

**Migration Yearbook:  
Central Asia and Russia -  
2023**

**Formation of migration  
policies in Central Asian  
countries and the Russian  
Federation in modern  
conditions**

**2023**

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**Dear readers,**

In the second edition of the “Migration Yearbook: Central Asia and Russia - 2023”, the working group is monitoring formation of modern trends in migration and development under the influence of migration policies in the countries of Central Asia and Russia, pointing out the significance of cooperation between the migrants’ countries of origin and destination in development of a coordinated migration policy not only under influence of the COVID-19 consequences (the first Migration Yearbook of 2020 was devoted to that analysis), but also, this time around, mainly under the influence of the recent events in Afghanistan since the year 2021 and events in Ukraine since the year 2022. Their impact on formation of new trends in the Eurasian migration space is reflected in the second Migration Yearbook of the year 2023.

The survey’s authors are the following experts: Leila Delovarova (chapter on Kazakhstan), Tatyana Zlobina (chapter on Kyrgyzstan), Dmitry Poletaev (chapter on Russia and Turkmenistan), Saodat Olimova (chapter on Tajikistan), Lyudmila Maksakova (chapter on Uzbekistan).

While welcoming the release of the second Migration Yearbook, the head of the Hanns Seidel Foundation in Central Asia, Dr. Max Georg Mayer, underlined the following: “Migration is a global phenomenon, which is also monitored by the Hanns Seidel Foundation around the world. The reason for this is that migration currently is a big problem and development factor in our partner countries of Central Asia. Migration extends not only to Central Asia, but also to European countries. We are talking about labor migration, including educational migration (younger generation from Central Asia are studying in Europe). The goal is also to promote legal migration and to tackle channels of illegal migration.”

We hope that the authors’ overview of changes that took place in migration in Central Asia and Russia by the year 2023, offered to our dear readers, will be interesting and useful to them.

Sincerely,

Review authors:

Leila Delovarova (chapter on Kazakhstan)  
Tatyana Zlobina (chapter about Kyrgyzstan)  
Lyudmila Maksakova (chapter on Uzbekistan)  
Saodat Olimova (chapter on Tajikistan)  
Dmitry Poletaev (chapters about Russia and Turkmenistan)

## Summary of

### **Migration Yearbook: Central Asia and Russia - 2023 “Formation of migration policies in Central Asia and the Russian Federation in modern conditions”.**

#### **Migration and conflicts.**

Armed conflicts in Afghanistan and in the South-East of Ukraine are affecting migration processes in the *Russian Federation*. Thus, the ongoing tension in Afghanistan leads to an increased number of Tajikistan citizens, obtaining Russian citizenship. Armed conflict in the South-East of Ukraine in the years 2022-2023 has caused on the one hand the departure of at least 500,000 Russian citizens from out of Russia (the new “relocated persons” term has gotten a widespread), and on the other hand, it has led to the arrival to Russia of at least 3 million refugees from Ukraine.

A part of the changes in the migration legislation of the Russian Federation is related to the ongoing armed conflict with Ukraine: starting from September 2023, citizens of Ukraine are able to enter and leave the Russian Federation without visas on the basis of an their passport of Ukraine, and starting from January 2024, the foreign citizens who are undergoing the military service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

The authorities of *Kazakhstan* have decided to exclude the “Taliban” from the list of banned organizations, justifying this decision by the fact that the UN Security Council does not recognize this movement as terrorist. There has been no influx of refugees from Afghanistan to Kazakhstan, partly because Kazakhstan does not share common borders with Afghanistan, and its legislation regarding the acceptance of refugees is quite stringent. Afghan students are enrolled in universities in Kazakhstan. The flow of relocated persons from Russia to Kazakhstan does not pose a direct threat to Kazakhstan’s security. However, it contributes to the emergence of various socio-economic challenges and places a burden on the labor market in Kazakhstan. There is a constant risk of involving Kazakh citizens in military actions between Russia and Ukraine, which may be related to the possibility of simplified Russian citizenship for foreigners who have signed contracts with the Russian armed forces.

Over the past two years, rapidly changing geopolitical realities have significantly influenced the formation of new migration trends in *Kyrgyzstan*. These include the rise of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan, resulting in a massive exodus of refugees from the country, as well as the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the Kyrgyz-Tajik border disputes. Border conflicts have arisen repeatedly due not only to the unresolved delimitation of disputed border areas but also because of territorial disputes between the two neighboring countries. These factors have led to significant depopulation of border regions and pose a threat to Kyrgyzstan’s national security. The number of refugees in the Kyrgyz Republic by the end of 2023 was only 138 people (from Afghanistan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Syria), at the same time the number of asylum seekers was 1,141 people. After the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), has accepted students from the American University in Kabul to continue the studies. The main migration strategy of these university students, based on interviews with them and friendly conversations, is to move mainly to the USA or Canada in order to continue their education there and to obtain permanent residence permit. As of March 2024, 345 Afghan students are studying at AUCA. Since the beginning of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, a large number of relocated persons from Russia have arrived in Kyrgyzstan. However, most of them consider Kyrgyzstan as a transit country and move on to

third countries. Migrant workers in Russia are experiencing the consequences of sanctions against Russia and are also at risk of mobilization for participation in the conflict.

In *Uzbekistan*, an Afghan diaspora has formed, created by displaced individuals. Afghan migrants work in construction, the private sector, or engage in entrepreneurship. Uzbekistan does not have the official right to accept refugees because it has not acceded to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. However, Uzbekistan lies in the path of Afghan refugees, and therefore, it is involved in these processes. Uzbekistan collaborates with several countries on the evacuation of their citizens from Afghanistan. The government of the republic has decided not to forcibly deport refugees, instead establishing temporary accommodation centers for arriving Afghan refugees and citizens facing difficult situations. Their number in the fall of 2022 was 35,000 people. In Uzbekistan, there are issues related to free education and accommodation for Afghan students who were admitted to universities in the country based on contracts signed with the previous Afghan government. These conditions persist, but Afghan students lack sufficient funds for their day-to-day expenses, and they are not allowed to work. Russia serves as the primary migration partner for Uzbekistan, both in terms of permanent residency and labor migration. Consequently, the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine impacts both of these migration flows.

An increased influx of temporary migrants from Russia to Uzbekistan has occurred, with the purpose of waiting out the period of armed conflict. This migration stream is relatively small, starting in spring 2022 and significantly growing with the onset of mobilization in Russia. As of September 2022, their number reached 78,200 people, which is 2.7 times more than in April. Due to relocation, prices for food and rent have substantially risen, creating a disparity between increased costs and the incomes of a significant portion of the local population who rent housing. This exacerbates the already significant social stratification within society. Additionally, there is a noted risk of increased competition in the labor market, especially in skilled professions, as highly qualified specialists are prevalent among the relocated persons.

After the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan in August 2021, the radical Taliban movement took control of almost the entire country. From that moment, *Tajikistan* severed contacts with Afghanistan but continued to accept refugees. By August 2021, the number of Afghan refugees had reached 14,000 people. In September 2021, a decision was made in Dushanbe to close the border for receiving refugees, partly due to limitations in infrastructure and resources for their reception. Refugees in Tajikistan have access to social services on par with Tajik citizens. They have the right to employment and entrepreneurial activities across all economic sectors. However, a lack of job opportunities, very low wages, and an unfavorable business climate limit the ability of Afghan refugees to support themselves and their families in Tajikistan. As a result, a significant portion of them awaits changes in the situation in Afghanistan to return home. Others, primarily women, are interested in further migration. They aim to move to third countries where their relatives reside, viewing Tajikistan as a transit nation.

Mass protests in November of 2021 and unrest in May of 2022 in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) caused waves of migration from the region.

In the years 2021 - 2022, armed clashes periodically took place on the Tajik-Kyrgyz border in the Fergana Valley due to the territorial claims of Tajikistan and of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) to each other and the unfinished delimitation of the border. The rate of obtaining Russian citizenship and the labor migration in the areas bordering the Kyrgyz Republic has increased. Tajikistan is one of the countries that has had the strong negative impact of events in Ukraine in terms of migration, due to high dependence on Russia and decrease in worth of migration due to exchange rate fluctuations, the growth of xenophobia and migrant phobia in the Russian Federation, the involvement of citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan in military activities in Ukraine.

One of the consequences of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine was the influx of so-called “relocated persons” from Russia into the Republic of Tajikistan, which in fall of 2022 amounted to 30,000 people. Tajikistan for the Russians is a transit country, since, according to the Russian Federation’s Embassy, the main bulk of relocated persons have moved to other countries.

There is no official information about the presence or absence of a significant number of refugees in *Turkmenistan*. As part of the elimination of statelessness efforts, only two refugees were reported to have received the citizenship of Turkmenistan in the year 2022.

For Turkmenistan, as for a neutral state, the main potential factor of instability at the present time is the extensive border with Afghanistan. In case of the situation’s deterioration in Afghanistan, residents of Turkmenistan in regions neighboring Afghanistan might potentially increase migration mobility.

### **Migrants’ remittances.**

Central Bank of the *Russian Federation* has stopped publishing official statistics on remittances since the year 2021; one can estimate the scale using data from the national banks of Central Asia. Thus, according to the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, remittances from the Russian Federation to Uzbekistan in the year 2022 have amounted to USD 14.5, and in the year 2023 their volume is expected to reach USD 8.8 to 9.2 billion. Remittances from the Russian Federation to Kyrgyzstan in the year 2022 have amounted to USD 2.7 billion, i.e. that also indicates positive dynamics, however not as evident. Remittances from the Russian Federation to Kazakhstan in the year 2022 have gone up compared to the year 2021 and reached USD 0.8 billion, which was partly due to increase in emigration (both for temporary and permanent residence formats) of the Russian citizens themselves to Kazakhstan, and also by the relocation of some Russian businesses to Kazakhstan.

According to the statistics and secondary sources, *Kazakhstan* is a net sender of Remittances (personal transfers) in relation to other countries. According to the People’s Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan over the year 2021, transfers from individual residents from the Republic of Kazakhstan abroad amounted to about USD 1,443,540 Transfers from abroad towards individual residents of the Republic of Kazakhstan amounted to USD 306,280,000. The largest amounts of such transfers occur in relation to the Russian Federation USD 538,330,000, Uzbekistan: USD 214,310,000, Kyrgyzstan: USD 167,010,000, Turkey: USD 245,740,000 and China: USD 36,400,000 million.

In the year 2022 was a decrease in the volume of transfers from the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation; for the first time ever, it turned out to be lower than from the Russian Federation to the Republic of Kazakhstan. Thus, in the year 2022, Kazakhstan received USD 775.500,000 from Russia, and sent USD 425,600,00 over there. Over ten months of 2023 the amount of money received from abroad reached 575.2 billion KZT.

In the years 2019, 2020 and 2021, the amounts of remittances sent from Kazakhstan to Russia exceeded the received transfers by 61%, 189% and 235%, respectively. Changes in such data are conditioned to the mass migration of Russians to Kazakhstan and the withdrawal of funds from the Russian Federation in connection with the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the announced draft in the Russian Federation.

This is connected with the presence of about 30,000 to 80,000 relocated persons from Russia on a permanent basis in Kazakhstan.

Around 35% as related to *Kyrgyzstan’s* GDP are comprised of remittances from migrants. Over the past ten years, the migrant workers have sent almost USD 23 billion to Kyrgyzstan. According to EDB estimates, the share of remittances from private individuals in relation to Kyrgyzstan’s GDP has decreased over the years of 2022-2023.

At the end of 2022, the volume of remittances to the country amounted to USD 3,086,500,000. From the Kyrgyz Republic to other countries, USD 1,213,500,000 was transferred. The net inflow amounted to USD 1,873,000,000.

In total, over the year of 2023, Kyrgyz citizens transferred USD 2,706,100,000 to the country. The money outflow amounted to USD 561,200,000. In total, the balance amounted to USD 2,144,900,000, which is more than last year in net figures by USD 271,900,000.

In Kyrgyzstan, it is believed that it is extremely important to develop a system for attracting funds from migrants, compatriots, and their associations for development of the country, education of children, and starting up of businesses by the migrants themselves.

According to the Central Bank of Republic of *Uzbekistan* (CBU), in the year 2022 the sum of remittances from migrants to the country has amounted to USD 16.9 billion, which is significantly more than in previous years: in 2021 it was USD 8.1 bn, in 2020 USD 6.0 billion. In the year 2023, according to the World Bank (WB), it amounted to USD 16.1 billion, which is 21% and 17,8% as related to the country's GDP, respectively.

The share of transfers from Russia decreased slightly: from 87% to 78%. According to the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, throughout the years 2018 to 2023 16% of the population's total income comes from labor migrants' remittances. The main bulk of remittances are traditionally spent on consumer needs, but over the recent years, there have been an increase in spending on the education and development of children.

*Tajikistan* is one of the countries in the world which is the most dependent on incoming remittances. Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, starting in 2014, and the Central Bank of Russia, starting in 2022, stopped providing information on remittances.

The total amount of remittances from private individuals from Russia to Tajikistan in the year 2021 amounted to \$1.8 billion, which is 3.4% more than in the year 2020. This amount is equivalent to 23% of the Republic of Tajikistan's GDP in 2021. In the year 2022, the volume of remittances increased and, according to the World Bank, amounted to \$5.2 billion, which is equivalent to 34% of the Republic of Tajikistan's GDP in the year 2022.

In the same year, the share of transfers from Russia in the total volume of remittances began to decrease. Although more than 90% of all labor migrants worked in Russia, the share of remittances they made to the Republic of Tajikistan amounted to 76% of all remittances received in the country. A quarter (24%) of all transfers came from Turkey, the UAE, the EU, and China.

In the year 2023, the amount of remittances was equivalent to 32% of the GDP of the Republic of Tajikistan.

According to the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, foreign money transactions by the private individuals of *Turkmenistan*, conducted either with or without opening an account through financial organizations, including remittances done via transfer systems from the Russian Federation, have steadily dropped down over the years of 2015 to 2020. Thus, in the year 2015 they amounted to USD 16,000,000, and in the year 2020 USD 121,000.

### **Prospects of migration trends development.**

The prospects for labor migration to the *Russian Federation*, primarily from Central Asian countries, are defined by a significant shortage of labor force, which has gotten exacerbated in the years 2022-2024. So far, there has not been observed a significant outflow of the labor migrants from the Russian Federation, however there is intensification of structural shortage of labor force in Russia.

In the mid-term and long-term time spans there will be continuation of the gradual migration legislation liberalization and increased flexibility in the migration processes management. This is what is evident by the legislation changes over the recent years: the adoption

of the law on repatriation, permission to retain the existing citizenship while obtaining the Russian citizenship, etc.

Education driven migration from the post-Soviet countries that are migration donors to the Russian Federation will be increased and, in this flow, over time, education driven migrants in educational institutions of secondary vocational education of the Russian Federation, whose graduates have attractive employment prospects in Russia, will become more visible.

The risks of terrorist threats' growth due to mass migration to the Russian Federation (including the context of events that are taking place in Afghanistan and in Ukraine), both in the short-term and mid-term prospects are still remaining, and in the long-term prospect, with the current lack of comprehensive funding for integration measures for the migrants of all categories, the terrorism induced challenges will become even more relevant.

*In the upcoming years*, in Russia the migrants' vulnerability will be retained (the main vulnerable groups of migrants are the migrant children, women, and refugees), since a comprehensive system of the migrants' integration and adaptation has not yet been established and government funding is not that considerable.

*In the long-term perspective*, the migration capacity of the Central Asian countries will still be preserved. The population in the countries of Central Asia will remain mainly of an early age, with a high proportion of the working-age population and potential for migration. In the countries of Central Asia (especially in Uzbekistan) there are some prospects for advanced economic development and of some new jobs' creation, including the ones for younger generation, therefore a part of the younger public will choose work in their homeland instead of the labor migration option, however the labor migration will still continue to take place, at least in the short-term and mid-term time frames. The already created diasporas in the Russian Federation will continue to attract new labor migrants in the environment where there is an insufficient number of jobs for the younger public from the Central Asian countries with pretty elevated wages and prospects for career growth in their countries. On the other hand, the ongoing demographic decline in the Russian Federation and the increasing labor shortage will be a strong attracting factor, which will intensify labor migration in the short-term and mid-term spans. The insufficient number of universities and vocational schools and colleges that are providing relevant education in demand among the younger generation of Central Asian countries will also influence education related migration from these countries to the Russian Federation.

Well-established migration flows to the Russian Federation will also boost up the feminization of migration both from Kyrgyzstan (which is already quite widespread) and also from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the Russian Federation. On the one hand, for the labor migrants' wives, an extensive separation from their husbands will increase the risk of family's dissolution, and they will strive to reunite with their husbands. On the other hand, for some unmarried migrant women from Central Asia, leaving for work in Russia, in addition to economic incentives might be encouraged by a broader market of potential mates from amongst compatriots that are going to work in the Russian Federation and the prospects of starting up a family during the labor migration in the Russian Federation.

Migration situation in *Kazakhstan* will depend on the development of the social-and-economic and political situation throughout the entirety Eurasian migration space. Labor migration to Kazakhstan from other Central Asian countries will maintain its numbers and at certain moments will tend to increase such as educational migration and the feminization of migration. Migration scale of ethnic Kazakhs the "Kandas", that are willing to come for permanent residence in Kazakhstan, will gradually decrease. In the mid-term perspective, there will be a slight outflow of the young working population, including the educated population, from Kazakhstan for study and employment abroad. This trend is a reflection of global trends and does not pose a threat to the demographic security of Kazakhstan.



In the Kyrgyz Republic, migration is an integral part or a significant section in many national development programs. At the same time, in the country there is an understanding of both the current benefits of migration, in particular in the combat against poverty levels, and its consequences in the near future due to departure and non-return of the economically active, mainly younger population with a higher degree of education.

Definitely, one might say that citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, of mostly able-bodied age, will continue to go out for labor migration, and, for the most part, this will take place out of the southern labor force abundant regions. Kyrgyzstan will thus continue to remain a donor country of the migrant workers. But, at the same time, the country is increasingly positioning itself as a destination country for migrant workers, and in some cases, as a transit country. This is evidenced by the extensive legal work, the number of adopted additions and changes to regulatory legal texts in the area of the legal status regulation of the foreigners who came to the Kyrgyz Republic to work, as well as their right to work.

In the Republic of *Tajikistan*, migration issues are considered as strategically significant. Nonetheless, the labor market in the Republic of Tajikistan remains to be weak and is unable to absorb all of the younger generation that enter the labor market after completing their studies, and growing threats contribute to the loss security sense amongst the public of the Republic of Tajikistan. This forces people to create additional spare savings and, in order to do that, they seek higher income opportunities abroad, as well as consider the prospects of relocating to other countries.

Therefore, one might confidently predict that in the foreseeable future, Tajikistan will remain a country of labor force origin, and the well-being of Tajik households and the country's economy as a whole will largely depend on migration and migrants' remittances.

It could be predicted that *Turkmenistan* in the short term will remain a donor country of migrants, the main flow of whom will be directed to Turkey and the Russian Federation. Moreover, due to the shortage of vacant slots in universities of Turkmenistan, the educational migration from Turkmenistan to the Russian Federation and to other countries will continue to take place. With the observed decline over the recent years in migration flow to Turkey, one might foresee a reorientation of the migrants' traffic from Turkmenistan to other countries, including to the Russian Federation

## **Modern migration processes and trends of their development in the Republic of Kazakhstan.**

**Leila Delovarova**

### **1. Brief migration profile.**

The main migration trends for Kazakhstan are uneven internal migration, ethnic migration of so called “Kandas” into the country, transit migration, external labor migration, and emigration of younger generation from Kazakhstan, which is not a threat to demographic and economic security of the country. It is also worth noting the role of educational immigration and emigration, feminization of migration and reversed migration. A new trend that requires special attention is the phenomenon of “relocation”, which affects such migration indicators as flows of remittances, changes in labor market relations, etc.

According to experts’ estimates, the data from responsible agencies and opinions of practitioners, over the period from 2021 to 2023, a very large share of unaccounted migration from Central Asian countries was still remaining.

The Republic of Kazakhstan today is the country with a mixed migration status; however, it positions itself for the most part as a country of hosting and transit of migrants. Within the framework of regional migration subsystem, migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan arrive in the country, and migration exchanges with Turkmenistan are observed. Starting from first half of the year 2022, for the first time, masses of migrants (relocated persons) from Russia went to Kazakhstan, which took place because of the geopolitical situation and the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. These waves are associated with announcement of partial military draft in Russia and have significantly increased the transit role of Kazakhstan in Eurasia.

#### *Internal migration.*

In internal migration during 2021-2023, the main centers of attraction remain such places like Almaty, Astana, Shymkent and the Almaty Province.

The number of people moving within the country increased by 6,1% in the year 2022. In terms of interregional movements, a positive balance of population’s migration has developed in 4 regions of the country: cities like Almaty (35,302 people), Astana (33,798 people), Shymkent (2,756 people) and the Almaty Province (898 people)<sup>1</sup>.

#### *External migration.*

Despite the fact that, since the year 2012, the balance of external migration has been consistently negative, over the last 3 years it has been going down.

Statistical data on the people who arrived and left the country over the years 2021 and 2022 shows a decrease in negative balance of migration in the context of certain ethnic groups. Data on arriving foreigners in the Republic of Kazakhstan are compiled in accordance with the Interior Ministry data of the Republic of Kazakhstan. A considerable difference in migration flows over the years 2021 and 2022 is associated, on the one hand, with entry restrictions for most of the year 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the other hand, with the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the draft announced in Russia in September of 2022. The largest number of migrants to Kazakhstan in the year 2022 arrived from Uzbekistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup> Migration of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2022). Website of the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan.

Миграция населения Республики Казахстан (2022г.). Сайт Бюро национальной статистики Казахстана. 12.04.2023 <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/social-statistics/demography/publications/6356/>

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population, more than 14,200 people were registered as legally working foreign citizens in Kazakhstan as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

Along with the fact that in the year 2022 about 5.7 million people arrived in Kazakhstan, and about 6 million people have left the country during the same year. The number of temporary residing persons was about 650,000 people in the year 2022.<sup>2</sup>

According to data of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, over the period of January through June of 2023 alone, the number of arrivals in the country was 13,652 people, the number of departures from the country was 6,996 people. The migration balance amounted to 6,656 people<sup>3</sup>. Compared to the corresponding period in the year 2022, the number of people that arrived in Kazakhstan increased by 87.3%, and the number of people departing from Kazakhstan decreased by 56.7%. The main migration exchange of the country occurs with the CIS countries. The share of people arriving from the CIS countries was 89.1%, the share of those leaving for these countries was 75.4%. The majority of arriving foreign citizens are transit migrants from the CIS countries.

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population, more than 14,200 people were registered as legally working foreign citizens in Kazakhstan as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

Experts, as part of the interviews conducted on this project, are pointing out the need for further improvement of the migrants' documenting methodology, because the available statistical data does not allow to implement comprehensive research due to different methodologies for documenting the arriving, departing, and residing foreign citizens. Alongside with this, one of the main conclusions is the strengthening of Kazakhstan's transit capacity; another significant aspect is that citizens of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are increasingly rerouted from Russia to Kazakhstan with intentions of work. This also applies to citizens of Kyrgyzstan, however, the EAEU membership provides for the citizens of this country certain preferences in the labor migration process.

## **2. State policy and state programs in the area of migration.**

The state migration policy of Kazakhstan includes such aspects as internal migration regulation (through creation of appropriate infrastructure and new jobs, balanced settlement, and resettlement of the people), the reception and adaptation of so called "Kandas" (ethnic Kazakhs), regulation of labor migration in Kazakhstan and prevention of the drain of younger talented population.

Kazakhstan has developed a sufficient legal framework in the area of migration processes' regulation, which is being improved on a permanent basis. The most significant is the Law "On Migration" dated by July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, which is adjusted with consideration of ever-changing migration realities.

The state strategy for migration management in Kazakhstan was set out in the Concept document of Migration Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the years 2017 through 2021.

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<sup>2</sup> Sources in the Interior Ministry provided information about the migration situation in the country. Website of the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

21.12. 2022 <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/qriim/press/news/details/479277?lang=ru>

<sup>3</sup> Migration of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan (January-June 2023). Website of the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan. 10.08.2023 <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/social-statistics/demography/publications/6354/>

According to the Migration Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the years 2017 through 2021, the Republic of Kazakhstan is adhering to a strategy of temporary migration for deployment of foreign workers, optimal settlement of population throughout the country, as well as long-term permanent migration in relation to ethnic repatriates. The migration policy was conducted on the basis of this document.

In the year 2021, a Roadmap was developed for the public services optimization entitled as “Acceptance and approval of invitations from hosts on visa issuance for the Republic of Kazakhstan”, “Issuance, restoration or extension on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan of visas to foreign nationals and stateless persons to obtain the right to leave and enter the Republic of Kazakhstan” as well as “Issuing of temporary residence permits to foreign nationals and stateless persons in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, which provides for the issuance of visas and invitations through service centers for population and through “e-government” portal. Based on the Roadmap for implementation of Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, No. 622 “On measures for further improvement of public administration system of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (hereinafter referred to as the Roadmap), starting from January 1<sup>st</sup>, of 2022, the refugees’ issues and issuance of work permits to the labor migrants are handed over to jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population.

In November of 2022, a new Migration Policy Concept document for the years 2023-2027 was adopted, which is describing and improving the aspects specified in the previous concept document in greater detail. The document stipulates that in order to obtain citizenship of Kazakhstan knowledge of the state language at a basic level is mandatory, as well as knowledge of the country’s history and Constitution. The new Concept document is providing for introduction of a simplified procedure for issuing a ten-year “Scientific and Academic Visa” with right to obtain a residence permit and subsequently citizenship of Kazakhstan.

Next direction is business-based immigration. For this category of migrants, it is envisaged to introduce an “investors visa” with a residence permit and the right to register a business, own a property, hire personnel, and make financial operations as well as freely conduct any transactions, which are taking place on the basis of their business activities<sup>4</sup>.

According to the document, it is proposed to attract 100 of the best foreign specialists to the country in professions that are in demand and the ones that at the same time considered to be rare for Kazakhstan. For them a “valuable skills visa” with a residence permit will be incorporated and a regularly updated rating list of valuable skills will be formed up. Moreover, the Concept document envisages issues of ethnic migration’s regulation. This will be the use of capacity of ethnic Kazakhs that are living abroad. In order to do that, it is proposed to use the “Ata Zholy” card, which will be issued to ethnic Kazakhs, that are citizens of other countries, and for foreign highest-level professionals<sup>5</sup>. It is also planned to thoroughly reform the resettlement policy of the “Kandas”, considering demographic and economic trends of the country, with additional incentives for their resettlement in the resettlement regions already at initial stage of accepting documents for processing.

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<sup>4</sup> Vaal T. The government of Kazakhstan has approved a new Concept document of migration policy. *Vlast*. 29.11.2022 <https://vlast.kz/novosti/52789-pravitelstvo-kazahstana-odobrilo-novuu-koncepciu-migracionnoj-politiki.html>

<sup>5</sup> Vaal T. The government of Kazakhstan has approved a new Concept document of migration policy. *Vlast*. 29.11.2022 <https://vlast.kz/novosti/52789-pravitelstvo-kazahstana-odobrilo-novuu-koncepciu-migracionnoj-politiki.html>

New rules were ratified in July of 2023. In the new Standard Rules, in comparison with the previous rules that were approved by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the conceptual mechanism has been significantly expanded.<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that during coordination of migration processes throughout the regions, their impact on the state of social-and-economic, demographic, and cultural development, as well as the environmental situation are taken in consideration. Such an approach allows for the organization of more effective coordination considering the specifics of a particular region.

Registration and records keeping of citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, foreigners that are temporarily or permanently residing in Kazakhstan as well as stateless persons at their place of permanent and (or) temporary stay (residence) is implemented in accordance with the Rules for registration of internal migrants. The order came into force on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

An innovation in relation to citizens of the visa-free mode countries was in abolition of the so-called “visa runs” starting from January of 2023; this somewhat has changed the procedure of stay of the above-mentioned citizens. According to the newly introduced rules, foreigners who do not require a visa to enter Kazakhstan will be able to stay in the country for as long as 30 days. However, within 180 days (six months), their total period of stay should not exceed 90 days. The EAEU citizens will be able to stay in Kazakhstan in a similar manner for no more than 90 days within 180 days’ time period<sup>7</sup>.

Previously in the rules this issue has not been sorted out, therefore foreigners could upon expiration of their stay leave the boundaries of Kazakhstan and enter again, thereby updating their time of stay. These rules do not apply to immigrants who came to Kazakhstan based on a visa and who have not obtained a temporary residence permit. For them, the time period of their stay in the country is limited only by the validity of that paperwork. It seems worthwhile pointing out that the Government is responding to international trends and changes. Kazakhstan has signed the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018<sup>8</sup>. The Government of Kazakhstan is actively working to raise awareness and promotion of the Global Compact.

