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RIGHT TO INTERNET ACCESS AS A MEANS OF ENSURING A DECENT LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The rights of people to a decent life, which is a supreme goal in the constitutions of most countries of the world, are also reflected in many international documents. Though for a long time the system of decent life rights ruled the traditional fields, nowadays it is difficult to imagine the decent life rights of a modern person without digital trends and information society. For this, first of all, people should have unhindered access to the Internet. In the article, the content, theoretical elements and principles of Internet accessibility of the relative rights to a decent life were analyzed in detail by the authors, researches on digital rights were conducted. At the same time, the ideas that Internet access should be recognized as a universal right because it offers a meaningful accountability and influence channel in the global sphere, that it is an integral element of the system of modern human rights to a decent life, that free Internet access should be considered a human right, and that Internet access should be guaranteed to ensure access to open information have been put forward.

KEYWORDS

Decent Life, Decent Standard of Living, Internet Accessibility, Welfare State, Adequate Standards, Digital Right, Legislation, Normative Act, IT, Information Society

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Introduction

The concept of the welfare state, which is often used in legal literature, includes a complex system of relations. This activity, aimed at ensuring human satisfaction and happiness, is shown as the supreme goal in the main bloodlines of most developed countries in modern times. In modern times, it seems possible to achieve this goal by raising the standard of decent life and providing adequate daily rights included in the system of decent life rights. First of all, it should be taken into account that the right to a decent life is a system of norms that does not have a single consensus and is of a relative nature.

The right to a decent life is primarily the provision of the most basic needs of all people in decent conditions. Man, as a biosocial being, should combine biological, social and spiritual aspects, and these circumstances should also serve to realize his needs in a complex way. Decent life of a person means the state of comprehensive fulfillment of biological, social and spiritual needs of a person, which are paid both independently, personally and with the help of the state, and are determined by criteria such as decent level and quality (Barsukova, 2016).

In other words, this concept shows how favorable the standard of living is for people and citizens in the respective state (Pashkova, 2014, p. 47). The satisfaction of the relevant needs necessary for living constitutes the total relevant social basket, which is called the right to a decent life or the right to adequate living standards. While in Azerbaijani and Russian literatures this right is expressed as the right to a decent life, we find it under the name of the right to adequate standards in European literature. The word adequate comes from the Latin word *adaequatus*, which means complete, suitable, exact, equal, equivalent, identical, matching. In the framework of rights, the term adequate refers to the level of quality that meets the standards and needs of a person, expressing subjectivity. It also means acceptable and satisfactory based on predetermined standards. In the Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, In the updated European Social Charter this right is expressed with the concept of general welfare. In Article 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, this right is called a decent standard of living and is considered among the highest goals of the state (Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1995).

However, it should be taken into account that this concept itself expresses a relative meaning. One person's adequate need may not satisfy another one's adequate need or vice versa. That is why this topic is quite controversial, and it is also given little space in legal studies. Determining the framework of the rights included in the right to a decent life should be started by analyzing the content and elements of this complex right.

As the use of the Internet increases, the need to protect and respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of everyone in the digital world is again on the agenda. In the global community, six out of ten people do not have access to the Internet, and human rights violations still continue, including the suppression of activities, the tracking of activists and journalists based on their online activities, the collection of personal data without the individual's consent, and digital surveillance.

The adoption of Internet accessibility as a human right followed the UN's 2016 declaration that actions to intentionally prevent or disrupt the access or dissemination of information online violate international human rights law (United Nations Chronicle). Internet freedom, Internet accessibility, the right to the Internet, the right to access the Internet, etc. in various sources. Internet accessibility interpreted under such names is important in ensuring freedom of expression online. Internet access is often associated with restrictions on freedom of expression. But here we are not talking about restricting access to any website, but about providing access to the universal Internet in general. Therefore, Internet access should be considered as a separate right, but also as one of the means of ensuring a decent standard of living.

Methodology

The conducted research aims to investigate the impact of the Internet on a decent standard of living and is aimed at recognizing Internet access as a unique right. The authors used qualitative case analysis, data analysis, thematic analysis, and comparative analysis methods in order to investigate the impact of Internet access on improving human well-being and to recognize Internet access as a unique right, especially as a legal element of the right to a decent life. The research was carried out in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2024-2025.

