

THE ROLE OF INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION IN THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY

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The issues of improving inter-municipal cooperation are relevant in the context of the administrative and municipal reforms being implemented in the country. Within the framework of improving the effectiveness of state and municipal management, some historical aspects of the formation and evolution of inter-municipal cooperation in Russia, the development of its legal, organizational and economic bases are examined. The analysis revealed a number of problems in the field under study and some ways of their solution in the course of joint activities of state authorities and local self-government. The emphasis was put on the practical activities of associations of the federal, interregional, regional levels, and specialized associations. The theme of the creation and development of urban agglomerations was touched upon. The authors conclude that it is necessary to study and generalize the best municipal practices, to combine the management experience of different territories for their more effective social and economic development.

Keywords: local self-government, inter-municipal cooperation, congress, association, agglomeration, social and economic development.

РОЛЬ МЕЖМУНИЦИПАЛЬНОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА В СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОМ РАЗВИТИИ ТЕРРИТОРИИ

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Вопросы совершенствования межмуниципального сотрудничества актуальны в контексте осуществляемых в стране административной и муниципальной реформ. В рамках темы повышения эффективности государственного и муниципального управления рассматриваются некоторые исторические аспекты становления и эволюции межмуниципального сотрудничества в России, вопросы развития его правовых, организационных и экономических основ. Проведенный анализ выявил ряд проблем в исследуемой области и некоторые пути их решения в ходе совместной деятельности органов государственной власти и местного самоуправления. Сделан акцент на практической деятельности объединений федерального, межрегионального, регионального уровней, специализированные ассоциации. Затронута тема создания и развития городских агломераций. Авторы делают вывод о необходимости изучения и обобщения лучших муниципальных практик, объединения управленческого опыта различных территорий для их более эффективного социально-экономического развития.

Ключевые слова: местное самоуправление, межмуниципальное сотрудничество, конгресс, ассоциация, агломерация, социально-экономическое развитие.

On the Day of Local Self-Government, celebrated on April 21, 2017 in the Russian Federation for the fifth time, President of the All-Russian Congress of Municipalities V. Kidyayev highlighted the common task of creating the social climate and quality of life to make this holiday a day of municipal unity. All organizations of inter-municipal cooperation are working for this purpose. This thesis once again emphasizes the importance of researching issues of inter-municipal cooperation (in the following abbreviated as: IMC), the formation and development of its legal, organizational and economic bases.

This topic is covered in the works of such specialists in the field of municipal law and local self-government (in the following abbreviated as: LSG) as G. V. Barabashev, L. A. Velikhov, O. V. Kutafin, V. V. Nevinsky, A. A. Podsumkova, V. I. Fadeev, E. S. Shugrin, etc., and it is discussed at various forums on the problems of state and municipal government. But, from our point of view, it is necessary to continue studying it. The use of methods for collecting and summarizing information, statistical analysis, and included monitoring has revealed the following.

According to one of the founders of the municipal (zemsky) administration L. A. Velikhov, in pre-revolutionary Russia the government did not allow municipal cooperation, since it was not interested in the growth of solidarity. However, with the growth of public initiative in 1910, Odessa Congress on Urban Development was authorized, in 1912 — Kiev Congress on City Finance, in 1913 — Petersburg Congress, and in 1915 arose the “Union of Cities” and the “Zemsky Union” (Govorenkova, 1999). We can see that even the names of the first Russian congresses speak for their socio-economic orientation.

A brief excursion into the history of the formation and development of the legal and organizational foundations of the IMC for a 100-year period (since 1917 to the present) was given earlier (Lyakisheva & Schegel, 2016). Further, we will consider a number of fundamental moments in the investigated field at the present stage.

In the current federal law 2003 on local self-government (in the following abbreviated as: Federal Law No. 131), issues of inter-municipal cooperation are dealt with in Article 8 and Chapter 9. They note that in each constituent entity of the Russian Federation, a regional council of municipal entities (in the following abbreviated as: ME) should be established. These councils can form a single all-Russian association of ME. Now in Russia there are several types of associations of ME: all-Russian unions, interregional, regional and specialized associations. Let us dwell on some, especially since a number of them celebrate anniversary dates in 2016–2017.

