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International Migration and Slovakia´s Security

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International Migration and Slovakia´s Security

Problems of legal and illegal migration, as well as of the so called refugees are investigated in this article. The focus is on Ukraine as the only "eastern" neighbor of the Slovak Republic. The Slovak-Ukrainian border became the external EU border beginning with May, 2004. Cross-border problems and their legislative regulation, as well as migration of "outlawed" people have reached Slovakia

Problems of Illegal Migration in Slovakia

The illegal migration was seen as a part of "organized crime" in Slovakia after 1993. In 2001, in connection with the terrorist world scene, another dimension was added to the problem of illegal migration: illegal migration as a source of possible terrorist threat for the country and especially for Slovak allies in the West, as Slovakia has been used as a transit country for illegal migrants. According to the report on meeting the tasks included in the *Strategy for the Prevention of Criminality in the Slovak Republic* in 2001, the Migration Office started to adopt special measures by preventing criminal activities among applicants for the status of refugees. The Migration Office entered into co-operation with representatives of the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner on Refugees) and with humanitarian and non-governmental organizations.[2]

At present (2005), the illegal migration has reached a highly organized character and includes a lot of international elements. The illegal migration reflects changes in the

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[2] *Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 496, May 15 2002, concerning the report on meeting the tasks ensuing from the Strategy for the Prevention of Criminality in the Slovak Republic*

international environment, especially war conflicts, humanitarian crises and natural disasters. The most articulated security risk after the terrorist attacks against the USA in 2001 was the threat of migration waves from Afghanistan after the USA and its allies invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 and started the counter-terrorist operation there. The (civil) secret service (Slovak Information Service) monitored the situation in Afghanistan and together with partner organizations abroad compared the dynamics of migration waves in neighboring countries and in the countries situated at the migration route from Afghanistan. The "Afghan" migration wave, however, practically did not touched Slovakia, as the Afghan refugees were mostly absorbed by countries in the neighborhood Afghanistan´s.[3] The same apprehensions were expressed in 2003 after the invasion of Iraq by USA and its allies. Here, too, the apprehensions were not confirmed. Just on the contrary, the number of Iraqi refugees, which was very high in 2001 and 2002, started to decline after the military invasion.

A cohesive and enduring risk represents the infiltration of "risk foreigners", including possible terrorists, into the mass of illegal migrants. In this respect, the border with Ukraine has developed into the crucial security risk, because after the events of September 11, it was this border that started to serve as the main crossing line for illegal migrants.[4]

After the turbulent year 2001 the Slovak authorities strengthened the strategy, according to which the first instrument for reducing the inflow of illegal migrants and refugees is the protection of Slovak state borders. Like the EU, Slovakia also seeks the solution of its migration policy in measures like:

♦ strengthening of migration legislation;

♦ elaborating the list of the so called secure countries and secure countries of asylum;

("Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 496 z 15. mája 2002 k správe o plnení úloh vyplývajúcich zo Stratégie prevencie kriminality v Slovenskej republike"), p. 48.

[3] Samson, Ivo: *Medzinárodný terorizmus: Implikácie pre Slovensko* ("International Terrorism: Implications for Slovakia"). Bratislava 2003, p. 223.

[4] Speech held by the state secretary (deputy minster) of the Ministry of Interior Ivan Budiak at the international conference about the Slovak-Ukrainian border co-operation, Council of Europe, Strassburg, 30. – 31. 5. 2002.
In: www.civil.gov.sk/CASOPIS/2002.

◆   concluding/signing of bilateral treaties on reciprocal employment of migration officials.[5]

Illegal migration was granted a special position in the new Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic, which was adopted by the Slovak Parliament (National Council of the Slovak Republic) in September 2005. Illegal migration, together, e g. with international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states and regional conflicts, has been highlighted as one of the crucial threats for the security environment of the Slovak Republic.[6]

The protection of state borders at the crossing points and at the s called green line, as well as the problems linked to the stay of foreigners in Slovakia has been dealt with by the Office of *Border and Alien Police of the Police Corps Presidency*, which co-operates with other police structures, institutions of the Ministry of Interior and other organs of the state administration of the state.

The migration movement preserves its high intensity and is mostly directed at the countries of the "old" EU like Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, which means at the countries with an already relatively high population percentage originating in the Muslim world. Whereas at the beginning (in the 1990´s) Slovakia was only a transit country for migration, after the Western European countries had introduced some hard anti-immigration measures, there appeared an increased interest of foreigners in winning a stay permit in Slovakia.