### **3. Intergovernmental cooperation**

International cooperation of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the CIS and non-former USSR countries is determined by interaction at bilateral and multilateral levels.

Migration issues are primarily being resolved at the national level; in this regard, the bilateral agreements with countries with which the most active migration exchanges are taking place, including the neighboring countries, are important. Bilateral agreements and readmission agreements nowadays are the key mechanisms for resolving migration issues.

With each of the region’s countries Kazakhstan has baseline agreements that are regulating migration issues. Foundations of multilateral cooperation were placed within the structure of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the 1990s.

<sup>6</sup> How will migration processes be regulated in Kazakhstan? Zakon.kz. 01.08.2023  
<https://www.zakon.kz/pravo/6401851-kak-budut-regulirovat-migratsionnye-protsessy-v-kazahstane.html>

<sup>7</sup> “Visa run” for foreigners in Kazakhstan has been officially abolished. tengrinews.kz 27.01.2023  
[https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/vizaran-dlya-inostrantsev-v-kazahstane-ofitsialnootmenen-489609/](https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/vizaran-dlya-inostrantsev-v-kazahstane-ofitsialnootmenen-489609/)

<sup>8</sup> Kazakhstan pledged to assist the migrants. *Sputnik Kazakhstan* 12.12.2021  
<https://ru.sputnik.kz/society/20181212/8455266/kazakhstan-migranty-dogovor-sodeystviya.html>

Agreements on cooperation in the migration area were signed between Kazakhstan and Tajikistan<sup>9</sup> (2018), as well as between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan<sup>10</sup> (2019), which formed up the basis for migration cooperation in years 2021 and 2022. These agreements have a well-developed foundation and capacity for further cooperation development both on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

The agreements have similar content and are directed at exchange of statistical, legal, and academic-and-research information, the exchange of information about citizens located within states, the protection of their rights and their family members (Article 3 of both agreements). The documents are also aimed at collaboration in the area of countering unregulated migration (Article 4 of both agreements), clarification of legal status, creation of joint experts' groups, participation in scientific and practical events and international projects, as well as at tackling cases of dual citizenship.

These agreements are of a framework nature, but the very content of the articles and a similar approach contribute to regulation of migration processes, harmonization of legislations and approaches, based on the countries' migration profile.

Uzbekistan is the largest exporter of labor force within the region and beyond and has quite high attractiveness for investments. Because of this, agreements covering different aspects of activities within the context of migration exchanges with Kazakhstan and beyond are vitally important. Boost of cooperation with Uzbekistan starting the year 2017 can be considered a substantial progress in issues of migration-related interaction. In the year 2018 there was modernization of migration policy, which is aimed at achieving much more effective cooperation between the countries.

It is worth noting the two agreements that were signed in 2019 with Kazakhstan. Cooperation agreement on combating illegal migration<sup>11</sup>, as well as Agreement on labor-related activity and protection of the labor migrants' rights that are citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Kazakhstan and that of the labor migrants who are citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Republic of Uzbekistan<sup>12</sup>. Both agreements were ratified in the year 2021.

The agreement on cooperation in combating illegal migration is directed at strengthening of interaction in the area of unregulated migration prevention and interaction in this direction is seen as one of the key areas of legal regulation of migration processes and creation of a statutory foundation for bilateral cooperation in the external migration area.

The Agreement on labor activity and protection of the migrant workers' rights is covering important aspects of both countries citizens' time of stay in the process of labor-related activities, with an emphasis on protection of the migrants' rights of labor. According to the document, the migrant workers will be

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<sup>9</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation in the area of migration. Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, No. 112// <http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1800000112>

<sup>10</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on cooperation in the area of migration. Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, No. 878 // <http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1900000878>

<sup>11</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the fight against illegal migration. Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, No. 196, <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1900000196>

<sup>12</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on labor activity and protection of the rights of migrant workers who are citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Kazakhstan and migrant workers who are citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Republic of Uzbekistan from 2019 Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated April 17, 2020, No. 314-VI ZRK // <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z2000000314>

compensated for damage that took place because of injury, occupational disease or other health hazard associated with performance of labor duties, and also the migrant workers are guaranteed to receive free medical assistance<sup>13</sup>.

The document covers labor relations in the fields of pedagogy, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals. In these areas the migrants need to undergo nostrification, a procedure for recognizing their educational documents. An important aspect, which is covered in the agreement is the guaranteed retirement and social security provision, as well as taking of measures aimed at prevention of illicit labor activities. Wages payment and other labor conditions for the migrant workers, according to the agreement, are regulated by employment contract with the employer in accordance with legislation of the host country.

The abovementioned agreements and activities for promotion of migration cooperation and improvements in provision of the migrants' rights are a contribution not only at the bilateral level, but also can be a potential for multilateral cooperation.

It is also worth noting the Memorandum of cooperation intent between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the social-and-labor area, which was signed in December of 2021. The Memorandum's conclusion is confirming and strengthening the two countries' capacity in cooperation promotion in the labor migration area, with coverage of significant social aspects. The document is covering the labor migration area relations with the direct involvement of responsible departments, which in turn will facilitate more organized labor migration with the priority of upholding the migrants' labor and social rights in the process of their activities.

All of the abovementioned agreements are considerable progress in migration cooperation between the countries.

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan entered into a Strategic Partnership Agreement<sup>14</sup> in 2018. Between the two countries, there exists an Agreement on Mutual Visits of Citizens<sup>15</sup> dating back to 2002, which regulates migration exchange and establishes the foundations for cooperation in this area. Additionally, it is important to note the Memorandum of Intentions for Cooperation between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of Turkmenistan in the social-labor area<sup>16</sup>. This document expresses the intention for interagency collaboration, including the exchange of experience in developing legislation related to labor, employment, and social protection. It also encompasses any relevant information that serves mutual interests and contributes to cooperation in this area.

A review analysis of bilateral agreements between Kazakhstan and other countries of the region is showing that strong foundations for migration cooperation have already been placed, covering the main areas, such as prevention work for unregulated migration, extended informational and interdepartmental interaction, as well as much deeper cooperation on upholding the migrants' rights, with emphasis on labor-related and social aspects.

<sup>13</sup> Uzbekistan has approved an agreement with Kazakhstan on labor migrants. *Migranews*. 02.03.2021.

[https://yekaterinburg.migranews.ru/articles/news/uzbekistan\\_utverdil\\_soglashenie\\_s\\_kazakhstanom\\_o\\_trudovykh\\_migrantakh/?sphrase\\_id=3311620](https://yekaterinburg.migranews.ru/articles/news/uzbekistan_utverdil_soglashenie_s_kazakhstanom_o_trudovykh_migrantakh/?sphrase_id=3311620)

<sup>14</sup> Agreement on strategic partnership between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018, No. 137-VI ZRK // <http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z1800000137>

<sup>15</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of Turkmenistan on mutual trips of citizens. Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002, No. 283 <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z020000283>

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum of intent for cooperation between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of Turkmenistan in the social and labor areas, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/enbek/documents/details/245463?lang=ru>

#### 4. Protection of the migrants' rights in Kazakhstan.

The Republic of Kazakhstan in its migration policy adhering to the following principles: recognition of the migrants' rights and freedoms; provision of security, protection of interests; transparency of migration issues policies; attracting professional workers to Kazakhstan; development of friendly relations with other countries; assistance to Kazakhs that are living abroad.

Any immigrant who has arrived on the territory of Kazakhstan has rights that are regulated by the Law on the legal status of foreigners<sup>17</sup> and by the Law "On Migration of Population" of the Republic of Kazakhstan<sup>18</sup>. The law provides free movement and choice of place of residence within the country, medical assistance, and education for the migrants. In Kazakhstan one can obtain a temporary or permanent residence permit. This may be the case if the permit is issued on the basis of an application from citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan that are related to foreigners or who are employing them. These can also be requests from educational facilities, hospitals, local executive agencies. In this case, the request for a residence permit is substantiated by the immigrants' need to receive education, treatment or start up a business.

According to legislation of Kazakhstan in the area of access to medical services (Article 88.5 of the Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan on people's health and the healthcare system), only the migrant workers with a well-regulated status are authorized to have access to free medical assistance in the event of contracting infectious diseases that are posing a danger to the public.<sup>19</sup> All migrants have access to free emergency medical assistance, regardless of their migration status. In other cases, migrant workers' access to medical services is on a paid basis.

The migrants from Kyrgyzstan are in the most advantageous position due to the functional start of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015, according to the statutory document of which, migrants from the member countries of this association are able to utilize national mode and have a certain social package, moreover, they are better informed directly, as well as able to use information provided by their compatriots. The migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan with well-regulated status and members of their families have access to the healthcare system of Kazakhstan to the same extent and under the same conditions as the citizens of Kazakhstan.

Along with this, it should be noted that the majority of migrants from Kyrgyzstan are working in Kazakhstan without making officially signed agreement in advance, and this significantly limiting their possibilities and access to medical services. In this case, one might only have access to free medical assistance in emergency cases. Thus, migrants from Kyrgyzstan quite often find themselves in the same situation as the migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Other reasons for limited access to the medical services for all migrants are financial insolvency, as well as the fear of being detained by law enforcement officials while going to the hospital.

Migrants have limited access to medical assistance/care, and there is also a problem of health deterioration of working migrants. This is related to the deterioration of living and working conditions,<sup>20</sup> in which the labor migrants are more likely to become victims of work-related accidents, contract infectious

<sup>17</sup> On the legal status of foreigners. Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995, No. 2337. <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U950002337>

<sup>18</sup> Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, No. 477-IV "On population migration" (with amendments and additions as of 01.01.2024).

<sup>19</sup> Labor migrants in Kazakhstan: without status and rights. September. 2016 [Access mode: [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/note\\_kazakhstan\\_681r\\_6\\_sept\\_2016\\_ru\\_web.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/note_kazakhstan_681r_6_sept_2016_ru_web.pdf)]

<sup>20</sup> Monitoring of migrants' access to decent and effective employment. Report. Astana. 2018 [Access mode: <https://redcrescent.kz/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Doklad-po-dostupu-migrantov-k-dostojnomu-effektivnomu-trudoustrojstvu-Krasnyj-Polumesyats-RK.pdf>]



diseases and suffer from them, the types of sicknesses that will be manifested after a certain period of time, when it gets more challenging to render them an assistance.

Thus, migrants' access to healthcare and education areas in Kazakhstan is complicated by a whole series of factors of a social-and-cultural nature, including language knowledge, as well as the factors that are related to their psychological wellbeing. The main structures that render assistance in tough situations are representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the migrants' communities themselves.

It is necessary to pay special attention to countering trafficking of human beings in Kazakhstan. The Government has already developed a relevant law draft, which contains articles strengthening the rights of human trafficking victims, that incorporate risk assessment of this type of crimes, as well as defining the role of non-governmental organizations.

## 5. Migrants' remittances.

Remittances from working migrants are an important indicator of migration processes for countries of destination and departure. For Kazakhstan both aspects are important, but according to the statistics and secondary sources, Kazakhstan is a net sender of Remittances (personal transfers) in relation to other countries. According to the People's Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan over the year 2021, transfers from private individuals from the Republic of Kazakhstan abroad amounted to about USD 1,443,540 Transfers from abroad towards private individuals of the Republic of Kazakhstan amounted to USD 306,280,000. The largest amounts of such transfers occur in relation to the Russian Federation USD 538,330,000, Uzbekistan: USD 214,310,000, Kyrgyzstan: USD 167,010,000, Turkey: USD 245,740,000 and China: USD 36,400,000 million.

In total, over the year of 2021, the amount of remittances sent from the Republic of Kazakhstan through various systems exceeded KZT 1 trillion, while the amount of money received from abroad amounted to KZT 283.5 billion<sup>21</sup>.

A unique feature of remittances in the year 2022 was decrease in volume of transfers from the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation; for the first time ever, it turned out to be lower than from the Russian Federation to the Republic of Kazakhstan. Thus, in the year 2022, Kazakhstan received USD 775.500,000 from Russia, and sent USD 425,600,00 over there.<sup>22</sup> This was an unusual situation for Kazakhstan, which took place due to geopolitical and geo-economic realities, because of which the sanctions against Russia were introduced. Over ten months of 2023 (from January to October), the amount of money received from abroad reached KZT 575.2 billion<sup>23</sup>.

For comparison, one might note that in the years 2019, 2020 and 2021, the amounts of remittances sent from Kazakhstan to Russia exceeded the received transfers by 61%, 189% and 235%, respectively<sup>24</sup>. Changes in such data are conditioned to the mass migration of Russian citizens to Kazakhstan and the withdrawal of funds from the Russian Federation in connection with the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the announced draft in the Russian Federation.

<sup>21</sup> Kazbaev A. Billions of dollars are being withdrawn from the Republic of Kazakhstan not only by oligarchs, but also by ordinary citizens. *inbusiness.kz* 09.02.2022 <https://inbusiness.kz/ru/news/milliardy-dollarov-iz-rk-vyvodyat-ne-tolko-oligarhi-no-i-prostye-grazhdane>

<sup>22</sup> Kulmukhamedova A. Kazakhstan again sends more remittances to the Russian Federation than it receives from there. *Kursiv* Newspaper No. 35; 22.09.2023 <https://kz.kursiv.media/2023-09-22/print1003-klmh-transfer/>

<sup>23</sup> A record volume of remittances was sent from abroad to Kazakhstan. *nur.kz*. 14.12.2022 <https://www.nur.kz/nurfin/economy/2001540-rekordnyy-obem-denezhnyh-perevodov-byl-otpravlen-iz-za-rubezha-y-kazahstan/>

<sup>24</sup> Kulmukhamedova A. Kazakhstan again sends more remittances to the Russian Federation than it receives from there. *Kursiv* Newspaper No. 35 22.09.2023 <https://kz.kursiv.media/2023-09-22/print1003-klmh-transfer/>

According to experts' opinion, this is connected with presence of about 30,000 to 80,000 relocated persons from Russia on a permanent basis in Kazakhstan. There are also cases where Russian companies have transferred a part of their staff to Uzbekistan and are likely making corporate remittances that look like transfers between private individuals. In addition, not everyone has moved with their families. Some moved alone, but their families are remaining in Russia, others were transferred to Uzbekistan. There are also cases in which families from Russia are separated (temporarily living in Kazakhstan, while a Russian company is transferred to Uzbekistan).

Due to the sanctions introduced against Russia, functionality of a number of money transfer systems has been suspended. Despite this, there are several ways of remittances from Kazakhstan to Russia, including such money transfer systems as "Zolotaya Korona", "CONTACT", "Western Union", "MONEYGRAM", or through bank branches or the banks' mobile applications.

Remittances from Kazakhstan indicate growth dynamics and reflect changes associated with modern geopolitical and geo-economic trends.

## **6. International and non-governmental organizations.**

International cooperation of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the CIS and non-former USSR countries is determined by interaction at bilateral and multilateral levels. External migration policy is determined by bilateral agreements with the countries of Central Asia, the Russian Federation, as well as by multilateral agreements with member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Almaty Process, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as well as with other international organizations.

The foundations for sustainable migration cooperation at international and regional levels have been placed within activities' framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) since the time when Central Asian region countries gained their independence. Legislative legal texts related to migration management have been developed and are in operation<sup>25</sup>. At the CIS level, the most relevant issues to be settled are the issues of forced migration and status regimentation of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as optimization of the legal regulation of labor migration and combating unregulated migration.

One of the latest agreements ratified by Kazakhstan is the Agreement on Cooperation in area of the member states population's employment promotion of the Commonwealth of Independent States dated by the year 2022.<sup>26</sup> The CIS, as an international platform in context of migration cooperation, has a significance from the point of view of participants' extensive geography, countries' experience in development of and migration processes management, with consideration of historical, social-and-cultural, economic, legal and political aspects.

### *Experience of the Eurasian Economic Union in area of labor migration regulation.*

One of the successful practices, from the standpoint of migration processes management in area of labor and social protection, can be considered the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), activities of which started in January of 2015 in accordance with the Treaty signed as of May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014.<sup>27</sup> The Union is an international

<sup>25</sup> Cooperation in the area of migration. Internet portal of the CIS. <https://e-cis.info/cooperation/3127/77661/>

<sup>26</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the approval of the Agreement on cooperation in the area of promoting employment of the population of member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, completed in the city of Minsk on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, dated by May 06<sup>th</sup>, 2022.  
<https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/enbek/documents/details/302805?lang=ru>

<sup>27</sup> Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (Astana, May 29, 2014). Consolidated version.

organization for regional economic integration that has an international legal standing. According to Section 26 of the Treaty (Articles 96-98), in context of the Union, favorable conditions have been created for the migrants' labor activity and for possibilities of movement within a single economic space.

The treaty specifically highlighted the migrant workers' rights and obligations. Migrants and members of their families are provided with social insurance, opportunity to receive medical assistance, the right to education, and to join trade unions as well to have access to information.

## 7. Asylum.

In accordance with the Roadmap for implementation of Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 No. 622 "On measures for further improvement of the public administration system of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (hereinafter referred to as the Roadmap), starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, refugee related issues and provision of work activity permits for migrant workers are transferred to jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population<sup>28</sup>. This measure was taken in order to increase efficiency of the migration policy implementation.

Currently, Kazakhstan is providing the refugees with temporary stay only for the duration of one year, with possibility of further extension. The experience of other participating states of the 1951 UN Convention concerning the refugees' status shows that providing a longer period of time is creating more opportunities. Provision of the status for only one year makes it challenging for the refugees to access many of the rights guaranteed to them by both international and national legislation. It is quite hard for refugees to get an official job due to their lack of a permanent status; they are not entitled to benefits (related to disability, loss of sole family provider, unemployment, etc.) that are provided for citizens of Kazakhstan only.

As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, there are 979 refugees in Kazakhstan from the following countries: Afghanistan (485), Ukraine (411), as well as from other countries and 8,266 stateless persons, including 7,397 stateless persons registered by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and 869 persons with undetermined citizenship registered by the UNHCR<sup>29</sup>. Refugees' flows to Kazakhstan are not as numerous, since the country does not border Afghanistan, Ukraine, or other major countries, from which the refugees flee.

### *Refugees' protection.*

Majority of refugees have been living in Kazakhstan over several decades, with continuous renewal of their status. There are no serious issues with the adaptation of refugees in the country; they speak the local language, they are trying to quickly integrate, and have family ties and communications with citizens of the host country. However, without permanent resident status they do not have access to most of social-and-economic rights, including naturalization.

Kazakhstan is one of participating states to both the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967. By confirming its commitment to the requirements of the UN Refugee Convention, at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, Kazakhstan has assumed an obligation to provide refugees with travel documents according to standard International Civil Aviation Organization (ICA) Convention that are readable by computing devices<sup>30</sup>.

UNHCR is working with the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on strengthening of asylum provision procedures and creation of effective referral mechanism from the border crossing to the authorized

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<http://pravo.eaeunion.org/SESSION/PILOT/main.htm>

<sup>28</sup> On measures for further improvement of the public administration system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated by September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, No. 318. Information and legal system of regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U2300000318>

<sup>29</sup> Information provided by the UNHCR office in Kazakhstan.

<sup>30</sup> UNHCR in Kazakhstan. Informational bulletin.

agencies so that the asylum seekers can safely enter the country and would be able to exercise their rights to asylum access.

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention and other international treaties have defined the rights of such persons on access to territory, fair and effective recognition of refugee status, education, social protection, healthcare, employment, and local integration<sup>31</sup>. Such mechanisms will help refugees to recover, to start a new life, the refugees will be able to find a job, pay taxes, etc. A key factor for refugees' self-sufficiency is access to education. Although the refugees in Kazakhstan have access to primary and secondary education, but when it comes to higher education or vocational training, they are often treated as foreigners.

### *Solving the problem of statelessness.*

Without having a legal status, stateless persons often have difficulty accessing basic rights and services such as education, health care, employment, and freedom of movement. Alongside with the partners, UNHCR is rendering support to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in identification and documenting persons with undetermined citizenship and prevention of cases of statelessness.

UNHCR is instrumental to the further harmonization of the national laws on citizenship and statelessness with international standards and is advocating for Kazakhstan's joining to the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions on Statelessness.

Since the launch of the #IBelong global campaign on tackling the issue of statelessness in the year 2014, Kazakhstan has introduced procedures for identification of statelessness, introduced legislation amendments to ensure that all children are registered at the time of birth and are issued birth certificates, regardless of the legal status of their parents and provided citizenship to about 13,000 stateless persons.<sup>32</sup>

The Government of Kazakhstan is promoting the work of UNHCR as well as cooperation with civil society, including the Kazakhstan's International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, the Red Crescent Society of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Legal Center for Women's Initiatives entitled "Sana Sezim". This approach is directed at comprehensive resolution of the refugees and statelessness issues.

## **8. Migration and conflicts.**

While analyzing the situation related to migration and conflicts and their impact on Kazakhstan, the main focus of attention should be directed on Afghanistan as well as the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

The situation concerning Afghanistan and building up of relations with the new Government, the "Taliban" regime as of today showing that there are no substantial threats to security for Kazakhstan. The authorities of Kazakhstan have decided to exclude the "Taliban" from the list of banned organizations. The decision is justified by the fact that the UN Security Council does not recognize this movement as a terrorist movement<sup>33</sup>. Expressed earlier concerns and predictions about the influx of refugees and other migration related risks and challenges in connection with Afghanistan have not turned out to be true. Moreover, the countries do not share common borders, and the legislation regarding acceptance of refugees is quite strict and, according to experts, there are no serious reasons for concern as of today. Kazakhstan is actively

<sup>31</sup>How many Ukrainians asked for asylum in Kazakhstan. forbes.kz .15.08.2022

[https://forbes.kz/stats/v\\_2022\\_godu\\_esche\\_ni\\_odin\\_chelovek\\_ne\\_poluchil\\_v\\_kazahstane\\_status\\_bejentsa](https://forbes.kz/stats/v_2022_godu_esche_ni_odin_chelovek_ne_poluchil_v_kazahstane_status_bejentsa)

<sup>32</sup> How many Ukrainians asked for asylum in Kazakhstan. forbes.kz .15.08.2022

[https://forbes.kz/stats/v\\_2022\\_godu\\_esche\\_ni\\_odin\\_chelovek\\_ne\\_poluchil\\_v\\_kazahstane\\_status\\_bejentsa](https://forbes.kz/stats/v_2022_godu_esche_ni_odin_chelovek_ne_poluchil_v_kazahstane_status_bejentsa)

<sup>33</sup> Kazakhstan removes the Taliban from the list of banned organizations. Nur.kz 29.12.2023,

<https://www.nur.kz/politics/universe/2053249-kazahstan-isklyuchaet-taliban-iz-spiska-zapreshennyh-organizatsiy/>

providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan and rendering education to Afghan university students at higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is providing a more compelling grounds for a thorough assessment of security risks.

The official position of Kazakhstan is in non-recognition of the territories of the Kherson, Luhansk, Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions as belonging to Russia, the Decree on their annexation to the Russian Federation was signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. At the same time, Kazakhstan holding on to a multi-vector foreign policy and has equally friendly relations with both Russia and Ukraine.

Influx of relocated persons from Russia, starting from the year 2022, that were directed to Kazakhstan and further because of announcement of the draft, do not pose a direct threat to the security of Kazakhstan. However, they contribute to creation of a number of social-and-economic challenges and are having a certain burden on the labor market in Kazakhstan. The next aspect is the constant risk of involvement of citizens of Kazakhstan in armed conflict between the two countries.

In April of 2023, information was published that the National Security Committee (NSC) of the Republic of Kazakhstan was investigating ten criminal cases regarding participation of citizens of Kazakhstan in armed activities on the territory of Ukraine<sup>34</sup>. The so-called “mercenaryism” in Kazakhstan is criminally punishable. Specific data about the said citizens and their actions were not announced. The participants of the military activities were charged with committing crimes under Article 170.3 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Participation as a mercenary in an armed conflict, military activities and other violent actions aimed at overthrowing and undermining the constitutional order, or on violating the territorial integrity of the state.” Cases of incrimination charges verdicts are periodically covered in the media<sup>35</sup> and, as one of the motives for committing this crime, the desire to make money for participation in armed activities is seen. Participation in military activities might be associated with obtaining of the Russian Federation’s citizenship. In middle of May 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin amended the Resolution allowing foreign nationals who have signed contracts for military service with the Russian Armed Forces to obtain Russian citizenship in a simplified manner. In order to obtain that citizenship, a foreign national who is participating in a special military operation only needs to sign a contract for a year. Previously, in order to obtain the Russian citizenship, foreigners were required to make an agreement for military service for at least five years<sup>36</sup>. At this stage, it is not clear precisely which motives will prevail in such cases, but it is already evident that as the conflict drags on for a longer period of time, there will be a number of cases of Kazakhstan’s citizens involvement in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

## 9. Prospects of migration processes development.

The prospects of migration situation development in Kazakhstan:

- the migration situation in Kazakhstan will depend on development of the social-and-economic and political situation throughout the entirety of the CIS, in particular, on the situation in Russia and in Central Asia;
- labor migration to Kazakhstan from other Central Asian countries will maintain its numbers and at certain moments will tend to increase depending on the needs of the national labor market and on the demographic

<sup>34</sup> Shashkina A. The KNB is investigating ten criminal cases against Kazakhstan citizens who participated in the ... in Ukraine. *Kursiv. Media*. 15.04.2023 <https://kz.kursiv.media/2023-04-15/Insh-knb-ukraine/>

<sup>35</sup> In Kazakhstan, a Wagner fighter was given a prison sentence for participating in armed conflicts. RBC. 29.11.2023 <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/29/11/2023/6566ee409a79475451e2fffc?>

<sup>36</sup> For the first time in the Novosibirsk region, a citizen of Kazakhstan received a Russian passport, by participating in the .... *Kommersant*. 21.11.2023. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6350541>

capacity of other Central Asian countries, educational migration and feminization of migration will only increase;

- the migration of ethnic Kazakhs the “Kandas”, that are willing to come for permanent residence in Kazakhstan, will decrease.
- In the mid- term perspective, there will be a slight outflow of the young working-age population, including the educated population, from Kazakhstan for study and employment abroad. This trend is a reflection of global trends and does not pose a threat to the demographic security of Kazakhstan.

*Main sources:*

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2. Law “On Migration of Population” dated by July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 // <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z1100000477>
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## **Modern migration processes and trends of their development in the Kyrgyz Republic.**

*Zlobina Tatiana. TSPC AUCA.*

### **1. Brief migration profile of the Kyrgyz Republic.**

The total population of Kyrgyzstan as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, was 7,037,000 people. Kyrgyzstan ranks 96<sup>th</sup> place in the list of countries by the number of populations. The Population Registration Department under the Ministry of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic registered 145,977 forms indicating childbirth in the year 2023. The number of births in the country has been decreasing since 2019, back then 174,484 babies were born, in the year 2020 it was 158,112 babies born, in the year 2021 it was 150,164 babies, and in the year 2022 it was 150,225 babies born. As of this day, the declining trend in the birthrate in the Kyrgyz Republic is sustainable, and the country's birthrate will remain to be the lowest in the region. However, it should be noted that, compared to the year 2021, over the time period of 2022 to 2023, mortality rate in the country fell sharply with 38,875 people; 31,401 people and 31,500 people respectively.

According to the data at the beginning of the year 2023, ethnic Kyrgyz make up the majority of the population (77.7%). Other ethnic groups living in the country are Uzbeks (14.1%), Russians (3.9%), Dungans (1%), Uighurs (0.90%), Tajiks (0.89%) and others.

The total number of people that left the country in the year 2020 was 5,822 people, in 2021 it was 8,998 people, and in 2022 it was 6,527 people. That also included those who left for the CIS countries in the year 2020: 5,649 people, in 2021 it was 8,583 people, in 2022 it was 6,193 people. Based on the available statistical data, it can be noted that rates of departures for the Russian Federation in the year 2022 (4,573 people) decreased significantly compared to the year 2021 (6,066 people). Departures for Kazakhstan (nowadays, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan are the two main destination countries for the labor migrants from the Kyrgyz Republic), which amounted to 2,392 people in the year 2021, and 1,422 people in 2022.

The number of individuals arriving in the country in the year 2021 was 8229 people, and according to data for the year 2022 it was 12,444. Amongst these arriving people in the CIS countries lived the following number of people: in 2021 it was 7,526 people, and in 2022 it was 11,450 people. Amongst them, the following number arrived from the Russian Federation to the Kyrgyz Republic: in the year 2021 it was 6,006 people, and in 2022 it was 9,124 people, 468 people arrived from Kazakhstan in the year 2021, and 833 arrived in the year 2022.

