

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

Tourism and Hospitality

**Influences of Russian Passport and Visa Formalities on Traveling
Abroad**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the research was to find out if Russian citizens were to travel to Finland more often if there was no visa required. As a person who lives that close to the border of Russia and Finland (which is nowadays a part of European Union) it has been really interesting to follow the relationships between the two countries and how they have been developing through the years.

The theoretical information for the research was collected through visa and tourism related books, newspapers and Internet pages. The study was carried out at the travel agencies in Vyborg and St. Petersburg as well as on-line.

There was always been a hope for Russian citizens to travel to the neighboring country without visa and lately there are more and more evidence of this dream to become the reality. This research was aimed to explore how willing are Russian tourists to travel and how visa abolishment would change the frequency of their travels. The results of the study show the potential growth of the tourists flow from Russia to Finland.

Key words: Russian tourist, Finland, Visa formalities

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1 INTRODUCTION

Modern tourism develops extremely fast. Annually a huge number of both organized and individual tourists cross the borders of the foreign countries and territories. Therefore, this giant flow of people requires to be regulated. Today, the global practice has developed a complex regulation, known as the passport and visa formalities.

The concept of the passport and visa requirements is rather vague, and includes a variety of components in each country. But the bottom line is that in any case of travelling abroad the passport and visa formalities determine how tourists are crossing the border of the state and helps to control them while they are in the country.

Tourism as a form of travel where tourists cross the state border also includes the implementation of tourism formalities, i.e., verification of compliance with the conditions of the tourists and the rules established by the state authorities of the entry and exit. Travel formalities other than the passport and visa requirements include: customs regulations, exchange controls, sanitary regulations, rules, stay and movement of foreigners and tourists, and other rules.

It may seem that the passport and visa formalities are a hindrance for tourism, but they are not. It is only partly true, but the passport and visa formalities in tourism exist, on the one hand, to create conditions for the safe stay of tourists in the country, and on the other hand - to protect the state, to take tourists from undesirable elements of society - illegal immigrants, smugglers, terrorists etc. You can never be too safe.

Besides, tourist registered at the home state and as a person visiting foreign country can always count on timely help in case of need from the host state and the consulate.

The main aims of the thesis are:

- To study the idea of passport and visa formalities in tourism, as well as the issue of regulation in an international perspective.
- To study and research Russian actual and potential customers' opinions on the visa issues between Russia and Finland.

In the latest news we can find multiple articles talking about visa abolishment or at least making the formalities easier for the travelers. Let us take a look at the several examples:

1. No longer than on September 9 2012 Russia and the USA got into agreement on simplified visa regime between the two countries, which was one of the most striking manifestations of the Barack Obama announced a "reset" in relations with Moscow (Embassy of United States in Moscow 2012).
2. Recently on the 26 – 28 of August 2012 in St. Petersburg, Russia, there was made an appeal to the European Parliament with a request for abolishment of visas for Russian tourists coming to Sweden and Finland by ferry (up to 72 hours) at the XXI Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, which already has become a reality. (Pechko 2012.)
3. In early 2012, Georgia has abolished the visa regime with Russia, allowing the Russians to freely enter the country for up to 90 days. Since then the number of tourists from Russia raised dramatically, up to 30 thousand people. According to Georgian authorities, this is 70% more than in March 2011. (Ivanov 2012.)

Other than that, for me, personally this topic is also close from the point of view of a foreign student in Finland. Every visa request came along with a lot of stress and effort. Last year was one of the hardest for the foreign students in Finland: everyone had to wait for the permit to stay and study for about 3 up to 6 months without any right of leaving the country.

Being a Russian citizen requires a visa during travelling to the most countries and territories. Personally I had gone through all those bureaucratic problems almost every time for the planned trips outside of the country.

Thus, we can conclude that the relevance of the chosen topic explains the decisive importance that passport and visa formalities have on the development of international tourism.

Talking about the beneficial parties of this research, we would like to consider tourists of both Finland and Russia in general. The research would give a better picture of the intentions of the interested actual and potential tourists, and if they were to actually consider passport and visa formalities as a problem at all or not. Nevertheless, there are also people interested in the system behind the visa and passport process in general; who would like to know how much easier or harder the relationships between countries could be with no visa required.

2 THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF THE PASSPORT AND VISA FORMALITIES IN TOURISM

2.1 General System of Tourist Formalities

In general, by the passport and visa formalities and travel formalities we understand the procedures relating to obedience by tourists, or persons who are crossing the state border; conditions, rules and requirements set by the state authorities of the country of entry and residence (Savelev 1997).

This chapter discusses the main concepts that will be mentioned in the thesis.

There is no one legal concept of the regulations for all the countries, since all the formalities are governed by different regulations, and apply not only to tourists but also to other categories of citizens. Therefore, it is sensible to make the concept of tourist formalities from the reference book:

Travel formality - is checking the compliance of procedures and rules established by the public authorities on entry to and exit from the country by the tourists and the subjects of tourist activity (Savelev 1997). Travel formalities are divided into several large sections, and include:

- interaction with consulates;
- tourist associations and administrations of foreign countries;
- national tourist offices;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation;
- passport and visa service;
- customs and border guards;
- carriers and some other procedures (Gulyaev 1996.)

Passport and visa formalities are formalities relating to obedience with the rules of crossing state borders and stay in their territory (Federal Law 1996).

I would like to introduce the concept of the customs formalities. They are not very hard to follow, but still take some time to get used to. Being able to perform all the procedures in

the right order would also save time not only for you, but for the people waiting in line after you.

All the individuals who are crossing the customs border must complete a customs declaration. Declaration shall be filled by each person over 16 years old. Declaration is a statement in the agreed form (written, oral, etc.) to the customs authority of the accurate information to the customs border of goods and vehicles, their number, name and other information required for customs purposes.(The Customs Code of the Russian Federation 1993)

Any customs duties and goods transported by an individual through the customs border are presented to the customs officers for the registration and customs control. Customs registration is organized in the locations determined for the exit and entry of people across the customs border. This can be a hall of the international airport, land or premises in the automobile checkpoint etc.(The Customs Code of the Russian Federation 1993)

During the customs registration customs officials set customs control. Customs control in the Russian Federation is a set of measures taken by the customs authorities of the Russian Federation in order to ensure compliance with the Russian legislation on customs and other Russian and international laws. Customs control is performed by customs authorities of the Russian Federation.(The Customs Code of the Russian Federation 1993)

In the list of the duties of the customs control is to check the documents and information required for customs, customs registration of goods and means of transport, accounting for goods and means of transport, physical and oral questioning of the tourists by the officials and as an exceptional measure - personal search.(The Customs Code of the Russian Federation 1993.)

Insurance formalities are meant to protect the property of individuals and legal entities upon the occurrence of various adverse events (insurance claims) from cash funds generated from insurance premiums paid by them (insurance premiums). In this case, the insured victim compensation related losses (damages) are within the sum insured as determined by the insurance contract (insurance policy) between the insured and the insurer, which acts as an insurance company.(Borisov 1999.)

Interactions with consulates are the formalities relating to the protection of interests of citizens in other states. Interactions with tour agencies and offices are formalities directly concerning the supporting of the tour. As mentioned above, by signing the contract with the tour operator, the customer is getting not the services of the tour operator directly, but only the right to receive the services of a tour operator partners - travel companies, carriers, etc. (Borisov 1999.)

The Hague Declaration on Tourism (1989) determined that the countries and the tourism industry should take effective measures to simplify tourism formalities and customs procedures with respect to passports, visas, medical and currency controls when making journeys, visits and stays (Principle VI). Travel formalities should be directed to removing barriers and making traveling easier for both tourists and countries.

2.2 The Concept of the Passport and Visa Formalities

Passport and visa formalities are the formalities relating to obedience of the rules of crossing state borders and the stay in the foreign territory (Savelev 1997).

“A passport is an official document certifying the identity of the citizen” (Online etymological dictionary 2012a). It contains information on gender, age, place of birth and residence, citizenship. A passport is issued in a number of countries; including Russia in addition to the travel passports in some cases can be used:

1. Ordinary passport (tourist passport, regular passport, passport)
Issued to citizens and other nationals, and generally the most-issued type of passport. Sometimes it is possible to have children registered within the ordinary passport of the parent, rendering the passport functionally equal to a family passport.
2. Official passport (service passport, also special passport)
Issued to government employees for work-related travel, and to accompanying dependents.
3. Diplomatic passport

Issued to diplomats and other government officials for work-related international travel, and to accompanying dependents. Although most persons with diplomatic immunity carry diplomatic passports, having a diplomatic passport is not the equivalent of having diplomatic immunity. A grant of diplomatic status, a privilege of which is diplomatic immunity, has to come from the government of the country in relation to which diplomatic status is claimed. Also, having a diplomatic passport does not mean visa-free travel. A holder of a diplomatic passport must obtain a non-diplomatic visa when traveling to a country where he is not currently nor is going to be accredited as a diplomat, if visas are required to nationals of his country.

In exceptional circumstances, a diplomatic passport is given to a foreign citizen with no passport of his own, such as an exiled VIP who lives, by invitation, in a foreign country. Such is the case of King Constantine II of Greece who has travelled on diplomatic passports of Denmark (the ancestral home of his royal house) and Spain (the adopted country of his sister Queen Sofia). (Legal language services 2012)

4. Emergency passport (temporary passport)

Issued to persons whose passports were lost or stolen, and who do not have time to obtain replacement passports. Sometimes laissez-passer are used for this purpose.

5. Collective passport

Issued to defined groups for travel together to particular destinations, such as a group of school children on a school trip to a specified country.

6. Family passport

Issued to family members—father, mother, son, daughter. There is one passport holder. The passport holder may travel alone or with one or more other family members. A family member who is not the passport holder cannot use the passport for travel unless accompanied by the passport holder.

7. Refugee Travel Document

When a person seeks asylum from their home country, they are often unable to obtain a passport, and passports cannot be issued to non-citizens. Refugee travel documents work as a type of passport that will allow people seeking asylum to travel internationally. (Legal language services 2012.)

In case of the loss of the travel passport abroad, the tourist shall be issued a temporary ID document which entitles tourist to return to his homeland. This document is issued by the Russian Consulate in the foreign country. (Federal Law 1996.)

For entry to another country with a valid passport if there is no agreement on visa-free travel with this state, requires a permit entry country visa. To obtain a visa Russian citizens are going to the embassy of the certain state in Moscow or consulate of the country of entry, provided that the residence of the traveler is included in the consular district of the Consulate. (Visa inform 2012)

Visa (from Latin "visa", plural "visum" - to read) "an endorsement made by an authorized representative of one country upon a passport issued by another, permitting the passport holder's entry into or transit through the country making the endorsement" (Online etymological dictionary 2012b). The resolution can be stamped in the passport or a separate document (for example, group tourist visa). Normally the grounds for issuing a tourist visa is the consent of the host travel agency to provide tourist services on the agreed route and confirmed dates, or the a special invitation to visit relatives and friends or traveling for business purposes.

Types of visas are:

- 1) single-entrance or multi-entrance visas,
- 2) individual or group visas;
- 3) student visa;
- 4) entry visa;
- 5) transit visa;
- 6) exit visa,
- 7) Schengen etc. (Visa inform 2012)

Tourist visa is a mark in the passport from the diplomatic representatives of foreign countries, which gives its owner the right for temporary entry into the territory for tourism and recreation.

