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DIGITALIZATION OF THE SOCIAL SPHERE AS PART OF THE SMART CITY CONCEPT

Cities play a principal role in the social and economic aspects of life around the world and have a huge impact on the environment. A study by McKinsey & Company shows that by 2025 the 600 largest cities around the world will jointly generate 60% of global GDP. In Europe, 80% of the population (77.9% in Belarus) is urban. As a result, currently most of the resources are consumed in cities; this contributes to the growth of their economic importance but also worsens their environmental indicators. The growth of the urban population has led to transport challenges in cities; the load on all city services (healthcare, housing and communal services, etc.) has increased many times. In such conditions, concepts of a sustainable, eco-friendly, compact, creative, and smart city draw considerable attention of the media and local authorities.

The term “smart city” was first used in 1994, when the focus was on the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in relation to modern urban infrastructure. California Institute for Smart Communities was one of the first to focus on how communities can become smart and how a city can be designed to successfully implement ICT [1]. Today, a smart city is a broad concept that has an extensive range of definitions. The European Commission assumes that “... a smart city is a place where traditional infrastructure and services become more efficient through the use of digital technologies for the benefit of its residents and businesses” [2]. However, now a smart city is going beyond the use of digital technologies, which means more rational urban transport networks, modernized water supply and waste disposal systems, as well as more efficient ways of lighting and heating. It also means a more flexible city administration, safer public spaces and meeting the needs of population (digitalization of healthcare and education, digital transformation of archives, museums, and libraries and development of mobile applications for citizens and tourists).

Statista estimates global spending on smart city initiatives to reach \$189.5 billion in 2023 [3]. Currently there are more than 1,000 pilot smart city projects in the world.

Yinchuan, the capital of the Chinese province of Ningxia, with a population of 1.6 million people, is leading in the ranking. All payments in the city, including transport, are carried out by face scanning. People order products through mobile applications and take them from the nearest refrigerator-storage rooms. Officials communicate with citizens exclusively with the help of a hologram.

The second place is taken by the new Japanese city of Fujisawa. Its 3,000 inhabitants use only solar energy, drive only electric cars, mopeds, bicycles and scooters, and consume 30% less water than standard. Street lighting is equipped with sensors and turns on only if there are people on the street. If an earthquake occurs, the city can survive for 3 days completely autonomously, providing itself with energy, water and food.

Milton Keynes (UK), with its population of 192 thousand people, occupies the third place. Two-seat unmanned electric cars of the city can travel 64 km without recharging. MK-smart system collects all data about the urban economy in one database, and each resident uses it to optimize water and energy consumption.

And what about Belarusian cities and towns? Certainly, they cannot compete with developed cities of the world yet, but some elements of a smart city have already become common, for example, an electronic prescription or Service 115 in Minsk aimed at improving housing and communal services. There is a dedicated resource for tourists, KrokApp, through which they can read information about attractions or listen to an audio guide. Education and public services are next in line; it is planned to implement their transition to electronic document management.

In contrast to Minsk and regional centers, the level of digitalization in small towns in Belarus is generally very low: even the distribution of tickets to the theater, cinema or concerts through online services is still not in use. However, this situation will change soon: the State program "Digital Development of Belarus" for 2021-2025 envisages the implementation of the project "Smart Cities of Belarus". In local centers of economic growth with investment potential (cities of Orsha, Baranovichi, Pinsk, Novopolotsk, Polotsk, Mozyr, Lida, Borisov, Soligorsk, Molodechno, Bobruisk) pilot smart city projects are to be established and connected to the state digital platform "Smart City (region)". By 2025, the platform is supposed to cover 17 cities and regions. The project budget is 6,450,000 rubles. The digital regional management system will add 3-5% to the GDP of small towns and create conditions for the emergence of new jobs [4].

Thus, great hopes are pinned on the creation of smart cities in the modern world. Belarus, along with other countries, is actively involved in the digitalization of all spheres of economic and social life. It would be great to see how, because of digitalization, modern information technologies are changing our cities and our lives for the better.

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DIGITALIZATION OF THE BELARUSIAN ECONOMY IN MODERN CONDITIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

The purpose of the study is a theoretical justification for the formation and development of the digital economy in the international economy and the development of practical provisions for its formation in Republic of Belarus.

The use of digital technologies in the economy and the development of high-tech industries is one of the most relevant areas of our time, which contributes to increasing the competitiveness of national products in the world market and forms the rating of the national economy in the world economy.

Currently, the Digital Economy is an economic activity based on digital and electronic technologies and includes electronic business and commerce, as well as the goods and services they produce. This definition can be applied both to economic and business transactions carried out on the Internet and with the help of digital communication technologies, as well as in social and cultural spheres.

The digitalization of economy has become an indicator of widespread implementation and progressive development. The main features of digitalization are continuous development, changeability, increased flexibility, adaptability, information exchange and real-time implementation of operations, a self-learning digital “smart” society.

The Republic of Belarus has recently significantly improved its position in the main indicators assessing the level of digitalization of the economy. In this paper, the position of the Republic of Belarus is considered on the basis of positioning in ratings that assess the level of development of the introduction of network technologies and the adaptation of the economy and society of the countries of the world to digital transformation. The undisputed driver of digital transformation is the sector of information and communication technologies (ICT). It was revealed that: 1) in terms of the level of Internet use by the population, and especially in the provision of public digital services,