In Slovakia, like in other comparable countries, the problems of migration can be divided into two main fields: legal and illegal migrations. In the field of legal migration the tasks of the Office of Border and Alien Police were defined in the following spheres:[7]

◆ persons at border crossings

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[5] *Vyhodnotenie činnosti Úradu hraničnej a cudzineckej polície Prezídia Policajného zboru v roku 2001* („Evaluation of Activities of the Office of Border and Alien Police of the Police Corps Presidency"). In: http://www.minv.sk/statistiky/uhpc1/index.htm.

[6] *Bezpečnostné prostredie Slovenskej republiky* ("Security Environment of the Slovak Republic"). In: *Bezpečnostná stratégia Slovenskej republiky* ("Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic"), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, September 2005, p. 5.

[7] Podrobné údaje o všetkých podrobnostiach z pohľadu Ministerstva vnútra SR možno nájsť pod príslušnými rozpracovanými subkapitolami: *Formy pobytov*; *Legálna migrácia*; *Nelegálna migrácia*; *Prevádzačstvo*; *Ochrana východnej hranice s Ukrajinou*; *Nový zákon o pobyte cudzincov na území* SR platný od 1.4.2002; Hraničná a cudzinecká polícia. In: http://www.minv.sk/statistiky/uhpc1/index.htm.

♦ registration of foreigners and issuing the stay permits

♦ issuing of travel documents to Slovak citizens

♦ visas agenda for foreigners

Illegal migration represents a much larger problem. The Slovak borders have been exposed to increased pressure after Slovakia's EU and NATO joining. From the point of view of illegal migration, Slovakia remains not more exclusively, but still mainly a transit country.

The illegal crossings of the Slovak borders by foreigners were organised by international organisations active in human smuggling that co-operated with domestic groups, mostly controlled by people from the organised crime environment. Mostly Albanian, Chinese, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Chechen groups have been active. It has been especially the SIS (Slovak Information Service) has been checking suspicions of contacts of some organisers to the terrorist organisations or their supporters. The activities of the SIS are not undisputed. In 2001, some information (unconfirmed, but not denied) leaked out that the SIS immediately started monitoring of the tiny (about 300 people) Arab-Palestinian community in Slovakia, which might have been interpreted as a preconceived bias against foreigners. In the course of the following years, the SIS improved its image a bit and the Slovak Information Service was able to deliver some information of top importance.

According to its Annual Report of 2005[8], e.g. the increased inflow of Chechen migrants continued in 2004. These migrants have been using our refugee facilities as a place of rest before continuing their migration way to Austria and then especially to France and Scandinavian states.

According to the Annual Report of the Slovak Information Service, new groups of human smugglers controlled by migrants from Chechnya have established on the Slovak territory. They organised the illegal migration directly in reception and accommodation centres and were linked to the international network of smugglers.

Foreigners holding a Slovak long-term residence permit issued on the basis of application for asylum because of business activities or family integration took part in organizing illegal migration. Persons who had been granted Slovak citizenship were

also involved. In many cases, the SIS provided competent bodies with information on them in relation to the organizing of illegal migration.

In 2004, cases of abuse of the so called spa treatment "vouchers" for illegal migration, this time from Moldova, reappeared. After a short spa stay, the migrants continued on their way by crossing the green border between Slovakia and the Czech Republic, or to Austria.

The Eastern migration route via the Ukrainian-Slovak border or the Polish-Slovak border near Ukraine was used most frequently. From the point of view of nationality composition, citizens of China, India, Pakistan and Russian Federation ranked among the most numerous. In connection with domestic political events in Ukraine the regime in local refugee camps has relaxed and increased efforts by persons interested in illegal migration to contact smuggling groups have been observed.

In the area of the fight against the illegal migration, the SIS carried out also a special operation with foreign partners. As the situation in crisis regions remains tense it can be assumed that the intensity of the illegal migrants pressure on the Slovak borders will not diminish.

Regular statistics of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic[9] claim that smuggling of illegal immigrants across Slovakia and parallel criminal activities are twin-phenomena. Attached to illegal smuggling of refugees, crimes as drug and illegal weapons´ smuggling, as well as illicit arms´ trafficking have become quite common.

The process of radicalization of a risk community on the Slovakia's territory has not been as sharp as that in Western European countries. Negative stances on the US military intervention in Iraq, or towards the way of solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were the only ones to be stated most openly. There were mainly foreigners temporary staying in Slovakia and trying to increase the radicalization of local communities who expressed their stances.

