

people in rural areas and small urban settlements, as well as rural infrastructure. This decision is enshrined in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of October 4, 2022, № 351 «On the development of agricultural and ecological tourism». Pursuant to Decree 351, agricultural and ecological tourism is an activity aimed at introducing tourists to the national traditions, natural, agricultural and cultural potential of the country as well as providing recreation and health care services during their temporary stay at agricultural and ecological farmsteads.

Agricultural and ecological tourism is a type of tourism aimed at employing natural, cultural, historical and other resources of rural areas to create a comprehensive tourist product. In the years 2016 and 2018, Belarus ranked first as the best country for agricultural and ecological tourism by the *National Geographic Traveller* magazine (Russia). Agricultural and ecological tourism in rural areas is supported by young people, who want to run and develop their family business by actively promoting the establishment and development of agricultural and ecological farmsteads.

These farmsteads are located in the most picturesque places and designed in a folk or a modern eco-style. It is the national flavour that gives zest to traditional agricultural and ecological farmsteads, whose owners create special cultural programs and initiatives. Here you will hear local legends and authentic songs, learn Belarusian dances and take part in ancient folk rituals. You can even have a traditional Belarusian wedding party.

All things considered, we can state that agricultural and ecological tourism is one of the most attractive options for recreation in Belarus. Picturesque landscapes, salubrious environment and the unique vibe of the countryside attract guests to the country's farmsteads. Agricultural and ecological tourism is becoming increasingly popular in Belarus. Today, owners of farmsteads, farmers, artisans, representatives of the tourism business form clusters, offering their guests a wide range of services, creating unique tourist offers and their own brands.

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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS ON THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION AND THE MAKING OF POLITICAL DECISIONS

Влияние социологических и политических факторов на формирование общественного мнения и принятие политических решений

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the influence of sociological and political factors on the processes of public opinion formation and political decision-

making. The goal is to gain an understanding of how various social and political aspects contribute to or hinder conscious public engagement in political processes and to determine the mechanisms of interaction between these factors to promote stability and development within society.

Sociological and political factors play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing political decision-making. Public opinion is a complex social phenomenon that is formed under the influence of numerous factors, including economic conditions, the political environment, the level of education among the population, the degree of public awareness, and many others. It represents the collective views and assessments of individuals regarding various phenomena and events in social life. Public opinion can be shaped by media, social networks, political leaders, experts, and other factors [1].

Sociological factors such as social status, education level, age, gender, and occupation can significantly affect the formation of public opinion [2]. For example, individuals with higher levels of education tend to be more critical and have a broader perspective, allowing them to evaluate the political situation more objectively. Similarly, the lifestyle and values accepted within a particular sociocultural group can greatly influence how political information is perceived and how political leaders' actions are evaluated. Additionally, sociological research conducted among the population helps to understand citizens' preferences and needs, as well as their attitudes toward various aspects of social life.

Political factors, such as party affiliation, media influence, state regulation, actions of the government, parliament, political parties, and external influences from other states or international organizations, also significantly affect the formation of public opinion [2]. Political decisions and actions can elicit various reactions from society, including support, protest, or indifference. For instance, political leaders can use media to control information and influence how the public perceives events and political processes.

An example of the influence of sociological and political factors is the 2016 referendum on the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. Political parties and leaders, using different arguments and strategies, influenced voters' opinions, while sociological polls helped predict the outcome of the vote [3, p. 127].

Thus, sociological and political factors interact with each other and determine the processes of public opinion formation and political decision-making. Understanding this interaction enables political leaders and society as a whole to consciously and effectively influence decision-making processes and ensure stability and development in society.

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DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM IN THE MOSCOW REGION

Развитие экологического туризма в Подмосковье

The aim of this article is to analyze the chances of the Moscow region to become one of the key locations for the development of ecotourism in Russia.

Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing areas in the tourism industry, attracting an increasing number of travelers seeking to combine recreation with care for nature and its preservation. The Moscow Region boasts a rich variety of natural landscapes creating ideal conditions for active recreation and educational tourism. There are several nature reserves, such as «Losiny Ostrov» and «Zavidovo», which offer unique opportunities to observe local flora and fauna. The tourist flow to the ecological centers of «Losiny Ostrov» [1] is growing every year; over the past 10 years, it has increased almost 10 times! This is largely due to the opening of new ecological routes. Popular routes include the Barefoot Trail in the Arboretum and the Deer Trail at the Elk Biostation. In 2022–2023, for the first time since the national park was established, water excursions on kayaks and electric rafts were opened, and a private all-season recreation area with glamping was equipped.

The forests of the Moscow region are home to many species of animals and plants, many of which are listed in the Red Book. This creates great potential for organizing eco-tours, nature trails and excursion programs aimed at preserving biodiversity and ecosystems. For example, the «Adventure Club» organization [2], which has been organizing hikes and travels since 2003, has a tourist program that includes visits to ecological trails, eco-technical farms, local history and natural history museums, as well as familiarization with local environmental issues.

In recent years, the Moscow region has seen active development of tourism infrastructure. New ecological routes, hotels and recreation centers focused on eco-friendly recreation have been opening. Local authorities and entrepreneurs understand the importance of attracting tourists and are starting to invest in the development of comfortable and safe infrastructure.