

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION
(EXAMPLES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KARELIA AND THE
REPUBLIC OF MORDOVIA)**

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Introduction

The issue of the indigenous peoples' access to information is relevant to the traditional areas of dense residence of indigenous peoples. It was highlighted many times during such large fora as the World Congresses of the Finno-Ugric Peoples.

The issue of access to information includes the following aspects: a) receiving information about the rights of indigenous peoples, ways of their realization, and state services; b) access to information in native languages of indigenous peoples; c) information channels; d) transparency of state bodies and state-funded organizations; e) role of media in distribution of information about the rights of indigenous peoples. The institutions of indigenous peoples seek for more systematic and parity communication with public authorities based on the principles of transparency and access to necessary information. This study allowed defining the relevant current trends in the Republic of Karelia as well as in the Republic of Mordovia, one more region of the Finno-Ugric peoples' residence, to make it possible to compare. The study will facilitate discussions of the recommendations and best practices that can be used for improving the situation.

The findings of the study are planned to be used in the activity of non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. This is a pilot study and it can be applied to other regions of indigenous peoples' residence. The results of the project will be presented to the expert community at international fora such as the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva.

1. Legal framework: international standards, review of national and subnational legislation

International standards

The access to information is a fundamental human right enshrined in various international legal documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) and other documents.

The article 19 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** sets out that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

The article 19 of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** reproduces the provision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice”.

The article 10 of the **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** adopted in 1950 is based on the fact that “everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers...”.

While studying the issue of access to information for indigenous peoples it is necessary to mention the article 16 of the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**¹ setting out that indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination. States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity.

Taking into account that indigenous peoples can be in the position of ethnic minorities the relevant norms can be additionally applied to them (to the extent to which these peoples are interested in applying the mentioned norms to their situation)². Thus, the article 9 of the **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 1998** (ratified by Russia in accordance with the Federal Law №84-FZ of 18 June, 1998) binds the parties:

– to recognize that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive

¹ Adopted by the resolution 61/295 of the General Assembly on 13 September, 2007

² V.A.Kryazhkov, *Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North in the Russian law*. – Moscow, 2010. Page 111

and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers;

- to ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media;

- not to hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities, and in the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, to ensure, as far as possible, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media;

- to adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

National legislation

The following key provisions of the **Constitution of the Russian Federation 1993** are related to the subject matter of the study:

- the article 29, paragraph 4: “Everyone shall have the right to freely seek, receive, transmit, produce and disseminate information by any legal means. The list of types of information, which constitute State secrets, shall be determined by federal law”;

- the article 24, paragraph 2: “State government bodies and local self-government bodies and their officials shall be obliged to provide everyone with access to documents and materials directly affecting his (her) rights and freedoms, unless otherwise envisaged by law”.

The fundamental normative legal act concerning realization of the right to access to information is the **Federal Law № 149-FZ of 27 July, 2006 “On Information, Information Technologies and Protection of Information”** (hereinafter – Law on Information).

The article 8 of this law sets out that individuals and legal entities shall have the right to search for and receive any information in any form and from any sources subject to the requirements established by the legislation. The citizen (an individual) shall have the right to receive information directly affecting his or her rights and freedoms from state government bodies, local self-government bodies and their officials. The organisation shall have the right to receive from state government bodies, local self-government bodies information directly affecting the rights and obligations of that organisation and also information required in view of interaction with those bodies as that organisation conducts its authorised activity.

The article 8, paragraph 4 of the Law on Information prohibits restrictions of access to the following information:

1) to normative legal acts affecting the rights, freedoms and obligations of person and citizen and also those establishing legal status of organisations and the powers of authorities;

2) to information on the state of the environment;

3) to information on the activity of state authorities and local self-government bodies and also on the use of budgetary funds (except for data constituting state or official secrets);

4) to information accumulated in the open funds of libraries, museums and archives and also in state, municipal and other informational systems set up or intended to provide citizens and organisations with such information;

5) to other information the impermissibility of restriction on the access to which is established by federal laws.

The article 8, paragraph 5 of the Law on Information obliges the state bodies and local self-government bodies to provide access to information on their activity both in Russian and an official language of a corresponding constituent republic of the Russian Federation. The person wishing to receive access to that information shall not be obligated to prove the necessity of its receipt.

The article 38 of the **Law of the Russian Federation № 2124-1 of 27 December, 1991 “On Mass Media”** (with the amendments and addendums of 1 January, 2018) provides that the citizens have the right to effectively receive authentic information through mass media about the activities of state bodies, local self-government bodies, organisations, public associations and their officials. The state bodies, local self-government bodies, organizations, public associations and their officials shall submit information about their activities to mass media in reply to the inquiries of editorial offices, and also by holding press conferences, circulating reference and statistical materials and other forms.

The article 10 of the **Federal Law № 82-FZ of 30 April, 1999 “On Guarantees of the Rights of Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation”** establishes that the persons belonging to the small-numbered peoples, associations of small-numbered peoples have the right to receive and distribute information in their native languages with a view to preserve and develop their authentic culture.

Subnational legal framework

The Republic of Karelia

There is an advanced legislation in the Republic that is designed to support the indigenous peoples. The article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Karelia sets out that “historical and ethnic features of the Republic of Karelia are determined by the residence of the Karelians in its territory”. The article 21 of the Constitution of the Republic of Karelia provides that the measures aimed at resurgence, preservation and free development of the Karelians, Veps and Finns living in its territory are implemented in the Republic of Karelia¹.

The Law of the Republic of Karelia “On State Support for the Karelian, Veps and Finnish languages in the Republic of Karelia”² guarantees the state support to the mass media functioning in Karelian, Veps or Finnish as well as to the experts working in this area. The Law also allows using the indigenous languages in publishing laws and other normative legal acts of the Republic of Karelia and in the work of state government and local self-government bodies in the Republic of Karelia.

The 2025 Strategy of the State National Policy of the Republic of Karelia³ says that the activities to “ensure enabling information space in the area of the state national policy implementation” are carried out in the Republic. As per the Strategy the information coverage of the state national policy includes: a) enhancing the mass media and Internet resources covering the issues of state national policy implementation; b) spreading social advertising in the mass media and Internet, supporting creation of thematic radio and television programs, newspaper and magazines columns, Internet projects aimed at achieving goals and targets of the state national policy; c) interventions in the mass media and Internet by the heads of state and municipal bodies, representatives of civil society institutions, public associations and religious organizations on the relevant issues concerning the implementation of the state national policy; d) organizing publication of printed materials, audio and video products about history, culture, traditions, current state of the peoples of the Russian Federation and other ethnic communities living in the Republic of Karelia in the languages of Karelia’s indigenous peoples as well as in Russian and foreign languages; e) carrying out mass media and Internet resources monitoring related to the coverage of state national policy implementation, conducting professional trainings for journalists in the area of state national policy implementation; f) creating conditions for transparent and public consideration of situations related to the interethnic and interconfessional conflicts as well as for independent coverage of these conflicts in mass media and Internet.

