

(7 October 2006)

ESF SCSS Exploratory Workshop (EW05-320)

**Eastern European Women as Immigrants in Western European Trans-regions.
Gender Perspectives on Everyday Life, Citizenship and Social Justice.**

Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki, Finland, 31 May - 3 June 2006

Convener: Aino Saarinen, Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki

Co-convener: Marina Calloni, Faculty of Sociology, University of Milan-Bicocca

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SCIENTIFIC REPORT

0. Executive summary

The workshop on *Eastern European Women as Immigrants in Western European Trans-regions*, convened by Docent *Aino Saarinen* (University of Helsinki) and Professor *Marina Calloni* (University of Milan-Bicocca), was held at the Aleksanteri Institute in Helsinki from 31st May to 3rd June 2006.

The 19 participants, all experts in studies on gender and migration in Europe, represented 12 countries. The workshop was also well balanced in terms of age, affiliation and discipline.

The involvement of participants from all four East-West trans-regions - Barents, Balticum, Central Europe and Alps-Adria - made the workshop very stimulating. In summary, cross-border and comparative analysis at all-European level is needed not only to grasp the phenomenon of East-West migration and the ongoing transition in post-socialist countries but also to understand who "we" are. A major challenge is the outlining of adequate methodologies and building research teams that are composed of both "us" and "them". The workshop will result in an anthology and, hopefully, a joint research application for the EU 7th Framework Programme.

1. The workshop

The workshop on *Eastern European Women as Immigrants in Western European Trans-regions* was introduced and convened by Docent Aino Saarinen, University of Helsinki, and Professor Marina Calloni, University of Milan-Bicocca. The three-day meeting took place in Helsinki at the Aleksanteri Institute for Russian and Eastern European Studies.

The European Science Foundation was represented by the Head of the Social Science Unit, Dr. *Henk Stronkhorst*. During the workshop he negotiated with the Director of the Aleksanteri Institute, Professor *Markku Kivinen*, on future collaboration between the ESF and the Institute.

The Aleksanteri Institute was in charge of the organisation and related practicalities. All costs were covered by the ESF but the Institute offered a fine dinner on the departure evening.

The workshop was restricted to invited participants, chosen on the basis of their expertise in the field of migration in Europe. However, before the beginning there was a public session open to interested scholars. On this occasion, two of the participants, *Enrica Capussotti* and *Andrea Petö*, summarised the main arguments of their presentations and the conveners introduced briefly the scientific contents of the workshop.

The list of 19 scholars included 8 key-note speakers and 11 participants with presentations at the parallel workshops. The scholars came from 12 different countries, including 4 former socialist countries (3 new EU member states and 1 applicant country). The group was well balanced in other ways as well. A third of the participants were full professors and other established scholars, a third PhDs and a third post-graduates. From a disciplinary point of view, 12 represented social sciences, 6 humanities and 1 legal studies. Half of the participants came from Northern Europe and half from Central and Southern Europe. The great number of Nordic participants is justified by the fact that in the period etc in the period of 2001-05 only one of the ESF workshops devoted to social sciences has been coordinated by a Nordic institution.

2. Aim and contents

2.1. Networking and collaboration on gender and migration

The workshop was made possible by the long term collaboration between the conveners, previously based at the Oulu University and the London School of Economics and now affiliated to the Helsinki University and the University of Milan-Bicocca. The themes and topics had dealt with the prospects of creating the "New and Social Europe", the transformations of gender relations in post-socialist countries and in particular politics and democracy, welfare and gender regimes, women's mobilisation against gender-based violence, struggle against social and economic marginalisation and the violation of human rights. This collaboration has included

cross-border networking, organising courses and seminars and publishing various materials.

In past years the conveners have worked separately on multi-national projects on migration in Europe. Aino Saarinen has directed the multi-disciplinary *RWN* project on *Russian Women as Immigrants in 'Norden': Finland, Norway, Sweden* (financed by the Joint Committee for Nordic Research Councils for the Humanities and Social Sciences). Marina Calloni has analysed migration in Europe from the perspective of post-socialist countries as well as the EU states that have become countries of new migration, such as Italy. The Enwise Report (delivered to the European Commission) dealt with the question of women brain drainers from post-socialist countries, *Gender, Citizenship and the Construction of "Otherness"* (financed by the Italian Ministry for Higher Education and Research) with the situation of Eastern European women in Italy.