Results

1. Concept and main theoretical elements of the right to a decent life

Since there is no concrete consensus in the legal literature about the right to a decent life, every researcher has a different approach to the content of this right. Some authors conducting research in this field note that the right to a decent life is a constitutional category of personal dignity (Andreeva, 1998, p. 11). Another group of authors argue that it is an element of the right to life, which is considered an absolute right (Chepurin, 2005; Zaitseva, 2009, p. 9). Another group of authors suggests that it constitutes the right to dignity, the right to life and the right to freedom from want (Arbuzov, 2011). One of the authors, Barsukova V.N. defends the idea that the basis of this right is the right to life and the right to dignity (Barsukova, 2016). Some authors argue that the right to a decent life includes first-generation human rights that include personal and political rights (Salikhova, 2009).

Among the authors conducting research in this field, there are those who connect it with Bismarck's social theory. They examine the decent life from the perspective of social rights. As for social rights, these rights, which constitute the second generation of human rights, were formed in the process of people's struggle for the improvement of their social level (Arbuzov, 2011). One of the authors, Professor Amir Aliyev, in his comments, calls social rights a complex of rights that are accepted by society and the state and established in normative-legal acts and that protect the opportunity, interest and certain characteristics necessary for the normal physiological, material, and spiritual existence and development of every person. He puts forward the

idea that social rights are mainly aimed at the implementation of social protection of the population in order to eliminate social tension in the society (Aliyev, 2019, p. 161-162).

Athors who link the right to a decent life with a person's economic situation are also found in the research. From a purely material and economic point of view, this right implies living above the poverty line of the respective society. As a result of the analyzes carried out in this area by the World Bank, they came to the conclusion that the costs and the additional amount needed to obtain the minimum standard of nutrition and other basic needs vary from country to country, reflecting the cost of participation in the daily life of society (World Bank, 2018).

One of the Russian researchers Baklanova E.V. by conducting a comparative analysis of legal sources in different states, he concludes that the central idea that constitutes the content of the right to a decent life has remained unchanged since its inception. According to the author, the state policy that ensures the decent existence of a person, the origin of the recognition of this right, the obligations undertaken by the state to ensure it, etc. motifs are linked and become specific in the context of different cultures (Baklanova, 2006).

The right to a decent life refers to rights aimed at the satisfaction of basic social, economic and cultural needs within the framework of reconciliation with principles such as a free and minimally restricted life, equal treatment before the law (Haas, 2014, p. 2).

These rights are basic and equal rights that people have from birth. In this context, to put it briefly, human rights in the modern sense aim to protect people from the oppression of those who rule (Freeman, 2017, p. 50).

What influences the formation of this right? First of all, we must note that states have certain obligations to protect the rights of their citizens, which are regulated by the domestic legislation of those countries in accordance with the international agreements they are parties to. In addition, the members of the international community also have a common obligation to protect human rights, which goes beyond the level of discussion and finds its response at the level of action (Shahin & Atahan, 2021).

In addition to culture and mentality, the stages of historical development can have their influence on the regulation of this specific right. Malakhov V.P. argues that history is dynamic and culture is conservative in his research, suggesting that historical aspects have a greater impact on the right to a decent life. Baklanova E.V. suggesting that the right to a decent life also has personal motives, and notes that it differs according to personal factors such as age and gender (Barsukova, 2016).

Of course, we consider it more appropriate to take into account that the presence of a person's mental and physical disabilities has a certain impact on his decent life requirements.

Among the researchers, Barsukova V.N. conducting an analysis of the term decent life, he concludes that it contains a confusion of the concepts of dignified life and dignified existence and notes that assumptions from completely utilitarian approaches to completely idealistic approaches are put forward in its content. In his research, the author divides the system of criteria for a decent life into two groups: 1) Obligations of the state to the individual, which include categories such as decent, sufficient, quality and adequate living standards; 2) personal behaviors that ensure a person's desire to live with dignity (Barsukova, 2016).

In Western legal literature, a decent standard of living is accepted as a necessary condition for the prosperous existence of a society, and has a rational character, and together with other natural rights, it represents the threshold at which the destruction of the individual, society and law begins and ends (Malakhov, 2002). Although the content of the right to a decent life is not directly specified in the legal systems of the Eastern countries, it indirectly adheres to the idea of state responsibility for the quality of material and spiritual life. In the Muslim legal system, the right to a decent life is implemented within the framework of the religious-ethical doctrine and is elevated to the rank of religious. However, the great influence of European law and international law on religious and traditional legal systems (Pashkova, 2014).

