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THE ROLE OF POLICY AND LEGISLATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: A LEGAL ANALYSIS (KAZAKHSTAN CASE)

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Abstract. The article examines the development of accessible tourism as an integral component of public policy and legal regulation in both international and national contexts. The relevance of the study is driven by the transformation of the global tourism industry, the increasing social orientation of public policy, and the growing importance of sustainable development and social inclusion in international relations. Accessible tourism is viewed not only as a socially oriented segment of tourism activity, but also as an instrument for enhancing the international competitiveness of states and tourist destinations.

The purpose of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of public policy and legislation in the development of accessible tourism from an international perspective, with a focus on the legal system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The methodological framework includes comparative legal analysis, institutional and structural-functional approaches, as well as general scientific methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization. The empirical base comprises international legal instruments, national regulatory acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan, materials produced by international organizations, and scholarly publications by Kazakhstani and foreign authors.

The study identifies key problems hindering the development of accessible tourism in Kazakhstan, including fragmented legal regulation, insufficient institutional support, infrastructure constraints, and a shortage of specialized personnel. It is shown that the current regulatory framework requires further harmonization with international accessibility standards. Priority directions for improving public policy and legislation are proposed, aimed at building a comprehensive model for the development of accessible tourism based on international best practices. The findings can be used by public authorities and in further research in international relations and tourism policy.

Keywords: accessible tourism, inclusive tourism, public policy, legal regulation, social inclusion, International standards, Republic of Kazakhstan

Introduction

In the context of the transformation of the global tourism industry and the increasing social orientation of public policy, accessible tourism is increasingly viewed not only as a specialized area of tourism activity, but also as an important instrument for sustainable development, social inclusion, and the international competitiveness of destinations. The expansion of population mobility, demographic aging, and growing attention to human rights are generating steady demand for tourism services adapted to the needs of various population groups, including persons with disabilities, older persons, families with children, and other people with limited mobility.

In international practice, the accessibility of the tourist environment increasingly acts as a criterion for the quality of state tourism policy and the effectiveness of legal regulation. International organizations and integration associations emphasize that without the systematic participation of the state, expressed in regulatory and legal mechanisms, institutional support and strategic planning, the development of affordable tourism is fragmented and unbalanced. In this regard, legislation and government policy are becoming key tools for creating an inclusive tourism environment and ensuring equal access to tourism services.

Analysis of international experience indicates that countries which have integrated accessibility principles into national tourism development strategies and social policy demonstrate a higher level of resilience in the tourism sector and greater adaptability to global challenges. At the same time, the effectiveness of legal regulation in accessible tourism is determined not only by the formal existence of regulatory acts, but also by the degree of their alignment with international standards, as well as by the availability of mechanisms for practical implementation and enforcement oversight.

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, issues related to the development of accessible tourism are gradually being incorporated into the agenda of public policy and the regulatory framework governing tourism activities. The adoption of strategic program documents, the digitalization of the sector, and participation in international accessible tourism networks demonstrate the state's intention to integrate into the global tourism space. At the same time, a number of challenges remain, including the fragmented nature of legal regulation, limited institutional support, and insufficient harmonization of national standards with international accessibility requirements.

In academic literature, accessible tourism is predominantly examined from the perspectives of social policy, tourism economy, or infrastructure development. However, a comprehensive analysis of the role of public policy and legislation in the development of accessible tourism from an international perspective taking into account the national specifics of Kazakhstan remain insufficiently developed.

This necessitates the application of a systemic and comparative legal approach to identify patterns in the interaction between international norms, national legislation, and mechanisms of public policy.

In this regard, the present study attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of public policy and legislation in the development of accessible tourism from an international perspective, with a focus on the legal system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The achievement of this objective determined the choice of methodological framework based on comparative legal, institutional, and structural-functional approaches, which made it possible to identify key challenges and prospects for the development of accessible tourism within the context of national and international interaction.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in the comprehensive consideration of accessible tourism as an object of public policy and legal regulation within the context of international relations and the national legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Unlike existing studies, this article:

- substantiates the role of accessible tourism as an indicator of the effectiveness of public tourism policy and legal regulation;
- conducts a comparative legal analysis of international standards and the national legislation of Kazakhstan in the field of accessible tourism;
- identifies institutional and regulatory constraints that hinder the implementation of accessibility principles in tourism activities;
- formulates prospective directions for harmonizing national legislation with international norms and recommendations.

Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of the study comprises contemporary scholarly approaches to analyzing socio-economic and legal processes in the tourism sector, grounded in the principles of interdisciplinarity, system analysis, and comparative research. The study is situated at the intersection of international relations, tourism policy, and legal regulation, which made it possible to examine the phenomenon of accessible tourism in a comprehensive manner from both international and national perspectives.

The research employed general scientific methods of inquiry, including analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, abstraction, and generalization. These methods enabled the study to clarify the essence of accessible tourism as a direction of sustainable development and to determine its place within the system of public policy.

A key research method was comparative legal analysis, used to compare international legal instruments, foreign regulatory models for accessible tourism, and the national legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This approach made it possible to assess the degree of alignment between Kazakhstan's regulatory

framework and international standards and to identify directions for its further harmonization.

To examine the role of the state in the development of accessible tourism, an institutional approach was applied, within which the functions of public authorities, mechanisms for implementing tourism policy, as well as legal and economic instruments influencing the development of accessible tourism infrastructure were analyzed. In addition, a structural-functional method was used, making it possible to consider the interrelationship between legislation, infrastructure, human resources provision, and the level of accessibility of tourism services.

The empirical basis of the study included:

–international legal instruments and recommendations (the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; materials of UNWTO, the European Union, and ENAT);

–national regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Tourist Activity» and program documents on tourism development;

–analytical reports of international organizations;

–findings from academic studies by domestic and foreign authors;

–official statistical and informational materials of government agencies.

To identify the challenges and prospects for the development of accessible tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan, a problem-oriented analytical method was used, which made it possible to systematize existing barriers of an institutional, infrastructural, and human-resources nature. A forecasting approach was applied when formulating prospects and recommendations for improving public policy and legislation in the field of accessible tourism.

The combined use of these methods ensured the scientific validity of the study's conclusions and made it possible to examine the development of accessible tourism as an outcome of the interaction between international norms, national legislation, and public policy.

Results

Theoretical and Legal Foundations for the Development of Accessible Tourism

In the context of implementing the principles of sustainable development and social inclusion, accessible tourism is viewed as an important area of public and international policy aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all population groups, including persons with disabilities. In academic literature, accessible (inclusive) tourism is defined as a system of organizational, legal, infrastructural, and service-related measures that ensures the possibility of full participation of persons with disabilities and other groups with limited mobility in tourism activities [1,2].

1. International Legal Approaches to Regulating Accessible Tourism

International legal regulation of accessible tourism is grounded in universal human-rights norms and in specialized instruments that enshrine the principles of non-discrimination and accessibility. Studies by N. V. Novikov, M. A. Shirinyants, and O. V. Tkachenko published in *Molodoy Uchenyy*, as well as research articles in *Bulletin of Kazakh Ablai Khan UIR&WL*, note that international standards play a central role in shaping the legal foundations of inclusive tourism. These standards are aimed at removing barriers in transport, accommodation, guided and excursion services, and access to tourism information [3].

The authors emphasize that international practice shows a shift from fragmented regulation toward a systemic approach in which accessibility is treated as a mandatory component of the tourism product. A similar position is presented in the article ««Accessible Tourism in Global Tourist Destinations and Its Relationship with Sustainable Marketing in the Digital Age», published in the *International Journal of Current Scientific Research*, where accessible tourism is analyzed as an integral element of destination competitiveness. That study highlights the need to standardize requirements for accessible infrastructure and service provision, as well as the importance of interstate cooperation in this field [4].

Thus, in international academic and legal practice, accessible tourism is interpreted not only as a state's social obligation, but also as a factor of economic development and an instrument for enhancing the tourism attractiveness of territories.

2. National Models of Legal Regulation of Tourism and Their Significance for Inclusion

National systems of legal regulation in tourism are formed with due regard to international obligations and a state's domestic socio-economic policy. In a study by A. A. Mukasheva and N. O. Ybyrai published in the *Bulletin of Eurasian National University*, the evolution of legal regulation of tourism activity is examined, including issues of public administration, standardization, and consumer rights protection in tourism services [5].

The authors emphasize that in most national legal systems, provisions that directly regulate accessible tourism are fragmented and are often not выделяются as an independent area. This makes it necessary to adapt legislation to the needs of persons with disabilities and to introduce special legal mechanisms aimed at developing an inclusive tourism environment.

