

Candidate of History

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Migration through the Russo-Ukrainian border

(by the example of Voronezhsky sector)

As a result of historical experience of the XX century, the scholars elaborated a clear definition of border as a barrier which is claimed to defend a state from the threats of external world. However, the situation has changed by now and the notions have broadened significantly. Not only does a border perform defensive functions but it also controls across-the-border interaction. It is more frequently heard that the freedom of information flows, means of communication and progressive technologies development result in blurring the borders, which become transparent and permeable. Without going deep into detailed theoretical discussions about modern frontiers appropriation, we would like to focus on the practical side of the issue while taking into consideration the contemporain development of Russia.

The experience of recent years reveals that nowadays the threats which are inherently nonmilitary (international terrorism, transboundary crime, illegal migration) are coming into foreground. Trying to resist them the government of Russia is giving increasingly more attention to the question of passport control system organization. Frontier authorities are handed over to the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (the FSB) by Presidential edict #960 dated 11 August 2003. At the same time, in 2003 the Federal Target Program for 2003-2011 "State border of the Russian Federation" was approved. According to the program in order to improve the effectiveness of immigration service at 78 passing points new generation of techniques is introduced. The authorities are encouraging the creation works of state computer-based system controlling the machine-recognizable visas and passports. Within the frames of the FSB the central office border guards personnel has been already reduced by half and organization departments with coinciding functions were liquidated. Though, despite the fact that Border Guards Service of Russia which is implementing border guarding in the Russian Federation is subordinated to the FSB, both national departments perform their own functions, have their own governing body with deputy corps and supply services.

Nevertheless, a lot of questions are still unsettled. The first deputy-director of the FSB, the head of Border Guard Services of Russia, General of the Army, V.E. Pronichev asserted, that there are 6 subdivisions of federal executive jurisdictions which accomplish 7 types of control at the crossing points. Their functions coincide partially, and that leads to procrastination during execution of documents and inadmissible queues because individuals have to wait for certain types of control.

A State Interdepartmental Frontier Commission was established to solve problems of this kind. The main aims of this body are to diminish coinciding functions and to optimize the system of crossing points. According to its decisions the border guards were handed over the functions of migration control at such points.

However, we can not examine frontier's role and properties without the region which it frames. Thus, border does not exist without a territory, and there is no territory without border. Consequently, we can not ignore the role of frontier regions and their peculiarities in our investigation.

It is not a secret that for Russian regions border cooperation with other countries turned to an effective mechanism of regional socio-economical development, as well as it became a powerful instrument of Russian foreign affaires. Border cooperation stimulates Russian integration into world economy and forms a

“zone of neighborliness” around Russia, which is a basis for the country’s successful development.

However, according to the world practice two regions can obtain positive results from their frontier location only in two cases: if they are both well developed in terms of economy and if one of them is comparatively undeveloped and another is thriving. Therefore, negative consequences are typical for the situation when both regions are economically undeveloped. Political confrontation between two countries can be another impediment for frontier cooperation. It manifests itself in strict visa regulations, distrust between the peoples or even military actions. Cultural differences, for example, in religion or language, can also lead to some difficulties in interaction.

Concerning Russia four types of frontier cooperation can be marked out. The first one implies cooperation with economically more developed European countries (Norway, Finland, the Baltic countries and Poland), which are separated from the Russian Federation by certain political barriers. The second type includes undeveloped but successful on the whole countries of CIS (Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Kazakhstan), the borders being really transparent in spite of some difficulties in the relations between these countries and Russia. Relations with poorly developed Georgia and Azerbaijan are relevant to the third category. Opportunities for collaboration with these countries are limited by military and political instability in the Caucasus region. At last the fourth type embraces less developed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia and China (with reserve that Russia borders only upon the least developed Chinese provinces and autonomous regions of Mongolia); meanwhile cooperation with these regions is worsen by non-economic impediments (different cultures, mentalities, political systems, the threat of Chinese expansion for the Russian Federation).

