

## **airBaltic Behind Substantial Increase in number of Russian Tourists in Latvia, Lithuania**

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During the first half of 2010, Latvia and Lithuania were among the top five fastest growing destinations for Russian tourists, according to that country's Federal Statistical Service. In first place was Thailand, with an increase in tourist numbers by 118.5% in comparison to the same period in 2009, followed by Lithuania (92.3%), Egypt (65.4%), Latvia (59.8%), and Montenegro (58%). Russian travel agencies, which provide services related to the Baltic States have confirmed that the increase in tourist numbers can be attributed specifically to *airBaltic* operations.

It is thanks to *airBaltic* that Latvia is becoming an increasingly popular destination for Russian tourists. Travel agencies in that country attribute this fact to the country's good geographic position, its Baltic Sea shoreline, and the fact that European level services are provided for a lower price. Rīga is also a popular transit hub for Russian tourists who are heading for other cities in Europe. The number of *airBaltic* passengers from various departure points in Russia increased by 70% during the first half of 2010 in comparison to the same period in the previous year. In Russia, *airBaltic* provides services in Moscow, St Petersburg, Archangelsk and Kaliningrad.

After launching 27 new routes this summer, *airBaltic* became Europe's largest flag carrier in terms of new routes and received the anna.aero ANNIES award for this fact. *airBaltic* serves 80 destinations from its home base at Riga, Latvia. From every one of these, *airBaltic* offers convenient connections via North Hub Riga to its network spanning Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, CIS and the Middle East.