The number of applicants for citizenship from the risk community has increased after the Slovakia's integration into the EU. Within the co-operation with the Slovak

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[8] *Annual Report of the Slovak Information Service*, Bratislava, SIS May 2005.
[9] In: http://www.minv.sk/statistiky/uhcp1/prevadzanie.htm.

Ministry of Interior, the SIS checked more than a hundred applicants, while security risks were found in 15 cases.

The SIS has also monitored links of risk persons to the underworld. Interests of these groups converged mainly in organizing of illegal migration and drugs trade. Potential involvement of risk persons in arms trade or in trade with chemical substances capable of misuse to produce weapons and explosives was closely monitored, as well.

The risk of terrorist threat to Slovakia and its interests abroad has increased recently. Threats against Slovakia by "Islamists", attacks against the embassy staff and its security personnel in Iraq, suspicious interest in strategic facilities on the Slovakia's territory and facilities with a high concentration of population, links of the risk community members in Slovakia to regions of active terrorism, their radical stances and contacts with members and supporters of terrorist groups have confirmed this trend.[10]

The comparative statistics concerning the number of people accommodated in refugees´ institutions (camps, facilities) might not be alarming, but it is eloquent.

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[10] Annual Report of the Slovak Information Service, Bratislava, SIS May 2005.

External border control, migration and asylum policy

Refugee camp:	No. of applicants´ days of stay as to 31.12.2004

	2003	2004	Increase/Reduction
Adamov	45 646	43 007	- 2 639
Gabcikovo	69 267	149 785	+ 80 518
Opatovská Nová Ves	25 934	43 387	+ 17 453
Rohovce	24 896	27 730	+ 2 834
Vlachy	0	13 189	+ 13 189
Brezová pod Bradlom	17 024	27 188	+ 10 164
Jazierce	8 210	26 143	+ 17 933
Zvolen	9 342	11 367	+ 2 025
TOTAL increase in 171 %	200 319	341 796	+ 141 477

Ukraine as Critical Border

In the last two-three years, it is has been Ukraine, which has increasingly become something like a stumbling bloc for the Slovak illegal migrants´ problem. The problem of the Slovak-Ukrainian border regime differs, of course, from the border relations with all other Slovakia´s neighbors, all of them being either/or EU and NATO countries. The Slovak-Ukrainian border has its genesis that deserves emphasis.

In 1993, when Slovakia got its independence and state sovereignty, the former Czechoslovak–Soviet border as it has been established after the WWII, with a short exception in 1992 when it was the border between Czechoslovakia and Ukraine, finally became the modern Slovak–Ukrainian border.[11]

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[11] Historically, there was no state border between territories of the modern Slovakia and the Transcarpathian Region of Ukraine, which actually is the Slovak – Ukrainian state border. Both Slovakia and Transcarpathia (historical name of the region is *Subcarpathia*) were parts of the same

Originally, in the mid of the 1990s there was an intention on both sides to deepen the process of liberalization of the border regime even behind the horizon set by the border treaties that were signed between Ukraine and Slovakia in 1993. Thus, in February 1995 the Slovak the "Agreement on conditions for non-visa travel of citizens of both states" with the Russian Federation, a treaty which abolished any regulation measures like tourist voucher, official invitation, etc. at the border crossing for travel of citizens of both countries provided that their stay in the other respective country will not exceed period of 30 days. The identical agreement has been concluded also with the Belarus in September 1995.[12]

Adoption of the EU acquis and New Division lines in Europe?

The EU has invited Slovakia to start the accession talks at the EU Helsinki summit in December 1999. Slovakia has presented its general negotiating position at the first meeting of the EU–Slovakia accession conference, which was held on 15 February, 2000. The EU has opened the first chapters of the accession talks with Slovakia during the EU presidency of Portugal in the first half of 2000. The last of the 31 accession chapters Slovakia managed to close during the EU presidency of Denmark in the second half of 2002. Thus, Slovakia succeeded to catch up with its Visegrad neighbors in the EU accession process even though it started the talks two years later. Together with other nine candidate countries Slovakia completed the accession talks with the EU at the Copenhagen summit in December 2002. After signing the Accession Treaty in April 2003 and providing that the ratification process in the EU member countries as well as the EU national plebiscite in Slovakia will bring positive outcomes, the expected date of the Slovakia's entry into the EU is May 1, 2004.[13]

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state formations for more than thousand years: Great Moravia, Hungarian Kingdom, Habsburg Monarchy, Austro-Hungaria and finally the first Czechoslovak Republic. In 1946 after WWII Czechoslovakia ceded its former province Subcarpatian Rus to the Soviet Union following the intergovernmental treaty. For more about the history of relations between Slovakia and Ukraine, including the history of the Slovak-Ukrainian border see Duleba, Alexander, "Slovakia's Historical and Cultural Relations with Russia and Ukraine", in: Kempe, Iris – Meurs, van Wim – Ow, von Barbara (eds.): *The EU Accession States and Their Eastern Neighbours*. Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gutersloh 1999, s. 254-276.