The phenomenon of “new border area” is specially significant in the context of border cooperation. The situation around the frontiers between the Russian Federation and former Soviet republics, which are now independent states, is very specific. The collapse of the USSR was also the collapse of a great mechanism implemented by the state - the mechanism of border regulation and border control which had existed for decades. Suddenly a lot of Russian central regions turned out to be border ones. Because of specific state attitude to the borders these areas are influenced by several factors of geopolitics, geo-economics and safety, all that forms their peculiarities. In spite of the fact that it has been 15 years since the appearance of new border regions on Russian political map, the problem of new border mentality in the minds of the populace and regional elites is apparent. The lack of such mentality is a significant hindrance on the way of transforming the border from just formal to real. Understanding of the border as not only a formal administrative line unnecessary to observe, but the line separating “our own territory” from “someone else’s” is the recognition of state sovereignty. However, this principle is not always accepted at once, especially in the regions where state border does not coincide with the borders between ethnic groups.

Incomprehension of frontier competitive advantages can be vividly exemplified by Central Black Earth Region. The set of its regions (Belgorod, Voronej, Kursk) border upon Ukrainian territories populated by both Russians and Ukrainians. As a result specific way of life has formed there. As if Central Black Earth Region merged with other regions of the USSR. It had not direct contact with sovereign states, and the boundary with the Ukraine was administrative and transparent; consequently, the access to the land and sea borders was not restricted.

Additionally, it is difficult to benefit from border location because of certain gaps in international legal documentation concerning the boundaries. The Ukraine was the first from the CIS states to sign boundary treaty in 2003, in the issue of which a small land section of the Russo-Ukrainian border was delimited.

However, despite accommodations being reached, the border has not been demarcated so far. The questions about the division of the Strait of Kerch and the Sea of Azov remain open...

Signification of the Common free-market zone agreement by the presidents of Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, Russia and the Ukraine in Yalta on 19 September 2003 was the next step forward. The main principles of this document are guaranteeing free movement of goods, services, capital and working force across the borders of the state parties. The free movement of working force implies ensuring free movement of individuals from one state party to another within the frames of common free-market zone and coordination of migration policy in relation to the third countries, while taking into consideration international legal norms and principles of the WTO. In its meeting on 20 April 2004 Ukrainian Rada ratified the Common free-market zone agreement, the Treaty between Russia and the Ukraine of cooperation in use of the Sea of Azov and the Strait of Kerch and the Russo-Ukrainian boundary treaty. The State Duma of the Russian Federation and the parliament of Kazakhstan ratified the Common free-market zone agreement as well. Besides, the State Duma approved the Russo-Ukrainian boundary treaty and the Treaty of cooperation in use of the Sea of Azov and the Strait of Kerch.

Boundary regime was facilitated for Russian and Ukrainian citizens in Autumn 2004. According to "the Protocol on the entry of alterations in the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Ukraine on visa-free travels for the citizens of the Russian Federation and the Ukraine on 16 January 1997" the citizens of "one state party on the basis of reciprocity are exempted from registration at their residence on the territory of the other state party, if the length of their stay in the host country does not exceed 90 days since the moment of entry, in the presence of migration card with mark of border-guard services". The Protocol also defines the alteration procedure of the list of documents required for crossing the Russo-Ukrainian border.

Currently the general length of the Russo-Ukrainian border is 2245,8 km, 1925,8 km of which consist the land boundary. 425,6 km of the border pass across the rivers and lakes. Judging by the length this frontier occupies the fourth place after the borders with Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia.

The Russo-Ukrainian border is an interesting study object, which in spite of stormy political processes taking place in the Ukraine curiously enough has not attracted much attention of the scholars so far. Nevertheless, this situation can be easily explained because as a rule researchers' attention is drawn by two details: the most successful and promising examples of across-the-border cooperation (for example, the Northwest of Russia) or the areas existing under threats to the regional and national security (Far East, the South and etc.). The Conception of border services development has been focused on the protection of the frontier on the North Caucuses. The second priority has been given to the Central Asia because of concentration of migration flows and drug traffic (mostly heroin) in European direction. Relatively calm and safe border areas, into which we can put with some provisos the regions of the Central Federal District, bordering upon the Ukraine, drew neither the officials nor the researchers, despite the fact that according to various assesses frontier length there comes up from 1279,3 km to 1343,2 km. In the judging of the Head of Regional Border Department of the FSB of the Russian Federation in the Central Federal District, currently the Russo-Ukrainian border has completely different aspect. "It is not today when the main principle of working was formulated for this border, and it stays immutable: maximal transparency for friends, insurmountable barrier for enemies."

