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The Transformation of Russian Citizenship Policy in the Context of European or Eurasian Choice: Regional Prospects

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Acquiring citizenship in the country of resettlement is the ultimate step on the integration pathway of a resettled person. For people from countries of the former Soviet Union (fSU), we can see a great variety in patterns of citizenship acquisition and changes in migration policy governing the granting of citizenship. Russia is the main player in this field. As a descendant of the fSU, the country uses its right to determine whether or not to grant its citizenship to people in the new independent countries as a way of maintaining its influence on the post-Soviet and even the former Russian Empire regions. Russian citizenship was granted to m 8.6 million people between 1992 and 2016 (excluding the Crimean population), more than 92 per cent of whom were from the fSU. Russia employs a range of different policies, starting with its compatriot policy for individual resettlement; then comes its not formally declared policy of issuing Russian passports for the population of non-recognised states (such as Transdnestria) and finally there is Russia's policy of automatically granted citizenship for 2 million Crimean people. This paper explores the phenomenon of Russian citizenship policy and compares it with European or Eurasian policy governing fSU countries. It also discusses the implementation of this policy at both regional and global levels.

Keywords: citizenship policy; migration; resettlement; Russia; fSU

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Introduction

The dissolution of the USSR in 1991 left about 25 million Russians¹ and 3 million other titular nationals as foreigners in the newly formed countries that used to be part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Unsurprisingly, between 1992 and 2013, about 9.6 million persons resettled in Russia from former Soviet Union (fSU) countries. Russian citizenship was obtained by 8.6 million persons between 1991 and 2016. About 2.2 million persons acquired this citizenship in Russian consulates, mainly in fSU republics, before resettlement in Russia (Chudinovskikh 2014). Some even became citizens of Russia either without ever having set foot in the country (including citizens of unrecognised states like Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia) or while living in Tajikistan or Turkmenistan and having dual or even triple citizenship.

In this paper, I discuss how the new Russian state has built citizenship policy from 1991 and ask two pertinent questions:

- What trends and patterns can be identified in the development of citizenship policies in post-Soviet countries in the context of Russian migration policy?
- What are the main ideologies and strategies used by Russia in the development of its citizenship policy?

I argue that political decisions in the sphere of Russia's national and foreign policy and the delivering of citizenship are partly related to the (sometimes inconsistent) way of thinking of the country's elite but can also be regarded as predetermined by the historical situation of the past. The traditional political culture of Russia as a state of nations with an imperial background has been coloured by its leader's personality, which has impacted on the policy-making process, making it sometimes situational and full of contradictions. Neither cultural traditions nor ideological motives are any less important than purely pragmatic reasons and the elite's vision of the place of Russia in the region and in the world.

To understand the meaning of Russia's national and foreign policy in relation to the historical situation of this state, with its imperial background, I use the comparative model of 'state-nation' (Stepan 2008). This model demonstrates more than one cultural tradition and identity, federal system (often asymmetric) of governance and parliamentary republic. This approach was adopted by scholar Alexei Miller (2016: 103) in his discussion of the Russian Empire and its successor states. From the moment that many non-Russian ethnic groups politically mobilised and did not see themselves as a minority but, rather, as owners of national autonomies inherited from the Soviet period, he argued that this Soviet 'heritage' of the legacy of territorialisation and the institutionalisation of ethnicity that exists in the post-Soviet space now makes it impossible to build, in Russia, a classical national state.

I think that a similar vision may well be typical for Russians who live in some regions of the fSU who accept Russia as their historical indigenous 'Motherland'. So I think that Russia, in its internal and external citizenship policy, is trying to manoeuvre and avoid rigid barriers against ethnic groups of the fSU in their desire for unity under the country's umbrella. Therefore, the definition of 'compatriots' has expanded in Russian policy over the years. This approach helps Russia to reach some demographical, geopolitical and national goals, as I show in this paper.

This argument will be discussed in the first, theoretical, part of the paper, while the second part will outline the main directions taken by citizenship policy in Russia and its implementation in relation to migrants from different countries. Special attention will be paid to the main forms of naturalisation that enable simplified access to Russian citizenship, as used by the majority of people from the fSU (forced migration, resettlement policy and dual citizenship via international agreements).

The paper discusses the 1991 and 2002 citizenship laws and all amendments to them on 10 May 2016.

Theoretical discussions

Discussions of immigration and citizenship policy usually are based on two approaches. Proponents of the first approach believe that the laws of any country in the field of citizenship depend largely on the way of thinking of the country's elite which, in turn, reflects the political culture prevailing in that state. Based on his studies of immigration policy and policy on citizenship in France and Germany, the political culture of elites, in Brubaker's (1992) opinion, reflects their attitude towards immigration and immigrants' possibilities for naturalisation and is determined by their understanding of the meaning of 'nation' – the 'imagination of the nation'.

Here, there are also two options. One is the understanding of 'the nation' in political terms as 'the community formed by a common territory, as a civil community' (Malakhov 2012). In this case, as Brubaker discussed (1992), the law on citizenship will be more 'inclusive'. Immigrants can relatively easily become citizens (through the naturalisation process), as can their children – through *jus soli* or the 'right of the soil'. In contrast, if the 'nation' is understood, in 'ethnic terms', as a group united by a common origin, the law on citizenship based on *jus sanguinis* or the 'right of blood' is a more 'exclusive' version and does not allow the automatic naturalisation of immigrants and their descendants, as it does in Germany.

Proponents of the second understanding of policy-making in the field of citizenship support a situational approach (Weil 1996, 2008). Arguing against Brubaker's position, Patrick Weil holds that the legislation on citizenship reflects the geographic and historical situation of the particular country. As this situation changes, the legislation also changes. Weil agrees that 'legal traditions' exist in every country but he thinks that they ultimately change under the pressure of modern processes and situational factors.

Russian scholar Vladimir Malakhov (2012) pointed out that both statements can be observed in today's modern European regulation of citizenship policy. European countries instead employ rational choice pragmatism but in combination with national ethnic interests.

Until World War 2, all states of continental Europe, with the exception of Switzerland, were countries of emigration, mainly losing their population. However, in the decades since then, these flows of migrants have changed the ethnic composition of their host countries' populations and induced changes in the citizenship regulations in European countries. These changes encompassed extensions of the *jus soli* mode of citizenship acquisition – for example, in the 1990s some EU countries introduced the possibility for the children of migrants born on their territory to naturalise (Malakhov 2012).

Despite a tendency to adopt the common European migration policy developed following the European Council meeting in Tampere in 1999, the approach to naturalisation differs across EU countries (Pratt 2009). The development of citizenship law and practices in Europe indicates a simultaneous process of convergences and particularism – as in the case of the Baltic States. Some of them are more liberal, others more restrictive (Malakhov 2014). As highlighted in the works of Tilly (1995) and Polanyi (2006), different citizenship policies create situations in which the opportunities for the 'inclusion' of people into the host society vary from one country to another. The modern policy of Russia on granting or denying citizenship can also be evaluated from this perspective, as evidenced by the mixture of different approaches: *ethnic* (the inclusion of indigenous Russians and descendants from the Russian Empire) and *territorial* (the different ethnic groups who live within the boundaries of the former USSR and even the Russian Empire). The choice of approach depends on both the political and the geopolitical situation in the country.

