

# Urban Environment Safety for Children: The Analysis of Current Legislation

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**Abstract:** The analysis of modern trends in the development of state politics concerning the creation of safe urban environment for children and the analysis of “urban environment safety” elaboration parameters are carried out herein. The system-based analysis of the Russian Federation legislation concerning urban environment safety pointed out the investigation actuality for such current practices as rating application while assessing the quality of the Russian urban environment. Legally approved methods of urban environment quality evaluation with statistical indicators included are reviewed, urban environment status monitoring is carried out, and its digitalization level is assessed herein. The analysis of the current Russian legislation in terms of issues related to children safety ensuring in urban environment revealed insufficient elaboration of urban environment evaluation parameters with regard to its safety for children. Considerable attention in ratings is paid to the issues concerning public areas improvement. Key indicators of urban environment quality, not fully describing its safety evaluation parameters for children, were developed. An innovative project developed for implementation of global digitalization into municipal facilities requires significant resources-related costs. The recognition of the child as the top priority for the state sets the objectives related to the development of safe environment for next generations of the Russians to their proper development. The author proposed some additions to the current list of indicators by means of which urban environment safety level for children can be defined.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The amendments made to the constitution of the Russian Federation in 2020 specified the child as the top priority of the Russian state policy (GARANT.RU-1, 2020). Urban environment is around a child from birth till age of majority. While adults intent to create safe living environment for rising generations, riskogenics of urban living tends to increase year on year (Le-van, 2015). Some negative phenomena of a natural or antisocial character are becoming a new turn of a social historical development (such as ecological and natural disasters, vi-rus pandemics, terrorism and many others) (Vologdina et al., 2020). Cyberspace is becoming a platform for cybercrimes because of a high victimity degree of children being potential victims. Adult and conscious parents develop certain

strategies aimed at the development of safe behaviour of their own children (precrime situations designing, intimidation with possible improbable consequences, and etc.) (Newman, 2001). Safety of urban areas for children shall become a target criterion in the process of Russian urban environment evaluation (Rakitina and Filipova, 2017).

## 2 METHODS

The viewpoint of the state on providing safety for all citizens (including children) is specified in the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy) (Consultant Plus, 2015).

The Strategy contains some specific forms of children safety provision. They are mostly related to

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the health care and improvement of cultural and educational levels of young citizens at the age of up to 18 years, the development of child friendly justice (the development of the maternity and child welfare service; the development of palliative medicine, for children as well; the development of public medical rehabilitation and improvement of the health resort treatment system, and for children as well; children and young people upbringing in the spirit of citizenship (Consultant Plus, 2015).

Structural components for provision of state and public safety are as follows:

- the rise of efficiency indicators for law protection activity of the bodies and special services, as well as public oversight (supervisory) authorities;
- the improvement of the national crime prevention system primarily among under-age persons and other violations of the law (including monitoring and evaluation of law enforcement practice efficiency);
- the development and implementation of special measures aimed at decrease of public relations criminalization level.

In 2018 the Federation Council issued a resolution “On Measures of Russian Government Related to the Implementation of the Priority Project “Establishment of a Comfortable Urban Environment” in which competent state authorities and municipal authorities were recommended “to take required measures for ensurance of law and public safety in urban environment” (the Federation Council, 2018).

Each federal subject of the Russian Federation shall develop its own state program of public safety and security ensurance and counteracting to crime in the region (Khabarovsk Krai Government, 2020).

The evaluation of such programs implementation results for each year is included into annual summary reports with detailed description of indicators related to the growth of crimes amount and crime detection statistics. Crime monitoring in the regions is carried out by the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation with publishing of data as per the key indicators on web-portal of legal statistics. Each subject of the Russian Federation takes its own place in the rating as per the key indicators of recorded crimes. Year by year dynamics is specified (Web-portal of legal statistics, 2020).

There was a shift to childhood in the Russian society during the last decade. The state and society began to treat “childhood” as a significant part of the civil society requiring special attention. A new stage

in the state policy was marked by development of specific national programs beginning with “The National Strategy of Actions for the Benefit of Children for 2012-2017” and including some a certain content for strategic directions of activities to fulfill the Plan of Events performed within the framework of the Childhood Decade (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) (GARANT.RU-1, 2017) and a system of statistical indicators characterizing the process of their execution (The Russian Government-2, 2019).

The Plan of Events, to be performed within the period of 2018-2020 (The Russian Government, 2018), contains a section “Children Safety Ensurance”. Some directions are specified in the section:

- recommendations related to anti-terrorism security of tent type organizations providing recreation and recovery of children, as well as the places of mass events with children participation holding in a natural environment;
- development of children life safety culture (behaviour in case of emergency);
- improvement of children active tourism safety;
- accessibility and safety of emergency exits in educational establishments.

