

THE MIGRATION SITUATION AND MIGRATION POLICY IN KALMYKIA

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The Current Situation in Citizen Migration

According to the results of the nationwide population census carried out in October 2002, there are 292,400 people living in the Republic of Kalmykia. Information on the population's ethnic composition has still not been published, but, according to similar data for 1989, Kalmyks accounted for 45.4%, Russians for 37.7%, Darghins for 4%, Chechens for 2.6%, and so on.¹

Compared with the last census, the size of the population had shrunk by 30,000 people (9.3%), and the republic was the only territory in the Northern Caucasus and the Russian South where a decrease in the number of residents was recorded.²

We will note that there is a continuous natural increment (the number of births exceeds the number of deaths) in the population in Kalmykia. But this is not enough to compensate for the migration decrement (more people are leaving than arriving), which led to the drop in its population. For example, in 2001, the natural increment amounted to 173 people, in 2000 to 92, and in 2003 to 464, with a migration decrement of 2,182, 1,237, and 1,692 people, respectively.³

Direction of Flows

The current migration situation in the republic is largely predetermined by the interregional movement of the population. The most intensive migration relations have developed with the neighboring republics of the Northern Caucasus, the Russian South, and the Lower Volga Region. The active migration exchange (in the volume of foreign migration) in 2001, 2002, and 2003 formed as followed: with the Rostov Region, 13.7%, 15.5%, and 15.9%; with the Stavropol Territory, 15.7%, 14.7%, and 14.1%; with the Volgograd Region, 11.2%, 10.9%, 10.8%; with the Astrakhan Region, 9.5%, 10.5%, 10.2%, and with Dagestan, 9.6%, 8.3%, and 8.1%, respectively.

¹ See: *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naselenia 1989 g. po Kalmytskoi ASSR*, Goskomstat RSFMS, Kalmyk Republic Statistics Department, Elista, 1999, p. 28.

² See: *Regiony Rossii. Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie pokazateli. Ofitsial'noe izdanie 2003 g.*, Statistics Collection, Goskomstat Rossii, Moscow, 2003, p. 52.

³ Here and later migration and demographic statistics are presented according to the information in the following publications: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitiie Respubliki Kalmykia za ianvar' 2002 goda*, Goskomstat Rossii, Gos. kom. Respubliki Kalmykia po statistike, Elista, 2002; *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitiie Respubliki Kalmykia za ianvar' 2003 goda*, Goskomstat Rossii, Gos. kom. Respubliki Kalmykia po statistike, Elista, 2003; *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitiie Respubliki Kalmykia za ianvar' 2004 goda*, Goskomstat Rossii, Gos. kom. Respubliki Kalmykia po statistike, Elista, 2004.

The Rostov Region (in 2001—14.6%, in 2002—16%, in 2003—16.1%) and the Stavropol Territory (18%, 17.7%, and 15.6%, respectively) account for the highest percentage of those leaving Kalmykia.

A positive balance is only observed in the migration exchange with the CIS and Baltic countries: in 2001—119 people (207 arrived and 88 left), in 2002—200 people (284 arrived and 84 left), and in 2003—7 (91 arrived and 84 left). The highest percentage in 2001 was of people arriving from Ukraine (21.7%) and Armenia (16.4%), and leaving for Ukraine (44.3%) and Kazakhstan (23.9%); in 2002, of people arriving from Armenia (38.0%) and Ukraine (14.8%), and leaving for Kazakhstan (33.3%) and Ukraine (32.1%); and in 2003, of people arriving from Ukraine (19.8%) and Kazakhstan (19.8%), and leaving for Kazakhstan (44%) and Ukraine (31%).

The outflow and inflow with respect to countries of the “far abroad” has decreased, but nevertheless the scales tilt in favor of those leaving. In 2001, the decrement amounted to 205 people (219 left and 14 arrived), in 2002 it was 163 (189 left and 26 arrived), and in 2003 it was 157 (173 left and 16 arrived). Most of those leaving headed for Germany: in 2001, 204 people, in 2002, 165, and in 2003, 146. They were mainly Germans.

Description of the Migrants

People of able-bodied age predominate in the migration structure. In 2001, their percentage in the total number of arrivals was equal to 71.4%, and in the number of those leaving to 74.4%. In 2002, these figures were 73.2% and 76.4%, and in 2003, 73.8% and 77.8%, respectively.

