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The Modern Migration Policy of Russia: Problems and Necessary Directions of Perfection

The Russian Federation has become one of the leading immigration receiving countries based on absolute number of immigrants. It is possible to identify two principal causes that determine immigration to Russia. The first is internal: the Russian economy has developed in a relatively successful way, demands for expanding the labour force have increased and relatives of Russians, who formerly lived in the USSR are now living in CIS countries. The external cause of immigration to Russia lies in the fact that Russia has potent demographic resources nearby. China, India and the Central Asian states represent this potential. At present these countries are home to nearly half of the world’s population. Among numerous consequences of large-scale immigration to Russia is the formation and increase in the numbers of ethnic communities that occupy “niches” in some branches of the economy where they enjoy solid positions in business. The main migrant flow to Russia is channelled from the CIS countries. From 1993 to 2009 Russia received 7.1 million persons from these former USSR countries. For the most part (approximately 60%) the migrants were ethnic Russians.

Migration was and remains the important component of demographic and economic development of Russia and some regions. The data of the Russian statistical committee says that in 2009 international migration on 97% compensated natural decline in population of the country. At the regional level a situation with the migration role is differed. The first zone is characterized by migratory outflow of the population and covers thirty eight regions. And in thirty regions migratory outflow of the population coincides with the general reduction of a population. The second zone includes forty six territories of Russia in which inflow of migrants is marked, however only in sixteen of them migration or completely compensates a natural decrease or supplements a population natural increase.

At present time, the Russian Federation is confronted with the negative demographic situation which involves the population decline, the decrease of the part of able-bodied citizens, and the ageing population. According the pessimistic
predictive estimate of the Conception of demographic development, Russian population decline on 18-20 million people. In this situation the immigration policy of Russia directed not on restriction of entrance, and on attraction of necessary categories of immigrants is required to the country.

In October, 2007 was accepting the new Concept of a Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation till 2025. It has been accepted designates purpose absolutely adequate to demographic situation in Russia - immigrants are necessary for the country. The given point of view was stated repeatedly by the Russian President as well. However, at level of practice of regulation of immigration until recently has developed and there was cardinally opposite situation. The immigration policy was reduced to struggle against illegal migration and limited inflow of any immigrants to the country.

Change of a migratory policy of Russia it is necessary in following directions.

1. “Collecting of Russian Compatriots”. Russia, unlike other countries of the world, is in unique position. It is surrounded by the states which made earlier the uniform country, and now focus millions the people close in the cultural and mental relation, speaking in Russian. Now more than 17 million Russian people live in CIS and Baltic States. The part of this population forms the migratory potential for Russian Federation. Migratory potential Russians and Russian ethnic groups is estimated no more than 3-4 million people in medium-term outlook. It gives chance throughout several years to involve Russian and representatives of the Russian people and sharply not to change ethnic structure of the population, and also to spend much smaller means for integration of immigrants in a society and to avoid serious international conflicts.

The Russian President signed by the in 2006 the decree “On the measures to aiding voluntary return of compatriots living abroad to the Russian Federation”. Also a corresponding governmental scheme (the period of 2006-2012) has been carried out for the purpose of stimulating the voluntary resettlement of compatriots in the Russian Federation on the ground of increasing appeal of its subjects; for the purpose of compensating the population decline on the basis of attracting immigrants to have permanent residence in Russia. For March, 1st, 2010 within the limits of the state program to Russia already has moved more than 18 thousand persons and about twenty seven thousand are at various stages of resettlement. The program planned to accept much more migrants. Some experts hasten to declare that the program has failed. The Russian authorities have underestimated scale of the given project. On its realization time and money is required.
According to the governmental scheme the federal government provides compatriots with: citizenship, public assistance, payment for passage and baggage delivery, extraordinary grant. The local authorities must help compatriots with placing in a job. According to the scheme the whole part of the Russian Federation was divided into three categories (“A”, “B”, “C”) with corresponding size of a moneyed assistance, which is to be given to the compatriots by the government. The regions “A” are supposed to have a national border and population decline in the last three years. The participants of the scheme, who are to remove to these regions, will receive 60,000 rubles (2,000 USD) and 20,000 rubles (670 USD) for each member of the family. Only one member of the family may receive status of participant of the scheme. The regions “B” and “C” are determined by several economic indexes, such as unemployment rate, level of investment, share of region in gross domestic product and number of migrants. The compatriots removing to regions “B” will receive 40,000 rubles (1,340 USD) and 15,000 rubles (500 USD) for each member of the family.