In this context, the interrelations between citizenship and national belonging are crucial. According to Tilly (1995), we can observe four 'ideal types' of relation between national belonging and citizenship in the context of the 'exclusiveness' and 'inclusiveness' of naturalisation policy (see Table 1). One type of relation between national belonging and citizenship is a nation understood as a territorial community based on Foulquié's (1982) primordial exclusive model (as in the case of Israel) – a Jew is a person who was born to a Jewish mother, or

who adopted Judaism. The primordial inclusive type is represented by two Empires – the Ottoman and the Russian. In both empires, different ethnic groups were citizens, but being baptised into the Orthodoxy in Russia, or the adoption of Islam in the Ottoman Empire gave extra evidence of ‘loyalty’ to the state, promoted inclusion and opened up career opportunities (Malakhov 2014: 215). The second type of relation is a classic example of the exclusive type, such as France, where citizenship aims to eliminate all the ethnic characteristics of minorities in the public space. This is why France did not sign the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. A prime example of the inclusive type is the USA, which presents unity on the federal level (and in some ways can be seen as a kind of federal ‘empire’); however, in contrast to France, the US nationality does not exclude identification with any other ethnic backgrounds of individual citizens (Malakhov 2014: 215, 217).

Table 1. Types of relations between national belonging and citizenship

Type of national belonging /citizenship	Exclusive	Inclusive
Primordial	Israel	Ottoman and Russian Empire
Acquired	France	USA
Post-socialist, post-imperial	Hungary	Russia

Source: Author’s own elaboration on the basis of Tilly (1995) and Malakhov (2014: 215).

In the context of our discussion of Russian citizenship policy, we can frame it as a post-socialist and post-imperial model with some hidden elements of irredentism. Citizenship legislation and repatriation policy are anchored in the past. People obtain an additional citizenship but remain (or may remain) in other countries. I would argue that the 2010 Hungarian law on citizenship concerning ethnic Hungarians who either live on the territory of former socialist countries or were born on Hungarian territory before Stalin’s border engineering after WWII reflects their right to simplified naturalisation if they show evidence of Hungarian kinship. Therefore the law uses a combination of territorial and ethnic belonging. With some variations, this approach was also taken in the citizenship legislation of Romania for the citizens of Moldova and of Bulgaria for Bulgarian minorities in other countries (Mogoş and Calugareanu 2012; Paskalev 2014). I think that the terms *post-socialist* and *post-imperial* reflect the aspirations of Russia and Hungary to include into their sphere of influence their compatriots and their descendants, even those from the time of the Tsarist and Austro-Hungarian dual empire. Examples of such post-imperial actions by Russia include granting Russian citizenship to citizens of other states that are now non-recognised territories – such as Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Nowadays, Russian naturalisation policy is inclusive for citizens of the fSU. About 98 per cent of all cases use liberal naturalisation based on either Russian kinship (compatriot policy), the citizenship of another fSU country or international agreements on simplified naturalisation between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

For Russian citizens, the meaning of national belonging or ethnicity as being a member of an ethnic group with its own cultural individual characteristics is very important. Russia is a multiethnic state. In Soviet times, ethnicity was reflected in the internal Soviet passports that existed till 1994. They indicated the holder’s ethnicity (for example Jew, Tatar or Russian), similar to the South Africa identity papers that were based on the race approach. No person in the fSU had any choice of ethnicity other than that of his/her parents.

Among the nations of former Soviet republics, Russians were the state-building nation that formed the USSR – and its national belonging was the most attractive option. In the case of mixed marriages, parents usually chose Russian nationality for their children’s birth certificate, believing that it would facilitate their

offsprings' future career development. During the last years of the USSR, a supranational identity – known as 'Soviet' nationality (*sovietskii narod*) – was constructed by the Communist Party. It was only reflected in international passports as Soviet citizenship. Nowadays Russian (*Rossiiskaya*) citizenship of all Russian citizens is not the same as Russian (Russkaya) ethnicity. The name of the country, *Rossiiskaya Federatsia*, does not mean 'Russian federation for ethnic Russians' but, rather, a broader multiethnic union (for more details, see Miller 2016: 123–124).

When, on 12 June 1990, the First Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR adopted the Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) as a part of the USSR, Article 11 of the Declaration stated that 'the Republican Citizenship of the RSFSR is settled on the whole territory of the RSFSR and every citizen of the RSFSR retains the citizenship of the USSR' (Salenko 2012: 8). After the dissolution of the USSR there were no debates about rights in Russia as the successor of the Soviet Union. This is why Russia prolonged the process of validation of fSU passports several times, with a special document attached to the passport indicating citizenship of the Russian Federation. The process of passport change from Soviet to Russian was initiated only after 2007, although the old USSR passport was valid until 2002.

Citizenship in the fSU and nation-state building

After the dissolution of the USSR, almost all countries of the fSU (with the exception of Estonia and Latvia) introduced 'the zero option' model for 'newly founded states' (Brubaker 1992), granting the opportunity for new citizenship to all people who lived in the new state at the time of dissolution. For 25 years, there were two laws on citizenship adopted after the collapse of the USSR: the first citizenship law No. 1948-1 of the RSFSR was adopted by the Supreme Council of RSFSR on 28 November 1991² and was replaced in 2002 by the second Federal Law No. 62-FZ on citizenship of the Russian Federation, in force from 1 July 2002. The 2002 Federal Law passed through 21 amendments.

In contrast to the majority of fSU countries, in 1991 the governments of Estonia and Latvia introduced a 'special' re-obtained version of citizenship which was extremely rigid and exclusive for non-indigenous ethnic groups. The reason was the influx of Russian-speaking migrants from other regions of the USSR after the Second World War. In Estonia the share of non-Estonians in the population increased from around 10 per cent in 1940 to an unprecedented 38.5 per cent in 1989 (Järve and Poleshchuk 2013: 3) – they were presented as a threat to Estonian identity and security. This way of granting citizenship was grounded in a person being of Estonian ethnic origin³ or of their residence in Estonia before the interruption of their sovereignty in 1940. All these non-indigenous people become stateless after the law came into force. The naturalisation requirements proposed loyalty and language tests and some conditions concerning the time of settlement.

In Latvia, as in Estonia, the share of non-Latvians also reached about 30 per cent of the total population at the moment of dissolution (Krūma 2013). Russian-speaking migrants and their children received a 'non-citizens' document confirming their 'stateless' status while, in Estonia, they were granted 'aliens' documents together with a permanent residence permit. Yet, according to the 2007 EU regulation, this population was granted the right to EU freedom (access to free movement, to the labour market etc.) (Molodikova 2009a). Russia, since 2008, also allows 'alien' persons from Latvia and Estonia access to the free-visa regime.

Nowadays, national doctrine adopted by President Vladimir Putin presents an 'ideal' of civic '*rossiianin*' or citizenship of Russia as appropriate for the people of the Russian Federation (Putin 2012). It is based on the perception of Russia as a state with a multicultural, poly-confessional population and a long history of coexistence in the Eurasian region. The Russian government has therefore promoted a vision of '*Rosiiski*' citizenship as the membership of individuals of different ethnic groups who live in a multicultural state, with their ethnic, cultural and religious identity in the background (Molodikova and Watt 2013: 181).

In this context we should highlight the fact that the Russian Federation is among the top three countries in the world for the highest stock of labour migrants. The number of foreign migrants in Russia oscillates around 10 million people – in 2016 it was 9.6 million, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA 2017) – but Russian society and its elite are still not ready to accept publicly the fact that Russia is an immigration country (Molodikova 2009b).

In comparison to other immigration countries, the main channels of naturalisation are not through labour migration. At least 10 channels now exist for simplified naturalisation in order to obtain Russian citizenship (see Table 2), the majority of which were created since the time of Vladimir Putin's presidency.