According to national composition, the migrants were distributed as follows: representatives of the indigenous people largely moved around the republic. In foreign migration, the number of arriving Kalmyks amounted to 20% in 2001, 19.3% in 2002, and 21.1% in 2003; with those leaving amounting to 10.9%, 11.2%, and 10.5%, respectively.

The greatest migration movement is observed among Russians. Their percentage in the foreign migration turnover is close to 50%. For example, they contributed to 40.6% of all the arrivals in 2001, 40.5% in 2002, and 45.1% in 2003, and to 54.8%, 53.3%, and 51.5% of those leaving, respectively.

Third place among the arrivals is stably occupied by Chechens (2001—12.9%, 2002—8.1%, and 2003—5.8%), and among those leaving by Darghins (2001—7.8%, 2002, 4.5%, and 2003, 4.1%).

The migrants gave the following reasons for the need to move: personal and family reasons (in 2001, 58.4% of those leaving and 39.1% of those arriving, in 2002, 60% and 43.8%, and in 2003, 60.7% and 36.6%, respectively); returning to their former place of residence (in 2001, 12.2% of those leaving and 35% of those arriving, in 2002, 10.3% and 32.8%, in 2003, 9.9% and 39.5%); job-related (in 2001, 9.9% of those leaving and 13.6% of those arriving, in 2002, 9.0% and 12.8%, in 2003, 11.0% and 13.9%, respectively); and study-related (in 2001, 13.9% of those leaving and 5.8% of those arriving, in 2002, 13.8% and 6.0%, and in 2003, 12.1% and 6.5%, respectively).

Forced Moves

As of 1 January, 2002, 1,699 forced migrants had been registered, including 429 registered in 2001, 392 of whom were Chechens, 30 Russians, and 3 Kazakhs. They mainly arrived from Ingushetia (381 people) and Tajikistan (25 people). By January 2003, the picture had changed somewhat: 1,387 forced migrants were registered, including 39 registered in 2002, 38 of whom were Chechens who came from Ingushetia. As of 1 January, 2004, there were a total of 1,240 such people (in 2003 forced migrants were not registered in the republic).

As we can see, migration is a determining factor in the change in size of the republic's population, and one of its dominating features is people migrating out of the country, particularly those of able-bodied

ied age. In so doing, the positive migration balance of members of the titular people, the Kalmyks, remains stable. Of the other relatively large national communities, the number of those arriving is higher than those leaving only among the Chechens, and even this index has been dropping in the past three years. Among Russians and Darghins, the number of those leaving is higher than those arriving.

How the Local Population Perceives the Migration Processes

On the whole, Kalmykia is one of the most stable territories in the Russian South. It is characterized by mutual understanding and cooperation among the members of different nationalities, and essentially all of the republic's public sociopolitical and cultural-enlightenment activity is supported in a spirit of favorable ethnic communality.

The old-timers are largely tolerant of the newcomers. For example, they feel a genuine empathy for forced migrants, most of whom appeared in the republic as the result of the armed conflict in Chechnia. It was no accident that the local press frequently published letters from Chechen refugees and statements from the leaders of the Chechen community thanking the Kalmykian official institutions and their leaders, as well as individuals, for their attention and humaneness.

Indicative in this respect was the report on the activity of the human rights ombudsman in Kalmykia for 2002, which stated that he had received more than 800 appeals, only 2% of which were complaints about violations of the rights of forced migrants,⁴ mainly with respect to people from Chechnia obtaining housing.

However, most of Kalmykian society (both in its ethnic and civil sense) has a negative attitude toward the North Caucasian and Central Asian migration vectors. As early as 1999, a poll of local residents conducted under the supervision of the author of this article showed that 44.2% of the respondents did not approve of Caucasians coming to the republic to live, and only 10.0% of the respondents were in favor. Thirty-six point nine percent of the respondents related negatively to Central Asians coming to live in the republic, and 11.5% positively. By way of comparison, 54.2% of the respondents approved of Russians migrating to the republic, while only 6.9% did not approve.⁵

Recently, the negative attitude toward the above-mentioned groups of migrants has not improved much. The periodic (several times a year) local clashes between groups of Kalmyks (less frequently Russians) and Caucasians remain a reality. They occur for everyday, interpersonal reasons. Escalation occurs when ethnic support groups become involved in these frays. Although almost all of these conflicts are short-lived and restricted to a small area, they can be very severe.