Thus, the population growth due to external migration for the year 2022 amounted to 5,917 people, replacing the constant trend of previous years towards the population's outflux.<sup>37</sup>

According to the latest population census conducted by the National Statistical Committee (hereinafter - NSC) of the Kyrgyz Republic in March of 2022, and publication of its results under the section "Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic' population", presented by the NSC KR, at location of their permanent residence during the census out of the total number of population 1,094,500 people were temporarily absent. Out of these, 964,600 people, or 88,1%, were not at home due to being at work, 77,400 people, or 7.1% for family related issues, and 41,400 people, or 3,8% were gone in connection with their studies and yet 11,100 people, or 1.0% were absent due to other reasons.

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<sup>37</sup> National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Population.  
<https://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/4/>

It was noted that at the time of conducting the census the amount permanently residing population of Kyrgyzstan was 6,936,200 people (as of March of 2022). Out of this number, 3,936,000 people were of able-bodied age (men 16 - 62 years of age and women 16 - 57 years of age).

This means that the number of migrant workers amounted to about 16% of the overall permanently residing population of the country and 28% of the able-bodied population. Out of the total number of temporarily absent individuals, 876,900 people, or 80%, went outside the country, and 217,600 people, or 20%, have migrated within the country's borders. The main bulk of those outside the country is 872,900 people, or 99.5%, went to the CIS countries, and 4,000 people, or 0.5% went to countries outside the CIS countries.

The main countries of destination for the temporarily absent people are Russia (870,300 people), Kazakhstan (2,200 people), and Turkey (1,800 people).

The largest number of temporarily absent people was observed in Batken, Jalal-Abad and Talas provinces (more than 20% of the total number, 40% or more of the able-bodied population).<sup>38</sup> Urbanization processes are actively taking place in Kyrgyzstan. There are not many new jobs openings in the sector of agriculture, however even in bigger cities it is not that easy for younger people, who often do not have a profession and find themselves in a strange social environment, to find a job. However, unlike the situation in Russia, the rural population of Kyrgyzstan continues to make up the main bulk of the country's population. The rare opportunities of the labor market in the Kyrgyz Republic are creating influx of external migration (for permanent place of residence and the labor migration), mainly to be directed towards Russia.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. State policies and programs in the area of migration.

In accordance with Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated by May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, No. 114 "On the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic" and the Provision on the *Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic* (MLSOM KR), The MLSOM KR is a state executive agency that is conducting the functions of development and implementation of state policy in the area of migration. *Other authorized state agencies* in the area of migration policy implementation are authorized state agencies for population registration, protection, and defense of the state border, on implementation of foreign policy, police agencies and national security agencies.<sup>40</sup>

In December of 2020, there was created the *Council on Migration, Compatriots and Foreign Diasporas under the Toroga (Chairperson)* of the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament). This Council included members of the Kyrgyz Republic's Parliament, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, and chiefs of government agencies. The Council was created in order to strengthen ties between compatriots and the Jogorku Kenesh as well as with other government

<sup>38</sup> National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Census of population and housing stock of the Kyrgyz Republic. "Migration of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic".

<https://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/a5bb2b71-d819-4780-9067-81cb00f93663.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Population of Kyrgyzstan.

[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5\\_%D0%9A%D1%8B%D1%80%D0%B3%D1%8B%D0%B7%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0#:~:text=%D0%9F%D0%BE%20%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%BC%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BE%202023,0%2C89%20%25\)%%20%D0%B8%20%D0%B4%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B3%D0%B8%D0%B5.](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%9A%D1%8B%D1%80%D0%B3%D1%8B%D0%B7%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0#:~:text=%D0%9F%D0%BE%20%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%BC%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BE%202023,0%2C89%20%25)%%20%D0%B8%20%D0%B4%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B3%D0%B8%D0%B5.)

<sup>40</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated by July 17th, 2000, No. 61 "On external migration"

<https://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/1792/edition/1264753/ru>



agencies and is intended to become a platform for initiatives' discussion with international partners and civil society. The Council also plays a significant role of coordination for the government agencies that are implementing the migration policy of the Kyrgyz Republic and participating in organization of civil servants training and their capacity building.

*Concept Document of the Kyrgyz Republic's migration policy for the years 2020-2030.* In the year 2021, by the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 191, the Concept Document of Migration Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the years 2021-2030 was approved, containing the goals and objectives of the migration policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. In the year 2022, the Action Plan until the year 2025 for its implementation was approved, which sets out the tasks and measures to their achievement, including mechanisms for gender equality provision, the integration of foreign migrants and reintegration of the returning migrants.

In April of 2022, by Resolution No. 227, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted the *Program and Action Plan for combating trafficking of human beings for the years 2022-2025.*

Kyrgyzstan adopted the *Human Rights Action Plan for the years 2019-2021 and the Interdepartmental Action Plan for the years 2019-2022* in order to implement the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination as program documents that detail measures for combating hate crimes, violence, xenophobia, and discrimination against migrants.

In November of 2018, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic has approved the *National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period of 2018-2040.* Migration issues are also reflected in this document, mainly in terms of labor market regulation (including retirement plans and other types of social security), professional training and retraining of younger generation, and job creation within Kyrgyzstan to boost motivation of the younger people to stay in the country. Integration into the EAEU is a priority in terms of setting labor competitiveness standards.

*The National security concept document of the Kyrgyz Republic* was approved by Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated by December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, No. 570. Migration in this context is viewed mainly through the national security lens.

The *State Concept document for development of smaller towns and urban settlement of the Kyrgyz Republic*, approved by Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001, No. 843, is mentioning internal migration in the context of rural and urban poverty, as well as population's movement in search of income, and in it the emphasis is made to the need of measures' development for solution of existing problems related to internal migration. Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the foundations of the state policy for supporting compatriots living abroad" dated August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, No. 183, and its related legislation. The law establishes the principles and goals of the state policy of the Kyrgyz Republic for supporting compatriots living abroad and the main directions of public authorities' activities the Kyrgyz Republic for its implementation.

Supporting legislation:

Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic concerning creation of the Council for relations with compatriots living abroad under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on the *Council for relations with compatriots living abroad under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic* and Appendix 2 to the Decree: *Regulations on the Council for relations with compatriots living abroad under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.*

The subjects of these three documents are Kyrgyz migrants, the compatriots that are working abroad. The Presidential Decree states that it is necessary to develop appropriate financial mechanisms and infrastructure to attract investments from our compatriots working in advantageous areas of production and to introduce the best practices in this area.

Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated by January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, No. 4 “*On taking of measures that are aimed at improvement of the migration situation*” (2021); contains recommendations for resolution of legal, economic, social, and domestic problems that are faced by Kyrgyz migrants abroad and by the returning migrants.

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the *President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Nurgozhoevich Japarov* addressed all Kyrgyz migrant workers in connection with International Migrants Day. He stated that “considerable progress has been achieved in redirecting the migration capacity of citizens in the interests of the country, ensuring protection of compatriots’ rights residing in host countries, as well as of immigrants and stateless persons. Gradually, the stream of labor migration will be diversified and provided with favorable economic conditions, as well as with legal and social guarantees.”<sup>41</sup>

### 3. Intergovernmental cooperation.

Kyrgyzstan is actively developing intergovernmental cooperation in the area of effective management of migration processes, both with countries of departure of the Central Asian region, by studying their best practices, and with a number of countries of destination of Kyrgyz migrant workers, and it also has membership in a number of globalization associations focusing on migration.

In this regard, first of all, it is necessary to note the membership of the Kyrgyz Republic in the *Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)* since the year 2015 (joining of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Protocol on the EAEU). Because of this membership, the migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan have the opportunity to freely move between the labor markets of the EAEU member countries, to have employment in the labor markets of all member countries of this association for globalization (Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan). The Kyrgyz migrants’ labor rights are similar to the rights of national workers in the Union’s countries of destination.

Kyrgyzstan is actively *cooperating in the migration area with the CIS member states*, including within the framework of the *CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (IPA)*. During last year, the *Council of managers of migration agencies of the CIS member states*, in light of modern geopolitical realities and guided by the *Economic Development Strategy of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period until 2030*, has decided to draw up a new *Concept document of the common migration space of the CIS states* on the basis of the current one, which is active since the year 2012.<sup>42</sup> In order to implement priorities in the area of labor migration regulation and free movement of labor across the territories of the CIS member states, the “*Strategy for Economic Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period until 2030*” was adopted in the year 2020.

*The Council on Migration, Compatriots and Foreign Diasporas under the Toraga (Chairperson) of the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic* also plays a significant role in establishing of intergovernmental contacts and expanding such cooperation.

The Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, through different mechanisms of interstate cooperation, is making significant efforts to expand the geographic scope of potential employment of Kyrgyz migrant workers.

*Turkey has extended the visa-free regime for the citizens of Kyrgyzstan up to six months* so that they can legalize themselves in the country; previously, the visa-free regime for citizens of

<sup>41</sup> Sadyr Japarov addressed the Kyrgyz migrants.

[https://24.kg/vlast/282455\\_sadyir\\_japarov\\_obratilsya\\_kkyrgyzstantsam-migrantam/](https://24.kg/vlast/282455_sadyir_japarov_obratilsya_kkyrgyzstantsam-migrantam/)

<sup>42</sup> Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

[https://cis.minsk.by/news/18597/o\\_sotrudnichestve\\_gosudarstv\\_%E2%80%9393\\_uchastnikov\\_sng\\_v\\_protivodejstvii\\_nezakonnoj\\_migracii](https://cis.minsk.by/news/18597/o_sotrudnichestve_gosudarstv_%E2%80%9393_uchastnikov_sng_v_protivodejstvii_nezakonnoj_migracii)

Kyrgyzstan was 90 days. Some new measures are also provided for citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who have broken the local laws. Previously, they would get to a “blacklist,” they were banned from entering the country and fined. Nowadays, before the end of the year, they will be able to leave and enter back in a simplified manner, by paying a fine.

In March 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic signed a bilateral agreement with the British company “AGRI-HR/Fruitful” in order to facilitate the employment of Kyrgyz citizens as seasonal agricultural workers in the UK under the SVW program. An agreement was also signed with the Pro-Force operator, within the framework of which the Center for Employment of Citizens Abroad at the Ministry of Labor, Social Provision and Migration (MTSOM) KR is keeping registration records of potential program participants.

In 2023, the MTSOM signed a memorandum of cooperation with the government of Sardinia Island in Italy. It is planned to deploy over there migrant workers in order to work in agricultural and hotel business.

A new contract has been made with the German company “Schmidt” to deploy citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic to Germany for work.

#### 4. Migrants’ rights protection.

The structure of the migration influx from the Central Asian region’s countries to Russia is changing. According to the EDB, the share of the Kyrgyz Republic citizens arriving to Russia dropped down from 19,9% in the year 2021 to 15,2% in the year 2023 in the overall migration structure.<sup>43</sup>

According to the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation, over the first six months of the year 2023, the total influx of Kyrgyz citizens to Russia has increased by 45% and amounted to 460,000 people, with 57% of them arriving in order to work. In addition, there is an 11% increase in citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who have received a residence permit in the Russian Federation. According to statistics from the Russian Interior Ministry, the overall number of border crossings by the Kyrgyz Republic citizens over the past year has amounted to 1,100,000 people. The supposition is that about 700,000 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic arrived for employment purposes.

*The right of the Kyrgyz Republic citizens to legal and safe labor migration.*

One of the main problems that must be resolved by migrant workers from the Kyrgyz Republic while looking for employment in the **Russian Federation** was and still is the obtaining of *registration at the place of temporary stay*. As of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a new procedure for *migration registration of foreign citizens* and stateless persons came into force in the Russian Federation. Nowadays the foreign citizens are given the right to independently notify the migration registration authorities of the Russian Federation about their arrival and the arrival of their underaged children into the place of their temporary stay in electronic form with usage of the federal state information system “*Unified portal for provision of state and municipal services*”, this however can also be done *by personal presence or via mail*. This becomes possible for those migrant workers who have a signed rental agreement; in this case, they will be able, without additional consent of the owner, to independently submit an online notification of their arrival and the arrival of their underaged children that are listed in the agreement. In practice though, the State Services portal is often experiencing malfunctions, and it takes a long time to wait for registration confirmation, therefore one might rather use the option of personal appearance in the office. But the instruction, which is defining practical application issues of this law contains a requirement to

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<sup>43</sup> Macroeconomic review of the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB, February 2024).

go through migration registration only at this portal, and in case of personal appearance, in the absence of the registration property's owner, they require to provide documents confirming valid reasons that are preventing the host party from sending a notification of arrival on their own. However, the very fact of having such an online registration option is already a progressive phenomenon, since it is solving the registration issue for a substantial number of people, allowing them to do it on their own, however, this of course, does not exclude the need for further adjustment work on this mechanism.

*The right to legal settlement of their migration status for the Kyrgyz Republic citizens.*

*The Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Russian Federation"* has also been amended. Such changes may affect the rights of some migrant workers, namely it has become possible to obtain a residence permit for making investments (their size and other conditions are not yet clear), underaged children of parents with a residence permit will be given a residence permit regardless of their place of birth, a residence permit for 6 months will be given to persons of unique professional specialties according to the list of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, full-time graduates of Russian universities with honors will be given a residence permit regardless of their work in Russia in their specialty, IT specialists working in the civil service, as well as citizens of Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine simply based on their citizenship of these countries. According to the law that came into force in 2021, the foreigners who arrived in the Russian Federation in order to work are required to undergo *fingerprint and photo registration*.

In 2022, 23,400 citizens of Kyrgyzstan received citizenship of the Russian Federation. Amongst the Central Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan ranks fourth in the number of persons who have received Russian citizenship. Already in the next year of 2023, significant changes were made to the *Federal Law "On Citizenship of the Russian Federation"*, in particular: *it is prohibited to deprive* citizens of the Russian Federation of their citizenship, however, at the same time, the Law also contains foundations for *termination of citizenship* on a number of grounds, such as upon the initiative of government agencies of the Russian Federation, including for committing of crimes, attempted crimes, preparations for committing of crime, provision of knowingly false information about oneself and for threatening of the national security. Voluntary denouncing of the Russian citizenship is allowed, however on the condition that the applicant fulfills all obligations to the state (military service, serving a prison sentence, taxes, alimony, fines, etc.) including obligations to other citizens of the Russian Federation. Without waiting for 5 years after receiving of a residence permit, but immediately after receiving this status, certain categories of applicants can be obtain the Russian citizenship: those born and permanently residing in the RSFSR and their direct descendants; parents, children and spouses of the Russian citizens that are married with having a common child; those who graduated with honors from Russian state universities, regardless of their work in major specialty; graduates of the Russian state universities, technical schools, and colleges, regardless of their academic performance, who have been officially working in their major specialty for over a year in the Russian Federation. After a year with a temporary residence permit and 5 years with permanent residence permit, all applicants who comply with a number of technical requirements and, most importantly, do not pose a threat to national security, can be granted the Russian citizenship. Persons who have made a contract for military service and combat veterans can be granted Russian citizenship bypassing the temporary and permanent residence permits.

*The right to healthcare assistance for the Kyrgyz Republic citizens who are in the migration.*

In the year 2022, Russia introduced *mandatory medical examination* for all foreign citizens, including those from the EAEU countries. The medical examination includes checking for traces

of the use of narcotics or psychedelic substances sold without a doctor's prescription, as well as infectious diseases, including those caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV infection). Starting from February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan can receive a free digital *mandatory health insurance* (MHI) policy in Moscow by applying for a digital MHI policy. A digital mandatory medical insurance policy will provide possibility to receive free medical assistance throughout the entire territory of Russia. And also, to undergo medical examinations and preventive checkups, as well as to choose medical institutions in order to receive specialized medical assistance.

Such changes and additions to the industry-oriented laws regarding to registration, legal status, and issues of Russian citizenship acceptance are affecting or able to affect the vast majority of migrant workers in the Russian Federation.

In order to obtain clarification information on all these legislative innovations, one might want to call the *hotline at the Consulate General of the Kyrgyz Republic* in Moscow or get consultation from the relevant civil society organizations.

#### *The right to retirement plans for migrant workers from the Kyrgyz Republic.*

In July of 2020, Kyrgyzstan ratified the Agreement on retirement plan provision for workers of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which provides for the transfer of social payments and earned benefits, including retirement plans for old-aged people, within the EAEU. In the year 2022, the first 14 applications were submitted from citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic to transfer their retirement savings and register such retirement plans; the practice of such retirement provision is considered to be of advanced nature and continues to be elaborated and developed.

#### *Voting rights of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who are in the process of migration.*

Citizens that are eligible to vote may register themselves and vote at diplomatic and consular missions of the Kyrgyz Republic if they reside in another country, as established by Constitutional Law No. 68 "On the Election of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and Members of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic" (adopted in the year 2011), with latest modifications in 2021).

#### *Rights of women the migrant workers.*

The National Statistical Committee does not always collect gender-disaggregated data, i.e., issues of women's migration are not always reflected in the official statistics, which does not allow to make a full overview of the dynamics of migration processes in the context of women's employment, or development of measures for protection of migrant women in the area of labor, safety, healthcare, countering economic inequality, violence, to resolve problems of joint adaptation of women and children.

"If in the short-term perspective, women's labor migration is helping to improve the well-being of the family, then in the future it can bring about some negative consequences at the country-wide scale. That is expressed in abandoned and raised children without a mother, and the damaged health of the women themselves, which will require additional recovery measures from the healthcare system. That also includes the risks of becoming human trafficking victims these days and of being left without social security in the future."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> From the speech of the Minister of Labor, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic Baatirova G.M. at the round table meeting "Feminization of migration" which was conducted by the Ministry of Labor, Social

“Migration in the country nowadays affecting the destiny of more than 3 million people, namely the are labor migrants, children, and families of labor migrants. Every fourth household in Kyrgyzstan has at least one labor migrant. The most active participants in the labor migration process are the able-bodied population aged 18 to 45 years old. One of the trends over the recent years has been participation of women in migration: in the total number of external migration women make up from 43% to 48% of the people. According to the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, starting the year 2014, the number of women participating in both external and internal migration has significantly exceeded the number of men, and according to some data, their numbers nowadays are almost as twice as that of men. And the reasons for this factor are in women’s situation in the domestic labor market of the countries exporting labor force.”<sup>45</sup>

In the UN World Migration Report 2022 it is stated: “A large number of women migrant workers who came from Central Asia are citizens of Kyrgyzstan, for instance, around 51% of Kyrgyz migrants in the Russian Federation are women.”<sup>46</sup>

The Concept document on Migration Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the years 2020-2030 addresses gender issues. Violence against women and girls in labor migration was considered particularly alarming and unacceptable. The Concept document is also talking about the necessity to “include a gender-based approach in the data collection and development process of such a methodology.”

For its part, **Kyrgyzstan** also made a number of additions and changes to its legislation, which is regulating migration management in the country and protection of the migrants’ rights in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Significant changes were introduced in the year 2020 to the *Code of the Kyrgyz Republic on Violations to the Laws of the Kyrgyz Republic “On External Labor Migration”* and “*On External Migration*”.

*The right to a regulated status for migrants in Kyrgyzstan.*

In Kyrgyzstan, a number of additions/changes were made to the *Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On External Labor Migration”* regarding the procedure for determining the annual attraction and use of foreign labor (*annual quota*) considering the needs of the national labor market. The new provisions are aimed at legalizing the labor activities of citizens of bordering neighbor states, namely the migrant workers that periodically enter the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in search for work and implementation of temporary labor activity.

In the year 2020, the Law “On Amendments to some legislative legal texts of the Kyrgyz Republic on the legal status of compatriots with foreign citizenship” has established a new visa “*Compatriots with foreign citizenship.*” This visa can be given to the people who acquired foreign citizenship, but previously had citizenship of Kyrgyzstan, as well as the people who were born in the Kirghiz SSR, or their descendants of the first and second degree. Persons that have a “*Compatriots with foreign citizenship*” visa do not need a work permit and have access to

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Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Bishkek jointly with representatives of the “Kyrgyzstan-Ural” public organization with the support of the public association “Insan- Leilek”, Caritas-France and the Solidarity Center in the Kyrgyz Republic.

<sup>45</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of chiefs of migration agencies of the CIS member states. Speech given by the member of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Sulaymanov K.K.

[http://iacis.ru/novosti/partneri/v\\_sng\\_predlozhili\\_obnovit\\_kontseptciyu\\_obshego\\_migratsionnogo\\_prostranstva](http://iacis.ru/novosti/partneri/v_sng_predlozhili_obnovit_kontseptciyu_obshego_migratsionnogo_prostranstva)

<sup>46</sup> UN World Migration Report 2022. p. 82.

healthcare, education, vocational training, and work under the same conditions as citizens of Kyrgyzstan.

In Kyrgyzstan in October of 2023, just as previously in neighboring Kazakhstan, a new regulation came into force on the procedure the foreign citizens' stay in the country. According to this regulation, “*visa run*” is now abolished, which was a practice when foreigners would cross the border out of the Kyrgyz Republic for a brief time and then would return back, thereby renewing their visa-free stay in the country. Nowadays the restrictions on the visa-free mode for foreign citizens have been introduced based on the principle of “60 days of stay over a period of 120 days” or “90 days of stay over a period of 180 days.”

The EAEU citizens might stay in Kyrgyzstan for 30 days without registration and, according to the latest changes, they are subject to the rule “90 days of stay in for a single time period of 180 days”. For citizens of Kazakhstan, these changes will come into force on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

#### *The migrants' labor rights in the Kyrgyz Republic.*

In development of the new provisions of the *Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On External Labor Migration”*, the *Code of the Kyrgyz Republic on Violations* was supplemented with an article according to which violation done by a foreign citizen or stateless person concerning the *rules for implementation of work activity in the Kyrgyz Republic* and which entails a fine. In the year 2020, Kyrgyzstan has established *criteria for recognition of foreign qualifications* for highly qualified foreign workers by amending the “Regulations on the procedure for implementation of labor activities by foreign citizens and stateless persons on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.”

Two years later, in development of what was legally determined by the qualifications of foreign workers in the Kyrgyz Republic, in February of 2022, the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission (the permanent regulatory agency of the EAEU) has approved the draft *Agreement on the mutual recognition of documents on academic degrees in the EAEU countries*.

*Activities of MTSOM KR and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the KR for protection of the rights and promotion of legitimate interests of migrant workers arriving from the KR.*

The activity of MTSOM KR is mainly aimed at assisting in legal employment, obtaining of new professional skills and knowledge, safer stay of the citizens abroad during the entire period of their work in there, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the KR, according to its mandate, is also protecting the rights and promoting the legitimate interests of our citizens located in other countries that came there for different purposes.

Thus, in 2022, about 47,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan who committed minor offenses were removed from the so-called “*blacklist*” of the Russian Federation<sup>47</sup>. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic constantly conducting such work with the Russian Federation and, as of this day, about 35,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan remain on the Russian “blacklist”, including those evicted from Russia on the basis of court's ruling.

The representative office of MTSOM KR in Russia in the year 2023 has rendered assistance to 465 labor migrants in receiving of unpaid wages. The total sum of payments amounted to RUR 31,800,000.

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<sup>47</sup> About 47,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan will be crossed out from the blacklist of the Russian Federation in 2022. <https://t.me/news24kg/21303>

In connection with the widespread implementation by the state of its services in digital format, starting from March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, there will be pilot project of provision of state consular services to citizens of Kyrgyzstan living abroad in digital format through service centers.

In Kyrgyzstan active work is being conducted by the *Center for citizens' employment abroad* (hereinafter referred to as the Center) *under the Ministry of labor, social security, and migration*. It is helping legally and safely to get a job abroad. With the help of the Center, in the year 2023, 13,319 people, including 4,400 women, were able to find employment with a guaranteed salary and social package. All citizens completed pre-departure training. More than 129,000 people received consultations on migration issues. Cooperation has been organized with 198 diaspora organizations around the world.<sup>48</sup>

The center is developing various employment opportunities for citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, thereby *diversifying the directions of labor migration streams that are coming from the Kyrgyz Republic*. Thus, the Center has informed citizens about the possibility for completion of online registration in February of 2024 for seasonal agricultural works in the UK through the website [www.migrant.kg](http://www.migrant.kg) to the Hops Labor Ltd. operator, which is making decision on hiring. More than 26,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan submitted applications for seasonal work in the UK in one day; their applications will be processed in several stages. In the UK 5,200 citizens of Kyrgyzstan are employed. The quota for the year 2023 was 8,000 people.

Similar information was also provided by the Center about the employment opportunities for our citizens in the Republic of Korea. In March of 2024, online registration was made of the people willing to go through a test under the EPS program, which is providing employment opportunities in the Republic of Korea. The EPS program envisages tests of Korean language knowledge level as well as professional skills of candidates and is also rendering assistance in search of employers and completing the necessary paperwork. In the year 2022, the Center for employment of citizens abroad under the MTSOM KR have deployed 920 Citizens of Kyrgyzstan to South Korea. Based on an intergovernmental agreement, work with South Korea has been taking place for 16 years as of yet. Over this period of time, about 5,000 people found employment. Nowadays there are 1,500 citizens of Kyrgyzstan working there.

With the Center's assistance, citizens of Kyrgyzstan can also be legally employed in *Kazakhstan, Turkey, Germany, Japan, the Persian Gulf states, in Egypt, in some European countries, all in all in 33 countries. A drop in the numbers observed concerning the people that are leaving for the Russian Federation, according to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic (based off of an interview with the Deputy Minister on February 2, 2024), as of February 2024, there were 408,000 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation*. There are 65,000 people in Kazakhstan, up to 60,000 in Turkey, 36,000 in the USA, about 10,000 in Austria, and 5,000 in Italy. In Hungary 3,000 people are studying and working, in France it is about 1,500.<sup>49</sup> *The direction of migration streams from Kyrgyzstan is constantly changing.*

Pre-departure training of the migrant workers remains to be quite important; nowadays there is an additional opportunity to take such a course in an online format, this can be done by downloading the migrant.kg mobile application. The website has a database of applicants, which

<sup>48</sup> Same location. Based on materials from the round table meeting.

<sup>49</sup> In which countries do citizens of Kyrgyzstan are predominantly work? Statistical data by the Ministry of Labor. <https://economist.kg/novosti/2024/02/02/v-kakikh-stranakh-prieimushchiestvienno-rabotaiut-kyrgyzstantsy-statistika-mintruda-2/>



allows to keep an online record of citizens of Kyrgyzstan that are willing to find a job and those already employed abroad.

*PEAs* (private employment agencies) in the Kyrgyz Republic are also offering many employment opportunities abroad. Their activities in the Kyrgyz Republic as of this writing have not been directly regulated by the relevant legislation. However, nowadays it is determined by the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On External Labor Migration”, by the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “On certain issues in the labor migration area in the Kyrgyz Republic” and by the “Regulation on the procedure for conducting of activities for employment of the Kyrgyz Republic citizens abroad”. More than 150 registered private employment agencies are doing a great deal of work on diversification of employment opportunities for our citizens abroad and in finding foreign cooperation partners. In the year 2019, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted the Resolution “On certain issues in the area of labor migration in the Kyrgyz Republic”, which is defining responsibility of private employment agencies and of the State center for employment abroad and for monitoring the compliance with migrant workers’ rights by the employers in their target countries.

## 5. Migrants’ remittances.

Around 35% as related to Kyrgyzstan’s GDP are comprised of remittances from migrants. Over the past ten years, the migrant workers have sent almost USD 23 billion to Kyrgyzstan.<sup>50</sup> According to EDB estimates, the share of remittances from private individuals in relation to Kyrgyzstan’s GDP has decreased over the years of 2022-2023.<sup>51</sup>

At the end of 2022, the volume of remittances to the country amounted to USD 3,86,500,000. From the Kyrgyz Republic to other countries USD 1,213,500,000 was transferred. The net inflow amounted to USD 1,873,000,000.<sup>52</sup>

In September of 2023 (announcement of partial draft in the Russian Federation took place), the migrants transferred USD 197,300,000 to Kyrgyzstan, which is USD 32,700,000 more than the month prior to that. This data is provided by the National Bank. The majority of remittances belong to Russia, namely USD 182,700,000. From the USA it was USD 2,900,000.

Upon the end of September, an outflow of funds was observed, namely USD 41,900,000. Over that month, the figure increased by USD 600,000. The main bulk of the money was transferred to Russia (USD 39,000,000).

In total, over the year of 2023, Kyrgyz citizens transferred USD 2,706,100,000 to the country. The money outflow amounted to USD 561,200,000. In total, the balance amounted to USD 2,144,900,000, which is more than last year in net figures by USD 271,900,000.<sup>53</sup>

Since the beginning of 2024, the National Bank has updated the methodology for collecting statistical data on international remittances from private individuals. As of today, along with traditional money transfer systems, the volume of international remittances from private individuals using the banking system mobile applications and electronic wallets is on the rise. These transactions are now included in the statistical data of international remittances between private individuals.

<sup>50</sup> Round table meeting on the topic of “Migrants. New directions for citizens of Kyrgyzstan”.