At the adjacent part there are Tchernigovskaya, Sumskaya, Harkovskaya and Luganskaya regions, the population of which counts more than 6 mln. of people (93,8% of them are Ukrainians). In political respect 18

Ukrainian regions are adjacent to Russian State Border, and there live about 1 mln. of people. The place is plain, cut by ravines and gullies, with hills here and there, with pine and mixed forests. That is convenient for trespassers.

The main paths of smugglers and illegal migrants go through Bryansk and Belgorod. On the whole, there are over 350 roads on the sector of Russo-Ukrainian border which are beyond frontier points and can be used both by illegal migrants and common people as ways to the near abroad. According to the statistics, border services manage to detain only 30% of all illegal migrants. Therefore, border guards had to control sectors of that kind. Nevertheless, the number of cases of smuggling suppression, identification of illegal migrants, drug traffic and illegal arms traffic revealing is soaring year by year.

*Table 1. The length of Russo-Ukrainian border
Regional Border Department of the FSB of the RF in the CFO (D)*

Regions	Total length, km	Land border	River border	Lake border
Bryansk	354,6	258,4	96,2	0
Kursk	296,0	228,8	66,5	0,7
Belgorod	594,4	534,2	59,0	1,2
Voronezh	98,2	98,2	0,2	0
Total	1343,2	1119,4	221,9	1,9

The Central Federal District Regional border office of the FSB, which is located in Voronezh, occupies a special place in the system of the Frontier Service of the FSB. It originates from a separate task force, created in 1993 in Voronezh. The task force was one of the first to begin patrolling the state border by using the operative and tactical methods. From the moment of its creation the Frontier Service is manned with contract servicemen. The Russo-Ukrainian border in the Central Black Earth Region is being patrolled by the Kursk Regional Frontier Service of the FSB, located in Kursk, and by the Belgorod and Voronezh Regional Frontier Service of the FSB, located in Belgorod. The border guards face difficulties in transition from combined-arms infrastructure to the structure of a special state service with corresponding technical equipment. The main aim is the provision of communication facilities.

The practice of the border guards shows that the border town phenomenon starts to play a more active role in the political, socio-economic and cultural life of the Central Black Earth region, becoming one of the key factors of regional development. Though even in the case of the Central Black Earth region the factor of border proximity is being used ambiguously. For example the Belgorod region benefits from this factor far more than the Voronezh region. The adjacency of the Voronezh region and the Ukraine does not contribute to the economic development of the former, in contrast with the situation in other regions that neighbor with developed and dynamically developing countries, and have entrance to the world markets.

Some contradictions in the situation in Voronezh region are clearly visible. On one hand, the city occupies the most convenient economic and geographical location with regard to the other cities of the Central Black Earth Region. Having the largest economic, academic and educational potential, and having a rich cultural and historical heritage, the city has a right to claim the title of the capital of the Central Black Earth Region. On the other hand, the region in its pace and intensity of development, economic activity and many other figures gives way to such regions as Lipetsk region and Belgorod region. Therefore the possibility of Voronezh region of keeping its competitive advantages and having resources for further development needs to be analyzed. There is no definite answer to this question since it has not been

analyzed thoroughly at the regional level. It seems, though, that given the existing advantages and the border proximity factor, the Voronezh region could play a key role not only for the Central Black Earth Region but also for the entire Russia in its cooperation with Ukraine.