On first stage the government has selected 12 regions. They are the Krasnoyarsk Territory, the Primorsky Kray, the Khabarovsk Territory, Province of Amur, Province of Irkutsk, Province of Kaliningrad, Province of Kaluga, Province of Lipetsk, Province of Novosibirsk, Province of Tambov, Province of Tver and Province of Tyumen. The scheme suggests removing about 670 thousand people here. At the second stage program action will extend at the expense of new territories of Russia. Now regional programs of resettlement of compatriots are confirmed approximately in 20 regions. The geography of action of the program has considerably extended. This external migration can help government to solve several problems, first of all, population decline and losses of the able-bodied population. Russia will try to compensate natural loss of the population of economically and geopolitically important regions like Far East with the help of governmental scheme.

The main part of the compatriots is arriving in Province of Kaliningrad. This fact can be explained by particular geographical location, improvements of economy and living standards of the region, the above mentioned process is a matter of great interest to local authorities. They are ready to receive about 300 thousand of resettles. The regions of the Far East cause anxiety. There is a population decline and sizeable migratory outflow in these regions, but compatriots, however, don’t aspire to migrate here. Only 2.2 percent of compatriots chose these regions.

The detailed analysis of the mechanism of resettlement displayed essential measures for increase of compatriot’s migration flow. First of all, state must help
settlers with habitation. It may be if state will extend pace of construction, will create on preferential terms state hypothec for resettles and will place at him disposal land and construction materials for building. Secondly, it is necessary to make special programmes for Russian-speaking young people and families with many children, because they are the most favorable migrants due to ageing Russian population. Thirdly, it is necessary to make special programmes to stimulate business initiative of compatriots. It will help them to accommodate better and develop Russian regions. Also, travelling allowance must be augment especially in the regions of Far East.

In the end of 2009 the Ministry of Regional Development of Russia has developed the new project of the program which realisation will begin since 2012. In this document have a new positions, capable to stimulate resettlement is made. There will be new categories of immigrants: managers, workers, farmers, students, businessmen and persons, with having great achievements in science, technician or culture. Also possibility of participation in the program will be given compatriots who already are in Russia. In January, 2010 the new presidential decree was signed number 60, which will give the chance to become participants of the program to people who have arrived earlier and there live in Russia many years. By approximate estimations the number compatriots, arrived to Russia before program start can make to 5 million persons, some of them live till now without the Russian citizenship. This position will start to work since summer of 2010 because the Government of Russia should accept some documents.

2. “Attraction of Educational Migrants in Russia”. According to Ministry of Education and Science the most significant country providing Russia by educational migrants, is China. In 2008 in Russia studied in 15,2 thousand students from China, 13,5 thousand – from Kazakhstan, 5,6 - from India, 4,4 thousand – from Ukraine, 4,0 thousand – from Vietnam, 3,5 thousand – from Uzbekistan and other countries.

Educational migration is one of the best migratory flows. It has positive economic consequences (brings money to universities, fills up the Russian labour market with qualified employees) and demographic effects (many foreigners to leave in the country after end of study and fill up the country population). Now foreign students are study approximately in 600 Russians university. The majority of educational migrants are study in Moscow, St.-Petersburg, Novosibirsk and big cities.

In the Concept of Social and Economic development of Russia till 2020 (signed in November, 2008) as other target reference points it is registered «Increase in a share of the foreign students study in Russia, to 5 % of total number of students» (now is 2% only). Russia could scoop more actively migratory potential from
among youth in CIS, and also in some developing states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. At the same time it is necessary to designate more accurately a priority of attraction of educational migrants to Russia in all demographic documents, including in again developed Federal Migratory Service of the Concept of migratory policy. It is necessary to give the chance for foreign students to obtain the Russian citizenship automatically.

3. “The invitation of necessary number of guestworkers on Russians labour market”. According the pessimistic predictive estimate of the Conception of Demographic Development of Russian Federation quantity of population above age 60 will exceed on 8.3 million in 2025. Also, in period between 2010-2014 the quantity of able-bodied citizens will decrease on 1.3 million people per year. It will create deficiency of a labour. Partly it will be possible to compensate reduction of a manpower growth of labour productivity and introduction of high technologies in economy. The country should involve foreign workers.

External labour migration represents the most considerable migratory flow in the Russian Federation. In 2008 2.4 million guestworkers worked in Russia. However, thus the share of foreign labour migrants among the population occupied on Russian labour market in 2008 remained concerning small - only 3,4%. However in some economy branches this share was more appreciable (for example, in building it has reached almost 19%). Between the official given and real scales of labour migration in Russia there is a considerable rupture. The quantity of not registered labour migrants differs from number registered several times though estimations of the first are rather approximate. For example, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia define number of not registered labour migrants in Russia around 10 million persons, and some politicians sounded figure 15 of million migrants. More exact represent estimations to 5 million the persons, received by researchers. Approximately 70% of illegal labour migrants in Russia are these citizens of the CIS countries. They have arrived legally, without the visa, but have not received registration or the work permit in Russia. In big cities the illegal markets of a labour force.