It is specified in the section devoted to the events aimed at cultural development of children that the state mass media must be engaged to facilitate the covering of events related to strengthening of a family institution, spiritual and moral traditions of family relationships, as well as a patriotic education of children and youth, moral values propaganda, healthy lifestyle popularization and a propaganda of kids and teenager's life safety culture. The above mentioned preventive function of such an education provides the growth of knowledge level in the sphere of fire safety and life safety in general.

The tenth section “Safe Information Space for Children” shall be marked among the main events within the framework of the Childhood Decade. According to the Plan the performance of these events shall be resulted in children media literacy improvement, increasing number of educating programs aimed at familiarization of parents and teachers with the newest hardware and software means for children protection against negative information, increasing level of children and their parents (representatives in law) awareness of risks and threats existing in the information and communication network (Tseveleva and Starinov, 2020).

Expected results on providing and protection of children rights and interests are described in the 13th

section of the Plan. They include the decrease of juvenile criminals proportion in the total amount of teenagers (14 to 17 years old), minimization of attempted suicides number and suicides committed among teenagers, humanization of a criminal prosecution practice for under-age persons (medium and small offense severity), resocialization of under-age persons who are to discharge from penal colonies (Vector “Childhood”, 2020).

Reformation of the approach to arrangement of urban environment which is safe for children moving and staying is performed on a stage by stage basis in Russia. Since 2017 a large scale work has been carried out in Russia concerning provision of accessible urban environment, as amended, including events for the period of their performance till 2025 (GARANT.RU-2, 2020). Within the framework of this program, objects and services accessibility maps for category of people with different disabilities are being created in municipal units. The fulfillment of control over respecting the interests and providing accessible and safe conditions for people with different disabilities in all social urban objects became the aim of municipal authorities. Urban amenities plans also assume the creation of attraction points for people, the establishment of accessible public areas for leisure of children and adults.

Speaking about the integral evaluation of Russian urban area safety (Hagmann, 2017) in general, paying attention to cities rating evaluation is necessary. The implementation of the monitoring program “The Quality Index of Urban Environment” and the project “Smart City” within the framework of the national project “Housing and urban environment” became innovative.

1 The Program “Quality Index of Urban Environment”. In November 2019 the Russian Ministry of Construction published the results of Russian cities indexing with regard to urban environment quality. Evaluation procedure was developed in accordance with the Russian President Decree enumerating the list of indicators to assess the efficiency of top officials activities, as well as the activities of Russian federal subjects executive authorities. One of the indicators is marked as “the proportion of cities with a comfortable urban environment” (The Russian Government-3, 2019).

Taking into account the large territory of Russia “The Quality Index of Urban Environment” applies a differentiated approach based on the size and the climatic conditions to different cities. The safety of urban environment is one of the six criteria for urban environment quality evaluation. There may be the

following indicators having impact on urban environment safety:

The proportion of apartment blocks considered as unfit ones (maybe used to characterize the safety of living conditions);

The proportion of solid and municipal wastes sent for treatment and disposal (this indicator increase proves the improvement of ecological situation; it characterizes ecological safety of the environment);

The proportion of pedestrian deaths occurred a result of road accidents (it characterizes the safety of urban road traffic network with regard to pedestrian movement);

The amount of traffic (it characterizes the number of constant atmospheric emission sources and subsequently has impact on ecological safety);

The level of urban environment accessibility for people with different disabilities (it characterizes the accessibility and safety of urban infrastructure objects, public transport, public areas and pedestrian crossings);

The proportion of lighted parts of streets, lanes and embankments (it characterizes the safety of movement during night time);

The safety of movement near health care, education, culture and sport institutions (it characterizes the safety of children movement to the objects of infrastructure);

The number of road accidents versus the number of population (it characterizes the level of threat to life and health of children because of various risks caused by the imperfection of its infrastructure);

The proportion of the urban population provided with potable water of a proper quality (the sanitation safety of children).

2 The Project “Smart City”. The initial items of the project were defined in 2015. The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs developed technical requirements to the law enforcement segment of the hardware and software complex “The Safety City”. In May 2017 the new methodological recommendations were sent to the regional departments of the ministry (RU-BEZH, 2015).

Interdepartmental Commission for issues related to the project implementation and development had been working till September 23, 2017 as a part of the Russian government. Systems for calling emergency response services through the universal telephone number “112” and the State Automated Information System “ERA-GLONASS” appeared alongside with the development of the target directions for providing the safety strategy (GARANT.RU-2, 2017).

The above mentioned safety systems were combined as a single platform “The Smart City” with

the support of the Russian president in 2018. The transformation of the pilot project was approved by the order of the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Utilities of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the Russian Ministry of Construction) No. 924/pr dd December 31, 2019 “On approval of the evaluation of the process and efficiency of urban facilities digital transformation in the Russian Federation (City IQ)” (The Russian Ministry of Construction, 2019). Under the ministry a working group specializing in the project implementation began its functioning; the group included the representatives of all interested federal and regional authorities, the representatives of housing and utilities branches, IT-technologies developers, a group of experts, the representatives of scientific society and centers of competence, as well as a UN Deputy Secretary General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN Habitat) Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif. Taganrog became the first full-scale “smart city” upon the results of the project startup in 2019 (RG.RU, 2020).

