

ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT IN MUNICIPALITIES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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Article info

Received –

2023 June 16

Accepted –

2023 October 10

Available online –

2023 December 20

Keywords

Accessible environment, unhindered access, powers of local self-government bodies, powers of the owner, disabled people in municipalities, rights of disabled people, accessibility indicators

The subject. This article discusses the main issues related to the competence of local governments in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled.

Methodology. The paper analyzes the federal legislation regulating the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled, and discusses the essence of these powers.

Main results, scope of application. The powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled should be considered, first of all, as the powers of the owner.

At the same time, the powers of the owner are not the only powers of local governments in this area. Local self-government bodies participate in activities to ensure that disabled people living on the territory of the relevant municipalities have equal opportunities with other citizens in the exercise of their rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Based on this, local self-government bodies should participate in providing an accessible environment for disabled people not only on municipal property, but also on the territory of the municipality as a whole, together with state authorities and organizations.

The second group of powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled can include: (1) the powers of local self-government bodies, which are implemented by them when granting local self-government bodies separate state powers in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled; (2) the powers of local self-government bodies, which are implemented by them jointly with the state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation at the expense of subsidies from the regional budget as part of the implementation of measures of the state programs of the subjects of the Russian Federation on the accessible environment; (3) the powers of local self-government bodies to participate, together with public organizations of disabled people, in the work on certification of priority facilities and services in priority areas of life of disabled people and other low-mobility groups of the population, carried out by state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation.

Conclusions. When considering the issue of the essence of the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled, based on the analysis of the practice of the Russian Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, it was revealed that by their nature these powers, as a rule, are neither separate state powers transferred to local self-government bodies for implementation, nor their own powers of local self-government bodies to address issues of local importance.

I. Introduction.

The issue of an accessible environment has always been quite difficult and relevant for our modern Russian state and society. It is even more difficult for municipalities of the Russian Federation. Despite the rather long-term operation of comprehensive programs to ensure an accessible environment for disabled people at the federal, regional and municipal levels, according to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Russian Federation, the indicator "the share of priority social, transport, engineering infrastructure facilities available to disabled people and other low-mobility groups of the population in the total number of priority facilities" in the Russian Federation according to the results of 2022 is only 76.6 percent. Therefore, it is still very early to talk about a complete solution to the problem of ensuring accessibility for disabled people and other low-mobility groups of priority social, transport, and engineering infrastructure facilities. This indicates the urgency of this problem.

In this article, the author examines the main issues related to the competence of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for citizens with disabilities, who are traditionally referred to as "disabled" in Russian legislation. The paper analyzes the federal legislation regulating the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled, and discusses the essence of these powers.

We will consider these issues using the formal legal method, methods of analyzing regulatory legal acts of various levels regulating the powers of local governments in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled, and judicial practice in this area, as well as the synthesis of conclusions and proposals based on this analysis.

The issues of the implementation of the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled are poorly studied in the scientific and educational legal literature. Traditionally, in the sciences of constitutional law and social security law, only general issues of the constitutional and

legal status of persons with disabilities in the Russian Federation are studied (dissertation studies of Rakhimli A.P. [1], Brizetsky S.N. [2], Lykhina T.A. [3], Albeeva A.Yu. [4]), issues of protection of the rights of certain categories of disabled people (dissertation research by Ilina O.M. [5], Ushankova I.V. [6], Chepurny A.G. [7]), general issues of legal regulation of social protection of disabled people in the Russian Federation, labor and social security of disabled people (dissertation research by Antipyeva N.V. [8], Yasyreva I.N. [9], Zhavoronkova R.N. [10]), etc.

Separate scientific articles by Roch'eva Ya.S., Svintsova A.A., Raduto V.I., Shestakov V.P., Chernyakina T.S., Radkova E.A., Chernova G.I. are devoted to general legal problems of disabled people [11, 12, 13]. General issues of the implementation of the state program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment" and the requirements of a barrier-free environment are considered in scientific articles by Lebedeva E.P., Minina A.A., Perepadya S.M., Rizk O.A. [14], Dolinskaya V.V., Dolinskaya L.M. [15], Lavrova Yu.V. [16], Raduto V.I., Svintsova A.A., Shestakova V.P. [17]. Scientific articles by Shestakov V.P., Svintsov A.A., Chernyakina T.S., Raduto V.I. are devoted to certain aspects of the practice of state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled [18, 19]. These authors also studied certain aspects of the judicial practice of courts of general jurisdiction in the framework of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [20] and administrative and legal provision of unhindered access of persons with disabilities to social infrastructure facilities [21]. At the same time, there is no municipal component in all the above-mentioned works: they do not address the problems of implementing the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled.

