



REVISTA INCLUSIONES

HOMENAJE A GINO RÍOS PATIO

Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales

Volumen 7 . Número Especial

Enero / Marzo

2020

ISSN 0719-4706

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**WORK IMPROVEMENT OF CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF CREATING
A FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: LEGAL ASPECT**

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Fecha de Recepción: 22 de agosto de 2019 – **Fecha Revisión:** 19 de septiembre de 2019

Fecha de Aceptación: 28 de noviembre de 2019 – **Fecha de Publicación:** 01 de enero de 2020

Abstract

The article is based on the provisions of modern legal acts regulating legal relations in the customs sphere and determining the need to improve the activities of customs authorities in modern conditions, in which it is important to take into account the growing requirements for the socialization of people with disabilities to organize their social rehabilitation.

Keywords

Legal regulation – Administrative law – Customs authorities – Social rehabilitation

Para Citar este Artículo:

Kupriyanova, Ludmila M.; Albov, Alexey P.; Kairova, Alla I.; Andrianova, Valeria V. y Nikonovich, Sergey L. Work Improvement of Customs Authorities in The Context of Creating A Favorable Environment for People with Disabilities: Legal Aspect. Revista Inclusiones Vol: 7 num Especial Enero-Marzo (2020): 347-357.

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Introduction

Relevance of the study

The digital economy and legal policy, as well as the effectiveness of public administration as one of the factors, are determined by the attitude to the protection of the rights of vulnerable segments of the population, which primarily include people with disabilities¹.

The state-legal solution of problems reflecting various aspects of socialization of persons with disabilities is a natural result of the increase in the mass of people with disabilities who are not able to carry out an economically independent existence². According to the UN, the annual increase in the number of people with disabilities is more than 8 million; every day 23 thousand people with disabilities appear in the world.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of disabled children: in Europe and in the Russian Federation, the number of patients younger than 17 years is growing rapidly. Rosstat names the figure of 600,000 disabled children in Russia. However, experts believe that the figures are underestimated. In fact, there are about three million people with disabilities. Many parents do not want to assign the disability group to their child and formalize them as a patient, even if their son or daughter suffers from a serious illness.

This problem requires the development of comprehensive state and legal measures to support the most humane attitude and active life of people with disabilities³. The theoretical and practical significance of studying problems related to social adaptation and rehabilitation, social well-being, ensuring social protection of people with disabilities and their integration into society is obvious⁴.

Degree of the development of the problem

The fundamental international legal document defining the policy of the Russian Federation in the field of rehabilitation and habilitation of disabled persons is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 13, 2006), ratified by the Russian Federation in 2012⁵.

European countries are actively developing models and legal frameworks for the integration of persons with disabilities into the socio-cultural environment.

People with disabilities are gradually integrating society in Germany. Social services in Germany provide two types of assistance: life support help and help in special

¹ R. G. Braslavskii, "Tsivilizatsionnaya teoreticheskaya perspektiva v sotsiologii", Sociological studies num 2 (2013): 17.

² A. Ya. Burdyak; S. A. Vasin; A. O. Makarentseva; R. R. Khasanova y E. A. Tsatsura, Invalidnost i sotsialnoe polozhenie invalidov v Rossi (Moscow: Izdatelskii dom «Delo» RANKhiGS, 2017).

³ N. I. Skok, Zhizneobespechenie lyudei s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami v sovremennoi Rossii (Tyumen: Vektor-buk, 2003): 158.

⁴ R. Martin, "Human rights and the social recognition thesis", Journal of Social Philosophy num 44 (2013): 1–21.

⁵ Konventsiya o pravakh invalidov. 2012. Available: http://ombudsmanspb.ru/files/files/OON_02_site.pdf

life situations. Since 1995, social insurance for the care for the disabled has been in force in Germany, as well as payments for home care. Legislation in Germany reliably guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities and prohibits dismissal before the age of 30.

