

## On the issue of the electoral activity of Russian youth

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**Annotation.** This article analyzes the reasons for the low electoral activity of young people. The author cites official statistics showing the level of involvement of young people in the political life of the country. The activity of the state and the subjects of the Russian Federation in the field of youth policy is analyzed. The author proposes a number of measures to improve the work of regional election commissions of constituent entities in order to increase the electoral activity of young people.

**Keywords:** elections, youth, absenteeism, electoral activity, election commission.

Elections and the electoral process among the achievements of modern civilization occupy a special, extremely important place. Elections concern everyone. It is here that the present and future of generations are decided. It is necessary to understand that elections are the result of daily work to regulate relations in society, and not a one-time event on the days of voting.

Official data show that every year there is a tendency towards a decrease in citizens' interest in elections. So, according to the Central Election Commission of Russia, 109,532,328 took part in the voting in 2017, 108,142,185 in 2018, and in 2019 - 108,476,726 people, as of July 1, 2020 - 108,393,079 [9]. Based on this, we can conclude that some citizens refuse to participate in the electoral process. This phenomenon is widespread not only in Russia, but throughout the world. In the Great Russian Encyclopedia, T.A. Vasilieva considers the concept of "absenteeism" as the evasion of electorate from participation in elections and referendums [2]. It should be noted that this phenomenon is most common among young people.

According to the Federal Law of December 30, 2020 No. 489-FZ "On youth policy in the Russian Federation", the category of youth in Russia includes citizens from 14 to 35 years old inclusive [1]. According to the Federal State Statistics Service, by 2020 the following age categories of young people live in Russia: 14 years old - 1,498,000 people, from 15 to 19 years

old - 7,161,000 people, from 20 to 24 years old - 6,889,000 people, from 25 up to 29 years old - 9,427,000 people, from 30 to 34 years old - 12,633,000, 35 years old - 2,479,000 people. As of January 1, 2020, this category in the Russian Federation includes 40 million people, which is 27.3% of the total population of the country [5].

Political scientists classify youth as a dynamic social group that can become an active and worthy participant in activities related to the organization and conduct of election campaigns. An increase in the degree of interest of young people in the management of public affairs is possible only if they can feel like real participants in all the processes taking place in the country. However, the reluctance of young people to participate in the political life of the country remains one of the most pressing problems.

The main reason for low social activity is associated with the widespread opinion among young people that “my vote does not solve anything”. Young people lose faith in their need and significance for the state, do not realize that the future of not only a particular region, but also the country as a whole depends on their voice. They seek to shift responsibility for their own life and situation in society onto others. This is due to the fact that “the transformation processes in Russian society have had a powerful impact on the formation of a whole generation of young people. The old and stable value system was destroyed, and Russian youth for a long period was left without clear spiritual and moral guidelines” [3].

Another no less important reason for youth absenteeism is distrust of the authorities. Young people questioned the legality of the elections and the freedom to express their will. The growth of mistrust is associated with the tense political situation in the country, falsification of the results of elections and referendums, bribery of votes. Young people are used as a "tool of influence" to achieve certain goals.

Another reason that reduces electoral activity is the lack of awareness and low level of legal culture among young people. Young people are poorly informed about the political activities of the state, about the work of election campaigns, about candidates. Lack of the necessary knowledge leads to the fact that some young voters do not understand how the candidate's proposed political program will change their lives.

Thus, having analyzed the main reasons for the low level of electoral activity of young people, one can come to the conclusion that a comprehensive approach is required to solve this problem.

Today in Russia a large number of methods have been developed to increase the degree of interest of young people in the electoral process. The state at the legislative level adopts normative legal acts regulating various aspects of state youth policy: Resolution of the Central

Election Commission of the Russian Federation dated March 12, 2014 No. 221 / 1429-6 "On the Youth Electoral Concept", Resolution of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation "On holding the Day of the Young Voter". All activities are aimed at familiarizing young and future voters with the legislation on elections and referendums, at drawing attention to regional and municipal elections, at increasing civic responsibility, social and electoral activity of young people.

In our opinion, in order to strengthen the confidence of young people in elections, it is necessary to start covering issues in the field of political rights at an early stage of socialization. The optimal solution would be to introduce new subjects into school educational standards, for example, "Political Sociology" or "Political Science", "Fundamentals of Electoral Law". Also, increasing the degree of trust can be achieved through educational work. Many potential voters spend a significant part of their free time on the Internet. According to official Mediascope data, 94 million people in Russia use the Internet every month; 91 million people go online weekly and 83 million daily. The most active users are citizens aged 12 to 34 years (on average, 185-194 minutes per day) [6]. This factor can be used to involve young people in the electoral process. So, the election commission of the Samara region in December 2020 launched an online project - "About elections here". To implement it, the Youth Election Commission of the Samara Region and the first in Russia Youth Precinct Election Commission No. 3045 were involved. This online project allowed members of the youth commissions to create a special form for registration of participants, to open the telegram channel "About elections here". The implemented project contributes to the development of the idea of creating youth composition of election commissions, provides an opportunity to enter the reserve of the composition of precinct commissions, and in the future - to take part in the organization and conduct of elections [7].

An important factor is increasing motivation and awareness of the importance of young people's participation in the electoral process. So, in 2017, the territorial election commission of the city of Muravlenko of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug launched a new project for young people - "Vybormen is a hero who cares!" The goal of the project is to convey to young people that the voice of every citizen of the country is important. The project includes meetings, master classes, intellectual parties, debates and round tables. With the help of a PR campaign on Instagram, Facebook, Vkontakte, users of social networks will find out why the heroes of the project go to the polls, for what reason they take an active part in the life of their country. This project makes it possible to understand that the future of the city, district, country depends on the choice of young people [8].

In order to increase the level of legal culture of young people, the constituent entities of the Russian Federation need to carry out targeted work with young and future voters, apply special information and explanatory programs during the inter-election period, and also exchange successful practical experience. For example, in the Irkutsk region, a website has been created about the work of the Election Commission with young and future voters. The Election Commission organizes intellectual tournaments on electoral law, quizzes, discussion platforms, youth gatherings, and holds the festival "The Future is for Youth". The purpose of these events is to increase the level of knowledge of young people about elections, state structure, practical acquaintance with the procedure for holding elections, the work of electoral associations in the framework of election campaigns [4].

Such a positive experience in the work of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, election commissions of constituent entities in attracting young people to public and political life will help to form the younger generation's knowledge about the electoral process in the country, increase civic engagement and responsibility through direct participation in elections. For this, the constituent entities of the Russian Federation need to exchange useful experience, carry out large-scale work aimed at educating young people in the field of exercising their political rights, and also strengthen state support in this area.

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