



## How Crises Are Reflected in Tourism Industry: The Case of Türkiye

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### Article History

Received: 09.04.2022

Accepted: 26.09.2022

### Keywords

Crisis

Crisis management

Tourism

Review method

Türkiye

### Abstract

A crisis can be defined as a painful process that results in deviations in the goals, objectives and strategies of a nation, organization, or institution with the impact of unfavorable events. Crisis management is the key to reduce or eliminate the effects of crises. The tourism industry may also be affected directly or indirectly in any national or international crisis. This study aims to reveal how the crises experienced in Türkiye between January 2015 and June 2021 affected the tourism industry and to find out which type of crises they are. The document review method was used to determine the current situation of the crises experienced in Türkiye between 2015 and 2021. This method is to describe the past events by revealing them as they are. Secondary data sources obtained from the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Turkish Statistical Institute were used in the study. It was determined that the plane crisis between Türkiye and Russia, the July 15 coup attempt, and the Covid-19 pandemic more strongly affected Türkiye's tourism than other crises (crises caused by natural disasters, economic crises, crises caused by technical lines, and regional crises).

### Article Type

Research Article

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DOI: 10.21325/jotags.2022.1131

## INTRODUCTION

In the pre-modern period, the feudal structure was dominant. In this period, tourism awareness had not yet been formed and only the aristocrats and bourgeois class were involved in tourism activities. Tourism activities are mostly carried out for religion, trade and health purposes. In the process that started with the Renaissance, the period of enlightenment began with the developments in the field of science and art. In the following years, developments in technology with the effect of the Industrial Revolution contributed positively to the tourism industry. In those years, which is called the modern period, usually mass tourism activities were performed. With mass tourism, the middle class had the opportunity to participate in tourism activities more than ever before. The technological developments emerging during the Industrial Revolution helped more people to travel. In the light of these developments, tourism has made even more positive contributions to the economy of countries. These contributions enable foreign exchange inflow (hot money) to the country, help the development of direct contribution to employment, a balanced development between regions, and infrastructure and superstructure investments. In addition to its direct contribution, tourism also indirectly contributes to other sectors. Nations make investments to increase their tourism revenues and they focus on tourism policies and strategies to mobilize these investments effectively. For countries to benefit from tourism revenues in a sustainable way, an ecosystem of trust should be created for incoming tourists. As such, crises or adverse events in countries may affect tourism negatively. In countries with lack of security, tourism may not develop properly. Crises can be prevented or to their effects can be reduced by performing crisis management in a planned manner. The crisis-related loss of the touristic attractiveness of a destination may cause a decrease in the tourism demand for it in parallel. Crisis management can play a key role in not affecting the tourism industry, which has a fragile structure in a chaos or crisis environment.

This study aims to examine the reflections of the crises experienced in Türkiye between January 2015 and June 2021 on the tourism industry. It also aims to determine which crisis types the events in Türkiye are more heavily concentrated on. The data obtained from the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Turkish Statistical Institute will be analyzed by the review method.

### Crisis

The word crisis is derived from the Greek word “krisis” meaning “decision”. Greek historian Thucydides and physician Hippocrates used the concept of crisis to explain the development process of an illness or conflict. A few centuries later, Hegel and Nietzsche included this word in Marx's theory of political economy in their philosophies. Since then, the concept of crisis has been increasingly used in different fields such as economics, political science, demography, philosophy of science, psychology or history (Starn, 1976; Pauchant & Douville, 1993).

Turkish Language Association describes the concept of crisis as “a difficult period, depression, depression in a country or between countries, in a society or an organization” and “the situation where something is very scarce” (Turkish Language Association, 2020). The definition and response of the concept of crisis in Türkiye emerged with the economic crisis in 1848. A meeting on the state economy was held under the leadership of the Grand Vizier of the period, Ali Pasha. It is known that most of the people at this meeting expressed the concept of “crise” as “crisis” because they could speak French. It was translated into Turkish as “depression” ([www.hurriyet.com.tr](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr)).

The Crisis Management Institute of America (2020) defines the concept of crisis as any problem or disruption that triggers negative stakeholder reactions that may affect the reputation, business and financial strength of the

organization. Crises are defined as situations that harm or threaten people, property, serious disruptions in operations, product recalls, labor problems, social media attacks, lawsuits and extremely negative news in the media, allegations of bad behavior against leaders ([www.crisisconsultant.com](http://www.crisisconsultant.com)).

In Chinese literature, the crisis is expressed with two symbols meaning “opportunity” and “danger”. With these meanings, both positive and negative connotations are attributed to the crisis at the same time. The crisis can create an environment in which the future is redefined or designed, resulting in the emergence of new organizations, jobs or industries, and even regions. In approaches that turn crisis into opportunity, this is related to the definition of the future (Kadıbeşligil, 2002; cited in Patan, 2009: p.3).

Many factors play a role in the formation of crises, and the main crisis types can be classified as follows (Cavlek, 2002: p. 481):

- Man-made crises: War, civil unrest, riots, regional tensions, terrorism, political instabilities, all forms of violence and crime
- Catastrophes caused by natural disasters: Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, epidemics and fire
- Disasters caused by human or technical error: Nuclear pollution, nuclear tests and oil spills

A crisis gives some signals before it comes. By anticipating these signals, we can manage the crisis effectively. Regester (1989) explains the factors that trigger the formation of a crisis environment as follows: static and falling earnings, low return on capital, unhealthy dividend policy, poor cash management, high equity borrowing, bad investment policy, the creation of unfair environments, portfolio management against innovation, and problems arising from communication with shareholders and financial institutions.

### **Crisis Management**

Crisis management is defined as “the board formed from experts in the subject so that the problem can be overcome with the least damage in case of any national or international problem or natural disaster faced by a country” (Turkish Language Association, 2020). Crisis management is the whole set of activities such as noticing the factors triggering the crisis, taking precautions, improving and learning (Göçen, Yirik & Yılmaz, 2011: p.496). Crisis management can be defined as a continuous integrated, comprehensive and comprehensible effort put forth by organizations in order to understand and prevent the crisis, and to effectively manage what is happening by considering the interests of their stakeholders in every step of planning and training activities (Santana, 1999 cited in Santana, 2004: p. 308).