Depending on the invitation we can have several types of visa:

- Business Visa is issued for those who would like to travel to the foreign country for a short duration for business which does not require actual labor work with receiving payment from the government of the visiting country.
- Private visa is issued with the help of invitation from a private person (a foreign national) of another state. The invitation is issued in the local authority.
- Tourist visa is issued for the time specified in tour, voucher or invitation to participate in the seminar, sports events, etc.
- Work visa entitles employment abroad. (Visa inform 2012.)

In addition to the above, there is one more type of visa - a transit visa which is "a short-term (usually 24 hours) visa that allows a passenger to travel across or through the issuing country on way to another country. Commonly, it allows the in-transit passenger to go out of an airport or port for an overnight stay".(Online business dictionary 2012.) Transit visa provides the tourist the right to be in the other country on the way to the final destination. It is issued for a certain number of hours of the Embassy of the third country after the main visa.(Visa-okay 2012.) For example, a citizen is going to Germany by train and travelling through a third country. After receiving his German visa by submitting documents to the embassy of the country (e.g., Poland) the tourist should obtain a transit visa. To get a visa, usually the tourist should fill application forms with a photo and pay consular fees. In some cases (for example, for a trip to England or the USA), the applicant may be invited for an interview at the consulate.(New Kaliningrad forum 2012.)

The minimum term of the visa application depends on international agreements, the existing practice, the type of passport, purpose of the trip and its duration. A number of travel companies have permission or reference to the consular service of tourists. However, a visa does not guarantee travel. A number of countries (USA, Sweden, etc.) require foreign tourists to carry a return ticket and funds sufficient to stay in the country during that period. In accordance with Russian legislation, controlling the availability of visas for foreign country assigned to the transportation companies.(Bogatov 2004.)

2.3 Passport and Visa Formalities on the Schengen Area

Seven European countries entered into the Schengen agreement on 26 March 1995 abolishing border controls at the internal borders of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, France, Spain and Portugal. Subsequently, Greece joined the Schengen agreement. Two types of visa were introduced:

- 1) Single Schengen visa is issued for up to three months and gives the right to move freely around the country having signed the Schengen Agreement;
- 2) National entry visa for a period of over three months, the issuance of which is the prerogative of the state, which is a part of the Schengen Agreement. There are no group Schengen visas. For tourists from countries outside the European Union, including Russia, the visa is required. Special order of entry extended to citizens of Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.(Schengen Agreement 1995.)

The purpose of the Schengen agreement is the free movement of citizens within the borders of the Schengen area, including foreign tourists and all who enter one of Schengen countries. The Schengen visa is valid through all the Schengen area. It is issued only for short-term visits of foreigners (a maximum of three months for one semester). There is also a Schengen transit visa.(Kashkin&Chetverikov 2000.)

In addition to the rules on cross-border both internal and external of the Schengen agreements include rules of the protection of the rule of law, the fight against crime. Based on the Schengen agreement there was created a special system (Schengen Information System) which is connecting law enforcement authorities of the Member States of the Schengen area with each other.(Kashkin&Chetverikov 2000.)

Originally Schengen agreement was signed only by five Member States of the European Communities. Later they were joined by the other Member States (see European Union), except the UK and Ireland. Associated members of Schengen are Iceland and Norway.(Kashkin&Chetverikov 2000.)

This agreement is of great importance not only for the citizens of the member countries. After the Schengen agreement it is no longer necessary in the design of multiple visas for travel to Europe. For example, if a tourist has a Schengen visa issued by the embassy of Germany, to travel from Germany to France and Italy, he would not need to apply for a

visa at the French or Italian Embassy. He may use one German visa freely across national borders of the Schengen agreement countries. (New Kaliningrad forum 2012.)

However, there is a number of visa restrictions:

1. The visa must be requested at the embassy of the country which is the main host country.
2. To enter the Schengen area through the country that had issued the visa for the tourist. Transit travelling is allowed, but tourists should be prepared to answer questions to the border guards about the purpose of trip and trip route. (Kashkin&Chetverikov 2000.)

To obtain a Schengen visa for temporary stay (up to 90 days) uniform requirements are set:

1. The applicant must have a valid passport, valid for at least 4 months after the end of the trip;
2. The applicant must have a proof of the purpose and route of the trip (e.g. business invitation, original invitation from a private person, travel voucher, certified in an area of the country where the inviting party is located);
3. The applicant should have sufficient financial means to stay (at the rate of \$100 per day) and to return to the country of citizenship or a third country, where admission is guaranteed (supported with tickets or the confirmation of their reservation) or be able to obtain it with the funds he has legally;
4. The applicant should have the appropriate international health insurance policy (insurance policy must be valid for all the countries of the Schengen area);
5. The applicant fills in the questionnaire, most of the issues of which are common to all Schengen states. (Kashkin&Chetverikov 2000.)

Separate aspect when considering the issue of visa formalities is the way travel agencies interact with tourists about the visa. Agencies working on visas for their clients face a wide range of issues, which can be divided into three groups. The first deals with the organization of the work of foreign consulates and their staff, the second - with the requirements for visa procedure established by the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Affairs of the countries and is normative for consulates. These mainly include a list of the required documents, the order of their reception and review, the delays in obtaining visas and

accreditation procedure of the tour companies, types of visas, etc. The third set of issues is the state regulation of matters related to obtaining an exit visa from the Russian side.(Kashkin&Chetverikov 2000.)

3 INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF PASSPORT AND VISA FORMALITIES

3.1 Passport and Visa Regimes for Russian Citizens in Different Countries of the World

One of the necessary formalities that accompany almost every trip abroad is a visa authorizing tourist's entry into the country. Normally, obtaining the visa does not require any supernatural effort. But, nevertheless, it somewhat limits the movement of tourists dramatically.

Below (pic.1) you can see the map of the world with shown visa requirements for Russian citizens:



Picture 1. Visa requirements for Russian citizens
(Visa regime for common Russian passport holders)

Visa regimes of different countries have a great number of differences among them and there is no possibility of an efficient classification in this paper. But to illustrate the issue several visa regimes around the world have been studied.

Some countries' regimes are shown below in the alphabetical order.

Australia

Visa is issued for up to three weeks. To obtain a visa a candidate must have a passport, one filled in application form with a photo, invitation (private or business), certificates from work or school (with the length of service and the total monthly income), health insurance for the duration of stay in the country, evidence of credit (documents, indicating the presence of the applicant's property), a declaration on the export of currency, and if you have children with you, notarized agreement of the other parent to the removal of children. In contrast to the private and leisure purposes, traveling with children with the business invitation is difficult. The typical length of stay in the country for leisure purposes is up to two weeks; for the private it is up to one month; on the business up to three months. For private and leisure invitation only a single visa can be issued. Visa with several entries to the country can be issued for the business purposes. The visa fee is U.S. \$ 300 without a booked tour, \$200 with a tour. (Australian Holiday 2012.)

Austria

Austria is a part of the Schengen zone. Citizens of the Russian Federation should have at the border a Schengen visa approved at the Consular Section of the Embassy of Austria in Moscow. All visa applicants must appear in person at the Austrian Embassy/Consulate. Visa is issued to an individual passport of the tourist. (Travel Company Alpha-visa 2012.)

In any case, your passport must be valid for three more months after the departure date when leaving Austria (and the Schengen zone as well). The Austrian Embassy and Consulates General do not accept visa applications by mail. The violation of the visa regime while on Austrian territory is highly undesirable – marks of any violations are placed directly into the passport and stored in a common Schengen computer database, which will make it difficult or even impossible to get another visa to the countries of the European Community and the countries of the Schengen Agreement. (Informative agency Interfax 2010.)

Canada

Visas are issued by the Consular Section of the Canadian Embassy in Moscow. To obtain a visa tourist one should pass the original invitation (it can be sent by fax to the embassy), 1 application form completed in English and 2 photos. Health insurance and sufficient funds for a trip to the country are required. Cost of services for submitting documents to the Embassy of Canada for 1 person - U.S.\$ 190. Additional payments:embassy visa fee - \$100 (single entry) or \$140 (multi-entry visa), and delivery - \$30. Visa is issued within at least 15 days.(Visa Services 2005.)

Cuba

For Russians travelling to Cuba for tourism for less than 30 days visa is not required if you have a travel voucher. The passport must be valid for at least 2 months from the date of departure. At departure airport tourist must pay a fee of \$ 20. (Visa to Cuba 2012)

Cyprus

All citizens of Russia and the CIS must have a visa for entry to Cyprus. The visa is issued free of charge. Individual statements of citizens as well as intermediaries (tour operators, travel agencies) are accepted without prior agreement from Monday to Friday from 10:00 to 16:30. Visas are issued on the same day or the day after, depending on the workload of the Consular Section. Minimum period of the tourist visa is 1 month with the possibility to visit Cyprus twice. The maximum period of the visa is 1 year. Multi-visas are valid up to one year and are issued for VIP, officials, businessmen, owners of property in Cyprus, holders of temporary or permanent residence permit, spouses of nationals of Cyprus and other groups on request.(Visa to Cyprus 2012.)

Egypt

On March 21, 2002 the Egyptian government decided to include Russia and Ukraine to the list of countries whose citizens do not require prior registration for the Egyptian entry visa. Now the entry permit will be issued to travelers upon arrival in the country. Earlier the

Russians and Ukrainians could go to Egypt without a visa only in tourist groups, but now it also applies to individual tourists. Leisure visa to enter Egypt can be bought anywhere in the border crossing area: usually at the arrival airport, or in advance in consular sections Egyptian Embassy in Moscow and Kiev. Visa fee is \$15, if it is acquired in Egypt. Within seven days after entering the country one must make a mark in the passport at the police department. Hotels do this formality for their guests. Otherwise it can be self-refer to the nearest police station.(Ask Aladdin 2012.)

Germany

There are two types of visas: Schengen visa and the national German visa. They differ in the duration: Schengen visa is valid for stays of up to 90 days within six months and entitles either for single or for multiple entries to Germany, a national visa to Germany has an initial limit of three months, but in contrast to the Schengen visa it can be extended by the German competent authority for foreigners in accordance with the purpose of your stay. Another difference the validation area: Schengen visa is valid for all Schengen States, but the German national visa is valid only for Germany. Visa processing times vary between the documents (Schengen visa will be issued within 1-3 business days), and the fact that an application for a Schengen visa you can fill in both in German and in Russian, and an application for a German national visa - only in German.(Global Russians 2012b.)

Greece

Greece is a part of Schengen zone. For entry into Greece a tourist must hold a visa, passport, medical insurance, currency (the rate of \$ 50 per person per day). Visas are issued by the Consular Section of the Embassy of Greece in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Novorossiysk. The visa can be issued by a travel agency or independently (with the invitation of a private person, with the invitation of Greek firms, and based on a letter from the hotel in Greece, confirming the booking).

An invitation from a private individual must be certified by the police in the community sponsor. If a child is in the passport of a parent he will not need a separate visa. The invitation from the business partner or company must state the number of passport guest,

date of birth, length of stay in the country and the purpose of the trip (the negotiations, the participation in the exhibition and the like). A copy of the invitation should be sent by fax to the host side to the Consular Section of the Embassy of Greece.(VFS Global 2012b.)

