

## Travellers from Middle East becoming number 3, after Russians and Georgians, among arrivals in Azerbaijan in the first 9 months of 2018

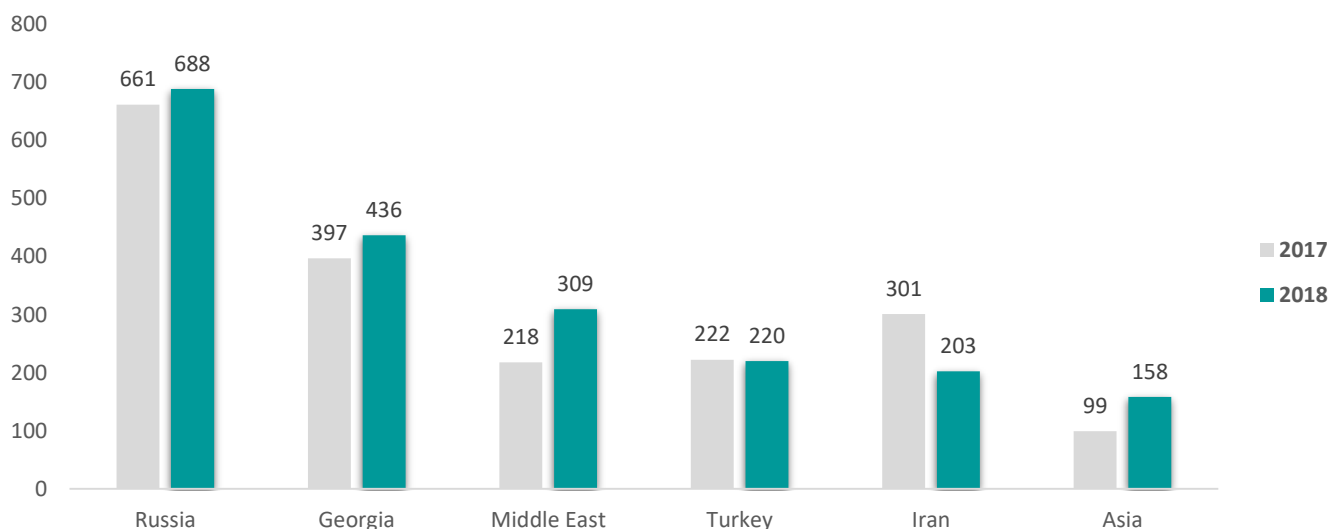
In the first nine months of 2018, 2,2 mln. foreign travellers arrived in Azerbaijan which is 6,4% more in comparison to the same period of 2017. The most remarkable fact is the growth of foreign travellers from Middle East: with 310 thousand travellers from this region, Middle East have reached rank three behind travellers from Russia (688 T) and Georgia (436 T). The number of travellers from the Middle East countries grew by 92 thousand or 42%, the most important markets being UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Israel, some of them with growth rates over 100%.

As can be seen from **Figure 1**, the country with the highest number of arrivals is still Russia: 688 thousand travellers are 27 thousand or 4% more than in 2017. A larger growth of foreign travellers can be seen for Georgia, 440 thousand, an increase of 40 thousand or 10%.

A substantial growth of foreign travellers, even larger than that for the Middle East, is observed for countries in Asia: with 158 thousand travellers in 2018 so far, the number of 2017 was exceeded by 60 thousand or 60%. The fastest growing markets are Pakistan, India and China with growth rates of 170%, 200%, and 62%, respectively.

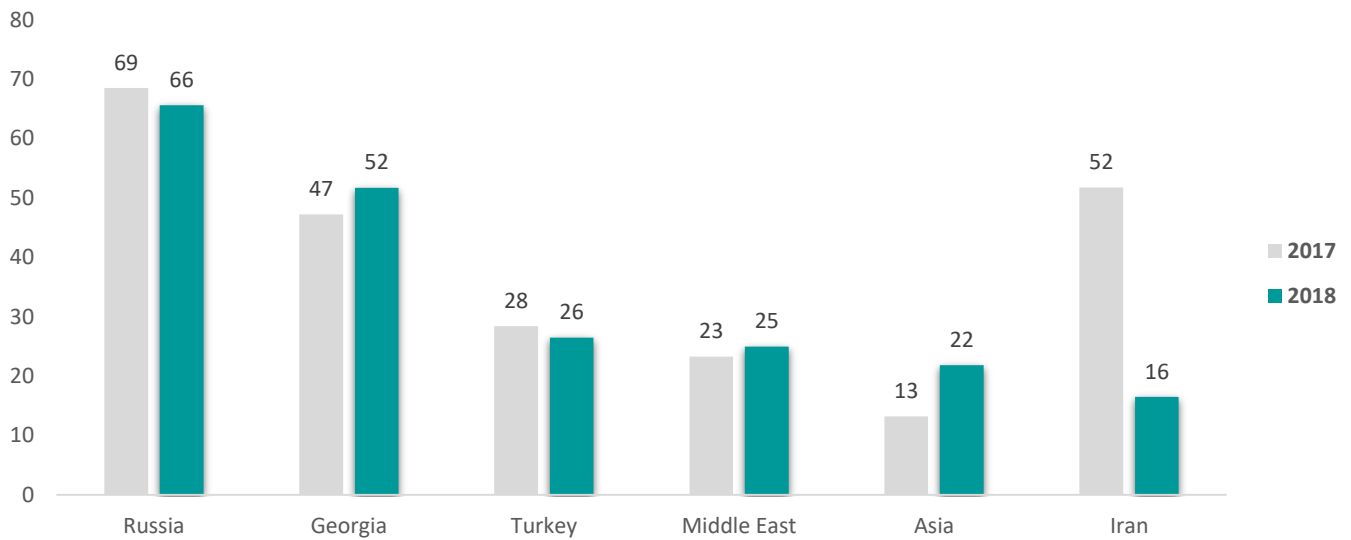
The 220 thousand travelers from Turkey are close in number to 222 thousand in 2017, a decrease of 0,9%. From Iran, 203 thousand travellers came in 2018 so far, a tremendous decrease of 33% from the 301 thousand in the same period in 2017.