In Russian legal literature, the recognition of the right to a decent life is associated with moral norms, where it is considered natural for the state to assume the obligation to ensure a decent life for all its members, regardless of whether it contributes or not (Pashkova, 2014).

This legal idea first appeared in Russia at the end of the 19th century. Here, too, the idea that the state should take care of the decent living of its citizens, like the existing arrangement, was completely related to rationality, like in the West (Pashkova, 2014).

The fact that the right to a decent life creates negative and positive obligations is also a subject of debate among the authors. After the World Food Summit in 1996, the US government stated that the achievement of any right to adequate food or fundamental right to be free from hunger is an aspirational, incremental goal that does not entail any international obligations. One of the authors, Thomas Pogge, opposes this idea and asserts the idea that human rights generate positive action even at the international level (Pogge, 2012).

In our opinion, if the right to a decent life forms a complex within the social sphere, then it must be included among positive obligations that require action, time, material resources and regulation from the state. This category of rights can be any security mechanism aimed at meeting the daily needs of a person. In our opinion, access to information and provision of internet access are also rights aimed at a decent life of a modern person.

2. Internet accessibility: principle or digital right

In recent times, the implementation of many transactions over or through the Internet has made the Internet a part of our daily lives. The emergence of computers and the increase in their use in everyday life made it necessary to provide communication and data flow between computers. This network system, in which computers communicate with each other, has created the Internet, a system of communication that is widespread throughout the world. The Internet is a system that connects all networks in the world through a certain protocol. The Internet, which provides communication between computers, has over time assumed the role of a mediator in meeting their social needs, allowing people to communicate with each other by sharing more and more information. The Internet is not only a channel of communication, but also mediates the exercise of rights and freedoms in the form of education and health, accessing government institutions and organizations, obtaining documents, shopping, listening to music, watching movies and many other activities. As Sterling Bruce said, the Internet belongs to everyone, but it belongs to no one (Bruce, 1993).

Living and socializing in society requires communication, which is provided on the Internet thanks to codes and common protocols. The possibility of communication provided by the Internet not only facilitates individual communication, but also accelerates mass communication, facilitates the accessibility and distribution of news. In this regard, the Internet should be considered both as a means of personal communication and as a means of mass communication. The Internet differs from traditional mass media by allowing two-way, interactive, uninterrupted communication. Another difference between the Internet and traditional media is that content is created by users. All these mentioned once again confirm how the Internet has an important and significant influence in our modern society.

Can Internet access be defined as a right? If so, how will its nature and place in the human rights system be determined? – This right refers to freedom or opportunity that is of great importance to every individual. For example, participating in a network that connects humanity and provides unique opportunities for information, communication and participation (Nastic, 2021, p. 84).

M.I. Best makes two arguments in support of the claim that there is a right to Internet access. First, the Internet acts as an important tool for achieving the goals of democracy. Second, because the Internet requires a symmetrical right to information, Internet access deserves to be recognized as a human right (Best, 2004, p. 24).

Internet access is a unique right because it cannot be reduced by any other right or freedom or is not covered by any other right. At the same time, this right can be considered *sui generis* because it fulfills functions that cannot be realized by alternative means (for example, newspaper comments, places reserved for public speech, places of public assembly or public libraries). Internet accessibility is not simply a form of realization of other rights (such as freedom of thought and expression, freedom of assembly, or freedom of information), although digitally enables access to these rights. Indeed, these rights can no longer be fully exercised without access to the Internet in a virtual global context. Free Internet access is a pragmatic prerequisite for ensuring secure access to other undisputed basic human rights, such as free speech and freedom of assembly. One might think that basic human rights can be exercised without access to the Internet. However, this underestimates how much the Internet has changed the way we communicate, interact, access information, and how necessary these new possibilities are for the realization of other human rights.

In order to ensure internet accessibility as one of the human rights, there are also approaches that demand that the Internet service be free in the sense of uncontrollable and uncensored and that it be provided publicly or free of charge to those who do not have access to it. To defend this argument, the authors refer to the minimalist concept of human rights, which has the advantage that the rights it underpins are acceptable to more complex theories of human rights (Reglitz, 2020, p. 314).