In 1995 in the United Kingdom, the Law on Non-Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities was adopted, which enshrines the principle of equal rights for people with disabilities and other citizens. Social services assist in the independent life of people with disabilities at home and if this is not possible people with disabilities can visit day centers that serve them.

Japan's law on persons with disabilities ensures the independence of persons with disabilities and also regulates the plan for working with persons with disabilities.

The central authority governing persons with disabilities in Cyprus is the Rehabilitation Council of the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance.

In the Russian Federation, social rehabilitation of people with disabilities currently includes several aspects: social and environmental orientation and social adaptation⁶.

It is important to emphasize that concern for the integration of persons with disabilities into society includes not only the creation of an accessible environment, but also a number of measures to remove all possible barriers, as well as the creation of separate state institutions that coordinate and control the implementation of public policy towards persons with disabilities⁷. The undoubted achievement of international legal instruments is that they are fully aimed at promoting the principle of non-discrimination of people with disabilities⁸.

According to international legal instruments, the process of effective and full integration into society is primarily based on ensuring the accessibility of all spheres of public life and promoting the full and effective participation of people with disabilities in the process of making socially important decisions⁹.

According to the Order of the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation dated October 8, 2000 No. 911 (as edited on June 18, 2003, as amended on February 17, 2004) "On approval of the Instructions on the procedure for customs clearance of goods imported into the customs territory of the Russian Federation as technical assistance)" (registered in the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation on November 27, 2000 No. 2466) goods imported into the customs territory of the Russian Federation as technical assistance are exempted from import customs duty and value-added tax (VAT).

⁶ M. Bach y L. Kerzner, *A New Paradigm for Protecting Autonomy and the Right to Legal Capacity* (Toronto: Law Commission of Ontario, 2010): 196.

⁷ R. Escorpizo y G. Stucki, "Disability evaluation, social security, and the international classification of functioning, disability and health: the time is now", *J Occup Environ Med*. Vol: 55 num 6 (2013): 644–651.

⁸ Konventsiya o pravakh invalidov. 2012. Available: http://ombudsmanspb.ru/files/files/OON_02_site.pdf

⁹ A. Sen, "Elements of a theory of human rights", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* num 32 (2004): 315–356.

Goods imported as technical assistance intended for state and municipal organizations financed from the budgets of all levels are exempted from import customs duty and include the following: cars of special purpose for rendering medical ambulance and also mobile diagnostic laboratories equipped with the special medical equipment received by medical institutions for own needs; cars intended for transportation of 10 people and more imported for children's homes, orphanages, nursing homes and people with disabilities; cars equipped with lifts for wheelchairs imported for rehabilitation centers of people with disabilities.

The fact that the customs clearance of goods is carried out with the use of benefits for the payment of import customs duty and value-added tax is important in this document subject to the presentation of goods by the recipient or documents by the declarant.

At present, one of the most actively rising tasks in the field of rehabilitation and habilitation of persons with disabilities in the Russian Federation is the formation of a model of effective interagency cooperation.

Research problem

How can customs authorities be included in this model?

State documents define the main activities of customs authorities concerning people with disabilities.

Thus, by the Decree of the Federal Customs Service of Russia dated February 25, 2009 No. 31-r "On Amending the Order of the State Customs Committee of Russia dated November 6, 2001 No. 1031-r", the procedure for exemption from VAT on imported technical means of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities has been simplified. Imported means of prevention and rehabilitation of the disabled (canes, wheelchairs, etc.), in accordance with article 150 of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation and the government of the Russian Federation of December 12, 2000 № 998 "On approval of the list of technical means, used exclusively for prophylaxis of disability and rehabilitation of disabled persons, the implementation of which is not subject to taxation on value-added", are exempt from VAT.