According to the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Karelia of 24 January, 2018 the State Program of the Republic of Karelia “Ethnosocial and

¹ The Constitution of the Republic of Karelia <http://gov.karelia.ru/Constitution/index.html>

² The Law of the Republic of Karelia «On State Support for the Karelian, Veps and Finnish languages in the Republic of Karelia» http://www.karelia-zs.ru/zakonodatelstvo_rk/prav_akty/759-zrk/

³ The 2025 Strategy of the State National Policy of the Republic of Karelia <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/465404691>

Ethnocultural Development of Traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples”¹ is put into effect. The Program considers the Karelians and Veps as indigenous peoples of Karelia as well as local ethnic groups of indigenous Russian population - Zaonezhans, Pudozhans and Pomors. It is underlined that the specific rights are guaranteed for these peoples due to their unfavorable social, economic and demographic situation. The aim of the Program is “to ensure ethnosocial and ethnocultural development of the traditional territories of indigenous peoples in the Republic of Karelia”.

Subnational legal framework

The Republic of Mordovia

As for the subnational normative legal acts of the Republic of Mordovia the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Mordovia reproduces the provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation:

- article 27, paragraph 4, Constitution of the Republic of Mordovia: “Everyone shall have the right to freely seek, receive, transmit, produce and disseminate information by any legal means”;
- article 22, paragraph 2, Constitution of the Republic of Mordovia: “State government bodies of the Republic of Mordovia and local self-government bodies and their officials shall be obliged to provide everyone with access to documents and materials directly affecting his (her) rights and freedoms, unless otherwise envisaged by law”.

The other subnational sources ensuring the right to access to information include the following:

- the Order of the Head of the Republic of Mordovia of 29 June, 2010 № 121-UG “On Providing Access to Information about the Activities of the Head of the Republic of Mordovia and his/her Administration”;
- the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Mordovia of 22 November, 2010 № 454 “On Providing Access to Information about the Activities of the Government of the Republic of Mordovia and State Executive Bodies of the Republic of Mordovia” and other acts.

2. Situation of indigenous peoples and information need

Situation of indigenous peoples in Russia and in the world

¹ The Decree of the Government of the Republic of Karelia of 24 January, 2018 on adoption of the State Program of the Republic of Karelia “Ethnosocial and Ethnocultural Development of Traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples” <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/1000201801260004>

According to the United Nations, there are around 370 000 000 persons belonging to indigenous peoples in the world. They represent more than 5 000 different groups living in more than 70 countries¹.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples does not contain definition of “indigenous peoples”. The Declaration sets out that the indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination as well as the right to determine their ethnic identity in accordance with their traditions and customs mainly based on their self-identification.

The realization of the rights of indigenous peoples as part of the human rights system is an issue of international agenda and important for every state.

The concept of “indigenous peoples” is not defined by the Russian Federation law. However, there is a close notion of “indigenous small-numbered peoples of the Russian Federation”.

According to the Russian legislation, indigenous small-numbered peoples of the Russian Federation are the peoples living in the territories of traditional residence of their ancestors, preserving the traditional way of life, livelihoods and crafts, making up less than 50 000 people in the Russian Federation and identifying themselves as separate ethnic communities². The Unified List of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation includes 47 indigenous small-numbered peoples among which 40 peoples have a special legal status of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation.

The modern world is characterized by the increasing globalization processes. It is highly reasonable to talk about the emerging issue of preserving human cultural diversity. In this context the sustainable development is mainly determined by the effective realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and preservation of their ethnic identity. Due to the lack of resources indigenous peoples have to appeal to the state institutions for preserving their identity.

The indigenous peoples face both old and new challenges in the globalized world. Their number continues to be reduced; assimilation processes are going on as well as native languages skills are being lost.

The Russian Federation is one of the largest multiethnic states in the world where 193 peoples live, each of them having their unique material and spiritual culture.

The Republic of Karelia

In 2017 the World Bank conducted the study “Integration of Indigenous Youth of Russia in the Labour Market”³. The results of focus groups analysis and interviews with experts in the traditional territories of the Karelians and Veps did

¹ Indigenous peoples. United Nations web-site [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://www.un.org/ru/letsfightracism/indigenous.shtml> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

² Article 1, Federal Law of 30 April, 1999 № 82-FZ “On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation”

³ Study of the World Bank “Integration of Indigenous Youth of Russia in the Labour Market”, 2017

not identify a big difference between indigenous and non-indigenous youth in the area of employment. According to the study, the knowledge of native languages is not an advantage in the labour market and the youth of all ethnic backgrounds experience similar problems: unemployment and low pay. In the meantime the authors of the study came to the conclusion that the youth in the traditional territories of indigenous peoples is more subject to the social problems, including alcoholism, restricted access to quality education, that lead to the higher rates of unemployment. The small number of self-employed young people and entrepreneurs is explained by the lack of targeted state programs aimed at promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship in traditional territories of indigenous peoples or by the lack of information about such programs. Another study of the World Bank “Karelia. Sustainable Local Development Based on the Cultural and Historical Identity”¹, conducted in 2016 in Kalevalsky national municipal district in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Karelia, explains poor dynamics in the area of self-employment and entrepreneurship by the difficult access to financial services, including banking and lending, or lack of information about such services in the remote traditional territories of indigenous peoples.

The access to quality education largely determines the social well-being of indigenous peoples. The study of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples “Right to Health and Indigenous Peoples with a Focus to Children and Youth”² highlights the problem of access to information about health services for indigenous peoples; “this can be attributed to a number of factors, including health information being unavailable in indigenous languages”. The UN study suggests “promoting health through the provision of culturally appropriate information concerning healthy lifestyles and nutrition, disease and illnesses, harmful traditional practices, and the availability of services. Information should be provided in the patient’s language and information mechanisms should be developed”. According to the experts, “indigenous peoples should be supported in making informed choices about their health by providing them with information” through creation and distribution of culturally appropriate tools and information materials.

