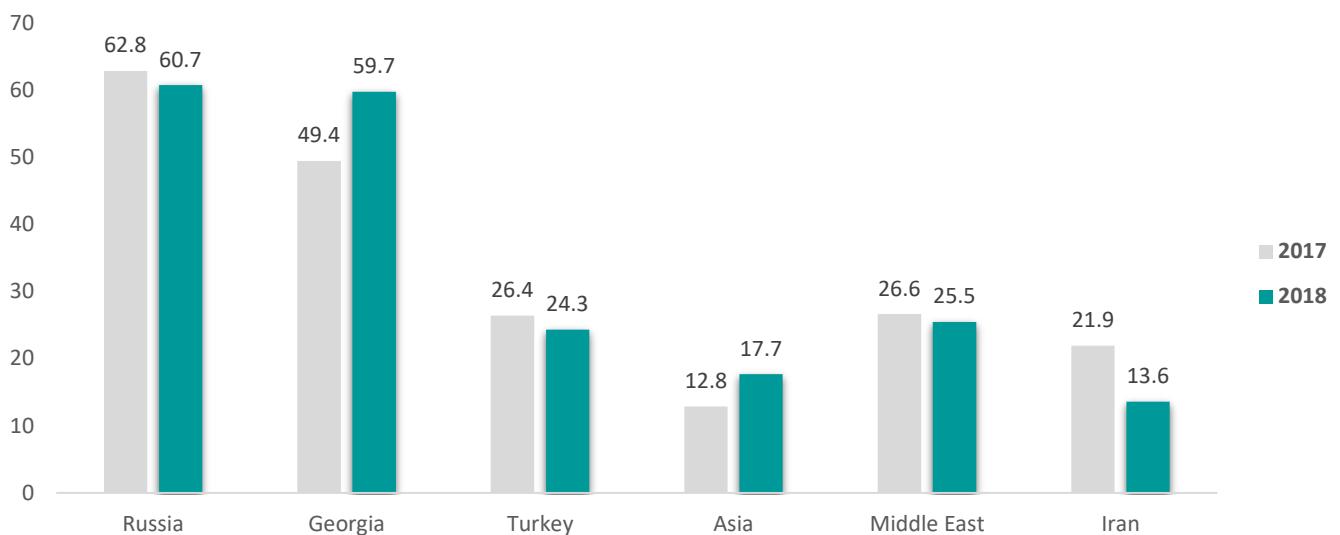


A successful year 2018 ends with a slight growth of foreign travelers in December

According to data received from the State Border Service, the number of foreign travelers in Azerbaijan increased in December by about 1% as compared to the December 2017. About 55.7% of all foreign guests in Azerbaijan came from the Russian Federation and Georgia, about 60 thousand from both of them. The number of travelers from Russia decreased slightly by 3.4%, the number of guests from Georgia increased by 20.8% compared to the same period of 2017. Arrivals from Asia increased by as much as 37.7%. Fastest growing markets are India and Pakistan with increases of 125.5% and 104.8%; decreases of 37.9%, 4.4% and 8%, respectively, are observed for Iran, the Middle East countries and Turkey. These developments correspond those which have been seen throughout the whole year.