A similar position is reflected in studies on the role of the state in developing inclusive tourism. For example, N. A. Logunova and Zh. L. Dotsenko note that public policy should include not only regulatory measures, but also economic incentives, institutional support, and oversight to ensure compliance with accessibility standards [6].

3. Conceptual Approaches to Developing Inclusive Tourism in Global Practice

Contemporary concepts of accessible tourism in global practice are based on the idea of universal design and a barrier-free environment. In a study by O. A. Almukhamedova published on the CyberLeninka platform, international experience in developing accessible tourism infrastructure is analyzed, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach that combines legal, social, and economic instruments [7].

The author argues that effective development of inclusive tourism is possible only when the actions of the state, business, and society are coordinated, and when a clear regulatory framework is in place that establishes mandatory accessibility requirements for tourism facilities and services.

Overall, an analysis of theoretical sources suggests that accessible tourism is an interdisciplinary and multi-level concept that requires the integration of international standards, national legislation, and global best practices. This underscores the need for further research aimed at improving legal regulation and adapting international experience to national conditions.

Legal Regulation of Accessible Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the principal regulatory legal act governing tourism activity is the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Tourist Activity», which sets out the strategic objectives for sectoral development, the rights and obligations of tourism market participants, and measures of state support. In the current version of the law, one of the objectives of state policy in the field of tourism is defined as creating conditions for tourism activities that take into account the needs of various population groups, including persons with disabilities and other groups with limited mobility. This indicates a normative orientation of national legislation toward the principles of social inclusion and accessibility of tourism services and infrastructure, which corresponds to international approaches to the development of accessible tourism [8].

At the same time, analysis of the content of this regulatory act shows that provisions related to accessible tourism are largely declarative and are not accompanied by clearly articulated implementation mechanisms, accessibility assessment criteria, or specialized requirements for tourism infrastructure and services. The absence in legislation of a separate category of «accessible (inclusive) tourism» as well as special norms establishing the liability of tourism actors for compliance with accessibility standards, limits the practical effectiveness of legal regulation in this area and complicates the systematic introduction of inclusive approaches.

State-level measures to digitalize the tourism sector including the development of digital platforms, tourism registers, and information services contribute to improving the informational accessibility of tourism services and

simplifying interaction among tourists, businesses, and government authorities [9]. However, these initiatives are currently focused primarily on economic and administrative efficiency and insufficiently account for the specific needs of persons with disabilities, including requirements for digital accessibility, universal design, and an adapted user interface.

An important indicator of Kazakhstan's integration into the international system for developing accessible tourism was the accession of the country's capital, Astana, to the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT), reflecting the intention of the state and local authorities to adopt European accessibility standards and exchange best practices [10]. At the same time, this step is largely image-driven and strategic in nature and requires further institutional consolidation at the national level, including the adaptation of ENAT's international recommendations to the conditions of Kazakhstan's legal framework and the development of unified regulatory requirements for an accessible tourism environment.

Thus, analysis leads to the conclusion that the Republic of Kazakhstan has established basic legal and institutional prerequisites for the development of accessible tourism; however, the existing regulatory framework requires further clarification, systematization, and practical specification. This highlights the need for scholarly substantiation of the mechanisms of legal regulation of accessible tourism and for the development of an integrated approach to its advancement, taking into account international experience and national specificities.

Discussion

Challenges in the Development of Accessible Tourism in Kazakhstan

Analysis of recent academic studies and regulatory legal sources makes it possible to identify several key challenges constraining the development of accessible tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

1. Regulatory and institutional barriers

Despite the existence of a basic legal foundation, the regulatory framework for accessible tourism in Kazakhstan remains fragmented. Requirements for ensuring an accessible environment are insufficiently specified, while implementation and enforcement mechanisms are underdeveloped. Significant difficulties arise in adapting international accessibility standards to the national legal system and applying them in practice at the level of tourism facilities and services [11].

2. Infrastructure-related challenges

One of the most acute problems is the low level of adaptation of tourism infrastructure, including accommodation facilities, transport, excursion routes, and public spaces. The absence of a barrier-free environment substantially limits the participation of persons with disabilities and other groups with limited

mobility in tourism activities, especially in regional destinations [12].

3. Bureaucratic obstacles and limited access to support measures

The development of accessible tourism is hindered by complex administrative procedures for obtaining state support and subsidies. The lack of transparency in project selection mechanisms, lengthy application review timelines, and high levels of bureaucratization reduce the investment attractiveness of the tourism sector, including initiatives aimed at improving accessibility and inclusion [13].