The Federal Association — “United All-Russian Association of Municipalities (Congress)” (ARCM) was established on July 7, 2006. Since 2009, the magazine “Municipal Russia” has become the “mouthpiece” of ARCM. Today, the Congress includes Councils of municipalities of all 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation and 6 interregional associations of municipal cooperation. It has become the largest organization uniting the potential of the municipal community at the federal level. Such consolidation allows the Congress to position itself as a platform where the most important issues facing municipal entities are accumulated and to act as an intermediary in dealing with them before the bodies of state power at various levels. This year, new forms and methods of work of the Congress were tested. The first meetings of the working bodies of the Congress — the Committees and the Scientific and Expert Council — were held, international activity began to gain momentum (Municipal Russia, 2016). ARCM regularly conducts activities that strengthen LSGs and the development of civil initiatives. Here are some outstanding examples of the work of the Congress in 2016–2017: in January, 2016, at the initiative of ARCM, in conjunction with the State Duma of the Russian Federation, the 1st constituent conference of the All-Russian Association of Territorial Public Self-Government (in the following abbreviated as: TSG) was held. In its work, 2 chairmen of Barnaul TSG participated among other 200 representatives of 65 regions of the Russian Federation. The issues of public participation in solving the problems of social and economic development of the territories, including through TSG, are constantly at the center of the attention of ARCM. In August, 2016 Moscow hosted the first meeting of the Chamber of Cities — the centers of the subjects of the Russian Federation. In January, 2017 the State Duma of the Russian Federation hosted a working meeting of President of the Congress V. Kidyayev with the chairmen of the Chambers of ARCM, where priorities and work plans for the year were discussed. In February of this year the first issue of the Congressional Information Bulletin “Regional Congresses” was published. The main topics of the issue were: the All-Russia competition “The Best Municipal Practice”, preparation of the regional report on the state of LSG in the subject of the Russian Federation, the draft Model Regional Law “On the interaction of state authorities of the subject of the Russian Federation and the council of municipal entities of the subject of the Russian Federation” (the item on involving the council in the development and approval of regional measures in relation to municipalities was added, including those on the budget, financial and socio-economic aspects). The appendices to the issue included orders of the Ministry of Justice from 30.11.2016 No. 270 and the

Ministry of Economic Development from 09.12.2016 No. 798, which approved the application forms for the nominations “Ensuring effective “feedback” with residents of municipalities, the development of TSG and the involvement of citizens in the implementation (participation in the implementation) of local government” and “Municipal economic policy and municipal finance management”(Official site of the All-Russian Congress of Municipalities, 2017).

On March 13, 1991, another federal association, the Union of Russian Cities (in the following abbreviated as: URC) was established as an association of large cities, the capitals of the subjects of the Russian Federation. The URC is a voluntary association in which the interests of cities are represented by their authorities. Having unified the LSG practitioners, it has solved specific tasks throughout its history. In 2008, the Concept of its activity “Cities of Russia — points of economic growth and centers of social development” was developed and adopted. Within the framework of this concept, the current work of URC is carried out (Official site of the Union of Russian Cities, 2017). In March 2016, the Union of Russian Cities celebrated its “silver” anniversary.

Another anniversary is the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Association of Siberian and Far Eastern Cities (in the following abbreviated as: ASFEC) — an interregional association of local authorities in the Russian Federation. This voluntary organization of the IMC of the cities of Siberia and the Far East was established in 1986 to promote the socio-economic development of municipalities, the organization of LSGs and inter-municipal cooperation. The current members of the Association are 70 MEs of the Ural, Siberian and Far Eastern Federal Districts with the population of over 13 million people. The activity of the Association is conducted simultaneously in several areas: information and analytical, the exchange of experience of the work of city administrations, as well as consulting and methodical directions. ASFEC activities are regularly covered on the website [6], in various compilations, in the Information Bulletin of Local Self-Government — the municipal Internet publication produced by ASFEC in conjunction with ARCM. The activities of ASFEC, in fact, reflect the history of the entire municipal movement in Russia. Its first President was Chairman of the Barnaul City Executive Committee V. N. Bavarin. A bright, experienced manager, head of Barnaul in 1994–2003, one of the ten best mayors of Russia, during his years in office, made a significant contribution to the activity of ASFEC, as well as to the history of the Barnaul city government, which celebrated its 140th anniversary in April, 2017.