In 2016 the Karelian Republican Non-Governmental Organization “Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples and Public Diplomacy “Young Karelia” with the support of the Ministry of the Republic of Karelia for National Politics, Relations with Public and Religious Associations conducted the expert workshop “Finno-Ugric Peoples and Sustainable Development. Health of Indigenous Peoples”. The participants of the workshop highlighted the need for obtaining and publishing objective statistical data on diseases among indigenous peoples and providing the indigenous peoples with full information on health services, including preventive

¹ Study of the World Bank “Karelia. Sustainable Local Development Based on the Cultural and Historical Identity”, 2016

² A/HRC/33/57 EMRIP Study “Right to Health and Indigenous Peoples with a Focus to Children and Youth”. <http://www.undocs.org/ru/a/hrc/33/57>

medical examination¹.

Following the Resolution VIII of the Congress of the Karelians of the Republic of Karelia² and the Resolution VII of the World Congress of the Finno-Ugric Peoples³ it can be concluded that the risk of their languages and cultures extinction as well as negative population dynamics raise the main concern. The aims and targets of the State Program of the Republic of Karelia “Ethnosocial and Ethnocultural Development of the Traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples” say that “the risk of absolute extinction of the Karelians and Veps is a real one, as evidenced by the results of the Russian Census of 2010”.

The indigenous peoples consider ensuring access to information in native languages and expanding areas of language use as part of the language issues solution. The indigenous peoples highlight the need for preservation of press and optimization of radio and television broadcasting in native languages. Promoting use of indigenous languages in the digital space is critical for resilience of these languages.

The Republic of Mordovia

The Republic of Mordovia is one of the subjects of the Russian Federation where the representatives of 119 ethnic groups live. The title nation is Mordva. The ethnonym “mordva” is an external name of the ethnic group (exonym). It divides into two subethnic groups – Moksha and Erzya – speaking in Moksha and Erzya languages representing the Finno-Volgaic group of the Finno-Ugric within the Uralic language family⁴. The native name of Moksha is Mokshet (in Moksha language) and that of Erzya is Erzyat (in Erzya language). The total population makes up 800 000 people living in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and other countries. Since 1992 the Congresses of the Mordovian People (Moksha and Erzya), high representative assembly of Moksha and Erzya living in the Republic of Mordovia as well as in other subjects of the Russian Federation and countries, take place in the Republic of Mordovia.

According to the 2010 Russian Census there are 333 112 people of the Mordovian ethnicity live in the Republic of Mordovia, among them – 152 179 people live in urban area and 180 933 people live in rural area⁵.

One of the issues faced by the Finno-Ugric peoples is the deteriorating demographic situation and assimilative processes. The population decline is a

¹ The materials of studies and expert workshop “Indigenous Peoples and Right to Health”. Edited by A.V.Tsykarev. Petrozavodsk: Periodika, 2016.

² Resolution of VIII Congress of the Karelians of the Republic of Karelia

³ Resolution of VII World Congress of the Finno-Ugric Peoples

<http://www.fucongress.org/vii-kongress/rezolyuciya/>

⁴ Multiethnic Mordovia / author – V.A Yurchyonkov; Ministry of the Republic of Mordovia for National Policy, Research Institute of the Humanities of the Government of the Republic of Mordovia. – Saransk: Foundation “Open Mordovia”, 2016. P. 20.

⁵ Official web-site of the Federal State Statistics Service. Volume 4. Ethnic composition and knowledge of languages, nationality – [Electronic resource]. – Link: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm (reference date: 26.01.2018)

common issue for many Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia. For example, in 2002 the number of Mordva population was 843 350 people¹, in 2010 – 744 237 people; in 2002 the number of the Karelians was 93 344 people whereas in 2010 – 60 815 people.

The problem of preserving the Moksha and Erzya languages beyond the Republic where 55.3% of the Mordovian population live raises big concerns. The resolution of the VI Congress of the Mordovian People (Moksha and Erzya) says that “only in 7 Russian regions children are provided with the possibility to learn their native language. From Congress to Congress the problem of sensitizing children and their parents to preserve linguistic and ethnocultural values as a tool of ethnic identity development in the context of globalization persists”².

Conclusion

Thus, in view of the analysis above the main areas of ensuring the right to access to information for the indigenous peoples are the following: a) rights of indigenous peoples and measures of state support, public services; b) access to funding, including grants for non-governmental organizations and g subsidies to support indigenous peoples, banking services; c) programs aimed at promoting employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship; d) cultural services; e) social area (education, health services); f) life protection; g) mass media.

3. Access to information for indigenous peoples: best practices and trends

a) Access to information about the rights of indigenous peoples

The development of the Russian Federation as a state of law directly depends on the level of legal awareness of the population, their understanding of such legal phenomena as value of human rights and freedoms; on the extent to which the population is legally informed; on the emotional attitude to the law, law enforcement bodies, legal remedies and procedures.

The poor level of legal literacy and the legal nihilism pose serious problems for ensuring human rights, including those of indigenous peoples in modern Russia. Very often the problems arise due to the lack of knowledge about rights and duties as well as about legal ways of their fulfillment. In this regard the legal awareness-raising and education of indigenous peoples are crucial for their sustainable development.

The part 3 of the article 15 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation highlights the necessity of obligatory publication of all normative legal acts related to the human and citizen's rights, freedoms and duties.

¹ 2002 Russian Census. Volume 4. Ethnic composition and knowledge of languages, nationality – [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=17> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

² The Resolution of VI Congress of the Mordovian People (Moksha and Erzya). Adopted on 24 October, 2014

The system of legal awareness-raising of the population is determined by the Federal Law № 324-FZ of 21 November, 2011 “On Free Legal Aid”. According to the Law, federal executive bodies and their subordinate authorities, executive bodies of the subjects of the Russian Federation and their subordinate authorities, governing bodies of state non-budgetary funds, local self-government bodies and officials should take part in the legal awareness-raising of population. The duty of legal awareness-raising of population can be also imposed on the state law offices, lawyers and public notaries. The legal clinics of higher educational institutions and non-governmental centers of free legal aid can participate in the legal awareness-raising and education.

The Republic of Karelia

The institution of Ombudsperson is developing in the Republic of Karelia in the framework of which the Public Expert Council functions. The Council includes the Commission for Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Migrants and Refugees and the Commission for Protection of the Right of Citizens to Information, Protection of Mass Media and of Electoral Rights of Citizens. The public is informed about socially important issues discussed by the Council, decisions adopted during its sessions as well as about the work of Ombudsperson. All the information is published at the web-site of the Ombudsperson - <http://ombudsman-karelia.ru>, as well as in other mass media.

