First, heritage managers often assume that a tourist is a costless additional client of an existing heritage. But heritage is individual creation, which basically cannot be sold to anyone else. So, whether the heritage brings profit or it becomes a problem, it depends on how the heritage products, located in the same place, will be managed as they have absolutely different meaning for tourists and local residents. This requires a principled heritage management system, which would allow a clear and specific definition of how and what should be done in a heritage site - after all, the whole heritage can be used in many different ways and intended for different markets. Eventually, heritage tourists need different products than local population, thus the heritage object for tourists will differ from the object intended for local population, even if it is the same heritage site. At the same time, the management principles, goals and tasks will also be different.

A similar situation is observed with tourists - very often they also think that most of heritage sites are costless. But in fact the identification, selection, presentation, maintenance and management of heritage sites are not free of charge - in many cases all the costs are covered by the state. This raises the problem of how to combine public spending and private benefits: in relation to the economy, the decision must be made how to return a part of the external gains from heritage objects.

Lithuania restored its independence a bit more than twenty years ago, therefore it is no surprise that the country responds quite sensitively and subjectively to the Soviet topic, especially when it comes to the cultural heritage of that period. This is not surprising: Lithuania has still got the generation of people who have vivid memories of the Soviet reality, the period of partisan fights, as well as the national movement for independence, therefore the Soviet period and the former Soviet Union associates uniquely with terror, censorship and global deficit times. Such assessment of the Soviet times is vital not only in the society but also in political and academic life. It perfectly illustrates the question of Vilnius Green Bridge sculptures, the stars of Vytautas the Great Bridge in Kaunas, the Palace of Culture and Sports in Vilnius and etc. that are constantly causing fierce debates and when the majority are in favour of the Soviet heritage destruction, despite the fact that the biggest part of Lithuanian cultural heritage objects, especially architectural and industrial objects that belong to the Soviet period, are created by the Lithuanians. This suggests an apparent inability to objectively assess the history and cultural heritage. Therefore, in order to preserve the remains of cultural heritage of this despised historical period, it is necessary to conduct thorough investigations. They would not only evaluate and define the impact that 50 years of the Soviet occupation had made on the State of Lithuania and its public, but would also help to create the framework and precedent for the objective evaluation of the Soviet heritage. This would allow to distinguish which objects and cultural artefacts should not only be protected, but would also benefit for the country's economic development, increasing the state's attractiveness to foreign tourists.

After analysing all the studies of the Soviet heritage that have been conducted all around world, three clear aspects were singled out. First of all, it should be noted that two different types of the Soviet cultural tourism are distinguished in literature, i.e. **the red tourism** (travelling to the countries of 'active' communism) and **the communist heritage tourism** (travelling to the former communist countries and the former Soviet Union Republics). This concept was formed by the scholar Caraba (2011:29-39), the University of Bucharest, who claimed that the heritage of all communist countries (both past and present) cannot be examined under one methodology, as the histories of these countries are very different, especially due to the fact that European communist states (except the former Republics of the Soviet Union) had such regimes that left a very large scar in those countries' societies, which complicates the studies of the aforementioned period and an objective assessment of the communist period. According to the author, China had a different fate, therefore its communist heritage is analysed separately - it is the first aspect of the Soviet heritage researches, which forms an absolute majority of all the researches and publications on the Soviet topic (Carabin, 2011:30). The second settled aspect, which basically focuses on cultural heritage tourism, analyses the regime of such countries as North Korea or Cuba and its impact on tourism.

The last aspect that is mainly typical to European authors is intended for the analysis of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet 'reality'. Particular attention is given to Albania, Romania and Bulgaria. Interestingly, the history of Romanian communist period raises interest and is widely discussed by British researchers, e.g. Stenning (2002), Sharpley (2009), Seaton (1996), Maitland (2010), and in particular Light (2010), who focuses on the researches of national Romanian identity, analyses the impact that was made not only by the legendary Count Dracula, but also by the communist regime of Nicholae Ceausescu, as well as the influence of the latter period on the country's tourism.

In addition to the aforementioned authors, Horakova and Ivanov also made a great contribution to the research of communist significance to tourism. Works by Jakovcic, emphasising the regeneration of the Soviet industrial heritage and its adaptation to the needs of contemporary cities, the development of tourism and culture, were particularly appreciated.

The analysis of the studies carried out so far and available scientific publications reveal two different topics. Some of works are intended for the examination of the identity and mentality of countries, when the emphasis is put on the assessment of socialist reality, terror and censorship and the impact of these elements on the current residents of these countries. Other authors investigate the benefits of socialist cultural heritage to the formation of national tourism product, as well as analyse the arising challenges and opportunities, heritage features, its attraction and ways to increase it. Still, among all the aforementioned works, the initiators of the suggested study miss articles on the Soviet cultural heritage management that combine the two above-mentioned topics, i.e. the impact of the Soviet period made on the society and how it is still influencing the formation of national tourism product.

Assessing architectural heritage of the Soviet period, crucially important are the debates about the cultural value of objects: appreciation-negation, closeness-alienation, change-permanence and etc. The emphasis of the meaningful aspect allows making the assumption that most of this period, the architectural evaluation problem is more related to the ambiguity of architecture than to the issues of artistic value.

Therefore, in order to achieve a more objective assessment of architecture, it is important to emphasise the approach that the influence of Soviet past does not have only one meaning, i.e. that despite the strongly politicised assessment of Soviet architecture, the whole architectural property of this period cannot be straightforwardly associated with 'alien' connotations.

It is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the heritagisation of the architecture that belongs to second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is associated not only with ideological Soviet contexts, but also with more general factors, when it comes to dealing with psychological problem in assessing the architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: '<...> in these buildings, which were built not so long ago, the public often do not see specific aesthetic value. It is because this construction period is still alive in memories of many people, they do not feel any sentiments that they would like to save them (Petruelis, 2005). Academic discussions also reveal that historical and contemporary criteria for architecture conservation are not identical (Štelbienė, 2000). These observations show that the Soviet heritage should not be associated exclusively with the Soviet topics, but it should be seen in relation to the general contemporary directions of architecture assessment and conservation.

Even if we assume that Soviet buildings are treated as a fragment of Lithuanian architecture history, another topical issue should also be taken into account - can Soviet architecture and functional types become a living part of modern cities? Incorporating the discording heritage into contemporary urban life is a very difficult problem. As it is pointed out by Markus and Cameron our 'experience and understanding of buildings are always and inevitably formed through the mediation of language and discourse (Markus, Cameron, 2002). Only becoming a part of public discourse, buildings also lay claim to monuments of architectural history.

On the other hand, an attention should be drawn to the fact that society will not sense the value of such architecture, until the architecture of the aforementioned period is given a sense of inseparable part of Lithuanian architectural history and promotion of such an approach is being started. By raising the question of how to properly deal with Lithuanian architectural heritage of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we need an answer to the question whether the objects of this period are an important part of Lithuanian architectural history. Jencks argues that there are two aspects of architectural history relevance – the influence (objects that are interesting because of their importance as a connecting link in architectural history) and perfection (objects that are relevant and interesting as a small, internally connected world)' (Jencks, 1993). In a sense, it can be applied to Soviet architecture, which, in spite of economical poverty and political aspects, is unquestionably valuable as a joining part of Lithuanian architectural development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Otherwise, it would be the situation, predicted by famous architect M. Fuksas: '<...> it may happen that only the objects of the old history and contemporary objects will remain and in the middle there will only be the void of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Petruelis, 2004). It is true that the value of architectural history should not be a pretext to preserve every object of this period - selection is essential.

However, Lithuania follows strictly conservative approach to cultural values (legally, cultural values that have not reached the term of fifty years may be included in the Register of Cultural Heritage only in exceptional cases), while other European countries with the same fate (neighbours Latvia, Estonia, Poland, and Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav countries and Albania) for almost 15 years have been actively analysing the influence of the Soviet period and communist regimes, the benefits of the heritage belonging to this period in developing so-called 'red tourism', and they have also amended the architectural *heritagisation* practice.

The analyses of Soviet influence on tourism were started quite early by British scientists, the most influential of which was D. Hall. He was one of the first to analyse the growth and development of tourism after the fall of communist regimes in Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, the former Yugoslavia, Romania, as well as to examine Soviet influence on the societies and the supply of tourism products and their formation etc. This author has laid the foundations for the interest (and quite an early one - the first Hall's works appeared in 1992) in the Soviet period, especially in its impact on tourism, despite the fact that most of this scientist's work analyse the evolution of South-East Europe and the influence of Balkans for the rest of Europe. Hall not only stimulated the interest in the post-Soviet countries, but also involved local researchers.

It should be noted that so far very little attention is paid to the analysis of the Baltic states, the former republics of the Soviet Union, the Soviet heritage, and in particular its impact on tourism and the national character of the above-mentioned countries. In summary, there is a lack of analytical work, and especially of detailed researches that would analyse the Soviet heritage industry, its prospects for development in the Baltic countries.