In the legal literature, the issues of exercising the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled are covered in a very small amount and only in general terms. In the scientific literature there are only works devoted to the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of landscaping (for

example, scientific articles by Sergeev A.A. [22] and Lavrentieva O.V. [23]). Matulov B.N. discusses the issues of delegating state social powers to local self-government bodies [24], Solomakha D.V. the differentiation of the powers of local self-government bodies in the exercise of the powers of the owner of municipal property was studied [25], and Raduto V.I. investigated the municipal-legal aspects of rehabilitation of disabled people [26]. At the same time, the above-mentioned works do not directly address the problems of implementing the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled.

In this regard, there are currently no scientific legal works aimed at studying the exercise of the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled in the legal literature. In this regard, this work is relevant and new.

II. Analysis of federal legislation regulating the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled.

According to Article 7 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, in Russia, as in a social state, state support for disabled and elderly citizens is provided, a system of social services and other guarantees of social protection are being developed. Social protection of disabled persons belongs to the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the subjects of the Russian Federation (paragraph "g" of part 1 of Article 72 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation). The Government of the Russian Federation ensures the functioning of the social protection system for disabled people, their social integration without any discrimination, the creation of an accessible environment for disabled people and the improvement of their quality of life (subparagraph "B.2" of part 1 of Article 114 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation). The mention of an accessible environment for the disabled appeared in the Constitution of the Russian Federation only after the 2020 amendments.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation does not directly enshrine the powers of public authorities of various levels in the field of social

protection of disabled people – their establishment within the constitutionally prescribed limits is the responsibility of the federal legislator, who, on the basis and in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, has the right to determine the content and scope of the relevant competence of both state authorities of the Russian Federation, state authorities of subjects of the Russian Federation, and local self-government bodies.

In Federal Law No. 131-FZ dated 06.10.2003 "On General Principles of the Organization of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation" (hereinafter - Federal Law No. 131), the accessible environment is mentioned in Articles 14, 16, 16.2, 17 on issues of local significance of certain types of municipalities and the powers of local self-government bodies to address issues of local significance. So, for example, the issues of local importance of the municipal district and the urban district include the approval of the rules for the improvement of the territory of the municipal, urban district, the implementation of municipal control in the field of improvement, the subject of which is compliance with the rules for the improvement of the territory of the municipal, urban district, including the requirements for accessibility for disabled people of social, engineering and transport infrastructure and provided services.

At the same time, it should be noted that in Federal Law No. 131 there is a certain contradiction about the obligation of local self-government bodies to provide for provisions on an accessible environment for the disabled in the rules for the improvement of the territory of the municipality. If the articles on issues of local importance contain an imperative requirement that the rules of improvement of the territory of the municipality contain provisions on an accessible environment for the disabled, which are necessarily checked during the implementation of municipal control in the field of improvement. Then, in paragraph 9 of part 2 of Article 45.1 of Federal Law No. 131 on the content of the rules for the improvement of the territory of the municipality, it is provided that the rules for the improvement of the territory of the municipality may regulate the issues of the arrangement of the territory of the municipality in order to ensure unhindered movement of disabled people and other

low-mobility groups of the population on the specified territory.

According to part 1.1 of Article 17 of Federal Law No. 131 on issues classified in accordance with articles 14, 15 and 16 of Federal Law No. 131 as issues of local significance, federal laws may establish the powers of local self-government bodies to address these issues of local significance. In this regard, Federal Law No. 181-FZ of 24.11.1995 "On Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Russian Federation" (hereinafter referred to as the Federal Law on Disabled Persons) establishes additional powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for disabled people.

The most important for our topic is Article 15 of the Federal Law on Persons with Disabilities, according to which federal state authorities, state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation, local self-government bodies (in the sphere of established powers), organizations, regardless of their organizational and legal forms, provide disabled people:

1) conditions for unhindered access to social, engineering and transport infrastructure facilities (residential, public and industrial buildings, buildings and structures, including those in which physical culture and sports organizations, cultural organizations and other organizations are located), recreation facilities and services provided in them;

2) conditions for the unhindered use of rail, air, water transport, road transport and urban ground electric transport in urban, suburban, intercity communication, communication and information means (including means that ensure the duplication of sound signals of traffic lights and devices regulating the movement of pedestrians through transport communications);

3) the possibility of independent movement on the territory where social, engineering and transport infrastructure facilities are located, entry into and exit from such facilities, boarding and disembarking from a vehicle, including using a wheelchair;

4) proper placement of equipment and information carriers necessary to ensure unhindered access of persons with disabilities to social, engineering and transport infrastructure

facilities and services, taking into account the limitations of their life, etc.