Now the foreign labour is involved to Russia more than from 140 countries. Three countries of the Central Asia were the largest suppliers of foreign workers in 2008: Uzbekistan (643 thousand), Tajikistan (391 thousand), Kyrgyzstan (185 thousand persons). From the CIS countries number of workers from Ukraine (245 thousand), Moldova (122 thousand), Armenia (100 thousand) and Azerbaijan (76 thousand persons) also is appreciable. After simplification of procedure of registration and work permit reception in Russia for citizens of the CIS countries since January, 2007, their share in total number of foreign workers has grown and in 2008 has made more than 73%. The third place in the list of the exports
countries of a labour to Russia occupies China (282 thousand) and also positions of Turkey (131 thousand), Vietnam (95 thousand) and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (35 thousand persons) are powerful.

Crisis also was reflected in the migratory policy of Russia regarding regulation of labour migration. Attraction of a foreign labour force in the country is carried out within the limits of the special quotas confirmed annually by the Government of the Russian Federation. Then by the order of Ministry of Health and Social Development of a quota on delivery of work permits to foreign citizens are distributed between regions of Russia, and also various professional groups of migrants. Since 2007 of a quota began to be established separately for the countries with free-visa and a visa regime. And the size of a quota for the countries with a free-visa regime several times more than for the countries with visa relations.

System of quoting of foreign labor force in Russia arouses serious pretensions. For example, in 2003 and in 2007 quote was “taken from the ceiling”. As a result, its implementation was only 40% and 20% accordingly. It mainly occurs because there is not clear mechanism of evaluation and methodic of accounting of real demand for foreign labor force, there is no balance of labor resources. On the strength of various conditions not all employers may make prognosis of scales of demand for migrants as a prospect, a part of them simply don’t apply in time.

Applications which are collected in the regional level don’t fix with concrete employers. There are often situations when application is given by one employer, but quote is factually used by another employer. But those who declare need in foreign workers, feels lack of quota. Such situation took place in the mid-year of 2008, when authorities were forced to increase quote very urgently, because it had been exhausted in June already. As a result, instead of initially stated quote in over 1,8 million permits, 3,4 million work permits were issued for foreign citizens in Russia. Thus, initial quote was exceeded almost in 2 times.

In 2009 Government of Russia fixed quote for issue of permits for foreign citizens in size of 4 million. But world economic crisis hardened development of several economic sectors, stimulated growth of unemployment and forced Russian authorities to revise size of quote for labor migrants. Also many foreign labor migrants lost the job, lost earnings in the territory of Russia. Particularly, prime-minister V.V.Putin declared for double reduction of quotes for foreign labor force attraction into Russia in 2009. He explained reduction of quote by the impact of economic crisis: “At first, we should provide opportunity of employment for Russians, who will be over the board of their enterprises. Foreigners will be taken for job places which are not taken by citizens of Russia” – prime-minister claimed. As a result, the quota has been reduced to 2010 almost in 2 times and has made 2,6 million work permits in Russia.
In the beginning of 2007 in Russia have been accepted a number of new laws which have been urged to correct a state of affairs in sphere of time labour migration. For example, registration procedure in a stay place has been simplified, penalties are increased by employers for use of illegal migrants. Really, now it became much easier to labour migrants to be registered. However, employers employ foreign workers spontaneously and unorganized, mainly that they can pay less. In the country it is required to develop a network of stock exchanges and private agencies on employment, to supervise working conditions of migrants. Also it is necessary to sign bilateral agreements with sending of labour migrants countries.

4. «Stimulation of migratory mobility of the Russian population». More than 6 million unemployed among the Russian citizens is in Russia now. Migratory mobility of many Russians is limited because of low level of wages and a strong difference in the prices for habitation between different regions of the country. For example, many workers in Russia receive wages on which it is impossible to rent apartment, and, having sold own apartment in a province - will not buy flat in a big city where there is a possibility to get a job. It is necessary to change cardinally system of regulation of an internal migration, stimulating with economic methods of resettlement of people, to remove barriers in the form of registration on a residence for the Russian citizens. It should be marked that in Russia reserves of internal labor migration and unemployed persons are not used practically nor in neighboring territories, nor in my own region. The most effective use of own labor resources could reduce needs of Russia in foreign labor force a little. Only in 2009 Federal Service on Labor and Employment introduced united bank of vacancies in the scale of all the country.

So, migration is the major resource of demographic and social and economic development of Russia. Now Russia has good chances to involve on the territory of migrants necessary categories. It should take advantage of this situation in interests of the development. Change of the Russian migratory policy in the specified directions can benefit the state and a society.