<https://economist.kg/novosti/2023/01/16/voprosy-migracii-trebujut-ekonomicheskogo-podhoda-itogi-kruglogo-stola-economist-kg/>

<sup>51</sup> News of Kazakhstan. The significance of remittances from Russia for the economy of Kyrgyzstan has dropped down over the recent years. <https://aqparat.info/news/2024/02/22/10633531-znachimost-denezhnyh-perevodov-iz-rossii.html>

<sup>52</sup> <https://24.kg/ekonomika/286734-v2023-godu-migrantyi-pereveli-vkyrgyzstan-27-milliarda/>

<sup>53</sup> National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic. Cross-border remittances from private individuals.

<https://www.nbkr.kg/index1.jsp?item=1785&lang=RUS>

In the Concept document of migration policy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the years 2020-2030 it is pointed out that as of today in the country at the Cabinet of Ministers' level no system has been developed for attracting funds from the migrants, the compatriots, and their associations for development of Kyrgyzstan. The mobilization of remittances for local programs of communities that send out the money is usually implemented by the migrants themselves. The Concept document sets the task of development and implementation of programs for attracting of remittances from the migrants for development of small and medium-sized businesses, for rendering assistance to the migrants in turning their remittances into savings and a source of income in the future. Here it would be important to have an analysis of such experience as the use of "*Meken cards*," with the help of which the migrants could stay in Kyrgyzstan for investment in various national projects through remittances or savings; as of this day there are about 60 compatriots that received this status. A request for "*digital nomad*" status can be filed in by citizens of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, etc. Already 670 people have this status.

## **6. Migration and conflicts.**

Over the span of past two years, the formation of new migration trends in the Kyrgyz Republic has been greatly influenced by rapidly changing geopolitical realities, such as the *Taliban's takeover of power in Afghanistan*, which resulted in a large-scale outflow of refugees from the country, *the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine*, and *the Kyrgyz-Tajik border conflicts*.

Over the past two years, such *conflicts at the border* took place repeatedly because of not only yet unfinished delimitation of disputed sections of the border, although much of the work has already been done on many sections of the border (the total length of the border is 972 km, out of which 889,45 km have been demarked), but conflicts are also happening because of territorial disputes between the two neighboring countries. This has led to a surge in both internal migration in the country to other regions that are not bordering the Republic of Tajikistan, and to departure of the Kyrgyz Republic citizens from near the border areas for labor migration, and in general, to a significant depopulation of the near the border territories. Such a trend poses a threat to the national security of the Kyrgyz Republic, with consideration of the yet unfinished delimitation process of the borders and territorial claims.

Despite of the fact that Kyrgyzstan has no direct border with Afghanistan and it is evident that the main burden of receiving the refugees is taken by Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, as a country that has ratified the UN Convention relating to the status of refugees dated by 1951 and its Protocol of 1967, and which is providing the state procedures for the refugee status identification, although not to the same extent, but nonetheless still is experiencing the consequences of a mass outflow of Afghanistan refugees. Considering the fact that the number of refugees in the Kyrgyz Republic by the end of 2023 was only 138 people (from Afghanistan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Syria), at the same time the number of asylum seekers was 1,141 people. After the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), has accepted students from the American University in Kabul to continue the studies. The main migration strategy of these university students, based on interviews with them and friendly conversations, is to move mainly to the USA or Canada in order to continue their education there and to obtain permanent residence permit. As of March 2024, 345 Afghan students are studying at AUCA, this is the total of all students that study online, offline and those who took an academic leave.

The large outflow of Afghan citizens to the countries of Central Asia, in particular to the Kyrgyz Republic, and infiltration alongside with them of Taliban ideas about "social justice",

which is happening in context of strong social stratification of society, might pose a threat to the national security of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In connection with the armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as partial draft in Russia, according to various sources, due to the lack of a unified accounting methodology amongst different government agencies, whereabouts 190,000 to 760,000 people from Russia arrived in Kyrgyzstan in the year 2022. At the same time, there is no information concerning how many people came to the country with what purposes. According to the Ministry of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, the incoming Russian citizens do not possess a certain legislative status, they come as foreigners and this the term “relocated persons” came to being and is now used in relation to them. In total, over the nine months of the year 2022, according to this ministry, 190,000 people came to the Kyrgyz Republic from the Russian Federation, including for tourism purposes. At the same time, MTSOM KR is stating that since the beginning of 2022, about 760,000 relocated persons have come to the country. However, it is worth noting that the majority of relocated persons did not consider the Kyrgyz Republic as a country in which they would like to settle down; according to MTSOM information, 730,000 of them later on have left for other countries.<sup>54</sup> According to the National Statistical Committee, in January of 2024, the GDP of the Kyrgyz Republic has increased by 7.4% compared to that of January 2023 and amounted to KGS 73.2 billion. The reason is not only in a change of the accounting methodology, but also in withdrawal of many businesses from the shadow sector and, not least, due to the transfer of many enterprises from the Russian Federation to the Kyrgyz Republic, and in launching of businesses by the relocated persons that came from the Russian Federation.

*Risks for citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic.* The Kyrgyz Republic citizens that are working in the Russian Federation may under the influence of sanctions and the risk of participation in the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, change their migration plans and consider the possibility of working in another country.

The Kyrgyz Republic’s migrant workers’ intentions to accept Russian citizenship through signing a contract for participation in the armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine should be critically thought through for the long-term future, because if such a citizen will have a need to return to the Kyrgyz Republic, they will be prosecuted for voluntary participation in armed conflict abroad. Also, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic as of the end of 2023<sup>55</sup>, in places of imprisonment of the Russian Federation amongst other citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic there are 459 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic imprisoned who have not decided file an appeal the competent authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation concerning their prison term associated with imprisonment in the Kyrgyz Republic.<sup>56</sup> And in here a very realistic scenario becomes a thing to a greater extent that any of these people, in order to cut short their long sentences and, moreover, to quickly acquire the Russian citizenship as well as to make money, may make a decision to participate in the armed conflict of Russia and Ukraine. Moreover, various PMCs are recruiting the migrants. It is important to note here that all countries of Central Asia, in their national criminal legislation, have *criminalized the voluntary participation of their citizens in armed conflicts abroad*. There are already some examples of condemnation verdicts under this article for citizens who have later on returned to the Kyrgyz Republic.

## **7. International and non-profit organizations.**

<sup>54</sup> The Parliament of Kyrgyzstan expressed concerns about the influx of Russians citizens.

<https://www.rbc.ru/politics/12/10/2022/63469bb09a794774082d62d9>

<sup>55</sup> From an interview with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, Imangaziev A. K.

<https://24.kg/obschestvo/279677-tsifra-dnya1tyisyacha-167-kyrgyzstantsev-osujdenyi-zarubejom/>

<sup>56</sup> Same location.

*The EU* has revised its *2019 Strategy for Central Asia* in January of 2024. The European Union is interested in strengthening ties with the countries of Central Asia; the European Parliament named the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) as foundation for cooperation with the countries of Central Asia. At the same time, the EPCA with Kyrgyzstan, negotiations on which concluded in the year 2019, still yet to be signed, despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan, as it is stated in the resolution, “was considered to be the most democratic country in the region with active civil society and free media” over the period of time starting from 1997. This Agreement contains in itself a migration component.

*IOM* is actively cooperating with Kyrgyzstan, by supporting over this period of time completion of more than eighty migration related projects with total worth of USD 33,000,000. Together with the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, *IOM* is monitoring ongoing shifts in the migration streams and pointing out the growing attractiveness of Kyrgyzstan for the migrant workers from nearby and distant countries. *IOM* is providing technical assistance to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic in prevention and combating trafficking of human beings, as well as in the new global challenges due to climate change. *IOM* is actively promoting the values and principles of the *Global Compact* for Safe, Orderly and Legal Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

At the beginning of 2024, an interaction plan aimed at resolution of issues in the migration area and in combating trafficking of human beings was signed between the MTSOM KR and the *OSCE Program Office in Bishkek*, Kyrgyzstan. An important part of the work plan with the *OSCE* included items on capacity and qualifications building of workers of social area on issues of provision of social services to the victims of trafficking of human beings in the context of the National Referral Mechanism.<sup>57</sup>

In September 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic and the *OSCE Program Office in Bishkek* have started conducting the first National simulation exercises to counter trafficking of human beings; and in September of 2022, the second national simulation exercise activities to counter trafficking of human beings were conducted.

A large number of *NGOs* specializing in protection of the migrant workers’ rights are actively operating in Kyrgyzstan. Amongst them, one might observe such foundations as “Resource Center for the Elderly” (RCE) (creation and promotion of a Public Councils network of at rural, regional, urban and country-wide levels, creation and organization of function of the Major Intercountry Public Council on Migration), public foundation “Insan -Leilek” (work a hotline for migrants at the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation, a crisis resolution center for migrant women at the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation, conducting of surveys on impact of the sanctions and draft on the labor migration process from the Kyrgyz Republic to the Russian Federation), as well as many other *NGOs*.

## **8. Some predictions for the migration trends development in the Kyrgyz Republic.**

In the Kyrgyz Republic, migration is an integral part or a significant section in many national development programs. At the same time, in the country there is an understanding of both the current benefits of migration, in particular in the combat against poverty levels, and its consequences in the near future due to departure and non-return of the economically active, mainly younger population with a higher degree of education. Because of limited opportunities of the labor market in the Kyrgyz Republic, the country’s leadership is taking all possible measures to create new business enterprises and job openings.

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<sup>57</sup> Signing of the Interaction Plan between MTSOM KR and OSCE. <https://www.facebook.com/OSCEBishkek/>

A major problem is an outdated version of the secondary specialized education system and the lack of instructors' staff on different specialties. And this is taking place with consideration of the fact that the majority of graduates are focused on emigrating during stage of their studies. In this regard, the program of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic for creation of 250,000 job openings and one hundred industrial enterprises seems to be extremely important and can play a fundamental role.

Alongside with that, considering the rapidly changing geopolitical setting as in the entire region of Central Asia and beyond, it is quite challenging today to make definite predictions on development of existing and the appearance of some new migration trends.

Definitely, one might say that citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, of mostly able-bodied age, will continue to go out for labor migration, and, for the most part, this will take place out of the southern labor force abundant regions. Kyrgyzstan will thus continue to remain a donor country of the migrant workers. But, at the same time, the country is increasingly positioning itself as a destination country for migrant workers, and in some cases, as a transit country. This is evidenced by the extensive legal work, the number of adopted additions and changes to regulatory legal texts in the area of the legal status regulation of the foreigners who came to the Kyrgyz Republic to work, as well as their right to work.

A positive contribution to changing of migration trends in the Kyrgyz Republic is the fact that the state is making significant efforts in search of the new labor markets and diversification of the labor migration streams direction coming from the country. There is ever increasing number of agreements is made with different countries concerning employment of the migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan. Accordingly, the stream of remittances from workers operating the Russian Federation will decrease, while it will increase, at the same time, coming from the other countries. It is safe to say that Kyrgyzstan is committed to its international obligations on implementation of ratified international legal instruments; therefore, the country will continue to develop its national migration related legislation in accordance with the international standards and best global practices available.

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## Modern migration processes and trends of their development in the Russian Federation.

Poletaev D. V.

### 1. Brief migration profile.

In the year 2022 according to migration registration data *at the place of stay*, in Russia 16,309,000 foreigners stayed during the year (number of arrivals, including repeated arrivals, during the year) amounted up to 16,309,000 people including the ones *with the purpose of work*, the amount of arrivals (including repeated arrivals, throughout the year hereinafter) is 11,807,000, for *private visit*: 2,667,000 arrivals, for *studies*: 866,000, for *business*: 192,000 arrivals, for *tourism*: 307,000 arrivals, for *other purposes*: 457,000 arrivals, and for *humanitarian purposes*: 14,000 arrivals.

In the year 2022, 2,060,000 *work licenses (patents)* were issued to foreign citizens and stateless persons, 95,000 *work permits* to foreign citizens and stateless persons, including highly qualified specialists: 32,700 and qualified specialists: 8,900.<sup>58</sup>

In the year 2022, out of the total number of registration for migration registration, (including repeated registration instances of the same foreign national) *for the purpose of work*, there were following number of registrations for citizens of Uzbekistan: 5,837,000 (49.4% of the total number of registration for migration), followed by Tajikistan: 3,528,000 (29.9%), Kyrgyzstan: 978,000 (8.3%), Kazakhstan: 163,000 (1.4%) and Turkmenistan 8,300 (0.1%). The share of migration registrations for Central Asia citizens *for the purpose of work* out of the total number of migration registrations for such purpose was 87.6%.

In the year 2022, 691,00 people have arrived in Russia from other countries either for *the permanent place residence or an extensive term of stay*.

Over 10 months of the year 2023 compared to the 10 months' data for the year of 2022, the number of work permits issued to foreign citizens (+28.9%; 80,700) and work licenses (patents) (+4.5%; 2 million) has gone up by 46.6% (317,800) the number of persons that were granted citizenship of the Russian Federation has decreased<sup>59</sup>.

The number of refugees and internally displaced persons in Russia has decreased by the middle of 2023 down to 599 people (351 internally displaced persons and 248 refugees). As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, 36,524 people had temporary asylum status (89% (32,420 people) were from Ukraine, 3.2% (1,153 people) were from Afghanistan, 0.3% and (95 people) were from Turkmenistan.<sup>60</sup>

According to 2022 data, the number of internal migrants amounted to 3,465,000 people<sup>61</sup>, which is 144,000 people (4.0%) less than was registered in the year 2021.

The main incentives for the migration influx to the Russian Federation include better economic situation within the Eurasian migration system, the aging of the Russian population<sup>62</sup>,

<sup>58</sup> Statistical information on the migration situation. Website of the IM RF. URL: <https://мвд.рф/деятельность/статистика/миграционная/35074904/>

<sup>59</sup> Analytical report on the results of the units' activities on migration issues throughout territorial agencies of Interior Ministry of Russia over the period of January - October 2023. Dated by 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2023

<https://мвд.рф/деятельность/статистика/миграционная/44633859/>

<sup>60</sup> Shcherbakova E.M. "Migration in Russia based on the results of the first half of 2023" // *Demoscope Weekly* 2023. № 1003 - 1004. URL: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2023/01003/barom01.php>

<sup>61</sup> Shcherbakova E.M. Migration in Russia, preliminary results for 2022 // *Demoscope Weekly*. 2023. № 983-984. URL: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2023/0983/barom01.php>

<sup>62</sup> Demographic forecast until the year 2035 (2020) Rosstat. 26.03.2020 URL: <https://www.gks.ru/folder/12781>

and demand for labor in the Russian Federation (including unskilled labor). The demand for low-skilled labor is evidenced by the stable long-term influx of labor migrants, mainly the ones that participate in unskilled and heavy work.

The structure of the migration flow has changed, in which predominating numbers of migrants are from Central Asia. In the area of external migration to Russia, one might observe an increase in the number of migrants from smaller towns and rural areas, a decline in the education standards and in the migrants' well-being, as well an increase of their cultural diversity (including aspects of language and religion). The share of family-oriented migration is increasing, and the number of migrant women and children of migrants, as well as the diversity of migration by age categories.

An incomplete understanding of the scale and structure of the migration influx and the place of labor migrants in the Russian economy is evident due to insufficiently elaborated migration statistics data, especially in terms of gender. Changes in the statistical methodology<sup>63</sup>, a decrease in the volume of published official data on the migration processes, including gender profiling is making it challenging for understanding.

## 2. State policy and state programs in the migration area.

Currently, strategic decisions in the migration area are made by the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation, and the management of migration processes is the responsibility of the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation (MDMI IM RF), the Federal Agency for Nationalities' Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Border Guard services under the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB).

According to the Regulations on MDMI IM RF<sup>64</sup>, the development and implementation of integration and adaptation programs are not amongst their priorities, which makes it quite challenging in management of migration processes.

This is what interviewed experts also spoke about.

*...oversight authorities are able to exercise the oversight. And migration is a huge, global-scale process in which many factors are intertwined, which are not managed on a linear basis, as the Interior Ministry is accustomed to. Nobody wants to turn their sight to this; the migration is not managed on a linear basis.*

*From experts' interviews.*

The state strategy for migration management in the Russian Federation is set out in the Concept Document of State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for the years 2019 through 2025<sup>65</sup>, which was adopted in the year 2018. The Concept Document was adjusted in 2023 due to the people's migration from the armed conflict in the South-East of Ukraine and due to the increased migration outflow of Russia's population<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> O.S. Chudinovskikh, A.V. Stepanova (2020) On the quality of federal statistical monitoring of migration processes *Demographic Survey* Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 54-82 URL: <https://demreview.hse.ru/article/view/10820>

<sup>64</sup> Order of the IM RF (2016), *On approval of the regulations on the Main Directorate for Migration of the IM RF*. Dated by April 15

URL: <https://media.mvd.ru/files/embed/795036>

<sup>65</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation (2018), *On the Concept Document of the state migration policy of the Russian Federation for the years 2019–2025* URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58986>

<sup>66</sup> On introducing of amendments to the Concept Document of state migration policy of the Russian Federation for the years 2019 – 2025, approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated by October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 No. 622 <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/49202>



The Russian Federation has the State-funded assistance program for voluntary resettlement to the Russian Federation of compatriots that are living abroad, and as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2020, 79 regions of the Russian Federation participated in this program, with latest amendments introduced in the year 2023.<sup>67</sup> This immigration program, which is supporting repatriation, is serving to attract new citizens for permanent residence who have direct or indirect historical background with Russia and the ethnic-and-cultural commonality with its people, as well as for promotion of social-and-economic development of the regions and to solve demographic issues, primarily in the territories of priority settlement initiatives (eastern depressed regions of Russia in need of labor resources)<sup>68</sup>. The program has established a principle of immigrants' territorial distribution, and it assumes a relocation decision of the migrants based on a conscious choice for the place of residence, work<sup>69</sup> and studies. The State Program over the timespan of 2006 through 2023 has assisted to about 1,140,000 people<sup>70</sup> to move to Russia<sup>71</sup>. Starting from January of 2024<sup>72</sup> the institution of repatriation has been introduced in the Russian Federation, which has changed the Program. One can be considered Repatriated person if they are willing to return to Russia from amongst the following categories: citizens who permanently reside outside of Russia as of February 24, 2022; former citizens of the Russian Federation; former citizens of the USSR; persons who have relatives in a direct ascending line who were born or permanently reside on the territory of the RSFSR, or on the territory that belonged to the Russian Empire or to the USSR, within the state border of the Russian Federation. Repatriated persons are eligible to obtain a permanent residence permit without prior acquisition of a temporary residence permit. They are also exempt from confirming their knowledge of the Russian language, just like the compatriots that are permanently residing in countries that are considered to be unfriendly to the Russian Federation. It is believed that nowadays whoever was brought up in the traditions of Russian culture and already speak Russian language are returning to Russia.<sup>73</sup>

In the fall of 2023, a new Law on Citizenship of the Russian Federation came into force<sup>74</sup>, which is modernizing the citizenship establishment in Russia and identifying the grounds, and conditions and procedure for acquiring and terminating the Russian citizenship. The previous Law

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<sup>67</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation's President dated by March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 No. 219 "On amendments to the State program to assist the voluntary resettlement for compatriots residing abroad to the Russian Federation ratified by the Decree of the Russian Federation's President dated by June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006 No. 637"  
<http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202303300023>

<sup>68</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation's President (2012) On the implementation of the State program to assist the voluntary resettlement for compatriots residing abroad to the Russian Federation dated by 14.09.2012 No. 1289. URL: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201209170003>

<sup>69</sup> State program to assist the voluntary resettlement for compatriots residing abroad. (2006). Decree of the Russian Federation's President dated by 22 of June 2006. N 637. URL: <https://rg.ru/2006/06/28/ukaz-pereselenie.html>

<sup>70</sup> Official informational package about State program to assist the voluntary resettlement for compatriots residing abroad. IM RF. 2024 <https://media.mvd.ru/files/application/4898971>

<sup>71</sup> Donets E.V., Chudinovskikh O.S. (2020) Russia's policy regarding facilitating the resettlement of compatriots in context of international experience. Population and economy. 4(3): 1–32 DOI 10.3897/popecon.4.e54911

<sup>72</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation's President dated by March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 No. 219 "On amendments to the State program to assist the voluntary resettlement for compatriots residing abroad to the Russian Federation ratified by the Decree of the Russian Federation's President dated by June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006 No. 637"  
<http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202311220023?ysclid=lpceo5iptr117017642>

<sup>73</sup> <https://regulation.gov.ru/Regulation/Npa/PublicView?npaID=138671>

<sup>74</sup> Federal Law No. 138-FZ dated by April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 "On Citizenship of the Russian Federation" entered into force on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

on Citizenship<sup>75</sup> was in effect for more than 20 years. According to the new law, citizens who acquired the Russian citizenship (i.e. those who were recognized as citizens of Russia, who were granted citizenship or received it on the basis of an international treaty, except for those who received the Russian citizenship by birth and as a result of changes in the country's state border) and who have committed crimes of terrorism or extremism (the list of such crimes included in Article 64 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation<sup>76</sup>), could be deprived of the Russian citizenship and such law enforcement practice is already in existence<sup>77</sup>. Starting from December 2023<sup>78</sup> citizens of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Moldova are eligible to apply for Russian citizenship without additional conditions, solely on the basis of their existing citizenship.

Amongst the upcoming changes, apparently, one can expect the creation of a special department for migration processes' management, which the Russian Federation President spoke about during the "direct hotline" in December of 2023<sup>79</sup>.

### 3. Intergovernmental cooperation.

The priorities of Russia's international cooperation in the migration area include interaction with the CIS countries. The interstate cooperation on a multilateral basis (within the context of CIS and the EAEU) and on a bilateral basis is mainly aimed at combating illegal migration and on regulation of the labor migration processes.

While determining the place of international treaties in the legislative system of Russia, it is necessary to mention the Federal Law of the Russian Federation dated by December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, No. 428-FZ "On introduction of amendments to some legislative texts of the Russian Federation in terms of application prevention of an interpretation that is contrary to the Constitution of the Russian Federation concerning the rules of international treaties about the Russian Federation." According to this law, in development of Article 79 of the Russian Federation's Constitution, some amendments were made to the Arbitration Procedural Code of the Russian Federation, to the Civil Procedure Code of the Russian Federation and to the Code of Administrative Proceedings of the Russian Federation, according to which the application of the rules of international treaties of the Russian Federation in their interpretation that contradicts the Constitution of the Russian Federation is not allowed. Prior to this law entering into force, the federal legislation did not directly contain such priorities of the Russian Constitution over the international treaties. Such a position has already been announced previously<sup>80</sup>, however it only has found legislative reflection at the end of 2020.

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<sup>75</sup> Federal Law dated by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002, No. 62-FZ "On Citizenship of the Russian Federation".

<sup>76</sup> For the dissemination of false information about the Armed Forces of RF and discrediting the Russian army, sabotage activities, calls for imposing of sanctions and to starting of an aggressive war, for public calls to extremism and encroachment to violation of territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, for desertion, evasion of military service and the performance of its duties and obligations under the law on foreign agents, espionage, high treason, and disclosure of the state secrets. <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/19080325>

<sup>77</sup> For the first time a Russian individual was deprived of their citizenship, for committing of a crime. RBC: 13 Dec 2023

<https://www.rbc.ru/politics/13/12/2023/65798d0c9a79472e985f19b2>

<sup>78</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation's President dated by December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, No. 962

<http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/50088>

<sup>79</sup> Putin spoke in favor of creation of a specialized agency for migrants' affairs; RBC 14 Dec 2023

<https://www.rbc.ru/society/14/12/2023/657afbe69a79472b58b7b842?from=copy>

<sup>80</sup> Resolution of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation of July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015, No. 21-P on the case of verification of the constitutionality of the provisions of Article 1 of the Federal Law "On Ratification of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Protocols thereto".

One of the latest intergovernmental agreements includes the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the stay procedure for the Russian Federation citizens on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan and for the Republic of Uzbekistan citizens on the Russian Federation's territory (which was signed in Moscow on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and in Tashkent on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021). By this Agreement, the citizens of Uzbekistan are given a grace period for migration registration at their place of residence with the authorized agencies of the Russian Federation within 15 days<sup>81</sup>. Previously, the citizens of Uzbekistan were subject to the standard of 7 days' term. The 7 days term often caused the migrants to cross the lawful framework, due to inability to locate a receiving host over such a brief period of time.

#### 4. Protection of migrants' rights.

In the Russian Federation, challenges for the migrants are mainly related to the *establishment of registration* at the place of residence, which is not of notification type, but that of control. In the area of migrants' employment, the challenges are related to finding legal work, poor labor protection policies, non-payment of wages by the employer, and non-compliance with the contract terms by the employer. In the *area of social needs and services*, one can identify difficulties in finding of housing and xenophobia of employers, with underdevelopment of the housing market in the Russian Federation. *The adaptation and integration challenges* of the migrants are related to a fear of migrants in Russia, and so far, there is no comprehensive system created for integration and assistance to the migrants.

A notable change in the international legal regulation, which is directly related to the migrant workers' rights protection in the Russian Federation, was introduced by the new Federal Law dated by February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, No. 43-FZ "On termination of international treaties of the Council of Europe in relation to the Russian Federation." In connection with termination of the Russian Federation's membership in the Council of Europe, which took place on March 16<sup>th</sup> of 2022, a number of key and fundamental international treaties that are regulating the basic human and civil rights and freedoms have lost their enforcement in relation to the Russian Federation. Amongst them are the following: "Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" (signed in Rome on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1950) and the Protocols 1 through 15. Previously, due to the Article 8 provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Russian Federation has developed a continuous practice of abolishing deportation related decisions, administrative evictions, and entry denial decisions into the Russian Federation while maintaining a balance of the interests between the national security and the family life of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation. As of this date, that mechanism is no longer functioning.

In the context of the foreign workers' rights protection, the explosive growth of so-called platform-oriented employment in Russia is a matter of concern, which is repeating the development path of labor markets in other countries that are receiving migrants<sup>82</sup>. A considerable number of labor migrants from Central Asia, namely within the platform-based employment framework, are working in the Russian Federation as taxi drivers, couriers, warehouse employees

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<sup>81</sup> Article 1 of "Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the stay procedure for the Russian Federation citizens on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan and for the Republic of Uzbekistan citizens on the Russian Federation's territory (which was made in Moscow on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and in Tashkent on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021).

<sup>82</sup> Digital labor platforms: new opportunities and new challenges. UN News. February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

<https://news.un.org/ru/story/2021/02/1397302>

or cleaning companies' employees. With such a format of work, the employees and individuals either receive or provide services for a fee through online platforms, however the workers are not making an official employment agreement and are deprived of the rights and safeguards provided by the law (social insurance, paid vacation, sick leave, remuneration for harmful working environment and the other benefits), they do not participate in decision making process regarding their work, they are not organizing trade unions or collectively defending their interests, and are the subjects of discrimination and exploitation by the customers and the platforms. Therefore, such type of employment makes the migrant workers especially vulnerable. The largest Russian IT companies, such as Yandex, Ozon, Wildberries and SberMarket that are using the platform-based employment format, are uniting for further joint development and pay extraordinarily little attention to the foreign workers' rights protection<sup>83</sup>.

In the year 2023, several significant changes were made in the legislation of the Russian Federation that are designed for simplification of the labor migrants' legalization in Russia:

- Registration at the place of residence of a labor migrant who is employed in Russia on the basis of a license (patent), nowadays could be implemented over a period of 1 year from the license's date of issue<sup>84</sup> (which is designed to eradicate the shadow services market concerning marketing of counterfeit receipts for the license's payment to the migrant workers; registration under the license (patent) will be valid throughout a year provided that the migrant is not changing their residence address);

- Simplification of the procedure for the owners of residential spaces and for the migrants that are living in those areas on the basis of residential premises' rental agreement, when a foreigner is capable to submit a notification of arrival to the authorized agency on their own<sup>85</sup> (the foreign citizen is able to submit the arrival notification on their own through the State Services Portal<sup>86</sup>, and that notification will be transmitted to the owner of the residential premises and the owner shall confirm their consent, whereas the foreign citizen will also be informed about the owner's consent through State Services and it will be sufficient for them to print out the tear-off slip of the notification, however the practical application of this norm is hard implement due to the lack of changes in the departmental Order<sup>87</sup>).

- Citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (not EAEU member states) who have arrived to the Russian Federation for purposes not related to work, in a manner that does not require a visa, are able to change the purpose of their visit to the Russian Federation without actually leaving the Russian Federation, for employment activity (previously they were obliged to leave the Russian Federation and upon re-entry identify the purpose of their visit as "work" in the migration registration card, which gave rise to a massive trespassing by the migrants of the legal framework and conducting work related activities without obtaining of a license (patent)).