The UN Human Rights Committee has stated that any restrictions on the operation of Internet-based, electronic or other such information dissemination systems, including Internet service providers or search engines, on the content must be specific. General prohibitions do not comply with article 19, paragraph 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It is inconsistent with Article 19.3 to prohibit a website or media from publishing material solely on the basis that it may criticize the government or a political social system supported by the government (OHCHR, 2011).

The report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression examines the main trends and challenges related to the right of all individuals to seek and obtain all information via the Internet and recognizes two components of the right to Internet access: the first component, except where permitted by international human rights law, access to unlimited online content. The second component concerns the availability of the necessary infrastructure and ICT. However, Internet accessibility is not viewed as an independent human right, but as an important tool influencing the realization of human rights in a wider context (La Rue, 2011).

By adopting Directive 2009/136/EC (European Parliament, 2011), which came into force in 2011, the European Union defined the positive obligation of European states to ensure all reasonable requirements for Internet access from fixed locations. The European Commission then launched the Digital Agenda for Europe action plan. After that, the process of recognizing the right to internet access in European countries accelerated.

Estonia is the first country to recognize the right to internet accessibility. The Law on Telecommunications adopted in February 2000 declared this right essential for life in the 21st century (Nastic, 2021, p. 86). Today, Estonia has a strong infrastructure network and easily accessible wireless coverage. Education, voting, taxation, governance are sectors that have been significantly moved to the online environment.

Greece is the first country to recognize in its constitution the right of all people to participate in the information society. This became possible after the revision of the Constitution in 2001 with the addition of Article 5a. At the same time, the obligation of the state to facilitate access to electronic and transmitted information, including its production, exchange and distribution, is defined. This means that both dimensions of the right to internet access are recognized (Chawla, 2017, p. 66).

On July 28, 2015, the Internet Bill of Rights was published in Italy. The declaration aims to define the precise responsibility that reflects the reality of the new legal regime and to develop the constitutional order that is fundamental to the internet. The Declaration seeks to recognize the fundamental principles of the validity of human rights in the digital world by highlighting their unique features. New digital rights such as the right to protection of personal data, the right to self-determination of information, the right to inviolability of computer systems and computer domains, the right not to be the subject of personal data, the right to online identity, the right to online anonymity and the right to be forgotten have been established in the declaration (Yilma, 2017, p. 124).

The French Constitutional Council considered the right to internet access in the context of rights protected by Article 11 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. The French Constitutional Council affirmed that internet accessibility is a human right, stating that freedom of expression includes the freedom to access public online communication services. Such a decision of the Constitutional Council is of great importance both within the country and internationally. For the first time, the constitutional principle of freedom of expression was expanded to include access to the Internet as part of freedom of speech (Coccoli, 2017, p. 247).

The Polish Constitutional Court considers that the protection of constitutional rights and freedoms in the context of the use of the Internet and other electronic means is different from the protection of general forms of communication. The Internet is a complex phenomenon and therefore must protect the activities of individuals arising from its use in various ways. Expressing opinions and disseminating information using the Internet and other electronic devices is the same as traditional media as defined in Article 54 of the Polish Constitution. In general, the Polish Constitutional Court firmly stands on the technical neutrality of constitutional protection. This principle means that the constitution must protect all individual rights and freedoms regardless of the technical means used to violate them (Nastic, 2021, p. 87).

Such a question arises: if we recognize the right to Internet access, then in which category of rights should we include it. Recognizing that right as a moral right, many authors state that in order to justify a moral right, it is not only necessary to show that it will protect any important interest, but also to show that the duties it imposes are reasonable. They present three arguments for this: It is necessary for individuals to have meaningful influence on the global players who create global rules; In an increasingly globalized and virtualized world, the Internet is already uniquely effective for realizing important political human rights (free speech, free association, and information); Internet access, if properly managed, would be extremely effective in protecting other basic human rights (life, liberty, freedom from torture, etc.) (Reglitz, 2020, p. 314-315).