Great Britain

Great Britain has three representative offices providing visa services in Russia: Moscow, St. Petersburg (to this consulate also includes: Leningrad, Novgorod Oblast, Pskov Oblast, Murmansk Oblast, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Republic of Karelia) and Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk region, Chelyabinsk Region, Perm Region, Kurgan Region, Republic of Bashkortostan and Udmurtia). Consulates offices accept applications for visiting the United Kingdom (including the Isle of Man and the Isle of the English Channel).(UKVisas 2012.)

The visa application can be submitted in person, through an agent or by courier. All applications are accepted on a standard letterhead. Applications are accepted for consideration only after the fee (£126for the leisuremulti-entrance visa, £22 for visiting the Commonwealth or a Dependent territory). Payment of the consular fee does not guarantee a visa. The visa fee is not refundable if a tourist withdrawals documents. Individual applications are usually treated during one day, the group claims within a week of receiving. If the application is properly and completely filled out and accepted by the Visa Section, the decision to issue a visa can be made on the basis of documents without an interview. If the application is not filled completely or otherwise unacceptable for further consideration tourist may need additional documents. Citizens with a passport of the EU, the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand can stay in the country for up to six months without a visa.(UK Border Agency 2012.)

India

To obtain a visa the tourist would need: the original invitation, passport, 2 photos, 2 copies of the completed questionnaires in English, tickets with a fixed date of arrival and the return. Visa is issued within 1-2 days. The visa fee is U.S. \$ 40.Since 2009 a Russian citizen should get the Indian visa in the Indian Visa Service Centre.(Visa to India 2012.)

Japan

To enter the country a tourist must have a passport and visa. The standard scheme of visa is complex and implies the need for a guarantor living in Japan. The guarantor can only be an individual or organization possessing the nationality of Japan or registered in its territory or a foreigner with a status of "permanent resident", "long-term resident" or "special resident." As the host company and the guarantor can only act one and the same person.(Visit Japan 2012.)

To obtain a visa a tourist must submit to the Embassy or Consulate General of Japan, the original and one copy of the document from the inviting party and the guarantor, as well as passport and one copy of the first page of passport photos (2 pcs.) And 2 of the forms (each document must be submitted within 3 months from the moment of its publication.) The following documents should be attached to ticket or reservation issued by the tour company, as well as a certificate from the tour company that the applicant bought the tour in the travel agency and a certificate of employment, education or pension certificate. In some cases, required to present proof of their ability to pay the costs, as well as a ticket to both parties and the document explaining what the applicant will do in Japan. Documents must be prepared for each individual applicant. Completed applications are considered in the Foreign Ministry of Japan, then the Japanese Embassy is instructed to issue a visa or refusal (if the visa application is rejected once, all the further petitions are meaningless.) The visa is free, but a fee of U.S. \$5-10 is charged on the processing and transfer of documents to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.(Visa to Japan 2012.)

Nepal

To visit the country Russian citizens need a visa. Visa to Nepal is made either through the Embassy of Nepal in Moscow, or on arrival at the airport in Kathmandu Tribuvan. This requires a 3x4 cm photo, valid passport and U.S. \$30. Minimum period of registration is for two days. To obtain a visa at the airport the tourist would need a filled in the application form in English. While in the country, the tourist can extend the visa at the Immigration Department. When leaving the airport of Nepal a fee of Rs400 needs to be paid.(Nepal.ru 2012.)

Spain

Spain is a part of the Schengen zone. To enter Spain a tourist must have a passport and a Schengen visa. For standard (flight - hotel - flight) guided tour of 30 days is usually issued a disposable Schengen visa "C" : for 30 days (formerly 45) with the issuing visa through a tour agency or for the period of accommodation and return ticket dates if issuing in person. To obtain a visa with the double entry (with the exception of a trip to Andorra), getting to the destination by train or car, or for a period longer than 30 days, the documents must be submitted individually or by substitution. (Visa to Spain 2012.)

United Arab Emirates

To travel to the UAE Russian citizens need a visa. The original of it is handed to the tourist at the border. It is necessary to make it in advance through a travel agency or through the "sponsor" (hotel, company or person entitled to apply for a visa). But sponsor can only help with issuing visa, but does not help with the funds. Hotel accommodation must be pre-paid. No hotel would send a confirmation of the reservation without pre-paying it, which serves as the basis for issuing the visa. Approved documents should enter the airport passport control in advance and without them the entry into the country would be forbidden. In Dubai the guest visa is issued for 60 days (with a right of renewal), leisure visa for 30 days and a special permit to enter visa for 14 days. For the each day of stay in the country longer than the agreed term, the tourist would pay fine of \$28. Visa or other marks of Israel in the passport may be cause for refusal of entry. (Visa to UAE 2012.)

The choice of countries is rather random and was presented here to show how the procedures may vary from country to country. Having considered the visa regimes in some countries, we would also like to give some attention to the countries and territories with visa-free entry.

In general, countries that do not require visas or issuing them at the border, insist on the presence of sufficient funds and a tourist ticket back home or to a third country (if the third country nationals require a visa). In addition, a tourist passport must be valid for some time after the expected departure from the country (in the case of Malaysia and many island nations - for 6 months). (Visa-free countries for Russia for 2012 (list).)

The following Table 1 lists the countries with visa-free regime or simplified system of passport and visa formalities for Russian citizen entering foreign countries.

COUNTRY/TERRITORY	COMMENT
NO VISA	
1. Antigua and Barbuda	Up to 28 days
2. Armenia	Up to 90 days
3. Azerbaijan	Up to 90 days
4. Barbados	Up to 28 days
5. Belarus	Up to 90 days (health insurance is required)
6. Bosnia and Herzegovina	Up to 90 days (with booking in the hotel or private invitation)
7. Brazil	Up to 90 days
8. Cook Islands	Up to 31 days (with booking in the hotel)
9. Costa Rica	Up to 30 days
10. Croatia	Up to 90 days (with travel voucher)
11. Dominica	Up to 21 days
12. Dominican Republic	Up to 90 days (Tourist Card at the border, \$10)
13. Ecuador	Up to 90 days, (entry permit, \$25)
14. Fiji	Up to 30 days
15. Georgia	Up to 90 days
16. Grenada	Up to 3 months
17. Haiti	Up to 3 months
18. Kazakhstan	Up to 90 days
19. Kyrgyzstan	Up to 90 days
20. Malaysia	Up to 1 month
21. Maldives	Up to 30 days
22. Micronesia	Up to 30 days
23. Moldavia	Up to 90 days
24. Namibia	Up to 3 months
25. Nicaragua	Up to 90 days (Tourist Card at the border, \$7)
26. Niue	Up to 30 days
27. Peru	Up to 90 days
28. Romania	Up to 90 days (health insurance, travel voucher)
29. Samoa	Up to 30 days
30. Serbia and Montenegro	Up to 30 days
31. Serbia and Montenegro (Kosovo)	Only through the airport of Pristina
32. Seychelles	Up to 1 months (with booking in the hotel; Visitor's Permit at the border)
33. Sri Lanka	Up to 30 days
34. St. Lucia	Up to 28 days
35. St. Vincent and Grenadin	Up to 18 days
36. Tajikistan	Up to 90 days
37. Timor-Leste	Up to 30 days (enter permit at the border, \$25)
38. Tuvalu	Up to 30 days
39. Ukraine	Up to 90 days
40. Uzbekistan	Up to 90 days

41. Vanuatu	Up to 30 days
VISA IS ISSUED ON ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT	
1. Bahrain	Up to 14 days (for females only with a husband)
2. BurkinaFaso	Up to 3 months
3. Cambodia	Up to 1 month
4. Comoros	Up to 2 months
5. Ethiopia	Up to 3 months (only at the airport in Addis Ababa)
6. Jamaica	Up to 30 days
7. Jordan	Up to 3 months
8. Kenya	Up to 90 days (with the booking in the hotel or personal invitation)
9. Laos	Up to 15 days (at the airports of Vientiane, LuangPrabang and Pakse)
10. Lebanon	Up to 3 months (prohibited with passport marks of visiting Israel)
11. Macau	Up to 30 days
12. Madagascar	Up to 30 days
13. Marshall islands	Up to 30 days (prohibited for Macau visa holders)
14. Mauritius	Up to 15 days (with the booking in the hotel or personal invitation)
15. Mozambique	Up to 30 days
16. Niger	Up to 1 month (with the booking in the hotel)
17. Oman	Up to 1 year (for females only with a husband)
18. Palau	Up to 30 days
19. Syria	Men get visa at all the airport, women need invitation. Prohibited for Israel visa holders or passport marks of crossing Israel-Jordan border
20. Thailand	Up to 15 days
21. Tonga	Up to 30 days (can be extended)
22. Turkey	Up to 2 months
23. Uganda	Up to 30 days
24. Zambia	Up to 30/60 days
SIMPLIFIED VISA REGIME	
1. Albania	The entry visa upon presentation of confirmation from the Albanian Ministry of Interior
2. Cameroon	The entry visa upon presentation of authorization from the General Commissioner of Immigration
3. CapeVerde	Visa up to 30 days at the airport (2-3 days prior must send a photocopy of the passport to the Interior Ministry Cape Verde)
4. China	without visa up to 6 days at the entrance of the Hong Kong and Macau in some cities in Guangdong Province in groups organized by China Travel Agency
5. Guinea-Bissau	visa at the airport, if the 14 days prior to departure passport details and two photographs are sent to the State Commissioner of national security and public order
6. Kuwait	visa at the airport (the inviting party must submit all documents in advance)
7. Malta	entry visa (30 days in advance accredited travel agency must submit all documents)
8. NorfolkIsland	without visa up to 30 days to owners of Australian visa valid for at least 30 days from the date of the alleged departure from the island
9. Qatar	visa at the airport up to 14 days, if accredited hotel has applied for at least 24 hours prior (can be extended)

10. Sierra Leone	without a visa for a business partner of the Government of Sierra Leone (an entry permit from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone must be obtained in advance)
11. Slovenia	without visa up to 15 days for holders of Schengen visa type C, valid up to 15 days
12. South Korea	without a visa: a) up to 30 days for visa holders in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.S. or Japan or b) 90 days for the former before in South Korea visitors at least 10 times, or at least four times in the last two years) up to 30 days only on Jeju Island
13. Surinam	(1-2 months, it is necessary beforehand to send passport information to the Consular Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Suriname Suriname or the embassy in the Netherlands or Belgium)
14. Tunisia	without a visa (up to 30 days before travel agency should send passport data in a special service of the National Police)

Table 1. Visa-free or simplified regimes for Russian citizens with foreign countries and territories (Table of visa-free countries for Russians 2012.)

As can be seen from Table 1, the vast majority of countries with visa-free or simplified visa regime are difficult to attribute to frequently visited and popular among tourists. Russian tourists are becoming more and more demanding now and prefer to travel to exotic countries. Visa-free or visa facilitation is just intended to increase the popularity of these countries from the tourism's point of view.

3.1 Regime of Russian Citizens entering Finland

This chapter considers the country this research is made about – Finland. As it was mentioned before, Russia and Finland have long and complex relationship with one another. Now when Finland is a part of European Union and a Schengen visa to Finland gives the right for a holder to stay not only in Finland, but in the entire EU for up 90 days (in 6 months period).

