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Ethnonational policy of the Komi Republic: normative and infrastructural support¹



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Abstract. The territory of the municipality of the city district "Vorkuta" is referred to the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the Komi Republic. It is not necessary to talk about some specific "Arctic" ethno-national policy in that municipality, different from the model of the national scale. Therefore, ethno-national policy is analyzed in general for the whole

Republic, and then its features are revealed in the municipality "Vorkuta," which is the part of the Russian Arctic. The analysis of the list of regulating and strategic documents reflecting the specifics of the matter, together with an extensive existing infrastructure, allows to conclude about the formation of a regional model of ethnic policy in the Komi Republic. In addition, the incoordination of a number of documents is noted, as well as some inconsistencies of ethno policy to federal standards. Ethno policy in municipality "Vorkuta" is generally carried out in the framework of a regional trend. Standard maintenance includes various municipal programs and plans. The conclusion about the need to improve the conceptual foundations of the Arctic vector of ethno policy has been made.

Keywords: *Komi Republic, Vorkuta, ethnonational policy*

In modern geopolitical conditions, along with increasing of the power presence and activation of industrial development of the land and sea areas of the Russian Arctic, one of the determining factors of the success of these processes becomes a factor of stability in international relations. Ethnonational, or, according to the official terminology, the national policy of the Russian Federation (RF) at the end of 2012 got the strategy, the validity of which is marked up to 2025². In this regard, at the level of the RF subjects, the intensive regulatory work has begun in order to develop various strategic plans, concepts and documents which realize or provide the implementation of goals and objectives denoted in the strategy. This applies also to the regions of the Russian Arctic, whose ethnic and cultural landscape has been changing rapidly within the last 20 years [1, Zaykov K.S., Tamitsky A.M.]. In this connection the question of the quality of regulatory and infrastructural support of ethnic policy in the Arctic and in the North of Russia has theoretical and practical interest. In accordance with Presidential Decree of 2 May 2014, № 296 the territory of the municipality Vorkuta in the Komi Republic refers to the Arctic Zone of RF

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² Ukaz Prezidenta RF ot 19 dekabria 2012 g. N 1666 «O Strategii gosudarstvennoi natsional'noi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2025 goda». URL: <http://base.garant.ru/70284810/> (Accessed: 13 October 2016)– Editor's note.

(AZRF). Population of Vorkuta is 81,442 people. More than 100 nationalities live here, among them are the Russians — 66%, the Ukrainians — 6.8%, the Tatars — 2.5%, the Komi — 1.5%, the Belarusians — 1.3%, and others³. Despite the special legal status of Vorkuta urban district, there is no question of specific "Arctic" ethnonational policy different from the policy of the national scale. Therefore, we initially focus on the ethnonational policy of the Komi Republic of in general.

Ethnonational policy of the Komi Republic

For the last few years the construction of the ethnonational KR has been replenished by a few policy documents. In December 2013 the Government of KR adopted a regional program "The Komi Republic is the territory of interethnic peace and accord (2014-2020)". (Hereinafter — "the KR Program 2020")⁴. In April 2015 the Government of the KR accepted the Decree № 133-p in which the "Strategy of national policy in the Komi Republic for the period up to 2025" was approved (hereinafter — "Strategy of KR 2025")⁵.

The "Strategy of KR 2025" as a concept paper has two main functions: instrumental and ideological, forming definite quality of ethnonational relations, "the strengthening of the state unity and integrity of RF, the formation of the all-Russian civic identity of multinational population of the Komi Republic, the development of national languages and cultures of its peoples."⁶. The trend of this functional content is inherent to the majority of similar documents, in which the principle of "tie-in" or "alignment" is inserted, on the one hand, the general constitutional principles (respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens, the legal nature of state, state sovereignty), on the other — the need to solve particular political and economic problems, including at the regional level.

Instrumental function is expressed in solving of such tasks as improving of state management in the area of the state national policy and strategic communications for its implementation, as well as improving of the interaction between government agencies and local government bodies and civil society institutions.

It is revealing that the "Strategy of KR 2025", according to official statements, was taken in the KR in the process of serious and thoughtful work of the scientific and expert community and

³ Realizatsiia gosudarstvennoi natsional'noi politiki v Respublike Komi: praktiki munitsipal'nykh obrazovani. Informatsionnyi biulleten', Noiabr' 2015. URL: <http://kultura.mouhta.ru/addinfo/nka/%D0%B8%D0%B1%20%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf> (Accessed: 12 October 2016).

