

Opening remarks

Dear readers!

We are proud to bring to your attention a new issue of the Electronic Journal of the Faculty of Economics of Lomonosov Moscow State University.

This issue includes articles that discuss factors influencing the current demographic situation in Russia in connection with the coronavirus pandemic; role of foreign competition in defining the geographical boundaries of the market for goods and services; the processes that have taken place in the domestic car market in recent years, primarily the growth in sales of Chinese car brands; issues of regulation of digital ecosystems within the framework of competition policy; and prospects for the implementation of sustainable development goals in Russia.

The article "Mortality Rate Differentiation in Russia in 2019-2020: COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Factors" examines factors that caused changes in the mortality rate in the regions. The research is based on official statistics, as well as regional representative results selective socio-demographic surveys of Rosstat. The conducted statistical analysis showed that a significant part of the regional variation in the increase of the overall mortality rate is explained by such characteristics of the demographic structure of the region as the share of elderly people in the region, the size of the household, the share of people with cancer in the region, as well as the high population density and frequency of social contacts, especially in large cities. At the same time, the study revealed the absence of a significant impact on the regional differentiation of mortality rate from the availability of medical services and the scale of the health infrastructure on the eve of the pandemic. The authors accentuate the need to improve the information basis for objective indicators and methods used for analyzing the contribution of the COVID-19 pandemic to the level and dynamics of mortality rate at the regional level.

The article "Foreign Competition as a Factor Defining Geographic Boundaries of Market" examines the impact of globalization processes on competition in the market for goods and services. The authors argue that since national market participants are under pressure from imports (foreign competition), when defining geographical boundaries, both agreements and actions in the domestic market, and the behavior of foreign competitors should be taken into account. This leads to the expansion of the geographical boundaries of the market, or inclusion of the external factors that explain the state of world stocks / shortages of goods and the dynamics of prices in the economic analysis of the market. The article provides a comparative analysis of approaches to determining the geographical boundaries of the market while taking into account foreign competition (actual and potential). The results of the study indicate the need to use a "broad" approach in defining the relevant market, based on the analysis of commodity flows, potential competition and switching costs.

The article "Analysis of Sales Growth of Chinese Car Brands in Russia in 2019-2020" contains an overview of the state of the Russian market of new passenger cars and describes the sales dynamics in this market from January 2017 to August 2021. Special attention is paid to the representatives of the Chinese brands Geely, Haval, Chery in Russia, which show positive dynamics of sales growth in the falling Russian market of new passenger cars. The analysis shows that in a falling market, one can increase their share through more effective marketing solutions. Since the companies do not disclose their plan to "conquer the world", the authors of the article relied on open sources, including official sites, and analyzed the actions already taken by representatives of Chinese brands.

The article "Regulation of Digital Ecosystems within the Framework of Competition Policy: Legal and Economic Approach" examines the processes of digital transformation of industries and markets, which are closely related to the formation of ecosystems and the introduction of artificial intelligence. The authors of the article summarize the main problems in qualifying the position and behavior of leading companies in ecosystems characterized by intensive use of artificial intelligence, including increased market concentration, the risks of price discrimination and algorithmic collusion. One of the specific challenges in this area is the dependence of the effectiveness of artificial intelligence on machine learning with big data. This justifies the growth of concentration, strengthens the position of leaders and potentially weakens the competitive environment. Anti-monopoly authorities are advised to strengthen their own digital competencies and analytical capabilities, to maintain a level of control over the market while leaving the benefits of artificial intelligence.

Review of the 152th meeting of the Dispute club "Economic Policy Knots" of the Association of the Russian Economic Think Tanks on the Topic "Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations: Prospects for Implementation in Russia" presents the discussion of issues related to the possibilities and limitations for the implementation of the UN sustainable development goals in Russia. The review notes that the transition to sustainable development is important from the point of view of nature conservation and solving environmental problems, and in the context of social and economic development. The current situation in Russia in this area can be characterized as far from optimal. For the transition to sustainable development and to ensure the competitiveness of the country's economy, it is necessary to carry out a number of tasks aimed at creating and implementing an adequate development strategy that takes into account national priorities and allows implementing the goals and objectives of sustainable development corresponding to these priorities.

We are looking forward to your feedback on the articles published in this issue and welcome possible future cooperation and contributions.

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