To understand how far the decisions of the national elite on nation-building are influenced by national tradition or the extent to which their decisions depend on the situation, analysis of the development of citizenship policy of Russia, its neighbouring fSU countries and migration processes is essential. According to rational choice theory, political decisions are determined by the ratio of costs to benefits, which are not always material but can also be symbolic. One such an example would be the country's reputation in international affairs – important for Russia, a country that is searching for its place among the world powers (Malakhov 2012). For example, the inclusion by Russia of the Crimea Republic, after the Crimea status referendum on union with Russia, can be seen as a geopolitical step. Sevastopol city is the only military base of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea and the gateway to the Mediterranean. Russia also gained demographically because the territory is inhabited by almost 2 million Russian-speaking people. After the referendum, Vladimir Putin justified the inclusion of Crimea and the granting of Russian citizenship to its population. In his message of 18 March 2014, he claimed the country for historical and cultural-ideological motives: 'Crimea (...) is the symbol of Russian military glory and unprecedented prowess'. He added that the peninsula is historically linked with the names of world-famous Russian writers like Tolstoy, Bunin and Chekhov (Kremlin 2014a).

Russian citizenship policy under Yeltsin: moral obligations of a successor state

The first law on citizenship was in force between 1992 and 2002 and allowed naturalisation in Russia based on the principle of *jus soli* for all fSU citizens who were either born in the RSFSR after 30 December 1922 or who had at least one parent who was a citizen of the fSU and who lived in Russia on the day of dissolution. The law was adopted in 1991 and all registered citizens (on *propiska*) at that time were granted citizenship by zero option. Persons living in other fSU republics were also eligible to obtain Russian citizenship simply through registration at any office of the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MoI). From 1993, they could obtain it through the Federal Migration Service (FMS) after their resettlement in Russia or at Russian consulates before it (Table 2).

Such simplified naturalisation was in force until 2002 (when the new law on citizenship was adopted). At the same time, Russia experienced an enormous inflow of Russian-speaking people in the 1990s. In 1992, the government created the Federal Migration Service (FMS), adopted the federal state programme *Migration* from 1999 to 2001 to provide assistance to resettlers and adopted laws on the assistance given to refugees and forced resettlers; this helped 200 000 forced migrants per year to gain Russian citizenship. The Russian government used the 'tragedy of the Russian people' abroad to blame the governments of, especially, Estonia and Latvia for their discriminatory policies toward Russians.

All unsolved conflicts manifested themselves through violence. Like the Kosovo scenario, Transnistria's, Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's claims for sovereignty were rejected by the Georgian and Moldovan governments and led to the emergence of the unrecognised states of Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia opened consulates there and, based on the 1991 law, a significant portion of the inhabitants from these non-recognised states were granted Russian passports.

Russia initiated the creation of the CIS institution and the agreement for free movement (the Bishkek Treaty) in 1992 was an attempt at ‘civilised divorce’, to give people from the former Soviet countries an opportunity to choose their place of residence and citizenship. Nevertheless, the Russian government did not urge people from the fSU to resettle, but only provided them with opportunities for naturalisation (Vykhovanet and Zhuravsky 2013).

The behaviour of the Russian elite was quite reactive to the massive return of fSU citizens. The exception was the Congress of Russian Communities on 30 January 1994, which represented almost 50 associations (*obshchiny*) from various former Soviet republics. It proposed, for the first time, the term ‘compatriot’ (Laruelle 2015: 91). The *Declaration of the Rights of Russian Compatriots* defined a ‘compatriot’ as: ‘every person residing in the territory of the USSR who is a citizen of the former USSR, (...) if he [*sic*] considers Russian language as his native language; if he considers his belonging to the Russian civilisation, and the descendants of these people’ (Russkg 2015). However, this initiative was not developed further. Only five years later, in May 1999, a significant step in compatriot policy was made by the adoption of Federal Law 99-F3 on the state policy of the Russian Federation regarding compatriots abroad, which defined a ‘compatriot’ as ‘a person or his/her descendants who live outside the Russian Federation (...) and also (...) a person whose relatives in direct parentage used to live in the territory of the RF, including persons who had citizenship of the USSR, used to live in states that were the part of USSR and have acquired citizenship of this state or become stateless persons’ (Zevelev 2008).

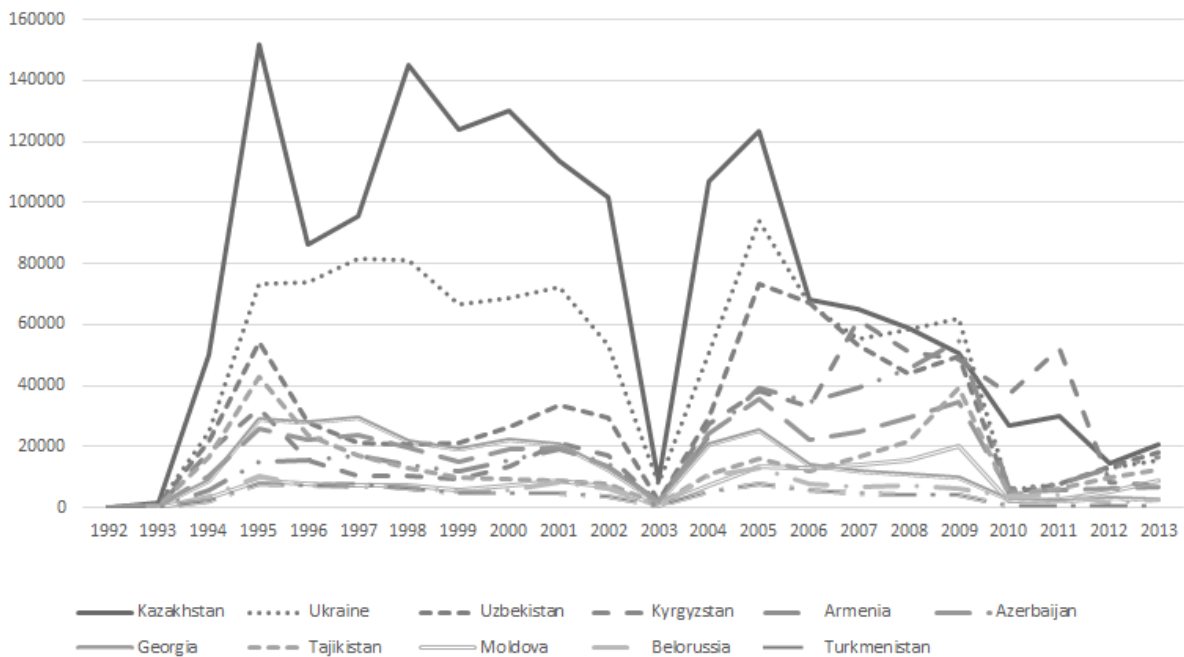
Russia claimed responsibility for these people but did not propose their resettlement in policy at that time, and did not include any reference to compatriots in amendments to the first law on citizenship of 1991.

Once it became clear that this massive repatriation migration into Russia would not quickly be over, the window for simplified naturalisation was extended until 2002. This opportunity was widely used. Figures 1, 2 and 3 show how the inflow of forced migrants from fSU countries, together with naturalisation, peaked in 1995, when citizenship was granted to 700 000 out of nearly one million applicants (Molodikova 2007). After that time, migration from the Baltic States experienced a 14-fold drop for Latvia and Estonia, alongside a decrease in acquisitions of Russian citizenship by people from the two countries (see Figure 2). This process was partly related to the depletion of migration potential and partly to the accommodation of Russians to the situation. The number of applicants from other, then fSU, countries (see Figure 3) was very modest and reached a maximum of about 22 000 in 2005 and 2013.