⁴ URL: <http://www.consultant.ru/regbase/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc&base=RLAW096&n=122194&rnd=228224103737438&from=87939-0#0> (Accessed: 13 October 2016). — Editor's note.

⁵ Utverzhdena Strategiia natsional'noi politiki v Respublike Komi na period do 2025 goda // Novosti. Ofitsial'nyi portal Respublika Komi. URL: <http://rkomi.ru/news/29131/> (Accessed: 30 July 2016).

⁶ Strategiia natsional'noi politiki v Respublike Komi na period do 2025 goda. URL: <http://law.rkomi.ru/files/44/17501.pdf> (Accessed: 13 October 2016). — Editor's note.

wide public discussion. This means either the authorities' attention to the opinion of the immediate objects of national policies (national minorities, indigenous peoples, the Komi people), or the competent use of political technologies of manipulation by the public opinion.

Despite the simplicity of this dichotomy, the first case also has its pitfalls. In the scientific literature there is an opinion that excessive administrative influence of ethnic entrepreneurs makes the ethnic organizations as the organic part of the political design of the Russian regions, and ethnopolitics itself instead of unambiguous focusing on the interests of society and the state (and, consequently, on strengthening of all-Russian identity) is more concentrating on meeting interests of individual ethnic groups and their leaders (ie. e., basically on increasing reproduction of cultural distinctiveness and the weakening of the integration trends in Russian society) [2, Shabayev Y.P., Sadokhin A.P.] In other words, both the tactics of creating visibility of social dialogue with the government, and lobbying of the ethnic interests by means of administrative resources is a serious risk of making ethnic effective policy in the Komi Republic, considering features of its ethnonational landscape and, what is very importantly, the legal status of the Komi people.

Formative function of the "Strategy of KR 2025" is carried out by achieving the following objectives:

- ✓ to ensure the equality of citizens, exercising of their constitutional rights, ensuring of international peace and concord, harmonization of interethnic and interfaith relations;
- ✓ preservation and development of ethnic and cultural diversity of the peoples living in the Komi Republic;
- ✓ the development of the system of ethnocultural education, civil and patriotic education of younger generation;
- ✓ to ensure optimal conditions for the preservation and development of the state languages of the Komi Republic.

The improving of the state management in the sphere of the national policy is a task which is inherently permanent. The most tangible wordings in practical terms, are related to the need of additional vocational training of civil servants, methodical support of activity of experts in the field of national policy and, of course, the monitoring of interethnic and interfaith relations. The tradition of annual monitoring for "measurement" of national tension in the region has been formed on the KR. For the first time such "measurement" was carried out in 2008 [3, Fauzer V.V.]. The basis of the national coloring of the Komi Republic is enshrined in its Constitution. Article 3

states that "the formation of the Komi Republic and its name is associated with the original settlement of the Komi people on its territory "⁷.

Such norm-declaration is a legal fixation of collective right to ethnic identity, at the same time being the continuation of the constitutional principles of the Russian Federation. It is worth noting that the positive abstraction of the Komi people from other nations in law testifies about its crucial role in the formation of the historical territory of the Komi Republic, and groundless claims of ethnic dominance, which is confirmed by the recognition of the Komi language, along with Russian, as the official one. These tasks do not go beyond the state national strategy of RF. There are quite a few notable drawbacks in the mechanism of their achievement. In general, regional programs, activities of the state and municipal programs are used as tools for implementation of the national strategy in KR. There is also an "Action Plan of the implementation in 2016-2018 on the territory of the Komi Republic of the Strategy of the state national policy of RF for the period till 2025" approved by the decree of the Government of KR № 117-p of 29 March 2016⁸. It is obvious from the name and the content that it is the "road map" of the state national policy of KR, but this plan is not formally associated with the "Strategy of KR 2025", as it does not realize it, but the strategy of the state national policy of RF. (SNP of RF)⁹.

The legal nature of the "Strategy of KR 2025" also remains unclear. According to the criteria defined by the federal law of June 28, 2014 № 172-FZ "On the strategic planning in RF", it is not related to the documents of strategic planning, and in the strategy of SNP of RF, the regional and municipal targeted programs are proposed as the tools of its realization.

