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## Franco-Russian year: Itinerary between Russia and France

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### Abstract

This article is dedicated to the cooperation between Russia and France in the field of tourism and culture, which is indispensable part of the modern economy. The Franco-Russian Intercultural cross year, on our mind, stimulates great advantages to strengthen economies and cultural matters of both countries. Nowadays, such event is an effective way to promote bonds between people of different cultures and set aside political disagreements. Cultural and scientific events are organized in both countries and one of main ideas is to promote discovering of different visions on cultural and economic events in both countries. We think that such event is very important because it helps visitors to make quite vision and provide more understanding of the another country, foremost it is needed for people who do not have a chance to travel abroad. Cross year leads to promote tolerance, arts, science, literature, history and the most important it helps to make clear vision of the future of the world.

**Keywords:** cross year, culture, tourism, exchange, Russia, France.

### 1. Introduction

This contribution results from my research about the Franco-Russian Cross Year 2016, this topic appears to be the more suitable since I am a French master student of tourism and hospitality business currently based in Moscow. In this enterprise my aim will be to demonstrate the utility of Cross years between my two countries in the actual context, then I will try to target the new ways and events that took place during this intercultural and touristic season.

The Russian and the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs are regularly introducing Cross Years with a specific theme, the Franco-Russian cultural links are based on an intergovernmental agreement on cultural cooperation signed on 6th February 1992. But historically, those relations ensue from the epoch of the reign of Louis XV and Peter the Great, thus the two countries have influenced each other over centuries.

Since 2010, cultural exchanges have been numerous, and followed one after another, Cross Year of "Language and Literature", "Heritage and Cinema", "Theatre", "Visual arts" etc.

This year 2016 dedicated "Franco-Russian Cross year for cultural tourism" inclines toward touristic exchanges between those two countries. The aim of such program, which has been launched in Moscow on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016, is to reinforce bonds between the two nations, while promoting our respective heritage, known as well as unknown.

In this article, we will try demonstrate how the cross year can be mutually beneficial especially during a time of diplomatic tension. We will also show how the intercultural heritage can go beyond capital cities and reach regions. The global purpose is to boost the flow of tourists and to create new routes between Russia and France.

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## 2. Main part

The diplomatic relationships between our two countries regularly suffer from unevenness, a few years ago the Crimean crisis led to a rise of contradictions, more recently the Syrian crisis has for consequence to increase the political tense between France and Russia, along those matters of discord the sanctions and penalties that they inflict each other are far to soothe the climate.

Hopefully, the cultural cooperation had barely been harmed by the political divergence, on the contrary cultural events that took place during cross seasons are the occasion for the partners to meet again on a neutral common ground. During the celebration on the opening day on the 5<sup>th</sup> April of this cross year, Alla Manilova the Russian Deputy Minister of Culture said "Tourism is the most effective and the most unique ways to popularize our cultural heritage and to encourage meetings between people."

This summer 2016, the first Francophone Multimedia Library "Francotheque" has opened in Moscow, this common project has for aim to spread widely knowledge, and to give an easier access to francophone culture for people who are interest in.

The 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 was schedule the opening day of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Paris, the project of the "spiritual and cultural Russian Orthodox center" was expected since 2007. This long-awaited, symbolic day was the occasion to celebrate the Franco-Russian friendship around the orthodox faith. However, against a backdrop of polemic about Syrian crisis, the Russian government finally decided to deal with more urgent matters and to cancel the coming of V.V. Putin for the opening. This decision had for consequence to add more distance in-between, nevertheless the Russian president held to assert in an official message read on his behalf by the Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinsky, the new center is, according to him, "the testimony of the solidity of the Franco-Russian bilateral relations."

Russia is also about to open its Tourist Office in Paris on 8 December supported by the project Visit Russia, in order to prepare the future FIFA 2018. France is the second largest visitor of Russia, in western Europe, this country is an important stakeholder in tourism economy.

We can assert that if Russia and France are sometimes in disagreement concerning external issues, the conflict do not meddle into the bilateral relations of the countries, at least not in the cultural sector, the economic stakes are too important. Russia and France have a cordial and long-lasting relation. The population and especially tourists are rarely influence by governments decisions, thus the diplomatic change seldom interferes in tourists' choice of destination and in the tourist flows in general. Regular cultural events are then the perfect occasion to gather the countries on a common neutral ground, with one main purpose: the promotion of cultural events that are reinforcing the mutual knowledge of both countries, which will lead to more interest and curiosity from tourists. Rising the attraction between Russia and France would definitely enhancement touristic and cultural businesses, and help economy in general. During the cross year's introduction day, the French Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert declared that France wanted to maintain bilateral relations with Russia in all dimensions including the institutional, economic and commercial.