It is important to note that among the invited participants there were members from other relevant European research groups as well. The *GRINE* project on *Gender Relationships in Europe at the turn of the millennium: Women as subjects in migration and marriage* (financed by the EU 6th Framework Programme) has focused on women migrants from Hungary and Bulgaria to Italy and the Netherlands, the *FEMINORE* network on *Female Migration in Northern Europe* (financed by Nordplus) on the mobility of women from Russia and the Baltic States to the Nordic countries.

The ESF workshop contributed thus to both reinforcing the already existing cross-border research networks and developing new research initiatives and collaboration between European experts in gender and migration.

2.2. Aim of the ESF workshop

The aim of the workshop was to produce new analyses of the changing structure of institutions and systems, the meaning of culture and the significance of agency concerning Eastern European women's mobility across the multiple blocks in the "New Europe". The starting point for this can be found in critical reflections of social

theories and methodologies, evaluations of different epistemological frameworks and multi-disciplinary approaches.

Several problems and issues were already identified in the workshop application. Firstly, migration studies and theory-building have, for a surprisingly long time, been male-centred and male-biased. This has created problems at the epistemological and analytical levels; feminist criticism and reconstruction is thus needed. Secondly, migration studies have focused on moving across the global welfare gaps and the differentiations between the Europeans and the non-European "others". With the fall of socialist regimes, the scenario of migration in Europe has changed. A wave of inter-European migration from Eastern to Western European countries presents new challenges; now the women arriving are more and more often, besides being "white", also well educated and experienced in paid work. Thirdly, in many cases investigations have been carried out within the frameworks of nation-states. The ongoing process of the enlargement of the European Union toward East and the affirmation of the perspective of "Europe of Regions" should be taken into account; more attention must be paid to mobility within the evolving East-West trans-regions. Lastly, the tensions and contradictions between different levels of action, the local, national, EU and global levels have led to increasing processes of marginalisation, exploitation and violation of human rights; this is in need of serious scholarly inquiry from the point of view of gender.

The complex dynamics of inclusions and exclusions, the construction of "otherness" and seeing the women migrants as different, gendered and overtly sexualised, call for new dialogue between different native and migrant groups in all European regions and countries. In particular, the ESF workshop was convened to reflect upon prospects for trans-culturalism, where migrant minorities are viewed as a human resource more than a weight and where the native majorities are challenged to deal with social marginalisation and look for "immigrant-friendly" forms of integration.

2.3. The workshop presentations

To address these problems and issues, the workshop was organised as multi- and trans-disciplinary and around the trans-regions of Barents, Balticum, Central Europe and Alps-Adria.

The general social and political framework was analysed in terms of gender and immigration at the EU-European level (*Lutz*). The EU is often presented as a “success story” in the struggle against gender inequalities. However, when it comes to migrant women, such success is far from being all-inclusive. There are two different policy tracks, one for inter-EU mobility policies and another for migration from outside the EU. This has increased the division between “us” and “them”. While EU citizens have full rights and the freedom to travel, the situation of non-EU citizens has been worsening. In particular, in the past fifteen years, women migrants from Eastern to Western Europe – work, marriage and different kinds of “sex migrants” alike - have confronted multiple new forms of gender inequalities and discrimination.

The section called the “prisms” aimed at discussing three thematic problematic, mainly from a trans-regional perspective. The issue of social justice and cultural recognition was analysed from the view point of the Alps-Adriatic region (*Calloni*). Italy is in fact a “new” country of immigration. Till the early 1980s it was characterised by emigration, but since the late 1980s the number of legal, semi-legal and illegal workers coming from both all over the globe and the former socialist countries has been increasing. The “new workers” are in many cases in vulnerable situations, often employed as care workers in families (for children, the elderly and house keeping) but also as sex workers. At the same time, many former socialist states have become countries of transit to Italy (*Näre, Kavcic*). In brief, the principles of pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men – that lie at the basis of the Maastricht Treaty, Amsterdam Treaty and the fundamental rights of the European Union, signed in Nice in 2000 - do not apply to non-EU citizens, irrespective of all the UN resolutions. At the domestic level, migration laws have been modified as a result of the changing governments. For instance, the legislation adopted in the 1990s recognised special provisions for trafficked women in order to protect them. The newest legislation from the 2000s has invalidated the reform and imposed a stronger division between “regular” and “irregular” migrants.

