

## “Medical Tourism at 2013 The St. Petersburg International Health Forum”

Miroslava Sumková

*Silesian Univerzity in Opava, School of Business and Administration in Karvina, Czech Republic*

### Abstract

*The St. Petersburg International Health Forum, which took place at the Lenexpo exhibition complex, lasted from the 16th until 18th October 2013. One of the key platform of all exhibitions was issue of Healthcare Tourism in a meaning of an international specialized exhibition of medical and health services, Spa technologies and medical treatment in Russia and abroad. The strategic purpose of the forum in future is the provision of a combined multi-industry, a comprehensive cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach to the development of the healthcare system.*

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*Paper Type: Review*

Last year organized Healthcare Forum was a unique project for the whole exhibition industry of St. Petersburg in general – several organisers united in a meaning of cooperation of four leading organizers of congresses and exhibitions – PRIMEXPO, ExpoForum, Messe Duesseldorf Moscow, People & Health and Medicine XXI Century medical centre. They have united their efforts to create the site for professionals in the health field in St. Petersburg, organizing special exhibitions, scientific, business events affecting all branches of medicine.

Having several specialized exhibitions share the same platform – Healthcare Tourism, Pharma, HEDIZ, People & Health, BioIndustry and Visus-Expo. This was a large consolidation of companies specialized in manufacturing medical devices, pharmaceutical goods, rehabilitation equipment and as well as experts in the field of medical and health-improvement services. which made the exhibition a multidisciplinary exhibition with a wide range of practitioners in the North-Western region of Russia. The encouraging fact of taken exhibition which should be taken into account, was the formation of a new section Bio-medicine.

Based on the mentioned initiative put into the largest medical project in the North-West Russia in St. Petersburg, it has been supported by the Ministry of Healthcare of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Government of St. Petersburg. As Vice-

Governor Olga Kazantseva has stated the Forum is supposed to become the most important event for all representatives of the healthcare industry. Moreover, it is supposed to encourage the implementation of state healthcare modernisation programmes due to the set KEY TOPICS OF THE CONFERENCE. Following topics were discussed within conference: Health care system of Russia and state policy and practical decisions, Infrastructure projects in medicine, Modernization of insurance system in Russia, Public-private partnership (PPP) in medicine, Investments to the development of medical industry of Russia, Development of medical centers and international models and prospects for Russia, Management of medical centers and experience of Russia and other countries, Medical equipment market in Russia and state purchases, localization of production and equipment maintenance, Medical personnel in the system of high-quality medicine.

While duration of the St. Petersburg International Health Forum more than **309 companies from 15 countries took part in it** - Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Slovenia, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, South Korea, India, Israel, Japan, and the United States - over the course of more than 30 special events, conferences, round tables and symposiums included. **These events were visited by more than 3500 people but approximately 80% of them were specialists.** Specifically, the representatives of health authorities, medical institutions, medicine centers, centers for aesthetic and reconstructive medicine, resorts and sanatoria experienced the up-to-date developments in medical field, presented their

services and discussed the latest scientific achievements in the field of health care, shared their experiences with colleagues from other countries and had the opportunity to develop business relations and strengthened relationships with their partners. For example, Pramod Goel, president and founder of PlacidWay and an internationally recognized industry leader in medical industry and a publisher of various medical issues, presented his complex comprehensive book *Evolution of Medical Tourism from Cottage Industry to Corporate World* during this unique exhibition occasion.

Clinics and specialist tour operators, mainly those from the United Kingdom, India, Israel, Lithuania, Russia, Germany, Slovenia and Finland presented their offers, accurate developments in health tourism at the Healthcare Tourism Exhibition. According to this, visitors got opportunity to receive discounts and special offers from exhibiting companies, to gain professional consultations and relevant information about the health tourism in different countries. For example, the **Firumeda** company offered everyone a medical examination by worldwide recognized Finnish specialists with an aim of building ecological cottages using warm therapeutic turf that can only be obtained in Finland. Professional coaches from the **WELLNESS & MEDICAL & SPA center in the newly developed Newton format provided consultations and presentations of special equipment and unique methods on the purpose of the body strengthening and the achievement of emotional harmony.**

The frames of the Forum included the following key exhibitions: "Farma" as the exhibition of medications and food supplements and biologically active additives and equipment and component parts for pharmaceutical production, and "Health Tourism" as the exhibition of modern products and services in the sphere of health-related tourism. Exhibition "Farma" was the project uniting specialists of the following areas: producers and distributors of medicinal products, chemists, pharmacists, pharmaceutical sales representatives. The exposition was based on presentation of the whole range of pharmaceutical products, most of all medicinal products, skin care products, pharmacy equipment. Consulting services were offered too and it meant to be an opportunity to get updated with the latest achievements of the pharmaceutical industry. Exhibition "Health Tourism and Health Resort Treatment" presented following issues: medical and recreation services, SPA-technologies and treatment services provided not only in Russia, but abroad too.

**The Healthcare Tourism Exhibition** has become a professional platform encouraging the discovery of the potential of the industry both, for companies and consumers in the healthcare tourism market in the way of the first specialized event in the North-West for companies which are specialized in offering medical treatment services in Russia and abroad. **The St. Petersburg International Health Forum** is the only regional platform that includes all types of medicine, it is the unique project uniting specialized exhibitions, scientific, practical and business events and presentations of professional exhibiting companies.

**Ing. Miroslava Sumková,**  
Department of Tourism,  
Silesian University in Opava,  
School of Business and Administration in Karvina,  
Czech Republic,  
miroslava.sumkova@gmail.com