THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE YOUTH ELECTION COMMISSION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

AUTHORSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this research work is justified by the need to improve the legal culture of the youth to ensure their participation in Russia’s most important election processes that have an impact on the country’s present and future. According to the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) statistics (Table 1), the representatives of the youth took an active part in voting at the presidential elections in March 2018, which indicates an increased interest of young people in the election process (Table 2).

Table 1. Proportion of age groups by population and among voters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>% of the population of Russia</th>
<th>% of the number of voting participants*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-59</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and older</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The number of voters, as well as gender and age, were recorded during the exit poll by a counter-interviewer.

Source: Search data.

Table 2. Attendance level (% in groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>According to the exit poll of VTsIOM*</th>
<th>Central Election Commission**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All population</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-59</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and older</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Calculation of the exit poll data. Data on the total number of voters (Central Election Commission of Russia), data on voter turnout, as well as data on the size of age groups (data from interviewer-counters, who recorded age “by eye”) were used;

**The expert recalculation based on the distribution of groups according to VTsIOM exit poll data. The proportions of groups are multiplied by the coefficient of difference with official data.

Source: https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=9002

The problem of involving the youth in the election process remains relevant. A young citizen reaches the age of majority and can already take part in voting but does not always aspire to it because parents in most cases do not explain the necessity of participation in election legal relations. Sometimes candidates themselves are not interested in attracting young people, because they count on an older audience, which ticks the ballots systematically and with great responsibility. The problem lies in the lack of young people’s trust in the election system as a whole, in the absence of interesting campaigns for young people, as well as in the misconception that “one vote does not solve anything”. Thus, some young voters are unwilling to waste their time and vote (LAVRENTIEVA, AL ALI & YASTREBOVA, 2019).

Some young people do not attend the elections due to inconvenient time and place of voting, as well as the impossibility to vote due to being away from their place of residence and impossibility to get an absentee certificate, a document entitled a voter to vote at any polling station instead of one to which a voter is assigned by the place of permanent or temporary registration. To get an absentee certificate, a citizen must come to the precinct election commission at least one day before the voting. A citizen should take their passport with them and write an application for an absentee certificate specifying the reason for the impossibility to vote at their polling station. After receiving an absentee certificate, a citizen may vote...
anywhere in the Russian Federation, wherever they are at the time of the elections. Due to lack of time, a citizen may not be able to issue an absentee certificate in time.

The fact that sometimes a citizen who has changed their place of residence is not on the voter lists due to the formation of the lists for Moscow Multifunctional Centers (MFC) also hinders the citizen’s participation in the elections. These problems can be completely offset by the introduction of universal electronic voting, for example, through the portal “State Services”. However, due to the vulnerability of this system in the case of a hacker attack, a full and non-alternative transition to electronic voting systems via the Internet is not quite appropriate (SITDIKOVA & STARODUMOVA, 2019).

The decreased level of electoral activity of young voters requires new approaches in working with the youth, as it is impossible to make young people go to the elections, but it is necessary to make them understand that their choice is important both for them and for the country as a whole. Raising the legal election culture of young people in modern Russia is also one of the main objectives of youth policy in the Russian Federation. In this connection, since 2008, based on Federal Act № 67 of June 12, 2002 "On main guarantees of election rights and the right to participate in referendums for citizens of the Russian Federation", the Youth Election Concept, regulations on youth election commissions (YEC), and other regulatory acts, YEC have begun to appear in Russia. The necessity of YEC is caused by the fact that other organizations do not want to engage in improving the legal culture of the young electorate, which is also the reason why young people are unwilling to attend the elections. Due to competent youth policy and the activities of YEC, it seems quite possible to solve this problem.


METHODS
The methodological basis of the research is a complex of scientific methods of cognition, such as system, statistical, historical, formal-legal, comparative-legal, logical, dialectical, metaphysical, and other research methods. We studied materials and key sources of various scientific literature on the proposed topic, analyzed legal acts of the Russian Federation, including the main provisions of the Federal Law of 12.06.2002 № 67-FL (amended 29.05.2019) "On basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in the referendum of the citizens of the Russian Federation", main postulates of the Youth Electoral Concept approved by the Resolution of the Central Election Commission (CEC) of the Russian Federation of March 12, 2014, № 221/1429-6, and studied the regulations on the formation of YEC in some subjects of the Russian Federation. This allowed for a more detailed study of the legal status of YEC, their main goals, objectives, and activities, as well as the procedure for their formation and structure.