III. The question of the essence of the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled.

Based on the complex and non-delimited wording of article 15 of the Federal Law on the Disabled, in practice, the question arose about the essence of the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled. Whether these powers are the local self-government bodies' own powers to resolve issues of local self-government, or in fact they are separate state powers transferred to local self-government bodies for implementation. This issue has become the subject of consideration by the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation. Thus, the Ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation dated 13.05.2010 No. 689-O-O "On refusal to accept for consideration the complaint of the municipal formation - the city district "Zelenogorsk City" of the Krasnoyarsk Territory for violation of constitutional rights and freedoms by the provisions of Article 15 of the Federal Law "On Social Protection of Disabled People in the Russian Federation" was adopted.

The Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation concluded that having established in the Federal Law on Disabled Persons the powers, rights and obligations of various subjects to implement measures of social protection of disabled persons, the federal legislator attributed to such measures the obligation of a number of subjects, including local self-government bodies, to create conditions for disabled people for unhindered access to social infrastructure facilities. The provision of article 15 of the Federal Law on Persons with Disabilities, which enshrines this obligation, is general in nature and does not contain instructions on specific ways of its execution by authorized entities, including local self-government bodies, nor does it delimit responsibility for its implementation between these entities. This provision does not limit the independence of local self-government bodies in choosing the means of implementing this duty, since it does not directly provide for the amount of local budget expenditures on measures to create conditions for disabled people

to access social infrastructure facilities and the timing of solving the task.

The public obligation arising from the norms of federal legislation to ensure the accessibility of buildings and structures for the disabled and other groups of the population with limited mobility is imposed, in particular, on the owners of buildings and structures. With regard to buildings and structures that are in municipal ownership, this obligation is imposed, unless otherwise established by law, on municipalities represented by local self-government bodies; by its nature, this duty is neither a State authority nor the authority of local self-government bodies. Thus, the contested provision of the first part of Article 15 of the Federal Law on the Disabled does not violate the constitutional rights of the applicant by itself.

In addition, a similar conclusion was confirmed by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation. So, the resolution of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of 13.05.2014 No. 32-AD14-1 was adopted, which provides for the following. By the decision of the Justice of the Peace, left unchanged by the decisions of higher courts, the administration of the Leninsky district of the municipal formation "City of Saratov" was found guilty of committing an administrative offense provided for in Article 9.13 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation "Evading the requirements for ensuring conditions for access of disabled people to engineering, transport and social infrastructure facilities", and was subjected to administrative punishment in the form of an administrative fine in the amount of 20,000 rubles. From the materials of the case of an administrative offense, it follows that during the inspection by officials of the Ministry of Social Development of the Saratov region, it was revealed that the administration of the Leninsky district of the municipal formation "City of Saratov" did not take measures to create conditions for unhindered access of disabled people to the administration of the Leninsky district of the municipal formation "City of Saratov", thereby evaded the requirements to ensure the conditions for disabled people's access to social infrastructure facilities, violating the requirements of article 15 of the Federal Law on the Disabled.

By virtue of the provisions of article 15 of the Federal Law on the Disabled, the district administration, as a local self-government body, is obliged to create conditions for disabled people for unhindered access to social infrastructure facilities. It follows from the case materials that the object of the non-residential fund, in which the administration of the Leninsky district of the municipal formation "City of Saratov" is located, is the property of the municipal formation "City of Saratov". Thus, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation confirmed that the fact of securing the local administration building to the operational management of a municipal state institution does not exempt the municipality, represented by the district administration, from the obligation to ensure accessibility requirements for the disabled of the local administration building, which is in municipal ownership, and also does not exempt the local administration from administrative responsibility.

Therefore, first of all, the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled are associated with municipal property objects. It is their local self-government bodies that are obliged to bring them into compliance with the regulatory requirements on accessibility. But these are not the only powers of local governments in this area. Local self-government bodies, by virtue of the constitutional purpose of local self-government as the level of power closest to the population (Articles 12, 130 - 133 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation), within their powers, participate in activities to ensure that disabled people living on the territory of the relevant municipalities have equal opportunities with other citizens in the exercise of their rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution of the Russian Federation (articles 2, 7, 18 and 19). Based on this, local self-government bodies should participate in providing an accessible environment for disabled people not only on municipal property, but also on the territory of the municipality as a whole, together with state authorities and organizations.