**The Soviet Heritage and Heritage Tourism: the Research.** At the beginning of 2013, the authors of this article initiated a study whose primary objective was to investigate the opportunities for the use of the Soviet heritage for Lithuanian tourism development. This study also aimed to investigate the current situation of the Soviet heritage tourism industry, the causes for its formation and to build such business model / strategy that would allow changing the situation, would contribute to most likely very complex and therefore difficult to initiate changes in heritage and tourism industries.

The study was carried out in two directions. First, the situation of heritage and tourism industries in Lithuania was analysed. An expert evaluation was carried out for this purpose, which was also the main method for survey data collection - professionals are those who can best assess the strategy for this industry operation, its performance and can easily identify its weaknesses and name the main difficulties. On the other hand, although, this approach is basically one of the best in order to reveal the specifics of a particular area and to elaborate on it, this study did not receive sufficient involvement and interest from experts. According to the qualitative indicators, 10 experts were selected - each of them was sent an invitation. But in fact, only 3 specialists took part in the study and this fact a little bit affected the reliability of data. The study initially aimed at the standard 90 percent indicator of deviation, which actually amounted only to 65 percent. Although the study is qualitative and this indicator is not essential, it still should be noted as regards to the generalisation of obtained data for the entire Soviet heritage industry in Lithuania.

The process of data collection was also adjusted by a little interest from specialists. During the preparation for the interviews, a general questionnaire consisting of 13 questions, divided into three themes - heritage conservancy, heritage tourism and heritage management - was prepared for the experts. When planning the study, it was estimated that during the interviews this questionnaire could be adapted according to the strongest area of a particular expert. As very few selected specialists responded to the invitation to participate in the study, later this decision was rejected. Otherwise, the data obtained would be very heterogeneous and revealing only a part of information related to the investigation.

In addition to the evaluation of experts, interviews with current Soviet heritage managers were conducted. The main problem was the selection of such objects. Although Lithuania is rich in

the Soviet heritage, not much of it is actually operating and most of heritage objects do not even have a formal organisation. Thus, during the selection, the key factors were a separate organisation, whose activities are directly related to tourism and / or heritage, as well as the level of the society awareness of organisation. Thus, 4 managers of the Soviet heritage were selected - the KGB Museum and the Soviet bunker in Vilnius, Plokštinė (Plateliai) missile base in Plungė region and Grūtas Park in Druskininkai. Unfortunately, only three of the selected object managers agreed to participate in the study - Grūtas Park representatives decided not to participate.

The second direction is an overall evaluation of the Soviet tourism attractiveness from the point of view of Lithuanian population, tourism companies and foreign residents. An interview and two different online questionnaires were prepared for this analysis. Such distribution channel was chosen for the questionnaire due to its convenience for researchers and a wide availability of respondents. By the way, this did not stop from getting a pretty wide range of data (both geographically and demographically). The total number of responses was more than 500.

A total of 120 foreign respondents from 20 different countries took part in the survey. The results obtained are not generally representative, but quite a broad geography is a significant fact: the answers to the questionnaire were very homogeneous, and indeed the results of the survey - although conditionally - reflect the general attitude of foreigners to the heritage of the Soviet period and its attractiveness.

As the aim was to reveal a common tendency of the Soviet heritage tourism attractiveness, it should be noted that during the process of planning this research, Lithuanian tourism target markets were not intentionally analysed, i.e., the survey did not focus on specific countries. The study was carried out to adjust / confirm the theoretical model that was already formulated, which was primarily designed for Lithuanian heritage tourism development, therefore our country's tourism image is not the subject of this investigation.

The survey of tourism business representatives was implemented in two phases. First of all, the selection of respondents was performed on the basis of pre-defined quantitative indicators. The selected companies were sent invitations and those that responded - participated in the interviews. However, it is regrettable that only 5 tourism agencies out of the selected 14 agreed to participate in the study. On the one hand, it shows the employment of survey participants, on the other hand, it can be concluded that creating unique tourism products is not a strategic direction of inbound tourism. And this already shows that private tourism sector lacks innovations and new ideas.

The following chapters will present the main results of the research. First of all, the data received during the interviews with experts and existing Soviet heritage managers will be discussed in more detail. Later, general tendencies of the Soviet heritage attractiveness will be discussed, based on the number of visitors (both Lithuanians and foreign) and the survey of businessmen.

**Heritage Tourism Development: Complex Problems and Unused Opportunities.** Despite a relatively low interest from tourism professionals, the evaluation by experts showed that the fundamental problems of Lithuanian heritage industry lie in our society. All the experts, who participated in the study, unanimously said that our country lacks creative initiatives and solid support for those initiatives. And according to the experts, involved in the study, this problem exists not only in heritage and tourism.

Experts said that Lithuanian heritage protection system is basically outdated and does not meet modern heritage maintenance and enhancement principles. In most cases, heritage

preservationists implementing heritage renovation projects do not take into account the fact that tangible heritage sites are lifeless in substance if they are not adapted to specific activities in future. Moreover, it is not mandatory to have any heritage or tourism-related institution operating in a heritage site. A perfect example is Estonian experience, when the restored old country estates have been adapted for schools and community needs. *This way buildings remain viable and, if local community is properly involved, they become very attractive for visitors - arriving tourists see not the hollow decoy, but a place with its spirit and history.*

The researched also noted that there is a serious lack of cooperation among heritage institutions and heritage project developers. For example, due to the initiative of the Ministry of Economy, a group working on the issues of cultural tourism development was established, but there is no information concerning the results they have achieved. One of the experts who took part in the study told that *'the last project that was initiated in Lithuania ended without much progress, although they had been communicating with heritage specialists and historians. The condition of the property has not changed, because there was no proper interest and cooperation from the side of heritage protection institution'*.

The interviewed professionals noted that *'Lithuanian financial opportunities are not limitless and it is sad, when the Soviet-era buildings, having both artistic and historical value, are mercilessly destroyed, whereas there are always enough funds for moulding new construction history moulage [The Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania – author's remark]'*.

There are many reasons why heritage professionals are very sluggish and unwilling to cooperate, but it is quite difficult to tell which of them is the most important. The experts highlighted *the lack of cooperation culture and traditions; the passivity of interested groups; the rivalry of departments for resources (i.e. money); the governmental attitudes of officials and the lack of responsibility; the lack of evidence-based analysis; the lack of vision; unbelief; incompetence and unwillingness to learn and to change; a narrow understanding of tourism, etc.'*

Although experts, participating in the study, were unanimous in quite sceptical evaluation of Lithuanian heritage protection, the opinion of experts on the responsibility for this area were different. They say that it is still difficult to make a difference in Lithuania, not so much due to the state system of care, or bureaucrats' *'resistance to change'*, as because of the prevailing public view that all work must be done by someone else, the public - in all cases - try to avoid responsibility and to shift it towards governmental representatives.

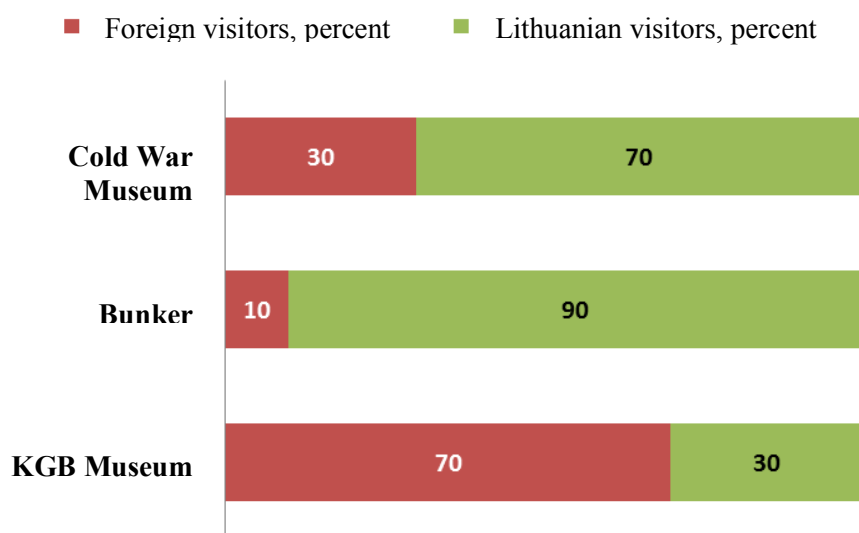
On the other hand, the experts also pointed out that the development of heritage projects lies with few authorities with different goals, which leads to permanent stagnation and very slow, i.e. very late and untimely decisions. The government has created a very rigid and inefficient heritage maintenance system, which instead of encouraging, in many cases, suppress the cultural heritage projects, in particular those that related to heritage animation.

The experts also agreed on the issue of the Soviet heritage, arguing that the history of this period is attractive, especially for the visitors from Western countries. For example, one of the experts says that *it is a real attraction for foreigners, because there's nothing similar anywhere else - neither in Russia nor in other Baltic countries. Their [the Westerners' – author's remark] history books did not speak about Lithuania.* The same opinion is shared by the managers of currently operating Soviet heritage. The manager of the Soviet bunker states that Soviet-era cultural heritage



– both tangible and intangible – is yet underdeveloped and it is perspective branch of tourism business.