At the moment, the benefits of the proximity to the state border are used only on the level of consumer goods market. The broken economic, academic, cultural and other ties have a tendency to restore lately on interstate, regional and personal levels. A number of businesses organize realization of products in exchange for agricultural goods, thus performing barter operations, using the convenient border location. The academic, athletic and cultural ties with the adjacent Ukraine have increased. Still, compared to the neighbor Belgorod region the pace of development in the abovementioned areas is significantly lower.

Migration as an important factor in across-the border border cooperation influences the interaction of regions adjacent to state borders and is of great importance to the national security protection. Recently, the migration relations of a region have underwent major changes as well, continuing to influence on demographical and socio-economic processes. Therefore the migration factor should be recognized as one of the new impulses of Voronezh region development.

In recent time, the attention of the government agents is drawn more and more to the problems of migration and the issues of migration processes control are becoming – for the first time in the Russian history – one of the main political priorities of Russia. According to Vladimir Putin illegal migration occupies the third place in the list of priorities for the law enforcement agencies, alongside with terrorism and economic security. The 2006 annual appeal of the President to the Federal Assembly of Russia is also relevant to the case. The President has put effective migration policy alongside with reduction of mortality in the list of demographic issues. The very essence of such a policy is motivating the nationals of Russia who currently reside abroad to return to Russia. Additionally, the need of stimulation of the drift of skilled labor force, “well-educated and law-abiding”, and “having respect for the Russian culture and national traditions” was mentioned.

Through the nineties, the Central Black Earth Region at large and the Voronezh region in particular were very attractive to the drift of Russian-speaking migrants from the former Soviet states. Despite the fact that the drift has decayed in the recent years, it did support the demographic situation in all parts of the Central Black Earth Region. Overall, from 1989 to 2005 over 160,000 people have crossed the Russo-Ukrainian border for permanent residence in the Voronezh region. Most of the migrants have previously resided in Kazakhstan, Ukraine and the Central Asian and Baltic states. Up until 2005 almost 121,000 refugees and foreigners admitted for settlement have entered the Voronezh region. It is worth mentioning that close to 23,000 people came from Ukraine, which is slightly less than the number of people that arrived from Kazakhstan.

Through the last decade of the XX century displaced persons have played a key role in the life of the region. The highest level of migration gain was registered in 1992 and amounted 32,000 people. Starting from 1993 the migration gain has contracted more than fourfold, accounting 7,600 people in 2001. It is necessary to stress that the migrant population turnover has also decreased. In 1989 it accounted 178,500 people, in 1995 – 109,000 people and in 2000 – 70,800 people. 76,800 people have arrived in the region in 1993 and 46,000 have left it, while in 2000 the figures changed to 39,200 and 31,600 people respectively. The decrease in the number of migrants makes it impossible to stabilize the demographic situation in the Voronezh region, which leads to unavoidable rundown of population.

Table 2. Information on the migrants (refugees and displaced persons), that arrived in the Voronezh

region from abroad as of March, 30 2005

Countries	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Belarus	Ukraine	Moldova	Georgia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	Turkmenistan	Tajikistan	Chechnia	Other regions
Voronezh	139	505	2112	844	5043	899	1230	695	1062	4842	2392	560	627	1174	200	823
Voronezh region	439	1199	298	1121	17805	1596	4800	2178	4264	20831	15745	9699	2029	11047	3046	3644
Total	578	1704	510	1965	22848	2495	6030	2873	5326	25673	18137	10259	2656	12221	3246	4467

During the last several years the qualitative composition of the migration flow has changed. Today, personal and family, study and work reasons for migration take the leading positions. Despite relative socio-economic stabilization in the Ukraine, it continues to supply foreign migrant workers to Russia. According to official figures of the Department of the Federal Migration Service, 575 people from Ukraine have come to Voronezh region to work and have registered in the passport department of the migration service from January to June 2007. The Ukrainian citizens occupy the third place in the list of migrant workers on the regional labor market, giving way to citizens of Uzbekistan (1667 people) and Moldova (606 people). It should be noted though that the proportion of the Ukrainian migrant workers is gradually declining. According to the information of the Migration Service, the main suppliers of CIS labor force in 2002 were Ukraine (35,4 % of total number of migrant workers), Moldova (27,1%) and Uzbekistan (12,3%). The majority of the foreign labor force is used in agriculture, which is explained by the shortness of hands, low wages and seasonality of work.