In total, about 2.2 million persons used the consulate channel for naturalisation. The majority of them – 1 650 million people – applied between 1992 and 2002 and ‘only 0.5 million persons obtained Russian citizenship in consulates between 2003 and 2013’ (Chudinovskikh 2014: 12, 37–38).⁴ In addition to the above channel, there were two other possible ways for obtaining citizenship. One of them is dual citizenship – proposed by the Russian Federation – that is the opportunity to acquire Russian citizenship without the need to renounce a previous citizenship. This path was available to citizens of CIS countries. However, most fSU countries tended to perceive this regulation as a threat to their sovereignty. Nevertheless, treaties on dual citizenship were signed with Turkmenistan⁵ in 1993 and Tajikistan in 1996.

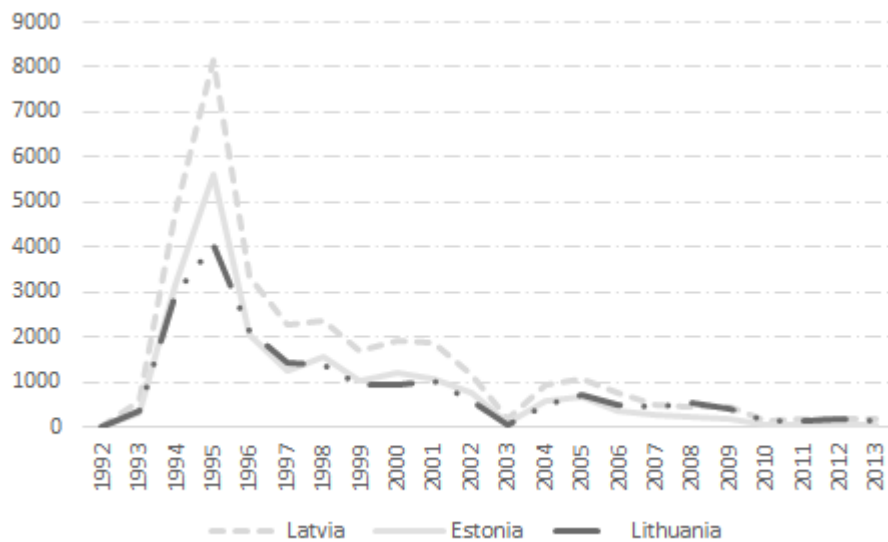
Another option was simplified naturalisation (only three months after application) based both on bilateral agreements signed with Kyrgyzstan in 1996 and Kazakhstan in 1996, and multilateral agreements with Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in 1999 on simplified naturalisation for the citizens of one signatory country, if they live in another signatory country. The Belarus–Russia Treaty (1999) on Union stated that the two countries formed a state in which the citizens of each countries have equal rights in the partner country. This channel was used by about 25 per cent of naturalised people from these particular CIS countries between 1992 and 2013 (Chudinovskikh 2014: 35) (Table 1).

Figure 1. Persons obtaining naturalisation through the Federal Migration Service (FMS) or branches of the Ministry of the Interior in the country of origin, 1992–2013



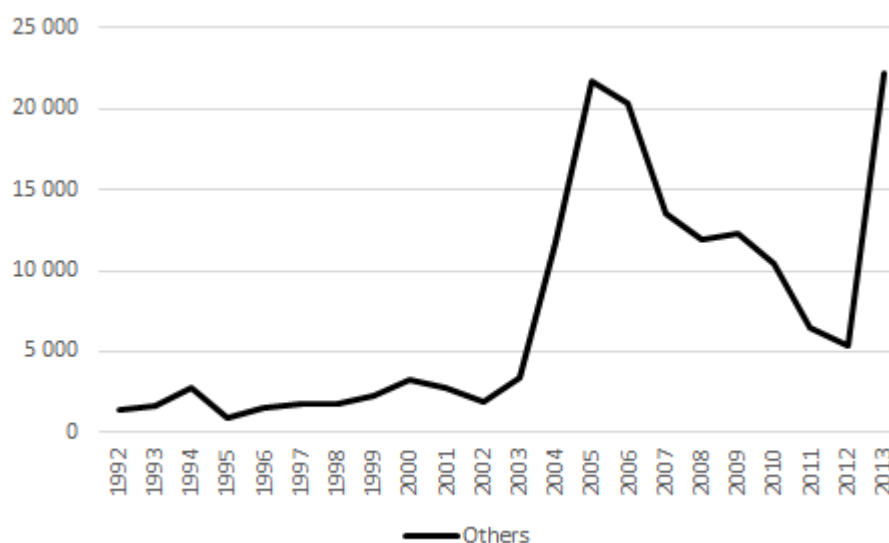
Source: Federal Migration Service.

Figure 2. Persons from the Baltic States obtaining naturalisation through the Federal Migration Service (FMS) or branches of the Ministry of the Interior, 1992–2013



Source: Federal Migration Service.

Figure 3. Persons from states other than those of the fSU obtaining naturalisation through the Federal Migration Service (FMS) or branches of the Ministry of the Interior, 2002–2013



Source: Federal Migration Service.

The only exception was in 1998, with the humanitarian assistance of Russian government for compatriots of non-Russian and non-Christian ethnic group – through the resettlement and naturalisation of 42 families of Adhygs from Kosovo. It cost the Russian government about 20 million USD. However, this was a symbolic step to strengthen Moscow's image in the North Caucasus after it was defeated in the first Chechen war. A governmental source described this act as 'not a big but a fine gesture towards the people of the North Caucasus. Moscow expected that it would be valued and Moscow's image in the region (which was shocked by the Chechen war) could be restored' (Kommersant 1998).

Summing up, we can evaluate the first law on citizenship as one of the most liberal in Europe (Chudinovskikh 2014; Salenko 2012). Russia's citizenship policy tries to create broad set of legal norms to soften the collapse of USSR. For example, marriage cases in the law on citizenship did not indicate how long a person had been married before naturalisation, and foreigners who lived in Russia at the moment of the collapse of the USSR also could apply for Russian citizenship for one year after dissolution. So, 98 per cent of those naturalised between 1991 and 2002 were citizens of the fSU, thus the first law supported their repatriation and helped them to return (Figures 1 and 2).

Citizenship policy under Putin's governance: building empire or a supra-national state?

The first decade of the twenty-first century brought dramatic changes to citizenship policy in Russia, due to a number of factors. The massive forced migration inflow dried up by the end of the 1990s and was replaced by extensive labour migration. Both the government and the population viewed this new tendency somewhat negatively and did not want to accept Russia as an immigration country. In addition, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the threat of terrorism emerged (Molodikova 2009a). Under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, the geopolitical place of Russia and its relationships with other, particularly neighbouring, countries has dramatically changed. The change of leadership in the country, on the one hand, and relations between Russia and the fSU, on the other, clearly indicate a cleavage between Russia and those countries (Georgia, Ukraine and

Moldova) that chose a Western orientation, the observer countries (Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) and other countries that ‘remained with Russia’ (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) (Mukomel 2005). The new citizenship policy influenced the different channels of naturalisation.

New law regulations

At the start of Vladimir Putin’s presidency, Russia’s policy on citizenship was somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, Putin signed, in 2001, the *Concept on the Demographic Development of Russia 2001–2025* as a response to the demographic crisis in Russia that had seen the country lose about one million people annually due to natural decrease. On the other hand, however, the second law on citizenship – N62-FZ – was adopted in 2002, and came into force in 2003. This new law, unlike the previous one, entailed rigorous steps for the obtention of citizenship. It withdrawn the *jus soli* grounds for naturalisation, and citizenship of the fSU was no longer valid (see Table 2). The law entailed four requirements: a residence permit (five years) or a permit for temporary stay (three years before any application for a residence permit), a legal source of income, lawful behaviour and the successful completion of a Russian language exam. As shown in Table 2, concessions were made for those who had served in WWII, those who had served in the Russian army and those who had graduated from Russian special and higher education institutions before 1 July 2002 (Salenko 2012: 11).