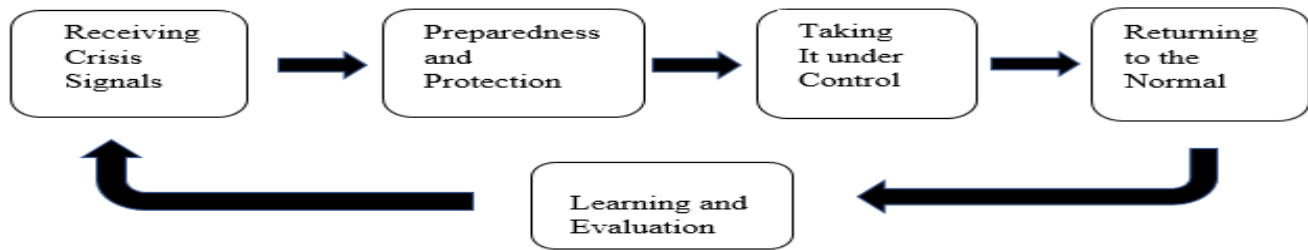
Crisis management is important to minimize or eliminate the effects of the crisis/crises experienced in a country, organization, or society because crises have very detrimental effects. Continuously informing the stakeholders of the experts involved in the crisis management can prevent the emergence of a panic environment.

Planning is crucial for the crisis management to be carried out effectively during the crisis. With planning, it is possible to prevent the crisis from reaching large dimensions by detecting the events and risks that may occur in the crisis environment. Regester (1989) outlines crisis management planning as follows:

- Categorizing potential crises,

- Developing policies to prevent crises,
- Formulating strategies and tactics to deal with each potential crisis,
- Determining who will be affected by the types of crises that may occur,
- Creating effective communication channels in a crisis environment,
- Testing everything

The main purpose of crisis management is the process of evaluating or catching the crisis signals, taking the necessary steps to overcome the crisis with the least impact, and putting them into action by being alert to the crises that may occur. As shown in Figure 1, the crisis management process has five stages, which are (Can, 1997: p.315)



**Figure 1.** Crisis Management Process

**Source:** Can, 1997: p.317

- **Receiving Crisis Signals:** It is the first stage of the crisis management process and managers should be sensitive to these signals. Failure to notice or ignore the signals leads to the emergence of a crisis. Managers need to keep away from unnecessary elements or isolate the signals that indicate a crisis.
- **Preparedness and Protection:** A preparation and protection mechanism is established by using the data obtained during the reception of crisis signals. At this stage, the organization carries out activities to protect the units from the effects of the damage that will disrupt the order of the departments.
- **Taking It under Control:** If the crisis is not successful in the first two stages of the crisis management process, the crisis is now felt with all its intensity. This stage aims to prevent, eliminate or minimize the effects of the crisis.
- **Returning to the Normal:** The crisis is now under control and the organization needs to be brought back to its normal functioning before the crisis. Due to the crisis, the ties in the organizational system may be broken or weakened, and the organizational mechanism may be broken.
- **Learning and Evaluation:** Decisions, measures and activities taken at the crisis stage are evaluated.

A nation may occasionally face crises. What matters is that the state organization must have crisis management skills. The situations where management skills are most needed are in times of crisis because crisis is an emergency (Demirtaş, 2000: p.3). “Crisis management centers” should be established to better manage crises. In order to manage the crisis environment that may occur in Türkiye, it was reported in the Official Gazette numbered 22872 on January 9, 1997 that the “Prime Ministry Crisis Management Center” was established. The main purpose of this administrative center is the organization, preparation, working methods, determination of duties and responsibilities of the Prime Ministry Crisis Management Center are listed as follows (Official Gazette, 1997):

- Streamlining the necessary preparations and activities to prevent or eliminate the events that triggered the crisis in line with the national interest,
- Minimizing the effects of the crisis or ending the crisis by coordinating the activities and services of the General Staff, the Ministry, institutions and organizations related to the crisis.

The Directorate of Communications, which is part of the Presidency of Türkiye, was established on July 24, 2018, in the Official Gazette numbered 30488, with a presidential decree. In this decree, the “Strategic Communication and Crisis Management Department” is located within the Ministry of Communications. Established in 1997, the “Prime Ministry Crisis Management Center” was revised and started its activities. The duties of this institution are as follows (Official Gazette, 2018):

- Defining the strategic policies in the practices to be carried out both in the national and international arena, by ensuring the connection in the institutions and organizations by considering the interests of the nation in line with the strategic goals and objectives of the state,
- Maintaining the national and international activities of strategic communication and crisis management, and cooperating with the institutions/organizations,
- Taking necessary measures by examining internal and external threats against the Republic of Türkiye,
- Taking action against negative activities (propaganda, distortion of information, perception operation, etc.) carried out against the Republic of Türkiye,
- Activating strategic communication and crisis management activities in extraordinary situations (crises, threat of war, natural disasters) to achieve the goals and objectives determined by the state,
- Ensuring the connection between all public institutions/organizations to best achieve the determined task,
- Performing other duties assigned by the President