The Franco-Russian ministries of cultural affairs put forward the cultural calendar by launching plenty of touristic events, and innovations, and the season meet a great success no matter the diplomatic concern. For the occasion of the new cross year, many intercultural or touristic events have taken place in both countries. Such as artistic exhibitions, concerts, opening of dedicated cultural spaces, besides, partnership and twinning have been created between Russian landmarks and French monuments.

Nowadays, the new challenge of our countries is to attract tourists in middle size cities, in less knowing regions. According to the UNWTO Barometer of 2015, France is the first destination in the world, and Russians are on the top 5 of France visitors. Russians "first-timers" are mainly visiting Paris and its regions, while "repeaters" tend to visit other regions of France. Russia is number ten on the world's most visited destination ranking thanks to Saint Petersburg, and Frenchs are in the top 10 of Russia's visitors.

Indeed, most of tourists prefer capital cities such as Paris and Nice for France, and Saint Petersburg and Moscow for Russia, which is of course the most logical and easy choice for prime travellers. But other territories are also overflowing with cultural wealth stern from a common heritage. One of the aims of the current cross year is to attract more tourists in different regions that are as rich in landscapes, and interest as the capital.

To support the project to highlight regional areas, a large twinning program has been developed by the French president of the National Monument's Center and Russians representative

of several monuments. After an official consultation in the French Ambassador's residence in Moscow in May 2016, they all agreed and signed four symbolic twinning agreements between Russians and French historical monument. All of those architectural and historical masterpieces are linked by a common history, and a common time period: Kouskovo's Manor nicknamed the "Versailles of Moscow" is now the official twin of the Castle of Champs-sur-Marne, a symbol of French classical culture nearby Paris, both are rare and rich monuments from the eighteenth century. Saint-Denis basilica in Paris' suburbs is partner with the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, where rest in peace the French and Russian sovereigns from a vast period. The house of Leo Tolstoy in Khamovniki and the house of George Sand in Nohant gathered are the symbol of the culture of literature that had spur on the last centuries of France and Russia. Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier and Melnikov's House in Moscow illustrate landmarks of modern architecture, both dating from the late 1920s.

Within the framework of these agreements, those monuments will host representatives of their partners to propose tracks of cultural and scientific cooperation. Institutions also organize exhibitions and cross-promotion of twinned sites.

Art is also a field where partnerships are numerous and worthy to spread the mutual knowledge. In Paris the Louis Vuitton Foundation is about to host for four months "Icones of modern art. The Chtchoukine collection" thanks to the participation of the State Hermitage Museum and the State Museum of Fine Arts Pushkin, in tribute to the famous art collector and patron of the early twentieth century. At the Pompidou Center, the enormous collection of Soviet and Contemporary art masterpieces is exposed thanks to the generous gift of the Vladimir Potanin Foundation, a valuable illustration of a little-known period of USSR and Russia.

The cross-year event helped to develop cross routes, with the Russian heritage in France and French heritage in Russia. An itinerary of Russian artists in Normandy, leading to the house of the painter Vasily Polenov in the Tula region, should be created soon. Several theatres from Saint Petersburg of whom Theatre Bryantsev, will come to Avignon the French city that host every year the International Festival of Theatre, to present their many and varied artistic show "Russian Seasons". In Lyon also, the festival of the Russian culture named "Russian Seasons" will stand during all year, the program varies according to many events, several spectacles of classical theatre and music concerts, painting exhibitions, and exhibitions around the orthodox religion, a program about Russian space adventure, a Russian Fair around gastronomy and music, and regular projection of Russian films are on the list. This city is popular for Russian expats, representations of the Russian culture are many and varied there.

If there are more and more events to represent Russian heritage in French province, Russia is only officially represented in 2 French cities: Marseille and Strasbourg. But every year and especially during Cross Years Russian institutions represented by the best companies of Russia are regularly visiting French province, most of the time through popular Ballet and Theatre tour where Swan-Lake, Nutcracker or Bolero are played across more than 50 French cities such as Orleans, Lille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Annecy, Nantes. Those events are a delight for the Russian culture lovers as well as for newcomers. Small groups of musicians are also touring through French regions to sing and play traditional Russian music.