According to the Schengen rules, the priority should be to obtain Schengen visas in the embassies or consulates of the main residence (Schengen agreement 1996). If the main destination is one of the other Schengen countries, the Embassy or Consulate of Finland cannot issue a visa, even if the trip is in transit through Finland. For example, if you plan to travel by car through Finland to Sweden on holiday, you should obtain a visa at the Embassy or Consulate of Sweden (see chapter 2.3 Passport and visa formalities on the Schengen area).

In some cases, the representative of the Schengen States may provide other countries with visa issues. Thus, the General Consulate of Finland in St. Petersburg also issues visas for those traveling to Austria. General Consulate only accepts applications from individual travelers, not tour groups or people applying for a residence permit. On the territory of the Russian Federation Finnish visa can be issued in Hungarian Consulate in Yekaterinburg, Kaliningrad and Lithuanian Consulate in Pskov.(Schengen visas to Finland 2012.)

Basically the process of applying and receiving Finnish tourist visa for a Russian citizen consists of 5 steps. They are explained below:

Step 1: Photo preparation

To apply for a Finnish visa you need to prepare a color format photo:

- size 36 x 47 mm
- head height 25 - 35 mm
- photos are not older than six months
- background color should be one color, light, but not white(gray is recommended)

(Global Russians 2012a.)

Step 2: Application

Secondly all the applicants have to fill out the application form on the website VFS. The questionnaire has to be filled in Latin alphabet letters (can be in Russian, but in the Latin alphabet letters).

The application form should be printed with a personal bar code, which will be created when the application form is completed. Visa application form and the bar code along with additional documents should be submitted at the Visa Application Centre of Finland in Moscow or St. Petersburg.(Global Russians 2012a.)

Step 3: Collect Documents

To apply for a Finnish tourist visa, a tourist needs to prepare the following documents:

1. One completed, printed and signed form.
2. A color photograph of the specified size.
3. Passport (other current and/or expired passport). The passport must be valid for three months after the intended date of travel.(Global Russians 2012a.)
4. Insurance for traveling abroad.

Each applicant (including children) must have insurance. Insurance policy should cover the entire period of the visa, and all the days of the planned visit, the territory of the insurance policy must apply to all Schengen countries have a limit of the sum insured for at least €35 000.(Global Russians 2012a.)

Nowadays you can issue the medical insurance policy to obtain a Schengen visa online. It could be paid by credit card and an applicant would get a medical insurance policy by e-mail. For a short-term visa the rate is calculated by multiplying the amount of days by €0.40 euro. In the Table 2 below the common rates for the health insurance could be found.

1-year visa with a right to stay in Schengen up to...	Price (in euros)	Rate a day (in euros)
180 days	38	0,21
120 days	30	0,25
(or 6 months) 90 days	25	0,28
(or 6 months) 60 days	19	0,32
(or 6 months) 45 days	14	0,31
(or 6 months) 30 days	10	0,33

Table 2. Insurance rates for opening multi-entry visas to Finland in Russia (Insurance of citizens traveling abroad 2012.)

5. Visa fees

All the fees for the visa should be paid in advance.

Normally for the people who don't live in North-West part of Russia and St. Petersburg region specifically have to show the hotel bookings or letter from an accredited travel agency, or a planned trip there and back, then dates on these plans should be reported as accurately as possible on a separate sheet of paper (can be in any form). But for the people living in the St. Petersburg area the invitation from Finland is not mandatory since they are the frequent travelers to Finland. (Global Russians 2012a.)

Step 4: Submit Documents

Submitted documents should be distributed to the Visa Application Centre of Finland in Moscow or St. Petersburg, the General Consulate, or the consular section of the Embassy. You can pre-enroll online for a personal appointment or submit an application without an appointment, in a queue. Documents in the visa section of the Embassy are accepted only with a personal appointment. Applying to the General Consulate of Finland in St. Petersburg can be done also with a personal appointment only: enrolment is done by phone or electronically. (Global Russians 2012a.)

If an applicant cannot come and apply in person, it can be done by the close relatives with a presentation of proof of relationship, or by the agencies accredited at the Embassy of Finland. The application could be tracked on the Internet address VFS Global 2012. To do this you need to specify the receipt number and date of your birth. (Global Russians 2012a.)

Step 5: Get Documents

A passport with a valid visa pasted inside should be received in person with a present ICR-check and a Russian civil passport. If you yourself cannot come to the Visa Application Centre or consulate, visa documents may be received by the close relatives (parents, children, spouses, grandmother/grandfather, grandchildren, brothers/sisters). To do this, they have to bring a Russian civil or foreign passport, attached ICR-check and proof of relationship (e.g., birth certificate, marriage certificate). Getting another person's documents could be done with an attorney. To do this, issue the notarized power of attorney for the person you trust the documents. The term of delivery would take up to three weeks and the consular fee is 1500 rubles (35 euros in rubles), 3,000 rubles (70 euros in ruble terms) – for the urgent visa request is 3 business days or less. (Global Russians 2012a.)

Generally speaking, the process is not very hard, but people still would have to spend some time and/or money to deal with this quickly and efficiently. The documents have to be prepared as accurately as possible. This will reduce the risk of an incomplete set of documents or delay in consideration of the application.

Besides that, when travelling with a personal car, a “green card” should be bought for a specific period of time. It could be on-line or from a special “green card” office. You can see the prices for it in the Table 3 below. The prices in the table are shown in euro.

Time spent abroad	Vehicle	
	Passenger car	Trailers for passenger cars
15 days	35	10
1 month	65	18
2 months	125	38
3 months	175	53
4 months	220	65
5 months	240	71
6 months	260	78
7 months	270	81
8 months	285	85
9 months	295	88
10 months	305	91
11 months	312	93
12 months	320	95

Table 3. The price list of the “Green Card” for the vehicles for Russian citizens entering the Schengen territory rates from 15 October 2012 to 14 January 2013(OSAGO-24 2012.)

As it seen from the Table 3, the prices for the Green Card are adding quite a lot to the expenses spent on the trip to Finland by passenger car. Besides, it is important to remember that radars are forbidden in Finland and drivers who have it in the car would lose it and be obligated with a ticket (around €400 depending on the income).(VFS Global 2012a.)

3.2 Requirements within Russia and Some Other States

In accordance with applicable law to participate in a trip abroad, citizens of the Russian Federation must have a passport. Issuing passports is regulated by the Law "On the

Procedure for Exit from the Russian Federation and Entry into the Russian Federation", which came into force in August 1996, and the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of December 21, 1997 № 1752 "On the main documents proving the identity of the citizen of the Russian Federation outside the Russian Federation".

When purchasing a foreign tour, the responsibility for ensuring the obedience of current passport current legislation is on the client, as specified in the contract for the providing of tourism services. A passport can be issued also by the majority of tour agencies. (Legal information portal 2012.)

Period of validity of any passport is set up to 10 years. However, in some countries, with an entry visa there are restrictions if the passport is valid for less than two months, and in some countries less than six. If a Russian citizen travels to such countries for a few days before the expiry of the passport, it must be remembered that during the passport control the expiry date of the passport and the availability of a return ticket will be checked. If the return date is after the date of expiry of the passport, the tourist is removed from the flight. To prevent such cases, regulations establish dual control: it is the tour agency when you plan a tour and the carrier when you buy a ticket. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

A child travelling with his parents should be written in one or both of the parents' passports. From the age of 6 in the parent's passport must be affixed a photograph of the child. Tourists traveling with a child, who at the time of border crossing was six years old, can also be removed from the flight, if there was no picture of the child in the parent's passport. A child can have his own passport from the birth and up to six years old he may have a photo or not, but from the age of six the photograph should always be in the passport. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

When a tourist is making trips to the Commonwealth of Independent States (or CIS countries), as well as adherence to the Kaliningrad region of Russia, Russian people do not need to carry a passport. In this case they use internal (civil) Russian passport as an ID. Possibility of issuing visas in each case is considered individually. Each embassy has its own demands. For instance, if a host side does not indicate paying the cost for insurance for the tourist, embassies of all countries (except the United States) require submission of the Health Insurance Act, drawn up in the territory of Russia. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

Some countries require that the invitation was not just stamped by the host company, but also with the seal of the notary (Germany, Italy). Visa application forms for different countries may vary depending on the purpose and duration of the stay. Application forms in some countries (Germany) can be photocopied. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

In addition to the basic documents for visa request, embassies and consulates may require additional information and documents in several countries. To get into Estonia for example one would need extra papers like:

- a copy of the contract with the country for entry into which the visa is issued submitted to the Consulate,
- a letter of guarantee of a legal entity on the Russian side

Another one of the most common additional documents required to be submitted in a foreign embassy for visa requests is an income statement (an official document from the employer on wages), confirming the financial strength and ability to pay the costs of the trip. To some foreign representatives (France, Spain) need to be submitted a ticket with date of return and a copy of the internal passport. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

For the Russian citizens under 18 years old who are travelling abroad with a parent there would be needed a notarized permission to leave the other besides an invitation to a country. If a child is traveling alone, he must have his passport, with personal visa. In this case, to leave the country the child requires a notarized permission from both parents. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

It should be always kept in mind that the passport must be valid for at least 6 months after the expiration of the visa. The period for which the visa is issued depends on the invitation. When filling in the form the receiving party specifies the purpose of visit, intended duration of stay and the number of visits. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

In accordance with these data embassy decides on the date to issue visas. In some cases, the visa may hold the specific border crossing point. The consular fee for a visa in different countries is different and it is constantly changing. (Savelev 1997.)

For tourist groups and delegations group visa is usually made and it is placed on the list of visitors or members of the delegation (Savelev 1997).

For the Schengen area a standardized questionnaire with a common set of questions in three languages was developed. It requests an original or a fax form. Additional documents may be requested in separate (specific cases) similar to the practice of issuing national visas. (Zorin & Quarterly 2000.)

Visitors from 126 countries (including Russia) can take advantage of the Schengen visa. Preferential visa-free entry to Schengen countries is granted for Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. Their citizens can enter the Schengen area without a visa only with their national passport. (Kashkin & Chetverikov 2000.)

It should be noted that if in one of the countries of the Schengen area tourist breaks the law and is expelled from the country, then he closes the path to all countries in the area. There is a computer center in Strasbourg which receives all the information. If a traveler gets into the "black list", then no embassy will issue him a visa as long as the country that put him there lets him out of the ban. (Kashkin & Chetverikov 2000.)

3.4 Relationship Development of Russia and Other Countries

One of the most up-to-date issues in the context of regulation of the passport and visa requirements is a question of their improvement. Thus the countries with different visa regime must choose between convenience and comfort for the visitors (and as a consequence, increases the tourist attraction of the region) or ensuring their own security.

Commonwealth of Independent States

To Russia the most important and strategically essential are the passport and visa relations with the CIS countries its direct neighbors.

According to the head of the Department of Consular Service of the Commonwealth foreign ministers it has been told to seriously reduce the list of documents, which Russian tourist would need to cross the borders of the CIS. However, this does not exclude that in the future for any travel outside of Russia, at least in Kiev or in Dushanbe, you will need a passport. (Moscow Railway Agency 2012.)

