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**MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

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**Mr G R Krumbock (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism**

(a) What are the reasons for the compound annual growth rate decline of 37% of tourist arrivals from the Russian Federation to South Africa between 2014 and 2016, (b) to what extent is this below average growth in arrivals due to changes in advertising spend in the Russian Federation and (c) what are the further relevant details in this regard? NW1748E

 **Reply:**

1. What are the reasons for the compound annual growth rate decline of 37% of tourist arrivals from the Russian Federation to South Africa between 2014 and 2016?

The new South African Visa Regulations that were introduced in 2015 requiring in-person visa application for Russians and the lack of visa processing centres impacted the tourist arrivals from Russia into South Africa.

Russia’s GDP also declined between 2013 and 2016 as the country went into recession, impacting all outbound travel from Russia.

1. To what extent is this below average growth in arrivals due to changes in advertising spend in the Russian Federation.

As an investment market, SA Tourism’s marketing spend in Russia has been minimal. SA Tourism leveraged on tactical opportunities with DIRCO and with South African trade.

1. What are the further relevant details in this regard

A media and trade engagement was conducted in 2016 in partnership with the South African Embassy in Russia. In the same year, SA Tourism also attended a roadshow to Moscow and St Petersburg organised by a South African tour operator, Follow Me to Africa. The purpose of the roadshow was to introduce South African Trade to Russian trade for purposes of doing business. Russian trade were also hosted in South Africa in 2015 and 2016 during Indaba to build relationships with South African trade.

Recent changes in the visa regime between Russia and South Africa mean that Russian passport holders no longer require a visa to enter South Africa, removing a key barrier to travel into South Africa.