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SPACE TOURISM

In the second half of the 20th century, mankind entered outer space. The road to space was opened in 1961, when the first spacecraft with Gagarin on board was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. Astronautics has become an enormous catalyst for modern science and technology. It stimulates the development of electronics, mechanical engineering, materials science, computer technology and many other branches of the national economy. Progress has gone so far as to create a tour into space and laid the foundation for space tourism.

Firstly, the idea of space tourism was proposed by American novelists Barron Hilton and Kraft Eric in 1967. They first tried to push through the idea of commercializing space. But at that time, that idea was accepted as an amusing fantasy tale by two writers, but nothing more. But almost 20 years later, in 1986, at the International Astronautical Congress, there was presented a report on the topic “Potential Economic Implications of the Development of Space Tourism”, which caused a lot of discussion not only in scientific, but also in business circles. And it can be said that after that moment, the idea of space tourism came to life again, and this time in earnest.

Some years later, the first step was done. As the shuttle program expanded in the early 80s, NASA began a Space Flight Participant program to allow citizens without scientific or governmental roles to fly. Christa McAuliffe was chosen as the first Teacher in Space in July 1985 from more than 11,000 applicants. About 1,700 applied for the Journalist in Space program. But, after McAuliffe was killed in the Challenger disaster in January 1986, the programs were cancelled.

In the late 1990s, a wave of space tourism re-emerged. In 1997 SpaceDev was founded, and in 1998 Space Adventures, Ltd. became the first company to begin working with private citizens interested in going to space. And, finally on April 30th, 2001 American millionaire Dennis Tito travelled to the International

Space Station (ISS) on a Soviet Soyuz rocket. He spent 20 million dollars to fulfil his dream, but that mirrored the current state of space tourism – the very richest people in the world are at the forefront. Tito, who paid \$20 million for his flight on the Soyuz TM-32 spacecraft, spent seven days on board the ISS and is considered the world's first space tourist. As a result, between 2001 and 2009, Soyuz rockets transported seven more space tourists to the International Space Station as part of Space Adventures.

And what about the 10s and 20s, we can see the tendency when the private space programs are slowly but surely replacing government space programs, including such a branch as a space tourism. Thus, today, anyone who has 250,000 dollars can buy a ticket for a mini trip into space. For instance, Virgin company provides the opportunity to launch a six people crew of a special spacecraft that will deliver people to a height of 100 kilometers above the Earth. Having reached the desired height, people will be able to experience the effects of microgravity within a few minutes, as well as admire stunning views of the Earth. Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon, is also looking for fame in this area and therefore created an initiative called Blue Origin. Everyone will be delivered using the New Shepard spacecraft to an altitude of 80-100 km. Bezos hopes that the first commercial flights for his company will also begin as early as 2022. Elon Musk, with his SpaceX, has also expressed an interest in commercial space travel. The company has developed the Dragon V2 spacecraft capable of carrying up to 7 passengers. What is more, SpaceX is aiming way above Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic. He also plans to send people into space, but this time it is about a whole flight to the real moon. It is obvious that a new round of the space race awaits us. True, this time it will be not the states that will compete to a greater extent, but private companies.

In the future, the privatization of space travel will support further scientific research, increase interest in further space exploration, and new innovative developments that will appear against the backdrop of competition will make it easier, much safer and cheaper, for ordinary people to have such adventures. So, the conclusion is that as the space tourism industry evolves, the ranks of spaceflight participants will grow, and suborbital and orbital flights will inevitably give way to lunar excursions and trips to Mars and beyond, by which time space tourism will be operating as a full-fledged industry capable of truly opening the frontier of space.