Turning to Northern Europe, the situations look different and yet there is undeniable sameness. Two other “prisms” - citizenship and everyday life - were analysed in the

context of the Nordic countries. The specificity of the "Nordic case" is that the majority of immigrants are, with minor exceptions, legal migrants. It is also important to note that the Nordic countries have been celebrated as an example of inclusiveness in terms of gender and social equality. It would be tempting to assume that there is no serious discrimination against women immigrants in the "women-friendly" *Norden*. But it is revealed by critical analysis of gender relations, citizenship, daily life and integration among second wave migrants from the former Yugoslavia, in particular refugee women from Bosnia, that this is not the case (*Gustafson*). The women who have moved together with their families, husbands and children face a double jeopardy. They have to cope simultaneously with problems in the public and private domains. As migrants they have difficulties in finding any jobs, in particular qualified jobs. As wives and mothers they confront the tensions in the family: male partners are not in the positions they previously had in their homelands, resulting in the fear of losing the bread-winner status and the masculinity it is perceived to bring with it.

However, the majority of women immigrants from Eastern Europe to the Nordic countries come for marriage, to live intimately amongst the natives. Only a few of them arrive in the new country through contacts established via internet (*Åhlund*). Most often, especially in the bordering Barents communities, they meet their future partners in Nordic-Russian enterprises, in trans-regional grassroots organisations, on holidays, thanks to relatives and friends - in short, in everyday life (*Hägg, Saarinen*). As wives or co-habitants without paid jobs, these women are economically dependent on their male partners. In the 2000s the situation has been worsening in Finland especially due to the new EU legislation. It is difficult to end the relationship without taking the risk of deportation even if there is intimate violence in the family because the period needed for an individual resident permit has been prolonged from two to four years. On the other hand, surviving alone can be a challenge as well. The Nordic regime is based on a two-breadwinners-family model, in other words on the ideal of working women and working mothers. Consequently, the level of social subsidies is tied up with women's own earnings. As many immigrant women, irrespective of their excellent education and solid professional experience, remain outside or in the margins of labour market, they are not entitled to more than the minimum of social subsidies. Anyhow, many immigrants stress that the subsidies and relatively well

functioning welfare services guarantee a better life than a salary below the poverty line and some meagre support from what is left of public safety nets in Russia.

But there are also problems linked to the regions of origin: the erosion of women's positions in Eastern Europe. All over Western Europe, in North and South alike, "ordinary" women immigrants have to confront cultural exclusion and degradation in the form of the stigma caused by prostitution in and from Eastern Europe (*Stenvoll*). Today it is justified to speak about a prostitution-related harassment in both the private life and the public sphere, at work and education, in free time. It goes without saying that the lack of respect and cultural recognition harms migrant women badly also as workers and welfare recipients (*Sverdljuk*). In this context, it is worth stressing that the division into prostitutes and wives has been imbedded in the legal maps of the EU-Europe and *Norden* both in the 2000s (*Petersen*). At the same time, the division has become "blurred" so that all women arriving across the Nordic-Russian border can be suspected of "selling sex" - or at least of having done so.

2.4. *Research methodologies*

A major part of the sessions was devoted to discussions on methodologies and feminist epistemologies, the modalities and instruments to be used for the analysis of gender and migration. Statistics is often conceived as a sort of replication of "systemic logics", structured and controlled by authorities and not viewing issues from the angle of women and marginal groups such as migrants. No wonder that the problematisation of the meanings and use of statistics was central to many papers. In general macro-economic indicators for instance tend to ignore many major gender issues. However, in recent years researchers in gender studies have developed new approaches to the history and sociology of migration so that new kinds of statistics are now available, challenging the multiple stereotypes of migrants and the fears of Western citizens toward the "others" (*Hars*).