Now the passport and visa relations in the CIS are in a rather difficult situation: for some countries (Turkmenistan) a visa is needed, which automatically implies the existence of a foreign passport, but with others (such as the Ukraine) there are no formal restrictions, but in practice it is safer and easier to have a passport.

As a result of the mutual coordination of department heads of consular services came up with a proposal that would simplify the list of documents that allow entry from one state to another CIS. The documents that should be excluded in the first place are: the child's birth, and secondly, identification cards, which are not passport (for example, military ID). The bottom line is that on the CIS border a tourist should have at least an internal passport. The final list of documents, with which Russian citizens can cross the border of the CIS requires further analysis and a new series of negotiations. In yet cut version of the list in addition to the identity card and birth certificate are, for example, a residence permit and seaman ID. (Entry of the Russians in the CIS 2012.)

Ideas to change the rules of entry and exit in the CIS have been discussed more than once. For facilitation of visa and passport controls between the CIS countries it has been proposed, for instance, to minimize the list of documents to several varieties of passports: "red" - civil, "blue" - service, "green" - diplomatic. (Moscow Railway Agency 2012.)

However, there are some downsides of solutions to simplify the passport and visa procedures. First disadvantage of radical reduction in the number of documents is political. The transition from internal to the international passport is de facto recognition of the Commonwealth collapse. Another negative point is technical. In Tajikistan, for example, not everyone has new internal passports, not talking about the international ones. In addition, not all of the checkpoints, including Russia, are equipped to quickly identify the origin of criminal or fake documents. (Legal consultation office 2012.)

Nevertheless, there are positive aspects of possible solutions to simplify the passport and visa requirements. Among them all CIS countries desire to confront illegal immigration. For Russia, it is also a step towards strengthening its own borders, the need for good relations with the EU and any results of the negotiations on the prospects of visa-free travel to Europe. The Ukraine has the same interest and it is probably the first country in the CIS to change the rules of crossing borders. Russia and the Ukraine have bilateral agreements governing the list of documents to cross the border, and are currently working on a mixed

Russian-Ukrainian commission. There are multiple consultations and as a result it may be decided to change the list at the bilateral level.(Business service 2012.)

Two of the most challenging area for Russia to simplify visa procedures are is the Central Asia and Caucasus. Saving the visa-free regime with them will only be possible if the leaders of these countries are able to convince the Russian government that they will do anything to discourage the export of terrorism and drug trafficking. In general, we can assume only that the visa will probably not be introduced with Belarus, given the closeness of the relationship. For all other CIS countries - it is a matter of negotiations.(RIA news 2012.)

European Union

An agreement between the European Community and Russia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas has been in force since June 1, 2007. It has unified the cost of visas, and made it easier to obtain visas for close relatives, journalists, official delegations, transport crew members and some other groups of visitors. Similar agreements have been signed and ratified between Russia and Denmark on 1 October 2009 as well as Russia and Norway on 19 October 2011. In 2007 Silvio Berlusconi, the Prime Minister of Italy, and later Alexander Stubb, the Foreign Minister of Finland started public discussions on the future possibility of visa-free travel between the EU countries and Russia. (Official Journal of the European Union 2007.)

On May 4, 2010, The EU and Russian Federation raised the prospect of beginning negotiations on a visa-free regime between their territories. However, it was announced by the Council of Ministers of the EU that the EU is not completely ready to open up the borders due to high risk of increase in human trafficking and drug imports into Europe and because of the loose borders of Russia with Kazakhstan. They will instead work towards providing Russia with a "roadmap for visa-free travel." While this does not legally bind the EU to providing visa-free access to the Schengen zone for Russian citizens at any specific date in the future, it does greatly improve the chances of a new regime being established and obliges the EU to actively consider the notion, should the terms of the roadmap be met. Russia on the other hand has agreed that should the roadmap be established, it will ease access for EU citizens for whom access is not visa-free at this point, largely as a result of Russian foreign policy which states that "visa free travel must be reciprocal

between states." Both the EU and Russia acknowledge, however, that there are many problems to be solved before visa-free travel is introduced. (Filatova 2010)

United States of America

Russia ratified the agreement on simplification of visa regime with the U.S., a law is placed on the portal of legal information. The document was signed on November 21, 2011, it aims to create more favorable conditions for travel of citizens of Russia and the U.S., and the development of economic, cultural, scientific, and cultural ties between the two countries, according to the explanatory documents. (Embassy of United States in Moscow 2012.)

The U.S. State Department notes that the implementation of the agreement will expand trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said earlier that the agreement is seen by Russia as an important but the first step in the transition to a visa-free regime between the two countries. (Interfax Information Services 2012.)

The agreement provides the issuance of the citizens of the two countries multiple entry visa for a stay of up to 6 months from the date of each entry and valid for 36 months from the date of issue. Under the agreement, the Russian Federation will be given business, private, humanitarian and tourist visas on direct invitation of the host side, and the United States of America - visas B1/B2. Decision on the application for a visa will be taken within 15 calendar days from the start of their treatment. (Interfax Information Services, 2012)

The U.S. embassy in Moscow reported, in addition, that they will reduce the cost of U.S. visas for Russians. Starting September 9, the sum of \$100, paid by the Russians for issuing tourist and business visas in the U.S. (visa type B1/B2), will drop to \$20. This type of visa will be issued for the full three years. At the same time, the visa fee of \$160 will be charged as before, said the embassy. (Interfax Information Services 2012.)

4 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 Research Method

Since there was a quantitative research conducted in this thesis, I would like to explain the reader the practical need of the work. The point is to study and find out if Russian people (actual and potential tourists) would be more willing to travel to a next door country (such as Finland) if there was no visa involved in the process of traveling. The research was carried out with a help of a short questionnaire which was distributed on-line and printed and actually spread through the travel agencies where the most of potential tourists are visiting. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions, plus an extra 11th question for the comments according to the topic if a person has any.

The full text for the Cover Letter for the research and the text of the questionnaire itself can be found in the Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively. Both of them were translated into Russian.

The research was held in the North-West territory of Russian Federation (Vyborg and St. Petersburg districts) and it is considered to be the most interested in Finland area due to the geographical location.

The target group of the research was rather extensive, but it concentrated on the people over 18 years old who are able to travel to the foreign country by themselves supporting the journey from the personal funds.

4.2 Analysis of the Collected Data

As it was mentioned before, the survey was made online and with printed copies. There were 20 copies filled in on-line and 192 respondents filled in paper. Altogether 211 filled in questionnaires were collected back. All of the respondents are Russian passport holders.

There are 7 back-ground check questions. The main idea of them is to find out the present attitude to Finland, frequency of the trips and the main aims of visiting Finland in general. The data was analyzed and presented to the reader below.

4.2.1 Age and Gender of the Respondents

All 211 respondents gave the information about their age and gender. As can be seen from the Figure 1 below, there are 107 females and 104 males. They were divided into 5 different age groups. Figure 1 shows the number of the group members.

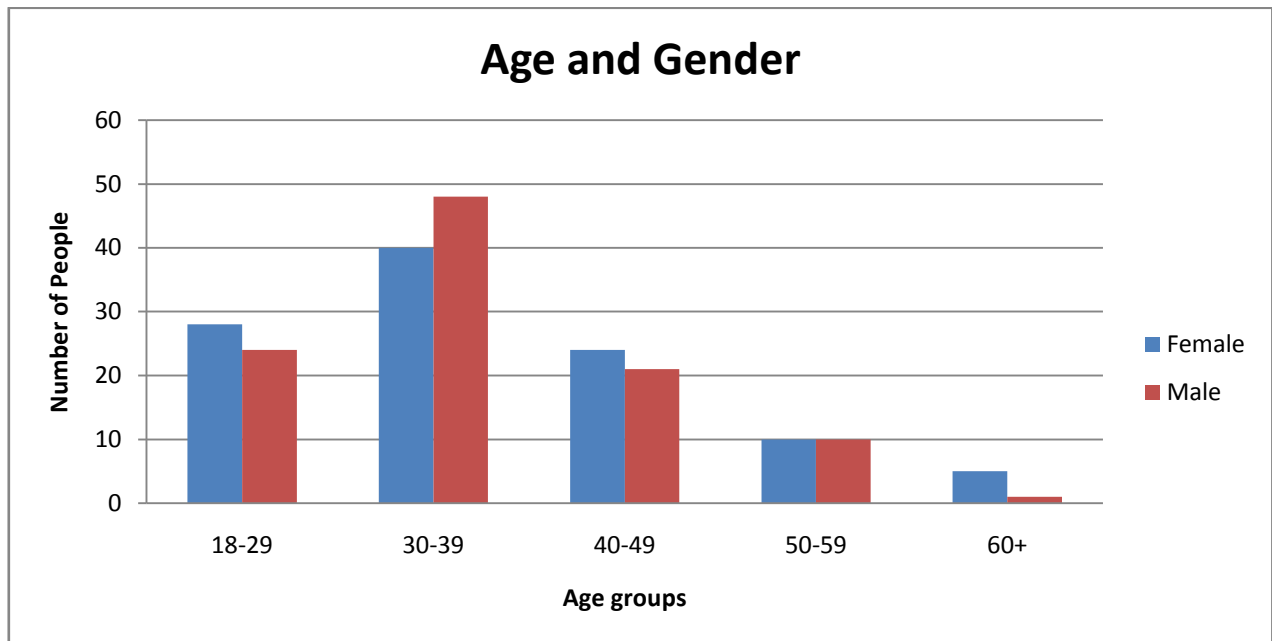


Figure 1. Age and gender of the respondents (n=211)

According to the Figure 1, the largest percentage of the respondents are in the age group 30-39. It covered 88 respondents or 42% of the total amount of people. As the age 30-39 is still an average for the entire target group the information is considered to be quite reliable.

The following age group is group 18-29 with the total percentage of 25% and not far behind is the group 40-49 with 21% of the entire group results. Older age groups have very few respondents with 20 people in the 50-59 years old group and only 6 people in the 65+ group.

Most of the respondents are female with 51%, but it is clear that male audience is still rather large with 49% of the total. It is common for Russian women to participate in social activities more than men, but in this research the score is close.

4.2.2 Interest in Visiting Finland

The question 3 “Are you interested in traveling to Finland?” has got a response from all the people as well. From the Figure 2 below it is extremely clear that almost everyone is attracted to the idea of visiting Finland.