The Ombudsperson deals not only with the complaints but also informs the population about his/her activities, receives citizens, promotes human rights and applies system approach by studying the history of the issue and informing the authorities about current systemic gaps. The Office of the Ombudsperson considered inter alia petitions related to the quality of major repairs of the district hospital in the Shyoltozero village (2018)¹ and violations of the citizens’ right to vote during the elections of the Head of the Shyoltozero Veps rural area (2015)². In this context the Ombudsperson assessed the actions of officials, gave consultations to the petitioners and conducted information campaign to reduce the risk of such situations in future.

According to the law the Ombudsperson informs the population about the human rights situation in the region, provides legal education, explains the citizens’ rights, freedoms and legitimate interests as well as ways and methods of their protection³. Each year the Ombudsperson publishes the report on situation of human and citizens’ rights and freedoms in the territory of the Republic of Karelia. Within his/her mandate the Ombudsperson can request necessary information and materials from federal state authorities, state authorities of the Republic of Karelia, local self-government bodies, public associations and officials. This mandate

¹ <https://mustoi.ru/remont-bolnicy-v-sheltozere-xaltura-za-federalnye-dengi/>

² The 2015 annual report of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Karelia. <http://ombudsman-karelia.ru/reports/4708/>

³ The Law of the Republic of Karelia “On the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Karelia” <http://ombudsman-karelia.ru/laki/>

makes the institution of Ombudsperson an important part of providing citizens, including indigenous peoples, with access to necessary information about respect of the rights of indigenous peoples in the Republic of Karelia.

There are public councils within the executive and local self-government bodies in the Republic of Karelia. According to the Ministry of the Republic of Karelia for Ethnic and Regional Policy¹, state interaction with indigenous peoples is realized via the Council of Representatives of the Karelians, Veps and Finns of the Republic of Karelia of the Head of the Republic of Karelia. The representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations are members of other collective working bodies: Board of Ministry, Council for Interethnic Relations of the Head of the Republic of Karelia, Council for Civil Society and Human Rights of the Head of the Republic of Karelia. The representatives of the Karelians and Veps are members of the Public Chamber of the Republic of Karelia and the Coordination Council on Implementation of State Support for the Karelian, Veps and Finnish Languages Learning in Educational Institutions of the Republic of Karelia. Participation in the consultative bodies allows indigenous peoples to receive information about the work of authorities and take part in development and realization of state national, educational, cultural, and social and economic policies. The representatives of indigenous peoples can participate in discussions of national and subnational draft laws and other normative legal acts concerning the rights and interests of the Karelians, Veps and Finns of the Republic of Karelia². The information about the work of these state-public institutions, including minutes of meeting, is published in mass media and at web-sites of the relevant authorities.

The Public Chamber of the Russian Federation criticized the non-transparent nature of public councils' formation that impedes inclusion of the recognized leaders of the local civil society³. However, it should be acknowledged that the members of the Council of the Representatives of the Karelians, Veps, Finns of the Republic of Karelia of the Head of the Republic of Karelia are appointed only upon the recommendations of indigenous peoples' public institutions.

The information about laws and legal acts including those related to the rights and legitimate interests of indigenous peoples is available in the legal data base at the official web-portal of the authorities of the Republic of Karelia⁴. The Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy registers the municipal normative legal acts and publishes the list of social non-commercial organizations that are beneficiaries of the Republic of Karelia executive bodies' support. According to the Ministry, in 2017 "more than 400 announcements and press-releases covering the projects and

¹ Information about the activities of the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of the Republic of Karelia in 2017 (represented at the meeting of the Board of Ministry on 02.02.2018)

² The Decree of the Head of the Government of the Republic of Karelia of 22 June, 2001 № 154 "On the Council of the Representatives of the Karelians, Veps and Finns of the Republic of Karelia of the Head of the Government of the Republic of Karelia" <http://nationalkom.karelia.ru/dejatel-nost/koordinacionnye-organy/sovet-predstavitelej-karelov-vepsov-i-finnov-respubliki-karelija-pri-glave-respubliki-karelija/polozhenie-o-sovete/>

³ The report of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation "On the State of the Civil Society in the Russian Federation in 2017" - <https://report2017.oprf.ru>

⁴ <http://gov.karelia.ru/Legislation/lawbase.html>

activities aimed at ethnocultural development of peoples, maintenance of interethnic and interconfessional peace and consent in the Republic of Karelia” were published at the official web-portal of the Republic of Karelia, web-site and social network “Vkontakte”, at web-sites of social partners of the Ministry. Among other ways of dissemination of information by authorities there are social ad videos, annual meetings with the representatives of non-governmental organizations, support for book publishing and mass media production, training and informational and methodological workshops, and reception of citizens by the Head of the Republic of Karelia in municipal units.

The Head of the Republic and members of the government as well as some authorities have their own user accounts in social networks. Via the social networks the officials provide information not only about their work but also receive complaints and petitions¹. Thus, according to the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of Karelia in 2017, 225 petitions were received from the citizens, 73 of them – via social network “VKontakte”. Among the issues raised by the citizens there are also those concerning state support of indigenous peoples of the Republic of Karelia.²

The Republic of Mordovia

In the Republic of Mordovia the institution of Ombudsperson is actively functioning. The mandate of Ombudsperson in the Republic of Mordovia is established in order to provide additional guarantees of state protection of human and citizen’s rights, freedoms and legitimate interests as well as its realization in the territory of the Republic of Mordovia.

The Law № 14-Z of 30 March, 2012 “On Free Legal Aid in the Republic of Mordovia” was adopted in the Republic of Mordovia. According to the Law, with the view of legal awareness-raising and education of population the representatives of the state system of free legal aid publish in places available for citizens, mass media, Internet or by any other means, information about the procedure and cases of free legal aid provision, about the meaning, ways of realization and protection of rights and legitimate interests of citizens and legal entities; rules for state and municipal services provision and other information defined in the article 28 of the Federal Law №234-FZ of 21 November, 2011 “On Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation”.

The free legal aid to the poor and other vulnerable groups of population is provided by the legal clinic of the Ogarev Mordovia State University (MSU). Thematic workshops and practical trainings with invited practitioners are organized by the legal clinic of the Ogarev MSU in cooperation with the Department of legal disciplines and different state bodies and non-governmental organizations.

¹ <https://ptzgovorit.ru/news/napisat-vkontakte-parfenchikovu-teper-mozhno-tolko-lichnoe-soobshchenie>

² Information about the activity of the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of the Republic of Karelia in 2017 (represented at the meeting of the Board of Ministry on 02.02.2018)

Since 2015 the project “Territory of law” developed by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Mordovia, Administration of Justice Department, has been realized in educational organizations of the Republic of Mordovia. The project aims at awareness-raising of pupils about the fundamentals of the Russian legislation and mechanism of the judicial protection of rights.