[12] Slovak title: *Dohoda o podmienkach bezvizovych ciest obcanov oboch statov medzi Slovenkou republikou a Ruskou federaciou*, resp. Bieloruskom.

[13] *Sprava o stave pristupovych rokovani Slovenskej republiky s Europskou uniou a nosne ulohy z hladiska plnenia negociacnych zavazkov Slovenskej republiky* (Report on the state of the accession talks of the Slovak Republic with the European Union and main tasks from point of the fulfillment of

The Amsterdam Treaty which entered into force in 1999, has incorporated the Schengen protocol into the EU legislative framework. Slovakia did not request any derogation or transitional periods for the implementation of legislation or administrative capacity building under this chapter declaring that it will complete it before the reference day for Slovakia's accession to the EU as of January 1, 2004.

Slovakia has adopted its national Schengen Action Plan in August 2001 according to which the full implementation of the Schengen acquis including that of the *second category* is expected to be completed in 2007. Because of the nature of the second category of the Schengen acquis the Slovak government decided to review the fulfillment of the Schengen plan's tasks annually on the regular base. In October 2002 the Slovak government has reviewed and actualized its national Schengen plan for the first time.[14] Following the Slovakia's performance in implementing the chapter 24 of the *acquis* the EU has twice revised its negotiating position with Slovakia, once in June 2002 when both sides has preliminary closed the chapter 24 and secondly in December 2002 when both sides have closed it finally.

As mentioned above Slovakia has concluded the accession talks on the chapter 24 with the EU by the end of 2002, although, until 2004, it has continued to work on the following remaining 8 priorities:

1. Implementation of the Schengen Action Plan;

2. Ensuring alignment of the data protection practices;

3. Upgrading and modernization of the border with Ukraine as the future EU's external border;

4. Establishing an independent body as the second instance in an asylum procedure;

5. Elaboration and implementation of an integrated and comprehensive strategy for fighting against organized crime;

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negotiating commitments of the Slovak Republic) (Bratislava: Government of the Slovak Republic, February 2003.

[14] For new version of the Schengen Action Plan of the Slovak Republic see attachment to *Sprava o vyhodnoteni plnenia uloh vyplyvajucich zo Schengenskeho acquis a navrh aktualizacie Schengenskeho akcneho planu Slovenskej republiky* (Report on the evaluation of the fulfillment of tasks from the Schengen acquis and the proposal on actualization of the Schengen Action Plan of the Slovak Republic) (Bratislava: Government of the Slovak Republic, October 2002).

6. Fighting against trafficking in human beings, money laundering and implementing a national anti-drugs program;

7. Implementation of the community instruments in the area of judicial cooperation in civil matters; and finally

8. Meeting the pre-conditions for cooperation with Europol.[15]

Visa policy with Ukraine

On March 15, 2000 the Slovak government approved the document "Concept of alignment of the visa policy of the Slovak Republic with the European Union",[16] in which it stated the calendar for denouncing the agreements on visa free regime with countries from the EU negative visa list. Further it denounced the non-visa agreements with Russia and Belarus which terminated the non-visa regime with those countries as from January 1, 2001.

On April 10, 2001 the new Council Regulation 539/2001, which actualized the EU both positive and negative lists of non-visa, res. visa countries entered into force. The Slovak government followed it by adopting the new document on the "Harmonization of the visa policy of the Slovak Republic with the EU".[17] To harmonize its visa policy with the EU Slovakia had on one side to impose the visa regime on countries like Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, South Africa, Cuba, and Seychelles Islands, but at the same time it has to terminate its visa regimes in bilateral relations with countries that are on the EU non-visa list. Ukraine is the only neighboring country of Slovakia, which finds itself (still in 2005) on the EU negative list of visa countries. As already mentioned, the Slovak government decided to impose visa regime on Ukraine on March 15, 2000 with force as of June 28, 2000 when it made the first important decisions with aim to bring the Slovak visa policy in a line with the EU within the accession process. Of course, it was not an easy decision as it has had negative

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[15] For more see *Action Plan..., 2002,* and *Sprava o stave..., 2003*, op. cit.

