

Kazakhstan's border policy: Russian direction. Part 1

One of the main directions of foreign policy strategy of our state is border policy because along with occurring everywhere globalization and the «opening» of national economies functions of boundaries have changed radically. Nowadays the borders are easily permeable to different types of flows including people, finances, information, etc., which undoubtedly contributes to the economic development of the regions, but, at the same time, creates the conditions for the spread of all kinds of threats and challenges to national security.

Kazakhstan is one of the largest states in the world, it has the ninth largest territory in the world, which determines a vast extension of the borders - about 12 187 km, including 600 km of the border on the Caspian Sea. In the east, north and north-west Kazakhstan has borders with Russia, in the south - with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, and in the southeast - with China. [1]

Kazakhstan-Russian border is characterized by the greatest extension which is about 7500 km; it is the world's longest continuous land border, to which the sector on the Caspian Sea is added [2, p. 11]. It runs mostly in the steppe and semi-desert areas in combination with a small amount of natural obstacles (except the territory of Pavlodar and East-Kazakhstan regions located in the highlands).

From political perspective, the Kazakhstan-Russian border is «transparent», i.e. is distinguished by the freedom of people and goods movement between the bordering states. This became the result of long-term process of boundaries' establishing, which began in 1998 with the signing of agreements on the delimitation of the northern part of the Caspian Sea, and was completed in 2005 by the Treaty on the Russian-Kazakh state border [3]. In conjunction with the Customs Union, has been existing between the two countries since 2010, border is also characterized by the absence of customs control.

A distinctive feature of the Kazakh-Russian border is also a simplified regime of its crossing for residents of bordering regions, established by the Agreement on the order of crossing the border for residents of border regions in 2006, which is also defined by the presence of five simplified crossing points at which border control is performed only once.

In addition, 75 crossing points function at the border, including 38 multilateral (20 rail and 18 road), 32 bilateral (3 rail, 28 road and 1 river) and 5 simplified crossing points for citizens of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan residing in border areas. These checkpoints carry out admission of passengers as well as variety of goods. The large number of checkpoints and permanent nature of their work also greatly simplifies the process of crossing the Kazakhstan-Russian border. [4]

From the viewpoint of the development of communications Russian-Kazakhstan border is sufficiently contact; it is crossed by 16 rail lines (if we count the number of paths leading to the border from the interior of the country, their number reduced to 7), approximately 200 roads, including 6 motorways, 36 paved roads, 33 roads without cover, and the rest are ground that become unusable during adverse weather conditions [2, p. 13].

Undoubtedly, openness and contact of the Kazakhstan-Russian borders promotes the development of bilateral relations between the states as well as strengthening of inter-regional cooperation, that is evidenced by vast legal base (about 100 different documents), covering different areas of cross-border cooperation, such as:

- border arrangement (for example, Agreement on the checkpoints of 1998);
- border security (for instance, Agreement on border crossing of 2006, Agreement on cooperation in the sphere of joint control of 2009);
- economic cooperation (agreement between bordering regions of the states);
- sphere of environmental protection and protection of people from emergency situations;
- scientific-technological cooperation;
- cultural ties, etc.

There are also agreements between companies, financial, scientific and educational institutions. In addition, in 2011 the Programme of the Interregional and cross-border cooperation for 2012-2017 was adopted.

Annual Forum of Interregional Cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan, which began its work in 2003, contributes to the development of cross-border collaboration. In particular, at the held in November 2013 in Yekaterinburg Forum a package of documents was signed, the most important of them was the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on good-neighborliness and alliance in the twenty-first century [5].

Absence of territorial claims between Russia and Kazakhstan is an important factor contributing to the development of bilateral relations. The problem of disputed areas belonging, including islands Ukatny and Zhestkiy (Atyrau), Imashevskoye condensate field (Atyrau), Komsomol siding in Easter Kazakhstan, village Ogneuporniy (Kostanay region) and so on, was finally resolved in 2005 with the signing of an agreement on the delimitation of the border.

References:

1. <http://countries.academic.ru/6/КАЗАХСТАН>
2. Russian-Kazakhstan border: problems of security and international cooperation. Monograph. S.V. Golunov. 422 p. (Российско-казахстанская граница: проблемы безопасности и международного сотрудничества: [монография] / С.В. Голунов; ВолГУ; Центр региональных и трансграничных исследований; науч. ред. Л.Б. Вардомский. – Волгоград: Изд-во ВолГУ, 2005. – 422 с.)
3. http://www.mid.ru/spd_md.nsf/webcantr/
4. <http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1300000697>
5. http://news.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/1559

Kuzmenko I.