To control this benefit, the State Customs Committee of Russia issued a decree of November 6, 2001 No. 1031-r "On exemption from VAT", on the basis of which the exemption from VAT is granted by customs heads only if there is an appropriate decision of the State Customs Committee of Russia (now the FEDERAL CUSTOMS SERVICE of Russia) sent to the customs clearance authority, adopted on the basis of confirmation by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development of the Russian Federation of their intended purpose. However, the regulatory and legal definition of the conditions of exemption from taxation does not fall within the competence of the FEDERAL CUSTOMS SERVICE of Russia. Based on this, the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation, having considered this order for the legality, in a decision of October 15, 2008 No. 5483/08 recognized these standards as invalid. The court pointed out that neither article 149, paragraph 2, article 150, paragraph 2 of the Tax Code, nor the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 21, 2000 No. 998, regulating the exemption from VAT of technical means of rehabilitation of disabled persons, contain provisions establishing the need for confirmation by some state body of the intended purpose of imported goods as a mandatory condition for tax exemption, as well as provisions

authorizing the federal customs authority to establish such a condition. In addition, the obligation, conditions and procedure, including the deadline for the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation to provide confirmation of the intended use of the goods, do not have legal regulation, nor does the contested order contain the procedure and deadlines for making an appropriate decision of the FEDERAL CUSTOMS SERVICE of Russia. A few months after the decision of the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation, the FEDERAL CUSTOMS SERVICE of Russia decided to make the corresponding changes to the order. As before, the decision on the exemption from VAT of means for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities will be made by the head of the customs authority responsible for processing the goods, but the decision of the Federal Customs Service of Russia and confirmation of the intended purpose are not necessary.

The changes were registered in the Ministry of Justice of Russia on March 31, 2009 No. 13629, but entered into force on September 29, 2008.

Thus, it is necessary to take into account the growing requirements for the deisolation of people with disabilities to organize their social rehabilitation in the activities of customs authorities in modern conditions. It is no accident that a significant amount is allocated from the federal budget to provide people with disabilities with technical rehabilitation facilities¹⁰.

In this regard, it seems significant to determine the level of legal literacy and awareness regarding the actions of customs authorities to support the social rehabilitation of people with disabilities and their families. This is the subject of research.

Research hypothesis

The effectiveness of interaction between customs authorities and the population is largely determined by the level of legal literacy.

The development of legal literacy of the population is a specially organized activity on the dissemination of legal knowledge, clarification of existing regulations and practices, informing the public about the structure, functions and powers of law enforcement agencies, as well as the rights and duties of citizens in relation to them. Legal education should act as a systematic and purposeful formation of certain legal attitudes, concepts, principles and value orientations¹¹.

Materials and Methods

The research is based on two surveys of family members of children with disabilities and employees of social institutions, conducted with the support of the Charity Fund "Lifestyle" and guardianship authorities of the Kaluga region.

¹⁰ Obsuzhdenie problem sotsialnoi reabilitatsii i sozdaniya bezbareranoi sredy dlya invalidov, 2011. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (adopted by resolution 61/106 of the UN General Assembly of December 13, 2006, signed on behalf of the Russian Federation on September 24, 2008, ratified by Federal Law No. 46-FL of 05/03/2012)]. Available: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/13543>

¹¹ M. S. Andrianov y V. V. Artemov, "Organizatsiya i metodicheskoe obespechenie raboty organov prokuratury po pravovomu prosveshcheniyu", Vestnik Akademii Generalnoi prokuratury Rossiiskoi Federatsii num 3 Vol: 41 (2014).

The surveys were conducted in 2018-2019.

Research base

The surveys involved 48 family members of children with disabilities, 24 employees of guardianship agencies, 86 employees of social institutions (SPI KO Polotnyano-Zavod Boarding House for the Backward Children, SDAP KO Berega).

Research program

The first survey was devoted to determining the level of legal literacy in relation to the actions of customs authorities in supporting the social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities; the second survey was organized after a series of seminars to improve legal literacy (classes were held in person and remotely).