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<sup>83</sup> The largest marketplaces will create their own association. RBC. 18<sup>th</sup> of Dec 2023

[https://www.rbc.ru/technology\\_and\\_media/18/12/2023/657f37099a7947f0543bac12](https://www.rbc.ru/technology_and_media/18/12/2023/657f37099a7947f0543bac12)

<sup>84</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation's Government dated by October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, No. 1756. "On amendments to the Decree of the Russian Federation's Government dated by January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 No. 9", valid starting from October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

<sup>85</sup> Federal Law dated by April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, No. 156-FZ "On Amendments to Articles 20 and 22 of the Federal Law "On Migration Registration of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Russian Federation", valid starting from October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

<sup>86</sup> Order of IM RF dated by December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, No. 856 "On approval of the Administrative regulation of IM RF for provision of public services to provide migration registration service of foreign citizens...".

<sup>87</sup> Date of source access: 02.12.2023. Order of IM RF dated by 10.12.2020 No. 856.

A common violation of the migrants' labor rights is the fact of dual taxation. If a foreign worker who has a license (patent) is officially employed, during receiving their wages they are taken away 13% of it as a personal income tax, in which case they are eligible<sup>88</sup> for this tax deductions by the amount of the monthly payment for their license (patent)<sup>89</sup>. In reality though, not all employers are implementing this procedure, and in this case, the migrant worker is making payments of a larger tax amount than they are obliged to pay under the legislation of the Russian Federation.

In the year 2023, the Federal Law introduced amendments to the Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offenses, which are improving the appointment and implementation rules for administrative penalties in the form of administrative eviction of a foreign citizen or stateless person from the Russian Federation, in case when taken in consideration their length of stay in the Russian Federation, marital status, their tax payment attitude in the Russian Federation, availability of income and housing conditions in the Russian Federation, type of occupation and profession, law-abiding behavior, their request for obtaining of the Russian Federation's citizenship. Then such administrative penalties are not applied if it is by fact an excessive right restriction for their private life and when the punishment is disproportionate to the goals of the administrative penalty<sup>90</sup>. Foreigners and stateless persons that are being evicted from the Russian Federation will be held in temporary detention centers for no more than 90 days from the date of the eviction order. Also, the Russian Code of Administrative Offenses has been supplemented with a new article<sup>91</sup>, which for the first time is set for a period of no more than 90 days of detention is established for the foreign citizens in a special institution from the date of the eviction order.

Starting from 01.01.2023, length of labor experience, which was earned in the USSR, as well as in the CIS countries, is not taken in consideration during assigning of a retirement plan in the Russian Federation, but rather bilateral agreements are made with the countries that are based on the "retirement export" principle. This means that the state will bear the costs of retirement payments in proportion to the amount of retirement rights that were acquired by an individual in the territory of each of those countries. New agreements have already been signed between Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (within the EAEU framework), as well as between Russia and Tajikistan. Negotiations are still underway with Moldova and Uzbekistan.

For the purposes of national security compliance and improvement of epidemiological situation in the Russian Federation, starting December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, provisions were applied for mandatory fingerprinting and medical examination confirming the absence of narcotic/psychotropic drugs use and the absence of infectious diseases that pose a danger to others, as well diseases caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV diseases) for the EAEU member states. Previously medical examinations and fingerprinting requirements for the temporarily residing EAEU citizens were not applied.

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<sup>88</sup> Foreign worker: how to reduce personal income tax by a fixed advance payment. September 13, 2016. <https://www.garant.ru/article/899267/>

<sup>89</sup> in Moscow and the Moscow region in 2024 it amounts to RUR 7,500. The cost of a license (patent) for foreign citizens that are working in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Consultant Plus. 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan 2024. [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_286167/b586103679f0571ef78a9bf15d8c0f8f9b74a65e/](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_286167/b586103679f0571ef78a9bf15d8c0f8f9b74a65e/)

<sup>90</sup> Amendments have been made to the Administrative Violations Code in order to clarify the rules for the appointment and execution of administrative eviction of a foreign citizen from Russia. December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023. <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/73144>

<sup>91</sup> Article 27.19.1 of the Administrative Violations Code of the Russian Federation. See Federal Law No. 649-FZ dated by December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 "On Amendments to the Administrative Violations Code of the Russian Federation". <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202312250050>

In order to improve access of the foreign citizens to free emergency and medical assistance<sup>92</sup> a departmental order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation was designed, which was in force since the year 2021 and which is designed to reduce the share of illegal refusals to render free medical assistance within the framework established by the Rules for the medical assistance provision to the foreign citizens on the territory of the Russian Federation<sup>93</sup>. There is an established practice when certain regions of the Russian Federation determine regulations for medical examination of the foreign citizens and stateless persons for confirmation of presence or absence of drug addiction, as well as of infectious diseases that pose a danger to others and are grounds for refusal to issue the documents or to render them obsolete<sup>94</sup>.

The Russian language is important for adaptation of the labor migrants from Central Asia in Russia and for protection of their rights in the Russian Federation, and so Russia is taking certain steps for supporting of the Russian language knowledge in Central Asia. Thus, Russia and Kyrgyzstan have signed an agreement on construction of Russian-language schools in Kyrgyzstan in March of 2023, during a meeting of bilateral intergovernmental cooperation commission, which was held in Bishkek. According to the agreements, the Russian Federation will build nine institutions of general education in Kyrgyzstan, namely in Bishkek, Osh and in all seven provinces of Kyrgyzstan<sup>95</sup>. For Russian-speaking classes in the secondary schools of Tajikistan, the Russian Federation has provided textbooks in Russian language.<sup>96</sup>

There is a number of legal texts of the Russian Federation that, to a different degree are related to the migrants' rights restrictions. Thus, the Government of the Russian Federation<sup>97</sup> on a yearly basis with consideration of the regional traits of the labor market and the employment priority needs for the Russian Federation citizens, is establishing allowable fraction of foreign workers that are engaged in various economy areas, and there is a similar Resolution for the year 2024<sup>98</sup>. There are also similar regional legal texts<sup>99</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> Letter of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation dated by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, No. 17-6/1/2-15861 "On observance of the rights of foreign citizens and stateless persons to healthcare and medical assistance."

<sup>93</sup> Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated by March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013, No. 186 "On approval of the medical assistance Rules to foreign citizens on the territory of the Russian Federation."

<sup>94</sup> For instance, in Moscow, dated August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, No. 827 an order was issued of the Moscow Department of Healthcare entitled as "On organization of medical certification activities for foreign citizens and stateless persons on the territory of Moscow".

<sup>95</sup> Putin and Japarov initiated a start to the construction project of three schools in Kyrgyzstan with Russian language of instruction on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/18636797>

<sup>96</sup> Starting from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, Russian speaking classes in Tajikistan will be provided with textbooks and will introduce a billing payment system. Khovar. February 2, 2024 <https://khovar.tj/rus/2024/02/s-1-sentyabrya-2024-goda-russkie-klassy-v-tadzhikistane-obespechat-uchebnikami-i-vnedryat-billingovuyu-sistemu-oplaty-za-nih/>

<sup>97</sup> In accordance with paragraph 5 of Article 18.1 of the Federal Law "On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation".

<sup>98</sup> For the year 2024: Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated by September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, No. 1511 "On establishing for the year 2024 the allowable number of foreign workers employed by industrial entities conducting certain types of economic activities on the territory of the Russian Federation"; for the year 2023: Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated by October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, No. 1751 "On establishing for the year 2023 the allowable number of foreign workers employed by industrial entities conducting certain types of economic activities on the territory of the Russian Federation".

<sup>99</sup> Management of Kurgan, Magadan, and Tula provinces in early November of 2023 in the Chelyabinsk province the ban on foreigners driving taxis and buses was extended until the year 2024. The same restriction applies in the Tyumen province (it was also extended up until the year 2024).

The change in the Law of the Russian Federation on maternity capital starting from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024<sup>100</sup> will additionally encourage foreign nationals that are planning to have children and to live in the Russian Federation's territory to decide in advance concerning their prospects on obtaining of the Russian citizenship for themselves and their upcoming child. According to these new developments the maternity capital will not be provided to the migrants' children if such children have not received Russian citizenship by birth.

Russian citizens believe<sup>101</sup>, that the labor migration is a positive phenomenon for the Russian Federation (47%), the 2023 figure is several times exceeding previous figures (2006: 21%, 2008: 14%, 2013: 14%). In the year 2023, 40% of them had the opposite idea, which is almost two times less than ten years ago (2013: 74%). In total 39% of Russian citizens believe that over the recent years relations between representatives of different ethnic groups have become more tense. Over the span of 10 years, this figure has significantly gone down by 18%; which was the opinion of 57% in the year 2013. Another 38% of respondents believe that there are no changes in the area of interethnic relations, either for the better or for worse.

According to a survey done in the fall of 2023 by the Moscow Commissioner for Human Rights, (N=900 are the migrants: citizens of Tajikistan (300), Kyrgyzstan (300) and Uzbekistan (300))<sup>102</sup>, In general, the local public in the Russian Federation in the opinion of the interviewed migrants has rather positive or neutral attitude towards the Central Asian migrants. Thus, 50% of the interviewed migrants from Tajikistan, 43% from Kyrgyzstan and 40% from Uzbekistan reported a good attitude towards them from the local public, and 36% of the interviewed migrants from Tajikistan, 40% from Kyrgyzstan and 39% from Uzbekistan reported a neutral attitude towards them.

The interviewed experts pointed out the problems in coverage of migration topics in the Mass Media.

*...Any appeal to the topic of migration gives rise to a surge of phobia of migrants, xenophobia and does not lead to anything good. One can promote it in a balanced way through the Mass Media, to invite them somewhere, and talk about positive developments. Which is not the case nowadays.*

*From experts' interviews.*

## 5. Migrants' remittances.

In the year 2021, private remittances from Russia to Central Asian countries amounted up to USD 9,943 million (77% of all transfers to the CIS countries), including to Kyrgyzstan USD 2,131 million, to Tajikistan: USD 1,800 million, to Uzbekistan USD 5,532 million, to Kazakhstan USD 480 million, Turkmenistan: USD 0.3 million.

Due to the fact that the Central Bank of the Russian Federation has stopped publishing official statistics on remittances since the year 2021, one can estimate the scale using data from the national banks of Central Asia. Thus, according to the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, remittances from the Russian Federation to Uzbekistan in the year 2022 have amounted to USD 14.5<sup>103</sup>, and

<sup>100</sup> Federal Law No. 634-FZ dated by December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 "On Amendments to Article 3 of the Federal Law "On Additional Measures of State Support for Families with Children".

<sup>101</sup> Immigrants in Russia: pros and cons. All-Russia Public opinion Research Center (VCIOM) August 14, 2023 <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/immigranty-v-rossii-za-i-protiv>

<sup>102</sup> Providing services on monitoring the labor migration from Central Asia in the territory of Moscow. Research paper. Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of Moscow, 2023.

<sup>103</sup> Remittances of individuals from Russia to Uzbekistan in the year 2022 increased up to \$14.5 billion. *Sputnik*. Uzbekistan

in the year 2023 their volume is expected to reach USD 8.8 to 9.2 billion.<sup>104</sup> Remittances from the Russian Federation to Kyrgyzstan in the year 2022 have amounted to USD 2.7 billion, i.e. that also indicates positive dynamics, however not as evident. Remittances from the Russian Federation to Kazakhstan in the year 2022 have gone up compared to the year 2021 and reached USD 0.8 billion, which was partly due to increase in emigration (both for temporary and permanent residence formats) of the Russian citizens themselves to Kazakhstan, and also by the relocation of some Russian businesses to Kazakhstan.

## 6. Migration and conflicts.

Armed conflicts in Afghanistan and in the South-East of Ukraine are affecting migration processes in the Russian Federation. Thus, the ongoing tension in Afghanistan leads to an increased number of Tajikistan citizens<sup>105</sup>, obtaining Russian citizenship. Armed conflict in the South-East of Ukraine in the years 2022-2023 has caused on the one hand the departure of at least 500,000 Russian citizens from out of Russia (the new “relocated persons” term has gotten a widespread), and on the other hand, it has led to the arrival to Russia of at least 3 million refugees from Ukraine<sup>106</sup>.

In the year 2022, there were two surges of emigration from Russia: one after February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and the other after the announcement of partial mobilization in September<sup>107</sup>. Various sources provided a wide range of information concerning the “relocated persons”, but by the fall of 2023, estimates were made of 500,000 -700,000 people.<sup>108</sup> Some of the people who left Russia during the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine have returned.

A part of the changes in the migration legislation of the Russian Federation is related to the ongoing armed conflict with Ukraine. Thus, starting from September 2023, citizens of Ukraine are able to enter and leave the Russian Federation without visas on the basis of an their domestic, foreign, diplomatic, or service passport of Ukraine, their ID card of a sailor or an aircraft crew member, even if these documents have expired<sup>109</sup>. Starting from January 2024, the foreign citizens who are undergoing the military service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation or military formations during the special military operation, and military personnel who retired from the armed forces during the same time period, as well as their spouses and children will be eligible to obtain Russian citizenship<sup>110</sup>.

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29.01.2023. <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20230129/perevody-fizlits-iz-rossii-v-uzbekistan-v-2022-godu-vyrosli-do-145-mlrd-31802413.html>

<sup>104</sup> Remittances of individuals from Russia to Uzbekistan may decline in the year 2023 - Central Bank’s forecast. *Sputnik. Uzbekistan*. 27.07.2023

<https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20230727/denejnyye-perevody-uzbekistanye-2023-god-sniieniye-sb-37296772.html>

<sup>105</sup> Migrants from Tajikistan became the first ones to obtain citizenship of Russia. *Sputnik. Tajikistan*. 06.05.2023 <https://tj.sputniknews.ru/20230506/migranty-tajikistan-grazhdanstvo-russia-1056935705.html>

<sup>106</sup> Ukraine Refugee Situation. Operational Data Portal. UNHCR <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>107</sup> Research have reported of 15% return of relocated persons back to Russia. RBK 25 Oct. 2023. <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/10/2023/6538b8739a7947719d23fd1e>

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5594533>

<sup>109</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation’s President dated by September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, No. 734 “On arrival and departure procedure to and from the Russian Federation for the citizens of Ukraine” 29.09.2023 <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202309290004>

<sup>110</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation’s President dated by January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, No. 10 “On the admission to the Russian Federation citizenship of foreign citizens who made a military service contract in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation or in military formations, and members of their families”. <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202401040001?index=2>



## 7. International and non-governmental organizations.

The international organizations in the area of migration in the Russian Federation are almost completely uninvolved in the processes of comprehensive interaction with Russian government agencies that are managing the migration processes.

The Office of the International Labor Organization (up until 2011)<sup>111</sup> and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (up until 2017) were active in the migration area conducting research programs, but as of this writing such activities are not taking place.

The Moscow Office of the United Nations International Organization for Migration (UN IOM) is mainly engaged in analytical work and conducting research in the migration area in the Russian Federation in interaction with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Its main activities in Russia include<sup>112</sup> consultancy work (mainly upon request from Russian governmental agencies) on the existing international experience in the areas of migration management, migration crises response, international cooperation, and partnerships in the migration area. A separate area of work is raising awareness concerning the Global Compact for Migration.

UNHCR is rendering direct assistance to just one group of migrants, namely refugees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Russian Federation<sup>113</sup> (operating in Moscow since the year 1992) is interacting with the Government of the Russian Federation and its authorized agencies to aid asylum seekers, refugees, and stateless persons, ensuring their protection in accordance with the international standards, as well as assistance in finding of long-term solutions. The majority of the country's office activities are implemented through the local non-governmental partners.

Over the recent years, one of the main providers of grants for the non-governmental organizations that are working in the migration area in the Russian Federation has become the Presidential Grants Foundation<sup>114</sup>, which has a dedicated branch called "Strengthening of interethnic and interreligious harmony", in the context of which the migration topics are being supported entitled as: "Social and cultural adaptation of foreign citizens and their integration into Russian society". However, the funding for this agenda is quite limited.

The Valdai International Discussion Club (The Valdai Club) and the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) remain to be the main experts' platforms in the migration area. The Valdai Club regularly publishes reports on various aspects of migration and conducts conferences that include the migration component.

## 8. Prospects and predicted estimates of the migration processes in Russia.

The prospects for labor migration to the Russian Federation, primarily from Central Asian countries, are defined by a significant shortage of labor force, which has gotten exacerbated in the years 2022-2024.<sup>115</sup> So far, there has not been observed a significant outflow of the labor migrants from the Russian Federation, however there is intensification of structural shortage of labor force in Russia. The shortage of labor force<sup>116</sup> is leading, amongst other things to ideas of replacement

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/moscow/areas-of-work/lang--ru/index.htm>

<sup>112</sup> <https://russia.iom.int/ru/nasha-rabota>

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/ru/unhcrinrus>

<sup>114</sup> <https://президентскиегранты.пф/public/contest/directions/religion>

<sup>115</sup> Akhapi N. Russian economy under sanctions restrictions: dynamics and structural changes. Bulletin of the Institute of Economics No. 6/2023. Economics and Management <https://vestnik-ieran.ru/index.php/component/jdownloads/send/19-2023-n6-articles/136-vart-2023-6-p7-25>

<sup>116</sup> The level of personnel shortage in industrial realm has set a new record. RBK August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/03/08/2023/64ca54369a7947ee430b0975>

of the understaffing by prisoners and to engage to the Russian Federation some workers from Kenya <sup>117</sup>.

In the mid-term and long-term time spans there will be continuation of the gradual migration legislation liberalization and increased flexibility in the migration processes management. This is what is evident by the legislation changes over the recent years: the adoption of the law on repatriation, permission to retain the existing citizenship while obtaining the Russian citizenship, etc.

Education driven migration from the post-Soviet countries that are migration donors to the Russian Federation will be increased and, in this flow, over time, education driven migrants in educational institutions of secondary vocational education of the Russian Federation, whose graduates have attractive employment prospects in Russia, will become more visible.

The risks of terrorist threats' growth due to mass migration to the Russian Federation (including the context of events that are taking place in Afghanistan and in Ukraine), both in the short-term and mid-term prospects are still remaining, and in the long-term prospect, with the current lack of comprehensive funding for integration measures for the migrants of all categories, the terrorism induced challenges will become even more relevant.

*In the upcoming years*, in Russia the migrants' vulnerability will be retained (the main vulnerable groups of migrants are the migrant children, women, and refugees), since a comprehensive system of the migrants' integration and adaptation has not yet been established and government funding is not that considerable.

*Within the EAEU framework*, the development of partnerships in the short-term perspective is taking on increasingly pragmatic shapes (a unified retirement system is being created, tax legislation is being integrated), and the migration flows in the Eurasian migration system are gradually returning back to pre-Covid era levels.

In the long-term perspective, the migration capacity of the Central Asian countries will still be preserved. The population in the countries of Central Asia will remain mainly of an early age, with a high proportion of the working-age population and potential for migration. In the countries of Central Asia (especially in Uzbekistan) there are some prospects for advanced economic development and of some new jobs' creation, including the ones for younger generation, therefore a part of the younger public will choose work in their homeland instead of the labor migration option, however the labor migration will still continue to take place, at least in the short-term and mid-term time frames. The already created diasporas in the Russian Federation will continue to attract new labor migrants in the environment where there is an insufficient number of jobs for the younger public from the Central Asian countries with pretty elevated wages and prospects for career growth in their countries. On the other hand, the ongoing demographic decline in the Russian Federation and the increasing labor shortage will be a strong attracting factor, which will intensify labor migration in the short-term and mid-term spans. The insufficient number of universities and vocational schools and colleges that are providing relevant education in demand among the younger generation of Central Asian countries will also influence education related migration from these countries to the Russian Federation.

Well-established migration flows to the Russian Federation will also boost up the feminization of migration both from Kyrgyzstan (which is already quite widespread) and also from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the Russian Federation. On the one hand, for the labor migrants' wives, an extensive separation from their husbands will increase the risk of family's dissolution, and they will strive to reunite with their husbands. On the other hand, for some unmarried migrant women from Central Asia, leaving for work in Russia, in addition to economic incentives might be encouraged by a broader market of potential mates from amongst compatriots that are going to work in the Russian Federation and the prospects of starting up a family during the labor migration in the Russian Federation.

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<sup>117</sup> Zhandarova I. Migrants from Africa and Asia will come for work to Russia "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" 7.01.2024 <https://rg.ru/2024/01/17/smena-kadrov.html>

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## **Migration processes in Tajikistan in 2021-2023: main trends.**

*Olimova Saodat*

The migration situation in 2021-2023 reflected the mobility model that has developed in the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) over the last 30 years, which is characterized by a low level of internal migration of the population along with large-scale external labor migration. On its background, other trends, such as educational migration, “brain drain”, net emigration, internal and environmental migration, etc., are representing smaller yet stable trends. Despite a number of external shocks that have significantly affected migration processes, the external labor migration continued to remain the most significant factor in economic activity in the Republic of Tajikistan.

The high level of poverty (21.2% in 2023), lack of jobs and demographic pressure on the labor market contribute to the persistence of external labor migration. The high birth rate (2.7 ppm in 2022 according to *Demographic Yearbook, 2023*: p. 115) ensures significant population growth, which amounted to 2.1% in the year 2022 (*Demographic Yearbook, 2023*: p. 110). Every year about 150,000 young people enter the labor market, but not all of them are able to find work in their homeland. Finding work abroad becomes a necessity for them.

### **1. Internal migrations.**

Internal migrations are not that widespread in the Republic of Tajikistan. Thus, the internal gross migration in the year 2022 amounted to just over 60,000 people (*Demographic Yearbook, 2023*: p. 222). The most intense displacement within the Republic of Tajikistan was observed in the Khatlon and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Regions, with population outflows occurring in both regions. On the contrary, there was a small influx of the population to the capital city of Dushanbe.

In addition to self-initiated migration, the internal migration is also including state-initiated environmental migration and population movements from poor-soiled mountainous areas to valleys with lands of deposits. In the year 2021, 195 households were resettled from mountainous areas to valleys, and it was 300 households in the year 2022. As for environmental migrants, i.e. people affected by natural disasters or living in dangerous areas, back in the year 2021 it was 210 households that got resettled to safer places, and in the year 2022 it was 221 households. (*Strategy, 2023*: p. 207)

### **2. External migrations.**

**2.1. External migration of the population (for permanent place of residence).** In years 2021-2023, the most numerous migration streams were still connecting Tajikistan with the Russian Federation (RF) and its regional neighbors. Moreover, the main partner for immigration to the Republic of Tajikistan is Uzbekistan (237 people in the year 2022 - *Demographic Yearbook, 2023*: p. 250), and for emigration from the Republic of Tajikistan the main partners are Russia and Kazakhstan (530 people and 477 people in 2022 respectively - *Demographic Yearbook, 2023*: p. 250)

Migration contacts with Russia are characterized by particular complexity since Tajikistan and Russia are linked by the Treaty on Dual Citizenship (1995). The ability to have dual citizenship allows people to retain their housing and resident status in both Tajikistan and in Russia. Therefore, statistical accounting of net migration, i.e. moving to a permanent place of residence in both countries is quite challenging.

In the years 2021-2023, swapping of citizenship or obtaining dual citizenship procedure has suddenly increased. In the year 2021, 103,681 citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan received

Russian citizenship; in the year 2022, it was 173,634 citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan who have received the citizenship. (Website of the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation) In the last months of 2023, the practice of provision of Russian citizenship to citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan have stopped, excluding those migrants who expressed their willingness to participate in military activities in Ukraine.

## ***2.2. External labor migration. Covid's "echo" in development of external labor migration.***

Despite the decline in the number of Tajik labor migrants over the recent years, the labor migration remains to be the largest migration trend in the Republic of Tajikistan, and Russia is the main host country. It is difficult to estimate the actual number of labor migrants from the Republic of Tajikistan working in the Russian Federation over the recent years, since a large discrepancy remains between the official labor migration statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation. Sources show a wide range of data: from 373,773 people, according to the State Statistics Agency of the Republic of Tajikistan, to 1.6 million people who were in Russia at one time in 2022, according to sources in Russia.

Over recent years, migration has gained a complex dynamic of "pulsation". After the 2020 year "Covid" and the opening of the borders, labor migration from the Republic of Tajikistan rapidly increased and by August of 2021 was almost equal to the "pre-Covid" level of the 2019. Consequently, after a sharp drop in the year 2020, the amount of remittances from the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan has returned to previous levels. Labor migration and remittances have supported a certain level of population's well-being of the Republic of Tajikistan and the economy of the country as a whole. Economic growth in the year 2021 was 9.2% according to the World Bank. (WB, "*Listening to Tajikistan,*" 2023) In years 2022 and 2023, the number of labor migrants from the Republic of Tajikistan continued to fluctuate. It dropped down after the start of Russian military activities in Ukraine, the announcement of the draft in Russia and forcing of the Tajik migrants to participate in the military activities of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, and quickly recovered after some unfavorable events in Tajikistan. These events include: the challenging situation on the Tajik Afghan border due to the withdrawal of Western coalition troops from Afghanistan, unrests in Gorno-Badakhshan District and border conflicts with Kyrgyzstan.

***Migration directions.*** Up until February 2022, up to 90% of labor migrants from the Republic of Tajikistan went to work in Russia, and just over 2% went to Kazakhstan. After the outbreak of the military conflict and especially after the deportations from Russia in 2023, a part of the migrants started to look for an opportunity to diversify their migration directions. They went in search of work to Turkey, South Korea, Great Britain, USA, UAE, and other countries.

***The demographic composition of migrants*** in the years 2021-2023, compared to previous years, has not changed significantly. As previously, more than 90% of the labor migrants are people of working age, 84 - 87% of all migrants are younger men, about a third have a higher and incomplete higher education. Over the last two years, there has been an increase in the share of women in all external migration streams: from 13% in 2021 up to 15,6% of all labor migrants in the year 2022.

***Employment of migrants abroad.*** After the shocks of 2020, the employment situation of migrants in all foreign labor markets has settled down. In the years 2021 through 2023, more than 90% of Tajik migrants had permanent jobs. (WB, "*Listening to Tajikistan,*" 2023) According to ADB, about 60% of migrants from Tajikistan are employed in construction projects and 17% are working in trade and rendering of services.

At the same time, the issue of social and legal lack of security of the migrant workers in Russia, in the UAE, and Saudi Arabia is becoming increasingly relevant, which leads to numerous cases

of violation of their rights and freedoms at all stages of migration. Trafficking of human beings is on the rise.

### **2.3. Other trends: “brain drain”, foreign labor migration.**

Since the year 2021, the numbers of “brain drain” cases of a replacement type have sharply increased (Tajik citizens are replacing specialists that are leaving for other countries in the Russian Federation). A particularly large outflow of qualified personnel is observed in the healthcare and education sectors of the Republic of Tajikistan. In the year 2022, 1,496 doctors and nurses left the healthcare sector in Tajikistan and went on labor migration. (*Asia-Plus*, 10.02. 2023) In addition to the growing emigration of highly qualified labor, educational migration has also noticeably increased. At the same time, there is a small but stable trend of specialists returning to Tajikistan.

Although Tajikistan is a migration donor country, in the country there are foreign migrants working, the vast majority of whom are PRC nationals. In the year 2021, 5,777 foreigners worked in the Republic of Tajikistan, amongst them 3,436 men and 2,341 women; in the year 2022 - 5,716 foreigners, including 5,188 men and 528 women. (*Strategy*, 2023: p. 204)

### **3. Migrants’ remittances. The role of labor migration in social and economic development of the Republic of Tajikistan.**

Tajikistan is one of the countries in the world which is the most dependent on incoming remittances. Over the recent years, it has been quite hard to obtain reliable data concerning the scale of transfers because the government of the Republic of Tajikistan, starting in 2014, and the Central Bank of Russia, starting in 2022, stopped providing information on remittances. This chapter uses primarily the World Bank data.

The total amount of remittances from private individuals from Russia to Tajikistan in the year 2021 amounted to USD 1.8 billion, which is 3.4% more than in the year 2020. This amount is equivalent to 23% of the Republic of Tajikistan’s GDP in 2021. In the year 2022, the volume of remittances increased and, according to the World Bank, amounted to USD 5.2 billion, which is equivalent to 34% of the Republic of Tajikistan’s GDP in the year 2022. A comparison of these data lines shows that in the year 2022, the significance of remittances for the economy of the Republic of Tajikistan has increased greatly. The transfers supported the consumer sector, which in 2022 became the main driving force of the economy of the Republic of Tajikistan. In the year 2022 Tajikistan experienced record low inflation and economic growth of 8%.

In the same year, the share of transfers from Russia in the total volume of remittances began to decrease. Although more than 90% of all labor migrants worked in Russia, the share of remittances they made to the Republic of Tajikistan amounted to 76% of all remittances received in the country. A quarter (24%) of all transfers came from Turkey, the UAE, the EU, and China. (*Chorshanbiev*, 2023).

Remittances continued to grow in the year 2023, increasing by 14% compared to the previous year. In the year 2023, the amount of remittances was equivalent to 32% of the GDP of the Republic of Tajikistan. The migrants’ remittances supported economic activity in the Republic of Tajikistan, remaining a significant source of income in households for Republic of Tajikistan. The households that received remittances utilized more than 80% of remittances to purchase food and about 10% for health services, education, and housing (IOM, 2021: p. 26). Despite the challenges of 2021-2023, poverty continued to decline in Tajikistan, and remittances played a decisive role in this.