Speaking about the implementation mechanism, which can be seen in the mentioned plan of events, for example, citizens' equality, the realization of their constitutional rights in the area of the state national policy is provided only by one type of event, namely the monitoring of citizens' complaints about violations of the principle of equality regardless of race, nationality, language in employment, during the substitution of positions of state civil and municipal service. That is according to the logic of the authors of the plan, to ensure citizens' rights is a process of passive surveillance, which is totally unacceptable in a legal state. Provisions for the establishment of

⁷ Konstitutsiia Respubliki Komi. URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/951600634> (Accessed: 13 October 2016). — Editor's note.

⁸ Plan meropriatii po realizatsii v 2016-2018 godakh na territorii Respubliki Komi Strategii gosudarstvennoi natsional'noi politiki RF na period do 2025 goda. URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/438845934> (Accessed: 13 October 2016). — Editor's note.

⁹ V punkte pervom plana meropriatii opredeleno: «Realizatsiia regional'noi programmy Respubliki Komi po ukrepleniiu edinstva rossiiskoi natsii i etnokul'turnomu razvitiu narodov Rossii «Respublika Komi – territoria mezhnatsional'nogo mira i soglasiia (2014-2020 gody) ». URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/438845934> (Accessed: 13 October 2016). — Editor's note.

conditions within the legislation of RF and RK, could become possible addition to the mechanism, to ensure equality in this sphere, or to develop and recommend preventive measures in this respect¹⁰.

Some aspects of the federal strategy have not been mentioned in the "Strategy of KR 2025", namely the tasks have not included the indigenous peoples (referred to only in principles), and the migration aspect of the ethnonational policy. Migration is a risk of inter-ethnic relations. According to the Federal Migration Service of Russia in the Komi Republic, 5416 foreign citizens and stateless persons were registered in migration service of Vorkuta in 2014, in 2012 — 4,457 persons, in 2013 — 4,504. Most of them are citizens of Ukraine: in 2012 — 1468, in 2013 — 1,578, in 2014 — 2,926; citizens of Uzbekistan: In 2012 — 1,096, in 2013 — 669, in 2014 — 338; citizens of Azerbaijan: in 2012 — 647, in 2013 — 656, in 2014 — 554; citizens of Kyrgyzstan: in 2012 — 330, in 2013 — 570, in 2014 — 746 persons¹¹.

The plan includes a number of measures aimed at the social and cultural adaptation of migrants. Among them are the legal education of foreign nationals, methodic support and development of cooperation with the national-cultural autonomies and communities. The key aspect is the activity to legalize the stay of foreign citizens in Russia. We are talking here about the effective and efficient organization of activity on preparing and carrying of complex exams.

We scratch our heads about the issue of non-inclusion of the task of sustainable development and support to indigenous peoples living in the KR, into the strategy. Thus, according to the Constitution of the KR, the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the KR includes the protection of original habitat and traditional way of life of small ethnic communities, among them are Komi, Nenets, Khanty, Veps living at the territory of the RK. In 2011, the law "On reindeer herding in the Komi Republic" was enacted establishing social and economic measures of support for herders. In addition, one of the tasks of the Ministry of National Policy of the KR is to promote the preservation of original habitat and traditional way of life, social and cultural development of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation, residing at the territory of the Komi Republic.

Thus, it can be stated that the "Strategy 2025" does not fully reflect the specifics of the ethnonational issues in the KR and is a kind of a palliative in its normative support. It is possible to agree with the opinion that there is a clear need to make significant changes in the conceptual

¹⁰ The action plan includes 60 items in XII sections to improve state management, to ensure the equality of citizens, exercising their constitutional rights, to promote the preservation and development of ethnic and cultural diversity, and others. — Editor's note.

¹¹ Report of FMS of Russia in the Komi Republic, dated 18 of September 2015. — Editor's note.

approaches, and in the mechanisms of implementation of the state national policy realized in the Komi Republic, to bring them in line with the objectives set forth in the "Strategy of the state national policy of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025" [4, Rozhkin E.N., Shabayev U.P., p. 40].

"Program of the KR 2020", as a full-fledged strategic planning document postulates such tasks as: provision of interethnic peace and consent, harmonization of international (interethnic) and interfaith relations; ensuring of ethnocultural and linguistic development of indigenous ethnic groups and other peoples living in the Komi Republic.

