



Industry Briefing Papers 2016

ASIA: RUSSIA

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to spa, wellness, wellness travel or well-being?

With quite a large number of new hotels and wellness destinations appearing in Russia (over a thousand hotels between 2010-2013), we are witnessing now a serious shift to domestic wellness tourism. There is a strong demand for medical wellness programs among local tourists, their number growing by 10% per year. Russians are getting back to the old tradition to spend the vacations in health resorts (sanatoria) on the Black Sea coast and in the Northern Caucasus region. Within the past few years Russia has demonstrated amazing statistics which made it the second country in Europe by the hot springs market. Almost all of the 2000 sanatoria offer modern spa and wellness treatments. Local developers and state officials are no longer doubting when it comes to investing in spa /wellness hotels, and the government has made official statements in favor of restoring the culture and practices of health resorts.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think is the most important development in your country for each of the following wellness sectors:

Spas:

A few domestic spa operators have appeared in the Russian market within the past two years. National standards for spa services are available, and elaboration of professional standards for spa therapists is underway. There are several projects of classical thermal spas in the South of Russia. Three on-line education courses for spa therapists and spa managers have been launched in 2016.

Beauty:

The majority of Cosmetology treatments can no longer be administered without a medical license. Any beauty salon or spa that offers facials other than product applications or massage, has to employ a full-time MD. There is a growing demand among Russian clients for the micro pigmentation treatments, and the number of «permanent make-up salons» is quite impressive.

Fitness:

For several decades serious fitness operators have been dominating in the market. Now time has come for «budget» fitness clubs, available to broader layers of population. A recent example of tremendous success is the «Fizika» chain of clubs established in partnership with «Technogym», with hundreds of workout machines in modern facilities at a very low monthly fee. However, yoga studios clubs are leading both in numbers and popularity among Russian clients.

Nutrition:

The current trend among wellness-aware Russians is buying organic food «Farmers'» shops and markets as well as healthy menu delivery systems. There is quite a large number of wholesome food suppliers, some of them offering food deliveries on a subscription-basis. One can pay for a relatively inexpensive subscription and get a weekly supply of organic food from local farmers. Nutrition and culinary classes are extremely popular, and almost every TV channel is offering programs «Cooking at home».

Wellness Tourism:

Every fifth Russian tourist has chosen a wellness destination for vacations in 2013. Over 8 million wellness tourists have travelled to domestic destinations, while only about 3 million people have preferred to go abroad to spa and wellness resorts. The majority of primary wellness tourists are still with the age span of 45-60, going to traditional health resorts, whereas younger generations are rather interested in popular international wellness destinations.

Wellness Communities or Real Estate:

Wellness Community is still a «terra incognita» in Russia but the real estate developers are gradually addressing the issue. Residential spas in elite condominiums have become quite a current phenomenon. There are several Spa salons in the Moscow City Towers, and a few more projects being developed. But the demand for spa apartments and residential spas is not so high at present.

3. Our theme this year is “Back to the Future.” What do you feel is your country’s most significant contribution to what is now a global wellness economy?

Traditional Russian Banya is on the agenda- both worldwide and for the Russian population. The rituals and technologies of the Russian steam bath are backed by strong scientific evidence. Russian balneologists are investigating deeply in the healing properties of hot humid steam experience. The global wellness community is sure to put Russian Banya on the list of «must-haves» for spa-goers and wellness tourists in the nearest future.

4. What do you feel is the biggest challenge in your country when it comes to growing the wellness economy?

The ever-lasting opposition between the new generations of spa/wellness professionals and the official healthcare institutions is a key obstacle to the new developing wellness market. The current regulations in the domain of healthcare ban the majority of alternative medicine methods, and wellness professionals have to offer some of their services illegally.

5. While no answers are right or wrong, we would like to know what you feel is the difference – if any – between the terms/concepts of “wellness” and “well-being” in your country.

The notion of wellness is largely misunderstood among physicians and MD practitioners and often mixed with or replaced by the term «medical rehabilitation». Wellness is largely understood in Russia as a «foreign concept» rather referring to fitness and spa than to well-being and overall health. However, events like Global Wellness Day and Spa and Wellness International Congress held in Russia help to raise the level of interest in the society to the notion and meaning of wellness.

SUBMITTED BY:

Name: Elena Bogacheva

Title: President

Company: Spa and Wellness International Council (SWIC)

Email: elena@spapriori.ru; elenablic@gmail.com

Phone Number: +7(985)764 02 03