On the other hand, experts note that the Soviet regime occupied a large part of the world, so Lithuania is not very unique in this regard. Attention is also drawn to the fact that the Soviet regime – it's just a historical period of few decades, which is too short to really leave a clear mark in tangible form. Therefore, the experts recommend to differentiate this cultural heritage, characterised by strong dissonance. According to them, in some cases, the places referring to the Soviet period, particularly the memorials of Soviet victims (similar as Nazi concentration camps that are better known to the Westerners), meaningfully communicate Lithuanian history and thus receive a certain sympathy from tourists. *'But the case when somebody attempts to sell the Soviet heritage as a kind of amusement for Western tourists and very often for the Lithuanians, even if it is for educational purpose - it is difficult to understand.* The KGB Museum representative in Vilnius agrees with the experts regarding the importance of education. She says that *every historical period leaves its heritage and it must be protected. It is especially important to introduce the ideologised the Soviet heritage for those who live the West and who have no idea what was behind the Iron Curtain.* This position is also well illustrated by the visitor statistics presented by the Soviet heritage managers: those objects that are more focused on the presentation of history than on entertainment attract more attention from foreign visitors.



**Figure 1. The distribution of the visitors of the Soviet heritage objects in 2012**

Thus, according to the experts, while forming the Soviet heritage tourism model, it is important not to balance heritage protection and heritage use, i.e., it is necessary to draw attention to the fact how such heritage will be developed and for what audience it will be intended. Not only has the economic side of the heritage project, but also the way it will be accepted by local community depended on that. The following conclusion can be drawn that despite a general public's indifference, community's opinion is important.

According to the specialists participating in the study, local dweller better feels and knows his land, therefore it is natural that it is the local community that has to say the most important word.

On the other hand, the research analysts raised doubts concerning how many Lithuanian citizens realise their power to influence the decisions and initiatives. A clear separation between the business and 'ordinary' people is still alive in Lithuania, although in all cases they work in order to achieve the same goals. *In our society business is heavily stigmatised: even in such cases, when businessmen seem to take not profitable projects, aiming to contribute to the development of country and the quality of society life, the society still takes a negative approach - if businessmen undertake something, it means they will have something to speculate. Therefore, businessmen are losing their interest in culture, and in many cases, good ideas and initiatives are pushed aside.* (Expert No. 2). As heritage management and animation is quite an expensive investment, many businessmen simply refuse to take such projects. Despite the fact that experts still believe that *local people are the real hosts of tourist destination and in the case of heritage tourism - local population is the real expert of the main resource - the heritage. Tourism that is useless for local residents has no future. Sooner or later conflicts will arise and it will destroy the tourist destination.*

On the other hand, community cannot be the only interested party, which can make decisions about what and how to do in a specific place of the site, especially in Lithuania, where there is a great lack of experience in carrying out community projects. The study experts say that *many communities are formed by the reverse principle, i.e., communities were born, because there was an initiative by the local government. In our country the situation is opposite than in Europe, where communities commonly raise initiatives and entrust their implementation to local authorities. So if there is no order from an authority, it will be very difficult to community to reach consensus.* So the best is to find a balance between the interests of local community and business entities.

However, the experts do not come to an agreement whether heritage tourism is sufficiently cost-effective and perspective industry. *In some areas of Lithuania heritage tourism has already become a significant factor, stimulating local economy - e. g. in Vilnius, Neringa and even more - in Trakai. But I'm not very optimistic as regards to the new areas of such attraction. Of course, if the heritage in any area is creatively presented to visitors, it may encourage more tourists to come and thus to provide additional income for local population, but I doubt if that could be called the 'engine' of local economy.* (Expert No. 1).

The expert also emphasised that there is no need of a sudden agricultural country conversion into the region of heritage tourism - it is already a significant progress that growing heritage tourism has contributed to the diversification of the means of subsistence in some parts of the country. *If we looked globally, we would understand that we are not a remote island with a unique heritage, which might interest many tourists. We could become exclusive due to a huge respect for our heritage, because we see the meaning in protecting it and we know better than others how to present it to our guests.* (Expert No. 1).

On the other hand, the Soviet heritage sites, which are currently operating, are great examples that the heritage of this historical period is very interesting for foreign tourists. According to the data provided by the heritage managers, visitors really like these heritage presentation / delivery forms: all three heritage managers, participating in the study, claimed that the vast majority of visitors give a positive feedback.

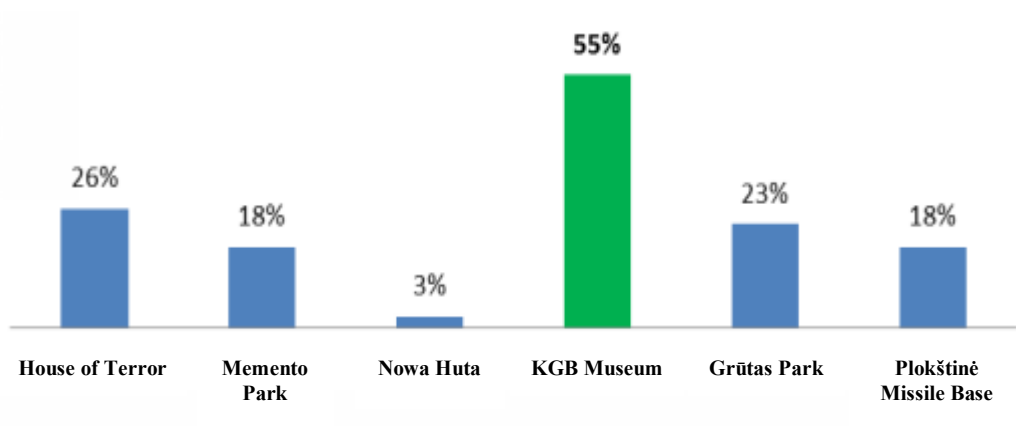
Thinking about the opportunities to use the Soviet heritage for the heritage tourism development in Lithuania, the main problem identified by the experts was miscommunication between different interested parties. For example, specialists claim that the impediment for a more

successful heritage project development is a large bureaucratic apparatus, therefore financial resources are not available for everyone - the technical requirements of most of the financial instruments are such that only their creators correspond to them. On the other hand, financial and legal issues are relevant when there is something to negotiate about, when there is a settlement reached concerning what and how we want to do. What concerns developing tourism in general, Lithuania has a serious lack of innovation, creative ideas and motivation to seek solutions: *We are going through the calm of ideas in all fronts [community, business and government - author's remark]. We are constantly looking for various 'good experiences', but we lack our own unique solutions. And we are a different country with different people' (Expert No.2).*

Thus, the experts pointed out quite extensive, structural problems, which are also reflected in the responses of heritage managers. For example, too less funding and a very high staff turnover, the lack of cooperation, the lack of initiative support and etc. On the other hand, it should be noted that the managers of existing Soviet objects are not active and motivated enough as they should be.

The KGB Museum is the one that showed up from other managers that participated in the research: it is the only one that maintains close relations with similar organisations in neighbouring countries, it is actively developing collaboration networks with local and foreign travel agencies, educational institutions, it carries out marketing campaigns, actively cooperates with Lithuanian and foreign media and etc. The latter fact is illustrated by the reputation of the museum in the world.

The foreigners, who participated in the research, said that it was the most famous museum out of all Soviet heritage objects in Central and Eastern Europe. But at the same time it should also be noted that other Soviet heritage managers, who took part in the study, are acting much more passive.