Various aspects of national policy are reflected also in 6 state programs affecting all spheres of life's activity: "the culture of the Komi Republic", "development of education", "development of the state and municipal management system", "protection of the population and territories of the Komi Republic from emergencies, fire safety and safety on water bodies", "economic development", "development of physical culture and sports". The complex of the presented programs forms the funding structure (financial support) of ethnic policy in KR. The list of acts of ethnic and national construction also includes the "activity plan for the implementation of strategy of active measures against extremism in the Russian Federation up to 2025 in the Komi Republic for 2015-2020", approved by decree of the Government of the KR dated 12 August 2015, and the complex of measures for the development of traditional culture of the peoples of Russia in the KR for 2015-2017, approved by decree of the Government of the KR dated December 29, 2014.

Realization of ethnic policy areas is arranged by the legislative and executive authorities of the KR in cooperation with government agencies, local governments, civil society institutions. Instrumental function embedded in the "Strategy 2025" is aimed on the improvement of this mechanism. Infrastructure of the ethnic policy in the KR includes, first of all, the Ministry of National Policy of the KR and its subordinate institutions ("Heritage Center" named after Pitirim Sorokin, "House of Friendship of Peoples of the KR") and Tourism Agency of the KR, which carries out the functions and powers of the founder of the state autonomous institution of the KR "Finno-Ugric ethnic and cultural park." The structure of the Ministry includes analysis and forecasting department of ethnic relations, the official languages department and the department for work with ethnocultural and religious associations. The main tasks of the Ministry are:

- ✓ to secure, within their powers, state guarantees of equal rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of a person and citizen, regardless of race, nationality, language, religion and other circumstances;

- ✓ to provide conditions for preservation and development of national identity, language and culture of the Komi people, as well as the languages and cultures of other peoples living in the Republic of Komi;
- ✓ to provide conditions for maintaining of the ethnic Komi groups residing outside the KR, and to support the compatriots living abroad;
- ✓ to provide conditions for the development of ethnocultural, scientific and business links with the regions and countries of the Finno-Ugric world and to establish the holistic Finno-Ugric cooperation system in the KR;
- ✓ to promote the preservation of original habitat and traditional way of life, social and cultural development of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation, residing in the territory of the KR.

The ministry has a public council. Its main function is the public scrutiny and the involvement of the non-profit / non-governmental sector in the implementation of the national policy. Regional ethnic and cultural infrastructure consists of twenty-three centers of the national cultures in all municipalities of the republic.

The public ethnic policy is presented by actors of different forms of organization. These are mainly national cultural autonomies and national cultural public associations. According to official data, there are 51 public associations at the whole territory of the KR. Analysis of the list of the registered non-profit organizations at the informational portal of the Ministry of Justice of RF shows that 32 associations are registered, the other 29 do not have registration. Speaking about the role of social actors, it should be said that according to official reports, representatives of ethnic public organizations are included in the public councils of KR executive bodies involved in the implementation of the state national policy. The Public Chamber of the KR has the Commission on legal affairs, ethics, interethnic and interfaith relations. Social activists are actively involved in the development of the national legal acts, reflecting the scope of international relations.

Thus, ethnonational policy of the Komi Republic has a significant list of normative and strategic documents, reflecting in general the specifics of the issue in the region, and in conjunction with an extensive infrastructure allow for some researchers to conclude about the formation of a regional model of the ethnic policy [4, Rozhkin E.N., Shabayev J.P.]. But at the same time, there are such problems as lack of coordination of some documents with each other, and in some parts there is the discrepancy of ethnopolitics to the federal standards. In our view, the model can not be described as something absolutely. On the one hand, there is a tendency to the formation of civil identity, though declaratively, on the other hand, mechanisms and practices of ethnic policy testify about the maintaining of the alarmist approach. When assessing the status of ethnic and religious relations at the end of 2015, for example, it was noted that in the Komi

Republic, in spite of the quiet situation, absence of conflicts on ethnic grounds, some negative developments are identified, and there is a latent tension¹².

According to the latest official reports in the area of national policy, both in 2014 and in 2015, in the Komi Republic a stable situation in the sphere of international relations has been preserved, as well as low level of interethnic tension and full absence of conflicts on ethnic or religious grounds. At the same time, in the materials of the monitoring, systematically lead by the Institute of language, literature and history of Komi, Science Center of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, it was noted that the latent interethnic conflict still exists in the KR.