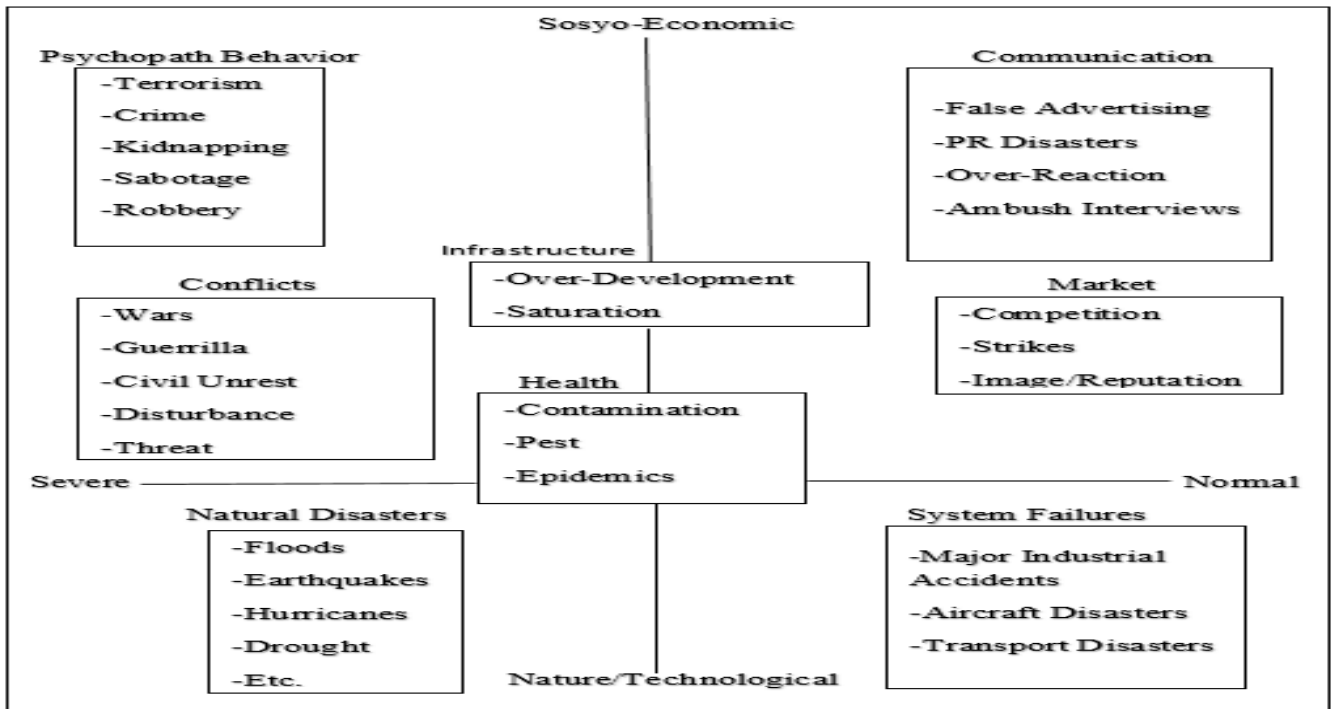
### **Crisis Phenomenon in the Tourism Industry**

For the local travel and tourism sector, crisis is defined as an event that disrupts the continuity of the organization of businesses as it emerges unexpectedly in the tourism industry, negatively affecting tourism businesses and the perceptions of tourists about the destination they came to for a holiday, damaging the destination attractiveness and comfort, leading to decrease in the number of tourists and tourism revenues in parallel, which are all negatively reflected on the local economy (Avcı & Küçükusta, 2013: p. 574). The crisis in the tourism sector is explained as a situation that disrupts or cuts the flow of the sector, harming the trust environment of the tourism destination region, and the deterioration of the tourism image of the region, which causes a decrease in tourism revenues (Köşker, 2017: p. 218). The crisis in tourism can be defined as the whole set of deviations in the goals, targets, and strategies of the negative effects of global or regional unforeseen adverse events on all stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Short-, medium- and long-term factors affect tourism demand. Short-term factors can be classified as strikes, traffic accidents, storms and floods, while fluctuations in exchange rates, increase in inflation rates, political unrest, and terrorist incidents can be classified as medium-term factors. Events that affect tourism demand in the long term are those including war, religious events, and travel restrictions (Köroğlu, 2004: p. 7). Short, medium and long-term crises may adversely affect the country's tourism revenues. In addition, crises may cause losses in tourism attraction

and lead tourists to turn to another destination.

Figure 2 shows how crises in tourism can be grouped into clusters. A cause-effect relationship can be established between individual crises and crises in clusters. Industrial disasters can cause great danger or false advertisements can damage the image of the destination. In addition, the crisis can go from normal to severe, depending on the environment. In real situations, the crisis acts within the framework, resolves itself or produces new ones (Santana, 2004: p. 301).



**Figure 2.** A Framework of Generic Causes of Crises in Tourism

**Source:** Santana, 2004, p. 301.

The tourism region and tourist businesses should assess their exposure to the crisis and develop their strategic, tactical and communication plans. Managers should regularly check their plans, practice crisis response management, and acquire crisis management skills. Managers and staff should be psychologically and physiologically prepared for the effects and stresses that crisis events may impose on them (Wilks & Moore, 2004: p. 41).

Communication can play a key role in the management of crises that may occur in the tourism region. In crisis communication, by acting in line with the principles such as correct information, transparency, and responsibility about the touristic destination, it can provide a positive development in the attitudes of potential tourists about the destination by correctly conveying the source of the crises, how the crises are managed and the risks that may occur. Otherwise, false information such as information distortion, information pollution, or deception will negatively affect tourist attitudes and behaviors towards the destination (Öksüz & Batu, 2017: p.104).

**Related Studies**

Tanrısevdi and Hançer (2003) aimed to reveal the strategies of travel agency managers against the crises and their reactions to the crises experienced in Türkiye and the world between 1990 and 2001. They concluded that travel agency managers have a reactive approach to crises.

Emsen and Değer (2004) aimed to reveal the effects of the terrorist incidents that took place between 1984 and 2001 on the tourism sector in Türkiye, and they found that one of the parameters affecting the tourism sector in Türkiye is terrorist incidents. They also found that terrorist incidents gradually increased in severity between the years determined in the study, and this is directly reflected in tourism statistics. In addition, they emphasized that terrorist incidents should come to an end in order for Türkiye to benefit from tourism revenues in a sustainable way.

Albeni and Ongun (2005) discussed how the crises experienced in Türkiye affected the Antalya destination and the tourism development process of Antalya, and proposed suggestions to minimize the effects of future crises, and they revealed that the crises experienced in the past in Türkiye have adversely affected the tourism sector of Antalya. They also warned that due to the deficiencies in the tourism planning of this region, Antalya may face the risk of losing its tourism attractiveness in the future. In addition, they concluded that the lack of qualified personnel, infrastructure and superstructure deficiencies in the destination, the inability to offer touristic activities for the whole year, the inability to reach the desired levels of revenue despite an increase in the number of tourists, the inability to raise local people's awareness of the tourism industry, and the insufficient promotion affect the tourism of the region negatively.

Yıldız and Durgun (2010) stated that the economic crisis that started in 2008 due to US mortgage loans has some global-scale damages. They aimed to reveal the effects of the economic crisis on the tourism sector in Türkiye. They also aimed to present some political suggestions for the Turkish tourism sector to overcome the crisis. They found that Türkiye has been directly affected by the global economic crisis and revealed a drop in international tourism mobility. Türkiye has been adversely affected by the global economic crisis.