One such clash took place in June 2001 in the village of Sadovoe, the administrative center of the Sarpa District, in which more than 1,000 Kalmyks and Darghins participated, whereby both sides used hunting guns. Luckily no one was hurt. Effective interference and emergency measures by the authorities and law enforcement structures made it possible to defuse the situation.

These events had strong repercussions in society and generated a broad discussion on the reasons for ethnic tension. An analysis of the newspaper articles during this time shows that the migration theme is seen as one of the most urgent.

It should be noted first of all that a certain percentage of the republic's population has formed an unfavorable stereotype of migrants for several reasons. For example, the migrants take jobs away from the local residents, and young migrants of call-up age are moving to evade army service. What is more, supposedly "poor" refugees are often seen dressed from head to foot in furs and barely able to stand up straight under the weight of their gold adornments. They buy houses and apartments without haggling for

⁴ See: *Khalimag unen*, 25 June, 2003.

⁵ For more detail, see: V. Volgin, "Kalmykia. Sostoianie mezhetnicheskikh otnoshenii," *Set etnologicheskogo monitorin-ga i rannego preduprezhdeniia konfliktov*, Bulletin No. 26, July-August 1999.

the best price, set up large personal farmsteads, have quite a large number of cows, sheep, and poultry, take over the local markets, and give bribes to resolve their registration and job problems.

The following aspects are singled out in the migration version of the reasons for ethnic conflicts.

The Caucasian Aspect

There is a popular opinion that the main conflict-prone factor is the growing number of Caucasian migrants itself. This can hardly be said for the entire republic, but in some areas the size of the Caucasian communities has perceptibly grown. For example, according to the data of the 1989 census, there were 503 Darghins (2.9% of the total size of the population) and 788 Chechens (4.5%) living in the Sarpa District. By the middle of 2001, according to the Kalmykian Interior Ministry, these numbers had grown to 1,376 and 1,306, respectively. Many of the indigenous residents were not happy about this. Here is the opinion of one of them: "Riding around Sadovoe is like riding around the Northern Caucasus."⁶ Another said, "In the evenings, it is like some Daghestani settlement here, their cars are everywhere, and all you hear is their foreign tongue. And they all behave aggressively. They have local vagrants working for them at all the trading points, and they act as though they are the boss."⁷ The village, which is usually referred to by the locals as "Sadovka," has recently acquired the name of "Caucasian prisoner."

When the potential for conflict increases, there are frequently proposals to toughen up the passport system with respect to people from the Northern Caucasus, right down to adopting a corresponding republic-level law, and to introduce other restrictions, even refuse to register Caucasians and deport them. This gave rise to a heated discussion, for example, at a gathering of citizens in Sadovoe on 11 July, 2001.

Officials are forced to remind the locals again and again that free movement and free choice of place of residence is the constitutional right of every Russian citizen, regardless of nationality, and it cannot be restricted. Kalmykian President Kirsan Iliumzhinov has stated repeatedly that there can be no talk of deporting Caucasians.

But radical sentiments are still evident and, what is important, even among some of the Caucasians who have been living in the republic for a long time. For example, the Chechen community made a decision to make anyone who does not observe the local traditions leave the district within 24 hours. Its leader, U. Zukhairaev, who has lived here for 35 years, suggested that the Daghestanis do the same thing. He noted: "Kalmykia and the Saratov Region are the Russian regions most kindly disposed toward people from the Northern Caucasus. Darghins who complain about oppression calmly engage in business here and have 3-4,000 sheep each. But this should be appreciated and the local customs respected."⁸ The titular population is happy to hear such words.

The Ethnostructural Factor

Some members of society believe that the problem is not so much migration as such, as the dramatic change in the ethnic composition of the population it causes. For instance, in the same Sarpa District, according to the data of the interior structures, between 1989 and 2001 the number of Russians dropped from 9,955 (56.5%) to 8,443 people. The number of Kalmyks also decreased slightly, from 5,243 (29.7%) to 5,000. The advocators of this point of view note that the local Russians are a special ethnic group, the descendants of those who lived for centuries side by side with the Kalmyks. They have always enjoyed mutual respect and understanding, based on long years of living together and a common outlook. Today,

⁶ *Sarpinskie vesti*, 17 July, 2001.

⁷ *Izvestia Kalmykii*, 9 August, 2001.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

North Caucasians are taking the place of the departing Slavs, and these people need a long time to adapt to the new ethnocultural environment and establish civilized mechanisms of interrelations with the Kalmyks and local Russians.