**Figure 2. The society awareness of the Soviet heritage objects**

To conclude this part of study, the attention should be paid to the following key points: a) heritage tourism is mostly influenced by cooperation and networking between different organisations and the interested parties - when there is no communication and no intention to find a compromise solution, the majority of heritage development initiatives remain unimplemented; b) Heritage tourism development must be aligned with the local community, which is the 'hostess' of the area; its support ensures the sustainable development of heritage tourism; c) the most important factor in the success of heritage tourism is expedient heritage animation and presentation to visitors; d) heritage project development is impeded by low sponsorship for adaptation projects. Thus, the

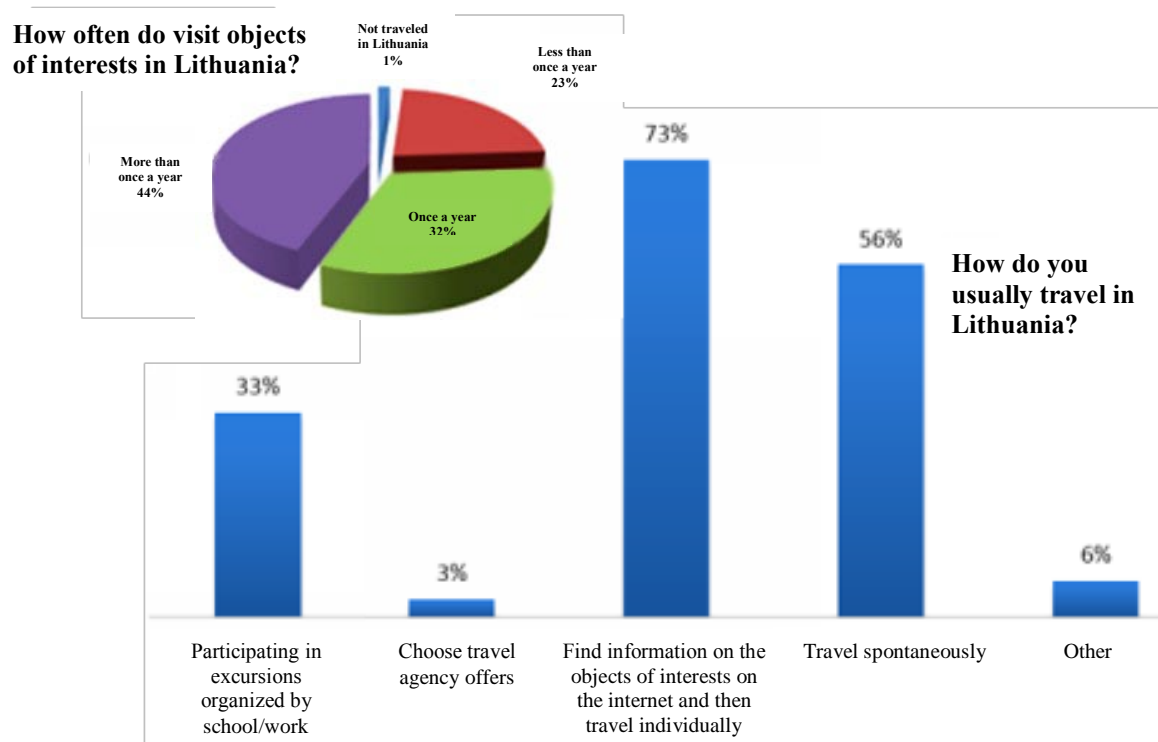
expert evaluation showed that heritage tourism, as well as many other fields, is a very complex industry, the topic of which is associated with many different factors.

**The Soviet Heritage Attractiveness: Different Approaches.** The next part of the study is a survey of visitors and businessmen, working with inbound tourism. In general, the relative importance of this part of the study is lower, so the surveys did not include very broad and comprehensive data.

In discussing the results, it is important to describe a general data of the respondents. The age of survey respondents ranges from 16 to 70 years. Such a wide distribution of the respondents in terms of age was unexpected when planning the study, but it reveals the inter-generational perception and evaluations. Differences between the younger and the older generations are relevant to the completeness of the study generalisation. Assessing respondents by sex, the number of women was a bit higher.

The absolute majority of the survey respondents consisted of Lithuanian population aged from 18 to 45. Since the main tourists are people of that age and they constitute the biggest part of consumers who have the highest purchasing power, such age distribution leads to more significant and more generalised conclusions of the study.

The survey was made up of two equal parts. According to theory, in the case of a specific country, the country's population are potential tourists and communities (in some cases - even governmental) representatives. Since the issues related to travel habits and preferences are more conventional, they were placed at the beginning of the survey. Thus, evaluating Lithuanian travel behaviour, respondents were asked how often do they travel across Lithuania and what means of travelling do they use. Respondents' answers are presented in Figure 3.

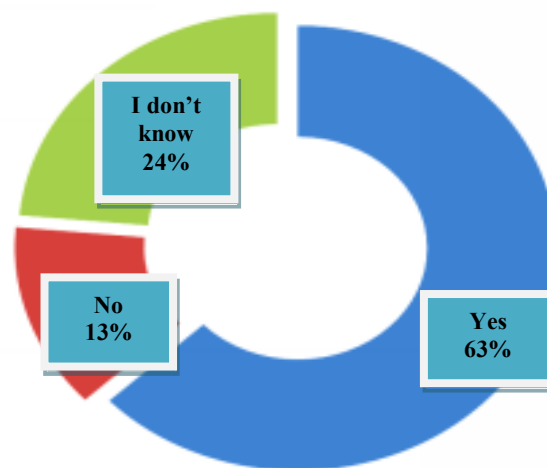


**Figure 3. Lithuanian travel habits**

As it is shown in Figure 3, more than two-thirds of the respondents at least once a year travel around their home country. This suggests that the Lithuanians are very much interested in their country, they think it is attractive for travelling. On the other hand, it shows a rather limited financial potential of Lithuanian people - travelling inside the homeland, especially in such a small country as Lithuania, is quite cheap.

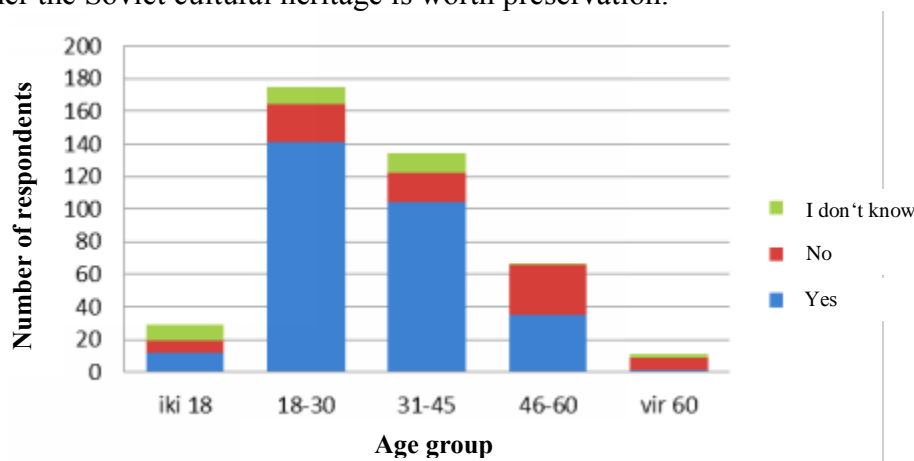
Respondents were also asked about the Soviet heritage, trying to assess the attractiveness of this cultural heritage as a travel destination (or one of the destinations) for the Lithuanians. Figure 4 shows a general attitude of the survey respondents towards the Soviet heritage.

**Does the Soviet heritage objects should be include into the excursion routes in Lithuania?**



**Figure 4. The assessment of the Soviet heritage**

As it can be seen from the Figure 4, more than half of the study participants were in favour of the Soviet heritage promotion (i.e., the inclusion of such objects in tourism routes). This shows that in general the Lithuanians think positive about the Soviet heritage. On the other hand, a relatively large number of respondents who do not have an opinion show that the public is not fully determined whether the Soviet cultural heritage is worth preservation.



**Figure 5. The relationship between age and assessment**

Figure 5 shows the dependence of the respondents' opinions on the age. As seen above, the age group of 18-45 years are most positive. The biggest part of Lithuanian population that think of the cultural heritage negatively is aged 46-60. Such distribution is not surprising - the elder generation survived the Soviet era, and what younger Lithuanian citizens see as the heritage, the elder generation treat as 'present.' More surprising was a significant part of respondents who were younger than 18 years and had no opinion.

Assessing the bonds between the respondents' attitudes and types of their residential area, it became clear that people living in big cities (i.e., Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda) are those who mostly appreciate the Soviet heritage and its potential for tourism. Rural population has the most sceptical attitude towards it. On the other hand, it is the rural population that makes up the biggest part of the oldest population.

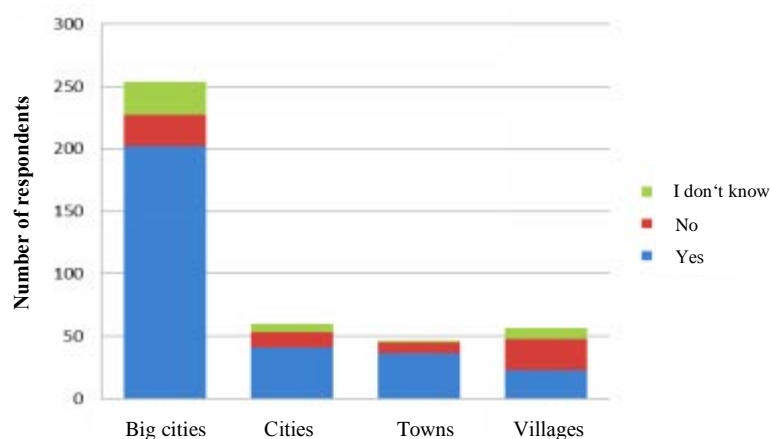


Figure 6. The assessment relationship between residential areas and the Soviet heritage

Respondents were also asked which of the Soviet-era architecture objects (as architecture is a part of cultural heritage that is most visually noticeable and which the research participants find the most easier to identify with) best represent Lithuania.