Unlike other media, the Internet is a uniquely democratic tool. Television and radio separate the senders and receivers of information, while the Internet allows everyone to access it at unprecedented speed and cost. It enables individual and group interaction and communication on a global scale. It is accepted as standard that

in order to live a minimally decent life, individuals must have a meaningful say in the rules to which they are subject and be able to participate in the creation of such rules (Hassoun, 2013). Both internationally and domestically, everyone has the right to participate in the governance of the state. However, our world has a number of powerful global governance institutions (such as the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization) that are not democratically empowered and cannot directly influence individual citizens. Thus, the first justification for a human right such as free Internet access is that without access to the Internet, many individuals lack a meaningful way to influence supranational rules and institutions. If individuals do not have access to the Internet, they are at a structural disadvantage to global players who negotiate international treaties and laws with the help of Internet communications. Moreover, without access to the Internet, it is more difficult for individuals to be informed about the issues at stake in inter-ethnic negotiations. For example, we can mention the nationwide protest of the European Union against the European and American negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between 2013 and 2016. Many European citizens, associations, NGOs and civil society groups have protested the secrecy of treaty negotiations and the targeted use of investor-state dispute settlement courts and proposed changes to labor rights, environmental protection and food safety standards. Although the protest took the form of rallies of hundreds of thousands of people, information about TTIP was shared through the Internet. For example, the STOP TTIP campaign (an alliance of 500 European organizations) took the form of an online European Citizens' Initiative that collected more than three million signatures (France 24, 2016). The protest resulted in upholding EU standards in these negotiations, which were extended and then suspended by President Trump, putting great pressure on the EU and national governments. Protest against TTIP could also be conducted offline, but it is reasonable to suggest that the costs of informing private citizens offline (ie through leaflets, radio and television messages) would significantly limit the campaign. Information sharing, protest coordination and direct online submission of protest forms on this scale, with this speed and with this force were only possible because many EU citizens had access to the internet (Reglitz, p. 318).

Another example is the case of Nestle against the Ethiopian government in 2002. The multinational company demanded six million US dollars in compensation for the nationalization of a company by the previous Ethiopian military government in 1986. In response to an Oxfam report on Nestle's claim, the multinational withdrew its demands and accepted Ethiopia's offer of US\$ 1.5 million in 2003, and Nestle later invested in three charity projects in Ethiopia (Denny, 2002). Likewise, the 2010 international protest against Nestle/KitKat's use of palm oil and destruction of tropical forests, organized by GreenPeace, was influential. The campaign video was viewed over 1.5 million times and over 200,000 emails were sent. Nestle/KitKat finally agreed to use sustainable palm oil in the rainforest (Woolley, 2010).

A second argument in support of recognizing Internet access as a basic human right is that it is necessary for the realization of many of our political rights (such as freedom of expression and assembly). Let's look at some historical facts for justification. We can cite the example of Beatriz Ehlers, a student of the Friedenreich municipal school in Rio de Janeiro, who organized a full-scale protest against the city government. The school, which serves low-income and disabled students, was selected by the city government for demolition to make way for sports fields for the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics. An online tool called Ehlers Panela de Pressao was used. Thousands signed up and the local government canceled plans to demolish the building within 72 hours of the website's launch (Reglitz, 2020, p. 320). Empirical studies also show that the use of the Internet leads to an increase in public demand for democratic forms of governance. Thus, indirect access to the Internet increases the importance of basic political rights. Most importantly, the Internet has expanded our potential community exponentially by lowering the costs of accessing, creating, and sending information. We go online to get information and communicate through social media. We still send and receive information in traditional ways, and the media (radio, television, and newspapers) reach large populations, but they represent the views of relatively few. The Internet is breaking down barriers to global information sharing and thus expanding opportunities for free speech and virtual assembly. Thus, the Internet has changed the value of the realization of some basic political freedoms. It seems illogical and absurd to deny the necessity of access to the Internet to exercise freedoms and live a minimally decent life in a digitalized society.

Protecting the online rights of billions of internet users in the digital world poses different challenges than traditional society. One such problem, net neutrality, is considered one of the current topics. Although it has been established in various documents at the international level, still no legal approach has been given to net neutrality in domestic law, as well as its different aspects from internet accessibility have not been defined. In practice, this creates a number of difficulties for the protection of human rights and freedoms in the online environment. Although there is still no legal regulation on net neutrality in Azerbaijan, the net neutrality

regulations of various states, as well as the European Union, have clarified some issues in this field. However, there is still no consensus on how to regulate the impartiality of internet providers, and there are gaps and contradictions in the mechanisms for ensuring net neutrality. Regulations on the technical aspects of net neutrality should focus on the protection of individual human rights and freedoms (especially freedom of expression, right to privacy).