The Ethical-behavioral Question

It is the behavior of some of the Caucasian migrants, which goes against the local norms, that is considered one of the most important determinants in ethnic confrontations. For example, at gatherings in the villages of Arshan-Zelmen, Kirovskiy, and Korobkin, the people noted primarily the disrespectful attitude of the people arriving from the Northern Caucasus toward the traditions, customs, and everyday life of the local residents. What is more, upon closer examination, it turns out that nothing supernatural is required of the newcomers. Here are some of the “complaints” mentioned by Nikolai, a 35-year-old Russian: “The Caucasians should be put in their place, they just don’t know how to behave. What, do they think they are a breed apart or something? They think they can stop their cars in the middle of the road to talk to friends coming the other way and hold up traffic. And they do not even give pedestrians the right of way. They are hail-fellow with the local policemen. And they don’t respect our women.”⁹

Such reproaches are aimed primarily at young Caucasians and, what is interesting, their compatriots say almost the same thing. For example, a resident of Svetly village, A. Omarov, lamented, “We Caucasians have very ancient traditions—maintaining good relations with our neighbors. But our young people do not observe these traditions. At times they do not even give us, their elders, the right of way.”¹⁰ Director of the tax inspection office in Sadovoe, a forced migrant from Chechnia, V. Vystropova, mused, “When I lived for nine years in the national republic (Chechnia.—*V.V.*), I subordinated to the local customs, I didn’t wear open dresses, I wore a scarf on my head, and I learned conversational Chechen. The people who come here (to Kalmykia.—*V.V.*) should do the same thing. Newcomers should not drive the local people to extremes, they should pay attention to them and do as they say, what’s so hard about that?”¹¹ She said she was sorry that the local residents were the ones being insulted by the newcomers, not the other way round. It is also unfortunate that the Daghestani diaspora openly flaunts its financial achievements before the less enterprising steppe residents.¹²

The lack of desire of newly arriving nouveau riche Caucasians to observe elementary decency and their aggressive behavior are creating an ingrained stereotype of “foreigners” as a whole in the minds of the titular population. The words of G. Batyrov, co-chairman of the republic’s public movement Home Territory, are characteristic in this respect: “Caucasian nationals are guests on Kalmykian soil, so they should behave accordingly.”¹³ Russian Federation State Duma deputy A. Burataeva was even more categorical about them, “You should thank us every day for giving you the opportunity to live on peaceful land.”¹⁴ But not everyone shares such sentiments. For example, the newspaper *Sovetskaia Kalmykia segodnia* found A. Burataeva’s statements unacceptable for a politician of her rank.¹⁵ G. Batyrov confessed however that the Caucasians gave his words “a hostile reception.”¹⁶ The newspaper *Komsomolets Kalmykii* raised the question, “Is it sensible to set the indigenous population against the newcomers? Yes, migrants are taking part of the local budget, but they are the same Russian citizens as every indigenous resident. As soon as we begin to infringe on migrants’ rights even a little, we are asking for big trouble.

⁹ *Sarpinskie vesti*, 30 June, 2001.

¹⁰ *Rassvet*, 11 August, 2001.

¹¹ *Izvestia Kalmykii*, 9 August, 2001.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Rassvet*, 10 August, 2001.

¹⁴ *Sarpinskie vesti*, 17 July, 2001.

¹⁵ See: *Sovetskaia Kalmykia segodnia*, 30 July, 2001.

¹⁶ *Elistinskie novosti*, 7 August, 2001.

This has been verified by the practice in many regions, and it would be unwise to make the same mistakes in Kalmykia.”¹⁷

Quite self-critical opinions are also encountered, the authors of which question the behavior not so much of the migrants, as of the indigenous residents. Here is one of them, “By demanding respect, we should first look at our own behavior from a distance. Are we acting in a way that demands respect? Not always, and we need to admit this. We do not observe elementary decency in everyday life, we drink, fight, scold, swear. When newcomers see this they immediately understand there is no order here, so this gives them license to be rude and lord it over us.”¹⁸

Journalist N. Kumenova believes that the rise in ethnic aggressiveness is encouraged by the undignified lifestyle of many Kalmykian men. “Of course,” she notes, “we cannot stand it when others reproach us for drunkenness, lack of initiative, and empty conceit. But this does not make the ‘behavioral distinctions’ characteristic of many Kalmyks less noticeable or reprehensible.”¹⁹

