

Regional universities in the cross-border space: problems of a legal status and a classification

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Abstract. The study is devoted to the problem of legal status and the types of regional universities in the cross-border space. The article analyzes the regulatory experience of the status of regional universities in Russia and Kazakhstan, specifically focusing on the cross-border regions. The authors conclude that regional universities play the role of key centers of scientific, educational, and socio-cultural development in border regions, training the personnel in the field of management and economics. In a number of countries of the world, regional universities in a cross-border space act as a platform for international communication and integration, as well as a factor in the retention of territory and cultural presence. The paper notes the positive experience of establishing the status of supporting universities in the Russian Federation in the cross-border regions of the Federation, particularly in the Altai Region and the Pskov Region. Support universities in these regions become the centers of educational and cultural development, attracting talented people from the regions of neighboring states.

Keywords: universities, regional universities, supporting universities, legal status

1. Introduction

The world educational practice is aware of the development of a network of regional universities along with the central (metropolitan) universities. The need for training personnel for the regions, the sociocultural development of the state's periphery dictates the creation of universities in the provinces [1]. In many cases, the formation of regional universities is caused by the need to maintain the presence of government and people in the cross-border areas. In this respect, the role and tasks of such cross-border universities are quite peculiar. At the same time, universities of this regional type often have a truncated legal status and limited financial support. By virtue of the established practice, in a number of states, leading and central universities have significant advantages.

2. Materials and Methods

The conducted scientific research is based on the collection and analysis of regulatory sources as basic empirical data for legal science. At the same time, the paper analyzed official documents of the

Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as special scientific sources on higher education issues.

In the study of the legal status and classification of regional universities, such methods were used as the formal legal, comparative legal, law interpretation methods. The formal legal method was used to analyze the regulatory legal acts determining the status of higher education institutions. The comparative legal method allowed to compare the types of universities in Russia and Kazakhstan on the basis of sources of law. The method of interpreting the norms of law was used to disclose the content of the concept of “supporting university”.

3. Results

In the Russian Federation, universities are divided into several types of a number of criteria (regulatory framework, the amount of autonomy and public funding, activity goals, place in higher education):

1. Universities with special status (Moscow State University and St. Petersburg State University);
2. Federal universities (10)
3. National research universities (29);
4. Supporting universities (33);
5. Regional and local universities that do not have the status of supporting universities (all other universities) [2].

In addition, by industry criterion and departmental subordination can be identified the following universities:

- Classical universities with a wide range of training areas;
- Technical universities;
- Medical universities;
- Agrarian universities;
- Departmental universities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecutor's Office, Investigation Committee, FSB, FSIN (law enforcement universities);
- Military universities.

In the Russian education system, higher education institutions are divided according to the criterion of the range of educational programs in:

- Universities;
- Academies;
- Institutes.

From the point of view of the title of the owner (founder) can be identified:

- Federal state universities;
- State universities of the Russian Federation;
- Municipal universities;
- Private universities.

From the point of view of the legal form, one can distinguish the following universities:

- Institutions;
- Autonomous institutions.

Regional universities of Russia are of particular interest in terms of their role and legal status in regional development. First of all, during the competition in 2015-2018, supporting universities, formed according to the model of American flagship universities, were selected among regional universities. This was done in order to prepare the regional elite and conduct research in the interests of the socio-economic development of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

Analysis of regulations governing the status of supporting universities allows us to formulate a number of signs of this category of educational organizations:

1. The supporting university aims to train personnel for the regional economy, social sphere and management;
2. The supporting university conducts research in the interests of the socio-economic development of the region;
3. The supporting university will allow to keep a talented part of applicants in the region, reducing migration and outflow from the regions [9];
4. As a result, the supporting university should promote the creation in the regions of comfortable conditions for a person's life, ensuring an equal standard of a person's life regardless of their place of residence (due to the orientation of scientific and social developments of support universities on creating a comfortable environment, improving the quality of life and developing a regional economy of impressions) [10].

Among experts there is a perception that it is a supporting university that can become a center of attraction for social innovation, the development of entrepreneurial projects, a place for the creative and cultural life of the region [11]. This is a so-called university campus, around which the whole life of the local community revolves – rural campus (campus, buildings, dormitories, libraries, offices of innovative companies, cafes, restaurants, banks, pharmacies, clinics, etc.). Such a university campus can be a condition for the development of creativity and the generation of new ideas [12]. Supporting universities in cross-border regions of the federation can act as a factor of social stability, reduction of social tension in the conditions of economic crisis. In addition, universities in such territories carry out their third mission, which is the cultural development of the region, the introduction of citizens to spiritual culture and additional education.