The data of the various sociological studies show that ethnic prejudice and intolerant sentiments that threaten the positive interethnic cooperation, are natural for large proportion of the respondents [4, Rozhkin E.N., Shabayev U.P.]. Such a discrepancy in the estimates between different subjects of ethnopolitical processes (power structures and scientific community) only confirms the belief that the bureaucratic tradition makes not only to "visualize" the national policy, but also to idealize the nature of interethnic relations in the national republics, which does not help to solve the most complex problems of the real ethnic policy [2, Shabayev Y.P., Sadokhin A.P.].

Features of ethnic policy in Vorkuta

Ethnopolitics in Vorkuta is generally carried out in the framework of a regional trend. Standard maintenance includes various municipal programs and plans. Among them are the program "Ensuring the security of the the population at the territory of the municipality Vorkuta 2015", "The development of the social sphere 2015"; "Development of Culture" in 2013 and "The Action plan for implementation in 2014-2016 of the strategy of the state national policy of the RF for the period till 2025 on the territory of Vorkuta. The special features of ethnonational landscape include: low percentage of the Komi people (1.5%); area inhabited by indigenous peoples; a small proportion of foreign citizens (3.4%); a high level of tolerance of people regardless of nationality and religion.

Within the framework of the Regional program "Social and economic development of the Arctic zone of the Komi Republic for the period till 2020 the need for compliance with the interests of the population of the Arctic zone of the KR is postulated. The tasks within the ethnonational policy are aimed at the development of traditional economies, ensuring the strengthening of employment and self-employment of the indigenous peoples and other ethnic communities living

¹² V Komi podveli itogi realizacii Strategii gosudarstvennoj nacional'noj politiki v 2015 g. URL: <http://finugor.ru/news/v-komi-podveli-itogi-realizacii-strategii-gosudarstvennoy-nacionalnoy-politiki-v-2015-godu> (Accessed: 12 November 2016). — Editor's note.

in the Arctic zone of the Komi Republic, the protection of their original environment and traditional way of life.

According to the official information, for these purposes the support in maintenance and development of trading posts is arranged, the access to educational services is improved, the social infrastructure in areas of compact residence of indigenous peoples is upgraded¹³.

In Vorkuta there is sanatorium boarding school № 1, which is the only institution for children in the republic, where the conditions for adaptation of indigenous peoples' children (Nenets) to modern life are created, preserving and developing their traditional way of life. The projects aimed at preserving the traditional forms of farming, and crafts are realized. Social policy division is engaged in the national policy issues of the municipality Vorkuta. There is no particular department for issues connected with small indigenous peoples of the North (SIPN). The municipal budget institution of culture "The city center of national cultures, and leisure activities" deals with the implementation of national policy in the sphere of preservation, development and study of languages of the peoples living in the KR, the traditional and modern culture of folk art of KR peoples and other countries. The operational headquarters for informational analysis and rapid response to prevent the possibility of interethnic conflict in the territory of Vorkuta was formed in August 2013. Unfortunately, traces of its work are not found at the moment.

The analysis of the monitoring data in the sphere of interethnic relations in the Komi Republic and in particular in Vorkuta allows to talk about peaceful and stable situation there, which generally refers to the adequacy of regulatory and infrastructural support in this field. At the same time, we should mention the difficult economic (employment) and demographic situation among the existing risks (negative migration). The uncommercial sector is represented by several cultural national associations (branch of the interregional civil society movement "Komi Voityr", Jewish community "Shalom", Tatar-Bashkir company "Chulpan", Cossack brotherhood "Spas", Vorkuta public organization "Ukraine", the German community "Renaissance", the community "Dagestan", the community "Kergezstan").

In conclusion it should be noted that the Komi Republic experience in regulatory and infrastructural support of the ethnic policy is one of the foremost both in the North-West and in the constituent territories included in the Russian Arctic. But at the same time there is a need to improve the conceptual foundations of just the Arctic vector of the ethnic policy.

¹³ Informacionnyj bjulleten' «Realizacija gosudarstvennoj nacional'noj politiki v Respublike Komi: praktiki municipal'nyh obrazovanij». Nojabr', 2015 god. URL: <http://minnats.rkomi.ru/page/13828/> (Accessed: 30 July 2016)

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