

The Issue of Citizenship in Eastern Ukraine: “Donbass has always been Part of Russia”

By Pravda.ru

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The problem of Donbass residents' legal status is serious. While Ukraine no longer recognizes them, procedures to acquire Russian citizenship are now envisaged.

Denis Pushilin, Vice Chairman of the People's Council of the Donetsk People's Republic suggested that a procedure to issue passports similar to those in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria is envisaged.

Vladimir Karasyov, an economist and political scientist from Lugansk, commented on the issue to Pravda.Ru.

“This initiative was launched long ago, and many proposals have been put forward so far. The President [Putin] also signed a law in August, allowing those born in Russia to receive citizenship at once. Those who studied or graduated in Russia can also use this opportunity.”

1.5 - 2 million refugees are reported to have fled to Russia so far.

As for those staying behind in the territory of Ukraine, according to Karasyov, they can receive Russian citizenship under certain conditions.

“One of the conditions to gain Russian citizenship is to renounce Ukrainian citizenship. But Ukraine does not have a procedure of renunciation. People solve this issue in private in Kiev,” Karasyov said.

Interview

Pravda: *Young people who turn 16, the age of obtaining a passport in Ukraine, do they get this document now?*

Karasyov: No, Donbass residents can only receive citizenship of Donetsk or Lugansk People's Republics. But these documents are not valid to enter the Russian Federation.

So, Kiev abandoned its citizens?

Yes, the only way for them is to go to the Ukrainian consulate in Rostov and pay a lot of money to receive a Ukrainian passport. Not everyone can afford it. Thus, it turns out that young people do not have a possibility to study in Russian colleges, or just leave Donbass.

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Eight million people living in Donbass are “all ours”, as President Putin used to say many times. I hope that other top Russian politicians, as well as Foreign Minister Lavrov, who always stands for Donbass residents, will also get involved.

Do Donbass residents have the possibility to acquire the relevant Ukrainian documents, information, or is everything closed?

Ukrainian government entities closed everything long ago. There is nothing there. And the new Republics are recognized only by some states. That is why any Republican documents even notarized and certified with LPR or DPR seals will not be accepted in Russia. I believe Ukraine faces collapse and a parade of sovereignties in the near future. Then these new entities will be recognized by other states.

Donetsk and Lugansk regions are historical territories of the Russian Federation. They even used to be part of the Rostov region. So, we'll have to carry out a referendum once again. Then it will be not only possible to enter Russia, but to adhere to the Rostov region.

Donbass may also enter the Russian Federation as a single entity. It is evident that about 95 per cent will vote in favor at the referendum, as it was shown in the Crimea. Present Ukraine demonstrated that it can only annihilate people.

Those living in Donbass are very hard-working people, hard labour in metallurgy, coal and chemical industries have marked their presence there for generations.

Donbass will boost the Russian economy, as it used to be a fount of minerals and ore minerals in the former Soviet Union. Ukraine just did not have money and technologies, as well as any desire to develop Donbass. In Russia it is possible.

From the very outset, people in Donbass believed that they would proceed in the same way as Crimea, but it did not happen, the Americans hindered them.

Nevertheless, people still believe that the militants will liberate Donbass from the Kiev sponsored Nazis, then the referendum will take place, and they will “return back home to their Motherland.”

And their Motherland is Russia, this territory was transferred to Ukraine [during the Soviet period], and people living there were not asked of their opinion.

At the beginning of the 20th century, when there was famine in Russia, the people of Lugansk mobilized and sent aid [to the affected areas]. There are even appropriate posters of those times in Russian museums.

Donbass came to the rescue of poor, starving and struggling regions. It was in 1915, just 100 years ago. We have always been a part of Russia and lived for Russia.'

Interview conducted by **Lyuba Lulko**

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