Regional newspapers have columns dedicated to legal issues. The regional edition “Izvestiya Mordovii” publishes official texts of laws of the Republic of Mordovia. The television channel “Narodnoye Televidenie Mordovii” broadcasts the legal programs “Time of justice”, “Persona grata”.

b) Access to information about state and municipal services

The legal framework of realization of the right to access to information about state and municipal services is provided by the Federal Law № 210-FZ of 27 July, 2010 “On the Organization of Provision of State and Municipal Services”, Federal Law №8-FZ of 9 February, 2009 (revised on 28 December, 2017) “On Providing Access to Information on the Activities of State Bodies and Local Self-Government Bodies”.

The Republic of Karelia

The main form of state support for social non-commercial organizations is federal and regional subsidies (grants). The Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of the Republic of Karelia organizes competitions providing the non-governmental organizations of indigenous peoples with the possibility to receive grants for realization of social projects. The information about the competitions and all necessary documentation are published in advance at the web-site of the Ministry. The non-governmental organizations of indigenous peoples can also take part in the competitions organized by other authorities. The authorities provide the non-governmental organizations with technical assistance.

The agreement between the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs and the Government of the Republic of Karelia provides with the grant to support social and economic development of the Veps, small-numbered people of the North, Siberia and the Far East, in the Republic. The subsidies destination is defined with account of the opinion of the representatives of indigenous peoples; among other things the applications should be considered by the Council of the Veps of Prionezhsky district. Provision of information for the Veps should be based on the principle of free, prior and informed consent. Indigenous peoples should have an access to information about realization of any projects at all stages of their preparation and implementation. According to the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy there was no misuse of public funds¹.

¹ Information about the activity of the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of the Republic of Karelia in 2017 (represented at the meeting of the Board of Ministry on 02.02.2018)

The study of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples “On good practices and challenges, including discrimination, in business and in access to financial services by indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and indigenous persons with disabilities”¹ recognizes importance of informing indigenous peoples about business incentive programs. The study proposes as a possible solution peer-support networks, such as indigenous chambers of commerce, that help to create a climate for indigenous business through networking and promotional and advocacy type activities. The Expert Mechanism recommends that the use of indigenous languages in business activities should be enabled, and indigenous peoples should have access to information on financial services in their own languages.

The State Program of the Republic of Karelia “Ethnosocial and Ethnocultural Development of Traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples” proposes to solve this problem via advocacy activities to promote self-employment of unemployed citizens in the traditional territories of indigenous peoples. The Government of Karelia plans to increase by 2020 the number of citizens informed about the possibilities of starting their own business up to 40 people².

The Council of the Representatives of the Karelians, Veps and Finns of the Republic of Karelia of the Head of the Republic of Karelia raised many times the issue of personnel development and employment among indigenous peoples with knowledge of native languages. As part of the solution the work with youth on professional orientation as well as dissemination of information about vacancies and assigned places in higher education institutions are carried out in the districts of the Republic.

The cultural institutions seek to use indigenous languages in their activities as well as provide services in these languages. The National Museum of the Republic of Karelia is working to ensure texts and information materials of the exposition in indigenous languages.

The National Library of the Republic of Karelia has a section “Indigenous Peoples of Karelia”³ within its web-site as well as electronic catalogue of literature in national languages. By means of these sections it is possible to receive updated information on indigenous languages and culture of Karelia.

In 2017 the Government of the Republic of Karelia adopted the Concept of Development of Ethnocultural Education in the Republic of Karelia (languages and culture of the Karelians, Veps and Finns) for 2017-2025. The document was elaborated with the direct participation of indigenous peoples. It provides the framework for creation of comprehensive system of ethnocultural education in Karelia that includes the possibility of receiving information about indigenous

¹ A/HRC/36/53 The EMRIP study “Good practices and challenges, including discrimination, in business and in access to financial services by indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and indigenous persons with disabilities” - <http://www.undocs.org/ru/a/hrc/36/53>

²The Decree of the Government of the Republic of Karelia of 24.01.2018 about the adoption of the State Program of the Republic of Karelia «Ethnic social and cultural development of the traditional territories of indigenous peoples” <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/1000201801260004>

³ <http://knk.karelia.ru>

peoples by citizens, in particular in digital space.¹ The information related to the ethnocultural education is available at the Portal of the ethnocultural education².

In 2014 the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples published the study “On promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction, prevention and preparedness initiatives”³. The study highlights that one key means of strengthening the participation of indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction is through education and awareness-raising. “Indigenous peoples have the right to receive information to reduce their risk and vulnerability and to protect themselves, their property and their livelihoods”. The experts emphasize the important role of early warning systems and dissemination of information that allows people making informed decisions and taking action in order to avoid risk or, at a minimum, reduce the risk, to their lives, health and property. The experts believe that the information should be provided to the indigenous peoples in their native languages among other.

The efforts to ensure information and early warning for citizens including those living in the traditional territories of indigenous peoples about expected disasters and poor weather conditions are undertaken in the Republic of Karelia. Such information is provided in Russian by means of telephone and mass media. The State Committee of the Republic of Karelia for Life Support and Security of the Population informed the Council of the Representatives of the Karelians, Veps and Finns of the Republic of Karelia about its intention to hire five call-takers with knowledge of Finno-Ugric languages for the duty shift “Systems - 112”⁴.

It is also known that the Legislative Assembly of the Republic of Karelia did mapping of settlements many of which are remote areas of dense residence of indigenous peoples where the access to mobile services and Internet is absent or limited. The deputies proposed to make amendments to the Federal Program “Elimination of Digital Inequality” in Karelia by reducing the minimum number of residents in a settlement that determines inclusion of a settlement into the program⁵.

The Republic of Mordovia

According to the Federal Law №210-FZ of 27 July, 2010 “On the Organization of Provision of State and Municipal Services” the multipurpose center (MPC) is an institution mandated to organize provision of state and municipal services, including electronically, by the principle of “one window”

¹ The Decree of the Government of the Republic of Karelia №182r-P of 4.04.2017 “On Adoption of the Concept of Development of Ethnocultural Education in the Republic of Karelia (languages and culture of the Karelians, Veps and Finns) for 2017–2025” <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/465412354>

² <http://edu-rk.ru/index.php/edu/info>

³ A/HRC/27/66 The study of EMRIP “Promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction, prevention and preparedness initiatives” <http://undocs.org/ru/A/HRC/27/66>

⁴ Information represented at the meeting of the Council of the Representatives of the Karelians, Veps and Finns of the Republic of Karelia of the Head of the Republic of Karelia of 28.10.2014.