### **4. State policy and state programs in the area of migration.**

#### ***4.1. Main development directions of the policy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the area of migration.***

The 2020 “Covid” year with lockdowns, a sharp deterioration in the situation with migrants in the host countries, and a stream of reversed migration required a prompt response to the rapidly changing situation. At the same time, it became clear that it was necessary to look for new approaches to migration and mobility, to develop the internal employment area in the Republic of Tajikistan in accordance with the new directions of the country’s development. These questions were raised in the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2030 (*NDS 2030*), however, the scale of migrations in Tajikistan and their strategic significance for the country required a detailed study of migration issues and the adoption of new legal texts and specialized programs.

In the context of the improvement of the regulatory-and-statutory framework, which is regulating certain aspects of the migration process, the improvement of the Comprehensive Program to Combat Trafficking of Human Beings for 2019-2021 has continued. An important area was also the involvement of diasporas in development of Tajikistan. For this purpose, in the year 2021, an “Action Plan for implementation of the Concept document of attracting foreign compatriots as partners in the Fatherland development for the years 2021-2025” was adopted. In 2021, implementation of the “Road Map for the economic and social reintegration of returning migrant workers in the Republic of Tajikistan over the period of 2018 through 2021” was completed.

In 2022, in the context of the military conflict in Ukraine and economic sanctions from Western countries against Tajikistan’s main trading partner the Russian Federation, the Government of Tajikistan created an Interdepartmental Staff for prevention of possible risks to the national economy. The Anti-Crisis Plan developed by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan contains measures aimed at supporting the migrant workers, namely by increasing amount job openings, professional retraining, stimulation of agricultural processing and folk crafts, etc., including subsidies to migrant households.

In the years 2021-2023, development and implementation of the most significant government programs aimed at development of population employment sector of Tajikistan, including labor migration, continued to take place. Thus, the State program for population employment promotion in Tajikistan for the years 2020 - 2022 was implemented. And in the year 2022, by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, the “Concept document for development of productive population employment in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2040” was adopted, in which the labor migration issues have a prominent place.

The key moment of the Concept document regarding migration is a system of measures aimed at vocational education development and the labor resources training that could meet the demands of the modern labor market.

Closely related to the Concept document for development of productive employment is the Strategy for migration processes’ regulating in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2040, which was adopted in June 2023. It is defining the goals, priorities, and objectives of the state migration policy of the Republic of Tajikistan, which are to promote sustainable economic development, ensuring state security, protecting the rights of migrants, protecting national interests, traditions, customs, and culture of Tajikistan. (*Strategy*, 2023: p. 113) The Strategy is considering population migration as one of the means of social-and-economic and innovative development of the country. The document also outlines the main directions and mechanisms for the state migration policy implementation for the Republic of Tajikistan. Among the most significant innovations are the following: development and implementation of a mechanism for electronic registration of migrants at the regional level of the Republic of Tajikistan; creation of a Public council under the Migration Service with the involvement of representatives of government agencies, international and

non-governmental organizations; improving the system of pre-departure training for the labor migrants; creation of a social support foundation of the migrant workers and members of their families. One of the goals of the Strategy is diversification of external labor migration. Measures were also developed to create a gender-sensitive system of pre-departure training for the migrant workers and members of their families, including their legal and informational support.

One of the most significant points of the Strategy is monitoring and evaluation of the results of the Strategy's implementation at different stages, as well as their publication and wide dissemination.

#### ***4.2. Management institutions.***

The key management institutions dealing with migration policy issues are: Interdepartmental commission for migration processes management under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of labor, migration, and employment of the Republic of Tajikistan (MOLME), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local executive authorities (Khukumats).

The most significant institutions dealing with assistance provision to the citizens of Tajikistan abroad are the embassies and consulate representative offices of the Republic of Tajikistan. In the year 2021-2023, only five consulate representative offices of Tajikistan operated in following places of Russia: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ufa, Ekaterinburg, and Novosibirsk, as well as two honorary consulate offices were in Kaliningrad and Krasnodar. Also, in Russia there are representative offices of the Migration Service under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan (six representative offices, in which there are 14 representatives). They are aiding in process of receiving due wages, assist in the detention or deportation of migrants, and advise on issues of employment and legalization of work in the Russian Federation.

In the year 2023, multitude of signals began to come from Russia concerning violations of the Tajik migrants' rights (mass detentions, police brutality, forced military service and forced drafting into military activities). In order to get to know better the living conditions of migrants and their problems, the Government of Tajikistan have sent out five inspection teams to Russia. They included representatives of several ministries and departments of the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as lawyers. The task force groups visited Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, and Ufa.

#### ***4.3. Intergovernmental cooperation.***

While developing national migration legislation, Tajikistan at the same time is supporting international initiatives. The country has approved the Global Compact on Migration and actively participates in various regional migration dialogues and international initiatives.

Over the years 2021 and 2023, Tajikistan has been actively interacting with host countries for Tajik migrants as well as with countries of transit such as Uzbekistan. In the year 2021, Tajikistan continued negotiations with Uzbekistan to agree on measures for the passage of persons, vehicles, cargo, goods, and animals across the state border in connection with COVID-19 restrictions.

In the year 2022, four documents on cooperation in the areas of labor, migration and employment were signed between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Amongst these documents are the Memorandum of Understanding between the Labor Migration Agency under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Migration Service of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of the Republic of Tajikistan, Declaration of Cooperation in the area of state labor regulation, Declaration of goodwill on digitalization of labor relations and project management in the area of labor, Declaration of goodwill on cooperation in vocational education.



However, the most active interaction was between Tajikistan and Russia. The main area of cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation in 2021 was the coordination of rules for testing, vaccination of the migrants and marking of people.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, an Agreement on cooperation in the area of retirement provision for migrants was signed between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan. According to the Agreement, Tajik migrants will receive a Russian retirement plan in accordance with their work experience in Russia.

The year 2022 has started with a migration amnesty, in particular the government agencies of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation reached agreements, according to which more than 120,000 Tajik labor migrants, who were previously denied entry due to minor administrative violations, were able to arrive to Russia.

Contacts of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan continued with departments and organizations of Russia for promotion of the organized recruitment of laborers in Russia (organized recruitment). Also, in the year 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the MLSP of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Federal state unitary enterprise “Passport and Visa Service” (PVS) of the Interior Ministry of Russia. According to the Memorandum, it was planned to start up a branch of the PVS and a center for pre-migration training of Tajik citizens in the Republic of Tajikistan. It is assumed that even before leaving for Russia, future labor migrants will be able to locate work in the Russian Federation, process the employment contracts, undergo fingerprinting and medical examination, and pass an exam in mastering of the Russian language.

In November of 2022, a representative office of the Multifunctional migration center “Sakharovo” was opened in Dushanbe, where seekers can apply for a license (patent) to work in Moscow and the Moscow Province, as well as receive information about vacancies in this region. The representative office is rendering assistance to Russian companies in recruiting personnel in the Republic of Tajikistan, providing learning experience to organized groups of labor migrants, and providing explanation on the procedure for residing and working in Moscow and the Moscow province.

In 2023, the Parliament of Tajikistan ratified the Readmission agreement signed in 2021 by the Governments of Tajikistan and Russia. However, practice shows that the readmission procedure is resorted to very seldom. Instead, the so-called “voluntary return” is utilized.

In 2023, Duma (Parliament) of the Russian Federation anti-migrant rhetoric intensified as well as in the Russian media. In Russia, the regime of stay for the migrants from the Republic of Tajikistan has been tightened, which has repeatedly become the subject of discussion between the Foreign Ministries and other involved departments of both countries. However, despite the unfavorable background, intergovernmental cooperation between Tajikistan and Russia continued its development. The year 2023 was concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation on issues of labor inspection and promotion of employment between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Federal Service for Labor and Employment of the Russian Federation.

While intensifying relations with Russia, Tajikistan did not stop efforts for diversification of labor migration directions, which remains one of the priority tasks in regulation of migration processes in the Republic of Tajikistan. Thus, in 2022, the minister of labor, migration and employment of Tajikistan and representatives of the relevant agencies of South Korea signed an Agreement and two Memorandums regarding the attraction of seasonal workers from the Republic of Tajikistan to various provinces of South Korea. In the year 2023, more than 5,000 Tajik citizens officially worked in this South Korea. (*Davlatzoda, 2022*).

## **5. The role of international and non-governmental organizations in resolution of migration related issues.**

In 2021-2023, a characteristic feature of work of the international and non-governmental organizations operating in Tajikistan has manifested itself with extra intensity: their direct and significant influence on development and implementation of the migration policy of the Republic of Tajikistan so that it would comply with global trends in the migration management. A large number of international actors and donor countries participating in development and implementation of the migration policy of the Republic of Tajikistan, including the World Bank, IOM, ILO, ADB and others, have applied pressure to create a Council for coordination of donors' activities under the MOLME of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2022.

The measures promoted by the international organizations and donor countries included in the pool of development partners of the Republic of Tajikistan are not always aimed at improvement of the migrants' situation. For instance, the system of organized recruitment of labor migrants is aimed primarily at oversight measures over the migrants, while at the same time it is significantly limiting their rights.

The most significant projects directed at resolution of migration related issues in the year 2021-2023 in Tajikistan were the following: IOM projects "Tajikistan: concept for migration integration, including gender, climate change and agriculture" (2019-2022); "Empowering of abandoned migrant families in order to improve migration results" (2021); IOM regional project "Labor migration program in Central Asia" (2022-2023).

In January of 2023, the Movement tracking matrix (MTM) team, in the context of the IOM project "Baseline assessment and study of returning migrant workers in Tajikistan (2022-2023), conducted the first round of baseline assessment of mobility in Tajikistan in order to track mobility, collect information on the population, geographical distribution of labor migrants and the returning migrants, reasons for migration, countries of destination and time periods of migration.

Besides the IOM projects, there was also implemented the ICMPD regional project "Strengthening migration management in the Silk Road countries for the years 2017 - 2020". (2020 – 2022) and the GIZ project "Increasing employment and income of labor migrants in Tajikistan" (2021-2023).

As for local non-governmental organizations, usually they work within the framework of grant-based programs of the international organizations and embassies. Most of them are involved in the implementation of the abovementioned projects.

## **6. Migration and conflicts.**

### ***6.1. Events in Afghanistan and their impact on the migration situation in the Republic of Tajikistan. Afghan forced migration to the Republic of Tajikistan.***

After the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan in August of 2021, the radical movement Taliban took control basically over the entire territory of the country, with the exception of Panjshir province. Waves of refugees flowed into neighboring countries - Iran, Pakistan, and Tajikistan, which borders Afghanistan for the length of 1344,15 kilometers. In the summer, about 5,000 Afghans crossed the Tajik Afghan border. In early August, Afghan pilots flew across the border in planes and helicopters, while government soldiers crossed by foot. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, the last American troops left Kabul, and from that moment on, Tajikistan has severed off contacts with Afghanistan, while still taking on the refugees.

If, according to UNHCR data, at the end of year 2020, 6,500 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers were registered in the Republic of Tajikistan, then starting January to August of 2021 the number of Afghan refugees doubled and reached 14,000 people. (*Mirzobekova, 2022*). The Tajik authorities provided refugees with tents, medical assistance, and food. The President of Tajikistan promised to take on 100,000 Afghan refugees under protection. However, at a meeting of the chiefs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and the security secretaries of the CSTO member states that took place on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in Dushanbe, it was decided to close the border to stop accepting the refugees. The main reasons were the threat to the security of the Republic of Tajikistan and the region as a whole due to the high probability of members of terrorist groups entering the country under disguise of refugees, as well as the drastically increased risks of spread of weapons, ammunition, and explosives, which were abandoned in Afghanistan by the Western Coalition forces. The danger was also posed by the growth of illicit trafficking in psychotropic substances and narcotics, which could get through with the stream of refugees from Afghanistan to Tajikistan, to the countries of Central Asia and beyond. And indeed, after the Taliban took over the power, there has been an increase in smuggling of weapons, attempts by armed groups to cross the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan, a concentration of militants along the Tajik Afghan border, an informational warfare, and threats that the Taliban distribute towards Tajikistan in abundance, as well as Taliban repression against ethnic Tajiks and Hazaras.

Currently, Tajikistan is forced to strengthen its security and defense systems in every possible way, attracting resources from Russia, the CSTO and China. Thus, a targeted interstate program was agreed upon to strengthen the Tajik Afghan section of the state border within the CSTO context. Tajikistan is promoting the initiative to create a “Security belt” along its border with Afghanistan, while still maintaining economic ties with that country.

One significant reason for closing borders was also the lack of infrastructure and resources to receive refugees. In the summer of 2021, 70 hectares of land were allocated along the Tajik Afghan border in the regions of Jaykhun, Shahritus, Farkhor, Shamsiddin Shokhin and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region for the reception and accommodation of Afghan refugees. At the same time, it became clear that Tajikistan is extremely short of resources to build an infrastructure for reception, accommodation and keeping of the refugees. The Tajik side counted on the support of international organizations; however, it was not provided. (*Mirzobekova, 2022*).

***Number of Afghan refugees.*** According to UNHCR, in April of 2022, there were 7,794 refugees and 2,100 asylum seekers in the Republic of Tajikistan. (*Mirzobekova, 2022*). A year later, in June of 2023, 6,800 refugees from Afghanistan remained in Tajikistan. (*Vinogradov, 2023*). The number of refugees is declining both due to the fact that they move to the third countries and because of deportations to their homeland.

***Policy of the Republic of Tajikistan regarding Afghan refugees.*** Tajikistan has developed a regulatory framework in accordance with international standards regarding forced migration, protection of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. In the Strategy for management of migration processes in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2040, attention is given to the issues of forced migration. (*Strategy, 2023: p. 196*) Issues of refugees’ protection are directly coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Interior Ministry of Tajikistan.

***Afghan migrants in Tajikistan.*** Tajikistan has been hosting refugees on its territory for many years. They have access to social services on an equal basis with citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan. Unlike most countries in the world, in the Republic of Tajikistan refugees have the right to employment and entrepreneurial activity in all areas of the economy. The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Refugees” exempts refugees from obtaining a work permit. Most Afghan refugees work in small and medium-sized enterprises in the trade, construction, services, and agricultural sectors. However, a lack of jobs, quite low

salaries, and an unfavorable business climate restrict the ability of Afghan refugees to support themselves and their families in the Republic of Tajikistan. Therefore, most of them are waiting for the situation in Afghanistan to be changed in order to return home. Others, especially women, are interested in further migration. As a rule, they strive to move to countries where they have relatives and consider Tajikistan as a transit country.

***International organizations and NGOs dealing with the issues of Afghan refugees.*** UNHCR in the Republic of Tajikistan with its partners, namely public organizations like “*Inson va Adolat*” and “*Children, Refugees and Vulnerable Citizens*” are providing legal and social assistance to the refugees and asylum seekers. These local NGOs are supporting refugee vocational training and educational programs, apprenticeship programs, provide employment services, and assist refugees in obtaining small grants to create income-generating activities. An important part of their activities is helping women and children that are refugees, the disabled, and the sick. Afghan non-governmental organizations also operate on the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan, these are the officially registered Committee of Afghan Refugees and the “*Orieno*” Center.

### ***6.2. Events in Badakhshan Region and associated migration.***

Mass protests in November of 2021 and unrest in May of 2022 in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) led to clashes between the population of GBAO and the government forces and to deaths of tens of people. All this caused waves of migration from the region.

### ***6.3. Tajik-Kyrgyz border conflict and its impact on migration.***

In the years 2021 - 2022, armed clashes periodically took place on the Tajik-Kyrgyz border in the Fergana Valley. The history of this conflict goes back at least a century, but the immediate causes of the clashes in 2021 - 2022 were the territorial claims of Tajikistan and of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) to each other and the unfinished delimitation of the border. In September of 2022, yet another series of clashes on the border have led to the death of more than 100 people from both sides and extensive material damage, but there was no noticeable wave of migration in the Republic of Tajikistan, however the rate of obtaining Russian citizenship and the labor migration in the areas bordering the Kyrgyz Republic has increased. This was related to the need to rebuild destroyed homes and household settlements. In addition, the Kyrgyz Republic closed its borders to incoming people and cargo from the Republic of Tajikistan, severing economic ties between the border regions of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic. This had a negative influence on the local economy and forced residents to search for work outside their local areas.

### ***6.4. The impact of the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine on Tajikistan in the area of migration.***

Tajikistan is one of the countries that has had the strong negative impact of events in Ukraine in terms of migration, economics, and security. This happened due to high dependence on Russia. Interviews showed that Tajik migrants see the following aspects as the main channels of negative influence on the events that take place in Ukraine regarding the migrants: inflation that followed measures of Western sanctions and decrease in worth of migration due to exchange rate fluctuations, the growth of xenophobia and migrant phobia in the Russian Federation, the involvement of citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan in military activities in Ukraine.

Mutual economic and trade restrictions between Russia and the West have also negatively affected Tajik business. The measures of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (Counter crisis plan, the activities of the interdepartmental Staff to prevent possible risks to the national economy) have stabilized the situation, however, the main driving force of economic growth in the Republic of Tajikistan in the years

2022 - 2023 remained to be migrants' remittances. The increase in transfers was facilitated by the emergence of vacant job openings and rising wages in the Russian Federation.

Many migrants are concerned about the participation of Tajiks in military activities. The government of the Russian Federation has taken measures to attract migrants from the Republic of Tajikistan to military service, simplifying acquisition of Russian Federation's citizenship for military personnel and significantly reducing the practice of evictions and deportations in the year 2022. This had an effect and increased the number of migrants who received Russian Federation's citizenship. However, after receiving the Russian Federation's citizenship, migrants are forced to sign a contract with the Russian Federation's Ministry of Defense and are sent to the frontlines. A wave of sealed metal caskets (KIAs) began to flood into Tajikistan. In the year 2023, raids on the places of work and residence of Tajik migrants, mass detentions of Tajiks on the streets of Russian cities and their beatings became more frequent in the Russian Federation. Tajik citizens with dual citizenship are taken to military registration and enlistment offices and registered for military reserve, after that they are prohibited from leaving the territory of the Russian Federation. Also, the migrants with dual citizenship who received an electronic call to military service are unable to leave for their homeland. In case of failure to appear at the military registration and enlistment office, they are usually threatened with deprivation of citizenship and deportation.

The complexity of the situation for migrants from the Republic of Tajikistan is amplified by dual citizenship with the Russian Federation, since, according to the laws of the Republic of Tajikistan, mercenary activity is prohibited. The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Russian Federation issued a message that it will be registering citizens of Tajikistan that are participating in military activities, and that they will be punished in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan, according to which citizens of Tajikistan face 12 to 20 years of imprisonment for participation in combat operations on the territories of other countries.

One of the consequences of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine was the influx of so-called "relocated persons" from Russia into the Republic of Tajikistan, which amounted to 30,000 people in the fall of 2022 (*Interview with an IOM employee, 2022*). Tajikistan for the Russians is a transit country, since, according to the Russian Federation's Embassy, the main bulk of relocated persons have moved to other countries.

## **7. Prospects and forecasts.**

In the Republic of Tajikistan, migration issues are considered as strategically significant. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is implementing measures aimed at improving the economic situation, increasing the well-being of the population, and providing of jobs for young people by developing the labor market, increasing its flexibility, training, and professional development of workers. Nonetheless, the labor market in the Republic of Tajikistan remains to be weak and is unable to absorb all of the younger generation that enter the labor market after completing their studies. Besides that, growing threats contribute to the loss security sense amongst the public of the Republic of Tajikistan. This forces people to create additional spare savings and, in order to do that, they seek higher income opportunities abroad, as well as consider the prospects of relocating to other countries.

Therefore, one might confidently predict that in the foreseeable future, Tajikistan will remain a country of labor force origin, and the well-being of Tajik households and the country's economy as a whole will largely depend on migration and migrants' remittances.

At the same time, it is hard to imagine what future migration trends will be in the light of rapid geopolitical changes, uncertainty in the security and epidemiological situation, as well as the ups and downs of the migration policies of the host countries. The experience of 2021-2023 has shown that rapid changes in the context of migration (lockdowns during COVID-19, military draft during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, border clashes, etc.), as well as changes in the policies of the host

countries, are making the migrants to quickly change strategies and diversify directions of the migration.

On the other hand, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is striving to reduce the high dependence on labor migration and remittances, which makes Tajikistan vulnerable to external circumstances and shocks. Therefore, one might expect that migration policy in the Republic of Tajikistan will be aimed at reducing the significance of labor migration and remittances for the national economy and, at the same time, establishing strict oversight over them. With that in mind, one might confidently assume that Tajikistan's migration policy will be developing in line with global trends and be integrated into the global migration management mechanism.

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## **Modern migration processes and trends of their development in Turkmenistan.**

**Poletaev D. V.**

### **1. Brief migration profile.**

There is a limited amount of data regarding the migration processes in Turkmenistan. The Internet based resources of Turkmenistan provide scarce information concerning the migration processes and do not provide a comprehensive picture in general.

The statistical offices of other countries, such as Russia and Turkey, as well as the OECD database, have there is information about migrants of Turkmenistan in other countries<sup>118</sup>. Thus, according to the OECD data, among the thirty-six countries in the year 2022 there were 25,048 Turkmen citizens (mainly in Turkey: 24,465 people), and in the year 2020 there were 81,179 of such citizens. (Also, primarily in Turkey there was 80,003 people).

According to the official statistics from Turkey, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and other countries, one can state that in the year 2022 the rate of departures from Turkmenistan has dropped in comparison to the increased figures of the year 2019, when, according to unofficial count, it was up to 110,000 people that left Turkmenistan.<sup>119</sup>

According to official data from Turkey (Turkish Statistical Institute)<sup>120</sup>, in the year 2022, 8,856 citizens of Turkmenistan have arrived in Turkey, of which 4,055 were men (46%), and 4,801 women (54%), 15,609 citizens of Turkmenistan have left the country, out of whom 10,055 were men (64 %), and 5,554 women (36%). In the year 2021, 24,465 citizens of Turkmenistan have arrived in Turkey, out of whom 13,635 were men (56%), and 10,830 were women (44%), 8,969 citizens of Turkmenistan have left the country, of which there were 5,140 men (57%), and 3,829 women (43%). In the year 2020, 1,207 citizens of Turkmenistan have arrived in Turkey, of which 656 (54%) were men and 551 (46%) were women, 1,700 of Turkmenistan citizens have left the country, of which 975 (57%) were men, and 725 (43%) were women. In the year 2019, 80,003 citizens of Turkmenistan have arrived in Turkey, out of which 52,146 (65%) were men, 27,857 (35%) were women, and 14,067 citizens of Turkmenistan have left, of which 6,334 (45%) were men, 7,733 (55%) were women. In the year 2018, 34,915 citizens of Turkmenistan have arrived in Turkey, of which 16,862 were men (48.3%), 18,053 were women (51.7%), and 10,096 citizens of Turkmenistan have left the country, of which 4,431 were men (43.9%), and 5665 were women (56.1%). In the year 2017, 20,317 citizens of Turkmenistan have arrived in Turkey, out of which 8,093 were men (39.8%), 12,224 were women (60.1%), and 4,001 citizens of Turkmenistan have left the country, of which 1,595 were men (39.9%), and 2406 were women (60.1%). As a result, over the years 2017-2022 in total 169,763 citizens of Turkmenistan have arrived in Turkey, out of which 95,447 were men, 74,316 women, and 54,442 citizens of Turkmenistan have left the country, of which 28,530 were men, and 25,912 were women.

<sup>118</sup> International Migration Database OECD.stat <https://stats.oecd.org/viewhtml.aspx?datasetcode=MIG&lang=en>

<sup>119</sup> In 2019, about 110,000 people or 2.2% of the country's population emigrated out of Turkmenistan (2021) Meteojournal. 01.05 URL: <http://meteojournal.ru/stati/v-2019-godu-iz-turkmenistana-emigirovalo-poryadka-110-tysyach-chelovek-ili-22-naseleniya-strany/>

<sup>120</sup>Turkish Statistical Institute URL <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=Population-and-Demography-109>

Net migration for the year of 2022 amounted to 6,753 citizens of Turkmenistan, for the year of 2021 amounted to 15,496 citizens of Turkmenistan, for the year of 2020 it amounted to 493 citizens of Turkmenistan, for 2019 amounted to 65,936 citizens of Turkmenistan, for the year of 2018 amounted to 24,819 citizens of Turkmenistan, for the year of 2017 amounted to 16,316 citizens of Turkmenistan, and, in general, over the 2022-2017 years' span the net migration amounted to 115,321 citizens of Turkmenistan.

There is a certain cyclical nature of the gender component in the stream of migrants from Turkmenistan to Turkey. Over the time period of 2017 to 2019, there was a gradual increase in the share of migrant men from Turkmenistan to Turkey (from 40% to 65%), and over the period of 2020 to 2022 the proportion of men began to gradually decrease (from 54% down to 46%). In the year 2017, there were significantly more women migrants from Turkmenistan amongst the total migrants' stream to Turkey (60%), by the year of 2019 their share dropped down to a third (35%), and in the year 2022 it has gone up again (up to 54%).

The sharp drop in the number of citizens of Turkmenistan in Turkey over the last 2-3 years has several causes. A key factor was security tightening in Turkey over undocumented migrants. Thus, in the year 2023, there were large-scale law-enforcement raids against illegal migrants in Turkey. In September of 2023, reportedly over the three months, 75,442 illegal migrants were detained<sup>121</sup>, as part of operations in Turkey, of which 32,563 were deported. Amongst them were some citizens of Turkmenistan. On the other hand, Turkmenistan is also enforcing strict travel regulations of its citizens that are leaving for Turkey. In 2022, upon the request of Turkmenistan, Turkey, has introduced visa regime for the citizens of Turkmenistan<sup>122</sup>, while changing the arrival procedure that has been established since the year 2007. The Turkish side has started up a special visa processing center in the capital city of Ashgabat, where the citizens of Turkmenistan will be able to obtain travel visas to Turkey.

Turkmenistan has significant migration-related exchange with the Russian Federation. According to the data from Russia (Main Directorate of Migration Affairs under the Ministry of Interior of RF)<sup>123</sup>, in the year 2022 in Russia at the residence places there were 111,001 citizens of Turkmenistan registered (total number of registrations), including 7,148 citizens of Turkmenistan that were registered at their place of residence, and at the actual stay location there was 103,853 people. From amongst them, for business purposes there were 4,472 people, for tourism 2,950 people, for studies 66,721 people, for work 8,344 people, for personal purposes 171,44 people, for humanitarian purposes fifty-three people, and for other purposes 4,169 people. In the year 2022, temporary residence permits (TRP) were issued to 4,023 citizens of Turkmenistan, permanent residence permits were issued to 3,490 citizens of Turkmenistan, the Russian citizenship was granted to 3,484 citizens of Turkmenistan.

<sup>121</sup> Fatma Sevinç Çetin, Sefa Şahin, Elmira Ekberova Over 3 months, more than 75,000 illegal migrants were detained in Turkey. Anadolu Ajansı 13.09.2023

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<sup>122</sup> <https://ria.ru/20220914/vizy-1816714914.html>

<sup>123</sup> Website of the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Interior Ministry URL: <https://мвд.рф/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya>



In the year 2021, 82,538 citizens of Turkmenistan were registered in Russian Federation at their place of residence (total number of registrations), including 4,321 citizens of Turkmenistan that were registered at their place of residence, and 78,217 at the actual location of stay. From amongst them for business purposes there were 2,880 people, for tourism 991 people; for studies 53,888 people; for work 7,880 people, for personal purposes 9,528 people, for humanitarian purposes sixteen, and for other purposes 3,034 people. In the year 2021, temporary residence permits (TRP) were issued to 2,371 citizens of Turkmenistan, permanent residence permits to 1,966 citizens of Turkmenistan, the Russian citizenship was granted to 3,628 citizens of Turkmenistan.

In the year 2020 in the Russian Federation 83,838 citizens of Turkmenistan were registered at their place of residence, including first time registration for 43,784 citizens of Turkmenistan. Out of this number, for tourism purposes 2,456 people, for studies 29,293 people, for work 3,906 people, for personal purposes 3,632 people, and for other purposes 4,497 people. In the year 2020, temporary residence permits (TRP) were issued to 2,085 citizens of Turkmenistan, permanent residence permits were issued to 2,271 citizens of Turkmenistan, and the Russian citizenship was granted to 2,451 citizens of Turkmenistan. For comparison, in the year 2017, temporary residence permits were issued to 1,000 citizens of Turkmenistan, permanent residence permits were issued to 1,021 citizens of Turkmenistan, the Russian citizenship was granted to 729 citizens of Turkmenistan.