4. Shortage of specialized tourism products and qualified personnel

Kazakhstan has an underdeveloped system for training personnel with competencies in inclusive service. There is also a shortage of specialized tour operators offering adapted tourism products and routes for people with specific needs. This limits the diversification of tourism offerings and reduces the competitiveness of the national tourism market [14].

Prospects for the Development of Accessible Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Addressing the identified challenges requires an integrated approach and the implementation of the following priority directions of public policy and sectoral development.

1. Harmonization of national legislation with international standards

A promising direction is the continued adaptation of Kazakhstan's legislation to international accessibility standards, including the norms of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and European inclusive-tourism practices, taking into account national socio-economic conditions [15].

2. Development of state programs and support mechanisms

A necessary condition for the development of accessible tourism is the establishment of specialized state programs to finance infrastructure projects aimed at creating a barrier-free environment. Additional incentives may include the introduction of tax benefits, subsidies, and public-private partnership mechanisms for businesses investing in the adaptation of tourism facilities [9].

3. Workforce training and promotion of inclusive services

An important role is played by the development of professional education and continuing training for tourism specialists with an emphasis on inclusive service. The dissemination of best practices for serving persons with limited mobility contributes to the formation of sustained demand for accessible tourism services [10].

4. Information support and digitalization

A promising direction is the development of digital platforms and information resources that provide reliable information on the accessibility of tourism facilities, routes, and services for different categories of tourists. This would increase consumer awareness and strengthen Kazakhstan's image as an inclusive tourism destination [8].

Conclusion

The study made it possible to examine accessible tourism comprehensively as an object of public policy and legal regulation in both international and national contexts, and to identify key features of its development in the Republic of Kazakhstan. An analysis of theoretical and legal approaches, international standards, and the national regulatory framework shows that, under current conditions, accessible tourism goes beyond a narrowly social domain and increasingly functions as an important instrument of sustainable development, social inclusion, and enhanced competitiveness of tourism destinations.

It has been established that, in international practice, the development of accessible tourism is based on the systematic integration of the principles of non-discrimination, universal design, and a barrier-free environment into public tourism policy and legislation. The effectiveness of such models is determined not only by the formal закрепление of accessibility norms, but also by the presence of institutional mechanisms for their implementation and oversight, as well as by cross-sectoral interaction among the state, business, and society.

Analysis of the legal regulation of accessible tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan indicates that basic regulatory and institutional prerequisites for shaping an inclusive tourism environment are in place. At the same time, significant constraints have been identified, including fragmented legislation, the declarative nature of certain provisions, the absence of specialized legal mechanisms, and insufficient harmonization of national requirements with international standards. These factors hinder the practical implementation of accessibility principles and limit the potential for the development of accessible tourism at both national and regional levels.

During the study, the key challenges to the development of accessible tourism in Kazakhstan were systematized, including regulatory and institutional barriers, insufficient adaptation of tourism facilities and infrastructure, bureaucratic constraints limiting access to state support measures, and a shortage of specialized tourism products and qualified personnel. It was established that these problems are interrelated in nature and require an integrated, interdisciplinary, and interagency approach to address them.

Based on the analysis, forward-looking directions for the development of accessible tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan were formulated, including harmonizing national legislation with international standards, expanding targeted state programs and business incentive mechanisms, improving the system of workforce training, and actively employing digital solutions to enhance the informational and service accessibility of tourism services. The implementation of these directions would enable the formation of a coherent model for the development of accessible tourism oriented toward long-term sustainability and social responsibility in the tourism sector.

Overall, the findings confirm that the development of accessible tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan is possible only through systematic interaction among public policy, legislation, and international norms. The conclusions and recommendations may serve as a scientific and practical basis for further improving the regulatory framework, developing strategic policy documents, and expanding research on inclusive and accessible tourism in an international context.

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ҚОЛЖЕТІМДІ ТУРИЗМДІ ДАМУДАҒЫ САЯСАТ ПЕН ЗАҢНАМАНЫҢ РӨЛІ ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ПЕРСПЕКТИВАДА: ҚҰҚЫҚТЫҚ ТАЛДАУЫ (ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ КЕЙС)

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада қолжетімді туризмді халықаралық және ұлттық контексте қоғамдық саясатпен құқықтық реттеудің ажырамас құрамдасы ретінде дамыту мәселесі қарастырылады. Зерттеудің өзектілігі жаһандық туристік индустриядағы үздіксіз трансформациялармен, мемлекеттік саясаттың әлеуметтік бағдарлы болып келе жатқаны және халықаралық қатынастарда тұрақты дамумен әлеуметтік инклюзияның артып келе жатқан маңыздылығымен негізделеді. Қолжетімді туризм тек әлеуметтік бағытталған туристік қызмет саласы ретінде емес, сонымен қатар туристік дестинациялардың халықаралық бәсекеге қабілеттілігін және тұрақтылығын арттыруға арналған стратегиялық құрал ретінде концептуализацияланады.