These requirements dramatically reduced the number of naturalisations from 272 463 in 2002 to 31 528 the following year for the CIS countries (see Figure 1) (Chudinovskikh 2014: 67). About one million individuals who had not registered for a residence permit at FMS offices by 2002 instantly became stateless persons with a passport from the former USSR (Molodikova 2007) that was not valid any more. Access to citizenship was paralysed. By the end of 2003 it rapidly became clear that the new law needed extensive revision because it failed to consider the migration processes in the fSU space. In total, therefore, 21 amendments were introduced between 2002 and 2016 for its liberalisation (Pravo 2016).

International treaties channel

When the second law on citizenship came into force in 2002, the channel of naturalisation through simplified procedure of registration was no longer available and a more popular path, based on international treaties of some CIS citizens, led to the acquisition of Russian citizenship. As Table 3 shows, use of this channel rose from 22–28 per cent of all applicants in 2002 to 54–56 per cent in 2010 for citizens of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus (Chudinovskikh 2014: 35). It was in operation until the end of 2011, when some limitations were introduced to this way of naturalisation; however, other channels were opened.

On 21 October 2011 the amendment to the international agreements between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on simplified naturalisation was tightened, with the introduction of requirements for temporary settlement or residence permits that had not existed in international treaties between these countries and Russia before. For Kyrgyzstan, this treaty was even denounced by Russia, which argued that Kyrgyzstan had abused it due to many people obtaining Russian citizenship without resettling in Russia or renouncing their previous citizenship according to the treaty conditions (Chudinovskikh 2014). This decision by Russia to denounce the treaty led to a dramatic decrease in the number of naturalisations of Kyrgyzstan citizens (see Table 3 and Figure 1).

Table 2. Reasons for simplified naturalisation under the law on citizenship (1991, 2002, amendments of May 2016)

1991	2002	2016
<p>Simplified naturalisation if the applicant:</p> <p>1) is the spouse of a Russian citizen or any person with a close relative who had Russian citizenship;</p> <p>2) is a child whose parents were citizens of the RF at the time of his/her birth irrespective of the place of birth of the child;</p> <p>3) is a child of a former RF citizen who was born after termination of his/her parents' citizenship and who could apply within five years of reaching the age of 18;</p> <p>4) is a USSR citizen who was a permanent resident on the territory of the fSU before 1 September 1991 if they were not citizens of those republics and if they declared their wish to acquire Russian citizenship within three years of the Russian citizenship law coming into force;</p> <p>5) is a stateless person at the date of the Russian citizenship law coming into force who permanently resided in the RF or fSU before 1 September 1991 if they declared their wish to acquire Russian citizenship within one year of the law coming into operation;</p> <p>6) is a foreign citizen/stateless person irrespective of place of residency if they themselves or at least one of their parents was a Russian citizen at birth and within one year of this law coming into force they declared their wish to acquire Russian citizenship.</p>	<p>Simplified naturalisation if the applicant:</p> <p>1) is a foreign citizen or stateless person at the age of 18 and who has a dispositive capacity if s/he:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has at least one parent who is a Russian citizen and resides in the RF; • has had USSR citizenship and residence and has not become a citizen of an fSU state and as a result remains a stateless person; • is a citizen of the fSU and has received secondary-level professional/higher education at institutions in the RF after 1 July 2002. <p>2) is a foreign citizen or stateless person residing in the RF if s/he:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • was born in the RSFSR and has been a citizen of the fSU; • has been married to a citizen of the RF for at least three years; • is a disabled person with an able-bodied son/daughter who has reached the age of 18 and is a citizen of the RF. <p>3) is a disabled foreign citizen or stateless person who came to the RF from an fSU republic and was registered at their place of residence in the RF before 1 July 2002;</p> <p>4) is a foreign citizen or stateless person who was a USSR citizen who came to the RF and who is registered at their place of residence / received a temporary residence permit in the RF before 1 July 2002;</p> <p>5) is a WWII veteran who was a citizen of the fSU and resides on the territory of the RF and renounces any other foreign citizenships;</p> <p>6) is a child or disabled person who is a foreign citizen or stateless person who can be granted Russian citizenship under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a child with a parent who is a citizen of the RF – on the application of this parent and the other parent's consent to the child's becoming a citizen of the RF; • is a child or disabled person in custody or guardianship, on the application of the custodian or guardian or who is a citizen of the RF. 	<p>Simplified naturalisation if the applicant:</p> <p>1) has been married to a Russian citizen for at least three years;</p> <p>2) is educated in Russian special professional and higher-education institutes (three years of work);</p> <p>3) is an asylum-seeker (after one year), but less time for Ukrainians;</p> <p>4) is a business person invested under certain conditions (three years of residence, investment and tax requirements);</p> <p>5) is a highly skilled labourer (three years if the profession is on the Ministry of Labour's list);</p> <p>6) is a veteran of WWII;</p> <p>7) is a child or disabled in some categories with parents or guardian with RF citizenship;</p> <p>8) has Russian as the mother-tongue – '<i>nositel russkogo iazika</i>';</p> <p>9) is a participant in the programme on the voluntary resettlement of compatriots;</p> <p>10) is covered by international agreements (Belarus–Kazakhstan–Kyrgyzstan; Abkhazia and South Ossetia);</p> <p>11) has at least one parent with RF citizenship and who resides in Russia;</p> <p>12) used to live or lives in an fSU republic but does not have citizenship or is a stateless person;</p> <p>13) was born in the RSFSR and had citizenship of the USSR;</p> <p>14) has special achievements in art, culture and science.</p>

Table 3. Naturalised persons due to intergovernmental agreements ('000) and their percentage of all naturalisations in Russia

Republics	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Belarus ('000)	5.0	5.1	4.9	3.4	3.4	0.7	1.6
% naturalisations due to international agreements	75.5	72.3	81.5	86.4	86.0	43.2	62.7
Kazakhstan ('000)	43.0	45.3	35.5	22.3	23.3	1.8	2.6
% naturalisations due to international agreements	66.3	77.1	70.1	82.4	77.8	12.3	12.5
Kyrgyzstan ('000)	56.4	47.7	44.7	34.9	49.1	3.0	0.6
% naturalisations due to international agreements	92.1	72.3	81.5	86.4	86.0	43.2	62.7
Total naturalisations due to international agreements ('000)	104.3	98.1	85.2	60.6	75.9	5.4	4.8
Total citizenships due to other reasons ('000)	367.7	361.4	394.1	111.3	135.0	95.7	135.8
% total citizenships due to international agreements	28.4	27.1	21.6	54.4	56.2	5.7	3.5

Source: Form 1 and 2-RD RD, FMS Russia, Chudinovskikh (2014: 36).

Surprisingly, this step was done in parallel with the strengthening of cooperation between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the creation of the Eurasian Custom Union in 2010. Later, the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Russia signed an agreement establishing economic integration through the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, which would come into force on 1 January 2015 and unite the labour markets of the countries concerned (RIA Novosti 2014).

Naturalisation through labour migration

As previously mentioned, 98 per cent of people obtained Russian citizenship not through work permits, in spite of the fact that Russia was one of the top three immigration countries with several millions of labour migrants. The paragraph below describes why it is almost impossible in Russia to be granted naturalisation through labour activities.