RESULTS
YEC are becoming a worthy staff reserve for members of the precinct and territorial election commissions and election commissions of the subjects of the Russian Federation, which will allow forming a competent, highly qualified young staff of election commissions of all levels in the future. To monitor the activities of YEC, it is necessary to introduce a field in which it will be indicated what agitation work has or has not been carried out with the given citizen in the YEC and in what way.

To improve the activity of the YEC, it is necessary to introduce the institution of mentoring and the corps of observers at the legislative level, as well as to adopt a federal law on the activity of YEC, which allows putting forward specific requirements for the activity of YEC, monitoring their implementation by the CEC, as well as bringing the existing provisions of YEC in the regions to a unified form.
Today, elections are the most topical issue, because quite recently, on September 8, 2019, by-elections to the State Duma, elections of heads of 19 subjects of the Russian Federation, and elections of deputies in 13 subjects of the Russian Federation, including the Moscow City Duma, were held. On March 18, 2018, elections of the President of the Russian Federation were held, and on September 09, 2018, elections of the Mayor of Moscow were also organized. Elections are prepared and conducted by election commissions at various levels. The legal status of election commissions is determined, first of all, by the Federal Law of 12.06.2002 N 67-FL (ed. from 29.05.2019) “On basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in the referendum of citizens of the Russian Federation” (hereinafter referred to as the “Law on Suffrage”). According to this law, election commissions should be understood as a collegial body formed in accordance with the procedure and terms established by law, which organizes and ensures the preparation and conduct of elections.

The main goals of election commissions are to realize and protect the electoral rights of Russian citizens and their right to participate in the referendum, as well as to prepare and conduct elections and referendums in Russia. Election commissions ensure that voters are informed about the timing and procedure for carrying out election activities, registered candidates, and the progress of the election campaign and its results.

According to A.A. Makartsev, the actual establishment of a system of permanent election commissions in the Russian Federation brings up to date, in the context of the interaction between the election commissions, the problem of implementing the function of controlling a superior body over a subordinate body and further development of other management functions: planning, direct management, HR work, etc. Relations between higher and lower election commissions can only develop based on forms and methods of public administration (MAKARTSEV, 2014). In T.Yu. Demidova’s opinion, the YEC can be divided into three groups:

1. Precinct election commissions formed in accordance with the current election legislation, where all members (or most of them) are between 14 and 35 years old;

2. YEC established for certain youth projects, which prepare and conduct elections to youth self-government bodies;

3. Youth “buffer commissions " created at the election commissions of the subjects of the Russian Federation, the territorial election commissions, and the election commissions of municipal entities (DEMIDOVA, 2017).

The regulations on the procedure for forming the YEC of a subject of the Russian Federation set out the goals, objectives, procedure and conditions for forming the staff reserve of YEC, and the powers and procedure for organizing the activities of YEC. Typical regulations on the activities of YEC in the subjects are created based on the Youth Electoral Concept in a given region, while they are all different and there is no unified approved form. According to the Regulation, YEC are usually established for two years. This term is established in the regulations of most YEC of the regions (Transbaikal krai, Magadan oblast, Stavropol krai, Republic of Dagestan, Yaroslavl oblast, Tver oblast, Ryazan oblast, Orel oblast, Lipetsk oblast, Ivanovo oblast, Voronezh oblast, Belgorod oblast, Kaluga oblast, Moscow oblast, Saratov oblast, Perm krai, Orenburg oblast, Nizhny Novgorod oblast, Chuvash republic, Republic of Udmurtia, Republic of Mordovia, Republic of Mari El, Arkhangelsk oblast, Tomsk oblast, Irkutsk oblast, Krasnoyarsk krai, Novgorod oblast, Sverdlovsk oblast, Republic of Kalmykia, Chelyabinsk oblast, Republic of Karelia, Pskov oblast).

In Tula oblast, the term of office of YEC is one year. In Tambov oblast, Kursk oblast, Ulyanovsk oblast, Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, Volgoda oblast, Altai krai, Novosibirsk district, Volgograd oblast, the term of office of the YEC is three years. In Penza oblast, Samara oblast, and Leningrad oblast the term of office of YEC is only five years. In some provisions on YEC, the term of office is less than one year or it is not established at all. According to the Youth Electoral Concept, as a rule, members of YEC can be citizens of the Russian Federation aged 14 to 35 years. The regional regulations on the Youth Electoral Commission specify that they are not just citizens of the Russian Federation, but those who live, study, or work in the territory...
of the subject of the Russian Federation in which the YEC is formed and have no criminal record.