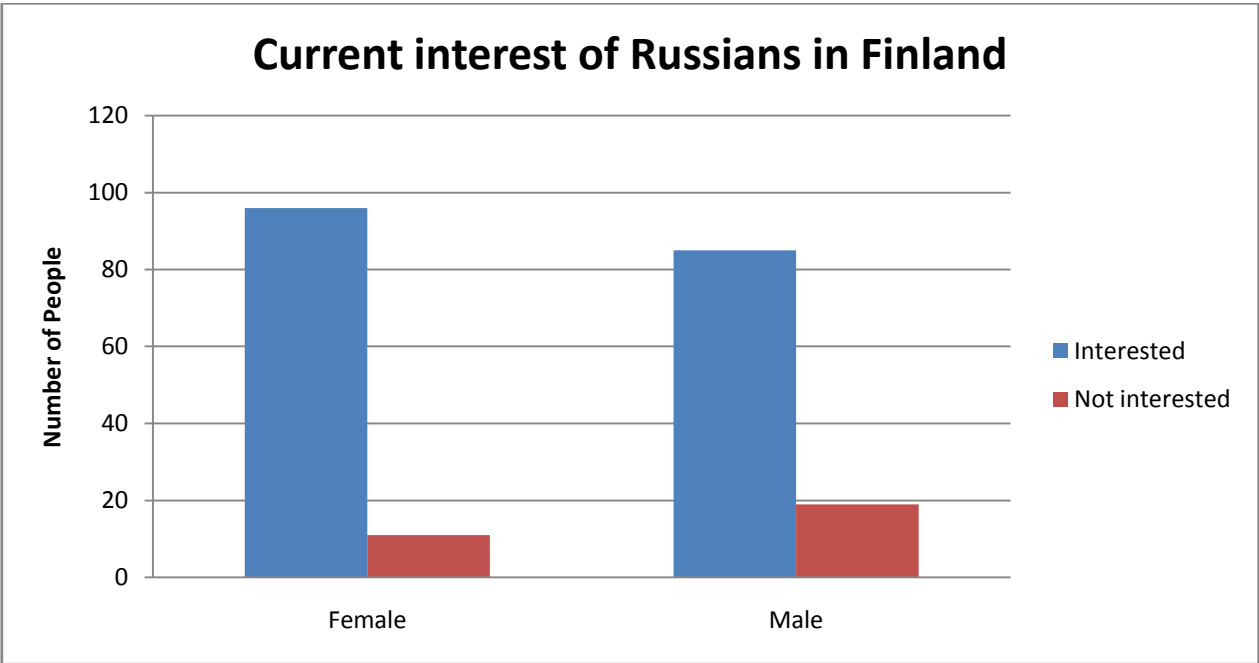


Figure 2. Current interest of Russian citizens in visiting Finland (n=211)

There are 85% of all the age groups and both genders who are interested and only 15% who are not. From the comments to the questionnaire was found out that some of those people have never been to Finland and still have no intention in going there due to various

reasons. But overall it could be said that North-West region of Russia and Vyborg and St. Petersburg in particular are highly motivated to go to Finland.

4.2.3 Time of the Next Planned trip to Finland

In this question respondents had 6 options to choose from. For some of them it was hard to give a precise answer since they have not actually planned a trip, but assumed the closest time they might visit Finland as a tourist.

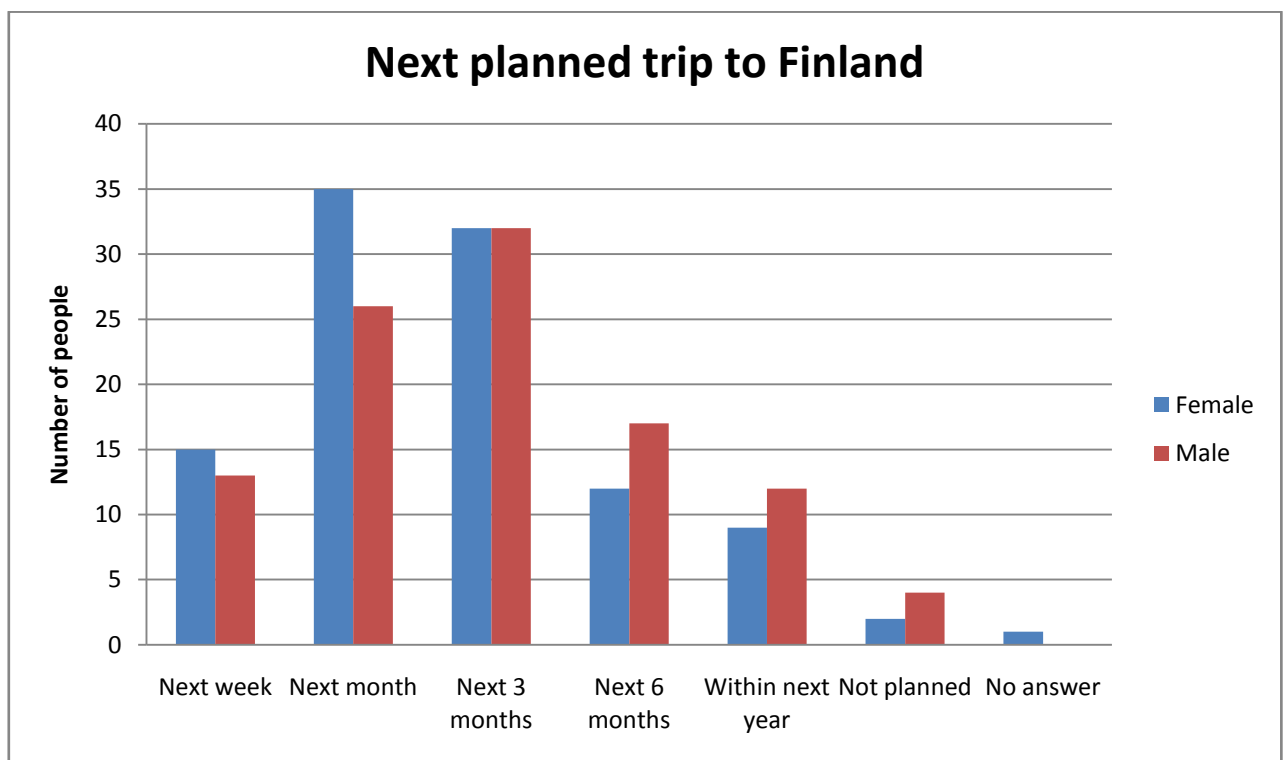


Figure 3. Time of the next planned trip to Finland (n=210)

There are a lot of people who would like to go to Finland within the next week 13% or 28 people. Besides that, about 24% of the respondents combined are planning to visit Finland within next year at least once or twice.

Female respondents are expecting to visit Finland sooner than male.

A small group of 6 people as in last question has not planned a trip to Finland in the near future. And only one person didn't reply at all.

4.2.4 Frequency of the Visits to Finland

Figure 4 which is seen underneath seems to be very remarkable because it shows the numbers on the current visits to Finland with visa for Russian citizens.

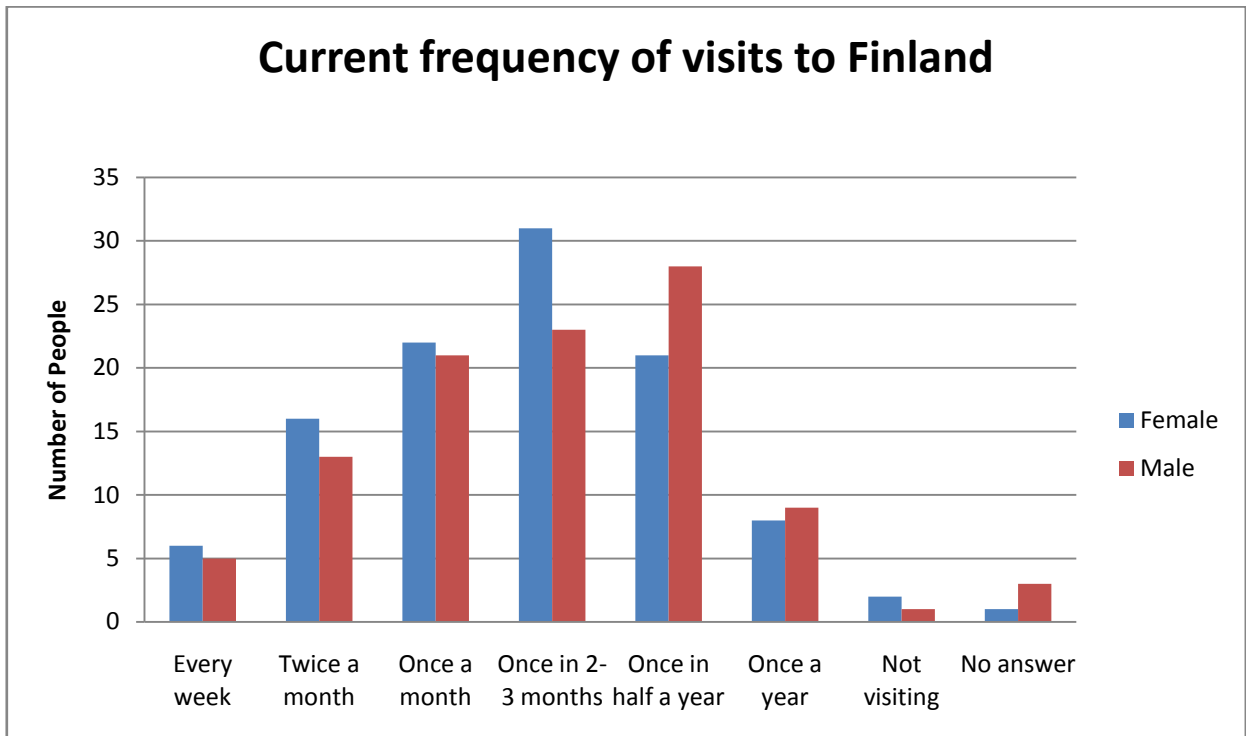


Figure 4. Frequency of the visits to Finland by Russians (n=207)

The biggest group with a total percentage of 26% is the group which visits Finland once in every 2-3 months. It is followed by the group of people who are going there around once every half a year with 24%. Nevertheless the third group got a close score with 21% for people who are visiting every month. Next largest group has 14% and go to Finland twice a month. Also 5% of respondents visit every week.

Given that I would consider Russian citizens who are living near the border with Finland or in the most of North-West region are frequent travelers to Finland.

Group of people visiting Finland only once a year is quite small with only 17 people or 8%. 3 people out of all 207 mentioned that they have never been to Finland in their lives.

4.2.5 Aim of the Visiting Finland

The following Figure 5 might seem a little confusing, but there are several factors standing out and explaining the situation rather clearly. In the question about aims of the visit the respondents were able to choose from several reasons and grade them from the main reason to not reason at all. One respondent was able to choose 1 or more main aims etc.



Figure 5. Russian Females' aims of Visiting Finland (n=107)

From the Figure 5 above it is seen that for Russian females visiting Finland the main aim is shopping. 81% (main reason) and 10% (quite an important reason) of the female respondents reflect Finland as a great place to shop. It is easy to explain, since there is a tax free policy between Russia and the EU and a lot of female find it as a big advantage of shopping in Finland.

Second main reason (72%) turned out to be visiting SPAs and beauty treatments. Finland is known for its high quality both modern and traditional-relaxation methods used in SPAs and it is no wonder a lot of women find it attractive.

36% of respondents have some friends or relatives they are visiting in Finland and put it as a main reason and 19% find it quite an important reason. It has to be said that with the

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and other Finnish universities gaining popularity among Russian students more and more Russians have friends to visit in Finland.

Finnish nature and hiking or camping is the second biggest reason (42%) for females to visit Finland. It is common to rent houses on the Finnish territory and enjoy the quiet life of the forest. People from St. Petersburg are regularly very tired from the rushing life in the big city and enjoy some peace Finland is able to give.

Culture came out with 24% for being quite an important reason. Helsinki in particular is a great place to visit for a variety of different music concerts with bands and singers visiting from all over the world and Russian women pointed out that some of those artists are not visiting Russia during the tour, therefore they have to go to Finland for a concert. Nevertheless, for 51% of the female respondents it is not a reason.

