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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE REGIONS: THE MAIN DIRECTIONS AND PROBLEMS

Аннотация: в статье рассматриваются социокультурные проблемы в международных связях регионов России. Основой анализа выступили следующие критерии: географическое положение и экономическое развитие региона.

Abstract: this article deals with socio-cultural problems in international relations of Russia's regions. The basis of the analysis is made by the following criteria: geographical location and economic development of the region.

Ключевые слова: экономика, регион, география, федеральный округ, международные связи, социокультурная проблема.

Keywords: economics, region, geography, federal district, international relations, socio-cultural issues.

The urgency of the problem is due to the fact that the regions of the Russian Federation, possessing economic and cultural potential, are faced with the problem of building harmonious international relations, the presence of which determines the further development of the region. One such problem is a socio-cultural one. Today there is no country that would have paid attention to building strong social and cultural ties with the peoples of other states. The world community as a system is distinguished by close interrelations and interdependence of all its elements and subsystems. A complex system of social ties and relations permeates all spheres of society, which defined human nature as social beings. Culture, as a process of spiritual, creative and intellectual interaction, involves a process of mutual enrichment with new ideas in the context of cultural exchange. Thus, it performs an important communicative function, bringing

together different social, ethnic, religious group of people. However, in relations between different states, as well as in the international relations of regions, social and cultural problems may be experienced in terms of different levels of economic development, unemployment, cultural potential of regions.

The region represents a single geographical area (region), characterized by a relative social stability (social and political), and of ethnic, cultural structures and so on.

In the opinion of other researchers, the problem of the definition of «region» in contemporary political science is becoming increasingly important.

The region is defined as a self-sufficient social body being in unity with the environment, with physical-geographical, ethnic, historical, political-administrative and legal properties. The concept of «region» is widely used in the 1990s, reflecting the sharp increase in the role of the regional factor in the life of Russia [1].

In this article, eight federal districts of the Russian Federation have been selected in order to analyse socio-economic problems in Russia's international relations. (see table 1).

Table 1

Federal district of the Russian Federation [2]

№	The name of the district	Area (km ²)
1	Central Federal district	650 205
2	The North-Western Federal district	1 686 972
3	Southern Federal district	447 821
4	The North Caucasian Federal district	170 439
5	Volga Federal district	1 036 975
6	Urals Federal district	1 818 497
7	Siberian Federal district	5 144 953
8	The far Eastern Federal district	6 169 329

Federal districts are not subjects or other constitutional parts of the administrative-territorial division of the Russian Federation. They were created by analogy with mil-

itary districts and economic areas, but did not coincide with their quantity and composition. Figure 1 presents a map of the Federal districts of the Russian Federation, showing the geographical location of the Federal districts, different area of their territory.



Figure 1. Map of the Federal districts of the Russian Federation [3]

The largest district in number of subjects and population is the Central district, the size of the territory – far Eastern district. All counties have land borders with other states. The Southern, North Western and Far Eastern districts are composed of entities that do not have land borders with other stakeholders and with the main territory of Russia. The Central, Volga and North Caucasus Federal districts do not have access to the world ocean (although the second and third go to «international» sea).

Each Federal district has a possibility of contact with foreign states, however, this process is accompanied by a number of sociocultural issues, expressed in different levels of economic development, unemployment, various cultural potential of the regions. For data analysis problems in international relations of the regions of Russia Federal district will be divided by geographical location; level of economic development.

The North-Western Federal district – the only one of the Federal districts of the Russian Federation, which directly borders with the countries of the European Union: Norway, Finland, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus. The Central Federal district is also close to the European States. The Volga Federal district is connected by a

dense network of transport routes with Kazakhstan. The Ural Federal district has a favorable trading location between Europe and Asia, the Siberian Federal district, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, southern Federal district, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The Far Eastern Federal district is close to China and Japan. Consequently, a more advantageous position for implementation of the international linkages are with the North-West, and Central Federal districts. The rest of the Federal districts are removed from Europe, and their contacts are possible only with some non-European States.

In any case, the possibility of mutual cultural exchange and constant communication is more diverse and multiple in the North-Western and Central districts in an international context.

The level of economic development of the Federal districts of the Russian Federation is reflected in table 2.

Table 2

*The level of economic development of the Federal districts
of the Russian Federation [4]*

№	The name of the district	GRP, billion RUB. (2016)
1	Central Federal district	20 821
2	Volga Federal district	9171
3	Urals Federal district	8002
4	Siberian Federal district	6107
5	The North-Western Federal district	5915
6	Southern Federal district	4076
7	The far Eastern Federal district	3223
8	The North Caucasian Federal district	1587

The most economically stable region is the Central Federal district, the second group is formed of the Volga, Ural and Siberian Federal district, third North-Western, southern, far Eastern Federal district. In last place is North Caucasian Federal district. The lowest level of unemployment was in the Central Federal district, the highest – in the North Caucasian Federal district.

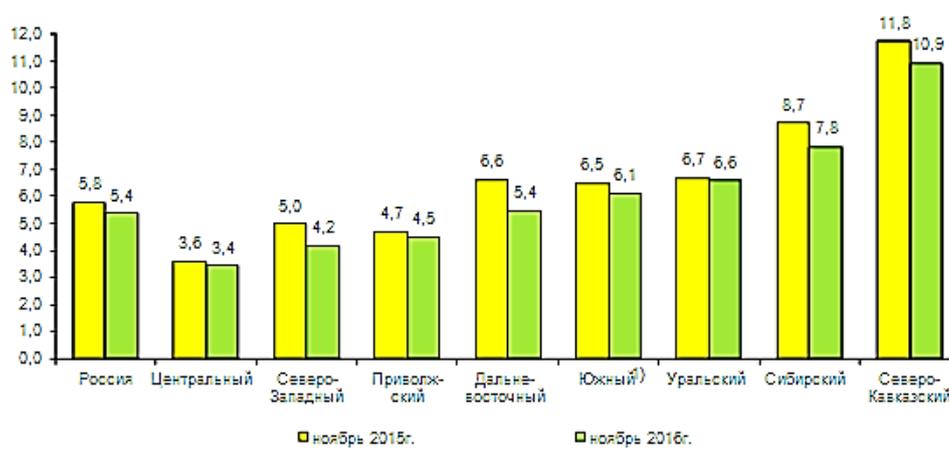


Chart 1. The unemployment rate in Russia (%) [5]

In order to ensure statistical comparability, the data for 2015. restated information for the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol

The level of economic development of Federal districts, unemployment rate and population are directly linked to the nature of the international relations of Russia. The region with strong economic resources has the ability to develop and implement a program for the development of cultural programs. So, the «State program of the «Development of culture and tourism» of the Russian Federation for 2013–2020» includes the following information: the level of attendance to exhibitions, museums, concerts, etc., which are highest in the Northwestern and Central Federal districts. The material well-being of residents of regions such as the Central, Volga, Urals, Siberian and northwestern Federal districts makes travel to Europe, Asia, and so on much more accessible.

Residents of other Federal districts are however more limited in terms of how far they can travel due to lower income levels.

In conclusion, this study allows us to conclude that the international cooperation Russia's economic districts has a number of important problems, which are explained by different geographical and economic situations. To resolve these difficulties, an importance must be placed on improving state support for the Federal Districts, which would need to have both economic and informational components.

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