Problems of Adaptation

Some members of the republic’s society believe that the necessary and inevitable adaptation of the Caucasians is being made harder than it need be. “Let’s be honest and admit that no one is welcoming them here, and no one is really helping them to settle in. The attitude toward so-called Caucasian nationals is extremely prejudiced. A local is ready to see a combat fighter or a terrorist in practically every Caucasian he meets, and officials see him as a way to extort money. They settle in as best they can, by giving bribes, buying residence permits, and putting up with all kinds of humiliation. There is no need to explain how this affects the attitude of one nationality toward another.”²⁰

Myths and Fears

Along with the image of Caucasians as “foreigners”, they are also considered “dangerous.” In so doing, these phobias are often clearly mythologized. For example, one publication described the situation no more and no less as Caucasians slowly but surely taking over the local population.²¹ In this respect, P. Ivikov, the director of a territorial structure of the then Russian Ministry of Federation Affairs and National and Migration Policy in Kalmykia, was forced to explain that there were no grounds for such alarm. At that time, there were 24,000 North Caucasians among the republic’s residents (7.6% of the population).

In turn, certain fears about the titular population also exist among its ethnic counteragents. For example, Marina, a 47-year-old Georgian, is worried about the fact that “Kalmyks seem to want to deport the Caucasians.”²² Of course, mutual fears and myths add an element of increased caution in relations between the old-timers and migrants.

Special Features of Regional Migration Policy

The specifics of the migration situation, the migration processes, and the way the locals perceive them cannot help but have an effect on how the republic’s power structures draw up migration policy. For

¹⁷ *Komsomolets Kalmykii*, 15-21 August, 2001.

¹⁸ *Iskra Kalmykii*, 1 February, 2003.

¹⁹ *Izvestia Kalmykii*, 9 August, 2001.

²⁰ *Sovetskaia Kalmykia segodnia*, 13 August, 2001.

²¹ See: *Vecherniaia Elista*, 1 August, 2001.

²² *Sarpinskie vesti*, 30 June, 2001.

example, in 2001, a policy aimed at intensifying the role of the Kalmykian Interior Ministry in this sphere was supported. For example, A. Sidorenko, deputy chairman of the republic's National Khural (parliament), was in favor of abolishing the Russian Ministry on Federation Affairs and National and Migration Policy and transferring the migration issues to the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry. In particular, he noted, "The problem of uncontrolled migration has become a real headache for the power structures and the local population."²³

In the report mentioned above on the activity of the human rights ombudsman in Kalmykia in 2002, it was also emphasized that uncontrolled migration is threatening the stability of our republic. Data were presented: approximately 40% of the Meskhetian Turks, who settled in its southern regions, are living there illegally.²⁴ The report stated that in 2002, relations between local residents and migrants in the Sarpa, Tselinnoe, and Chernozemel'skii regions became aggravated. After visiting these regions and meeting with representatives of the municipal power structures, old-timers, and migrants, the ombudsman asked the republic's government to hold round tables on "Human Rights and Migration Processes in Kalmykia" in some of the regions, and these meetings indeed took place.

The republic's authorities declared the need to strengthen the legal base for combating uncontrolled migration. However, the presidential elections in Kalmykia and the campaign leading up to them in 2002 prevented this task from being carried out with the determination required. But in 2003, an attempt was made to change the approaches toward the regional migration policy. For example, on 20 January, head of the republic Kirsan Iliumzhinov signed a decree on measures to organize state regulation of migration processes on its territory. The goal of these efforts was to step up state regulation of these processes, protect the constitutional rights and freedoms of all the people legally residing in the republic, and secure public order. The decree was based on the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; Art 11.3, sub-item "b" of Art 72 of the Russian Federation Constitution, and Arte 3 of the republic's Steppe Code (Constitution).

We will explain that the first of the named provisions of the Russian Constitution declares that "the scopes of authority and powers of the bodies of state authority of the Russian Federation and the bodies of state authority of the subjects of the Russian Federation shall be delimited under this Constitution, Federal and other Treaties on the delimitation of scopes of authority and powers." The second says that the "protection of the rights and freedoms of man and citizen, protection of the rights of ethnic minorities; ensuring legality, law and order, and public safety; and the border zone regime" are under the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the Russian Federation constituencies. The aforementioned norm of the Kalmykian Basic Law envisages: "In the Republic of Kalmykia, human and citizen rights and freedoms are recognized and guaranteed pursuant to the Russian Federation Constitution, the Steppe Code (Constitution) of the Republic of Kalmykia, and the generally accepted principles and norms of international law. The Republic of Kalmykia is striving to create conditions that ensure the dignified life and free development of its citizens."

