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Influence of natural and technological emergency situations on tourism and sustainable development in St.Petersburg and Leningrad region (Russia)

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St.Petersburg and Leningrad region belong to the most populated and tourist-active regions in the European part of Russia. St.Petersburg is a second important transportation connection point in Russia, there are many industrial and infrastructure facilities in Leningrad region such as chemical plants, mechanic engineering, power stations including a nuclear power station, etc. That is why a lot of technical objects and people can be influenced or damaged by natural hazards and various types of technological accidents can be triggered by natural phenomena that have place in the region.

According to the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situation, Leningrad region has a medium level of frequency of emergency situations caused by natural triggers (two to four cases a year). The climatic and orographic conditions of the area contribute to the development of many different types of dangerous natural processes such as floods, storms, strong winds, extreme heat and frost, snowfalls, heavy rains, hale, etc. Hydro-meteorological phenomena are the most often among all natural triggers of emergency situations in the region; about 50% of them are caused by storms and strong winds and 25% by floods. The biggest number of natural emergency situations happens in St.Petersburg. Storms make the marine navigation more difficult and even block the port sometimes. In Leningrad region, 5-10 villages and cities (including St.Petersburg) are at risk to be flooded. In November 1999, the work of Leningradskaya nuclear power station was partly blocked due to the increasing in water level. The federal road Moscow-St.Petersburg is often under influence of heavy snowfalls that cause many problems for transport system of the region during the winter.

The majority of technological emergency situations are caused by fires in industrial facilities and residential sector, trafic accidents and shipcrashes. Sometimes natural phenomena can also trigger technological accidents. However, their frequency is not so high (about three cases a year). Breakdonws in power systems and transport problems are the most often among them. In general, we can characterize Leningrad region and St.Petersburg as an area with a low level of danger for tourism development. The biggest influence on tourists can have emergency situations triggered by storms, strong winds, floods, snowfalls as well as wild and technological fires.