

## DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF RESORT TOWNS IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

The current state of the resort towns and their diversification in Armenia are discussed in the context of sustainable development. Armenia doesn't currently stand out among the tourist destinations of the world, despite its historical and cultural heritage and natural resources. In this article the town Jermuk is described, which is located in Vayots Dzor region of Armenia. Health centers and other infrastructures of Armenian resorts were built in the period of the Soviet Union; they were restored in recent times. The main development trends of Jermuk should follow the upgrade of already built resorts (their leading examples at the European level), at the same time creating more active environment in order to meet the requirements of local population and visitors, taking into account the surrounding natural landscape and its features. One of the important issues, which should be taken into account, is the problem of seasonality (the city has no money to give for the opportunity to diversify the tourism offer in winter), and the economy with the only activity (thermal function).

Within a few years, Jermuk has rediscovered its perspectives and expresses the desire to acquire its place in the international market of spa tourism at a future date. Thus, the question of assessing the historical and cultural heritage is now one of the most pressing problems of the city, which is on the eve of important decisions on the future direction of resuming recovery services. For the revival and development of Jermuk in the medium and long term, and in order to identify urban and architectural interventions, we should note some important issues:

Updating the thermal functions of the city: This area of Jermuk still attracts a large clientele in summer, mainly from Yerevan, the Armenian diaspora and from the former Soviet republics (mainly from Russia). At the same time, the increase in the tourist attraction level requires upgrading public-safety and recreational facilities in order to meet the current needs of national and international clients.

Diversification of tourism offer: In order to cope with international competition, Jermuk should diversify its summer travel offers for increasing tourist flows even during the winter season. In this context, it should also be noted that Jermuk has all the necessary conditions (mountain ranges and favorable climate of the region of Vayots Dzor, quantity and quality of snow in the winter) for the development of winter sports (downhill and cross-country skiing, etc.).

Integration of the local population in the process of urban and economic development of the city is also important. Evaluation of Armenian culture in the context of economic development can only be achieved by relying on the skills of people.

**Key words:** area planning, town planning analysis, resort, historical heritage, cultural heritage, resort town, the Republic of Armenia, Jermuk city.

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