The Youth Electoral Concept approves the number of members of YEC from 7 to 16 people. According to the conducted statistical analysis, the majority of YEC was formed of 14 people (Krasnoyarsk krai, Stavropol krai, Altai krai, Pskov oblast, Yaroslavl oblast, Orenburg oblast, Ulyanovsk oblast, Tula oblast, Oryol oblast, Saratov oblast, Nizhny Novgorod oblast, Samara oblast, Kursk oblast, Volgograd oblast, Belgorod oblast, Republic of Udmurtia, Moscow oblast, Vologda oblast, Moscow, Sverdlovsk oblast, Sevastopol). The second-largest number of people is 12 (Kaluga oblast, Chuvash Republic, Novosibirsk oblast, Novgorod oblast, Arkhangelsk oblast). The YEC in the Transbaikal krai and Magadanskaya oblast was formed with 16 people. The YEC of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, the Republic of Dagestan, Tambov oblast, and Irkutsk oblast were formed with 15 members. The YEC of the Republic of Mordovia, the Republic of Mari El, and the Republic of Karelia were formed with 10 members. The YEC of Tver oblast and the Republic of Kalmykia were established with 9 members. The YEC in Penza oblast and Tomsk oblast were formed with 8 persons, and the minimum 7 persons formed the YEC of Perm krai.

There are YEC the number of whose members is undefined; it is higher or lower than the set one. Thus, according to the Regulation on YEC of Voronezh oblast approved by the decision of the Election Commission of Voronezh oblast from 29.11.2018 № 95/639-6, the number of members of the YEC is not specified and is determined by the Election Commission of Voronezh oblast on the proposal of the YEC. As A.P. Vorobiev notes, students, being a highly educated and highly cultural part of society, act as an innovative reserve and potential elite of society as a whole, which concentrates in its views and ideas the potential of future political, cultural, and economic transformations in society (VOROBIEV, 2011).

The objectives of the YEC personnel reserve are: to study the youth personnel potential, to increase the efficiency of using the professional and creative potential of young people, to create an information database on promising youth personnel, as well as to attract employers’ attention to the members of the youth reserve. The formation of YEC members is based on the principles of legality, transparency, and information openness. According to A.P. Vorobiev’s research, among the forms of activity of state and non-state (public) organizations on increasing the electoral activity of students, the most effective are recognized: festivals, communication in Internet forums, talk shows, while the traditional forms of increasing the electoral activity, such as lectures, seminars, training courses, give way to more modern technologies, designed for mass and game type (VOROBIEV, 2011).

According to the sociological survey of S.A. Baburkin and A.V. Gavrilo, the most frequently mentioned source of information for the election commissions was information videos on television, radio, and in buses (BABURKIN & GAVRILOV, 2012). Regional YEC carry out their activities in various ways:

1. They organize Olympiads, contests of essays, abstracts, posters, and video recordings on the theme of elections among schoolchildren, students, and cadets.

Thus, in May 2019, the Mordovian YEC, based at the Saransk Cooperative Institute, held an Olympiad among students of higher education institutions of the Republic of Mordovia on the basics of electoral law and the electoral process.

2. They hold active events at educational institutions on Young Voter’s Day, which is established in the Russian Federation every third Sunday of February.

For example, on September 8, 2019, as part of the celebration of the Young Voter’s Day, the territorial election commission of Kamzyak district of Astrakhan oblast held “The Whole Family for Elections!” and “Public Recognition” events. In all secondary schools of Kamzyak district, on a single voting day, schoolchildren and their parents took part in choosing the best teacher for their school, which was called “Public Recognition”. At the same time, a photo contest “The Whole Family for the Elections!” was launched, where the district residents could depict their family marches on the main political event in the region.
3. They organize open classes, lectures, exhibitions, quizzes, business games, training courses, and round tables dedicated to the electoral law both on the territory of YEC and in educational institutions.

Thus, on October 21, 2019, the work of the "School of Parliamentarism" — an educational project created to expand the practice of interaction between government agencies, local governments, and socio-political organizations with young people — was completed in Kovylkino region, which was attended by the Chairman of the YEC of the Republic of Mordovia Saifullova Alsu. The School of Parliamentarism was attended by more than 100 high school students, for whom meetings were organized with the heads of public organizations, politicians, and scientists of the Republic of Mordovia. At the end of the educational program, 20 best participants were be selected, who visited the State Assembly of the Republic of Mordovia.

