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GLOBAL SOCIETY

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**SITUATIONS OF INTENTION TO STUDY ABROAD IN THE FRAMEWORK OF  
CHINA-RUSSIA HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION**

**Abstract:** *Russia is an important node country along the “The Belt and Road” Initiative. The development of cross-border higher education between China and Russia is not only the inevitable result of the development of exchanges, but also a necessary condition for accelerating the promotion of the “The Belt and Road” strategy. Both the Chinese and Russian governments have issued relevant plans and policies at the national level, to form a stable two-way study abroad mechanism in an orderly manner in order to attract students from more countries and regions to study in their own countries. How to continue to improve the level of two-way exchanges and cooperation in higher education between China and Russia, especially in the face of the global pandemic of the new crown pneumonia pandemic, which is a huge test for improve the education level of opening up, requires the joint thinking of education researchers from both countries.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural cooperation between China and Russia, overseas student, cross-border higher education, education combined with sino-foreign investment*

The cultural exchange between China and Russia is an extremely important aspect in the development of contemporary Sino-Russian relations. It is also a strategically important content of building a new type of relationship between major powers. Since November 2000, Within the framework of the regular meeting between Chinese and Russian Prime Ministers, the Chinese and Russian governments set up the China-Russia Education, Culture, Health and Sports Cooperation Committee at the deputy prime minister level. Over the past two decades, cultural and people-to-people cooperation, political mutual trust and economic and trade cooperation have jointly constituted the three pillars for the sound development of China-Russia relations.

During President Xi Jinping’s visit to Russia in June 2019, the two heads of state elevated China-Russia relations to a new level of comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation in the new era. They expressed their appreciation and cherishment of the traditional Sino-Russian friendship to the Russian side. International student exchange is the main content of Sino-Russian educational cooperation. Thanks to the rapid and high-level development of Sino-Russian relations, Bilateral educational exchanges between China and Russia show an active trend, and the exchange of students between China and Russia shows a rapid growth trend.

**1. Overseas and Domestic Research Status**

The existing research on Chinese overseas students group mostly focuses on the study of Chinese overseas students group to the United States, while there are relatively few studies on the groups of overseas students from China to Russia, and their timeliness is poor, have not received enough attention from domestic and foreign scholars. Domestic and foreign scholars' research on groups of students studying in Russia mainly focuses on the following aspects:

**1.1. Educational exchanges between Chinese and Russian students**

Specific research topics include the general situation of Sino-Russian education exchanges for international students, such as the policy of studying abroad, the number of international students and their development trends, the distribution of professional fields, the composition of students, and the impact on the place of study. Problems about exchanges of education for

international students are specifically embodied in China and Russia, which contain small-scale of student flow, low level of education study abroad, uneven distribution of areas of expertise, as well as colleges and universities fewer substantive cooperation between China and Russia, cooperation in running schools is still in the primary stage research cooperation between the two countries, and universities needs to be deepened and other issues.

### **1.2. Investigation and analysis on the adaptability of foreign students to Russia from a cross-cultural perspective**

Scholars take an interdisciplinary perspective and examine the main problems of Chinese students living abroad from the perspectives of psychology, sociology and linguistics, such as the problems of Chinese students' study, life and psychological adaptation abroad, economic pressure, and employment. Prospects, etc., explore the main factors affecting their lives and the causes of problems, but rarely involve Chinese students in Russia.

### **1.3. The current situation of cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Russia**

Based on China's policies and the historical background in the new era, such research makes an in-depth analysis of the cultural and people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between China and Russia. For example, in the context of the "Belt and Road" to study the current situation of Sino-Russian higher education cooperation, this type of research explores the problems and proposes targeted solutions. This kind of research pays more attention to the macro background and relevant national policies, but research on the status quo of foreign students at the micro level is relatively lacking.

### **1.4. The historical development of educational cooperation and exchange of students between China and Russia**

This type of research mostly focuses on comparing the characteristics of the scale and professional fields of exchanged students between China and Russia before and after the reform and opening up. The article longitudinally summarizes the development rules and characteristics of Sino-Russian cultural exchanges and cooperation, and the timeliness overlaps. It cannot objectively reflect the current situation of the Chinese student group in Russia in the new era, and cannot serve the requirements of promoting Sino-Russian university education cooperation and cultural exchanges at this stage.