The openness of the Internet requires the provision of net neutrality. Network management is essential for optimal network utilization and other innovations. Today, in almost all countries of the world, a network operator does not have the ability to block or discriminate against services such as Google, Facebook or Skype. However, in practice, there are also facts of restricting or blocking access to various social network platforms, such facts should not be interpreted within the framework of net neutrality, but should be analyzed in the context of the right to internet access. Because net neutrality requires that there be no discrimination against internet data and traffic, regardless of equipment, content, author, origin or destination of the content, service or application. But it is an undeniable fact that the cancellation of the principle of net neutrality indirectly violates the right to internet access. Because the elimination of net neutrality will eventually lead to a monopoly in the provision of internet services to users. Therefore, both terms should be related to legal regulation.

3. The activity of the states on ensuring Internet availability serves to ensure a decent standard of living

The UN's call for developed nations to help less well-off societies shows that human rights Internet access meets the second human rights criteria mentioned above, that human rights should be relevant issues of international concern. However, some of the major barriers to universal Internet access are not limited to lack and expensive infrastructure.

The first is monopoly and lack of competition on the supply side, which in some cases make entry more expensive. Here, increased competition between providers can drive down access costs.

A second barrier is that even where the Internet is available, people are often prevented from using it due to illiteracy or a lack of basic computer skills. The implementation of ICT literacy in society will remove a significant barrier to access to the global Internet.

Thirdly, the existing traditional inequalities in the society, which we explained in the previous chapters.

All these points show that barriers to access to the global Internet are often not related to gaps in expensive IT infrastructure. Therefore, the recognition of any right is not enough with its declaration, but requires states to fulfill specific guarantee and protection obligations. For example, the UN states that states have an obligation to ensure universal access to the Internet by developing concrete and effective policies in consultation with people from all walks of life, including the private sector and relevant government agencies (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). It also implies a positive obligation to finance the cost of Internet access for those who cannot afford it where it is affordable. Thus, all nations are called upon to develop a progressive online development strategy, make the right investments in Internet infrastructure, and support poorer nations by signing up to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Along with these positive obligations to provide Internet access, the interest in Internet access also underpins negative obligations prohibiting undue interference with individuals' use of the Internet. This idea underpins the 2011 UN Special Report on the Importance of the Internet and the subsequent 2016 Resolution, which calls for internet access to be unrestricted, uncensored and unregulated by governments or other entities. The UN states that the rights that people enjoy offline must also be protected online, in particular freedom of expression and the duty of states to ensure that access to the internet is always guaranteed, including during times of political unrest (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). If these negative obligations are fulfilled by states, free access to the Internet will be more effective in protecting human rights. It's no coincidence that, according to Freedom House's 2018 Internet Freedom Report, the worst autocracies are also the ones that restrict their subjects' access to the internet the most (Freedom House, 2018). As of October 2023, there are 5.3 billion Internet users in the world, which is 65.7 percent of the world's population. Of this total, 4.95 billion, that is, 61.4 percent of the world's population, are social media users (Statista, 2023). These figures once again prove that there are still countries that do not provide internet access. Many democratic developing nations currently do not provide affordable Internet access to large parts of their population.

Access to the Internet is valuable and necessary for ensuring important human rights and democratic participation in the virtual age, and will remove the control and coercion of states that violate it. The Internet requires more regulation and governance than it currently has. However, regulation is necessary to regulate use, not to limit access. Few rights are absolute, and the right to access and use the Internet is no exception.

The Internet is so essential to communication, interaction, and access to information that to deny humanity a portion of access is to deny people a minimally decent chance at life.

Ensuring Internet access also serves to address the digital divide. It should be noted that measures to eliminate global digital inequality should be implemented in parallel with measures to prevent social, economic, political and cultural problems in traditional society. The impact of traditional society on the global information society includes the impact of existing problems in this society. Therefore, the measures taken in both directions ultimately serve to achieve the common goal. For example, the activities of the UN on the elimination of poverty essentially have a positive effect on the reduction of the level of digital inequality. That is why, starting from 1997, the UN includes limited access to information among the criteria for determining poverty in its development programs. At the same time, the development of digital technologies is mentioned as one of the priority directions in the Europe-2020 Strategy.