Controlled migration is beneficial for both the region and the state. It stabilizes the population size and its socio-demographic and professional characteristics. In contrast, the migration from Ukraine to Russia is not always legal and controlled. This notion also applies to illegal migrants from Southern and Southeast Asia that head off to the European Union states and to illegal migrant workers from Moldova and Ukraine.

Around 50,000 people and over 5,000 vehicles cross the Russia-Ukraine border daily, which constitutes a third of the entire cargo and passenger flow through the border of the Russian Federation. The part of the Russia-Ukraine border within the Voronezh region is less problematic compared to Belgorod-Kharkov and Bryansk-Sukhumi areas. This thesis is easily proved by the results of a monitoring of news published on the official web-site of the Frontier Service of the FSB from January 2003 to August 2007. There were no reports about serious violations in crossing the border in the Voronezh region. Nevertheless, from January to February 2007 over 30,000 people and over 7,200 vehicles have crossed the border in the region. 29 persons were lawfully not allowed to cross the border, including 22 persons without documents and 7 persons, who are forbidden to enter the Russian Federation.

There are some difficulties concerning the interaction between regional frontier and migration

services in regulation of migration flow since these services are subject to jurisdiction of different institutions – the FSB and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia respectively.

There are three border checkpoints in the Voronezh region: Novobelaya, Bugaevka and Voronezh airport. Despite the fact that the majority of the foreign migrants pass through Novobelaya and Bugaevka border checkpoints, the station of immigration control is located only in the airport building. The Department of the Federal Migration Service has repeatedly approached the Voronezh Region Administration with a proposal to create the stations of immigration control in the two border checkpoints. The Administration refused to do so, motivating its decision on the basis that the activities of migration services is financed from the federal budget. Thus, it is impossible to evaluate the immigration situation in the region, as well as the influence of migration on socio-economic and domestic stability of the region due to the current flaws in the system of immigration control.

During the first six months of 2007 over 4500 foreign citizens have crossed the Russian border in the Voronezh airport, including 3,000 citizens of Armenia 663 citizens of Germany

Overall, during the first six months of 2007, over 6,000 citizens of Uzbekistan, 4,500 people from Ukraine and 2,141 Moldovans have registered in the migration services. These figures show the relatively high level of migration mobility, with the citizens of Ukraine having the lead.

The official data, though, does not reflect the real migration situation in Voronezh region. According to the officials of the migration service, the absence of stations of migration control in Bugaevka and Novobelaya border checkpoints results in the impossibility of bringing the foreign citizens that violated the migration regime to administrative responsibility. It hinders the service of helping in filling in the migration forms. Additionally, problems arise in conducting the immigration control of foreign citizens and stateless persons, that either seek asylum, or arrive to Russia for labor activities as foreign workforce. The fact that more and more foreign citizens and stateless persons penetrate Voronezh region does not only have a profound impact on the work of government agencies, but also affects the region interests and causes national security problems. Quite a few of foreign citizens arriving in Russia within the migrant flow for asylum seeking purposes attempt to carry out illegal commercial activities. Illegal migration stimulates the inflow of unqualified and criminalized work force. This in turn affects the labor market bringing disbalance to the current situation. The growth of the number of immigrants causes problems in carrying out sanitary control.

Taking into consideration mentioned above, the analysis of migration situation in the region proves the actuality of the issue of illegal migration and the need of consolidated measures by the public authorities and government agencies. An interagency group on coordination and cooperation between law enforcement agencies on the issues of prevention and suppression of illegal migration has been created for these purposes. It includes representatives from the public prosecutor's office, the FSB, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, the regional border office of the FSB and the state customs. Alongside with the comprehensive study and discussion on the most acute problems of the region, effective ways of problem solving and joint operations and ventures coordination are being carried out within the framework of this structure.