Зерттеудің мақсаты – халықаралық тұрғыдан қолжетімді туризмді дамытуда қоғамдық саясатпен құқықтық негіздердің рөлін жан-жақты талдау, сонымен қатар Қазақстан Республикасының құқықтық жүйесіне ерекше назар аудару. Зерттеу әдістемесі салыстырмалы құқықтық талдау, институционалдық және құрылымдық-функционалдық тәсілдерге, сондай-ақ жалпы ғылыми талдау, синтез және жалпылау әдістеріне негізделген. Эмпирикалық база ретінде халықаралық құқықтық құжаттар, Қазақстан Республикасының ұлттық нормативтік актілері, халықаралық ұйымдардың аналитикалық есептері және отандық және шетелдік ғалымдардың академиялық зерттеулері пайдаланылды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері Қазақстандағы қолжетімді туризмді дамытуға кедергі болатын негізгі институционалдық, нормативтік, инфрақұрылымдық және адами ресурстық шектеулерді анықтайды. Мақалада құқықтық реттеудің бөлшектелген сипатымен ұлттық заңнаманың халықаралық қолжетімділік стандарттарымен жеткілікті үйлесімінің жоқтығы көрсетіледі. Нәтижелер

негізінде инклюзивті туристік органы қалыптастыруға бағытталған қоғамдық саясатпен құқықтық механизмдерді жетілдірудің басым бағыттары ұсынылады. Зерттеу қорытындылары мемлекеттік органдар қызметінде, туристік саясатты дамытуда және халықаралық қатынастармен туризм басқару саласындағы одан әрі академиялық зерттеулерде қолданылуы мүмкін.

Тірек сөздер: қолжетімді туризм, инклюзивті туризм, қоғамдық саясат, құқықтық реттеу, әлеуметтік инклюзия, халықаралық стандарттар, Қазақстан Республикасы

РОЛЬ ПОЛИТИКИ И ЗАКОНОДАТЕЛЬСТВА В РАЗВИТИИ ДОСТУПНОГО ТУРИЗМА В МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ: ПРАВОВОЙ АНАЛИЗ (КАЗАХСТАНСКИЙ КЕЙС)

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Аннотация. В статье анализируются особенности развития доступного туризма как направления государственной политики и правового регулирования в международном и национальном контексте. Актуальность исследования обусловлена трансформацией мировой туристской индустрии, усилением социальной направленности государственной политики и возрастанием роли принципов устойчивого развития и социальной инклюзии в системе международных отношений. Доступный туризм рассматривается не только как социально ориентированная сфера туристской деятельности, но и как инструмент повышения международной конкурентоспособности государств и туристских дестинаций.

Цель исследования заключается в комплексном анализе роли государственной политики и законодательства в развитии доступного туризма в международной перспективе с акцентом на правовую систему Республики Казахстан. Методологическую основу исследования составляют сравнительно-правовой, институциональный и структурно-функциональный подходы, а также общенаучные методы анализа, синтеза и обобщения. Эмпирическая база включает международные правовые документы, национальные нормативно-правовые акты Республики Казахстан, материалы международных организаций и научные публикации отечественных и зарубежных авторов.

В результате исследования выявлены ключевые проблемы развития доступного туризма в Казахстане, включая фрагментарность правового регулирования, недостаточную институциональную поддержку, инфраструктурные ограничения и дефицит специализированных кадров.

Установлено, что действующая нормативно-правовая база требует дальнейшей гармонизации с международными стандартами доступности. Сформулированы перспективные направления совершенствования государственной политики и законодательства, направленные на формирование комплексной модели развития доступного туризма с учётом международного опыта. Полученные выводы могут быть использованы в деятельности органов государственного управления, а также в научных исследованиях в сфере международных отношений и туристской политики.

Ключевые слова: доступный туризм, инклюзивный туризм, государственная политика, правовое регулирование, социальная инклюзия, международные стандарты, Республика Казахстан

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