Sarı and Uçar (2010) examined the effects of the global economic crisis of 2009 on tourism employment in Türkiye, and found that the contraction in the economy affected the tourism sector negatively, causing a decrease in employment.

Sarı and Seçilmiş (2010) researched the effects of the global crisis, which started in the second quarter of 2008, on the accommodation businesses in the tourism sector in Türkiye, and made some suggestions for better management of a future crisis. They determined that tourism managers benefit from the decision-making technique during the crisis in planning before the crisis. They also revealed that businesses do not have advance warning systems against the crisis and that managers have difficulties in crisis management.

Göçen, Yirik and Yılmaz (2011) examined the effects of the crises that occurred in Türkiye between 1997 and 2010 on the tourism industry and revealed which crisis element is more common. They found that crises caused by natural disasters and epidemics lead to worse harm than financial crises.

Avcı and Küçükusta (2013) aimed to reveal the measures and practices taken by travel agency officials in crises. In addition, they examined the effects of the economic crisis on travel agencies. They determined that the integration and organizational preparation of the travel agencies during the crisis period are at the forefront, and it is necessary for the administrations to adapt as soon as possible against the conditions created by the crisis.

Ayaz (2016) determined the reflection of the economic crises that affected Türkiye between 1993 and 2009 on the Turkish tourism sector by cross tabulating the number of foreign tourists, the number of outgoing tourists, the number of accommodation facilities, rooms and beds, external active tourism revenues and external passive tourism

expenses. The researcher determined that the economic crises of 1993-2009 affected foreign active tourism positively, while negatively affecting the accommodation facilities, the number of rooms and beds. They concluded that the global economic crises negatively affected the number of rooms and beds in the tourism certified accommodation facilities of the Turkish tourism sector.

Mutlu and Akbaş (2016) examined the effects of the September 11 terrorist attack on the Turkish tourism industry. They found that this terrorist incident in the USA had a negative impact on the global economy and that although this attack took place in the USA, it had a significant impact on Türkiye, and there was proportionate decrease in Türkiye's tourism revenues.

Köşker (2017) aimed to reveal the reflections of the crises experienced in Türkiye in 2016 on the tourism sector. He found that Türkiye experienced a great loss in tourism revenues in 2016. There was an increase in the number of tourists only from Georgia among the top 10 countries that sent the most visitors to Türkiye.

Yaşar and Yaşar (2017) aimed to make some predictions about the future of tourism by analyzing the situation in terms of tourism by comparing the periods before and after the aircraft crisis between Türkiye and Russia in 2015. They found that Russian tourists had a significant share in Türkiye's tourism revenues in the period before the downing of the Russian plane, and Turkish tourism was deeply affected by the political crisis. They determined that the steps taken towards normalization between Türkiye and Russia in 2017 gradually contributed to the increased number of Russian tourists to Türkiye.

Öksüz and Batu (2017) aimed to find out, based on statistical data, how the terrorist incidents that took place in Türkiye in 2016 affected the tourism sector. They revealed that the 2016 terrorist incidents in Türkiye in 2016 caused a crisis and according to the tourism statistics of previous years, it was revealed that there was a deep decrease in the number of tourists and tourism revenues. They concluded that crisis communication is of vital importance in the crisis environment of destinations.

Doğruol (2018) analyzed the terrorist incidents that took place in Türkiye in the period 2015-2017 and examined how these incidents affected Türkiye's tourism as a result of their presentation in the foreign press, and concluded that the foreign press presented the events in Türkiye exaggeratedly and biasedly, that there was a serious decrease in the number of foreign tourists, and that, in parallel, the tourism income decreased.

Davras and Aktel (2018) examined the effects of the crises in Türkiye (Türkiye-Russia tension and the July 15 coup attempt) on the tourism sector between the years 2015 and 2016. In order to reveal whether these situations have an impact on the tourism sector in Türkiye, the data were analyzed using Türkiye's official tourism statistics between 2000 and 2016. They concluded that the events that took place between 2015 and 2016 had a significant impact on Türkiye's tourism.

Yılmaz, Ünal and Dursun (2019) aimed to determine how hotel businesses tried to overcome the crisis experienced in Türkiye in 2016 by applying crisis management. They determined that the activities implemented by the hotel enterprises during the crisis were mostly in the field of marketing, as well as in human resources, cost, quality and customer.

Yıldız and Işıldar (2020) examined the factors that triggered the 2016 crisis chronologically and compared the literature and similar events. To analyze the crisis of 2016, the researchers examined the negative events in Türkiye



since 2014. They found that tourism in Türkiye took a heavy blow in 2016. A close look into tourism statistics shows that the effect of the crisis still continued in 2018.

## **Method**

In the current study, the review method was used to reveal the current situation of the crises experienced in the determined scope and to determine their reflections, and the general review model was used to reach a general opinion about the universe. Karasar (2005) defines review research models as a research approach that aims to describe a past or present event/events by reflecting them exactly. The review researcher has to interpret the data obtained by accessing various previously recorded records (written documents, statistics, pictures, audio and video recordings, etc.) by arranging them within a system.

This study was carried out to examine the reflections of the crises experienced in Türkiye between January 2015 and June 2021 on the tourism industry. It was also aimed to determine the most common crisis types in Turkish tourism. Due to the extraordinary events that took place in Türkiye in the last six years, this study is limited to those years only and it was thought that it would help by revealing the extent to which Türkiye's tourism was affected in this period when many types of crisis types were experienced.

The tourism data available on the websites of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Turkish Statistical Institute were used. Although the study was limited between January 2015 and June 2021, 2014 statistics were also included to better analyze these years.

## **Results**

Table 1 shows the chronological order of some of the major events that took place in Türkiye between 2015 and 2021. There were intense terrorist incidents in Türkiye in 2015. In the last quarter of 2015, Türkiye-Russia plane crisis occurred. The July 15 coup attempt, the murder of Russia's ambassador to Ankara, Andrey Karlov, and Euphrates Shield Operation initiated by the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) took place in 2016. In addition, intense terrorist attacks continued in Türkiye in 2016. Terrorist incidents took place at the beginning of 2017, and the Türkiye-Netherlands political crisis and the Idlib operation initiated by the Turkish Armed Forces began. In 2018, there was a short-term political crisis between Türkiye and the USA and the Olive Branch Operation by the Turkish Armed Forces. In 2019, Operation Claw-Shield and Operation Peace Spring were carried out by the Turkish Armed Forces to protect the Turkish border. The most important event in 2020 is the Covid-19 pandemic. The first case was found in Türkiye in March 2020. This pandemic still affects everyone in 2022.