The second group of powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled can include:

1) the powers of local self-government bodies, which are implemented by them when granting local self-government bodies separate state powers in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled. For example, such an opportunity is directly provided for by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 599 dated 17.06.2015 "On the procedure and timing of the development by Federal Executive authorities, Executive authorities of the Subjects of the Russian Federation, local self-government bodies of measures to increase the values of accessibility indicators for disabled people of facilities and services in established areas of activity";

2) the powers of local self-government bodies, which are implemented by them jointly with the state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation at the expense of subsidies from the regional budget as part of the implementation of measures of the state programs of the subjects of the Russian Federation on the accessible environment.

Thus, in accordance with the Decree of the Government of the Omsk Region dated 16.10.2013 No. 261-p "On approval of the state program of the Omsk region "Accessible Environment", subsidies are provided to the budgets of municipalities of the Omsk region from the regional budget in order to co-finance expenditure obligations arising from the exercise of the powers of local self-government bodies of the Omsk region on issues of local importance within the framework of the implementation of such Program activities such as:

a) creation of conditions for inclusive education of disabled children in municipal preschool educational organizations, general education organizations, organizations of additional education of children, including the creation of a universal barrier-free environment for unhindered access, and equipping organizations of additional education of children with special, including educational, rehabilitation, computer equipment and vehicles;

b) arrangement of pedestrian crossings with traffic lights with sound signals, equipment of traffic lights with sound signals;

c) ensuring unhindered access of disabled and low-mobility groups of the population to bus stops and pedestrian crossings on public transport routes.

Subsidies for these purposes for the city of Omsk are provided in 2023 in the proportion of 89 percent from the regional budget and 11 percent from the budget of the city of Omsk;

3) participation of local self-government bodies together with public organizations of disabled people in the work on certification of priority facilities and services in priority areas of life of disabled people and other low-mobility groups of the population carried out by state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation. For example, in the Omsk region, such events are held in accordance with the decree of the Government of the Omsk region dated 07.08.2013 No. 192-p "On approval of the Procedure for the formation of an accessible environment for the disabled and other low-mobility groups of the population in the Omsk region."

IV. Conclusions.

Thus, in this paper we have considered the question of what difficulties disabled people face in practice when exercising their powers in the field of providing an accessible environment by local self-government bodies. We found out that the powers to address issues of local importance include the implementation of municipal control in the field of landscaping, the subject of which is, among other things, compliance with the requirements for ensuring accessibility for disabled people of social, engineering and transport infrastructure and services provided.

When considering the issue of the essence of the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled, based on the analysis of the practice of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, it was revealed that by their nature these powers, as a rule, are neither separate state powers transferred to local self-government bodies for implementation, nor their own powers of local self-government bodies to address issues of local importance. The public obligation arising from the norms of federal legislation to ensure the accessibility of buildings and structures for the disabled and other groups of the population with

limited mobility is primarily assigned to the owners of buildings and structures. With regard to buildings and structures that are in municipal ownership, this obligation is imposed on municipalities in the person of local self-government bodies, unless otherwise established by law. Therefore, the powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled should be considered, first of all, as the powers of the owner.

At the same time, the powers of the owner are not the only powers of local governments in this area. Local self-government bodies participate in activities to ensure that disabled people living on the territory of the relevant municipalities have equal opportunities with other citizens in the exercise of their rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Based on this, local self-government bodies should participate in providing an accessible environment for disabled people not only on municipal property, but also on the territory of the municipality as a whole, together with state authorities and organizations.

The second group of powers of local self-government bodies in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled can include:

- 1) the powers of local self-government bodies, which are implemented by them when granting local self-government bodies separate state powers in the field of providing an accessible environment for the disabled;

- 2) the powers of local self-government bodies, which are implemented by them jointly with the state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation at the expense of subsidies from the regional budget as part of the implementation of measures of the state programs of the subjects of the Russian Federation on the accessible environment;

- 3) the powers of local self-government bodies to participate, together with public organizations of disabled people, in the work on certification of priority facilities and services in priority areas of life of disabled people and other low-mobility groups of the population, carried out

by state authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation.

Due to the low actual values of accessibility indicators for disabled people of facilities and services of municipalities, local governments need to organize systematic work to increase the values of these accessibility indicators.

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

Dityatkovsky M.Yu. Accessible environment in municipalities of the Russian Federation. *Pravoprimenenie* = *Law Enforcement Review*, 2023, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 96–105. DOI: 10.52468/2542-1514.2023.7(4).96-105. (In Russ.).