In the early 90's Barnaul deputies shared their experience, discussed problems and sought solutions

within the Association of Chairmen of the District Councils of Deputies of the cities of Siberia and the Far East, established in October, 1992. The work was supported by the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR and supervised by our fellow countryman Y. I. Zhiltsov. This association ceased its activities with the dissolution of the Soviets in the fall of 1993. Subsequently, the deputies of Barnaul City Duma (in the following abbreviated as: BSD) and the heads of LSG bodies of the city preserved the traditions of their predecessors. For example, in December, 2006, in Tomsk they took part in the ASFEC conference “First Results of The Local Government Reform in the Russian Federation”, where they discussed work experience in the first year of implementing Federal Law No. 131. In November, 2011, they participated in the ASFEC conference held in Barnaul under the motto “Strong self-government is the guarantee of the development of the country”, and in March, 2012, in Novosibirsk discussed the topic: “The main directions of the social policy of the municipality”. In February, 2014, in Barnaul an expanded meeting of the Council of ASFEC was held, where our experience in the development of TSG was approved, and in November the ASFEC conference “Modern mechanisms of housing and communal services management” was held in the city. In 2016, within the framework of ASFEC, issues of the development of territories were discussed in Tomsk (“Financial and economic activities of municipal entities of Siberia and the Far East in modern conditions”), in Irkutsk (“Actual issues of socio-economic development of municipalities at the present stage of municipal construction”) and at a number of other conferences.

Barnaul, in addition to active participation in ASFEC, implements other forms of IMC. Thus, Barnaul City Duma adopted Decision of February 17, 2017 “On the participation of the city district — the city of Barnaul of the Altai Territory in the Union of Russian Financiers”. The result of such cooperation has already manifested itself in the fact that Chief Specialist of the Finance, Tax and Credit Policy Committee of Barnaul T. Yurtaikina received an award for the third place in the category “The Best Young Financier” in the All-Russian competition “Financial Start” in the spring of 2017. She submitted the work “Approaches to the construction of a balanced budget policy for 2017–2019” on the example of the city district — the city of Barnaul.

An example of regional cooperation of municipal bodies is the Association “Council of Municipalities of the Altai Territory”. This voluntary association was established on June 28, 2006, in accordance with Art. 66 of the Federal Law No. 131 for the purpose of developing LSG in the Altai Territory, ensuring the protection of rights and representing the common interests of MEs, members of the Council [7]. The

regional association includes 717 MEs. Among the many events organized by the association over a 10-year period, we note the 1st regional conference held jointly with the administration of Barnaul in June 2015, dedicated to the problems and prospects for the development of TSG in the Altai Territory. In June, 2016, the 1st regional meeting of village heads was held. These events were covered by many media and publications (Mishchenko et al., 2016). In 2017, a number of events are planned, including in the framework of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Altai Territory. At the VII Congress of the Association held on May 12, 2017, the priority areas of the work of the Council and MEs of the region were discussed; issues of citizens participation in social and economic development; improvement of infrastructure and investment attractiveness of the territories.

Considering the economic and managerial aspects of the development of the territories, it is necessary to dwell on another form of IMC, that is, specialized associations and unions of local authorities. These include inter-municipal associations that take into account the specifics of some MEs (closed administrative-territorial formation, science city, etc.). We believe that this kind of cooperation can include agglomeration, because, according to experts, it is possible to form associations for the economic interaction of ME. As an example, let us cite the Barnaul agglomeration, created in accordance with the current legislation, municipal legal acts, incl. by Decision of Barnaul City Council on June 8, 2012 № 755 "On the participation of the urban district — the city of Barnaul of the Altai Territory in the Association "The Barnaul agglomeration". This agglomeration, uniting 3 municipalities: Barnaul, Novoaltaysk and Pervomaisky district of the Altai Territory, contributes to the increase in the effectiveness of LSG bodies and the level of social and economic development of these territories within the framework of IMC. Its activities can be a separate topic of study. However, from the point of view of experts, in general, municipal associations react too slowly to radical economic transformations in the country. As an example, we can cite the precedent with the creation of regional innovation systems, which mean a set of institutions and organizations of various forms of ownership located in the region, functioning on the basis of market principles and implementing the creation and dissemination of new technologies. The most important direction of the economy, which gives both revenue to municipalities, and employment to the population, is almost out of focus of the municipal government. Only now in certain regions there are corresponding associations that in the long term will allow to raise the level of influence of local self-government on the development