The study determined three groups:

- group 1: family members of disabled children;
- group 2: employees of guardianship and trusteeship bodies;
- group 3: educators of social institutions.

The division of the respondents into groups was determined by the different levels of professional training and the difference in tasks with regard to the social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

The surveys concerned knowledge of the legislation of the Russian Federation regarding social rehabilitation of people with disabilities and the actions of customs authorities in a particular situation, the reactions of family members of children with disabilities and employees to various complex (sometimes even conflicting) issues.

The level of readiness for legal self-education was also clarified. Questionnaires were given to the respondents for a certain time (on average – 40 minutes). The second survey was conducted at the final seminar.

Besides, during the study, discussions, and interviews were conducted with employees of the Lifestyle Foundation and officials of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Kaluga Region.

The issues of legal literacy of family members of children with disabilities and employees of social institutions were discussed in these conversations. This allowed conducting a theoretical comparison of the dynamics of the legal literacy level.

Results

The obtained data are summarized in Tables 1-3. This helps to more clearly assess the dynamics of legal literacy in the selected study groups.

Questions are divided into the main groups in the tables.

Group of questions	Results of the 1st survey (October 2018)	Results of the 2nd survey (September 2019) after two legal seminars and consultations
Questions about knowledge of provisions of the main state documents concerning social rehabilitation of people with disabilities	Low level – 32%	Low level – 16%
	Sufficient level – 28%	Sufficient level – 36%
	Good level of knowledge (can name articles, can put knowledge to practice) – 26%	Good level – 30%
	Excellent level (constantly improving, consulting with experts) – 14%	Excellent level – 18%
Questions about knowledge of the provisions of the main state documents regarding the actions of customs authorities in support of the social rehabilitation of people with disabilities	Low level – 78%	Low level – 58%
	Sufficient level – 14%	Sufficient level – 30%
	Good level – 6%	Good level – 8%
	Excellent level – 2%	Excellent level – 4%
Questions about choice of information source	Seek advice from specialists – 4% Use interpersonal information exchange – 80% Use the Internet – 12% Use special literature – 4%	Seek advice from specialists – 10% Use interpersonal exchange of information – 70% Use the Internet – 15% Use special literature – 5%
Questions about choice of ways to deliver equipment or medicines for the disabled	Act through customs – 4% Use personal connections – 96%	Have the knowledge to act through the customs authorities – 46% Trust exclusively personal connections – 54%
Questions about readiness of the legal self-education	No desire to independently engage in legal self-education – 42% Desire to engage, but no time – 56% Desire to engage – 2%	Low level of cognitive interest in legal information – 16% Good level of cognitive interest – 48% High level of cognitive interest – 36%

Table 1
Generalization of the survey results of group 1 of the study (%)

Group of questions	Results of the 1st survey (October 2018)	Results of the 2nd survey (September 2019) after two legal seminars and consultations
Questions about knowledge of provisions of the main state documents concerning social rehabilitation of people with disabilities	Sufficient level – 24% Good level – 68% High level – 8%	Sufficient level – 12% Good level – 75% High level – 13%
Questions about knowledge of the provisions of the main state documents regarding the actions of customs authorities in support of the social rehabilitation of people with disabilities	Sufficient level – 36% Good level – 70% High level – 4%	Sufficient level – 15% Good level – 78% High level – 7%

Questions about readiness to the legal self-education	Constantly improve competence in the field of legal literacy – 34% Read additional literature, consult with specialists – 66%	Independently expand knowledge in the field of legal support of social rehabilitation of people with disabilities – 75% Ready to hold legal seminars and round tables with colleagues – 25%
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Table 2
Generalization of the survey results of group 2 of the study (%)

The participants of the second group were not asked about the choice of the source of legal information; the employees of the guardianship and trusteeship bodies demonstrated good information competence in conversations. Also, representatives of the guardianship authorities do not often face problems with the delivery of equipment and drugs. These questions were not included in the survey for this reason.