The last reasons for Russian women came out to be medical treatment (75%) and business (67%).



Figure 6. Russian Males' aims of Visiting Finland (n=104)

The situation in the Figure 6 above is quite different form the Figure 5.

The main attractions for Russian males seem to be the nature. It got 42%. As well as Russian females, Russian males are looking for peace and quiet in Finland with a great opportunity of fishing and hunting. It is understandable with high-rhythm of the life and a constant pressure from work, family and society.

Secondly Russian men are as well as females enjoy SPAs of Finland. 34% of the male respondents gave it as a main reason to visit Finland.

Business related visits are close with 30% as a main reason and 26% with quite a reason. Nowadays more and more companies from the North-West Russia and not only have some branches or storages in the Finnish territory. There are also a lot of different kinds of trades going on between the two countries.

Russian men have an interesting tendency with shopping with almost equal number of responses in all four categories: 24%- main reason, 28%-quite the reason, 19%-not much of a reason and 29%-not the reason at all.

The last reason for male turned out to be medical treatment with 81% saying it is not the reason at all.

4.2.6 Accompany on the Way

This question had an opportunity for more than one answer.

From the Figure 7 below it is clear that the most part of Russian female is travelling to Finland with a family (45 respondents) or a spouse (32 respondents). Only 7 ladies are travelling with co-workers and about 20 visit Finland by themselves. It is quite common, since sometimes a woman does not own a car or just prefers to go with a couple for a safety reasons.

The following Figure 8 is relatively similar to the female one. Most of the males put family (42 people) or spouse (25 people) as a main accompany during their trip to Finland. But a big percentage (or 34 people) goes to Finland by themselves or with their friends (16 people). 17 males are travelling with their co-workers.

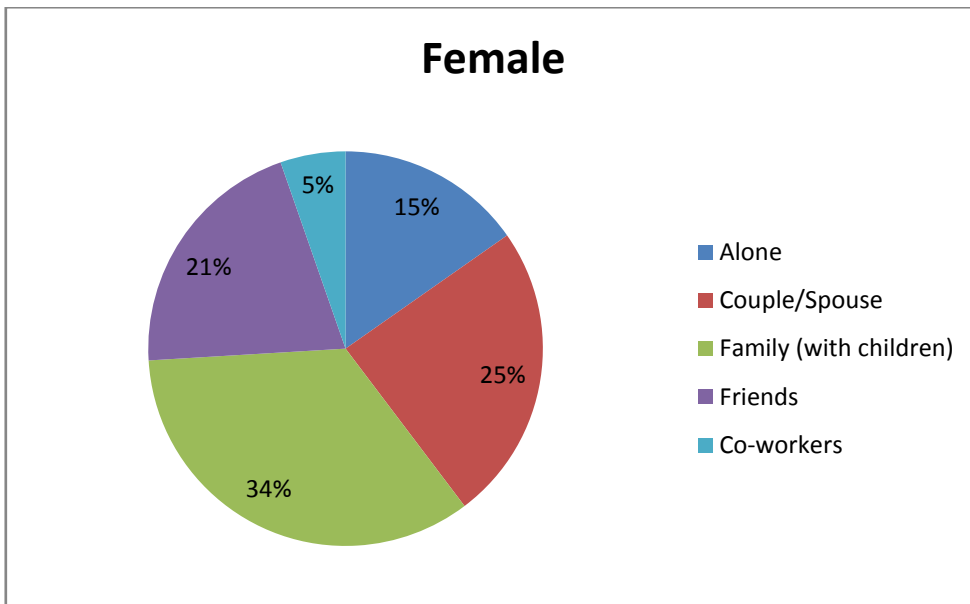


Figure 7. Russian females' accompany in Finland (n=107)

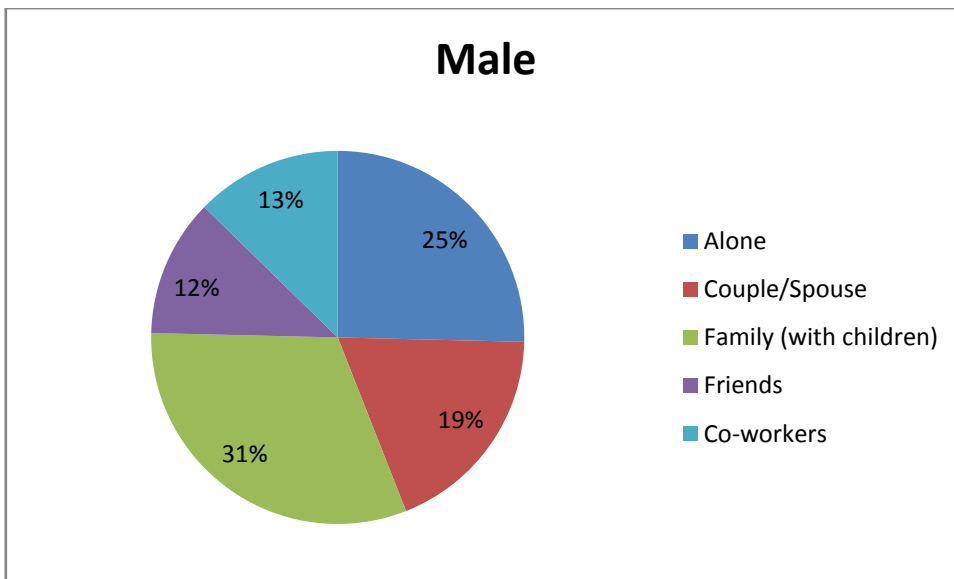


Figure 8. Russian males' accompany in Finland (n=104)

4.2.7 Influences of Passport and Visa formalities

This is one of the most important parts of the questionnaire which directly applies to the topic of the research. In the questionnaire the respondents have to rate the passport and

visa formalities which bothers them from “very much” to “not at all”. There is also an option of choosing “No problems” related to passport and visa formalities.

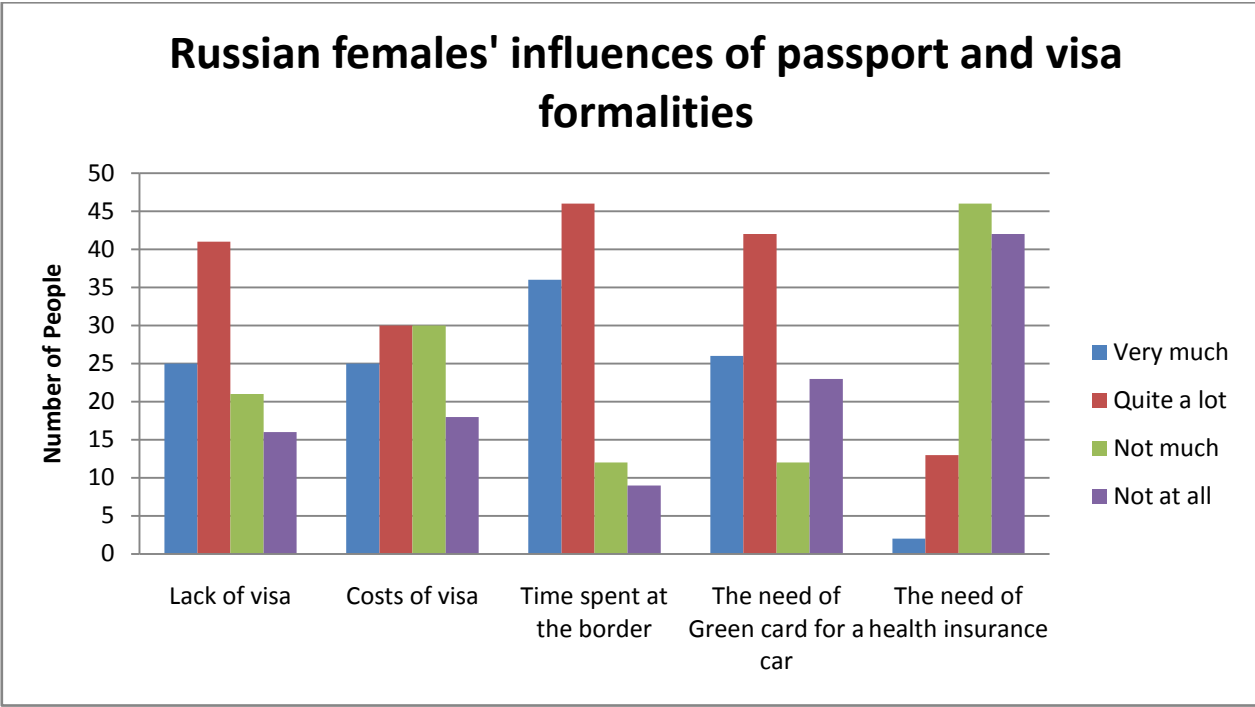


Figure 9. Russian females' influences of passport and visa formalities when travelling to Finland (n=107)

From the figure above, the first (45%) and second (35%) biggest influence on Russian ladies turned out to be the time spent at the border. Some of the borders to Finland are unfortunately known to be “slow” and a lot of people are losing their temper waiting in the lines for a long time.

It was interesting to find out that the need of buying a Green Card for a car got 25% (as well as 41% as a second reason) and the lack of visa itself got 24% (as well as 40% as a second reason). Nowadays way too many Russian tourists are travelling to Finland with their personal cars; therefore the flow at the borders is giant and the border guards are not ready for it.

The costs of visa got close results in all four options with 24% saying it is the main reason, 29% giving it as a second main reason and 29% as well saying it is not that important. And 17% marked it as not important at all. The price for visa today, as it was mentioned before is only 35 euros and most respondents pointed it out as a reasonable one.

The influence female respondents put as the least important one is the cost of health insurance. This has to be bought in order to get the visa and of course most ladies think “better safe than sorry”.

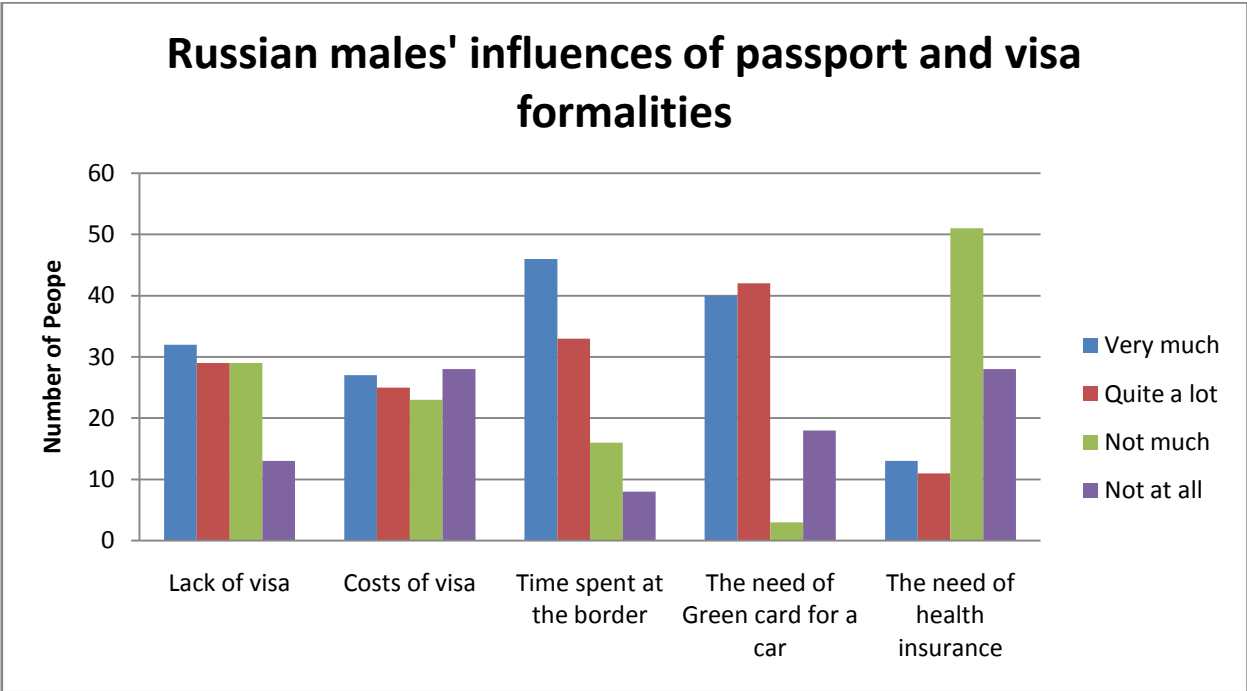


Figure 10. Russian males’ influences of passport and visa formalities when travelling to Finland (n=104)

Figure 10 reflects almost similar results as a female figure 9.