Overall, an action plan to address the digital divide at the national level can address the digital divide across multiple strata at the same time. For example, the provision of connectivity through ICT in villages and the creation of collective access points, on the one hand, eliminates the difference between rural and urban areas, and on the other hand, women who are victims of the backward way of thinking in rural areas can become active members of society.

Based on the analysis of measures to eliminate digital inequality in the Republic of Azerbaijan, it can be observed that great success has been achieved by taking into account the guiding provisions reflected in international legal norms within the country. Therefore, it is more appropriate to interpret the national regulation on the elimination of digital inequality on the example of our own republic.

All measures planned and carried out according to the main directions of the National Strategies are aimed at the elimination of digital differences, along with the establishment of the information society in the country. Referring to the analysis of the current situation, those measures can be conventionally divided into general and special types. If the general plan of measures serves to eliminate the digital gap in all areas as a whole, special measures are carried out taking into account specific social characteristics. For example, increasing the number of electronic services and thereby facilitating citizens' access to state bodies, as well as access to information, serves to eliminate digital inequality throughout the country. Measures such as the organization of information provision related to the disability problem of persons with disabilities and children with limited health capabilities, as well as providing them with social and technical assistance, ensure the right of that group of persons to obtain information and serve to eliminate the differences that have arisen with healthy persons.

We believe that more attention should be paid to measures in the field of encouraging the population in domestic law. Because it is precisely encouraging measures that can arouse interest in ICT in the simple layers of society. Therefore, it is more appropriate to define a list of both general and special types of measures to eliminate the digital inequality between individuals. It is obvious from the statistical data that success in this field has been achieved in the Republic of Azerbaijan (The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024).

The successful implementation of measures aimed at eliminating the digital inequality within the country results from their planning in stages. State Programs and Action Plans for different years have been adopted in order to implement the activities envisaged in the mentioned Strategies. All these programs and plans defined the actions to be taken in a logical sequence by years, and therefore, as a result of the partial implementation of those actions, the elimination of the digital inequality between rural and urban areas, the active participation of women in the life of society, the training of educated personnel in the field of ICT, etc. such results have been achieved.

Thus, in Azerbaijan Republic, measures aimed at eliminating digital inequality in all areas are implemented at a high pace of development, which ultimately serves to ensure human and civil rights and freedoms and directly ensure a decent standard of living.

Discussion and Conclusion

1. The right to a decent life is attributed to positive obligations and requires certain actions from the state - time, costs, actions. This right is considered to be realized for people only when it is supported and ensured through the power structure and state institutions. That is why all international acts dedicated to human rights impose important obligations on states in this field.

2. Support for a decent life of all categories of people in the Euroregion - employed and unemployed, disabled and elderly - is one of the most important goals. The European social model applied in the region is

only a visible part of the progressive measures. All the authors in their research suggest different ways of combining a decent standard of living with social protection in the European context. First of all, it should be noted that most of the social rights are collective rights and, as in all other regions, they create positive obligations and require some active action by the union. Therefore, Union acts are adopted as a guarantee mechanism regulating all aspects of the protection of social rights in the region. Although the European Social Charter, which includes basic social rights, is the first such complex document, it also has certain shortcomings. These include its less efficiency, lack of self-enforcement mechanisms in national courts, and other issues listed above. Although the Treaty of Lisbon is acceptable to a wide range of stakeholders and ideologies within the EU, in our opinion, there is a need to adopt a more advanced, modern version of the Social Charter - a new regional social charter.

3. We have strong reasons to accept the idea that free internet access is a human right. Because it is necessary to ensure a minimum decent life in the digital age. Internet access should be free of charge through tested means. In rich societies, internet access should be considered part of the social minimum. This means that everyone should have the right to an adequate Internet connection, just as all citizens in many advanced societies have the right to a telephone connection. Such legislation already exists in some countries (for example, Germany).

The role and importance of access to the Internet in terms of influencing decisions at the international level is undeniable. Although access to the Internet is not an official channel that provides formal opportunities for global influence, it is an effective means by which individuals can exert collective influence. Therefore, Internet access should be recognized as a universal right as it offers a meaningful channel of accountability and influence in the global sphere. Considering that according to the instructions of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on obtaining information, the mandatory method for disclosing public information is disclosure in Internet information resources (Article 30.1) and the use of other methods is not mandatory (Article 29.2 provides for may be disclosed has been established), therefore, internet access must be guaranteed to ensure access to open information for society members.

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