⁵ http://karelia-zs.ru/presssluzhba/novosti/karel_skie_parlamentarii_predlozhili_razrabotat_dorozhnyuyu_kartu_razvitiya_sotovoj_svyazi_i_interneta_na_territorii_respubliki/

which means provision of a state or municipal service after a single relevant request of the applicant.

Among first MPCs in the Republic of Mordovia those in the urban district of Saransk were created on the basis of the Citizens Reception Center existing from 2007 as well as in Ruzayevsky municipal district.

On 25 February, 2013 the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Mordovia №61 “On Establishment of the State Autonomous Institution of the Republic of Mordovia “Multipurpose Center for Provision of State and Municipal Services” was adopted. This Decree provided the SAI of the Republic of Mordovia “MPC” with the status of MPC mandated to coordinate and interact with other multipurpose centers situated in the territory of this subject. Among the statutory goals of this institution are:

- awareness-raising of individuals and legal entities about the procedure, ways and conditions of provision of state and municipal services;
- organization of consulting on the provision of state and municipal services.

As of 30 September, 2017 in the Republic of Mordovia the multipurpose centers for provision of state and municipal services are created and function in all municipal districts (in total 23 MPCs in municipal districts and Saransk urban district, 221 windows).

In order to improve availability of state and municipal services for rural population the territorial branches function in 64 municipalities of the Republic of Mordovia (74 windows) that allows the rural population receiving services directly in their places of residence without leaving for the district center. According to the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Mordovia as of 30 September, 2017, the percentage of citizens in the Republic having access to state and municipal services by “one window” principle makes up 99.6 %¹.

The information about state and municipal services is provided at the information boards of the MPCs, web-portal of state and municipal services (functions) of the Republic of Mordovia², web-sites of administrations of municipal districts of the Republic of Mordovia, web-sites of MPCs of municipal districts of the Republic of Mordovia.

The Mordovian mass media publish information about the procedure of receiving state and municipal services by the principle of “one window”. According to the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Mordovia as of 30 September, 2017, 4 materials were published in the newspaper “Mokshen Pravda”, 10 materials – in “Erzyan Pravda”, 48 materials – in “Izvestiya Mordovii”. 115 materials were published in district media resources. The television channel “Teleset Mordovia” showed 146 videos. The relevant information is published on regular basis at the web-site of the state authorities of the Republic of Mordovia -

¹ Public reporting on realization of the Order of the President of the Russian Federation of 7 May, 2012 №601 The form of the public reporting on the Order of the President of the Russian Federation of 7 May, 2012 № 601 for 9 months in 2017 // http://mineco.e-mordovia.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1601%3A-7-2012-601&catid=114%3A2010-03-19-08-41-22&Itemid=563 (reference date: 26.01.2018)

² <http://gosuslugi.e-mordovia.ru> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

<http://www.e-mordovia.ru> (during 9 months in 2017, 46 materials were published) and official web-site of MPCs (web-pages within the official web-sites of municipal districts), including the web-site of the SAI of the Republic of Mordovia “MPC” - <http://www.mfc13.ru>¹.

c) Access to information in digital space and mass media. Access to information in native languages.

The Republic of Karelia

In the Republic of Karelia the Autonomous Institution of the Republic of Karelia “The Publishing House “Periodika” publishes print media in indigenous languages; the State Television and Radio Company “Karelia” ensure news coverage and thematic radio and television programs in national languages. The archives of print media in indigenous languages are being digitalized and made public. The mass media have their web-pages as well as social media accounts. However, the Congress of the Karelians emphasized many times that it is necessary to preserve and increase the number of print media copies as well as to adjust the time of TV-programs broadcasting in national languages so that more people could watch them². The initiatives aimed at increase of reading among rural population including the reading courses and Roman script learning were realized.

By the initiatives of the public and with support of the authorities the Publishing House “Periodika” is widening its activity and transforming into the language resource media center of the Baltic Finns of Karelia. The aim of this Centre is creating conditions for increasing the use of indigenous languages and its modernization including via their more active use in information and communication technologies³. The Center will allow strengthening cooperation among mass media, non-governmental organizations and authorities. It is proposed that the Center would work as a focal point for ethnolinguistic activities in the Northwestern Federal District⁴. The initiative was supported by the Government of the Republic of Karelia and set in the Order of the Head of the Republic of Karelia following the VIII Congress of the Karelians⁵. The project will play an important role in the empowerment of indigenous peoples with regard to receiving necessary information.

¹ Public reporting on realization of the Order of the President of the Russian Federation of 7 May, 2012 №601 The form of the public reporting on the Order of the President of the Russian Federation of 7 May, 2012 № 601 for 9 months of 2017 // http://mineco.e-mordovia.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1601%3A-7-2012-601&catid=114%3A2010-03-19-08-41-22&Itemid=563 (reference date: 26.01.2018)

² The Resolution of the VIII Congress of the Karelians of the Republic of Karelia

³ The Concept of the Language Resource Media Centre of the Baltic Finns of Karelia

⁴ Z.I.Strogalschikova, Multimedia Resource Center of Cultural Heritage of the Baltic Finns of the North-West: from concept to realization // The final compilation of speeches of the participants of the Interregional research and practical conference dedicated to the current problems of the Finno-Ugric peoples. “The Finno-Ugric peoples of the North-West of Russia: problems of preserving and retransmitting traditional culture”. 14 November, 2017. Leningrad oblast. Page 14-22.

⁵ The Order of the Head of the Republic of Karelia following the VIII Congress of the Karelians

The Republic of Karelia remains the only Republic in the Russian Federation where the language of the title nation does not have the official status. This restricts the possibility to receive information in native languages for indigenous peoples. The main issue in the agenda of the Karelian national movement is an issue of status of the Karelian language¹. The Council of representatives of the VIII Congress of the Karelians of the Republic of Karelia in cooperation with the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy elaborated the road map “The Karelian language is official language of the Republic of Karelia”; the working group for roadmap realization functioned. However, it has been argued in the public space that there is a lack of information on realization of the road map. In September 2017, the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy held the Conference “Status of the Karelian language in the System of Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation: Legal, Linguistic and Cultural Aspects”, the materials of the Conference are available in the Internet.

The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Karelia expresses readiness to consider the issue in favor of making the bulletins in indigenous languages providing that the list of areas of dense residence of indigenous peoples is prepared and approved as well as there is such request from indigenous peoples. The national and subnational legislation allows voting in indigenous languages. Making bulletins and other election materials in indigenous languages could increase the level of participation of indigenous peoples in the elections. The Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy of Karelia was entrusted to prepare the list of the areas of dense residence of indigenous peoples in the Republic of Karelia.