Up until the mid-2000s, the discourse was formulated in Russian society that labour migrants and their inclusion in Russian society were undesirable. Right-wing nationalist parties like Rodina (Homeland) and some communists supported this attitude. During the Duma election campaign, they called for a limitation of migrants' activities in Russia and supported the introduction, in November 2006, of a law prohibiting foreigners from trading on Russian markets. Together with movements like 'Our Russia' (*Nasha Rossia*), 'Russian March' (*Rysskii Marsh*) and the 'Movement against Illegal Immigration' (DPNI), they presented a plethora of arguments against labour migrants in Russia. These parties supported the debates on the migration issue in the Russian media and even assisted the anti-migrant riots, especially the first major one in Kondopoga, by recruiting skinheads (Laruelle 2015; Molodikova 2009b).

A problem existed with the definition of ‘foreigner’ in Russian legislation, before the new law on foreigners came into force in 2002. Until that time, migrants from CIS countries with USSR passports were not perceived as foreigners. The new 2002 law on foreigners, together with the new 2002 rules for the registration of labour migrants meant that more than 80 per cent of labour migrants became illegal. Obviously, the opportunities for naturalisation through labour activities in such a situation were small. The brief liberalisation of labour registration between 2007 and 2009 legalised 6.5 million people but the economic crisis again rendered many of them illegal. Instead of a quota system, a new certificate (patent) system of access to the labour market for migrants from visa-free countries of the fSU was introduced in 2010 to enable migrants to work in private households and from 1 January 2015 to allow them to work in businesses – a move which was seen by migrants as a liberation from the outrage of many employers. Unfortunately, already by 1 January 2015, three obligatory exams had been introduced (on Russian language, Russian history and migration legislation) as one of the conditions permitting the obtention of a patent for labour migrants – conditions that were not necessary for citizens of the Eurasian Union (EAEU), i.e. from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia. The illegal labour activities of citizens from other fSU countries rose dramatically and deportations in 2015–2016 affected 1.5 million people. The model of the EAEU is based on that of the EU, with its free movement of persons, capital, labour and good. The structure of governance is also very similar. It is too early to evaluate possible transformations in citizenship policy but the economic crisis has not helped the intentions of labour migrants to go to Russia. In 2016 alone their number decreased by more than 1 million people (FMS 2016; MIA 2017).

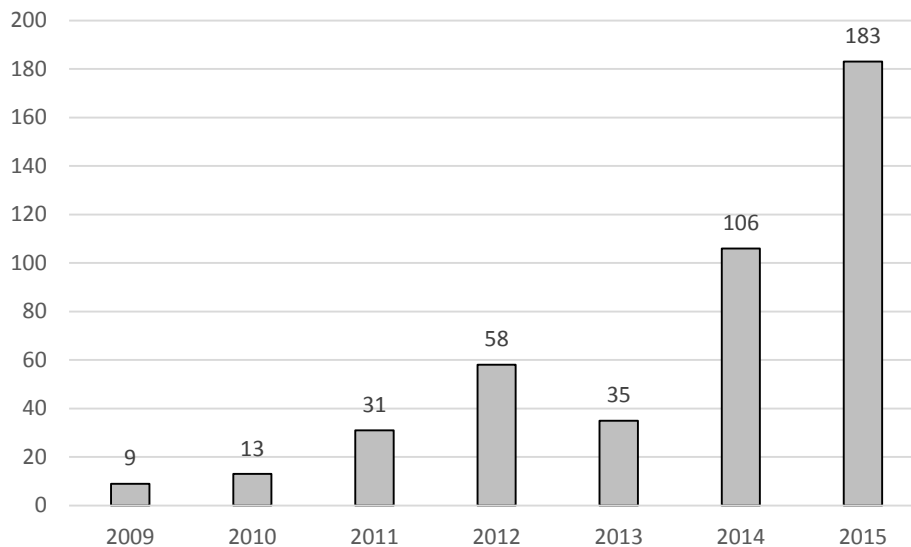
Compatriots’ policy channel

Many times in his speeches, Russia’s President Putin talked about the tragedy for Russians abroad after the dissolution of the USSR (Kremlin 2014a, 2014b). In one of his first speeches in October 2001, at the first World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad, Putin stated: ‘Russia is interested in the return of compatriots from abroad’. *Principal Directions of the Russian Federation Towards Compatriots Living Abroad in 2002–2005* were published for the first time, outlining the range of possible actions that Russia could take on this issue.

The state programme on the *Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots from Abroad* and the *Russian World* concept were initiated in 2006 (Molodikova 2007). The resettlement programme was followed by a simplified procedure for obtaining residence and work permits and a one-year application for citizenship. However, implementation of this programme suffered because of both a lack of interest from regional authorities and difficulties obtaining registration for citizenship applications. Thus, for the first two years the programme did not work properly and only about 8 000 people arrived instead of the 300 000 expected annually (Figure 4).

In the 2010 amendment to the law on compatriots, the definition of ‘compatriot’ was expanded to include ‘any citizen of the former SU even if she or he or their descendants had never lived in the RSFSR (now the Russian Federation)’. The list of persons eligible to participate in resettlement programmes and simplified naturalisation was also extended to include migrants who were already temporarily or permanently living in Russia. These amendments led to an increase in the number of arrivals from 8 000 in 2008 to 57 000 in 2012; in 2015 it reached 183 000 through the participation of Ukrainian asylum-seekers and to 124 000 in 2016 (Figure 4).

Figure 4. People who resettled in Russia as participants in a state programme on the voluntary resettlement of compatriots, 2009–2015 ('000)



Source: Federal Migration Service.

Right-wing nationalist parties like the LDPR, Rodina and the Communist Party and their Duma deputies supported the discourse on Russian compatriots and the state federal programme on the *Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots from Abroad*. The new party, Rodina, sought to restore Russian influence over the ‘near’ abroad, and to create a supra-state encompassing Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, as well as the pro-Russian secessionist regions of Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Marlene Laruelle (2015: 89) argued that the nationalist storyline – namely that of ‘Russia as a divided nation’ – has gone from being politically incorrect to becoming part of state policy. Over the years, the necessity to unite Russian ‘divided society’ and the ‘Russian world was formulated and contextualised into the national policy’ (Laruelle 2015: 89).

Selective compatriot policy naturalisation

The colourful revolutions in a number of CIS countries influenced some geopolitical decisions of the Russian elite. The selectivity of compatriot policy-making for access to citizenship manifested itself several times. For example, at the time of the Russia–Georgia conflict in 2008 there were about 1 000 South Ossetians who were granted legal status and further citizenship. In contrast, the Russian government is not ready to accept the repatriation of about 100 000 Adhygs from Syria. It has agreed to the resettlement of a modest 100 families annually, thereby avoiding mass repatriation by the Syrian Adhyg diaspora.

The Rose and Orange revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine in 2004 and 2005 together with the ‘twitter revolution’ in Moldova in 2009 influenced the development of these countries towards EU integration and NATO membership. The Russian–Georgian five-days war led to flows of asylum-seekers from both sides and about 34 000 South Ossetians moved from South Ossetia to the North Ossetia Republic of the Russian Federation (RIA Novosti 2008). The war ended with the official recognition by Russia of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on 26 August 2008. Much later, on 18 March 2015, Russia signed a treaty on alliance and integration with South Ossetia and Abkhazia according to which citizens of these states can apply for Russian citizenship in addition to their own. Like Transnistria, they use the Russian channel for the naturalisation of their own population.

Highly skilled labour naturalisation

The *Concept of State Migration Policy* was adopted in 2012 and stressed the resettlement policy for compatriots as one of the main strategies for replenishing population resources and attracting highly skilled migrants. To facilitate the migration of these latter, several steps were taken in 2010. A new 'education migration' was proposed as an additional resource for population increase. An amendment to the law on citizenship and on foreigners in 2010 opened up the opportunity for highly skilled workers to apply for a residence permit and citizenship after three years, in comparison to the eight years proposed for labour migrants.