All in all, the numbers do not always represent the reality. For example it is not easy to make gendered violence visible as it takes different forms, direct and indirect, physical, psychological, and sexual. It is also difficult to gather empirical material on other hidden phenomena, such as illegal work or trafficking. The problem of gender-based violence is something that both women natives and migrants share, while the

issue of trafficking directly concerns mainly “non-EU” citizens. The vulnerability of migrant women, in both respects, is worthy of special attention (*Kaselitz*). On the one hand, authorities and centres for information, help and support do not necessarily reach out to legal migrants let alone semi-legal or illegal ones. This dissolves the basis of reliable quantitative information on their exposure to violence. On the other hand, increasing the presence of immigrants' own voices in qualitative analysis and methodologies, in social sciences, history, political philosophy and anthropology, is also a major challenge. The Daphne programme, financed by the EU, has been helpful in increasing public awareness against gender-based violence and gathering and analysing information in alternative ways and stressing the gravity of the question.

Yet migration is not only a matter of discrimination and poverty. It creates new forms of interaction, liberty and solidarity and new forms of aggregation and mobilisation. Many participants mapped these spaces and avenues for agency - signs for autonomy, mutual trust and networking, innovative ways of interacting with natives, other migrants and also with institutions and informal structures. Making qualitative, theme-centred interviews, often both of immigrants and natives as neighbours and friends or as actors in public and civic institutions, seemed to be the “mainstream” choice among social scientists, for example for the RWN and FEMINORE teams. For the historians in GRINE, oral tradition has the same key role. In both cases, new situational and interactive approaches have been developed. The issue of identity is not considered in ontological terms but as a matter of interactions over spaces and times, which makes the identity “mobile” and “flexible” in relation to the experience the subject has. In this way it is also possible to investigate the changing of life perspectives, how an autobiography is reconstructed in narratives over time. Of special interest were oral history methodologies in post-socialist countries, where narratives indicate the complex dynamics between past times, ongoing transition and future perspectives (*Petö, Protassova*). The de/reconstruction of identities adequately describes the situation and the “encounter” of both interviewed person and the researcher (who shares the “same” past). In sum, the issue of inter-subjectivity must be considered in all the phases of cross-cultural investigation processes, in interviews, memories, narratives, in languages used in interviews, in the transcription and translation and, finally, semantic and hermeneutic interpretation of meanings (*Capussotti, Alexandrova, Laliotou*). It is worth noting that the two aforementioned

teams were both composed of two kinds of groups - the natives and the immigrants (RWN) and the scholars coming from the country of origin and destination (GRINE).

3. Results of the workshop, research perspectives and publications

Some major results emerged at the end of the workshop. Firstly, women crossing borders from Eastern to Western Europe vary in their background, education, profession, age, family relations, motivations, nationality and ethnicity and, most importantly, their present status: they are economic migrants, marriage migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, illegal residents or trafficked women. Moreover, there are multiple other agents in the field: migrant women's families, local authorities and diplomatic representatives, domestic and foreign employers (legal and illegal), organised criminality for sex business, policy- and decision-makers, media and civil society and the non-profit sector, not to forget the majority population at large. Despite differences and the multiplicity of factors, the phenomenon of migration present us some common challenges, discussed at the workshop application and waiting to be explored further in various sub- and trans-regional contexts and, most importantly, from the point of view of migrant women themselves:

- If we want to understand in appropriate ways the phenomena of female migration from Eastern to Western Europe, it is necessary to have a deeper understanding of what is taking place in their countries of origin, learn about the political situations and the socio-economic developments. In particular, it is crucial to do research on gender and transition, women's life in the new geo-political constellations, in the multiple new blocks of Europe - in Russia, Byelorussia, and Ukraine (etc) and in the new EU member and candidate countries in the Baltic Region, Central Europe and Alps-Adria. Moreover, it is necessary to analyse the socialist past per se and in relation to its influence on the present daily life. This is vital in order to avoid the polarity between two opposite interpretations. Till the turn of the 1980-90s, in "internal" commentary, everyday life in socialist countries had been presented by leaning on sex as an empirical category and without much criticism. From the turn of the 1980-90s on, "external" commentators have used gender as an analytical category but approached socialism mainly as a failure of gender equality. The interviews, memories and narratives of emigrated women are not divided in that manner. In short, we need new

ethnographic researches and new interpretations. For instance, new analysis of the socialist regime as a welfare regime from the angle of women would be important.