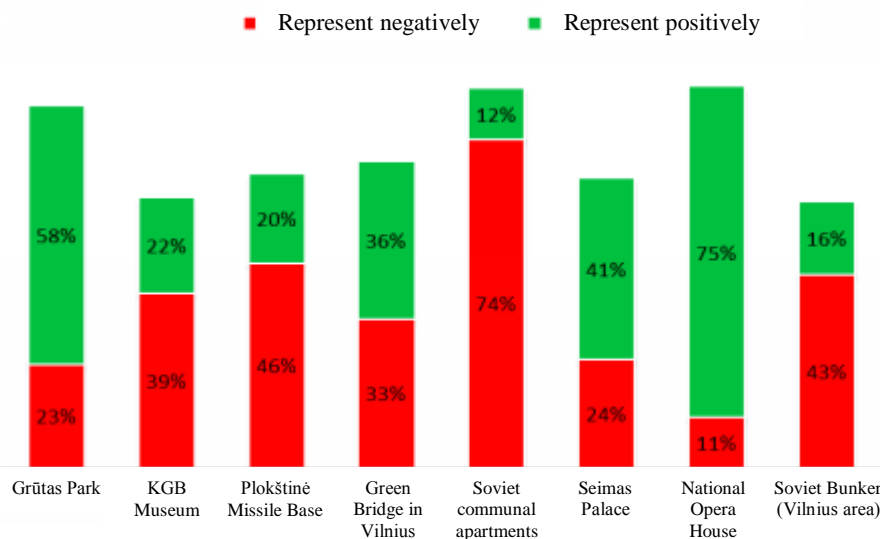
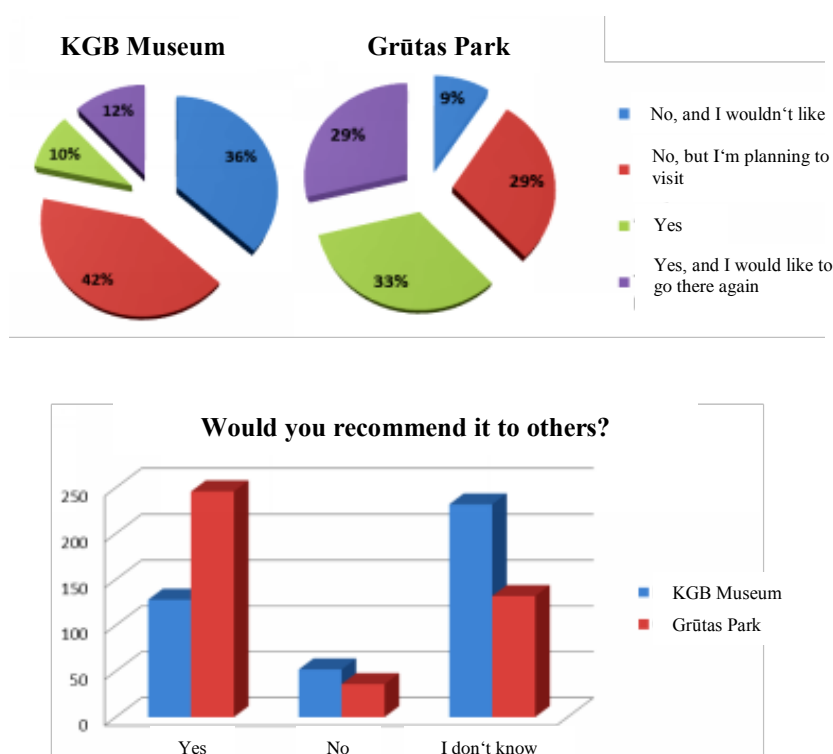


Figure 7. Soviet Heritage Assessment

The responses of the study participants' confirmed the position expressed by the experts - people prefer heritage which is not associated with a negative side of the Soviet history. As it can be seen, respondents indicated that the best Soviet building, which could represent the country is Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, whereas Plokštinės (Platelių) missile base received the most of negative responses as well as Soviet communal apartments, although the latter are being actively explored at the moment, offering to form the urban reserves there.

As it may be seen, there is a dissonance between the society, scholars and heritage professionals' attitudes and evaluations. So the following conclusions can be drawn that the Lithuanians are not yet ready to properly reflect and objectively assess the Soviet period. This is reflected in the separate evaluation of some objects.

As there are only a few objects of the Soviet heritage operating in Lithuania, in order to make a more detailed assessment of the Soviet heritage, the objects that are most discussed in a public space were selected, i.e., the KGB Museum and Grūtas Park. Participants were asked to indicate whether they have visited these objects and whether they would recommend them to others.



**Figure 8. Comparison of Grūtas Park and KGB Museum**

As shown in Figure 8, Grūtas Park is seen much more positively than the KGB Museum: the majority of the survey participants have visited it and would recommend it to their friends. It should also be noted that only 9 percent of respondents have a categorically negative opinion concerning this park. Meanwhile, the KGB Museum is very strictly assessed - more than one-third of the Lithuanians are not interested in this heritage object.

This picture reveals an interesting situation. KGB museum managers claim that both Lithuanian and foreign nationals give only positive feedback on this object. For the sake of clarity,

it should be noted that this can be proved by the guest book of the museum that records visitors' reviews. So there is no reason for the author of the study to doubt the managers.

Also, there are no reasons to doubt the results of the survey of visitors (the results are generalised, summative, anonymous), so it can be concluded that the majority of the Lithuanians evaluate one or another thing according to prevailing stereotypes. Firstly, it is likely that the museum is seen as boring, unattractive due to the type of organisation activity - usually museums are associated with boredom in Lithuania. Secondly, it is a painful historical memory: the museum represents the dark side of Lithuanian history, the horrors of the occupation period and presenting them as a kind of 'entertainment' is usually negatively assessed, ignoring the educational side of such museum activities. Together such stereotypical and conservative approach is limited by other people's initiatives. So it is worth to raise a question - whether or not should the development depend on the community? This is an important question, because one of the objectives of the research is to adapt already formulated theoretical model of the Soviet heritage management, in which one of the interested parties is the community. Therefore, the study participants were asked who they think should be responsible for the development of heritage projects.

The survey of Lithuanian population confirmed the statements made by the experts: almost half of the respondents said that heritage - is a municipality (or in other words - governmental) prerogative and more than 40 percent of the survey participants indicated that heritage projects are the responsibility of heritage professionals. This shows that the public is not ready to take the responsibility and initiative, even if it concerns the matters that directly affect each of us.

Of course, the attention should be paid to the fact that more than 90 percent of the survey participants responded positively to the question of whether the local community has an influence on the development of heritage tourism. 65 percent pointed out that communities simply lack interest for solving such issues. Thus, the results show that the society is dominated by the right-duty dualism: while as many as 90 per cent are aware that the site owners are the local people, the community, only 7 percent tend to take the responsibility. In other words, today the public tends to take its rights but it forgets its duties. This situation very often has negative consequences and they are felt not only in the areas related to heritage and tourism.

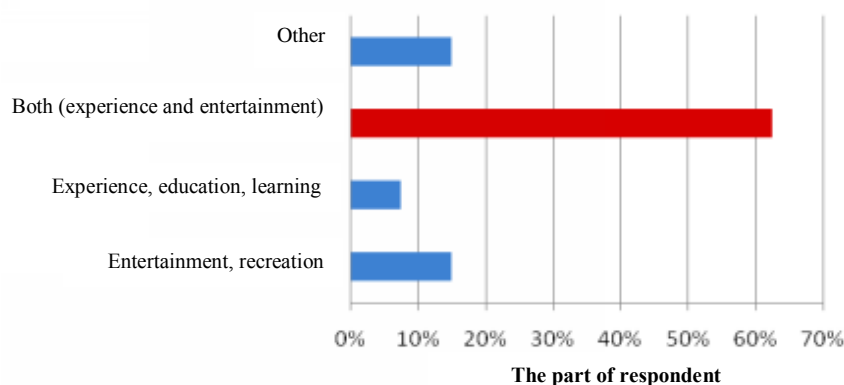
The next group of subjects were foreigners. This part of respondents is very important - after all, it is the money from foreign arrivals left inside the visited country that generate income and create added value for tourism industry. The study involved 120 people from 20 countries, aged from 16 to 55 years. Mostly the respondents were 18-25 years old. The survey involved more women than men - they accounted for almost two-thirds of the total participants. If assessing respondents geographically, the study participants mainly came from D. Britain and Spain.

One of the goals of this survey was to find out the opinion of foreign residents, not only of those who have not encountered the Soviet times but also of those who have never been to Lithuania. This was relatively achieved. The biggest part of the participants has not visited our country and did not know what the Soviet heritage is.