[16] *Koncepcia zosuladovania vizovej politiky SR s vizovou politikou EU* (Concept of alignment of the visa policy of the Slovak Republic with the European Union) (Bratislava: Government of the Slovak Republic, 15.3.2000).

[17] *Harmonizacia vizovej politiky Slovenskej republiky s vizovou politikou Europskej unie* (Harmonisation of the visa policy of the Slovak Republic with the European Union) (Bratislava: Government of the Slovak Republic, 27 June 2001).

effects on bilateral relations with Ukraine in terms of both political and human – especially in the neighboring regions – contacts.

Bilateral policy context Slovakia – Ukraine: Visas Proved Counterproductive

The imposition of visa regime in Slovak-Ukrainian relations in June 2000 significantly affected the movement of persons through the common state border as follows: number of Ukrainian citizens crossing the Slovak–Ukrainian border decreased significantly from 1.7 mil of persons in 1998 till 0.3 mil in 2001, which meant a reduction in 5.6 times, while the total movement of persons through the section of the Slovak-Ukrainian border decreased almost in 5 times since 1998. The above impacts have led both Ukrainian and Slovak governments to negotiate the liberalization of the visa regime aiming at mitigating its negative impact on bilateral relations. The principal accord has been reached at the end of 2000 when the then Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko paid visit to Slovakia to meet his Slovak counterpart Mikulas Dzurinda.

As far as visa issue is concerned, both premiers reached an important agreement on the creation of a joint expert commission to take a look at the results of Slovakia's visa requirement for Ukraine nationals, and to script a liberalized regime that would interfere as little as possible with business, social, cultural and sport contacts. In February 2001 the two sides changed the visa regime, effective as of March 1, 2001 to eliminate the need to show a letter of invitation by citizens of both countries while getting a visa, and to provide free visas for children under 16, the issue of multi-use free visas for some categories of applicants who had cross the border often as air crews, river and sea-going boat crews, railway servicemen, truckers, people living in bordering areas, and above all those with relatives on the opposite side of the state border, students, WWII veterans, etc. and a 50 per cent savings on visas for people traveling on the basis of a mutual agreement, i.e. in culture, art, sport, church relations. After the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine in 2004, the Ukrainian Government made a decision to abolish – unilaterally – the visa regime for Slovakia

(like other EU countries) since March 2005.[18] Slovakia has not responded reciprocally, however.

As indicated above, the imposition of the visa regime had created rather a negative general political framework in bilateral Slovak–Ukrainian relations. Apart from this initial political impact which has been overcome later on thanks to intergovernmental arrangement on the liberalization of visa regime in 2001 and the unilateral approach by the Ukrainian government in 2005, the visa debate on both sides of the Slovak-Ukrainian border that had anticipated its imposition raised the following two main apprehensions: firstly, the visa regime will hit human contacts in Slovak-Ukrainian relations as number of citizens visiting each other country will dramatically move down and secondly, this will result in cutting-down economic cooperation and trade exchange between the two countries. The following facts try to determine the extent in which the "post-visa" facts come up to the above major negative expectations. Comparison of annual statistical data on movement of persons through the Slovak–Ukrainian border for years of 2001 and 2002 – which are the first two years of the visa regime being in force - in comparison with the data for previous "non-visa" years facilitates drawing preliminary conclusions as well as estimates on future trends in respect of effects of visa regime in Slovak–Ukrainian relations.[19]

Table: *Legal movement of persons through the Slovak-Ukrainian border crossings from the territory of the Slovak Republic, 1998–2002 (number of crossings by persons)*

Persons by their citizenship	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Citizens of the SR	75,652	62,096	52,718	54,092	76,799
Citizens of Ukraine	1,765,657	1,247,294	549,726	278,315	326,331
Citizens of non-visa countries	67,613	54,757	52,876	33,448	35,457
Citizens of visa-countries	3,040	2,501	15,780	32,446	20,740
Total	1,911,962	1,366,648	671,100	398,301	459,327

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[18] Originally, the decision was to be valid until September 2005. In September 2005, however, the Ukrainian side prolonged the visa free regime for Slovaks, this time without any firm time horizon.

[19] Please note that the figures for 2004 have not still been at disposal for the use of researchers at the beginning of 2004.