Outside of the region of Saint Petersburg and Moscow, French culture appear to be less represent in smaller cities, especially in tourism, Frenchs are still very few to come in faraway regions of Russia which are hardly accessible without a specialized agency, and a local guide. But new routes have been created in Russia recently, the Silver Ring around Petersburg and its regions and the Silk Road going through CIS, are now more and more interesting for the French travellers looking for new experience, new territories, willing to be more respectful of the nature.

In Russian Federation, the French culture is more represented by the expats who illustrate and animate their heritage where they are based. Nevertheless, Russia count 12 cities which have a French-Alliance: Ekaterinbourg, Irkoutsk, Kazan, Nijni-Novgorod, Novossibirsk, Rostov-sur-le-Don, Rybinsk, Saratov, Perm, Togliatti and Vladivostok. Most of the time seasonal events are organised such as meetings, exhibitions, spectacle, concerts, cinema festivals, those events are appreciated by the Francophone local community and the Russians willing to learn more about France. This year the French moviemaker Remy Chayé created an animated long movie "Long Way North" about Saint Petersburg and northern Russia during the Empire period, the film meets a great success and has already received many awards, it has been cast in many countries except Russia unfortunately.

From my personal point of view, I can witness the considerable change that occur in term of tourism attraction in Russia. Between my different journey mainly in Moscow, but also in Petersburg, I have notice that the effort of an internationalisation of the capital city is clear, the underground is now equipped with English signals, and Latin alphabet transcriptions. The improvement of the touristic signs and boards that appears in Russian with English subtitles in most of the center areas, the city also recently provide touristic information offices in many foreign languages. In Moscow and Petersburg, French commercial events are regularly organised thanks to sponsorship of French companies, there are French-days or weeks and even French-months, those are kind of fairs illustrating the French culture through gastronomy, markets, fashion and beauty, street-art show, cinema, a way to spread culture around the consumer-society more than around heritage.

### 3. Conclusion

Russia and France have different ways to show themselves outside their borders, according to the needs, expectancy of the other population and tourist. From what I have experienced and witness French tourists are seeking a nostalgic image of Russia, made of art, music, museum, or theatre, beautiful landscape, architecture and folklore.

Russian tourists are craving for luxurious places to relax, eat, shop, far from the original French soil and the richness of provincial area, even if regions are easily and quickly reachable from Paris. But Russian who land on the French countryside are barely there for tourism, but most of the time for familial, or professional reasons.

The reflect of France in Russia seems to me, to be more artificial and commercial, but is obviously an efficient way to stimulate economy. France is more illustrated through it modern culture and entertainment form, rather than from historical culture. the On the other side Russian representation in France is more intellectual and artistic, at the end the knowledge would stay in minds, which is more worthy souvenir than a product of consumption. Finally, the terms of culture and heritage can have various interpretations, and whatever the political climate between our two countries, and no matter some stereotypes, I believed that the two people have a common culture and a mutual love, conscious or not, who continue over centuries and this is always for the best.

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УДК 33

### Франко-российский год: маршрут между Россией и Францией

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**Аннотация.** Эта статья посвящена сотрудничеству между Россией и Францией в области туризма и культуры, которые являются неотъемлемой частью современной экономики. Франко-российский кросс-год, на авторский взгляд, способствует развитию преимуществ в вопросах укрепления экономики и культурного развития бизнеса в обеих странах. На сегодняшний день проведение таких мероприятий – это эффективный способ раздвинуть границы между представителями разных культур и отложить в сторону политические разногласия. Одной из главных идей проводимых культурных и научных мероприятий является содействие формированию представлений о культурных и экономических событиях в обеих странах. Авторы полагают, что подобное мероприятие очень важно, поскольку это помогает посетителям создать свое видение и лучше понять другую страну, прежде всего, это необходимо для людей, которые не имеют возможности выехать за границу. Кросс-год способствует развитию толерантности, искусства, науки, литературы, истории и самое главное, помогает прояснить видение будущего мира.

**Ключевые слова:** перекрестный год, культура, туризм, обмен, Россия, Франция.

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