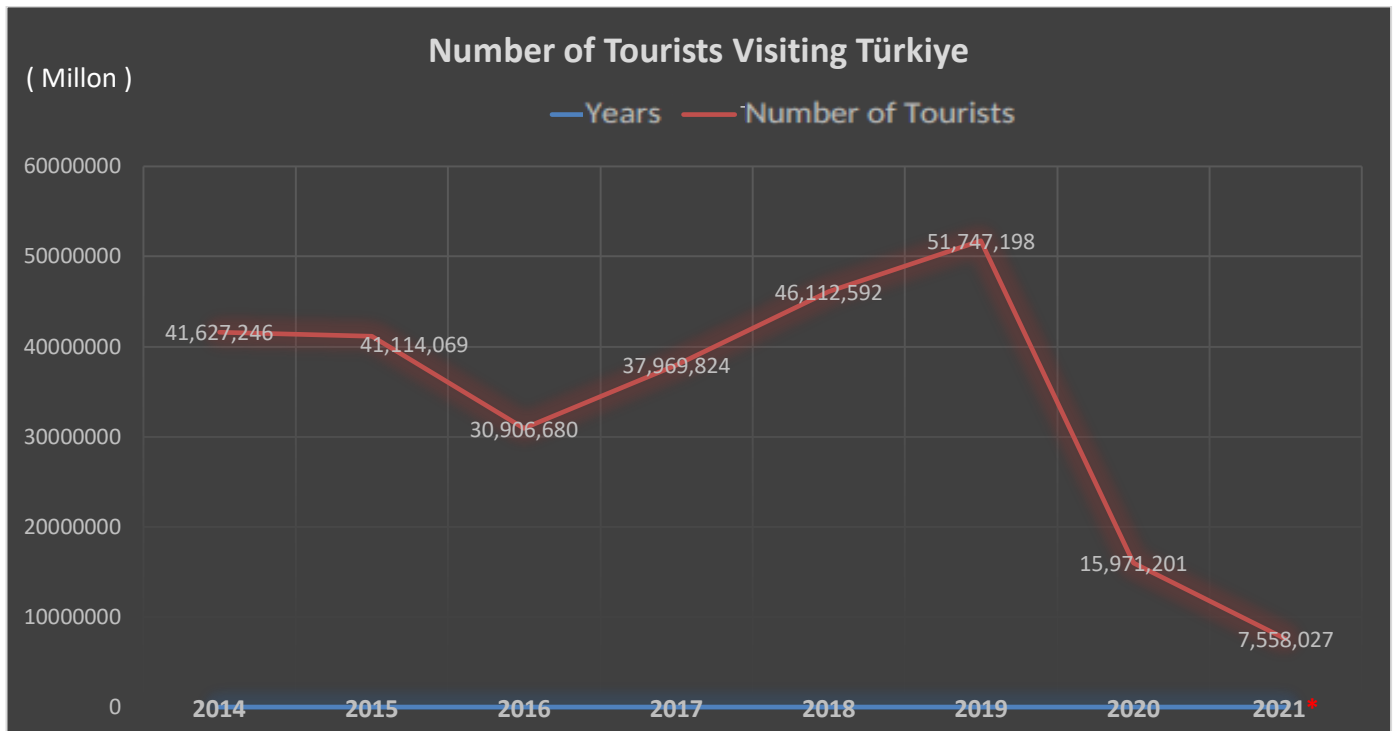
**Table 1.** Chronological Order of Certain Major Events in Türkiye Between 2015 and 2021

2015	2016
<p><b>January 6</b> - suicide bomb attack on the police in Sultanahmet  <b>February 22</b> - Beginning of the Shah Euphrates Operation by the Turkish Armed Forces in Syria  <b>April 1</b> – Attack on Vatan Security  <b>June 5</b> - Bomb attack on a rally in Diyarbakır  <b>July 20</b> - Bomb attack in Suruç  <b>July 22</b> -Armed attack on a police officer in Ceylanpınar, Şanlıurfa  <b>August 2</b> - Attack on the gendarmerie station in Ağrı  <b>August 19</b> - Explosion of the explosive laid on the road by terrorists in Siirt  <b>September 8</b> - Terrorist attack in Iğdır  <b>October 10</b> -Ankara-In front of the train station-bomb action  <b>November 24</b> – Türkiye-Russia plane crisis</p>	<p><b>January 12</b> - Bomb attack in Sultanahmet  <b>January 13</b> - Suicide attack by terrorists on Diyarbakır Çınar district police headquarters  <b>February 17</b> - Ankara Merasim street bomb attack  <b>March 19</b> - Live bomb attack on İstiklal Street  <b>March 27</b> - Attack with a bomb-laden vehicle in Diyarbakır bus station  <b>April 1</b> - Attack on the military service station in Mardin Kızıltepe with a bomb-laden vehicle  <b>May 1</b> - Bomb attack on Gaziantep Police Department  <b>May 10</b> - A bomb attack on a police bus in Diyarbakır's Bağlar district  <b>May 12</b> - Bomb attack on military service vehicle in İstanbul Sancaktepe  <b>May 24</b> - Bomb attack on soldiers in Çaldıran district of Van  <b>June 7</b> – Bomb attack on police in İstanbul Vezneciler  <b>June 8</b>- Attack with a bomb-laden vehicle on the Police Headquarters in the Midyat district of Mardin  <b>June 28</b> - İstanbul Atatürk Airport bomb attack  <b>July 15</b>- Coup attempt  <b>August 1</b> - Bomb attack on the service vehicle carrying the police in Bingöl  <b>August 18</b>- Bomb attack on Elazığ Police Department building  <b>August 20</b> - A suicide bomber attack at a street wedding in Gaziantep  <b>August 26</b> -A bomb-laden vehicle attacked the police headquarters riot group chief in the Cizre district of Şırnak.  <b>October 6</b> - Explosion in Yenibosna, İstanbul, near the 75th Year Police Station  <b>October 9</b> - The gendarmerie station in Hakkari's Şemdinli district was attacked with a bomb-laden vehicle.  <b>November 4</b> - Bomb attack on Diyarbakır Bağlar Police Station  <b>November 24</b> - The Adana Governorate was attacked with a car bomb.  <b>November 24</b> - Operation Euphrates Shield  <b>December 10</b> - Bomb attack in İstanbul Beşiktaş  <b>December 17</b> - Bomb attack on the vehicle carrying the soldiers serving in the Kayseri Commando Brigade Command  <b>December 19</b> - Assassination of Russian Ambassador to Ankara Andrey Karlov</p>
2017	
<p><b>January 1</b>-İstanbul Ortakoy Reina Attack  <b>January 5</b> -İzmir Courthouse attack  <b>January 20</b> - Terrorist attack on İstanbul Police Department  <b>February 17</b> -Şanlıurfa Viranşehir terrorist attack  <b>March 11</b>-Türkiye-Netherlands political crisis  <b>October 8</b> - Idlib operation</p>	
2018	
<p><b>January 20</b> -Operation Olive Branch  <b>July 31</b>- Explosion of an explosive civilian vehicle trapped on the road by terrorists in Hakkari Yüksekova  <b>October 4</b> -Batman terrorist attack</p>	
2019	
<p><b>May 28</b> - Operation Claw-Shield  <b>October 9</b> - Operation Peace Spring</p>	
2020-2021	
<p><b>March 11</b>- The first Covid-19 pandemic case diagnosed in Türkiye</p>	