- New comparative analyses are needed on everyday life and forms of co-living especially in the evolving trans-regions. Evidently the problems and issues in different parts of EU-Europe, in Northern, Central and Southern Europe, are so different that it is not easy to make any valid generalisations. Yet many communalities and similarities in differences can be found, as in the case of gender and multiple forms of citizenships and intimacy in the "New Europe" that were identified as a potential theme for future investigation.

- Comparative analysis between the past and the present are needed in the Western countries as well. The previous welfare models are changing due to the pressures of globalisation, the processes of Europeanization and new waves of migration. In all cases, gender relations, welfare regimes and migration regimes are transforming. Therefore we need to learn more about the complex and intertwined dynamics of these regimes at all levels. This relates directly to the natives and the construction of a "Fortress (EU) Europe" that increases hostilities toward the "others" and contributes to a double morality in all spheres of life, in particular in the domains of sexuality.

- Empowerment of (women) immigrants is a crucial issue because of the lack of rights of citizenship, participation and presentation. Without the right to vote and to be voted these "minorities" remain at the margins of the public life, lacking any access to "mainstream" agendas and social policies. Indeed, there is evident need for more research on immigrant women as political actors. One of the challenges we have to face is the development of a view from the bottom up that combines ethnography and normative analysis on the issue of political citizenship in the light of multilevel perspectives.

- Last but not least, the phenomena of gender and migration need to be addressed with new methodological approaches. During the workshop a kind of transversal and processional methodology has emerged. It implies a continuous exchange of positions between the speaker and the listener and, most importantly, trust and mutual respect. Transversal methodology helps to challenge the assumed definitions: who "we" and

the "others" are. These kinds of dialogue can also be applied as research praxis. It is fruitful to encourage new types of research constellations, which are composed of both "us" and "them" in various meanings.

- The positive results of the workshop and the quality of the papers convinced us that it is important:

- **to continue the debates initiated at the workshop;**
- **to consolidate and expand the existing network and exchange of information;**
- **to edit an anthology** (by Aino Saarinen and Marina Calloni) that collects the presentations given at the workshop for publication in 2007; and
- **to organise new meetings** in order to develop **a comparative study and a 'trans-regional' research application** for the 7th Framework Programme, supported by the European Union, in spring 2007.

4. Programme of the workshop

Wednesday 31st May 2006

Afternoon Arrival at the Hotel President

19.00 - 20.30 Registration at the Aleksanteri Institute

Thursday 1st June 2006s

1. Session:

9.00 - 10.00 *Introduction by the Convenors:*

Aino Saarinen and Marina Calloni

Presentation of the European Science Foundation by

Henk Stronkhorst (Standing Committee for Social Sciences)

10.00 - 11.30 *Current Priorities on the Agenda:*

Finalised, Ongoing, and Planned Collective Projects

Nadedja Alexandrova (Gender Studies Centre, Sofia University):

"Gender Relationships in Europe at the Turn of the Millennium (GRINE)"

Jana Sverdljuk (NIKK, Oslo University):

“Russian Women as Immigrants in Norden (RWN)”

Dag Stenvoll (Rokkan Centre, Bergen University)

“Feminine Migration in Northern Europe (FEMINORE)”

11.30 - 12.00 Coffee / Tea

12.00 - 13.00 *Theoretical Perspectives*

Helma Lutz (Faculty of Education, Münster University):

“Dis/appearing Borders? Gender, Migration and Identity

Re/construction in the ‘New Europe’”

13.00 - 14.00 Lunch

14.00 - 15.00 *The ‘Prisms’: Everyday Life*

Kerstin Hägg (Department of Child and Youth Education, Umeå University):

“Everyday Life as Problematic: Russian Immigrant Women in the Three Nordic Countries”

15.00 - 15.30 Coffee / Tea

15.30 - 17.30 Parallel Workshops

Workshop 1

Nadedja Alexandrova (Gender Studies Centre, Sofia University):

”The Concept of Love, Marriage and Home in the Life-stories of Bulgarian Women Migrants”

Kerstin Åhlund Söderlund (Gothenburg University):

“It Takes Two to Tango - about Marital Migration from East to West”

Workshop 2

Anu Laas (Department of Sociology, Tartu University):

“Attitudes towards Immigration in Estonia, Finland and Sweden”

Ionna Lalioutou (Department of Special Education, Thessaly Universit):