There is the Commission for Terminology and Orthography of the Head of the Republic of Karelia that inter alia integrates new words and examines manuals and materials in indigenous languages that are to be issued. In 2017 the Commission for Terminology and Orthography made the translation into Karelian of the place identification signs, sign plates of educational and cultural organizations, official letterheads as well as carried out an expertise of draft programs of the Karelian and Vepsian languages study in the middle and senior schools. The Commission for Terminology and Orthography supported translation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other documents into Karelian and Vepsian. All these efforts contribute to information availability in indigenous languages.

The activists of the initiative group “The Official Status for the Karelian Language in Karelia” informed that the content of some replies to the requests directed to the officials about the status of the Karelian language was vague and did not meet the expectations of the requesting party².

The communication between citizens and authorities in indigenous languages provided by the law is obstructed in practice due to the lack of resources of the authorities to ensure necessary translation. It should be noted that the citizens themselves reluctantly communicate in indigenous languages mainly using the

¹ The Resolution of the VIII Congress of the Karelians of the Republic of Karelia

² <https://vk.com/club79741361>

Russian language for this purpose. According to the Ministry for Ethnic and Regional Policy, since 2014 only one petition was received in Karelian.

The Republic of Mordovia

The information society in the Republic of Mordovia is one of the most developed among other regions of Russia¹. As per the ranking of the regions by the level of the information society development presented at the session of the Council on Regional Informatization of the Ministry of Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Mordovia takes the 13th place and makes the top three of the regions of Privolzhsky Federal District.

In general, there is the positive dynamics in the Republic of Mordovia in terms of information and communication technologies development.

There is the State Program “The Development of Information Society in the Republic of Mordovia by 2020” being realized in the Republic of Mordovia².

One of the major ICT infrastructure facilities is data processing system (Data Center) in the Technology Park of the Republic of Mordovia. The resources of the Centre are used in particular for the infrastructure development of the e-government of the Republic of Mordovia.

The automated data system “Open Government”³ is implemented in Mordovia to publish in the Internet an open access information about the activity of state executive bodies and local self-government bodies of the Republic of Mordovia.

The whole territory of the Republic of Mordovia is covered by the digital terrestrial television and radio broadcasting.

Not only cities but all 22 municipal districts of the Republic are provided with digital fiber optic communication channels.

The target of eliminating digital inequality between urban and rural residents was set out by the Federal Law “About Communication” that provides for creation of access points in the settlements with the population numbering from 250 to 500 persons and access to the Internet with the speed not less than 10 Mb/s. The contract between the Federal Agency of Communication (Rossvyaz) and PAO “Rostelecom” provides for creation of Internet access points with the speed not less than 10 Mb/s in 202 localities of the Republic of Mordovia⁴.

¹The Republic of Mordovia took the 3d place in the Privolzhsky Federal District by the level of information society development [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://www.e-mordovia.ru/gosudarstvennaya-vlast-rm/ministerstva-vedomstva/ministerstvo-isrm/novosti/respublika-mordoviya-zanyala-3-mesto-v-privolzhskom-federalnom-okrugo-po-urovnyu-razvitiya-informats/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

² Adopted by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Mordovia № 421 of 23 September, 2013 “On the Adoption of the State Program of the Republic of Mordovia “The Development of Information Society in the Republic of Mordovia by 2018”; (the Program was extended until the end of 2020 by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Mordovia № 30 of 28 January, 2016)

³ The “Open Government” portal of the Republic of Mordovia [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://opendata.e-mordovia.ru/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁴ Free Internet access is now provided to the rural population of 111 localities of Mordovia [Electronic resource]. – Link: <https://www.rostelecom.ru/regions/volga/press/d441273/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

The language policy in the Republic of Mordovia is implemented in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Mordovia, Law № 19-Z of the Republic of Mordovia of 6 May, 1998 “On the Official Languages of the Republic of Mordovia” and some other normative legal acts.

Thus, the article 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mordovia sets out that Russian and Mordovian (Moksha and Erzya) are the official languages of the Republic of Mordovia.

The article 21 of the Law of the Republic of Mordovia “On the Official Languages of the Republic of Mordovia” provides that the mass media of the Republic of Mordovia (radio, television, press) ensure the official languages use as well as take into account the information needs of people belonging to other ethnic groups and living in the Republic.

The part 3 of the State Program “Harmonization of Interethnic and Interconfessional Relations in the Republic of Mordovia” for 2014-2020 identifies some problems in the area of native languages use in the Republic of Mordovia: limited record-keeping in Mordovian (Moksha, Erzya), partial provision of names of streets, place identification signs, names of shops and sales outlets in official languages of the Republic of Mordovia, inadequate organization of the Mordovian languages learning and educational process in preschool facilities in the district centers of the Republic of Mordovia largely inhabited by the Mordovian population, poor implementation of the Law “On Official Languages of the Republic of Mordovia” in the area of everyday services and transport, lack of translators in the Republic of Mordovia¹.

Mass media play important role in ensuring the right of access to information. They represent the main tool for expressing and shaping public opinion. Mass media provide relevant quality and objective information necessary for the best functioning of the society. The quality of mass media work and impartiality of material presentation determine the population’s trust to them.

The possibility of receiving immediate and credible information about the activities and decisions of state authorities by the population directly depends on the possibility of mass media to receive this information from the relevant bodies.

While considering the issues of realization of the right to access to information in native languages it is important to highlight the work of ethnic media. The following mass media have a major role in the realization of the right to access to information in native languages in the Republic of Mordovia:

– ethnic publications in Moksha and Erzya: newspapers “Mokshen Pravda”², “Erzyan Pravda”³, “Erzyan Mastor”¹, magazines for children and young

¹ The State program «Harmonization of Interethnic and Interconfessional Relations in the Republic of Mordovia” for 2014-2020, adopted by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Mordovia № 507 of 18 November, 2013 [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://e-mordovia.ru/otkrytye-dannye/tselevye-programmy/ministerstvo-politike-rm/gosudarstvennaya-programma-garmonizatsiya-mezhnatsionalnykh-i-mezhkonfessionalnykh-otnosheniy-v-resp/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

² “Mokshen Pravda”: newspaper [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://www.mokshen-pr.ru/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

³ “Erzyan Pravda”: newspaper [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://erziapr.ru/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

people “Yakster Tyashtenya”², “Chilisema”³, literary and news magazines “Moksha” and “Syatko”⁴ and other publications; besides, some municipal newspapers contain separate pages in Moksha and Erzya (for example, the page “Likhtibrya” in Moksha in the Ruzayevsky municipal district’s publication “Ruzayevskaya Gazeta”);

– TV-programs in Moksha and Erzya – “Siyazhar”⁵ (State Television and Radio Company “Mordovia”, TV-channel “Rossiya”), “Od pinga”⁶ (Television company “Teleset Mordovii”, channel 10), “Mordovia 24”⁷ (“Narodnoye Televideniye Mordovii”).