Group of questions	Results of the 1st survey (October 2018)	Results of the 2nd survey (September 2019) after two legal seminars and consultations
Questions about knowledge of provisions of the main state documents concerning social rehabilitation of people with disabilities	Sufficient level – 64% Good level – 36%	Sufficient level – 52% Good level – 45% High level – 3%
Questions about knowledge of the provisions of the main state documents regarding the actions of customs authorities in support of the social rehabilitation of people with disabilities	Sufficient level – 88% Good level – 12%	Sufficient level – 76% Good level – 18% High level – 6%
Questions about readiness to the legal self-education	Constantly improve competence in the field of legal literacy – 12% Read additional literature, consult with specialists – 24% Not interested in legal issues – 64%	Independently expand knowledge in the field of legal support of social rehabilitation of people with disabilities – 25% Ready to hold legal seminars and round tables with colleagues – 15% Sometimes ready to attend seminars in this area – 60%
Have you faced problems with customs in your work?	Yes – 4% No, these issues are dealt with by the management – 96%	Are you ready to solve problems at customs, if they arise in the process? Yes – 4% This should be done by specialists – 74% I do not believe that my knowledge will help in this – 22%

Table 3
Generalization of the survey results of group 3 of the study (%)

Educators from social institutions noted the need to increase competencies in the field of legal literacy and understanding the professional significance of knowledge in conversations about the possibilities of interagency interaction, including customs authorities.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data obtained as a result of surveys allows concluding that in the field of legal literacy, in general, the results are quite satisfactory. This is especially true for employees of guardianship and trusteeship bodies. There are also small improvements in parents of children with disabilities.

We note the following conclusions among the most important ones:

1. The following changes are taking place in the field of legal information: firstly, traditional channels (newspapers, magazines, specialized literature, radio) are being replaced by new, more operational channels for obtaining legal information (Internet, social networks); secondly, many recipients become aware of the importance of increasing the level of information competence, i.e. motivation for improving knowledge and willingness to interact with representatives of the executive branch, including customs, is growing.

2. The interpersonal exchange of legal information is also a very effective channel (75% of all respondents).

3. No more than 15% of the respondents seek advice from customs specialists.

4. Only 10% of all three groups of respondents possess relevant knowledge of government documents regarding the actions of customs authorities to support the social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. Moreover, only 6% of them are convinced that this knowledge will help them achieve a court decision in their favor in the event of a conflict. This, from our point of view, indicates a rather low level of confidence in the judicial system.

5. 4% of the surveyed parents of children with disabilities experienced problems with customs actions to support the social rehabilitation of people with disabilities. This may be since the vast majority of the respondents prefer to solve problems with the transportation of equipment and drugs through friends and at personal request.

6. The seminars held and the supply of teaching materials were highly appreciated by 85% of the seminar participants.

7. Only 12% of the survey participants expressed their readiness for legal self-education, which indicates the need to support cognitive interest and the organization of a holistic system of legal education. The conducted seminars proved to be effective in the development of cognitive interest in this problem.

Studying the experience of social protection of persons with disabilities in the Russian Federation and foreign countries, in which the situation of people with disabilities allows them to maximize the opportunity to lead a full life and to have equal rights with other citizens, it can be concluded that the formation of an effective model of socialization of people with disabilities and the creation of an accessible favorable environment for them with the participation of state, customs, public and other organizations located in the Russian Federation, in this matter is at the initial stage of its development and requires more attention from government agencies.

An important direction in this field of social development is the formation of legal literacy of the population, especially employees of guardianship and trusteeship institutions, social institutions and members of families of persons with disabilities. Legal literacy is the foundation of an effective constructive dialogue between the population and the authorities, including customs.

Acknowledgments

The authors of the study thank Elena Alekseeva, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of Kaluga Region, and Elena Beregova, Director of the Lifestyle Charitable Foundation for the Promotion of Social and Cultural Initiatives and Guardianship, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, for their assistance in organizing the study and advisory assistance.

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