At this point it is important to draw the attention to the fact that the vast majority of the surveyed people expressed a desire to visit the Soviet heritage sites. This confirms the findings received during the expert evaluation. On the other hand, contrary to the experts, this survey revealed that while travelling in the heritage areas foreign visitors are looking not so much for education as for solid experience i.e., the complex of entertainment and education. Such choice of



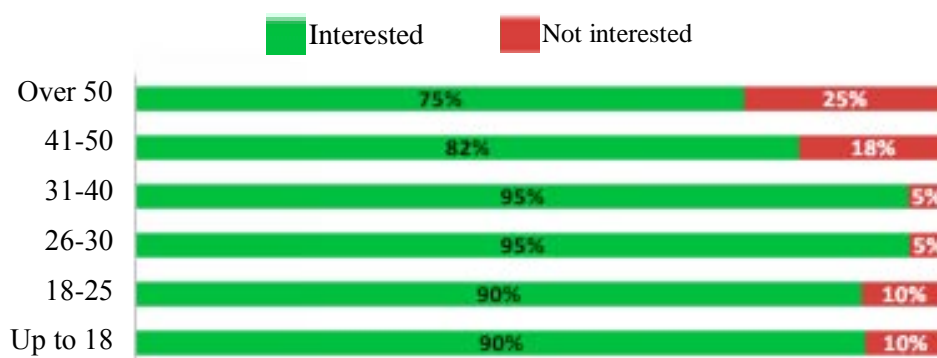
visitors together explains such a strong interest in the Soviet heritage: visiting such area or object would allow experiencing and learning that part of the world history, which was unknown for many people from the Western world.



**Figure 9. Travel goals / expectations**

Since this survey was aimed to find out the opinion of the foreign population towards the Soviet heritage and to evaluate the potential of such heritage for tourism development, the data was analysed from different aspects. However, in all cases similar findings have been obtained - the vast majority of respondents are very interested in this period of history and what it has left for today's generations. Nevertheless, some of the survey results deserve special mentioning.

In particular, the interest in the Soviet heritage is quite closely related to the respondents' age. The Soviet heritage as a possible destination was rather sceptically evaluated by the respondents whose age was over 50 years. This is relatively natural, because these people can be related to the World War II history and its consequences. So, they tend to evaluate this period of time more critically.



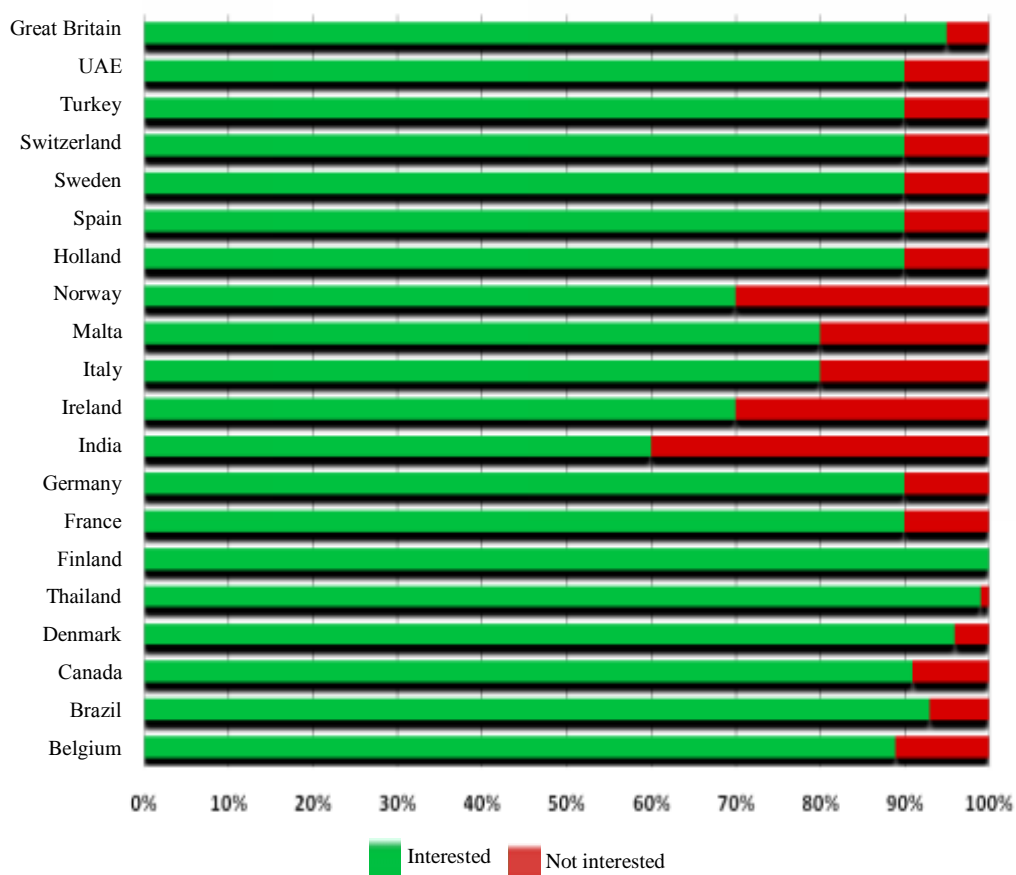
**Figure 10. Respondents' interest in the Soviet heritage by the age groups**

More interesting is the case among younger respondents. Usually the youngest members of society share a more active interest in the unseen / unknown things. In this case, a little more interest in the Soviet heritage was revealed among the respondents aged between 26-40 years compared with 16-25 years.

Of course, according to the number of the study participants, it is difficult to say whether this is the only case or if the conclusion can be made that the Cold War history, especially related to the

former Soviet Union, is ignored, i.e., schools provide too little information to young people so that they could assess it? In this case, at least because of national incentives, we should cherish the heritage of this period, otherwise the world will quickly forget this totalitarian regime, which is the second by the number of crimes against humanity, and its damages. In this case, heritage is not only important as a 'money machine', but it also gives a sense to the national experience and identity.

Another interesting aspect that was revealed after the analysis of the respondents' responses, is the correlation between the interest in the Soviet heritage and the country. The cultural heritage that belongs to this period mostly interests the Scandinavians and Finnish people: all respondents from Finland said 'yes' to the question of whether they would like to visit the Soviet heritage site.



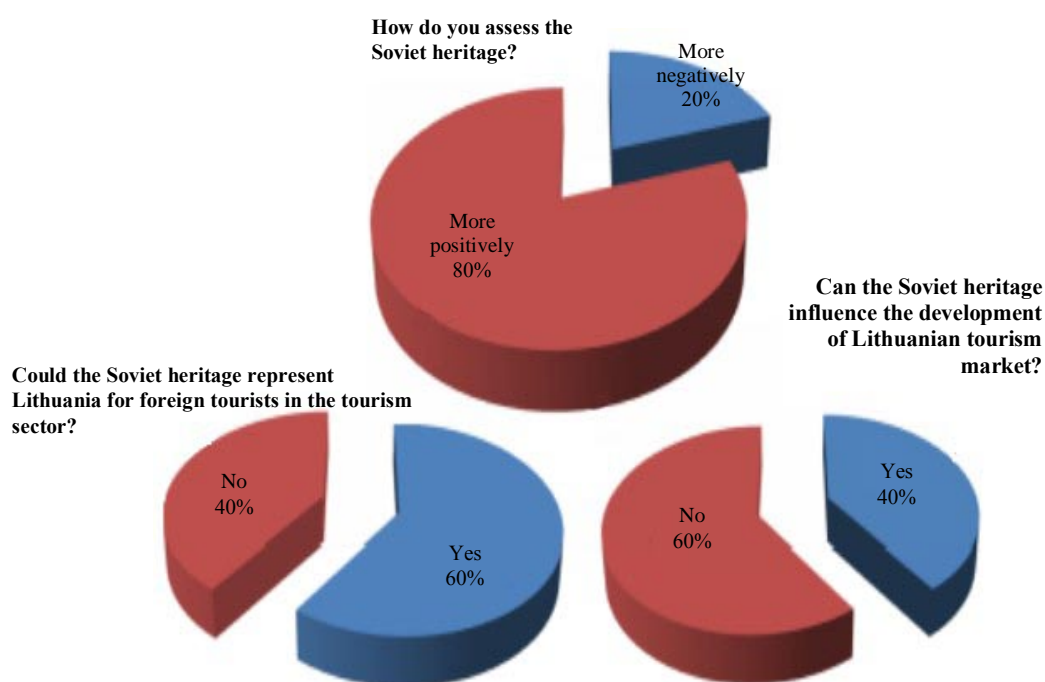
**Figure 11. The interest in the Soviet heritage by country**

Although the survey data cannot be generalised due to the low number of responses, the data shows target tourism markets, which could popularise the Soviet heritage tourism in Lithuania, i.e., the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, Thailand and Brazil.

The last interview was intended for tourism industry representatives - in order to investigate another interested party in the heritage management model, i.e. to evaluate the approach of people that are directly related to the heritage industry. Their position for one or another matter determines whether a particular heritage object will become an attraction as it is the businessmen who bring the locality 'buyers', i.e. tourists.