The education migration channel

In 2012, there were about 165 000 foreign students studying in Russia. The law on citizenship gave those coming from CIS countries the opportunity to stay in Russia after completing their studies (Romodanovski 2013). Later, however, this amendment was withdrawn, in spite of the fact that, every year, the Russian government funds between 15 000 and 18 000 fellowships for the education of the children of compatriots in higher education institutes in Russia.

FMS statistics in Figures 1, 2 and 3 clearly demonstrate that citizenship policy very strongly affects the process of naturalisation of people from fSU countries. We can observe the sharp decrease in the number of naturalisations as a consequence of the new citizenship law in 2002 or of the requirements for residence permits and citizenship renunciation in 2010–2011. Another tendency can be observed in Figure 2, on the Baltic States. Their Russian-speaking populations have several options for international migration: to other EU countries or to Russia. Consequently, the acquisition of Russian citizenship is less attractive for them than for citizens of other fSU countries. For the latter group, with limited opportunities for emigration to the EU, Russia continues to be the regional centre of attraction with regard to labour migration and naturalisation.

Summing up, we can see that the Russian government has made a number of efforts to reverse its attraction as a place for qualified persons, but its labour policy was controversial and did not support the rise of citizenship through the granting of work permits. The legal amendments regarding acquiring citizenship have pushed the majority of fSU migrants to use the channels of the Soviet roots, kinship or place of birth as the main reasons.

The Ukrainian crisis and the collisions of dual citizenship

The novelties of asylum policy and the refugee crisis

In 2014 a new approach to granting citizenship emerged during the Ukrainian crisis and its consequences stimulated the development of legislation on citizenship again in different, sometimes contradictory directions. According to the 1989 Census, the Russian diaspora in Ukraine was the biggest in the world (about 8 million people). The Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine have historically been areas where the majority of Russians live.

One consequence of the success of Crimean conversion is the enormous public support that Vladimir Putin has had in Russian society since March 2014. Putin has also enlarged his own repertoire of arguments on relations with the 'Russian world': 'The Russian nation became one of the biggest, if not *the* biggest, ethnic groups in the world to be divided by borders' (Kremlin 2014b). He pointed out that Russia's relationship to 'Russian-speakers' abroad is an important emotional issue. The Kremlin officially recognises the gap between Russia's territorial body and its 'cultural body'. Thus the country's 'cultural body' was accepted as being larger

than its territory, which has shrunk from the Soviet-era borders that were typical of many former empires (Laruelle 2015: 94–95).

Responding to Crimean inclusion in May 2014, the government introduced new measures – through a special constitutional act – to offer citizenship to 2 million Crimean citizens. Crimean inhabitants automatically received Russian citizenship. About 20 000 Ukrainians left Crimea and about 5 000 people refused to apply for citizenship. For those who rejected the offer and kept their Ukrainian citizenship, a permanent residence permit was proposed (Concept 2015).

Between 1 April 2014 and February 2016 about 1.3 million forced migrants left the territory of Ukraine for the Russian Federation as a result of violent conflicts in Donetsk and Lugansk. In 2015, the Federal Migration Service of Russia received 1.3 million applications for refugee status and temporary asylum from Ukrainian citizens. About 170 000 people signed up for the programme of voluntary resettlement of compatriots and can acquire Russian citizenship for a year (FMS 2016; Concept 2015). The greatest barrier to apply for any kind of protection status for them was the compulsory withdrawal of Ukrainian passports and the prohibition to leave the Russian Federation until citizenship had been granted for one year in exchange for a certificate of refugee status. Many forced migrants have relatives in Ukraine and do not want to lose the opportunity to visit them. The new amendments in July 2014 shortened the time for a decision on asylum to be made from three months to three days and opened access to massive participation for Ukrainians in the compatriot resettlement programme; this improved their access to naturalisation and temporary residence permits with access to the labour market.

In May 2016, President Putin signed the order on the simplification of registration for further naturalisation and access to jobs only for Ukrainian forced migrants (Pravo 2016). To obtain Russian citizenship, Ukrainians no longer need to present confirmation from the Ukrainian authorities of the renunciation of their previous citizenship but instead write a letter of commitment that they promise to do so as soon as possible. The visa-free regime granted by the EU to Ukraine on 11 June 2017 led to discussions in the Ukrainian parliament on the introduction of a visa regime with Russia. In July, in order to prevent a massive return of Ukrainian labour migrants from Russia, the Russian parliament adopted a special regulation on the simplification of naturalisation for Ukrainians who live in Russia. They can apply for Russian citizenship by presenting a document confirming the notarised copy of their refusal for citizenship of Ukraine. If the Russian president signs this regulation it will come in to force on 1 September 2017 (Dukhanova 2017).

Dual citizenship – dual standards

Simultaneous to the liberalisation of Russia's refugee and citizenship law in 2014, which allowed fast-track naturalisation, an unexpected legal act was passed on 4 June 2014. An amendment to the citizenship law required Russian citizens (resident in Russia) to inform the FMS of their dual citizenship or residence permit of other country. Failure to do so will mean that they are subject to Criminal Code penalties – a fine of 5 000 euros (as of July 2014) or up to 400 hours of forced labour. These people cannot occupy governmental positions or be elected. According to an FMS 2016 report, about 1 million persons informed the FMS about their dual citizenship and more than 40 000 Russians were fined for concealing it (EUDO Citizenship Observatory 2015). In 2016 alone, about 69 600 Russians sent letters to the FMS about their dual citizenship⁶ (MIA 2017).

Even more controversial political steps were taken by the Russian government six months later, on 23 January and 18 March 2015, when treaties on unity and strategic partnership were signed with unrecognised states such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia, granting all citizens of these states access to Russian citizenship and opportunity to jobs for Russian government services (Lenta 2015). *De jure*, Russia accepted the dual citi-

zanship that existed *de facto* in these countries. However, Russian citizens are now in a less-favourable situation to people from non-recognised states, because double citizenship does not give the right to work in state structures to ordinary citizens of Russia

In Transnistria we can observe similar strategies as in other non-recognised states. Some of the population there (around 300 000 people) were granted citizenship of Moldova, around 300 000 of Russia and around 100 000 of Ukraine. In all, between 30 000 and 50 000 people have dual citizenship – combination of Russian and Romanian or Bulgarian, or Moldova and Ukraine, or Russia and Ukraine – and even triple citizenships – Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian (Rosbalt 2006).⁷

The new options for nativity channel

The sanctions introduced against Russia after its inclusion of Crimea led to further alienation of the country from the West. As a result, Russia now attracts as many people as possible through naturalisation. From April 2014, a very ‘exotic’ category for simplified naturalisation, known as ‘native in Russian language’ or ‘Russian native-speaker’ (*nositel russkogo iazika*) was created by an amendment to the law on citizenship. It provides the opportunity to obtain citizenship after less than one year without a prior residence permit. Individuals can ask for a special one-year visa for such an application and for settlement. The new Article 33 specifies that a foreign citizen or stateless person, according to the results of investigation by the special commission on ‘nativity’, now recognises persons as a Russian native-speaker (*nositel rysskogo iazika*) those who use Russian in everyday family life regardless of his/her citizenship, if he/she or close relatives live or used to live in Russia, or the fSU or the Russian Empire (Concept 2015).