The supporting universities are the support of Russia's political and cultural presence in the cross-border areas. In the Russian Federation, the Altai State University and Pskov State University play such a role. Moreover, in recent years, the Altai State University plays the role of the presence of Russian culture in Central Asia, it is a serious institution of educational, scientific, and cultural integration of the peoples of Central Asia, including through the SCO University.

5. Supporting universities are selected on a competitive basis;
6. The development program of the supporting university should be coordinated with the state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and integrated into the program of socio-economic development of the regions.

Experts in the field of education view supporting universities as a logical continuation of the reform of higher education through the creation of leading universities and a network of support regional universities in Russia [13].

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the higher education institutions are also divided into several categories, according to criteria similar to Russia. So, from the point of view of the founder, the state and joint-stock (private) universities are allocated. State universities are divided into 3 categories:

- National universities;
- International universities established on the basis of agreements with foreign countries or conducting educational activities in international educational programs (including by the Turkish-Kazakh University - Ahmet Yesevi University);
- Other state universities.

The Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 16, 2013 No. 420 on Approval of the Model Rules for the Activities of Organizations of Higher and (or) Postgraduate Education indicates that higher and (or) postgraduate education is implemented in the following types of universities:

1. National research university;

2. National organization of higher and (or) postgraduate education;
3. Research university;
4. University;
5. Academy;
6. Institute;
7. Conservatory.

4. Discussion

The main problem of supporting universities is in terms of their legal status and legal fate. It is obvious that the fixation of the legal position of supporting universities in federal legislation suggests itself. Without waiting for the decisions of the central government, a number of subjects of the Russian Federation took the path of normative regulation of the position of support universities. Thus, in the Rostov Region, the Regional Law on the Interaction of the State Authorities of the Rostov Region with the Base University of the Rostov Region was adopted. [14]. In the regional law, the directions of participation of the reference university of the Rostov region in the socio-economic development of the Rostov region are determined:

1. Development and effective use of the scientific, technological, innovation and educational potential of the support university of the Rostov region for the purposes of personnel and research support for the socio-economic development of the Rostov region;
2. Involvement of the supporting university of the Rostov region to solving the tasks stipulated by the strategy of socio-economic development of the Rostov region, as well as other strategic planning documents of the Rostov region;
3. Providing, on the basis of scientific achievements of the support university of the Rostov region, rational and efficient use of resources of the Rostov region, increasing the competitiveness of goods produced in the Rostov region, works performed and services rendered and others [14].

It can be noted that the uncertainty of the legal position of support universities raises doubts about the preservation of this category of Russian universities in the perspective of 2019-2025. Establishing the status of supporting universities in education legislation and a clear separation of support and federal universities could be the logical conclusion of the reform of support universities. Lack of clarity in the status of support universities creates uncertainty among regional public authorities towards support universities politically (such an ambiguous situation may entail an inert and passive attitude of public authorities to the support of support universities). In addition, the refusal of regional authorities to support the creation of support universities because of the fear of merging and optimizing regional universities, as well as their transfer to regional funding (Irkutsk Region) is quite natural. Taking into account the provisions of the current normative legal acts, the life of the support universities is limited to the period of implementation of development programs for this category of universities. A new category of regional innovation space development centers is used instead of support universities.

The most numerous category of Russian universities (regional universities) are in a situation of even greater legal uncertainty. They have no peculiarities in their legal status. From the point of view of the state policy, a gradual reduction in the number of regional universities was quite natural. It was conducted in order to optimize government spending or transfer them to being financed from the budgets of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

5. Conclusion

Thus, we would like to note a tendency in the Russian practice of higher education to distinguish elite universities and peripheral universities in the regions. A total of 33 supporting universities stand apart from regional universities. These universities are positioned as the regional centers for training, research for the development of the region and socio-cultural development of the territory. At the same time, the legal uncertainty of the position of supporting universities casts doubt on the existence of this

category of universities after the completion of their development programs. The regional universities are even more at risk. They can gradually fall under the reduction and restriction of funding, or they can be transferred for financial support to the subjects of the Russian Federation, which is tantamount to their full commercialization. It should be noted that there are similar trends in world education in terms of selecting elite universities. Thus, in the Republic of Kazakhstan, national and international universities have a special status. At the same time, in foreign practice, the serious importance of provincial universities is noticeable. They have international educational programs and an established reputation in the field of science.

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