Unlike interviewing Lithuanian and foreign residents, the survey of businessmen was carried out only in accordance with pre-defined indicators selected by business representatives. Unfortunately, it is regrettable that the majority of entrepreneurs refused to participate in the study or did not respond to the invitation in general. It strongly influenced the survey results, as only 5 companies participated in the research out of the selected 14. Thus the resultant data only relatively represents the position of tourism industry businessmen towards the Soviet heritage and the data obtained cannot be applied to all tourism professionals. Moreover, it is not always possible to find a consensus or a common direction among the respondents.

The companies that took part in the survey are specialising in the inbound tourism for more than 5 years, so that is why their opinion is quite significant. Therefore, speaking of the approach of tourism businessmen towards the Soviet heritage, it can be concluded that most of the respondents assess the heritage of this period positively. This can be seen in Figure 12.



**Figure 12. Tourism business approach to the Soviet heritage**

On the one hand, more than half of the respondents believe that the Soviet heritage does not / will not have a real impact on the tourism market. It follows that the entrepreneurs are rather reserved in regards to new tourism directions. On the other hand, they need to evaluate the risks, therefore more traditional tourist destinations are supported. However, respondents also noted that the Soviet heritage can become the object presenting Lithuanian tourism.

Positive attitude towards the Soviet heritage is also confirmed by the fact that most of the surveyed companies have already prepared the Soviet heritage tourism products, as well as many of them claim that the Soviet heritage objects must be cherished, because they are the tourism resources. Figure 13 presents the summarised opinion of the respondents.

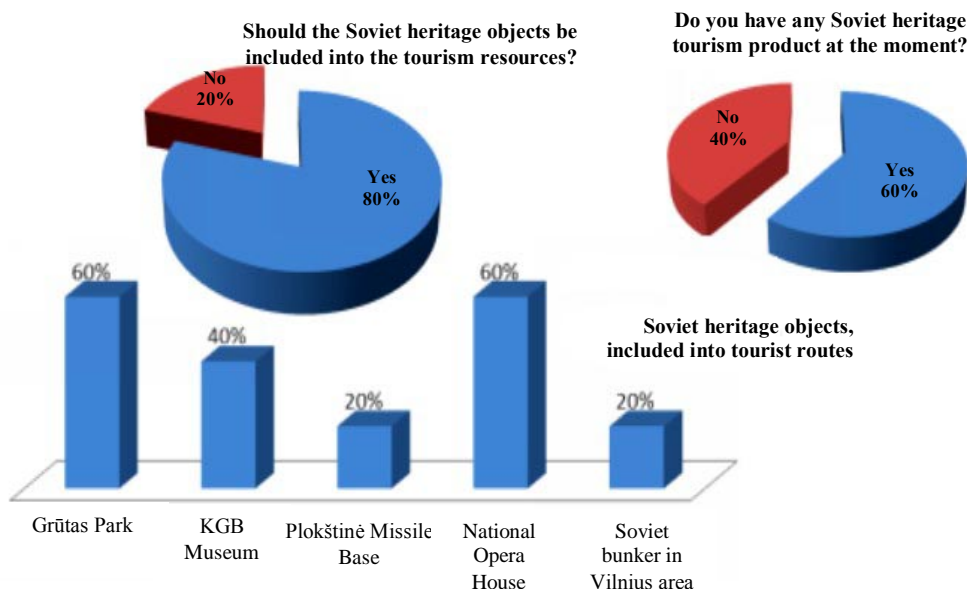


Figure 13. The Soviet heritage tourism in Lithuania

Attention should be drawn to the fact that most of the businessmen have included those objects of the Soviet heritage routes that were indicated as most valuable by the people of Lithuania. This shows that tourism representatives respond to the views of local dwellers and develop those objects which are considered most unique and valuable by the community. Visitors from abroad create a synergy effect, as they are shown what the country’s people are most proud of.

On the other hand, the objects which should be presented to foreign tourists are also selected in regards to what businessmen consider as the Soviet heritage. Tourism professionals mainly assign the urban and architectural heritage to the Soviet heritage. Also a number of entrepreneurs attribute the then transport and culture to the Soviet heritage.

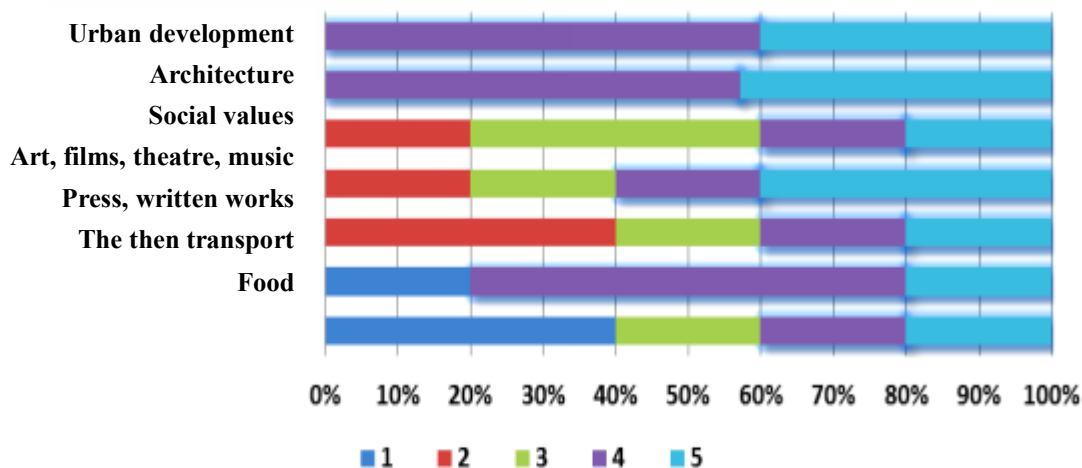
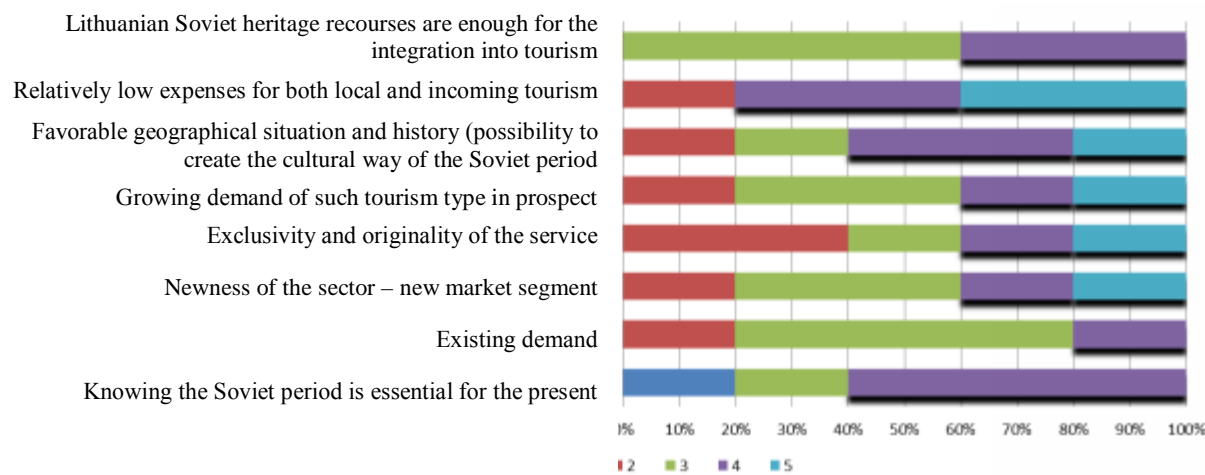


Figure 14. The Soviet heritage elements

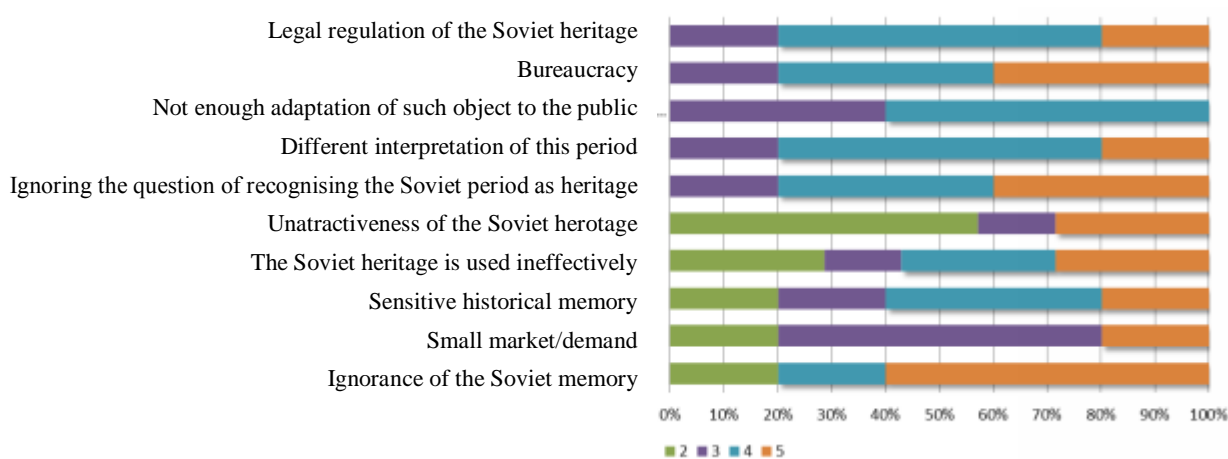
During the study, businessmen were also asked about the factors or causes - social, economic, political, legal, etc. - that encourage or inhibit from the creation of the Soviet heritage tourism products. Tourism company representatives named motivation as one of the main encouraging factors i.e. most of them start to develop the Soviet heritage products because of the view that a proper knowledge of the Soviet period is necessary to understand the present, and it is very important part of our national identity (without questioning - is it good or bad).