Source: *Office of the Border and Aliens Police, Presidium of the Police Corps of the Slovak Republic, March 2003*

Table: *Combined Press of illegal migrants on the Slovak Republic's state borders by direction – from and to Slovakia, 1993–2004*

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
2.182	1.190	2.786	3.329	2.821	8.236	8.050	6.062	15.548	15.235	12.493	7.442

 Source: *Office of the Border and Aliens Police, Presidium of the Police Corps of the Slovak Republic, 2005*

Table: *The combined Pressure on Slovak-Ukrainian Border: 1993, and 1998 - 2004*

1993	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
91	365	1.162	1.473	1.945	2.399	5.483	2.080

Source: *Office of the Border and Aliens Police, Presidium of the Police Corps of the Slovak Republic, 2005*

The Slovak officials arguing in favor of imposition of visa regime on Ukraine have been often using an argument that visa regime on Ukraine would help Slovakia to improve its border protection against illegal migration.[20] The similar logic of combining a need in introducing visa regime by candidate countries on non-candidates which are on the EU negative visa list with protection of border against illegal migration could be found also in the EU Commission's approach, e.g. in the 1999 regular report on Slovakia – which was one of the most critical regular reports on Slovakia at all for lagging with necessary reforms in the JHA field – the Commission placed its critics on Slovakia that it still has not imposed the visa sticker with regard to Belarus, Russia and Ukraine in the subparagraph dealing with the

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[20] For Slovak official arguments aiming at backing the decision to impose visa regime against Ukraine see Duleba, A. (ed) *Ukrajina a Slovensko..., 2001*, op. cit., pp. 19-21, 35-41.

border control.[21] The Slovak–Ukrainian experiences learned from the two "visa years" back up the counter-argument that combining a visa regime in bilateral relations with border protection against illegal migration from the third countries is completely unfounded. Visa regime has significantly effected legal movement of persons through the Slovak–Ukrainian border, and especially the reciprocal travel of citizens of both countries, but it has to do practically nothing with the developments of press of illegal migrants from the third countries on the Slovak–Ukrainian border.

Summary of main findings

The basic findings of the above analysis dealing with impacts of visa regime on the Slovak–Ukrainian border regime could be summed up in the following way:

1. Imposition of visa regime has significantly affected the number of crossings of Ukrainian citizens through the Slovak–Ukrainian border, which, in the first years after the introduction of the visa regime, decreased in 6 times in comparison with the pre-visa period in Slovak–Ukrainian relations.

2. The visa regime did not affect much the travel of Slovak citizen to the territory of Ukraine, quite on the contrary, already in 2002 the number of crossings of Slovak citizens through the border with Ukraine overcame the number for crossings from the pre-visa years.

3. The visa regime interfered significantly into the Slovak–Ukrainian border regime in terms of considerable reduction of the total number of persons crossing the border which, in the first years after the introduction of the visa regime, has decreased in 5 times if compare it with the pre-visa period and first of all because of dramatic decrease in number of crossings of Ukrainian citizens.

4. Imposition of visa regime did not affect transport movement over the Slovak–Ukrainian border so dramatically as it did in regard of legal movement of persons. However, the absolute number of transport means that passed the border crossings was lower in 2001 res. 2002 almost in 1.7 res. 1.4 in comparison with figure for 1998 res. 1999. The cartage was growing in 2001 and 2002 regardless of visa-regime.

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[21] See *1999 Regular Report...*, 1999, p. 50.

5. The number of Ukrainian and Russian tourists visiting Slovakia showed a decline in about a half if compare figures for the first two years (2001 and 2002) of the visa regime being in force with figures for previous years.

6. Development of contacts over the Ukrainian section of Slovak borders following the imposition of visa regime has downward trends in comparison with other national sections of state borders of Slovakia on neighboring countries, especially what concerns human contacts. Both basic indicators in this respect as of number of crossings of person as well as transport means are far below the 6 per cent share of the Ukrainian border in the total length of the Slovak state borders.

7. In 2004, a decline in the number of illicit refugees was registered. As to Ukraine, however, the press on the (Ukrainian-Slovak) border continued to increase.

Conclusion

Based on the analytical-empirical (quantitative) research, it could not be proven the introduction of the visa regime is – like a thesis – the best protection against the illegal immigration. The statistical data in the years 2000 – 2004 (and it seems that the data for 2005 will not differ from the trend in the previous years) do not confirm such a thesis.

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