IDENTITY, ETHNICITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POST-SOVIET SPACE

Organizers: David Karácsonyi, Tigran Sargsyan

Location: Room G

SPATIAL AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN ETHNICAL STRUCTURE OF BELARUSIAN POLESIE

Authors: Liudmila Fakeyeva*, Belarusian State University, Faculty of Geography, Economic Geography of Foreign Countries Department, Belarus; Alina Nemkova

Keywords: Belarus, ethnic structure of Brest and Gomel regions, Polesie, Post-Soviet countries, regional development

Abstract: Border region is a special area that experiencing the greatest impact of neighboring countries in all spheres, and also has strong cultural, economic and social ties with surrounding countries. The ethnic structure of these areas is more complex and in Belarusian Polesie is presented mainly by Belarusians, Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Jews.

The analysis of dynamics indices and shares of main ethnic groups by districts for the last intercensal period 1999–2009 shows that the number of Belarusians gradually reduced, as well as other nationalities, but Belarusians remain dominant in the ethnic structure, and their share is growing. The growth of the share of Belarusians in the ethnic structure is presented mainly in Zhlobin, Svetlogorsk, Rechitsa and Mozyr districts.

The most homogeneous by ethnic composition is the central part of the study region. The most significant group of Russians living in the eastern regions and major industrial centers: Gomel, Brest, where they account for more than 10%. Poles mainly live in the western part, patterns are generally dispersed. The greatest concentration of the Polish population is related to individual districts of Brest region: Malorita, Zhabinka and Brest. Ukrainians are also dispersed, however, Malorita, Pinsk, Brest, Bragin and some other southern areas of Polesie – the main areas with high share of this ethnos.

In general, in Polesie there is an alignment of the ethnic structure and strengthening the position of titular Belarusian nation. The highest level of ethnic diversity is in south-west and south-east of the region, as well as for districts with major cities.