When an illegal migrant has been detected, he or she is usually placed in the local police precinct where the state border infiltration has taken place for the time needed for filtration activities. The mechanism of exclusion from the country is poorly elaborated which results in the same illegal migrants being detained multiple times by the frontiersmen. Some migrants come across up to three times, while citizens of India (27 %), Afghanistan (14,5 %) and Bangladesh (5) are being detained more frequently than others.

In 2006 for the purpose of ensuring the security of the state border, the border zone was extended. The Russo-Ukrainian border zone in the Voronezh region is currently set by law in Rossosh and Kantemirovskiy regions.

The border zones were abolished in the 1990's, which, according to the opinion of some frontiersmen made the border accessible to the smugglers and other trespassers. It is now decided to return to the reliable and time-tested methods of carrying out border security duty. The presence of the border zone is perceived to play the key role in timely abolishing of the transfer channels of drugs, weapons, subversive groups, to identify smugglers and illegal migrants.

As the border zones are being reintroduced, the conditions of the border control change. This includes the changes in entry procedures, temporary residence issues, and control of movement of individuals and vehicles, economic activity and carrying out cultural and socio-political events. However according to the opinion of several experts these innovations would just complicate the situation on the state border. For instance, doctor of geographic science, head of department of the economic and social geography of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, S. Artobolevskiy holds that the drawbacks of the extension of the border zone are evident. These are: deterioration of investment climate and economic attractiveness of the region, contraction of all kinds of transborder contacts, economic loss due to reduction of tourist flow, worsening of the image of the state, outflow of population from the region, and finally increase of danger of corruption in FSB. The head of department of theory of Saint-Petersburg school of situation modeling feels certain that the initiative of expanding the border zone is first and foremost economically unsound. As he is saying, the expansion of the border zone and complication of the transition rules within it will lead, willing or not, to exemption of considerably large territories from economic turnover. The scholar does not dispute the need of combating illegal migration, what he insists on is that the combating must be conducted not along the border but within the region where foreign workforce is required.

To sum up, we can single out several factor which influence significantly migration through Russo-Ukrainian border and, therefore, the activity of border and migration services. Among them there are social and political instability in the Ukraine, imperfection of legislation concerning the Russo-Ukrainian sector of the state frontier, lack of necessary facilities, despite the fact that Ukrainian border guards are better equipped. Potential threats of subversive and terrorist act at the border and in an adjacent area, penetration of the border by the members of international terrorist and extremist organizations, illegal armed units are still remain. We can also name illegal activity aiming at organizing settled flows of material and labour resources smuggle, preserving the scale of illegal migration. In this connection the importance of Russian regions adjacent to Russo-Ukrainian border is increasing and for all comparative transparency of the frontier these areas are acting as advanced posts.

Small length of the Russo-Ukrainian border, poor organization and structural differences with Ukrainian borderline regions can explain insignificance of the frontier in Voronezh region. Another reason is that for a quarter of the century local authorities and representatives of border services has been speaking in favour of border fortification and strengthening of its legal status.

However, not only is the principle of "locked border" irrelevant in modern conditions but also it damages the work at the border and causes inconveniences for people who live nearby. It is people who should become the factor of effective border cooperation, people who consider the frontier area as a place for strategic progress for themselves. Therefore, local authorities should favour the shaping of border mentality in people's minds.

It is important to understand that Voronezh region can well benefit from collaboration with the Ukraine and the reason for that is not only range of competitive advantages in political, economic, cultural, scientific and educational fields, but also its geopolitical position. The shortest way from the Ukraine to Kazakhstan is lying through Voronezh region (Voronezh region is bordering upon Saratov region adjacent to the Russo-Kazakh frontier). The border may help to stabilize demographic and migratory situation in the region and solve short-term goals as well as long-term ones. Taking into consideration that Belgorod and Kursk are developing partnership with Euro regions, we presume that they can win over beneficial partners, therefore with unsettled demographic and migratory problems abstention of Voronezh region from border collaboration can lead to further stagnation.