**Source:** The table was created by the researchers in the light of the data obtained from aa.com; bbc.com, cnnturk.com dha.com, euronews.com, haberturk.com, haber7.coM, hurriyet.com, calendar.com, ntv.com, Sabah.com, sozcu.com, tr.sputniknews.com, and t24 .com (2020) internet news

Graph 1 shows the number of tourists coming to Türkiye between the years 2014-2021. In 2015, the number of tourists decreased by 1.23% compared to the previous year and fell to 41,114,069 million. In 2016, 30,906,680 million tourists visited Türkiye with a decrease of 24.82% from the previous year. Bomb attacks by terrorists in 2015-2016, the downing of a Russian jet due to violation of Turkish airspace, the July 15 coup attempt may have caused a decrease in the number of tourists. The reason for this was that due to the extraordinary events that took place in Türkiye during this period, the citizens of many countries, especially the USA and Germany, were warned not to go on holiday to Türkiye. The Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov's call for Russian citizens not to go to Türkiye right after the Russian jet was shot down due to a violation of Turkish airspace, and the Russian tourism agencies canceled their package tours to Türkiye after that, caused a serious decrease in the number of Russian tourists coming to Türkiye. In 2017, there was an increase of 22.85% compared to the previous year, and 37,969,824 million tourists came to our Türkiye. Some positive developments in this year have seen a significant increase in the number of tourists. The plane crisis between Türkiye and Russia came to an end and the political relations improved, terror

incidents fell compared to previous two years and the environment was less chaotic, therefore, Türkiye began to be viewed as an attractive destination for tourists again. Terror incidents were not experienced as much in 2018 as in the previous year. In 2018, 46,112,592 million tourists visited Türkiye, with an increase of 21.44% compared to the previous year. The number of tourists this year reached a historical record. In 2019, as in the previous two years, there was an increase in the number of tourists. This year, with an increase of 12.21 percent compared to the previous year, 51,747,198 million tourists came to Türkiye, surpassing the total number of tourists visiting our country in 2018, breaking a new record. It can be seen in the chart that there was a notable increase in tourism in Türkiye in 2017-2018 and 2019, with the effect of the crisis experienced in the past decreasing or even being eliminated.



**Graph 1.** Number of Tourists Visiting Türkiye between 2014 and 2021.

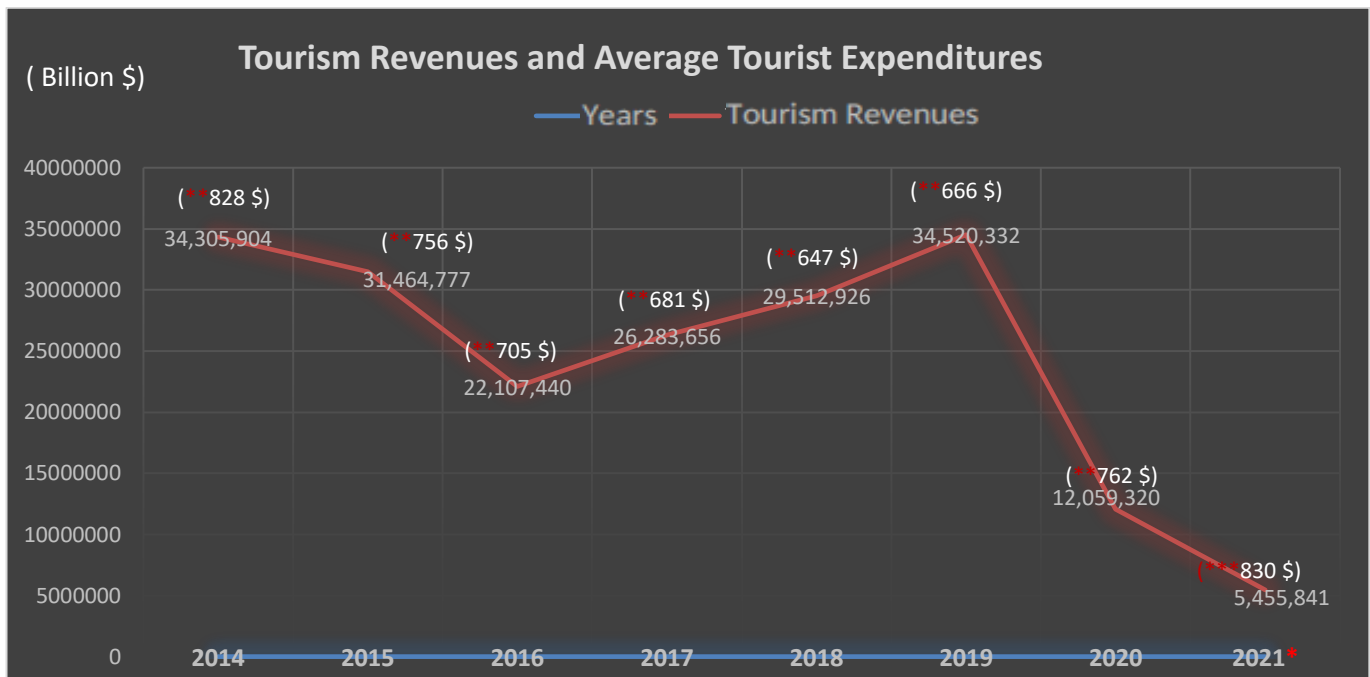
**Source:** yigm.ktb.gov.tr (2021).