The decree we have been looking at calls efficient state regulation of migration processes one of the republic's priority tasks and, in particular, envisages drawing up provisions on organizing coordinated work between state and municipal structures to ensure observation in Kalmykia of citizen registration regulations. In this respect, the Interior Ministry has been entrusted with stepping up work to identify people who are violating the residency registration and entry regulations. It is to immediately apply an entire set of measures envisaged by the law, as well as deport foreigners and stateless citizens who are residing illegally on Russian territory. The local self-government structures have been asked to cooperate with the State Sanitary Epidemic Supervision structures to draw up normative acts on municipal control over migrants in order to observe sanitary norms and regulations aimed at preventing the spread of infectious and other dangerous diseases. The directors of enterprises, institutions, and organizations, regardless of form of ownership, as well as private businessmen, have been ordered to unconditionally carry out

²³ *Izvestia Kalmykii*, 31 October, 2001.

²⁴ See: *Khalimag unen*, 25 June, 2003.

the legislative requirements regarding the registration of Russian citizens and the use of foreign labor when hiring citizens under a work or civil-law contract.

Two more items of the decree also draw attention to themselves. One calls for strict observance of the demand set forth in the law on the state of housing facilities (including the amount of living space per person) when resolving citizen registration problems. The other envisages preparing a conception for organizing a state housing fund bought up from people who leave the republic to live permanently elsewhere.

At the same time, a long statement by the head of the republic was published, explaining the appearance of this decree and the special features of migration policy.

- First, when evaluating the current migration processes, the authorities recognize their objective nature and development “in keeping with the laws governing the nature of human society.”²⁵
- Second, the leadership is against uncontrolled migration. According to the republic’s leader, we should “not just be impartial observers of the process, only noting and registering the changes occurring in the ethnic, age, and professional composition of the population. It is perfectly clear that this route is not acceptable to us. Today we are faced with a whole set of extremely complicated socioeconomic questions generated by uncontrolled migration and the lack of proper state attention to the demographic situation. Tomorrow we may have problems of a much more serious nature.”
- Third, the head of the republic is in favor of stepping up control over observation of the registration regulations for all newcomers. “In no way are we restricting or do we intend to restrict the rights of Russian Federation citizens to freedom of movement, we only want to intensify control over the observation of registration regulations for all people who come to Kalmykia.” “In other words, we will no longer allow the practice whereby there are ten or more legally registered people to one square meter of living space. We will not hide the fact that there are cases when employers in search of easy prey are taking advantage of the unregistered labor of illegal migrants, which of course is cheaper for them and means they do not have to worry about social security, work safety, and ensuring technical safety standards for these workers. There can be no two ways about it: the strictest order must be established.”
- Fourth, the president of Kalmykia is in favor of a regulated procedure regarding the purchase of land, housing, and other real estate by newcomers. “We know of cases where migrants bought up whole sections of apartment buildings, the former occupants of which had left the republic. We also intend to impose regulatory measures in this area. Of course we will not prohibit anyone from buying housing in Kalmykia, but priority must go to our own citizens. I have issued corresponding orders to the republic’s government, which is to draw up a conception for organizing a state housing fund bought up from people who have left the republic to live elsewhere. The organization of this fund is an additional opportunity to resolve the housing problems of the indigenous population of the steppes.”

In the republic’s official circles, the Interior Ministry primarily expressed support of the president’s initiative. Deputy minister V. Badaev said, “The president has clearly defined a problem that concerns not only the law enforcement and executive structures, but the republic’s entire population. This addresses the recent trends toward an increase in the uncontrolled movement of citizens not only from the regions of Russia with a difficult socioeconomic situation, but also from outside the country.” The Interior Ministry representative believes that “complaints by the local population about the buying up of whole sections of apartment buildings are legitimate” and in this respect warned, “Today whole sections and apartment buildings are being bought up, and tomorrow they will start divvying the population settlements up. This could lead to ethnic conflicts, which might escalate into open confrontation between one nationality and another.” V. Badaev specified that the coercive regulations should not affect law-abiding citizens,