4. They conduct excursions to the local election commissions to get acquainted with their activities.

For example, on October 24, 2019, the Russian CEC held an introductory tour for the YEC of the Oryol oblast. CEC member Yevgenia Orlova met with her colleagues. The guests told about the work of their commission, shared their impressions about the participation of YEC members in a single voting day on September 8, 2019. Yevgenia Orlova informed the excursionists about the work of the CEC of Russia with the appeals and complaints of citizens in the past election campaign, as well as spoke about the activities to improve the electoral law and electoral process in the past elections.

5. They organize forums and meetings.

The YEC of the Republic of Mordovia with the support of the CEC of the Republic of Mordovia held a meeting with participants of the Youth Interregional Educational Forum "Inerka — 2019" on July 13, 2019. More than 700 young people from Saransk and municipal districts gathered in a tent camp in the Bolshebereznikovsky district of the Republic to participate in lectures and workshops, to work productively in groups and exchange experiences, and to ask guests of federal and regional levels questions.

6. They actively publicize their activities in the media: they broadcast their meetings or organized events on social networks, publish news about the events, which is constantly carried out by the majority of YEC on its own sites and social networks, as well as hold other events specified in the Regulations on YEC.

It should be noted that the Union of YEC of the Russian Federation plays an active role in implementing youth projects and programs in the area of electoral law and assisting in the establishment and development of YEC in the Russian Federation. Today, the Union of YEC of Russia is engaged in the organization of events to improve the legal and electoral culture, assists in the organization of elections to youth consultative bodies, participates in conferences, round tables, and other events aimed at increasing the electoral activity of young people, conducted by other bodies and organizations, summarizes the experience of YEC, distributes and applies the most successful initiatives, participates in the implementation of activities aimed at the development of youth self-government, participates in the implementation of measures related to the preparation and holding of elections and referendums in the territory of the subject of the Russian Federation, and identifies young people with organizational skills and leadership qualities (KUCHENIN, NIKODIMOV, LOSHKAREV & TCHINARYAN, 2020).

According to E.V. Mahora, the education of young voters should be started at school, as from the age of 18 a young voter has the right to vote in elections. At the same time, when voting in the elections, a young voter should make a conscious, independent choice based on knowledge of law and electoral campaign (MAHORA, 2018). However, cadets of military schools should be included in YEC as well. Thus, as a result of the sociological survey on the electoral consciousness of cadets and students, conducted by E.B. Marin, it was revealed that
Cadets show great interest in participating in the electoral process. It is reasonable, as the persons entering different types of public service already have a certain understanding of the state activity of the goals and tasks set for them by the state (Marin, 2017).

As noted by N.A. Bereza and E.A. Knyazkova, local communities with clearly defined goals and strong mentoring support, mainly for the youth community, are the most effective and durable. Participating in various projects and winning grants, the youth of local communities are socially growing and developing, getting a proper start in life, as well as organizational and communicative experience to jointly solve various problems (Bereza & Knyazkova, 2018).

The mission of mentoring in the work of YEC will be the training of young observers, providing full control over the voting and counting of election results, as well as the formation of personnel reserve in the electoral system of different levels of the election commission, which will contribute to the formation of young people’s confidence that their participation in the electoral process can influence the situation in their region. This should be the real essence of mentoring in the implementation of this direction.

On the day of the elections to the Moscow City Duma, September 8, 2019, observers provided full control over the voting and counting of election results at each polling station in the capital. The electronic voting that took place on the same day, which was mentioned earlier, was also monitored by observers. It should be noted that in the YEC of Sverdlovsk oblast, observers are prepared for each election by the efforts of young people and active work is done at the Public Observation Center.

We also propose the creation of a separate federal law that will regulate the activities of YEC and based on which the model regulation on YEC will be prepared. As the analysis has shown, the YEC provisions in the regions differ in their content and structure, and sometimes even at all contradict the Youth Electoral Concept, which at the moment is the only source of forming the YEC provisions, so that the YEC provisions are uniform and do not differ from each other, and we need a single law adopted at the federal level.

This federal law can be formed based on already existing YEC provisions in the subjects, as they meet the existing legislation on the election process. This law can also prescribe the above-proposed methods of control over the activities of the YEC, introduce the institution of mentoring, the powers of mentors, indicate the powers of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the CEC on the activities of the YEC, indicate that the Civic Chamber may perform the functions of oversight of the YEC, and the CEC will perform the control functions over the YEC as a whole.