– Radio programs in Moksha and Erzya: “Vaygel”⁸ (Autonomous Institution “Mordovia – 7 dney”, on a frequency of 73.88 VHF), “Siyazhar”⁹ (State Television and Radio company “Mordovia”, Radio of Mordovia).

The Internet provides with huge opportunities for ensuring access to information in native languages. Most of the above mentioned ethnic media of the Republic of Mordovia publish their content in Internet.

The official web-portal of state authorities of the Republic of Mordovia (<http://www.e-mordovia.ru>) has Moksha and Erzya versions.

However, it should be acknowledged that there is still much to do to further develop ethnic media and ensure the right to access to information in native languages in the Republic of Mordovia. The decrease in number of copies of ethnic publications is the pressing issue, as the Congresses of Mordovian peoples noted many times. The following problems are expected to be solved: resumption of district newspapers publication in Moksha and Erzya in all districts of the Republic; creation of the Internet archive of existing radio and television programs in native languages; resumption of translation practice of the official documents into the Mordovian languages; development and implementation of measures aimed at providing support to the Mordovian languages in computer technologies¹⁰.

¹ “Erzyan Mastor”: newspaper [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://www.erzia.saransk.ru/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

² “Yakster Tyashtenya”: magazine [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://vk.com/club118080936> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

³ “Chilisema”: magazine [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://chilisema.ru/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁴ “Syatko”: magazine [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://vk.com/club78443596> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁵ “Siyazhar”: television program [Electronic resource]. – Link: <https://mordoviatv.ru/kompaniya/programmymi/siyazhar/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁶ “Od pinga”: television program [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://10tvr.ru/programmy/category/9> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁷ “Mordovia 24”: television program [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://ntm13.ru/mordoviya-24/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁸ “Vaygel”: radio program [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://vaigel.ru/broadcast/all> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁹ “Siyazhar”: radio program [Electronic resource]. – Link: <https://mordoviatv.ru/radio-mordovii/arhiv-radio-rossii/siyazhar/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

¹⁰ The Resolution of the VI Congress of Mordovian (Moksha and Erzya) Peoples, adopted on 24 October, 2014

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study it can be said that in general the national and subnational legislation (in particular in the Republic of Karelia and the Republic of Mordovia) ensures realization of the right to access to information. However, it should be recognized that there are certain problems in the fulfillment of this right in practice.

The right to access to information should be realized by consolidated efforts, including non-governmental organizations, state institutions, and aimed at creating legal, economic and institutional conditions favorable for this right enjoyment, including by indigenous peoples.

In view of the digital space development, in particular Internet, many regional mass media will have to do much to develop, improve and promote their publications, especially in native languages.

Recommendations to improve access to information for indigenous peoples

- To continue further development of regulatory and legal framework necessary for realization of the right to access to information for indigenous peoples;
- To ensure availability of legal information, development of system of legal education and awareness-raising for the representatives of indigenous peoples, including effective functioning of the relevant inquiry systems;
- In view of rather small audience reached by legal information sources, mainly specialists, it is necessary for mass media to hold more intensively information activities (television and radio programs, newspapers columns etc.) aimed at increase of knowledge and awareness-raising about the rights of indigenous peoples as well as their promotion and protection;
- To hold more actively preliminary discussions of draft laws and normative legal acts in the subjects of the Russian Federation related to the rights and legal interests of indigenous peoples with their direct participation in such discussions;
- To contribute to spread of literacy in the area of information and communication technologies among indigenous peoples;
- In view of a big language gap in the cyber space that increases the current digital gap, to support content provision in native languages;
- To strengthen interagency cooperation within the UN mechanisms by the international organizations to arrange and create knowledge base open to public, to increase awareness of indigenous peoples about their rights, to carry out outreach activities related to the right of indigenous peoples to access to information;

– Providing that 2019 is proclaimed by the United Nations as an International Year of Indigenous Languages¹, to strengthen measures aimed at improving the status of native languages and widening areas of their use;

– To develop awareness-raising campaigns, conduct workshops and trainings on a healthy lifestyle for indigenous peoples. To ensure gathering and publishing objective statistical information about diseases among indigenous peoples. To establish the statistics of health and demographic as well as social indicators of small-numbered indigenous peoples using the modes of federal state statistical monitoring;

– Not only state authorities and local self-government bodies should be obliged to raise legal awareness of indigenous peoples. The duty of legal awareness-raising should be also imposed on civil society organizations, national non-governmental organizations the chartered aims and objectives of which include protection and promotion of rights, consultative assistance to the members of non-governmental organizations. Thus, the Consultative Committee of Finno-Ugric Peoples (CCFUP) defends and protects the rights and interests of Finno-Ugric peoples set out in the Declaration of Major Principles, Aims and Objectives of Cooperation between the Finno-Ugric Peoples². According to the Charter of the Youth Association of Finno-Ugric Peoples (YAFUP) one of its goals is protection of political, social and economic, and other rights of Finno-Ugric peoples³. The aims and objectives of the Association of the Finno-Ugric Peoples of the Russian Federation include protection of the rights of Finno-Ugric peoples of the Russian Federation; dissemination of civil society ideas, increase of legal awareness of the population, protection of human and citizen's rights and freedoms⁴;

– In view of the particular features of the Republic of Karelia, to ensure the web-sites functioning in indigenous languages along with the official Russian language to improve dialogues between the representatives of indigenous peoples and authorities. The use of indigenous languages in the work of authorities will contribute to the achievement of one of the aims of the Strategy of State National Policy of the Republic of Karelia by 2025 aimed inter alia at preserving the Karelians and Veps as unique ethnic groups of the world community.

¹ The United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution (A/RES/71/178) on 'Rights of Indigenous Peoples', proclaiming 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

² The Statutes of the Consultative Committee of the Finno-Ugric Peoples – [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://www.fucongress.org/consultativny-comitet/polozhenie-o-konsultativnom-komitete-finno-ugorskix-narodov/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

³ About the Association – [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://mafun.org/about/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)

⁴ The Charter of the All-Russian public movement "Association of the Finno-Ugric Peoples of the Russian Federation" – [Electronic resource]. – Link: <http://www.afunrf.ru/docs/ustav/> (reference date: 26.01.2018)