\*For 2021, the number of tourists arriving in Türkiye until June is shown.

In 2020-2021, the spread of the Covid-19 virus, which emerged in Wuhan, the capital of the Hubei region of China on December 1, 2019, to other countries affected the whole world. Due to the pandemic, there have been national and international closures in certain periods. International transport activities are temporarily suspended, people have postponed their vacation plans, and world tourism statistics have been negatively affected. The first case of the Covid-19 outbreak was reported in Türkiye on March 11, 2020, and soon it affected the whole of Türkiye negatively. In 2020, 15,971,201 million tourists came in Türkiye, a decrease of 30.86% compared to 2019. The effects of the pandemic are observed to continue.

Graph 2 shows Türkiye's annual tourism revenues and the average per capita expenditure of tourists. In 2015, tourism revenues decreased by 8.29% compared to 2014 and amounted to 31,464,772 billion dollars. In 2016, the decrease in tourism income continued again compared to the previous year and reached 22,107,440 billion dollars. Türkiye's tourism attractiveness decreased due to the terror incidents in 2015-2016, Türkiye-Russia plane crisis in 2015, and the coup attempt in 2016. Due to these events, there has been a serious decrease in the number of tourists

and a decrease in tourism revenues. In 2017, it increased by 18.89% compared to the previous year and reached 26,283.656 billion dollars. In 2017, the political crisis between Türkiye and Russia came to an end and there were no terror incidents. Although there were some negative events in 2017, it did not affect the tourism of the country in general. Tourism revenues in 2018 increased by 12.28% compared to the previous year and amounted to 29,512,926 billion dollars. Although approximately 4.5 million more tourists came in 2018 compared to 2014, 4,792.978 billion dollars less revenue was earned compared to 2014. In 2019, it increased by 16.96% compared to the previous year and reached 34,520.332 billion dollars Türkiye's tourism income in 2019 is almost the same as that of 2014. This can be explained by the fact that although the crises experienced in Türkiye in 2015-2016 ended, the reflections of the crisis continued, the decrease in tourism demand in Türkiye and the decrease in prices due to the competitive environment. Therefore, it can be assumed that Türkiye's tourism revenues and average tourist expenditures per capita decreased. While the average tourist expenditure per person was 828 dollars in 2014, it decreased to 666 dollars in 2019. The average tourist expenditure per person in 2020 is 762 dollars, and in 2021 it is 830 dollars. The reason for the increase in 2020 is that no data was collected from the border gates due to Covid-19 in the second quarter of this year. Thus, an increase is observed in average per capita expenditures in 2020. Although the average tourist expenditure per capita in 2021 is higher than in the past, the data does not reflect the whole year as it is until June 2021. Tourism revenues in 2020 decreased by 65.07% compared to the previous year and fell to 12,059,320 billion dollars. The main reason for this is the pandemic, which emerged in China at the end of 2019, reaching global dimensions and affecting the whole world. This pandemic had a negative impact on tourism statistics. Since the tourism data only covers the first six months of 2021, this year could not be evaluated in full, compared to the previous year.



**Graph 2.** Tourism Revenues and Average Tourist Expenditures in Türkiye between 2014 and 2021.

Source: <https://yigm.ktb.gov.tr> (2021).

\* Türkiye's tourism revenues are calculated until June 2021.

\*\*The average tourist expenditures of tourists visiting Türkiye between the years 2014 and 2021 are included.

\*\*\*In 2021, average tourist expenditures until June are shown.

Table 2 shows the distribution of foreign tourists who visited Türkiye the most between the years 2014 and 2021, by their nationalities. An increase was expected in the number of tourists in 2015 compared to the previous year, but terror incidents continued this year and the political crisis with Russia in the last quarter of the year prevented achieving the tourism targets. Parallel to these, there was a partial decrease in the nationalities that visited Türkiye the most in 2015 compared to the previous years. In 2016, there was a sharp decrease in the number of tourists. As shown in Table 2, there was a serious decrease in all countries except for 2 countries in 2016 compared to the previous year and the number of tourists reached 15,550,514 million. Compared to the previous year, there was a decrease of 28.71%, which can be explained by the full impact of the Türkiye-Russia aircraft crisis in the last quarter of 2015, the July 15 coup attempt and terrorist incidents.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Foreign Tourists Visiting Türkiye by Nationality

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Germany</b>	5 250 036	5 580 792	3 890 074	3 584 653	4 512 360	5 027 472	1 118 932	516 404*
<b>Bulgaria</b>	1 693 591	1 821 480	1 690 766	1 852 867	2 386 885	2 713 464	1 242 961	332 257*
<b>France</b>	1 037 152	847 259	555 151	578 524	731 379	875 957	311 708	114 875*
<b>Georgia</b>	1 755 289	1 911 832	2 206 266	2 438 730	2 069 392	1 995 254	410 501	86 668*
<b>Holland</b>	1 303 730	1 232 487	906 336	799 006	1 013 642	1 117 290	271 526	107 085*
<b>Iraq</b>	857 246	1 094 144	420 831	896 876	1 172 896	1 374 896	387 587	250 997*
<b>England</b>	2 600 360	2 512 139	1 711 481	1 658 715	2 254 871	2 562 064	820 709	49 299*
<b>Iranian</b>	1 590 664	1 700 385	1 665 160	2 501 948	2 001 744	2 102 890	385 762	318 033*
<b>Russia</b>	4 479 049	3 649 003	866 256	4 715 438	5 964 613	7 017 657	2 128 758	746 724*
<b>Ukraine</b>	657 051	706 551	1 045 043	1 284 735	1 386 934	1 547 996	997 652	772 437*
<b>Greece</b>	830 841	755 414	593 150	623 705	686 891	836 882	136 305	21 652*

**Source:** data.tuik.gov.tr (2021)

\*The sum of the data for the first 6 months of 2021 is shown.