At present, the existing multidisciplinary orientation of the academic field provides a multi-dimensional research approach for the study of the status quo of international students. However, the differences among researchers with different academic backgrounds reflect the basic situation that the multidisciplinary research on this topic still lacks coordination and integration.

At the same time, due to the lack of research on the current situation of Chinese students in Russia, the two countries are in a spontaneous state without theoretical support in university cooperation, which has also become one of the reasons hindering the university cooperation and cultural exchanges between China and Russia.

## **2. The status quo of the exchange of foreign students between China and Russia**

China and Russia are each other's largest territories. Looking back at the tortuous development of Sino-Russian relations in the past four hundred years, the relationship between the two countries is currently at the best period in history, and the cooperation between the two countries in the field of education has also been actively moving forward. The history of Sino-Russian study abroad exchanges is inextricably linked with the history of Russian missions in China at the end of the 17th century. Since there was no diplomatic relationship between China and Russia at that time, the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China served as the informal representatives of the Russian government in China for a long time. The mission made great contributions to the Russian scientific research on China and trained a large number of world-renowned sinologists.

### **2.1. The signing of the Sino-Russian government agreement**

During the first official visit to the People's Republic of China by President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation in December 1992, the two countries signed the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Russian Federation.

In June 1995, during the visit of Premier Li Peng of the State Council of China to Moscow, in accordance with the wishes of the Chinese and Russian governments for exchanges and cooperation in the field of education, China and Russia officially signed the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Academic certificates and degree certificates between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Russia. According to the agreement, the signing of this agreement has facilitated the exchange of Chinese and Russian students from the institutional level.

In short, high school students in China and Russia or those who have obtained vocational high schools, technical secondary schools, adult education and self-study exam graduation certificates, can apply to study in universities in both countries. The Chinese and Russian governments mutually recognize the educational qualifications and degree certificates issued by each other. Holders of such certificates are qualified to engage in professional activities, advanced study, continuing study and degree study in China and Russia according to the professional direction or major, degree or professional level on the certificates.<sup>1</sup> It is particularly noteworthy that Premier Li Peng, who signed the agreement, had been selected and sent by the Chinese government to study in the Soviet Union from 1948 to 1955. He studied in the Department of Hydropower in Moscow Power Engineering Institute and served as the president of the Union of Chinese Students and Scholars in USSR.<sup>2</sup>

## **2.2. Chinese and Russian universities are paying more attention to student exchange and study abroad**

As the Chinese and Russian universities pay more attention to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings in the United Kingdom, the QS World University Rankings in the United Kingdom, and the US News World University Rankings in the United States. China and Russia regard it as an important indicator to measure national soft power, especially educational competitiveness. Both universities take the proportion of international students in universities as an important standard for school effectiveness evaluation and introduce various policies to attract more international students. In 2012, in order to further consolidate the social foundation of bilateral relations, the *"China-Russia cultural Cooperation Action Plan"* signed by China and Russia proposed that the number of students exchanged between the two countries should reach 100,000 by 2020. A series of key support was given to the exchange of overseas Chinese and Russian personnel.

The China Scholarship Council under the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China subsidizes Chinese students to pursue degrees in Russia through the *"Sino-Russian Joint Training Program for Artistic Talents"*, the *"Training Program for Professionals in Russia"*, the *"State-sponsored Postgraduate Program for Building High-level Universities"* and other related programs. Since 2014, the National Scholarship Fund of the educational ministry of China has supported outstanding self-financed students to study for higher-level degrees at public expense through the *"Support Program for Outstanding Graduates in Russia"*. Outstanding self-financed international students who have won prizes in the Russian or international competitions can apply for funding from the program to continue studying for higher-level degrees in Russia. The state-supported support program for outstanding graduates abroad is currently only implemented in Russia, and there is no precedent in other countries in the world.

<sup>1</sup> Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Russian Federation on the mutual recognition of academic qualifications and degree certificates, June 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Li Peng, Li Peng's Memoirs (1928-1983), China Electric Power Press, July 2014.

The export of higher education services at the national level by the Government of the Russian Federation has been identified as a strategic task. In 2013, 21 Russian universities received additional subsidies from the "5-100" program to improve their competitiveness in the global education market. In 2017, the government of the Russian Federation approved a program called "Development of the export potential of the Russian education system", this program allows foreign students to apply to more than 500 universities in Russia through the "Study in Russia" multilingual information platform.