The “Smart City” standard includes items related to the implementation of the following systems:

- automatic photo and video recording of road traffic offences;
- management of urban parking areas;
- intelligent management of urban public transport;
- intelligent traffic control (“smart traffic lights”);
- safe and comfortable public transport waiting areas;
- roadway condition monitoring;
- intelligent systems of ecological safety, and etc. (The Russian Ministry of Construction, 2019).

### 3 RESULTS

The movement of Russia towards the global digitalization of all public and economic processes following the rapid development of IT-technologies led to the occurrence of the “smart city” idea. It is capable to control the communication systems of municipal units and to facilitate all-round control over events in urban areas. The idea shall be implemented in the direction from the West to the East of the country. Of course, the issues related to the all-round implementation of total control systems cause a lot of discussions in the society (Dé R., 2016). Implementing the global program of control over all life support systems, the municipal facilities face the

problem of public danger level increase, if cyber criminals are infiltrated into such a platform.

Financial expenses for development and implementation became another limitation for the project spreading. The current economical crisis, because of relieving the consequences of the anti-pandemic campaign 2019-2020 and a protracted nature of limitations escaping, created sufficient number of reasons to believe that the East of Russia will not be able to see the efficiency of such digital project implementation in the nearest future.

Therefore, nowadays urban environment safety shall be specified and included into the current program of the Russian urban environment safety quality evaluation “The Quality Index of Urban Environment” (Consultant Plus, 2019).

### 4 DISCUSSION

By 2024 the rise of the index average value of the urban environment quality all over the Russian Federation by one third (+30 %) is planned by the Government (The Russian Government-1, 2019). Therefore, the internal indicators of urban environment safety shall increase. It means that the number of cities having a comfortable environment shall increase by one third (up to 60 %).

As an example, in 2019 the 13th place was the result of work related to the development of a comfortable urban environment (out of 84 participating federal subject) according to the data provided by the press service of the governor and Khabarovsk Krai government. Moscow region has still the leading position (National projects of Khabarovsk Krai, 2020). Meanwhile, the key indicators demonstrating efforts related to the development of a comfortable urban environment were concentrated on the issues of public areas improvement but without taking in-to consideration such an important indicator of comfortability as the urban areas safety (Lebedeva, 2020).

The place in a rating of the recorded indicators of crimes committed in Khabarovsk Krai for the period of 2019 can be observed here. During a decade the rating place of Khabarovsk Krai among all Russian regions has not been low than the 28th (with regard to the total number of the recorded crimes at low population density) (Web-portal of legal statistics, 2020). As the result, the environmental quality increases according to the index but without taking into account the criminogenic level of the region.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The Russian legislation has got a significant resource in the form of developed state programs aimed at the society development with children as the top priority. The activities developed in the federal plans are implemented directly in the federal subjects. Requirements to ensuring infrastructure objects accessibility for people with disabilities were developed long ago, as well as the indicators of the urban environment quality. However up to now no specific indicators have been defined by means of which the statistic indicators of the urban environment safety for children could be taken into account. But children are the main users of urban areas (in case of leisure together with adults or by their own mobility potential). The criminogenic level of environment in cities shall be included as a parameter alongside with some other ones.

The analysis of the legislation in the field of providing urban environment safety for children justified that Appendix No. 1 of the Russian Federation Government Decree No. 510-r dd March 23rd, 2019 shall be amended. The list of indicators for urban environment quantity index calculation shall be supplemented as follows: “37 Number of crimes committed towards under-age persons and ones committed with their participation per year. The calculation formula is the ratio between the number of crimes committed toward under-age persons and the number of population (between 0-18 years old) per year. According to the data provided by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The indicator characterizes the degree of urban environment safety for children”. “38 The implementation degree of an automatic photo-video recording system into the perimeters of public places and building surrounding areas. The calculation formula is the increase of perimeters number equipped with automatic photo-video recording systems in a reporting year versus the number of perimeters equipped in the previous year”.

The existing indicators related to the efficiency in holding activities aiming at safety provisions are specified in the statistical annual reports of internal affairs bodies and regional security departments responsible for fulfillment of public safety programs (except for road traffic and transport safety). At the same time the decrease in the number of road accidents with participation of under-age persons is interrelated with roadways and pedestrian ways quantity improvement and taking additional measures for regulating pedestrian movement around a city (The Russian Government, 2018).

The important parameter having impact on public areas safety is an outdoor surveillance providing a recording of situation taking place inside parks, public gardens and embankments. That is why the provision of public areas with monitoring of their current situation will not only help to detect street crimes but can also be used as a preventive mean against public disturbers.

Proposed parameters will help to specificize urban environment quality indicators shifting the emphasis to the safety of urban areas for children. Chasing the leading positions in the rating of urban environment quality, the efforts of municipal and state authority representatives will focus on the target indicator of urban environment quality that is its safety for children.

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