

Hotels welcome tourists, businesspeople and fans

INTERVIEW WITH
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Tourism in Ukraine is thriving and new hotels are shooting up. Read the story as seen from one of the most popular destinations, Lviv, where we met Oleg Nemchinov – Deputy of the Regional Council and Executive General Manager of Eurohotel.

Wonderful views, numerous monuments, convenience, cosiness and a romantic atmosphere – this is what sets ancient Lviv apart from other Ukrainian cities. Lviv is a real pearl of European architecture so it is no wonder that tourists from around the world come to this city. Then, logically, it is no surprise either that Lviv's hotel and restaurant businesses are developing at high pace.

Eurohotel

In early 2008, Eurohotel was opened in Lviv. Oleg Nemchinov explains that the building on Tershakovtsiv Str. has hosted a hotel since 1973. It was named “Ulyanivsky” hotel. At that time, the hotel had an excellent level and was the finest in Lviv, since it was the first one with showers and telephones in every apartment. After 1973 the Hotel was not renewed or renovated. But in 1991,

as Ukraine gained its independence, the Lviv City Council passed the decision to rename the “Ulyanivsky” hotel into the “Nezalezhnist” (“Independence”) hotel. During that period, a considerable area of the building was used for office premises.

Standards have changed since 1973, and when a new team of Ukrainian investors arrived in 2007, the hotel underwent renovation and a new strategy was elaborated.

Challenges and strategy

Oleg Nemchinov says that “nowadays there are completely different requirements for employees and top management – and you have to consider product promotion. Today hotels use modern information technologies and work with GDS, cooperate with travel agencies, and make additional promotions via the Internet”.

Eurohotel has done its best to react to the new challenges and opportunities. The hotel management works with media partners from radio, television, newspapers and magazines, and takes part in tourist exhibitions.”The best kind of advertising, however, is still the recommendations from one guest to another“, states Oleg Nemchinov.

These guests come in different types: “On the one hand, there are our neighbours, the Poles. This is “sentimental” tourism motivated by the common history of our countries. We also have many Japanese, American and recently Chinese guests – they may be attracted because Ukraine is a relatively cheap destination.

Tourists and business visitors

Another distinction is between tourists and business visitors: “On the one hand, we have chosen to be a business hotel - but we propose several packages for tourists on the other” explains Oleg Nemchinov. Wi-Fi Internet and a computerized registration system have been set up, and the hotel's conference hall with modern equipment can easily be transformed into a negotiation room or media-centre. All 36 employees have attended nine months of specialized English language courses with emphasis on tourism. Some language difficulties remain however, although a minimum skill level of two-three languages has been achieved.

Nevertheless, Oleg Nemchinov explains that everything is going according to the plan prepared in the



beginning of 2007. But in the quickly developing tourism sector, there is no room for complacency.

The next steps

At first, Eurohotel was planned to have four stars, but due to formalities it has not yet been allowed to increase its rating. Despite this, further improvements are already planned. “We plan to make another big conference room, a second restaurant, a SPA salon, and a parking lot” reveals Oleg Nemchinov. Establishing the parking lot involves an agreement with the Lviv City Council Dwelling Department, and active

consultations are being carried out.

According to Mr. Nemchinov, it is hard to estimate the amount of investments already made since the project's budget consists both of investors' own money and credit costs. Only after repaying all credits, will it be possible to calculate the real investment volume. However, as the “Eurohotel” investors estimate that recoupment of the investments will take 5-6 years.

Lviv's hosting of the European Football Championships may be a facilitator in this respect,

as tourists and football fans will pour into Lviv in the summer of 2012. Some of them will stay at Eurohotel. The new name for the hotel, however, was not chosen for the occasion. According to the management of the hotel, it is in fact motivated by aspirations to introduce traditions of European hospitality to Lviv.

So far, these aspirations have certainly been successful. After meeting the hotel's hospitable Executive General Manager, we are convinced that regular tourists, business guests and football fans alike will really enjoy a stay at Eurohotel.