The Russian Federation CIS Affairs, Russian Overseas Chinese and Rossotrudnichestvo has used the exchange of scholarships between the two governments to attract more Chinese students to study in Russia. Russian universities will also strive for Chinese students as the focus of their foreign affairs work. Russian embassies and consulates in China and the Sino-Russian Cultural Center actively promote higher education resources, major Russian universities promote superior majors to attract Chinese students through their cooperative universities in China.

### **2.3. The deepening of cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two countries**

Under the framework of the China-Russia cultural exchange mechanism, the language and cultural exchanges between the two countries have formed a stable cooperation mechanism. In November 2005, the two governments signed the Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Russian Federation on Learning Chinese in the Russian Federation and Learning Russian in the People's Republic of China.

The agreement stipulates that the two parties will try their best to promote and support the learning and teaching of Chinese, Chinese literature and culture in Russian educational institutions, and support the learning and teaching of Russian, Russian literature and culture in Chinese educational institutions.

Subsequently, the establishment of theme years such as "State Year", "Language Year", "Regional Cooperation Year", "Science and Technology Innovation Year" between China and Russia, the launch of "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Competition and "Russian Talent" Competition greatly promoted the teaching of Chinese in Russia and Russian in China. In 2007, during the "Year of China" in Russia, seven Confucius Institutes were opened in Russia. By 2021, there were 19 Confucius Institutes and 5 Confucius Classrooms in Russia. Russia has set up 35 Russian cultural centers in China. The number of schools and students learning and teaching Russian and Chinese has increased.

## **3. Difficulties faced by the exchanges of foreign students between China and Russia**

### **3.1. The pandemic's restrictions on exchanges between China and Russia**

The global pandemic of the new crown pneumonia is a huge test for the opening up of education. The pandemic not only presses the "pause button" for normal educational cooperation and exchanges, but brings severe challenges to the health, study, life, and work of students and teachers who migrate across borders.

A series of restrictive measures in need of pandemic prevention, such as visa interruption, port closure, and flight suspension, have indeed caused a sharp drop in the number of educational exchanges between China and Russia. Sino-Russian higher education cooperation will inevitably be affected by the COVID-19. The content and form of educational cooperation between the two countries are facing huge difficulties, but the two countries have not stalled their pragmatic cooperation in the education field.

### **3.2. The lack of English education programs in Russian universities**

There is a general lack of English education programs in Russian universities. The lack of English courses in Russian superior majors has led to a decline in international competitiveness, making it increasingly difficult to attract outstanding students from non-Russian-speaking countries. In particular, the gap between China and Russia in the publishing of scientific research journals. Chinese and Russian universities and scientific research institutions generally do not understand

each other's academic journal catalogs. Most scientific and technological workers in China and Russia cannot read other party's academic publications in Chinese or Russian.

Looking at the majors of overseas students from China and Russia, we can find that 70-80% of overseas students are majoring in cultural and social sciences, such as languages, while the proportion of students majoring in science and engineering is obviously low. The gap between China and Russia in the field of scientific research journal publication makes it difficult for the two countries to open up a situation in the field of high-level talent exchange. And there are few Chinese and Russian students in the fields of aerospace, biotechnology, precision instruments, petroleum engineering and other majors that are of great significance to the national strategic development in the future.

### **3.3. China and Russia pay little attention to their overseas students**

Some scholars pointed out that because of the lack of English teaching in Russian universities and the difficulty for Chinese students to communicate and study in Russian, there are problems in the classrooms of poor language training, the limited scale of university education cooperation, and the safety of studying abroad. At present, Russian universities and the government have not proposed corresponding policy measures, which to a certain extent hinders the further development of Chinese and foreign student education and cultural cooperation.