**Figure 15. The driving factors of the Soviet heritage tourism**

In addition to the aforementioned factor, the study participants indicated the relatively low costs of travel for both domestic and foreign tourists, as well as a favourable geographical position of Lithuania as significant factors for the Soviet tourism development.

Figure 16 demonstrates the respondents’ opinion about the limiting factors for the Soviet heritage. In this case, the attention should be drawn to the fact that almost all of the factors presented in the survey appeared to be sufficiently important ‘obstacles’ based on the opinion of study participants.



**Figure 16. The factors limiting the Soviet heritage tourism development**

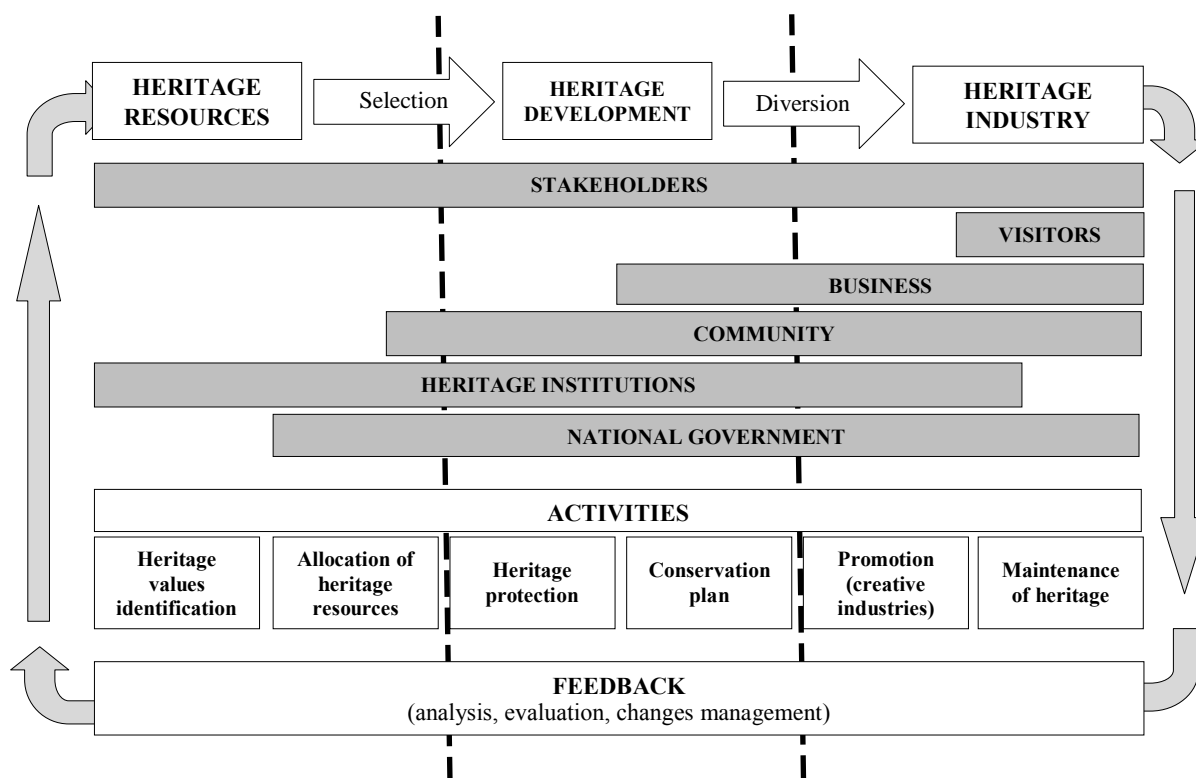
In fact, the respondents gave the highest rank to the disregard of history - according to the respondents, the unfavourable public opinion and the avoidance of an awkward topic is a key reason why many tourism companies do not develop this tourism product. Such responses only confirm the general position of the study participants - the public is not prepared to properly reflect and understand the cultural heritage of the occupation period, it is still not ready to objectively assess their history.

In addition to this factor, the respondents also highlighted difficult legal regulation of the Soviet heritage and bureaucracy in general. This is a direct criticism for the Lithuanian heritage institutions, which should take into account the criticisms related to formal and bureaucratic business processes. Moreover, the experts who participated in the research also pointed out that the Lithuanian heritage system is inflexible and does not meet modern heritage management principles. So the survey of the business representatives reflects the general moods of heritage tourism professionals.

Summing up the second part of the study, the following conclusions can be made: a) taking into account the opinion of the respondents, the preferred Soviet heritage is the one that is not associated with the negative side of the Soviet history; b) there is a dissonance between the public and heritage / tourism professionals, indicating that residents are not ready to evaluate objectively the Soviet period; c) the right-duty dualism dominates in the society; d) visitors are very interested in the heritage of the Soviet period - it is interesting for people from different countries and belonging to various groups of age; e) tourism companies representatives appreciate the opinion of local community and they include those Soviet heritage objects into their tourism routes that the community consider as unique and valuable; f) the entrepreneurs are encouraged to promote the development of the Soviet heritage tourism by the perception that a proper knowledge of the Soviet period is necessary to understand the present - it is very important to develop the nation's identity; g) inert and negative public opinion with regard to the Soviet era is an essential reason why many tourism companies do not develop this tourist product.

According to the qualitative analysis, the model of Lithuanian heritage management was formed, which is presented in Figure 17. Despite the prevailing international practice, we are not yet ready to entrust heritage (especially Soviet) projects to the communities. On the other hand, it is likely that the Lithuanians identify the concept of community with self-governance institution - it is not bad if we are talking about the intensely urbanised area (e.g., Vilnius, Kaunas etc.).

Accordingly, in this model it was decided not use the communities and the central government concepts that are specific to UNESCO heritage management practices, but a self-governance appeared there - an interested party, capable to combine the interests of both the community and the central government and having more coordination skills, in order to ensure the successful development of heritage projects and constructive co-operation between business and local community. In addition, the self-governance usually has got more financial leverage in order to properly develop heritage projects, compared with communities.



**Figure 17. The management model of Lithuanian heritage**

**Conclusions.** Today, the heritage industry is a part of creative industry, although it differs a little bit from other cultural industries: the heritage is not only inherited - it is created, constantly reproduced and realised. The most common process when legacy becomes heritage is called interpretation. Resources, i.e. legacy becomes heritage due to the interpretation. Legacy is interpreted by converting it to heritage and heritage object is again interpreted when presenting it to the public. Only then legacy becomes (or does not become) heritage.

Heritage tourism and the projects of heritage adaptation for public interest have a tremendous positive social and economic impact on regions. This tourism destination does not require huge initial investments, but has a great direct and indirect effects on the area: the heritage industry is developing, the employment of population is growing and the heritage industry has a huge inductive impact on other areas of economy, even if they are not directly related. After conducting the Soviet heritage industry analysis, it was found that it is only developing in Lithuania.

According to the assessment provided by the experts and the survey of businessmen, the main reasons are legal restrictions and bureaucracy. The managers of the heritage objects that are currently operating also indicated financial problems (too little funding, it is difficult to form a relatively large staff because of seasonal variation and etc). However, the situation is likely to change eventually, given that the majority of the surveyed entrepreneurs assess the Soviet heritage positively and consider it a viable tourism niche.

The study revealed that all the participants, the respondents of the study acknowledged that the Soviets have left a black spot in our history - it is an advantage of our tourism that has both economic and social-emotional charge, which is important not only for foreign tourists, but also for us as a nation. On the other hand, all the interested groups differently assess not so much a period

as its cultural heritage. Our society still tends to remove and to obliterate from its memory the objects, which most distinctly demonstrate the extremes of that time - tremendous ambitions and empty shops, pompous facades and absolute poverty inside and etc. On the other hand, most of the participants were in favour of an exciting heritage presentation / animation - the participant indicated Grūtas Park as quite acceptable and attractive object of the Soviet heritage. While foreigners are more familiar with the KGB museum. Nonetheless, these two objects attract a lot of visitors from abroad, and travel agencies have already accustomed to form the excursions so that foreign tourists have a chance to visit both objects. It is therefore possible that the flow of visitors will grow even more, and it will contribute to the regional development, as consistently growing number of visitors, promotes the development of small business. Heritage development projects in this way help to solve such problems as unemployment and economic difficulties in the region.

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