“Daughters as Migrants? Some Thought on Youth, Everyday Life and Sociality of Migration”

18.00 Dinner (Free Choice)

Friday 2 June 2006

2. Session

9.00 - 10.00 *The 'Prisms': Citizenship*

Åsa Gustafsson (Department of Sociology, Umeå University):

“Change, Change, Change but What Remains Constant? Citizenship,
Integration and Gender Relations in a Nordic Country”

10.00 - 11.00 *The 'Prisms': Social Justice and Cultural Recognition*

Marina Calloni (Faculty of Sociology, National University of
Milan-Bicocca):

“Including the 'Otherness': Controversial Processes of
Democratisation”

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee / Tea

11.30 - 12.30 *Methodological Challenges in Cross-divide Research*

Andrea Petö (Equal Opportunity and Gender Studies Center, Miskolc
University and Gender Institute, Central European University,
Budapest):

“Integration of Europe: New Opportunities for Women in 'East'?
Personal and Theoretical Comments on Oral History, Memory and
Migration”

12.30 - 13.30 Lunch

13.30 - 14.30 Agnes Hars (KOPINT-DATOR Economic Research Institute,
Budapest): “Gendered Migration Patterns in the Light of Micro-data
Drives of the Hungarian Labour Migration to the European Union:
Evidence Based on Micro-Level Research”

14.30 - 15.30 Enrica Capussotti (Department of History, Siena University):

“Inter-subjectivity and Inter-disciplinarity: Oral History and the
Present”

15.30 - 16.00 Coffee / Tea

Markku Kivinen (Director): “Presentation of the Aleksanteri Institute”

16.00 - 17.00 Verena Kaselitz (Social Change - Institute for Innovation in Gender
Research and Violence Prevention):

“Methodological Problems in Addressing Migrant
Women's Experience of Multiple Victimization”

17.00 - 19.00 Parallel Workshops

Workshop 3

Jana Sverdljuk (NIKK, Oslo University):

“Russian Women as Immigrants in the Nordic Countries:
Challenging the Ability to Formulate a Just Moral Judgment”

Ekaterina Protassova (Department of Slavonic and Baltic Languages
and Literatures, Helsinki University):

“Russian-speaking Women in Transnational Communities”

Workshop 4

Lena Näre (Department of Sociology, Helsinki University):

“Trust, Solidarity and the Politics of Everyday Life - Ukrainian and
Polish Immigrant Women in South Italy”

Hanne Petersen (Faculty of Law, Copenhagen University):

“Changing Legal Maps in the Nordic Countries and Europe. Gender
and Mobility - Confused Orientations”

19.30 Dinner at the Restaurant Nokka (Katajanokka/ Kanavaranta 7)

Saturday 3 June 2006

3. Session

9.00 - 11.30 Parallel Workshops

Workshop 5

Dag Stenvoll (Rokkan Centre, Bergen University):

”Prostitution, Gender and Migration (PROGEMI)”

Urša Kavčič (Peace Institute, Institute for Contemporary Social and
Political Studies, Ljubljana):

“Discussing the Demand Behind Trafficking in Women”

Aino Saarinen (Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki University):

“Citizenship, Transition, Gender - Reflections on the Developments in
'Norden' - Barents”

11.30 - 12.30 Summing Up by the Convenors; the 'Book Project'; Future Project
Plans

12.30 Lunch and Departure

5. Statistical information on participants: Attachment 2

Gender

Female: 18

Male: 1

Age (year of birth)

1950 and before: 4

1950-1959: 3

1960-1969: 5

1970 and after: 7

Title

Full professors: 4

Senior scholars

(Ass. professors,

Docents): 3

Doctors: 5

Candidates of science

(Russia): 2

Post graduates: 5

Country of origin

Austria 1

**Bulgaria 1

Denmark 1

*Estland 1

Finland 3

Germany 1

Greece 1

*Hungary 2

Italy 2

Norway 2

*Slovenia 1

Sweden 3

* new EU member countries

** EU applicant country

Disciplines

Social Sciences*: 12

Humanities**: 6

Legal studies: 1

*Sociology, social anthropology, political science, communication studies, economics

** History, social philosophy, linguistics (Slavic one)

6. Final list of participants: Attachment 3

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