At the same time, there are two shortcomings in China's public diplomacy towards foreign students. On the one hand, the vast majority of Chinese international students lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the political and cultural issues involved in public diplomacy, which prevents them from expounding their ideas rationally and prudently when discussing relevant topics with foreign people, and communication barriers appear; On the other hand, China's exchanges of Chinese culture with foreign students are often in the form of formalism and performance projects, which have not allowed foreign students to truly feel the inherent charm of Eastern civilization, and cannot make foreign students appreciate China's goodness.<sup>1</sup>

## **4. Countermeasures to strengthen cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Russia**

### **4.1. The Chinese and Russian governments should coordinate policies to respond to cultural cooperation under the pandemic**

Chinese and Russian universities and scientific research institutions have accumulated experience in online exchanges and cooperation during the pandemic. The pace of cooperation has not slowed down, and new progress has been made in many areas. At present the education authorities of the two countries are actively integrating domestic educational resources to lay a solid foundation for the recovery of educational cooperation after the pandemic and a higher level of pragmatic cooperation between the two countries. In addition, the education authorities of the two countries give full play to the advantages of existing cooperation mechanisms and platforms, and actively carry out high-level dialogues within bilateral and multilateral frameworks.

The Sino-Russian Education Cooperation Sub-Committee and the Shanghai Cooperation Education Educational cooperation within bilateral and multilateral frameworks to exchange information and join hands to respond to the impact of new coronary pneumonia, to provide mutual assistance and support. To further strengthen communication and policy coordination, believe that as the pandemic becomes more controllable on a global scale, the educational cooperation between the two countries will usher in new and greater developments.

### **4.2. China and Russia should moderately relax restrictions on work visas for foreign students after graduation**

Regarding the work visa policy for foreign students, it is recommended that the Chinese and Russian governments appropriately relax the work visa restrictions for foreign students in the two

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<sup>1</sup> *Han Fangming*, Public diplomacy for international students should be viewed from strategic perspective, *Nanfang Daily*, 2011-10-10 (F02).

countries after graduation in accordance with the principle of mutual exemption. After studying in institutions of higher learning in China and Russia, foreign students can apply for short-term visas for graduation practice, innovation and entrepreneurship activities by presenting graduation certificates of institutions of higher learning in both countries. In the meantime, those who are hired by relevant work units can apply for work-related residence permits in accordance with regulations. In order to enhance the attractiveness of China and Russia to international students, it provides more convenient conditions for outstanding international talents to stay in China and Russia.

#### **4.3. Strengthen the publicity and guidance of the media of the two countries**

The two countries should strengthen propaganda through the Sino-Russian media cooperation mechanism to form a brand effect on Sino-Russian higher education.

For school-age students in China and Russia, neither country is the first choice. One of the important reasons is that the brands of Chinese and Russian universities and strong majors in the world are generally not highly recognized and have not formed a strong attraction. To this end, the media and other methods should be used to strengthen the promotion of the establishment of brand colleges, professional courses, departments and research institutions in Sino-Russian universities.

#### **4.4. Improving the level of studying abroad and expanding the field of studying abroad**

In the next step of China-Russia exchanges and cooperation in studying abroad, the two countries should seek to continue to expand the scale of two-way study abroad to further optimize the professional structure of foreign students and improve the level of study abroad.

China and Russia have a certain degree of complementarity in advantageous majors, and each has some advantageous majors, such as Russia's aerospace, aviation, materials technology, nuclear physics and other fields, and China in light industry, artificial intelligence, communication technology and other fields. In addition, it is necessary to further consolidate the existing cooperation between China and Russia, and continue to establish a journal evaluation system mutually recognized by the scientific communities on the basis of consensus.

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### СИТУАЦИЯ НАМЕРЕНИЯ УЧИТЬСЯ ЗА ГРАНИЦЕЙ В РАМКАХ КИТАЙСКО-РОССИЙСКОГО ГУМАНИТАРНОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА

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**Аннотация:** Россия является важной узловой страной инициативы «Один пояс, один путь». Развитие международного высшего образования между Китаем и Россией является не только неизбежным результатом развития обменов, но и необходимым условием для ускорения продвижения стратегии «Один пояс, один путь». Как китайское, так и российское правительства выпустили соответствующие планы и политику на национальном уровне, чтобы сформировать стабильный механизм двустороннего обучения за границей упорядоченным образом, чтобы привлечь студентов из большего числа стран и регионов для обучения в своих странах. Как продолжать повышать уровень двустороннего обмена и сотрудничества в сфере высшего образования между Китаем и Россией, особенно перед лицом глобальной пандемии новой коронной пандемии пневмонии, которая является серьезным испытанием для повышения уровня образования в сфере открытости, требует совместного мышления исследователей образования из обеих стран.

**Ключевые слова:** культурное сотрудничество между Китаем и Россией, иностранные студенты, международное высшее образование, образование в сочетании с китайско-иностранскими инвестициями

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