**Figure 1: Foreign travellers (in thousands) from 6 countries and regions in the first 9 months of 2017 and 2018**



In September, the total number of arrivals in Azerbaijan decreased by 8,7% or 22 thousand; 231 thousand travellers arrived, compared to 253 thousand in the same period of 2017. **Figure 2** shows the developments in the numbers of foreign travellers for the six countries or region with the highest contributions in September 2018.

**Figure 2: Foreign travellers (in thousands) from 6 countries/regions in September 2017 and 2018**

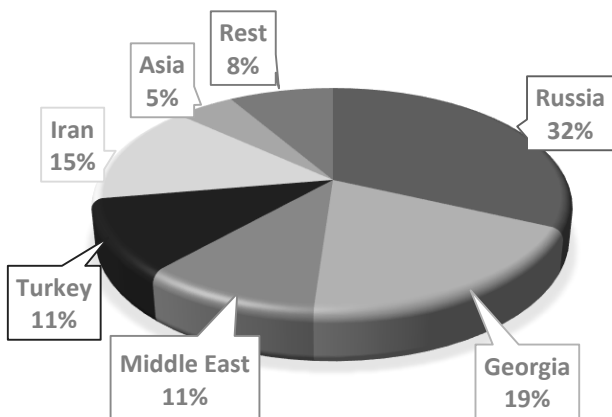


The most obvious fact is the enormous decrease in the number of travelers from Iran, a trend that was already observed during the whole year 2018. Only about 16 thousand Iranians visited Azerbaijan in September 2018 after 52 thousand in September 2017, a decrease of 68,2%. Slight decreases, by 4,2% and 6,8%, are also noted for travelers from Russia and Turkey, respectively. On the other hand, it can be seen from **Figure 2** that the number of travellers from Asia has grown substantially from 13 to 22 thousand or 65%. Highest increases are observed for Pakistan, India, and China. Also the flow of foreigners from Georgia and Middle East increased, by 9,5% and 7,1%, respectively. For the Middle East, an unusual strong increase of travellers from Israel is causing the overall increase whereas the number of arrivals from other countries of this region show slight decreases.

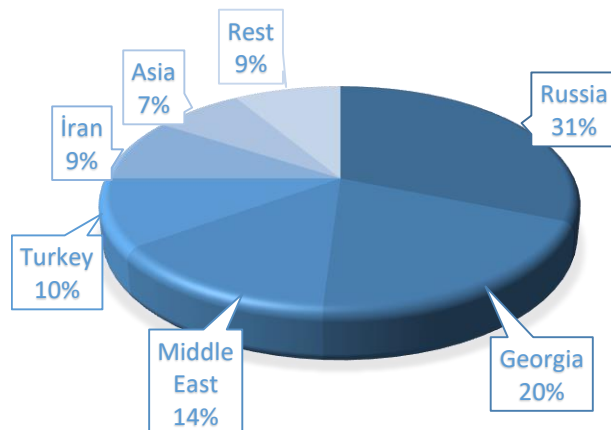
The **Figures 3 and 4** show the shares of arrivals of the countries and regions in the period January to September 2017 and 2018, respectively. From the traditionally largest tourism markets, Russia, Georgia, Iran and Turkey, all but Georgia are losing. This is particularly true for Iran whose share went down from 15% to 9%. Russia and Turkey lost one percent point, Georgia could win one percent point. Russia and Georgia are still holding leading positions in the ranking of traveler markets.

Great winner on the tourism market are the countries of the Middle East; their share of arrivals increased from 11% to 14%, advancing from rank five to rank three in a short period. The share of the Asian countries increased from 5% to 7%.

**Figure 3: Shares (in %) of arrivals, January to September 2017**



**Figure 4: Shares (in %) of arrivals, January to September 2018**



**Methodological note:** The numbers of foreign travellers are counts of border crossings as registered by the State Migration 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 September 2018 and in the period January to September 2018 as well as changes of these numbers against the same periods in 2017.

| Region       | 2018           |                  | Change against 2017 |                  |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
|              | Sep            | Jan-Sep          | Sep                 | Jan-Sep          |
| Russia       | 65 633         | 688 163          | 68 521              | 661 349          |
| Georgia      | 51 703         | 436 361          | 47 231              | 397 038          |
| Iran         | 16 483         | 202 505          | 51 784              | 301 012          |
| Turkey       | 26 475         | 220 232          | 28 401              | 222 258          |
| Middle East  | 24 948         | 309 443          | 23 294              | 217 947          |
| Asia         | 21 846         | 158 000          | 13 236              | 99 081           |
| Europe East  | 9 830          | 76 735           | 9 282               | 74 627           |
| Europe West  | 9 643          | 75 928           | 8 457               | 69 933           |
| America      | 2 905          | 21 081           | 2 129               | 16 762           |
| Rest         | 1 016          | 6 791            | 780                 | 6 811            |
| Africa       | 1 009          | 8 893            | 545                 | 5 100            |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>231 491</b> | <b>2 204 132</b> | <b>253 660</b>      | <b>2 071 918</b> |