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ACADEMIC BRAIN DRAIN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC MANPOWER REPRODUCTION IN RUSSIA

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OBJECTIVE

The paper looks into Russian researcher migration to the EU supported by international science foundations, by Humboldt Foundation (FRG) in particular. Examination of the specific involvement of highly skilled Russian experts in the current cross-border academic mobility helps answer the following question: does the wide-scale involvement of Russian researchers in international scientific community in the context of growing internationalization and globalization hinder or promote brain drain? It also makes it possible to assess the role of Western foundations in the development of Russian science, in particular, formation, academic development, integration in formal and informal international academic networks of the most skilled Russian researchers. Consideration is given to the factors influencing the current transboundary migration of Russian academics. Special attention is given to the role played by foreign non-commercial science foundations (A.Humboldt Foundations as an example) in formation, academic development, integration in formal and informal international academic networks of the most skilled Russian researchers.

MAIN RESULTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The process of transition under the patterns of globalization has caused some important changes in the situation of Russian scientists. In Russia in 1990ies, there were mostly alarmist estimations of purely losses expected from the brain drain process of Russian scientists dominant. Especially Western scientific foundations were been object of claims of some groups of Russian politicians and experts against the intellectual and financial ‘damage’ for Russian society from their activities. However, from the beginning of the 2000ies growth period in Russian economy, the phenomenon of the brain drain came into other light. First, the establishing of a Russian scientific ‘diaspora’ abroad was stated – discussions slightly moved from the idea of ‘damage’ to the discourse on strategies to use the benefits of inclusion of Russian scientists in international academic chains for modernizing Russian economy and society, second, the experience of some other countries (China, India and Brazil) in using the knowledge and skills of former immigrant scientists in economic modernization of their societies became a special field of interest. Third, there appeared first concepts of how to organize a comeback and/or sound cooperation with representatives of the ‘diaspora’ abroad.

Brain drain discontinuation and even reemigration of Russian academic elite in medium- and long-term perspective seem possible, given some institutional environments and streamlined activities along the following lines:

- o Establishment of a public-private foundation for purposeful headhunting – search for and bringing back leading Russian researchers to Russia upon termination of active academic career thereof abroad with a view to establishing or reproducing scientific schools through combination of studies and teaching at universities. In so doing, such researchers should be provided with acceptable financial terms (3-5 year European level fellowships along with potential extension thereof with regard to performance). The selection of candidates shall, for the avoidance of conflict of interests, proceed openly and be assisted by experts both international and Russian, including same alumni of Western foundations running in Russia but quite familiar with the state of

research and individual researchers from the international scientific community

- o Granting higher-education-abroad loans to children of the academics willing to return to Russia (e.g., credit on property in Russia) for an important factor prompting Russian academic elite to stay and work abroad is the desire to provide a decent education to their children, who grew up abroad, which needs to be taken into account while arranging reemigration of academic parents
- o Unconditional award of state retirement pensions and other social benefits to representatives of national academic elite upon return to Russia
- o Purposeful communication with former and present-day compatriots - representatives of academic elite – on the part of Russia’s diplomatic missions, including meetings, conferences, cultural events where they may get access to an extensive information on what is on in Russian science and culture, etc. In any case, it is necessary to prop up their feeling of inclusiveness, they should be turned into allies; otherwise no measures towards reemigration promotion will be successful
- o Arrangement of summer schools by big research centers and universities in Russia along with compulsory invitation – possibly supported by RFBR (Russian Foundation for Basic Research), private funds – of Russian academics working abroad on a permanent basis, for giving lectures and exchange of experience in scientific and organizational activities (including fund raising, etc.). Such contacts could be mutually beneficial: on the one hand, the colleagues coming to Russia could take a closer look at potential doctoral students with a view to attracting them, on the grant basis, to studies at their research centers abroad. On the other, this would help doing away with their notorious bias towards potential research and teaching activities in Russia
- o Personnel policy can be successful if only the reemigrants, accustomed to and appreciating availability of the required infrastructure, are provided with

comfortable environments for scientific activities. Interviews showed that critically important for comeback decisions of many representatives of academic elite are availability of the required lab facilities and access to international publications in the relevant fields of studies. The big grant programme designed for establishment of first-class labs shall be continued along with contraction of Russia's atrocious accounting and withdrawal of the lab heads from under government procurement law

- o Launching consortia of research institutions and libraries for gaining shared access to digital versions of scientific periodicals (some Russian research and institutional libraries already have such experience)

- o Networking academic institutions so as to build full-fledged lines of equipment, in part by "pooling" of what has been received in recent years along the lines of various grant programmes by individual institutes, laboratories and researchers, for establishment of shared centers on the basis of leading RAS institutions in different fields of science, partially by additional purchase and novel manufacture of the required components for the labs, including that by promoting establishment of research and innovation firms.