It has been mentioned by current Russophile representatives that there are many indigenous populations of fSU republics such as Georgians, Kyrgyz, Moldovans and Tajiks who can be considered as “‘native speakers in Russian” because they use [the] Russian language at home’ and thus acquire Russian citizenship in a simplified way. It seems that ‘Russia is ready to drag into Russian citizenship half of the world’ (Chudinovskikh 2014: 56). However, as a necessary condition, applicants have to resettle in Russia and renounce their previous citizenship before being granted Russian citizenship. The risk of becoming a stateless person means that this procedure was completed by only 500 out of 5 000 who received the certificate of the commission on ‘nativity’ in 2015 (Concept 2015).

The ‘nativity’ channel was introduced on the periphery of mainstream citizenship naturalisation policy (as a favour to persons from the fSU) in August 2015. This pragmatic approach was used in the latest amendments designed to attract high-skilled experts and investors. It has been used by many developed countries (Concept 2015). Law-makers opened up greater opportunities for naturalisation for highly skilled people who work in Russia in special fields where there is much demand (a list of 73 such professions was prepared by the Ministry of Labour). The foreign investors who have business in Russia and invest in the Russian economy are also the subject of this amendment. Both categories have to work in Russia for three years before the application and can apply for Russian citizenship in a simplified way (Table 2). In 2016, about 7 000 foreigners were granted naturalisation in this way, out of 9 600 foreigners who applied (MIA 2017).

The Parliament of the RF also adopted, in July 2017, regulations on the conditions under which migrants with Russian citizenship may lose their right to it if they are found to be preparing, attempting or committing terrorist acts and extremist actions, if a corresponding court verdict came into force. This amendment to the law ‘On citizenship’ and ‘On foreigners’ was initiated after a suicide bomber (a migrant from Kyrgyzstan) blew himself up on the St Petersburg underground in spring 2017 (Dukhanova 2017).

Conclusions

This paper presents the peculiarities, complexities and mixed nature of the factors that influence the development of citizenship policy in Russia. During the time of Yeltsin's government, the law on citizenship reflected the repatriation character of migration processes in the fSU. It was supported by other laws, such as that on refugees and forced resettlers (*o vinyzdennii pereselenetseh*), and was very liberal in nature. Until 2002 it served as a kind of 'transitional' law, based on the concept of expatriates returning to the Russian motherland. Residency permit options for labour migrants were underdeveloped and did not play an important role in the naturalisation process, either.

The new citizenship law of 2002 introduced, in its first version, a rather modern variant of immigration regulation, taking into consideration the fact that the majority of migrants were motivated by economic reasons and were primarily searching for work. However, the law was unable to reach the desired results and, after 21 amendments that were introduced over the years, it eventually looked very similar to the previous law. It no longer reflected the government's initial idea to promote the integration of labour migrants. Rather, it supported resettlement from the fSU and other territories for several reasons:

- for historical reasons, the share of those in countries of the fSU who have relatives in Russia and who want to resettle to Russia is high;
- labour regulations which are unrealistic do not allow the majority of labour migrants to have access to legal registration and residence permits, which is a pre-condition for citizenship;
- labour-market policy towards migrants in Russia has been inconsistent and oscillated between being liberal and being restrictive; and
- the country's need for both skilled and unskilled labour because of the demographic crisis faced hidden resistance from the elite, which only supported ethnic repatriation programmes, and became undermined by xenophobic attitudes towards migrants generally.

Russia, which became an independent state in 1991, tried to formulate its national discourse around the idea of national identity in the 2000s. There are at least two major strands of national discourse: one is based on multiethnicity and the other on a territorial approach (based on the territory of the Russian Empire and the fSU), which sees Russia as a divided nation. This conflict led to an unclear goal of nation-building, which could possibly use a mixed model, but needs to be clearly articulated. Hence, Russia's naturalisation policy has suffered from inconsistencies and contradictions, resulting in the introduction of a very controversial naturalisation regime in recent years.

Unfortunately, the policies of the Russian citizenship regime are not clearly articulated (either for Russian society or for immigrants). They should be more thoughtfully designed and differentiated between the various categories of migrant. For example, priority access to citizenship for highly skilled migrants and migrant investors is feasible and economically warranted, and is offered by many countries. However, the 2014 regulations on dual citizenship and the naturalisation process that was formulated in response to the crises in Crimea or Transnistria are unclear.

It seems that the decision-making process in Russia over the past couple of years has become more situational and, to a great extent, dependent on leadership personality. Amendments to the citizenship law were adopted very quickly without any public discussion after government leaders presented their vision on the problem.

Following the creation of the Eurasian Union (EAEU) in 2015, access to its labour market for migrants from non-member states of the union has deteriorated. That reduced the access of non-member migrants to

legal residence permits and future citizenship due to unfavourable labour conditions. Opportunities for labour migrants of EAEU countries, however, have increased. Nevertheless, the statistics show that people from EAEU and other CIS countries continue to mainly use the same liberal naturalisation strategies as in the 1990s and 2000s.

In opposition to the policy of integration of migrants, the Russian government developed a geopolitical approach for citizenship policy, gathering together the remnants of the former Soviet Empire, through the creation of a supra-national Eurasian Union and granting a certain status and Russian citizenship to un-recognised states in the fSU.

Geopolitical factors, mainly the NATO eastward advancement and the EU to the Russian borders, goaded Russia into creating its own ‘circle’ of friends (even non-recognised states) and precipitated the formation of different political and economic unions (as the EAEU, for example). In its citizenship policy, Russia is trying to manoeuvre in a difficult geopolitical situation. As a consequence, the definition of ‘compatriots’ has been expanded over the years. This approach helps Russia to reach certain demographic, geopolitical and national goals that were proclaimed in government programmes and strategies.

There is no principle of *jus soli* in the law, in fact, because it covers the territory of the fSU and even of the Russian Empire, which no longer exist. Demographic factors are among the most important ones for the future development of Russia. Achieving the goal of increasing the permanent Russian population, especially of working age, is made difficult by the limited interest of the Russian-speaking expat population to return to the motherland. This situation led to the acceptance of the numerous amendments to the law adopted in 2002. Russia as a regional hub is attractive only for people from fSU countries, and the demographic crisis does not give the Russian government many choices other than to accept migrants from fSU countries. The country needs an increased labour force, needs to attract not only compatriots, but also high-skilled professionals and investors of non-Russian origin, but this discourse is underdeveloped in its citizenship policy and in the discussions of the elite.

Notes

¹ The number of 25 million Russians was taken from the 1989 Census as the last data before the dissolution of the USSR.

² Later, after the new Constitution was adopted, special amendments were made to the 1991 citizenship law in order to replace ‘RSFSR’ with ‘the Russian Federation’ (Salenko 2012).

³ The formal rules on granting citizenship refer to the time when Estonia and Latvia existed as independent states after the revolution of 1917. Their independence was lost by the inclusion of the two countries into the fSU as union republics in 1940. However, *de facto* this regulation was created to prevent the access of the Russian-speaking population to naturalisation, because of their high number (more than 20 per cent of the total population of these countries) – Estonians and Latvians were afraid of the influence of Russians on elections results and reforms.

⁴ The grounds for the simplified naturalisation of applicants from abroad are a permanent settlement permit, the existence of close relatives, being a citizen of Russia living there permanently and the existence of citizenship of an fSU country.

⁵ Until 2015, there were only two countries in the CIS (Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) which signed the treaties on the regulation of dual citizenship (*Dogovor ob uregulirovanii voprosov dvojnogo grazdanstva*). Turkmenistan froze the implementation of this agreement unilaterally in 2003 and denounced it in 2015. The bilateral treaty between Russia and Tajikistan continues to operate (Euraziiskoe prostranstvo 2014).

⁶ According to the new regulation of 2014, it is obligatory and, if any relevant information is concealed, can incur a criminal penalty.

⁷ Pridnestrovie government website: <http://pmr-pridnestrovie.es-pmr.com>.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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