



INTERNATIONAL LEGAL GUARANTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND PROBLEMS IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON MINORITY EDUCATION

**Intervention on the theme ‘In the Spirit of Tolerance: Ethno-cultural Education’
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Russia, having taken the path of democratic reforms has led to the explosion of national self-consciousness among the various ethnic communities residing in the country. This brought to the forefront the social need of individuals to explore and learn more about the national origins of their own group and to open up the riches of national traditions and language.

At the same time, the disintegration of the united geopolitical space, the abolishing of the ideological doctrines, which shaped national policy, tense socio-economic situation caused by the transition to the market economy - everything sharply revealed the problems of inter-ethnic relations and gave birth to the alarming tendency of national intolerance and alienation.

Moreover, one should remember that Moscow throughout the ages has been evolving as the multiethnic city. Many ethnic communities made important contributions into the city's science, culture, and socio-economic development. And then, ethnic education has long tradition in our city and country. As far back as in the 17-18th centuries children of the craftsmen from Europe attended Lithuanian, German, Polish schools. Under the Soviet period in the 20s, Moscow boasted of about 70 private ethnic schools. Ethnic theatres, associations and clubs were opened. Yet, in 1938 in accordance with the USSR Council of Peoples Commissars decision the activities of ethno-cultural associations were banned and within the following 4 years all the ethnic schools were closed.

Hence, the steps taken by the Moscow City Department of Education supported by the Moscow Government to establish educational institutions in which children of various nations could be introduced to their native culture and learn their own language, actually contributed to the rebirth of one of the most vivid cultural and historic traditions of the city. Fifteen years ago in multiethnic Moscow a special ethno-cultural subsystem of education began to evolve. In 1997 the educational institutions with ethno-cultural component of education were accorded their own status - the Government of Moscow approved regulations of the school and pre-school institution of this type. The establishment of educational institutions with ethno-cultural component is the social order of the Moscow residents. Starting from 1988 the Department of Education has not ignored even a single request from the ethno-cultural associations and communities to launch ethno-cultural education of different forms and kinds. The public educational institution with ethno-cultural (national) component

of education was legalized by the Moscow City Law "On General Education".

It is significant, that in the process of transition to the cultural diversity of the Moscow education system, the conditions are built up for self-identification, teaching national and ethnic issues and offering opportunity to teach some disciplines in national languages.

Presently in Moscow the status of an institution with ethno-cultural (national) component of education is accorded to 46 educational institutions, among them: 38 general education schools, 5 pre-school institutions, 5 private educational institutions and 2 out-of-school facilities. Besides, there are 12 schools with ethno-cultural groups offering elective ethno-cultural courses; 68 educational institutions have ethno-cultural educational centers as their structural elements, four institutions of vocational training. Altogether, in 130 educational institutions various ethno-cultural courses are offered - teaching is organized of language, culture, history and traditions of a number of nations and nationalities of the Russian Federation, CIS, Baltic states, and other foreign countries, namely Azerbaijani, Abkhazian, Armenian, Belorussian, Buryat, Georgian, Greek, Daghestani, Jewish, Kazakh, Korean, Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Tartar, Turkish, Chuvash, and Japanese.

Russian ethno-cultural education is winning more and more prominence (it is implemented in 23 educational institutions: in 19 of them the component is included in the curriculum, in 4 - in the form of out-of-school activities) not only as a response to the development of national education of other ethnic groups, but also as an indication of the new stage of the Russian nation's internal development. Very often the question is asked: "Why are we talking about the ethno-cultural education but not of the national education?" When establishing educational institutions with ethno-cultural component the Department of Education proceeded from the belief that the children will study, live and work in the multiethnic city, but not in the place of compact habitation of one or another ethnic group. Therefore, when giving the students an opportunity to learn native language and culture, it was also essential to teach them the state language - Russian, in other words, the language of inter-ethnic communication. That is why, the whole of the education and upbringing process in the institutions with ethno-cultural component of education is conducted in Russian, in accordance with the Russian Federation curricula and unified standards for all Moscow students, and only a quarter of school hours is devoted to the study of native (national) language and some other disciplines of the ethno-cultural component.

The curricula of the educational institutions with ethno-cultural component of education are aimed at introducing students to the ethnic cultural, spiritual, moral, ethical values and contain a vividly expressed humanitarian trend of education. But for all that, the tendency towards multiethnic education is becoming more and more pronounced. The teachers of the general education institutions with ethno-cultural component are involved in the search mode of work building up and developing ethno-cultural orientation of teaching and upbringing.

Special place in the ethno-cultural education content is devoted to Russian language as the language of inter-ethnic communication which is the medium of teaching in all general education institutions with ethno-cultural component of education. It is important that general education institutions with ethno-cultural component of education are becoming real cultural centers for the people of one or another nationality and first of all for the students' parents. Ethnic red-letter days commemorations are becoming an inseparable part of these institutions' activities. The celebrations are organized in accordance with national traditions and not only students' parents but also embassy officials and representatives of ethno-cultural communities and societies are invited to take part.

The second distinguishing feature at this stage of ethno-cultural education development is the beginning of the positive tendency of departure of ethno-cultural education institutions from national isolation.

Currently over 40 thousand children are educated and over 3 thousand teachers and instructors work in

the institutions with ethno-cultural component of education.

Recent experience in structuring the city's ethno-cultural space showed that it is more expedient to open ethno-cultural centers and groups with ethno-cultural component, but not educational institutions. This allows us to more fully meet the population's educational demands and ensures accessibility of ethno-cultural education for the greater number of children, thereby avoiding their national isolation and promoting children's adaptation in the city life. On the other hand, such inclusion of ethnic culture into Moscow's educational field facilitates the introduction of many young Muscovites to the distinctive features of culture and traditions of other peoples.