Time spent at the border is number one issue for Russian males, too. 45% gave it the main and 32% as a quite important reason. Green card is an issue for the male tourists as well (39% as main and 41 as a second main), since it adds up a lot to the budget of the frequent traveler.

Almost a third or 31% of respondents gave a lack of visa as the main reason. It is almost impossible for a Russian male who has not been in the army to get a visa if he is not a student. And Russian men are reservists until the age of 27. Cost of visa only influences 26% (main reason) and 24% (quite a lot) of the male respondents.

Health insurance is not the reason at all for most males: 27% and 50% say that it is not much of a reason for them.

4 people out of 211 marked that they do not have any passport or visa related formalities on the frequency of their trips to Finland.

4.2.8 The Interest in Visa-Free Entrance to Finland

The graph in the Figure 11 below represents extremely clearly that almost everyone is interested in Finland to be a visa-free country. 99% in both Russian male and female groups would be interested in visiting Finland with no visa regime between the two countries. Only 1% in each group would still not be attracted.

Most of the respondents put in their comment section “*Pro visa abolishment with Finland for the citizens of the North-West of Russia*”.

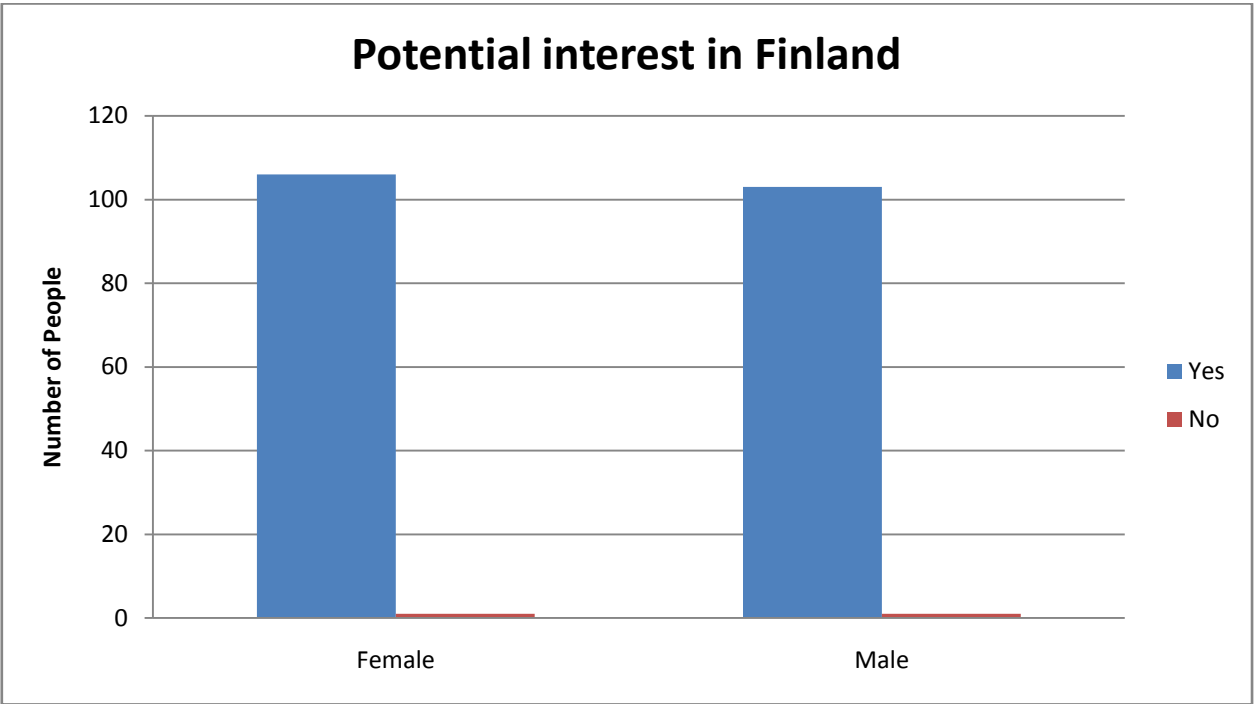


Figure 11. Increase of interest in visiting Finland with no visa for Russian citizens (n=211)

4.2.9 Potential Increase of the Frequency of visits to Finland

In this question respondents were free to choose how the frequency of their trips to Finland would or would not change with a condition of visa abolishment for Russian citizens.

5 people could not decide whether it would change or not and decided not to give an answer for this question.



Figure 12. Potential increase of frequency of trips to Finland by Russian citizens (n=206)

From the figure 12 above it is clear that most of the Russian females (43%) would like to go to Finland as often as at least once a month. And 24% of Russian male are supporting that initiative.

A third (31%) of the male respondents would like to visit Finland up to several times in half a year. And 14% of women agree.

A remarkable fact is that 7% of females and 12% of males say that the number of their visits would not change much.

5% of the female group and 4% of the male are ready to visit Finland on a weekly basis and 2% of females and 4% of males would go to Finland several times a week with no visa.

4.2.10 Comments Section

Unfortunately, most of the respondents prefer not to leave any personal comments referring to the current issue, but 27 people did.

Most of them were against visa regime between Russia and Finland:

"It's better without visa!"

"Our neighbor countries don't need it"

"Pro visa-abolishment in the boundary zones"

"I am for democracy and against euthanasia, therefore I believe we should cancel visas"

"Visas need to be cancelled" etc.

And only one pro:

"I believe we shouldn't abolish visa regime with Finland"

5 SUMMARY

The aim of this thesis is to find out if Russian tourists would be more willing to visit Finland if there was no visa. Therefore it would be logical to check and compare some figures which were got from the qualitative research we showed above.

Firstly, let's look at the figures 2 (p. 40) and 11 (p.49).Both of them are concerning the interest of going to Finland, but first one is actual (with visa) and the second one is potential (without visa). Females' interest in Finland increased by 9% and males' interest increased by 17%. The difference in numbers between the two groups can be also explained with a point of view that females were more willing to go than males to begin with. This result shows a remarkable increase in the interest in Finland as a visa free country for Russians.

Next important figures are 4 (p. 42)and 12 (p. 50). In those the reader can see how the frequency of visiting Finland would change from actual to potential. As it was already said, Russians living in the North-West part of Russia are the more frequent travelers to Finland already, but with potential abolishment of visa, the numbers would rise even higher.

It was figured out with a help of question 8 and figures 9 and 10, that surprisingly, the biggest deal-breaker for not going to Finland would be not the lack or costs of visa, but the car related issues: the cost of Green Card for the car and the time tourists have to spend in the line waiting.

In order to travel to Finland more often, drivers have to pay a relatively significant cost for the Green Card about which we talked in Chapter 3.1 Regime of Russian Citizens Entering Finland. Unfortunately, it is more of a safety matter than a passport or visa related formality. Without it getting in the accident in the Schengen territory would be even more pricy.

The border formality is still related to passport and visa, since both Russian and Finnish border guards have to check and compare all the paper work as well as stamp a passport of each individual and it takes some time to be accurate and not make any mistakes. Visa abolishment would not solve this problem right away, since still some form of control would

be needed and vital for both countries and it would take some time to develop new efficiently-working system.

Nevertheless, Russian tourist turned out to be very willing to go to Finland more if they had a chance of visa-free entrance. Maybe one day it will become a reality.

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Appendix 1. Cover Letter

Dear Respondent,

I am inviting you to participate in a research project to study the influence of visa issues on the tourism between Russia and Finland. I am a student at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences in Imatra, Finland and I chose this topic as my thesis project. As a person who lives that close to the border I am very interested in the relationships between the two countries and how they have been developing through the years.

Along with this letter you can find a short questionnaire with 10 questions about the visa issues and how they affect you personally. The results of my survey would give a better picture of the intentions of the actual and potential tourists and if you were to actually consider passport and visa formalities as a problem at all or not.

This survey should take around 5-10 minutes to complete. I hope you will find some time to fill it in and return it. The participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate in my research which is held until the 7th of November 2012, please give the filled in copies back to me or to the tourist agency manager who gave it to you. The survey is anonymous, therefore you should not put your name on it and I promise that I will respect your privacy. I will make sure that all the answers would not be linked to you personally and the results would be kept at the thesis database of the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.

Even if you decided not to participate in the research, but still are interested in the results, you can contact me by the following e-mail: daria.baranova@student.saimia.fi and I would be happy to share them with you.

If there are any difficulties or concerns about this questionnaire, don't hesitate to contact me as well.

Yours faithfully,

DariaBaranova

Appendix 2. Questionnaire

1. Gender:

- Male
 Female

2. Age: _____

3. Are you interested in travelling to Finland?

- Yes
 No

4. When?

- Within next week
 Within next month
 Within next 3 months
 Within next 6 months
 Within next year
 Not planned

5. How often do you visit Finland now?

- Weekly
 Twice a month
 Once a month
 Once every 2-3 months
 Couple of times a year
 Not visiting

6. Are you travelling for:

Reason		The strongest Reason	Quite an important reason	Not much of a reason	Not a reason at all
Leisure	Shopping				
	Hiking (nature)				
	Culture events				
	Spa and beauty				
Business					
Visiting friends and relatives					
Medical treatment					

Other reasons, please specify: _____

7. Are you travelling:

- By yourself
- With a spouse
- With family (with children)
- With friends
- With business partners

8. Do the difficulties with travelling formalities affect the amount of your visits to Finland?

- Yes

	Very much	Quite a lot	Not much	Not at all
Lack of visa				
Cost of visa				
Time spent at the border				
The need of a Green Card for a car				
The need of health insurance				

Other reasons, please specify: _____

- No

9. Are you willing to visit Finland more if there was no visa required between our countries?

- Yes
- No

10. How often would you like (prefer) to visit Finland without any visa?

- Several times a week
- Weekly
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- Once every 2-3 months
- A couple of times a year
- Frequency won't change

11. Do you have any personal comments on the passport and visa related topic?