In the year 2022, the Main Directorate for Migration of the Russian Interior Ministry has received 4,742 notifications in relation of the work contracts that were signed or the civil-law contracts with citizens of Turkmenistan that are working in the Russian Federation, including 529 that were made on the basis of a work permit and 4,213 were made without a work permit. In the year 2022, work permits were issued for 837 citizens of Turkmenistan, including to twenty-three as qualified workers and 432 as highly qualified workers. The number of valid permits for work in the Russian Federation by the end of 2022 for citizens of Turkmenistan was amounted to 855 documents.

One can also note the increase in migration for permanent residence permit (PRP) from Turkmenistan to the Russian Federation. In the year 2022, 3,484 citizens of Turkmenistan have been issued citizenship of the Russian Federation, in the year 2021 it was 3,628 people, and in the years 2017 and 2016 the number of citizens of Turkmenistan who have been granted Russian citizenship was approximately 5 times less (729 people and 774 people, respectively). Citizens of Turkmenistan are holding 12<sup>th</sup> place amongst foreign citizens who have received the Russian citizenship in the year 2022 (0.5% of all those who received citizenship of the Russian Federation).

In general, over the years 2016-2022, TRP was issued to 13,182 citizens of Turkmenistan, permanent residence permits were issued to 12,920 citizens of Turkmenistan, and Russian citizenship was granted to 13,471 citizens of Turkmenistan.

With regards to the growing number of Turkmenistan's citizens wishing to obtain a temporary residence permit (TRP) in the Russian Federation, the Russian Embassy in Turkmenistan has introduced a waiting list for the service "Initial consultation on temporary residence permits and requesting of a clear criminal history certificate on the territory of Turkmenistan"<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup> About the new registration procedure for initial consultation on issues of obtaining a Temporary Residence Permit (TRP) and processing a clear criminal history certificate in the territory of Turkmenistan. Website of the Russian Embassy in Turkmenistan. 12.01.2022 <https://turkmenistan.mid.ru/home/>-

In the context of the visa regime for the Russian-speaking population of Turkmenistan, there is not a lot of opportunities to move to the Russian Federation. It is mainly manifested in participation in the State-funded assistance program for voluntary resettlement to the Russian Federation of compatriots that are living abroad<sup>125</sup>, or through studying at higher educational institutions of the Russian Federation.

Data on internal migration to Turkmenistan are also not publicly available, however, according to indirect indicators one might observe the situation on internal educational migration to the capital city of Turkmenistan Ashgabat. In the year 2022, there were twenty-five higher educational institutions in Turkmenistan<sup>126</sup>, 23 of which are located in Ashgabat, so the main stream of internal educational migration in Turkmenistan is taking place from the regions of Turkmenistan to the capital city of Ashgabat, where the majority of universities is located. In total in the universities of Turkmenistan over the years of 2022 and 2023 there were 69.900 students<sup>127</sup>. The number of students admitted to universities in the year 2021 has increased to 14,337 people (compared to 12,242 people admitted in the year 2020) all due to introduction of thirty-two new specialty subjects at the universities. There are forty-two secondary vocational educational institutions operating in Turkmenistan, in which in the years 2022 and 2023 there were 26.400 students. For a country with a population of several millions of people and a large number of young people, such a number of universities and secondary vocational educational institutions is unable to cover all the training needs of the young citizens of Turkmenistan, therefore the number of countries where educational migrants from Turkmenistan are going is expanding. Thus, in the year 2024<sup>128</sup>, a number of people wishing to study at universities received additional opportunities to study in China and in Hungary.

In Turkmenistan there are university students from ten different countries<sup>129</sup>, including Afghanistan (about 200 students), Tajikistan, China, the Russian Federation, and Republic of Belarus. Some foreign students are studying in Turkmenistan under bilateral agreements between the government of Turkmenistan and the governments of their countries (for instance, students from Afghanistan) and some are studying on a commercial basis<sup>130</sup>. The university students from Turkmenistan are also studying abroad, both within the context of intergovernmental agreements and on a non-commercial basis.

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oformlenia-razresenia-na-vremennoe-prozivanje-rvp-i-istrebovanie-spravki-ob-otsutstvii-su](#)

<sup>125</sup> Decree of the Russian Federation's President (2012) On the implementation of the State program to assist the voluntary resettlement for compatriots residing abroad to the Russian Federation dated by September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, No. 1289. URL: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201209170003> State program to assist the voluntary resettlement for compatriots residing abroad. (2006). Decree of the Russian Federation's President dated by 22 of June 2006. N 637. URL: <https://rg.ru/2006/06/28/ukaz-pereselenie.html>

<sup>126</sup> Higher education system of Turkmenistan. Erasmus + website in Turkmenistan

<https://www.erasmusplus.org/tm/ru/higher-education-in-turkmenistan/system-of-higher-education/>

<sup>127</sup> Voluntary National Survey of Turkmenistan. On implementation progress of the global Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ashgabat. Turkmen Publishing Service. 2023

<https://turkmenistan.un.org/ru/download/137512/239049>

<sup>128</sup> Turkmenistan's students are invited to study at universities in China and Hungary. Turkmenistan: Golden Age. 02.01.2024 <https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/ru/post/78982/studenty-turkmenistana-priglashayutsya-na-obuchenie-v-vuzy-kitaya-i-vengrii>

<sup>129</sup> The expert spoke about foreign students in Turkmen universities (2019) centralasia.news 16 Dec. URL <https://centralasia.news/5715-jekspert-rasskazal-ob-inostrannyh-studentah-v-turkmenskih-vuzah.html>

<sup>130</sup> The expert named the number of Turkmen students abroad (2019) centralasia.news 06 Dec. URL: <https://centralasia.news/5665-jekspert-nazval-kolichestvo-turkmenskih-studentov-za-rubezhom.html>

Intergovernmental bilateral agreements on mutual recognition of the diplomas, scientific degrees and titles are made with countries such as China, the Russian Federation, Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Tajikistan. Diplomas from educational institutions of these countries are recognized, and their holders are able to be hired in the relevant fields, including the education system.

The official website of Statistical Bureau of Turkmenistan<sup>131</sup> is publishing in a limited form some data on migration. For instance, the latest migration-related data can be found in the National Voluntary Survey of Turkmenistan on the SDGs<sup>132</sup>, which is related to the number of persons who were granted the citizenship of Turkmenistan in the context of efforts to end statelessness, as well as in National Voluntary Survey of Turkmenistan regarding to the progress in implementation of the national sustainable development agenda for the year 2023<sup>133</sup>. In the section of statistical digests one can only see photos of cover pages<sup>134</sup>, but there is no possibility for download of the actual digests.

In general, the statistical information on external and internal migration in Turkmenistan is available in a limited range both on the websites of Turkmenistan's official departments and on the Web resources of countries that are receiving the migration influx from Turkmenistan. Randomized surveys in migration area in Turkmenistan are quite seldom.

In the year 2022, in Turkmenistan a general population census was conducted<sup>135</sup>, according to which the official population of the country amounted to 7,058,000 people. During the census, some migration related questions were asked<sup>136</sup> (country of birth, country of citizenship, residence abroad and year of arrival to the country, place of birth, previous place of regular residence with arrival date as opposed to current residence, parents' country of birth, obtaining of the citizenship, country of previous regular residence abroad, total duration of stay in the country, cause for migration, place of regular residence five years prior to the census, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and ethnic-and-cultural traits (ethnicity, nationality, religion, language).

<sup>131</sup> Website of Turkmenistan Statistical Committee URL: <https://www.stat.gov.tm>

<sup>132</sup> Voluntary National Survey of Turkmenistan. Expansions of people's rights and achieving of inclusiveness and equality. Ashgabat. Turkmen Publishing Service. 2019 p. 48 URL: <https://www.stat.gov.tm/storage/images/File/Programs/%D0%94%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%B9%20%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%B9%20%D0%9E%D0%B1%D0%B7%D0%BE%D1%80%20%D0%A2%D1%83%D1%80%D0%BA%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0%20.pdf>

<sup>133</sup> Voluntary National Survey of Turkmenistan. On progress in implementation of the global Sustainable Development Agenda. Ashgabat. Turkmen Publishing Service. 2023  
<https://turkmenistan.un.org/ru/download/137512/239049>

<sup>134</sup> Website of Turkmenistan Statistical Committee. Publications Section. <https://www.stat.gov.tm/publication/1>

<sup>135</sup> Outcomes of the total population and housing census of Turkmenistan of. State Committee of Turkmenistan on Statistics. 2022.

<https://new.cisstat.org/documents/20143/633543/%D0%98%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%B8+%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%BE%D1%88%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B9+%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%B8+%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F+%D0%B8+%D0%B6%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%89%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE+%D1%84%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B0+%D0%A2%D1%83%D1%80%D0%BA%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0+2022+%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0.pdf/74eb819d-5ba3-6a9a-442d-a37496aad886?t=1689579538644> ; <https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/ru/post/74129/mezhdunarodnye-eksperty-perepis-naseleniya-turkmenistana-sootvetstvet-mezhdunarodnym-standartam> <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/WS3YamatovRUS.pdf>

<sup>136</sup> Organization, methodology and main provisions of the population and housing census of Turkmenistan in 2022 (2019) State Committee of Turkmenistan on Statistics. September. Presentation. URL:

[https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.41/2019/mtg2/13\\_TKM\\_Mamiliyeva\\_RUS.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.41/2019/mtg2/13_TKM_Mamiliyeva_RUS.pdf)

Alternative estimates of Turkmenistan's population<sup>137</sup> indicate 1-2 million less of population than what the official census results in Turkmenistan would indicate. The official results of the 2023 census were published on the Turkmenistan Statistical Bureau website in concise version. The full version of the census results was not published on that website.

There are also no data on Turkmenistan's migration on the website of the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee<sup>138</sup>.

## 2. State policy and state programs in the area of migration.

The main agency of migration management system and the migration related data collection in Turkmenistan is the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan<sup>139</sup>. This system is also made up of the following: Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Turkmenistan's Population (internal migration)<sup>140</sup>, Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan (external and internal education migration), Turkmenistan's Statistical Bureau.

According to provisions of the Law of Turkmenistan "On Migration"<sup>141</sup> (Article 5), the authorized state agencies of Turkmenistan in the area of migration are the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, the Ministry of National Security of Turkmenistan, the Ministry of Interior of Turkmenistan, the State Border Service of Turkmenistan, and other state agencies that are dealing with migration related issues.

The work of Turkmenistan's State Migration Service is determined by the Law of Turkmenistan "On Migration Service"<sup>142</sup>, according to which it is identified as the central executive agency enforcing the regulation of Turkmenistan's migration system, implementation of the state policy in the migration area, compliance with international treaties that Turkmenistan is a part of on migration issues.

The sixteen main tasks of the State Migration Service include the following:

- 1) Implementation of Turkmenistan's state policy in the migration area;
- 2) Coordination of the government agencies and other legal entities' activities in order to regulate migration issues, including this area's work with international organizations;
- 3) Detection, prevention, and elimination of illegal migration;
- 4) Creation of a system (database) concerning the migration processes and incorporation of an automated data processing system;

<sup>137</sup> UN estimate: 6,430,000 people (2022, OOH

<https://population.un.org/dataportal/data/indicators/49/locations/795/start/2020/end/2023/table/pivotbylocation>), US estimate 5,691,000 people (2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/turkmenistan/#people-and-society>).

<sup>138</sup> Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS. Migration

<https://new.cisstat.org/web/guest/%D0%A7%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F>

<sup>139</sup> Website of the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan URL: <https://migration.gov.tm/ru/>

<sup>140</sup> Website of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of Turkmenistan <https://mlsp.gov.tm/ru>

<sup>141</sup> Law of Turkmenistan (2012) On migration. Digest of Turkmenistan's Parliament, No.1, Article 41 URL:

<http://minjust.gov.tm/mcenter-single-ru/215>; On June 5, 2021, the Law of Turkmenistan "On introduction of additions and Amendments to the Law of Turkmenistan "On Migration", adopted on March 31, 2012, was ratified and entered into force from the moment of its official publication, namely starting June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<http://www.ynam.info/blog/zakon-turkmenistana-o-vnesenii-dopolneniy-i-izmeneniy-v-zakon-turkmenistana-o-migracii2/>

<sup>142</sup> Law of Turkmenistan (2009) On migration. Digest of Turkmenistan's Parliament, No. 4, Article 79 URL: <http://minjust.gov.tm/mcenter-single-ru/246>

7<sup>3</sup>) Interaction with authorized government agencies on issues of Turkmenistan's citizens registration at the place of their residence and provision for maintaining of overall statistical records on these issues;

14) Provision of protection concerning Turkmenistan's national interests in the migration area.

Turkmenistan has not yet developed a strategic document in the migration area and all these related issues are being resolved in a swiftly manner as they arise. So far there are no special national programs in the migration area that have been adopted.

Amongst the latest developments in the area of educational migration, one might mention that on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Law was signed on the country's accession to the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications relating to Higher Education in the European Region<sup>143</sup>.

### **3. Intergovernmental cooperation.**

Turkmenistan is a country that has declared permanent neutrality (December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1995). Turkmenistan has associated membership in the CIS.

Turkmenistan, within the framework of the national development plans, has set the goal of joining in achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>144</sup> (SDGs) and has joined the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

Turkmenistan has also joined the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking of human beings, especially women and children, supplementing the UN Convention against transnational organized crime<sup>145</sup>.

Turkmenistan is maintaining a constant dialogue in migration area with the Russian Federation. Thus, in January of 2023, the Russian Ministry of Interior has signed an agreement with the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan. This document provides for the swift exchange of data between the two countries' departments on migration issues. In the years 2022 - 2023 over 4,000 university students from Turkmenistan have studied at the Russian Federation's universities on the government funded tuition. According to this year's admissions campaign's results, 385 citizens of Turkmenistan were admitted to the universities under the quota of the Russian Federation's Government.<sup>146</sup> In total 30,600 students from Turkmenistan throughout the Russian

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<sup>143</sup> Turkmenistan has signed the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education. Erasmus+ website in Turkmenistan 29/03/2023 <https://www.erasmusplus.org.tm/ru/news-and-events/turkmenistan-podpisa-lissabonskuiu-konventciiu-o-priznanii-kvalifikacii-vysshego-obrazovaniia/>

<sup>144</sup> Sustainable Development Goals website URL: <https://sdgs.un.org/>

<sup>145</sup> Voluntary National Survey of Turkmenistan. On implementation progress of the global Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ashgabat. Turkmen Publishing Service. 2023 <https://turkmenistan.un.org/ru/download/137512/239049>

<sup>146</sup> Russia has proposed for Turkmenistan to switch to a visa-free regime. Greater Asia. 20.04.2023 <https://bigasia.ru/rossiya-predlozhila-turkmenistanu-pereiti-na-bezvizovyi-rezhim/>

Federation's universities over the years 2022 – 2023, have studied.<sup>147</sup> It is planned to create a Russian-Turkmen University in Turkmenistan.<sup>148</sup>

#### 4. Protecting migrants' rights.

Turkmenistan is participating in elimination of statelessness: starting the year 2005 to 2020 in total 25,510 stateless persons have obtained the citizenship of Turkmenistan<sup>149</sup>. In the year 2021 in total 2,657 stateless persons have obtained the citizenship of Turkmenistan, in the year 2022 it was 1,530 stateless persons (including two refugees), jointly it was representatives of 26 ethnic groups, of which 57% were women<sup>150</sup>.

Turkmenistan has experience in using of digital environment to support migrants from other countries. Thus, the Turkmenistan's State Migration Service has a multilingual (Turkmen, English and Russian) website, which contains a handy information section for foreign citizens<sup>151</sup> with the following subsections: list of required documents for foreign citizens' registration, memos (migration registration, memo for employers and the foreign citizens and their employer's liability for violation of the migration legislation); useful information for university students that are citizens of Turkmenistan studying in other countries; on obtaining of a visa (list of required paperwork); on obtaining of biometric passport for external travels (list of required documents); procedure for crossing the Turkmenistan's border by foreign citizens. The website also has a section "for foreign citizens"<sup>152</sup> with following subsections: processing and extension of visa application; residence permit in Turkmenistan; processing of letter of invitation; conducting of employment activities in Turkmenistan; citizenship of Turkmenistan; registration of foreign citizens.

Turkmenistan is participating in combat against trafficking of human beings: on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, the Law of Turkmenistan "On Combating Trafficking of Human Beings" No. 454-V dated by October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 came into force<sup>153</sup> (which replaced the previously existing Law of

<sup>147</sup> Kazakhstan is leading in the number of students in Russian universities. The international cooperation. Website of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. 08.07.2022

[https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/53842/?sphrase\\_id=8033957](https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/53842/?sphrase_id=8033957);  
Arefiev, A. L. Training of foreign citizens in the higher educational institutions of the Russian Federation. Statistical digest / Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. — Issue No. 17 (2020). — Moscow: State Institute of Russian Language named after. A. S. Pushkin, 2020. Pp. 24 <https://uni-dubna.ru/File?id=461d891b-a65f-4c59-879c-2352c2f166d7>

<sup>148</sup> Russia and Turkmenistan are reaching a new level of cooperation in the higher education area. The international cooperation. Website of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. 10/12/2023 [https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/74183/?sphrase\\_id=8033957](https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/74183/?sphrase_id=8033957)

<sup>149</sup> Website of the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan URL: <https://migration.gov.tm/ru/gosudarstvennaya-migratsionnaya-sluzhba-turkmenistana/> ; Refugees and migrants. UN News. August 14, 2020, <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2020/08/1383812>

<sup>150</sup> Common country analysis. Turkmenistan UN. Update 2022 <https://turkmenistan.un.org/ru/download/124048/213125>

<sup>151</sup> Website of the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan. URL: <https://migration.gov.tm/ru/information/pamyatka/>

<sup>152</sup> Website of the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan URL: <https://migration.gov.tm/ru/inostrannym-grazhdanam/>

<sup>153</sup> Analysis of Turkmenistan's legislation in the area of combating the trafficking of human beings. UNODC. UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Ashgabat. 2018

Turkmenistan “On Combating Trafficking of Human Beings”, adopted on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007), the “National Action Plan of Turkmenistan to Combat Trafficking of Human Beings for the years 2020 through 2022” has been adopted and took on the effect<sup>154</sup>.

## 5. The migrants’ remittances.

Since the year 2020, in Turkmenistan, one can top up their VISA and MasterCard banking cards with a limit of USD 300 per month, and to make international transfers through services like Western Union and MoneyGram with a monthly limit of USD 200<sup>155</sup>.

According to the Central Bank of the Russian Federation<sup>156</sup>, foreign money transactions by the private individuals of Turkmenistan, conducted either with or without opening an account through financial organizations, including remittances done via transfer systems from the Russian Federation, have steadily dropped down over the years of 2015 to 2020. Thus, in the year 2015 they amounted to USD 16,000,000, in the year 2016 to USD 8,202,5000, in the year 2017 it was USD 1,603,000 in the year 2018 USD 470,000 in the year 2019 USD 234,000 and in the year 2020 USD 121,000. The decrease in the year 2020 compared to that of 2019 amounted to 52%.

## 6. Migration and conflicts.

There is no official information about the presence or absence of a considerable number of refugees in Turkmenistan. As part of the elimination of statelessness efforts, only two refugees were reported to have received the citizenship of Turkmenistan in the year 2022<sup>157</sup>.

For Turkmenistan, as for a neutral state, the main potential factor of instability at the present time is the extensive border with Afghanistan. In case of the situation’s deterioration in Afghanistan, residents of Turkmenistan in regions neighboring Afghanistan might potentially increase migration mobility.

## 7. International and non-governmental organizations.

Turkmenistan is a member state of 42 international organizations, including the UN and a number of its specialized agencies such as: UNESCO, UNIDO, ICAO, etc.; OIC; OSCE; IBRD; IMF; MFC; EBRD; ECO; OIS; Asian Development Bank, etc. The country is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement<sup>158</sup>.

In Turkmenistan there is representative office of International Organization for Migration, the UN migration agency. The IOM supports the Government of Turkmenistan in improvement of the migration management, while regularly reviewing national legislation in the migration area and in prevention of trafficking of human beings as a response to the migration’s

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia/2018/Legal\\_Assessment\\_Turkmenistan\\_rus.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia/2018/Legal_Assessment_Turkmenistan_rus.pdf)

<sup>154</sup> Voluntary National Survey of Turkmenistan. On progress in implementation of the global Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ashgabat. Turkmen Publishing Service. 2023

<https://turkmenistan.un.org/ru/download/137512/239049>

<sup>155</sup> In Turkmenistan, changes have been introduced to foreign exchange transactions on international remittances. Turkmenportal. 10.03.2020 <https://turkmenportal.com/blog/25856/v-turkmenistane-vneseny-izmeneniya-na-valyutoobmennye-operacii-po-mezhdunarodnym-perevodam>

<sup>156</sup> Data from Russia’s Central Bank URL: [https://cbr.ru/statistics/macro\\_itm/tg/](https://cbr.ru/statistics/macro_itm/tg/)

<sup>157</sup> Common country analysis. Turkmenistan UN. Update 2022

<https://turkmenistan.un.org/ru/download/124048/213125>

<sup>158</sup> Website of the Plenipotentiary Representation of the Republic of Tatarstan in Turkmenistan. On Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan in the international community. URL: <https://tatturkmen.tatarstan.ru/constitution.htm>

changing dynamics and the contemporary challenges, increasing the capacities of younger generation in the context of migration and prevention of rushed decisions for illegal migration, by providing protection and assistance in reintegration of the migrants that ended up in challenging situations with a focus on women's empowerment in the context of migration in Central Asia, taking into account the interconnection of migration, environment and climate change in the national climate change adaptation planning, while supporting Turkmenistan in implementation of the Global compact for a safe, orderly and legal migration.<sup>159</sup>

There are some non-governmental organizations working in Turkmenistan, including some in the area of combating trafficking of human beings. For instance, the public organization Ýeňme (Ashgabat); the Ashgabat Club, which maintains a 24/7 hotline on the issues of migration, crime prevention, counteraction and combating the trafficking of human beings. Over the years of 2019–2020, the “Ýeňme” public organization has implemented the following projects: organization a shelter for victims of trafficking of human beings; awareness campaigns to combat the trafficking of human beings; creation of income-generating activities for the victims of trafficking of human beings<sup>160</sup>.

## 8. Prospects and prediction estimates of migration processes.

It could be predicted that Turkmenistan in the short term will remain a donor country of migrants, the main stream of whom will be directed to Turkey and the Russian Federation. Moreover, due to the shortage of vacant slots in universities of Turkmenistan, the educational migration from Turkmenistan to the Russian Federation and to other countries will continue to take place. The education related migrants from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, China, and other countries will arrive in Turkmenistan, both on the basis of bilateral intergovernmental agreements and on a private basis.

With the observed decline over the recent years in migration stream to Turkey, one might foresee a reorientation of the migrants' traffic from Turkmenistan to other countries, including to the Russian Federation.

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Website of the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Interior Ministry URL:

<https://мвд.рф/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya>

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## **Contemporary migration processes and trends of their development in the Republic of Uzbekistan**

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**Demographic situation.** Uzbekistan has enormous and growing demographic and labor capacity. According to the Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (hereinafter referred to as the Statistics Agency), as of beginning of 2023, the country's permanent population amounted to 36,024,900 people, of which 56.8% are able-bodied working age people. In the year 2022, the population increased by 753.600 people (2.1%). Over the recent time, demographic growth in Uzbekistan has been accelerating due to a surge in the birth rate. In the year 2021, 905,200 babies were born, and in the year 2022 it was 932,200 births (4, pp.4-5). Over the year 2023, the number of births increased up to 968.100 babies. The accelerated reproduction mode of population that has been taking place over the past 5 years, which is expected for the near future will ensure a large-scale increase in labor resources.

### **Brief migration profile.**

Migration of population with a change of permanent place of residence has noticeably picked up over the recent years, albeit without a clearly defined dynamic. According to the Statistics Agency, number of arrivals was 191,100 people in the year 2020, 256,800 in 2021, and 214,800 in the year 2022. According to calculations, in the year 2021, 276,900 people participated in permanent migration, in the year 2022 it was 223,600. More than 90% of the population's transfers for permanent place of residence occur within the country's borders (in the year 2022 it was 94.9%) (4, p. 16-18). Migration for permanent places of residence is taking place most actively within the regions' borders (60% or more of the domestic scale rate). In the context of migration for permanent place of residence between provinces, the main streams are directed to the capital city of Tashkent, where there are significantly greater employment opportunities, better developed infrastructure, and relatively high wages, as well as to the surrounding Tashkent province, in which there is quite a concentration of many industrial enterprises and other manufactures.

The external migration volume for permanent places of residence is relatively small. In the year 2022, of the total number of arrivals, only 1% (2,300) are from other countries, in 2021 it was only 1,900 people, i.e., less than 1% of the total number of migrants of this type. In the year 2022, the number of individuals that left the country has dropped down to 8,800 people as opposed to 20,100 in the year 2021. As a result of changes in structure of migration-related streams over the recent years, the country's population migration outflow is noticeably decreasing. The negative balance of external migration for permanent places of residence in the year 2021 was 18,200 and in 2022 it was 6,500, i.e., has decreased by almost three times fold.

The main migration-related streams in Uzbekistan are the large-scale external and internal labor migrations. According to the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Alleviation (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Employment), each year 2-3 million people participate in external labor migration alone. A survey conducted by UNICEF in Uzbekistan in the year 2021 (2,500 people) showed that 72% of respondents had friends and relatives who went to work in other countries or described themselves as labor migrants. (2)

### **External labor migration**

Uzbekistan is a country of labor force surplus. According to the Ministry of Employment, more than half a million young people are going out to the labor market annually, however not every single one of them would find work. In the year 2022, the country's labor force amounted to

19,500,000 people, of which 14,100,00 people were employed, and the unemployment rate made up 7,6%.

In Uzbekistan, external labor migration is covering a significant part of able-bodied working population. According to surveys, the main driving force is employment opportunities and prospects of higher wages. Significant differences in wages from a place of origin and the place of employment are often the main decisive factor.

After a certain decline in labor migration due to the pandemic, it is currently returning back to the usual levels. According to the Ministry of Employment, in the years 2022 and 2023 the number of Uzbek citizens working outside the country has exceeded two million people as opposed to 1,5 million in the year 2021.

There are no significant changes in the composition of labor migrants. Thus, according to the Agency for External Labor Migration (hereinafter referred to as the Agency), in March of 2022, amongst 2,400 labor migrants conducting temporary activities abroad, 21,4% were women, 75,9% were men, and 35,1% were younger people. More detailed information about the composition of migrants and trends in the formation of migration streams was identified during a sociological survey, which was conducted in the year 2022 by the Labor Market Research Institute under the Ministry of Employment (11) in 52 districts and cities of the country. Around 2500 people went through the interview. According to the survey, (10, p.83) from amongst them 86,5% were men, 13,5% were women. The younger generation of 18 to 30 years of age is 41,6%, 31 years of age and older is 58,4%. More than two thirds of the migrants were married. And 66,3% had specialized secondary education (college), while 27,6% had secondary education, and 6,7% had higher education. There is a trend towards increase in the number of migrants with higher education and vocational training, which is due to the growing need for relatively highly qualified workers in the host (recipient) countries. Amongst the respondents, 72,1% have worked in Russia, 12,2% worked in Kazakhstan, 8,7% worked in Turkey, and 2,3% worked in South Korea. The main reasons for sustainable tendency of the labor migrants towards Russia and Kazakhstan are the competitive advantages of their labor markets, no need for visa, long-term ties between the countries, as well as Russian language knowledge by many migrants. In addition, cultures of Russia and Kazakhstan have been familiar to everyone in Uzbekistan since childhood.

The majority of migrants (71%) worked legally. Main areas of labor activity were the following: construction (46,1%), production industry (13,2%), trade (6,9%), transportation (7,6%), foodservice industry (7,1%), service provision area (8,3%), agriculture (6,4%). A vitally important motivation turned out to be the amount of salary. For 62,7% of migrant workers, it was insufficient wages at their place of residence as the main factor of decision-making process. According to the Statistics Agency, the average monthly salary in the country over the year 2018 was USD 219, and in 2022 was USD 384, which is significantly lower than in the employment areas. According to the survey, the average monthly salary of a migrant in the Russian Federation in the year 2019 was USD 709,8, and in 2022 it was USD 763.0, and still for some (15,3%) it was USD 1000 or more, and in large enterprises wages were much higher than in the smaller ones.

