**New Trends in Federal Regulation of Regional and Local Governance in Russia**

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There are now 85 regions and about 20,000 municipalities in Russia. Traditionally, regional development lies within the framework of the federal economic and social policy, but it is not among the main activities of the Federation in Russia. Local development issues fall into the competence of regional and municipal authorities. The Federal Government is also taking various actions in relation to local, especially urban development.

Several federal laws and numerous government decisions apply to the development of regions. However, the general legal construction of it remains incomplete.

Last years, the regulation of regional and local development has been manifested in the following areas:

- legislative regulation of regional and local governments and their economic basis,

- citation of regions and cities in federal strategic and spatial planning documents,

- improving of the intergovernmental fiscal relations between the Federation, regions, and municipalities, e.g., in changing of redistribution of tax revenues and getting grants and specific loans to other tiers of budgetary system,

- individual development of several regions, metropolitan areas, and cities that are the places of mega-events or realization of large investment projects,

- specific regulation and initiatives for development of such important macroregions as the Russian Far East, the Arctic Zone, etc.,

- federal support of some local territories, including science cities, cities “closed” for military or nuclear activities, special economic zones, etc.,

- regulation of urban development activities, as well as actively improving the city environment,

- stimulating housing construction in regions, such as through preferential mortgages for certain categories of citizens,

- etc.

In recent years, the regions have been considered as basic platforms for the implementation of federal initiatives, primarily the so-called national projects initiated by the President in 2018.

Those actions of the Federal Government received a new impetus under Covid-19 because regional and local authorities had a lack of resources to response to the pandemic. The process of forced decentralization has taken place. Though, this applies more to the regions, but not to municipalities, whose role has become less.

In addition, amendments to the RF Constitution adopted in July 2020 necessitated changes in the structure of regional and municipal governance. The reform of the system of public authorities and re-centralization were being launched in the end of 2021. According to the new Federal Law No 414-FZ, the list of regional responsibilities was increased from 127 ones in the acting law to 170 powers which will be since 2023. The draft federal law on local self-government should start the merger process of municipalities and drastic changes in their responsibilities during the transitional period until 2028. The role of city governance will decrease, while regional and federal ones should increase.

The research conducted with the Russian Presidential Academy (RANEPA) financing made it possible to systematize the actions of federal authorities in regional and local development issues, including those caused by the pandemic, to assess changes in the system of separation of powers between tiers, and to identify the risks of their further consolidation in the federal legislation.