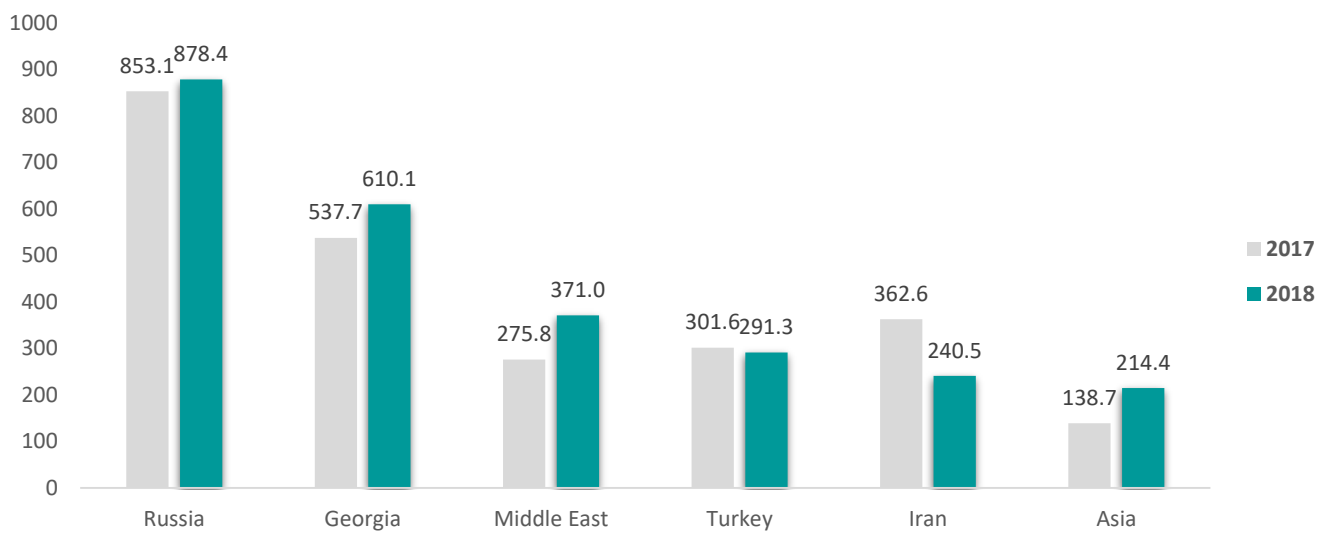
Figure 1: Foreign travellers (in thousands) from 6 countries/regions in December 2017 and 2018



In the year 2018, on the whole, the number of foreign travelers in Azerbaijan increased by 153 thousand and reached 2.8 million, compared to 2017. The growth rate amounts to 5.7%. The three countries with the largest shares in Azerbaijan's tourism include Russia (30.9%), Georgia (21.4%) and the Middle East (13%); the share of these countries amounted to two thirds of the total tourist flow. Georgia, the Middle East and the Asian countries slightly increased their shares by 1.5%, 2.8% and 2.4%, respectively. Russia and Turkey lost approximately 1% each; the share of Iran in the country's tourism decreased by as much as 5%.

The highest growth rates in the number of travelers show the Middle East and the Asian countries with as much as 34.5% and 54.6%, respectively. Among the Middle Eastern countries, Saudi Arabia (119.2%; 41 thou), Israel (160.8%; 40 thou) and Kuwait (80.5%; 30 thou) particularly distinguished themselves, and among Asian countries - Pakistan (135%; 73 thou) and India (175.3%; 39 thou). The number of arrivals from Georgia, an increase of 72 thousand, or 13.5%, totaled to 610 thousand. The Russians (878 thou) arrived only 3% more, compared with 2017.

Figure 2: Foreign travellers (in thousands) from 6 countries and regions in the whole years 2017 and 2018



Methodological note: The numbers of foreign travellers are counts of border crossings as registered by the State Border Service. These numbers cover touristic visitors but also other travellers who do not fulfil the definition of being a touristic visitor given by the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008, such as border workers, long-term workers and students and patients, etc.; hence, the inbound tourism flow is slightly lower than the numbers of travellers provided in this report.

Table 1: Number of foreign travelers from various countries and regions in Dec 2018 and in the period January to Dec 2018 as well as changes of these numbers against the same periods in 2017.

Region	2018		Change against 2017	
	Dec	Jan-Dec	Dec	Jan-Dec
Russia	60 702	878 391	62 824	853 082
Georgia	59 702	610 124	49 441	537 710
Turkey	24 281	291 259	26 406	301 553
Asia	17 689	214 390	12 847	138 668
Middle East	25 464	370 998	26 628	275 830
Iran	13 586	240 483	21 895	362 597
Europe East	6 183	99 144	6 319	96 807
Europe West	5 261	96 299	5 367	90 291
America	1 519	26 500	1 353	22 116
Africa	969	8 629	625	6 924
Rest	616	8 672	385	6 420
TOTAL	215 972	2 844 889	214 090	2 691 998