According to the Election Commission of the Kurgan oblast, published on the website www.kurganoblduma.ru 17.05.2017, the Youth Parliament of the State Duma has developed and submitted a draft federal law “On general principles of youth self-government organization in the Russian Federation”. In particular, Paragraph 3 of Article 1.4 of the draft federal law contains the definition of the YEC, according to which, YEC is a collegial body of youth self-government, organizing and ensuring the preparation and conduct of youth elections and youth referendums.

**Conclusion**

Thus, we conclude that the YEC created under the election commissions of the subjects of the Russian Federation are one of the main sources of personnel reserve for the country’s electoral system. The necessity of establishing and the actual functioning of YEC is dictated by the fact that constant changes in electoral legislation create the need to clarify the rules of law among young people, while a decrease in their level of electoral activity requires new approaches to work with the youth. Carrying out their activities through the YEC, young people become a worthy personnel reserve of members of the precinct and territorial election commissions and election commissions of the subjects of the Russian Federation, which will allow forming a competent, highly qualified young staff of election commissions of all levels in the future.

It is necessary to trace the work of the YEC by adding one field that indicates the agitation work was or was not carried out with the given citizen in the YEC and in what way. If a person ticks this box, it can be noted that the activities of the YEC are important in this region and in the
future, this may lead to the YEC becoming a permanent body and its activities will be funded from the state budget, as it will increase the level of citizens’ turnout at elections. It is also possible to improve the activities of the YEC by introducing the institution of mentoring and the corps of observers at the legislative level, as well as by adopting a federal law on the YEC, which allows putting forward specific requirements for the activities of the YEC, monitoring their implementation by the CEC, and bringing the existing provisions of the YEC in the regions to a unified form.

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The legal status of the youth election commission in the Russian Federation

O estatuto jurídico da comissão eleitoral juvenil na Federação Russa

El estatus legal de la comisión electoral juvenil en la Federación de Rusia

Resumo
O artigo descreve a União das Comissões Eleitorais da Juventude da Federação Russa e dá recomendações sobre como melhorar o trabalho da comissão eleitoral da juventude para melhorar a cultura jurídica dos jovens futuros eleitores e a formação do interesse consciente dos jovens cidadãos da Rússia pelo sufrágio e pelo processo eleitoral. Conclui-se que, para controlar o trabalho da comissão eleitoral juvenil, é necessário inserir o campo da ficha de inscrição do participante do processo eleitoral, na qual ficará indicado que o trabalho de agitação foi ou não realizado com o cidadão determinado e de que forma. Isto permitirá propor requisitos específicos para as atividades das comissões eleitorais juvenis, monitorizando a sua implementação pela Comissão Eleitoral Central, bem como unificar as disposições existentes das comissões eleitorais juvenis nas regiões.


Abstract
The article describes the Union of Youth Election Commissions of the Russian Federation and gives recommendations on improving the work of the youth election commission to improve the legal culture of the young future voters and the formation of conscious interest of young citizens of Russia to suffrage and the election process. The conclusion is made that to control the work of the youth election commission, it is necessary to enter the field in the registration form of the participant of the election process, in which it will be indicated that the agitation work was or was not carried out with the given citizen and in what way. This will allow putting forward specific requirements for the activities of youth election commissions, monitoring their implementation by the Central Election Commission, as well as bringing the existing provisions of youth election commissions in the regions to a unified form.

Keywords: Youth election commission. Election commission. Young voter. Electoral education.

Resumen
El artículo describe la Unión de Comisiones Electorales Juveniles de la Federación de Rusia y ofrece recomendaciones sobre cómo mejorar el trabajo de la comisión electoral juvenil para mejorar la cultura legal de los futuros votantes jóvenes y la formación de un interés consciente de los ciudadanos jóvenes de Rusia por el sufragio y la proceso electoral. Se concluye que para controlar el trabajo de la comisión electoral juvenil, es necesario ingresar al campo en el formulario de registro del participante del proceso electoral, en el cual se indicará que el trabajo de agitación se realizó o no. con el ciudadano dado y de qué manera. Esto permitirá presentar requisitos específicos para las actividades de las comisiones electorales juveniles, monitorear su implementación por parte de la Comisión Electoral Central, así como llevar las disposiciones existentes de las comisiones electorales juveniles en las regiones a una forma unificada.