of the whole social and economic sphere of the territory (Mishchenko & Mishchenko, 2015). The relevance of the topic of agglomerations was emphasized by its consideration at the IV All-Russian Conference "The development of urban agglomerations", held on May 17, 2017, in Novosibirsk. The purpose of the discussion was to increase the effectiveness of state policy and management of socio-economic processes in the development of urban agglomerations in Russia, the issues of their strategic planning and spatial development. Actual problems were raised, an exchange of experience took place, expert evaluation of agglomeration projects and proposed solutions was obtained (The IV All-Russian Conference presents effective tools for the development of the Novosibirsk agglomeration, 2017).

The foregoing allows us to summarize that the voluntary horizontal associations of ME are a real potential for improving management processes, development and reform of LSGs. Associations contribute to the development of a coordinated position of state and local authorities, to increase the efficiency of their activities in the social and economic development of the territories.

At the same time, the study of the stated topic showed that many difficulties arise in this process. Among the problems inherent in both the whole of LSGs and IMC, organizational and economic problems are traditionally identified. A number of them we covered earlier (Lyakisheva & Schegel, 2016), but nevertheless we will note that the lack of financial resources, including those necessary for the payment of admission, annual membership and targeted contributions, and also the limited items of expenditures of local budgets for events, business trips, production of information materials and collections about work experience, production of other printed products. We believe that these issues will become the topic of discussion at various levels and will be resolved.

The importance of the discussed topic of IMC is emphasized by the fact that it is mentioned in the Report on the Status of LSGs in the Russian Federation, where E. S. Shugrina, Doctor of Law, Professor, Director of the Center for Support of Local Authorities of the Higher School of Economics of the Russian Academy of Science, considering the tendencies of the development of local self-government, notes that the analysis of the activities carried out at the federal level concerning the LSG shows several stable trends: the issues of improving Russian federalism, regional policy, regional economy are on the agenda; LSG is referred to as an integral element of both; the number of events has increased, where a complex of problems of interaction of regions and ME is considered. The expert emphasizes that these issues arise in the context of discussing strategic

development, agglomeration, delineation of powers, proportionality of financing, etc.; LSG is mentioned in the context of discussing the features of the spatial development of the territory, transforming it into a “territory comfortable for living”. In 2015–2016 several organizations were involved in identifying, analyzing and replicating the best municipal practices, the most famous of them being the Agency for Strategic Initiatives, the Union of Russian Cities, the All-Russian Council of LSG. The result of many years of active work of expert organizations was the official recognition of the importance of its activity. On August 18, 2016, the Government of the Russian Federation signed resolution No. 815, in accordance with which it was decided to hold the annual All-Russian competition “The Best Municipal Practice” in 2017. The purpose of the competition is the organization of systematic work to identify, summarize and disseminate successful experience of municipal government in various areas:

urban policy, ensuring favorable environment for the life of the population and the development of housing and communal services; municipal economic policy and management of municipal finances, etc. (Shugrina, 2016). The Government of the Altai Territory adopted resolution No. 62 of February 22, 2017 “On approval of the provision on the regional stage of the All-Russian competition “The Best Municipal Practice”, which regulates the holding of the regional stage of this contest.

As we can see, inter-municipal cooperation contributes to the generalization of experience and the joint solution of managerial problems, which is an indispensable element in raising the level of social and economic development of municipalities, regions and the country as a whole in the light of the transformations taking place in Russia. This topic is regularly heard at various levels, conferences and forums, confirming the thesis “In Unity is Strength!”

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