As seen in Table 2, the Türkiye-Russia plane crisis in 2015 resulted in a serious decrease in the number of Russian tourists coming to Türkiye. This crisis deeply affected Antalya, which is the most preferred destination for Russian tourists. This has deprived the Antalya destination a large part of its tourism revenues. The murder of Russia's ambassador to Ankara, Andrey Karlov, in December 2016 did not adversely affect the relations between Türkiye and Russia because Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that this incident was a provocation and a move aimed at disrupting Turkish-Russian relations. Russian President Putin, also stated that the murder was a provocation, similar to Turkish President Erdogan's statements, and that it aimed to disrupt Türkiye-Russia relations and the peace process in Syria. The Turkish-Russian aircraft crisis experienced in 2015 continued in 2016 as well. The normalization of political relations between Türkiye and Russia at the end of 2016 brought an increase in the number of Russian tourists in 2017. In 2016, there was an increase in the number of tourists from Ukraine and Georgia. The continuous positive progress of Türkiye-Ukraine relations encouraged Ukrainian tourists to visit Türkiye. The high level of political relations in Georgia, which is Türkiye's border neighbor, is the most basic indicator of this. Türkiye is known to export the most to Georgia and 17 percent of the total exports to this country belong to Türkiye. The elimination of the crises experienced compared to the last two years had a positive effect on the tourism statistics. In Table 2, there is an increase in the number of tourists coming to Türkiye from many countries compared to the previous year. However, there is a slight decrease in Germany, England and the Netherlands compared to the previous year, which can be considered as a reflection of the crises experienced in 2016. The political crisis between Türkiye

and the Netherlands in 2017 did not affect the tourism statistics in general. As shown in Table 2, there is an increase of 34.62% in 2017 compared to the previous year, and the number of tourists reaches 20,935,197 million. This table also shows 55.13% of the total number of tourists in Türkiye in 2017. The increase in tourists in 2018, which continued in the previous year, continued this year as well. According to this table, 24,181,607 million tourists meant an increase of 15.50%, compared to 2017, providing 52.44% of the total number of tourists in Türkiye. In 2018, the number of tourists from Georgia and Iran decreased, whose main reason can be considered as the economic problems in Georgia and Iran. There were positive developments in tourism statistics in 2019. The number of tourists visiting Türkiye the most was 27,171,822 million, with an increase of 12.36% compared to the previous year. This number constitutes 52.50% of the total number of tourists in Türkiye.

When compared to the previous year in Table 2, an increase can be observed in the number of tourists from other countries except Georgia, which can be explained by the continuation of some economic problems in Georgia. In 2020, the Covid-19 virus, which emerged in China in December 2019, affected the whole world in a short time, causing a sharp decline in tourism statistics. In 2020, 8,212,401 million tourists came to Türkiye, with a decrease of 69.78% compared to the previous year. This number of tourists constitutes 51.42% of the total number of tourists in Türkiye. Since the data comprises only the data covering the period by June 2021, it could not be compared to the June 2020 data, as no data could be collected in the second quarter of 2020 due to Covid-19.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to reveal how the crises experienced in Türkiye between January 2015 and June 2021 affected the tourism industry and to determine which crisis types were the most common. The crises experienced in Türkiye over the period of 2015-2021 were examined and these crises were found to have adversely affected the tourism of the country. The crises that took place in Türkiye during this period were found to have directly affected the number of tourists and, accordingly, tourism revenues. When the crises in Türkiye are compared, it was determined that the Türkiye-Russia plane crisis on November 24, 2015, the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, and the Covid-19 pandemic had a greater impact than other crises, and this impact continued for a long time and reflected negatively on the tourism sector. It was also found that due to the crisis, the image of the country was damaged, tourism demand decreased, and the holiday packages were sold below the target price, negatively affecting both tourism revenues and average tourist expenditures per capita.

Türkiye survived the effects of the crisis to some extent in 2017-2018 and 2019, and although achieved a significant increase in the number of tourists, there was a serious decrease in average tourist expenditures per capita during these years. This has had some fundamental consequences. First, due to the intense competition with rival countries and the negative effects of the crises, discounts are made in touristic products to make the Turkish tourism market attractive. The second is the discounts made to attract the few tourists who come to tourism enterprises during the crisis period due to the fierce competition among tourism enterprises in Türkiye.

While tourism revenues contribute positively to the development of the Turkish economy, tourism revenues are negatively affected in the slightest crisis or chaos environment. Although tourism has a dynamic structure, it is more easily affected by crises compared to other sectors. Türkiye can minimize the risks that may occur by doing some work to protect this fragile structure (Sarıçay & Ünal, 2014).

Apart from the domestic crises experienced in Türkiye, international global crises experienced have as much negative impact as national crises. The foreign press also has a role in the negative impact of the crisis on the image of the country. The press can announce the crisis to large masses in a short time. Since tourism creates added value, crises directly or indirectly affect the sectors connected to tourism negatively and disrupt the micro and macroeconomic balance of the country (Göçen, Yirik & Yılmaz, 2011).

The tourism industry directly contributes to the economic empowerment of developing countries. Developed countries need to create a security environment to benefit from tourism. To achieve this, they need to increase their resources more than ever before. These countries may need international support in their attempts to increase their security. Aid in the form of increased security measures may be less costly than direct economic aid from foreign countries and provides an incentive for local people to become more economically independent as they develop their own tourism industries (Thompson, 2011: p. 699).

Crises, in general, have a negative impact on societies on a national or international scale in many ways. National and international crises affect societies negatively in terms of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects, and these effects generally continue even after the crisis is over. To reduce the effects of the crisis, an effective crisis management should be performed. During a crisis, crisis management is of vital importance and therefore, the people involved in crisis management should be selected from experts. During the crisis, the experts in crisis management can provide information about the crisis to the individuals and prevent the formation of chaos in the society. Domestic tourism has an important place in minimizing the negative effects of the tourism sector in a crisis or chaos environment that may occur in the future in Türkiye. While preparing tourism policies and strategies, the necessary research must be conducted on domestic tourism so that it can play an effective role in the crisis environment.

### **Declaration**

The contribution of the authors of this article to the study is 40%, 40% and 20% according to author rank. The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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