According to the Agency's data, in the year 2022, 568,500 Uzbek women worked abroad. The geographic scope of labor migration for men and women is somewhat different, depending on the demand for professions in the countries of destination. Thus, amongst men, the share of workers in Turkey was 2,5%, and amongst women it was 17,6%. In Kazakhstan, the share of women amongst the migrants exceeds 20%, in the year 2019 it was eight times higher than that of men. The composition of women is mainly young and relatively young women, aged from 30 to 50 years old, with secondary general and secondary vocational education. Over recent years, the need for paramedical personnel has especially increased in Western countries. In the year 2022, under

a joint program of the Agency and the Swiss organization Globogate Recruiting GmbH, there is a need for experienced nurses. According to the Embassy of Israel, out of the 10,000 migrant workers from Uzbekistan working in this country, about 80% are women that are caring for the sick and elderly. According to the Agency's data, more than 60% of external labor migrants of Uzbekistan are working in Russia: in the year 2022 it was 1,450,000 people. According to the Agency's data, the majority of labor migration is taking place on a legal basis.

In the year 2022, migration streams were establishing in the context of Pandemics subsiding. Economic activity began to recover, which had an impact on revival of migration processes. At the same time, the military operation of Russia introduced certain adjustments. According to the Agency, in the first quarter of the year, 133,000 labor migrants returned from Russia to Uzbekistan. According to the survey, 15% of them lost their jobs in Russia, 25% had financial difficulties due to unstable exchange rates and would like to return to Uzbekistan. Altogether, in the years 2021-2022 there was a relative decrease of the migration stream to the Russian Federation. According to the Ministry of Employment, accelerated job creation is planned for the year 2024, including 500,000 jobs with decent level of wages. At the same time, the Agency is vigorously searching for alternative labor markets. Over the recent years, Uzbekistan has been expanding the geographic scope of its labor migration due to an increase in the number of partners from the CIS countries and non-former USSR countries. Namely, from Turkey, the UAE, other countries in Southeast Asia, as well as of the European Union. (31)

A significant part of migrant workers is employed through organized recruitment process. Republic of Uzbekistan, after signing of intergovernmental agreement with the Russian Federation in April of 2017, has started implementing the organized dispatch of labor force to the Russian Federation. Prior to this, it was done only in the Republic of Korea, and in small quantities. Currently, Uzbekistan is expanding the scope of organized recruitment. According to the Agency, in 2021, 108,500 people went to work in an organized manner (100,000 to Russia, 6,900 to Kazakhstan and 1,500 to South Korea). At the end of 2022, Russia lifted the limit on the number of labor migrants from Uzbekistan, which are employed in an organized manner in the areas of construction, agriculture, as well as industrial development and trade. New partners of organized recruitment became such countries like Serbia (410 people) and Germany (31 people).

Currently, intergovernmental agreements on organized employment have been made with many countries. In the year 2022, the labor migrants went out to work in the UAE, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Poland. On a small scale, the organized recruitment started to take place targeting Denmark, France, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Iran, and Pakistan.

It is planned to develop organized recruitment with Germany, Austria, and Japan. According to the Ministry of Employment, the labor migrants from Uzbekistan, after passing of a customized test related to knowledge of the language and the chosen trade, were invited to work in Japan. These were predominantly qualified workers and specialists, with guarantees of decent wages, benefits for health insurance and social coverage, as well as opportunities for changing places of work. They will have the status of "specialized qualified workers."

The Agency's work practice includes making of agreements with employers and recruitment agencies in the recipient countries, as well as signing memorandums for cooperation with authorized organizations of other countries. Starting June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, new representative offices of the Agency for external labor migration of Uzbekistan began operating in the Russian Federation: in places like Tula, Voronezh, Volgograd, Nizhny Novgorod, Irkutsk, Amur province, Krasnodar, Krasnoyarsk, Perm Territories, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area. New representative offices were opened in Shymkent (Kazakhstan) and Istanbul (Turkey). However, in the year 2022 compared to

that of 2021, the number of people that were engaged to work in an organized manner dropped down to 7,100 people, mainly because of Russia and Kazakhstan. The main reasons for the decline in organized stream of labor force to Russia are the reduction in requests from large construction sites of Russia, the lifting of Covid-related restrictions at the borders, as well as the still existing organizational costs of organized recruitment.

In the year 2023, organized employment has increased significantly. According to the Agency, over the 8 months of 2023, 28,200 people were deployed, including more than 20,500 people to Russia, 812 people to Kazakhstan, and 3,184 to South Korea, as well as 1,809 to the UK, 387 to Germany, 194 to Turkey, and in small quantities to Romania, Bulgaria, Japan, Lithuania, Poland, and Latvia. In the year 2023, a new model of organized recruitment to Russia started to be implemented on the basis of pre-migration training centers for foreign workers (so called “mono-centers”). In 2023, a safe migration project was started up in Uzbekistan, aimed at informing the migrants of the most relevant legal and other issues. The agency and its branches throughout the regions have expanded the scope of their activities. They provided informational and advisory services to 67,100 citizens that are working or willing to work abroad. The activities of migrant workers abroad were monitored, compliance with the terms of employment contracts was examined, as well as working and living conditions of the migrant workers were studied, while identified shortcomings were tackled.

Thus, a system of safe and orderly labor migration is being consistently created. Migrant workers started to be legally equated with the self-employed public with issuance of electronic workbooks. In total 28 single-centers “Ishga Marhamat” (“Welcome to work”) have been created, in which 70 types of short-term training courses, training in 30 professions and 7 foreign languages in relation to the profession were organized. The practice of issuing international “Skills passport” certificates has been introduced. Cooperation with host countries is expanding. Measures have been taken to provide financial support for the migrant workers and members of their families (small loans, benefits-based loans, and subsidies, in some cases apartments, etc.).

A UNICEF study (an online survey of 2,500 people) indicated that the labor migration of the population of Uzbekistan has a significant impact on society and life of the country (2) 50% of respondents think that the labor migration has a positive impact on society. More than 70% of interviewed people involved in migration believe that the attitude towards them or their family members has not changed after their departure for labor migration. About 20% of them believe that it has improved, and only 10% believe that the attitude has deteriorated. Yet 48% of the respondents believe that labor migration in one way or another is negatively affecting the situation and children’s behavior, but 16% noted the positive impact of migration on behavior of children who are the members of migrants’ families, every third one of the interviewed noted the negative impact of migration on family life.

### **Internal labor migration.**

In Uzbekistan, internal labor migration is also pretty significant. As the IOM experts pointed out, its rate in Uzbekistan is quite high; it is taking place mainly “from rural to urban areas for employment related purposes.” Its main directions are Tashkent, as well as bigger cities the regional centers. Such migrants (so called “mardikors”) are the day laborers who are hired for little money to do any work for regular individuals, and often for small enterprises, organizations, and Government services. In cities there are so called “Mardikor bazaars,” i.e., a kind of unofficial labor stocks, the Mardikors have practically no rights and often become victims of deception and arbitrariness of employers and law-enforcement agencies. Despite the costs of such types of employment, internal labor migration is quite significant in poverty reduction, in particular for those who have lost their jobs or find themselves in difficult life situations. The significance of the internal labor migration is not only in mitigating unemployment and earning money, but also in

ensuring social stability in society. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, measures are being taken to streamline temporary, seasonal, and daily types of work. An online system has been created, namely the Meningishim (“My Work”) application, where job offers are published for seasonal, daily workers and other self-employed people. In August of 2022, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted “On measures for reduction the share of unofficial employment and a balance creation for labor resources based on modern approaches”, which provides for further measures to sort out the informal employment.

**Educational migration.** In Uzbekistan there are 154 universities, 20% of them are branches of leading foreign universities. The number of students has increased to 808.400 people. According to the Statistics Agency, the number of foreign students studying at the country’s universities in the 2022-2023 academic year amounted to 5,000 people, which is three times higher than 5 years ago. At the same time, according to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the number of Uzbekistan citizens studying abroad amounted to 85,900 people. (15) Research is indicating that the educational migration is closely related to the labor migration. Many students abroad are starting to work either while studying or upon completion of their studies.

**External relations, further steps in modernizing the state migration policy.** The Presidential Decree “On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022 - 2026” sets the following goal: “Transformation of the Government agencies’ activities based on the “aiming to serve citizens” principle. Based off of that, the country’s contemporary migration policy is in the process of creation. Migrants are the most vulnerable category of workers, who are dependent on any fluctuations in the global economy, labor markets, epidemics, illegal actions of the law-enforcement and other arbitrary violations. Uzbekistan is taking systematic measures in the area of streamlining the labor migration, managing of migration processes and social protection of workers that are employed abroad. In the years 2021-2023 external migration connections of Uzbekistan have significantly expanded. According to the Agency’s data, in the years 2021-2023 a number of agreements on labor migration were signed with the following host countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Japan. A Memorandum of Cooperation and an Action Plan (as of April 2021) were signed with the Eurasian Economic Commission, aimed at strengthening of mutually beneficial cooperation in matters of migration and social protection of migrant workers. New state institutions have been established (foreign representative offices, agencies, a fund for material support of the labor migrants). Intergovernmental relations are also expanding, in particular with the Russian Federation.

According to the Agency’s information service, cooperation agreements have been signed with 422 organizations from countries such as Great Britain, Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Germany, Serbia, Finland, Russia, and Kazakhstan. As a result of this work, more than 70,000 jobs openings were identified, 22,000 seekers to work abroad were employed to training sessions in the *monocenters* that are operating in the country.

Inter-parliamentary relations of Uzbekistan are in the process of expansion. In May of 2022, a number of organizational issues on labor migration were discussed at the level of the foreign ministers of Russia and Uzbekistan. By decision of the Committee of Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament of Uzbekistan) on International Affairs and Inter-parliamentary Relations, assistance was rendered to Uzbek compatriots in Ukraine. In particular, some practical assistance was provided for evacuation of 6,030 citizens through the territory of Poland and Romania to Uzbekistan through specially organized flights of the national aviation company “Uzbekistan Airways”. A number of new agreements have been made of long-term significance with countries that are receiving the largest number of labor migrants. One of the most key areas of the migration policy modernization is consistent implementation of a support system and social protection for

the labor migrants. A system is organized for pre-departure vocational and language training for the migrant workers. In the established educational and industrial facilities and the *monocenters*, the migrant workers go through pre-departure language and vocational training. Much attention has started to be paid to adaptation issues of returning to their homeland workers. A database of returning migrants is in the process of creation. In the context of labor migration programs there are some measures provided to assist in employment, in implementation of entrepreneurial initiatives, and more efficient use of remittances from the migrant workers.

Uzbekistan has not joined the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), however, the main goals and modernization directions for the state migration policy indicate that the measures taken to implement it are consistent with the GCM principles and goals. A system of organized labor recruitment with appropriate mechanisms is being introduced to ensure work safety measures work outside the country. A nationwide database of citizens willing to work abroad has been created. A system of pre-departure training for the labor migrants is in the process of implementation. The “labor-migration” software package was launched within the context of the “Unified National Labor System” information system (5). The legislative framework is being improved. Currently, the country’s labor migrants are provided with comprehensive assistance in employment finding, in exercising the rights of Uzbekistan citizens to work abroad, as well as legal and social support to the migrants both within the country and in host countries. Over the years 2021-2023 the legislation of Uzbekistan has been supplemented with new legal documents and legal mechanisms. The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was issued “On additional measures to encourage citizens going on organized labor migration abroad” dated by July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted “On additional measures to support citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan conducting temporary labor activities abroad and members of their families” dated by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted “On additional measures to encourage the citizens that are leaving for organized labor migration abroad” dated by July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Work on the draft Law is in the process of completion “On External Labor Migration”. Its adoption will determine in a legislative realm the main directions of the state policy in the external labor migration area.

Based on governmental resolutions, legal assistance to people that are working outside the country has been significantly strengthened, and the scope of benefits and guarantees for the labor migrants has been expanded. A fund has been created to support people working abroad and for protection of their rights and interests. The interaction of governmental agencies whose activities are related to working on labor migration issues has been intensified. The practice of life and health insurance of labor migrants is introduced as well as providing mortgage loans to members of their families, and the measures have been taken to ensure the reintegration of individuals that are returning from the labor migration. The Agency is strengthening its efforts on organized labor force recruitment by reaching out to the host countries. Non-state institutions, namely private employment agencies (PEAs) have officially started their operations. Interaction of state entities and non-state institutions is bringing about considerable outcomes in terms of alternative sources and employment opportunities abroad and increasing the entire migration system’s efficiency. In fact, over the recent years, the labor migration management in Uzbekistan has been raised to a new state level. In parallel with implementation of Government measures for the migrant workers’ social protection, the social status of this category of citizens in the country has improved. According to experts, “the society’s attitude towards the citizens that are working abroad has also radically changed, as well as a dialogue has been established with labor migrants, and a new system has been introduced for examination and resolution of their challenges and needs (13, pp. 145-156). The Agency for Youth Affairs, the Youth Parliament, and representative offices of non-commercial organizations participate in implementation of the migration policy.

There is a number of issues in implementation of Uzbekistan's migration policy. In particular, a sufficiently effective interaction between the Agency and PEAs has not yet been achieved; for instance, in the year 2021, many private entities have lost their licenses. The issues of illegal labor migration also remained to be insufficiently resolved. In the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On additional measures for further improvement of external labor migration system of the Republic of Uzbekistan" it is specifically indicated that there are still large quantities of illegal labor migration, as well as relatively low figures of citizens' organized employment abroad and employment provision to persons that are returning home from labor migration.

**The role of international and non-governmental organizations in solving migration issues.**

Institutional cooperation between governmental structures of the country and international organizations is expanding. International organizations are actively participating in major forums, conferences, and seminars on population migration issues. In the year 2019, Uzbekistan became a full member of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which created the legal and organizational basis for international cooperation in this area. In the year 2021, the IOM office launched activities aimed at streamlining and humanizing of migration processes, expanding international cooperation, providing practical assistance, especially in protection the migrants' rights, preventing illegal forms of migration, and providing humanitarian assistance to the migrants who find themselves in challenging life situations. IOM chairs the UN Network on Migration Working Group and is responsible for the overall coordination of the UN agencies' activities on migration issues. Upon the initiative of IOM, the protection of migrants' rights was included in the Samarkand Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at the first Asian Human Rights Forum (2018). IOM is initiating creation of a pilot skills development center for potential labor migrants from Uzbekistan. In the year 2021, IOM launched the Comprehensive Action Plan for Afghanistan and Neighboring Countries for the years 2021–2024 (CAP). This plan was revised in the year 2022, with Uzbekistan's branch of IOM now leading the coordination of IOM sub-regional support in Central Asia to Afghanistan. IOM is assisting the Government of Uzbekistan in implementation of the GCM in training and professional development activities for demography researchers, academic studies on population's issues are supported by UNFPA, this foundation in the years 2021-2023 have rendered support to migration projects. In the year 2023, a branch of the Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development was also started up in Uzbekistan, amongst the activities of which there is assistance in implementation of the "Safe Migration in Central Asia" project.

The European Union, with the support of UNICEF, is funding a project to assist the Government of Uzbekistan to develop appropriate policies and programs for child protection. Over the recent years, UNICEF has been implementing a number of projects in Uzbekistan aimed at solving gender related issues and protection the rights of children, especially the migrants' children. In particular, in the year 2021, a project was developed entitled "Assessing the impact of COVID on the rights of children that are affected by migration". Via an online survey 1,800 children aged 14 to 18 years were interviewed, of which 31% were children of migrants. (14). In December of 2021, a project "The Impact of Labor Migration on Society" was completed. (2). The documents developed by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan are significant for development of policies and programs by the Government in the area of children's protection in the context of migration. The development of projects aimed at humanitarian purposes by the UNICEF Representative Office is envisaged for by the 2025 Road Map.

On issues of organized deployment of the migrants to Russia, starting from the year 2021, the Multifunctional Migration Center (MMC) of Moscow is working in close cooperation with the Agency. It is implementing an entire set of activities for recruitment and deployment of the



migrants to work in Russia. Besides the provision of substantial assistance to migrants in paperwork processing, the IMC is providing information concerning available job openings, organizing interviews with employers, and participating in assessment of the professional qualifications of potential employees. There is regular information exchange between the Agency and the IMC, and a database of candidates and vacancies is being created. The Peoples' Friendship University of Russia participated in assisting the migrants to learn the Russian language. As part of this cooperation, the migrant workers can receive Russian language classes. Such classes are subsidized by funds of Uzbekistan.

Non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs) are also involved in issues of labor migration in Uzbekistan. The oldest of them is the NGO "Istikbolli Avlod" ("Generation with Future"). Currently, its branches operate in almost all regions of the country. The Information and Advisory Center created by this organization has implemented more than 60 projects in the area of awareness raising campaigns, protecting the rights of human trafficking victims, vulnerable migrants, and expanding economic opportunities for representatives of vulnerable groups. In the year 2023, in Samarkand, with the support of the United States Agency for International Cooperation (USAID), the second Informational and Advisory Center was started up in partnership with the Samarkand branch of "Istikbolli Avlod" organization. It is also worthwhile to highlight the NGO "Barqaror Hayot" ("Sustainable Life"), one of whose tasks is to reduce cases of illegal migration and to prepare the migrant workers for work adaptation abroad. Youth organizations (Agency for Youth Affairs, Youth Parliament) are engaged in awareness-raising work in order to prevent illegal migration and the involvement of young people in fraudulent activities.

**Migrants' remittances. The role of labor migration in the social and economic development of Uzbekistan.** According to the country's Central Bank (CBU), in the year 2022 the sum of remittances from migrants to the country has amounted to USD 16.9 billion, which is significantly more than in previous years: in 2021 it was USD 8.1 billion, in 2020 USD 6.0 billion. In the year 2023, according to the World Bank (WB), it amounted to USD 16.1 billion, which is 21% and 17,8% as related to the country's GDP respectively. At the same time, the share of transfers from Russia decreased slightly: from 87% to 78%. In a survey for Uzbekistan, the World Bank experts predict a decrease in the number of migrants to Russia due to the military conflict and other complications, which will slow down the country's GDP growth down to 3.6%. (3) The amount of remittances in the future may be negatively affected by the expected recession in the global economy, fluctuations in the USD exchange rate (more than 90% of remittances that are sent to Uzbekistan are made in USD), and increased competition in the global labor markets. According to the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, throughout the years 2018 to 2023, 16% of the population's total income comes from labor migrants' remittances. According to a survey conducted by the Institute for Labor Market Research in 2022, due to earnings abroad, around 67,3% of the migrants' families improved their standard of living and solved their pressing issues, including the education of children and the purchase of their own housing. Reportedly 22,9% of respondents were able to organize a wedding party for their children, and 7,3% invested in starting up or supporting their own business. (10 p. 83) The main bulk of remittances are traditionally spent on consumer needs, but over the recent years there have been qualitative changes in the structure of the use of remittances, in particular, there has been an increase in spending on education and development of children. The country's Government is taking a number of measures to increase the investment-oriented turnover of remittances. According to some experts, it is advisable to create a much favorable environment in Uzbekistan not only for development of private entrepreneurship, but also for attracting of the remittances capacity to nation-wide significant economic development projects.

**Migration and conflicts as latest trends in development of external migration of the population.** The conflicts that are occurring in neighboring countries have a certain impact on the migration processes. In the years 2022-2023 these were the conflicts of Afghanistan and Russia.

**Afghanistan.** The neighborhood with Afghanistan has long posed certain security challenges for Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has strengthened its border to stop the entry of illegal migrants or refugees from Afghanistan. Border crossing posts were repeatedly subjected to armed attacks from Afghanistan, which required the construction of an Afghanistan-Uzbekistan separation walled barrier with length of 137 km. In Uzbekistan, an Afghan diaspora was formed up by the re-settlers. The Afghan migrants work on construction sites, in the private sector, or are engaged in entrepreneurship. Uzbekistan does not have the official right to accept refugees, because since it did not join the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. At the same time, Uzbekistan, being on the crossroads of the refugees' travel path, participates in these processes. Uzbekistan is cooperating with a number of countries on issues of their citizens' evacuation from Afghanistan. According to experts, in the summer of 2021, 2,000 foreign citizens were evacuated through Uzbekistan. According to the special representative of the country's President, Uzbekistan's position is based on "the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, adhering to the principles of good neighborliness and mutual respect."

Based on the Presidential Decree "On approval of the Regulations on the procedure for granting political asylum in the Republic of Uzbekistan" (dated by May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017, No. PD-5060), political asylum in Uzbekistan is granted to foreign citizens and stateless persons on the basis of generally recognized principles and norms of international law and with consideration of the country's national interests. The country's Government has decided not to forcibly deport asylum seekers but to create temporary accommodation centers for arriving Afghans and citizens who found themselves in tough situations. According to the human rights activists, by the end of 2021 there were about 2,000 Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan.

The border town of Termez plays a significant role in supporting the UN relief operations on the border with Afghanistan. In this place, in October of 2021, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with the active support of the Government of Uzbekistan, created the Termez Regional Humanitarian Logistics Center, which allows delivery of humanitarian aid. In this place, the Governments of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have established an educational center to train the citizens of Afghanistan. In coordination with the IOM, Uzbekistan is implementing pre-departure training for the labor migrants from Afghanistan for their future employment in the EU countries. Their number as of Fall of 2022 was 35,000 people. International organizations take part in their employment. The European Union expressed its readiness to allocate EUR 1.6 million to Uzbekistan in order to render assistance to the Afghan migrants. These funds are intended to create jobs, vocational training, retraining, and the migrants' professional development. The IOM took part in the creation of two centers in Uzbekistan for pre-departure training and adjustment of the labor migrants for their further deployment to European countries, as well as, in cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan, in implementation of their vocational training. Western countries, in particular Germany, are interested in supporting Uzbekistan in the event of an escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan and in case of refugees' influx increase.

In 2022, IOM has been working with Government and civil society partners to expand direct assistance to vulnerable citizens of Afghanistan and to members of the host community. IOM also providing support in capacity building of state agencies on preparedness to emergency situations, migration, as well as in interaction development between relevant state agencies of Uzbekistan. According to experts there are currently some issues with Afghan university students in

Uzbekistan. In February of 2022, they were admitted to the country's universities on the basis of contracts made with the previous Government of Afghanistan, with free education and accommodation. These conditions remain to be relevant. However, there is not enough funds for their current expenses, and they do not possess a right to get a job (no work visa issued), they need some real assistance from international organizations in resolution of these problems.

**The Russian Federation.** Russia is the main migration partner of Uzbekistan both in case of migration for permanent place of residence and in labor migration, therefore the armed conflict is having an impact on both of these areas. The influx of migrants from Russia to Uzbekistan has increased. This migration is aimed at a temporary stay in the country in order to wait out the period of armed conflict. With regards to this category of migration, in the academic literature the term "relocation" is adopted, and participants of this process are referred to as "relocated persons." That is a relatively small migration stream that started to take place in the spring of 2022 and significantly increased with the start of draft in the Russian Federation. There is no clarity regarding the number of relocated persons in Uzbekistan; some of them are categorized as tourists. According to the Statistics Agency, over the 9 months of 2022, over 395,000 citizens of Russia arrived in the country for tourism purposes, which is 2,1 times more than in similar period of time in the previous year. Moreover, in September their number amounted to 78,200 people, which is 2,7 times more than that of April.

According to the experts, in this forced temporary migration from Russia the two main waves can be highlighted. In February through March of 2022, the Russian citizens were moving more due to political and psychological reasons; these were mainly people with residence permits or citizenship of other countries. Later on, the migrants' motivations became more complex, and the migrants' composition became more diverse. The share of entrepreneurs starting up their own businesses in Uzbekistan and qualified personnel working remotely for their Russian companies or collaborating with local organizations has increased.

Amongst the local community there are some mixed opinions regarding the relocation. In general, there is no negative attitude observed. According to a number of experts of economics, the temporary influx of migrants has a positive influence on the economy of Uzbekistan, since it increases the consumption and creating added value in the economy. The demand is growing for hotel services, restaurants, rental of premises, and housing rental. Relocation from Russia is strengthening the host country's IT sector. According to the experts, by the beginning of 2023, about 6,000 IT specialists have arrived in Uzbekistan. Currently, the IT industry in Uzbekistan is one of the key priorities of the economy. According to the *IT Park*, in terms of the quality of infrastructure for the IT sector, Tashkent is at a fairly high level, therefore a massive number of requests have been received from Russian companies. Within the country a special program for relocated persons "Tashkent Rush" has been developed, which is aimed at assisting in the employment and adaptation of IT specialists in the country. At the same time, the experts are observing certain damage caused by the relocation to some groups of the population, which might become a long-term phenomenon. In particular, because of relocation, prices for food and housing rental have significantly gone up, creating an imbalance between the increased prices and income of a significant part of the local population that are housing tenants. Airfare prices have gone up quite fast. All of this is reinforcing the already significant social division of society. There is also a danger of increased competition in the labor market, especially in the skilled labor area, because amongst the relocated persons there is predominate of some qualified specialists. (7) According to surveys done by journalists, some relocated persons intend to stay in Uzbekistan for a long time and to gradually settle down.

**Labor migration in aspects of national security.** In the modern world, migration security is an integral part of not only demographic, but also national security. (1; 8) It is becoming more and

more relevant because its subject becoming an entire population of the country. In relation to Uzbekistan, the migration processes may have negative consequences due to the growing scale of external labor migration. Despite significant economic outcomes, it is creating considerable risks for social-and-economic and national security. Currently, the migration situation in Uzbekistan, considering the intensity of search for work abroad and the sustainable dynamics of these processes, is directly affecting issues of national security, because it entails direct drain of the population, usually the youngest and most able-bodied. (9) They have to search for jobs abroad due to the oversaturated national labor market. Labor migrants are the most socially vulnerable category of people, even in context of organized employment. Labor migration involves mainly young and middle-aged people, in which the younger people usually develop professionally and build up their careers. When leaving the country in search of work, young people are often involved in unskilled labor, and thus might even lose their professional qualifications, which they obtained in the country. Many migrants are facing infringement of their rights in the area of labor and live in unfavorable sanitary and hygienic conditions, which is creating livelihood and psychological discomfort. According to the migrants themselves, the most significant causes for their dissatisfaction are untimely payment of wages, violation of work schedules, involvement in forced labor, work in unfavorable conditions, unfounded complaints from employers and issues with law enforcement agencies, as well as lack of protection in cases of illness. Migrants living and working without official employment are at particular zone of risk.

Another challenge of mass labor migration for the country is its negative consequences for the preservation of traditional family values, which are especially revered in Uzbekistan. Migrants leave their families behind for extended periods of time, which affects marital relationships and the upbringing of children, which is a concern for a massive number of families. The UNICEF Country Report presented the results of a survey on the children's situation in the absence of parents. An online survey of 1,800 children aged 14-18, of whom 31% were from migrant families, showed many negative consequences for children that are left behind by their parents. (17) Many migrants go out on work trips together with their children. This to some extent solves family issues, but at the same time creates many other challenges for children's education and upbringing. (12, p.21) In Russia, for example, many children of migrants are poorly able to speak Russian language, so they are reluctantly being accepted into the school system, and if they are in fact accepted, a number of challenges arise with the quality of learning and their adaptation. (6, pp.34-35) It is no coincidence that many teenagers from migrant families are starting to work early in life or babysit at home with younger siblings. (12, p. 22-23) In order to ensure migration security, the country will have to make significantly greater efforts to secure a balanced national labor market, capable of providing employment for a rapidly increasing number of labor resources.

**Predicted estimates.** According to experts, in the coming years, population migration with the purpose of changing permanent place of residence will continue to take place on a small scale and, mainly, within the country. Highly educated younger generation might be motivated to travel to other countries, therefore one of the country's modern migration policy directions is to create conditions for reducing of "brain drain" based on the accelerated development of the area of intellectual labor application. The adopted Strategy for Development of the country's Economy, the Urbanization Program, and the accelerated IT technologies development are aimed precisely at these goals. According to experts, labor and educational migration in the coming years will continue to take place on almost the same scale, considering the growing saturation in the national labor market and in vocational education system. One might expect further spatial expansion of the labor migration. According to the manager of information service of the Agency for External Labor Migration, in the coming years the likelihood of significant streams of labor migration to non-former USSR countries will continue to take place. According to the experts, this is conditioned to both high demographic growth in Uzbekistan and the growing labor demand in

other countries. The need for labor abroad, especially in the developed countries, will increase in the upcoming years. In particular, Germany alone needs 1.5 million foreign workers, an analogous situation is in other EU countries. This situation is creating certain motivations amongst the country's public to work abroad. According to a UNICEF survey for the year 2021, "only 26% of respondents provided a clear answer that they would not like to go on labor migration, 50% of the respondents can picture themselves as labor migrants in the future and so they chose an affirmative answer to the question about their willingness to work abroad". (3) At the same time, many migrants believe that they are tired of migration and prefer to work in their homeland. According to the experts, the Government of Uzbekistan is fully appreciating significance of the public's external labor migration for the country's economy. On the other hand, it is developing its migration policy considering the existing and expected risks associated with the employment of its citizens abroad. (1, 13) Experts believe that it is advisable for the Government of Uzbekistan to intensify efforts to significantly expand employment opportunities throughout the country's regions, as well as to join the EAEU. By becoming a member state of this organization, Uzbekistan will gain access to one labor market with free movement of labor. The conditions of stay of labor migrants that are coming from Uzbekistan will be improved to the status of laborers from other EAEU member states.

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