²⁵ Here and later the statement is quoted from *Khalimag unen*, 22 January, 2003.

but those residing illegally in the republic and “leading a lifestyle that is not in keeping with the elementary standards of decent behavior.”²⁶

The local press related positively to the initiatives of the republic’s leadership. The following commentary is characteristic: “The viewpoint expressed by President Iliumzhinov on migration policy in the republic and on the need to establish order here brought a sigh of relief among our citizens. No matter how the governor of the Krasnodar Territory is criticized for the special migration conditions he introduced, only those kinds of measures can save the region from chaotic settlement. We intend to adopt the same tough regulatory measures. We should have done it ages ago.”²⁷

The newspapers are full of positive responses from citizens. Strangely enough, even those who were in the unenviable role of migrants to other regions and have experienced infringement of their rights approve this practice and are in favor of introducing it. The confession of some A. Ovchinnikov is worth noting, “We left for the town of Gulkevichi in the Krasnodar Territory. We lived there for eighteen months, and then came back. Our eldest son who did not go with us said, ‘You will be treated like foreigners there.’ And that is exactly what happened. Things are really hard there for migrants, the locals are the first to be provided with work. In this respect I approve the policy of the governor of the Krasnodar Territory. We should do the same thing here. Apartments, work, and tickets for resorts should go to the locals first.”²⁸

On 11 April, 2003 the Law on Staying and Residing in the Republic of Kalmykia and on Measures to Regulate the Migration Processes in the Republic came into force. It regulates migration and only allows it in a volume which permits the geopolitical and socioeconomic conditions to ensure the rights and freedoms of citizens legally living in the republic, as well as state and public security. What is more, the law envisages the creation of a Migration Control Commission as a structure for resolving questions related to granting rights to staying and residing in the republic. The commission was invested with important authorities. For example, foreigners and stateless citizens may only be granted the right to permanent residence in the republic with its consent. With respect to citizens of the Russian Federation, a commission decision is mandatory for residence in Kalmykia if the place of residence does not meet the living space standards per person envisaged in the Russian Federation housing legislation. Based on the commission’s proposals, the government must set the annual maximum number of migrants to be granted permanent residency in the republic. The commission is also responsible for observing migration legislation. But this law was not destined to go into full effect: six months later on 11 October, 2003, the National Khural was forced to render it null and void since the public prosecutor structures found it contained contradictions to federal legislation.

In this way, the process of forming a regional migration normative-legal basis has still not been completed and, it is thought, will be continued.

C o n c l u s i o n

The quantitative migration indices and dimensions of the migration problems in the republic are perhaps less impressive than in several other regions of the Russian South. But this does not mean they are less important to the population, particularly the titular, and the authorities of Kalmykia.

We are sure that migration helps to reduce the size of the population to a certain extent: the migration decrement is higher than the natural increment. And the republic attracts migrants in particular from the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia (Chechnia, Ingushetia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan), since on the whole it is distinguished by a calm sociopolitical and ethnoconfessional situation. But even more people are leaving Kalmykia.

²⁶ *Militsia Kalmykii*, 24 January, 2003.

²⁷ *Vecherniaia Elista*, 25 January, 2003.

²⁸ *Ekonomika i zhizn—Kalmykia*, 7 February, 2003.

In this respect, the conclusion can be drawn that the main task in migration policy is to create conditions for reducing the outflow of people (both from among the old-timers and the newcomers) beyond the republic, particularly people of able-bodied age.

What is more, judging by the moods of the old-timers (primarily representatives of the titular population), the greatest concern is not aroused by the constant decrease in the number of residents, as by the arrival of new residents, primarily Caucasians, with whom conflicts episodically arise. To be fair, it should be noted that these conflicts are often provoked by the behavior of the newcomers.

Migration policy in the republic also has a clearly marked characteristic: the emphasis is on stepping up state regulation of the migration flows, or to be more precise, one of them, entry and observation by newcomers of the registration and residence regulations.

Without diminishing the importance of the regulating and controlling components of migration policy, in our opinion the need has arisen for adding another component to it, the idea and measures for integrating law-abiding migrants (including Caucasian and Central Asian) into the local community. If this does not happen, the level of tolerance in relations between the old-timers and newcomers will continue to drop, the essentially transit nature of migration will be retained, and the size of the Kalmykian population will go on shrinking.