

## Social Characteristics and Consequences of Labor Migration

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### *Abstract*

The increase in the number of labor migrants is also greatly influenced by the rapid growth of urbanization rates. Most people who leave their villages and come to cities cannot find work. Some of them find it difficult to adapt to city life, and some lack the skills to work in urban environments. In addition, the increasingly intense process of globalization leads to an exponential increase in the flow of foreign labor migration. Today it is difficult to find a country that is not involved in labor migration to one degree or another. The more developed countries feel the need for labor, the more pressing the problem of unemployment in developing and poor countries becomes. This article is about it.

**Keywords:** *labor migration, migrants, European Union, Russia, Central Asia.*

### *Introduction*

In most countries of the world, the population is increasing (with the exception of Western Europe) and, accordingly, the number of people looking for work, forced to receive income from one type of work or another, is also increasing. Therefore, it is no secret that unemployment, which creates new jobs, has become the most pressing social problem in many places. Especially in countries where most of the population is young and there are not many large industrial enterprises, solving the problem creates more difficulties. In addition, increasing environmental pressure, in particular global warming, decreased annual precipitation, and the regular occurrence of droughts, are depriving many people of their source of livelihood. Oxford University professor Norman Mayer predicts that by 2050, "150 million people will be displaced from their homes by rising sea levels and changes in agriculture." [1].

In 2022, 327,131 cases of illegal crossing of EU borders were recorded, which is 64% more than in 2021 and 1.6 times more than in 2020. However, this figure is significantly lower than in 2015-2016, when, due to military operations in the Middle East, more than 1.8 million illegal migrants arrived in the EU in the East and North Africa.

The number of asylum applications also reached its highest level since the migration crisis of 2015-2016 - 923,991 (+46% compared to 2021). More than a quarter of all applications came from arrivals from Syria and Afghanistan. Next come Venezuela (6%), Turkey (5%), Colombia (5%), Pakistan (4%), Bangladesh (3%), Ukraine (3%) [2].

### *Methods*

In the process of writing the article, the methods of analysis, synthesis, work with documents, work with information, systematization, mathematical and statistical analysis were used.

**Literature Review.** In foreign economic literature, considerable attention is paid to the theoretical and methodological aspects of studying the problems of international labor migration. Among the foreign scientists whose works were carefully studied during the dissertation research, one should single out such

authors as Giddens A., Downs RM, Zelinsky W., Layder D., Lee E.A., Massey D., Ravenstein EG, Stark O., Stalker P, etc. Despite the breadth and versatility of the consideration of the problems of international labor migration, there are still many unresolved issues.

### *Discussion*

The largest migrations in the world today are taking place in Ukraine, with a total of 14.4 million people displaced. According to ICMPD estimates, in 2022, internal migration in Ukraine amounted to 6.5 million people, external migration - 7.9 million. Of the 7.9 million people who left the country, 4.9 million were registered as participants in the Temporary Protection Directive, first activated in the EU. Another 3 million went to Russia, the countries of the former USSR and Turkey.

Despite a certain reverse outflow of migrants that occurred in the second half of 2022, a second wave of migration from Ukraine to the EU in the amount of 0.5 to 4 million people is predicted in 2023. In connection with this, it is already planned to extend the Directive for 12 months until March 2024, which will allow us to accept new migrants and work out mechanisms to assist refugees after its expiration.

The economic crisis may become the most important factor in migration processes in the world in the foreseeable future. The labor force in Europe is inexorably declining. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, by 2030 the number of people of working age in Europe will decrease by 13 million people (4% of the total workforce). Even considering the processes of digitalization and automation, this will lead to a labor shortage; in 2022, for example, 6 million highly skilled jobs were unfilled across Europe.

Structural changes in the European economy are capable of further aggravating the problem of labor shortages, which, coupled with low rates of economic growth and high inflation, are forcing many EU countries to significantly liberalize migration legislation and introduce new tools for attracting labor resources from other regions of the planet.

As in previous years, Russia remained an important labor market for Central Asian migrants in 2022 and will likely continue to attract them in 2023. At the same time, the Russian economy, which has so far withstood tough international sanctions, is beginning to slow. Migrants for whom economic considerations are particularly important may vote with their feet and seek alternative destinations because returning home, where jobs are scarce, is impractical. It is reported that in 2022, Kazakhstan attracted additional labor migrants from Central Asia. Turkey's attractiveness has also shown signs of increasing in recent years. In addition, Turkey will need labor to rebuild areas devastated by the devastating earthquake in February 2023 [3]. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan has continued to diversify labor migration destinations and entered into a bilateral agreement with Israel, while negotiating with Portugal, the UK and Saudi Arabia. In addition, in 2022, the UK has allocated up to 40 thousand six-month visas for workers from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. As more host countries begin to show interest in Central Asian workers, competition for human resources is expected to increase and Russia's role as a regional magnet may decline in the long term. In 2023, it will be important for countries in the EECA region and countries of destination of EECA workers to closely monitor these developments and accompany increasing labor mobility with appropriate agreements and governance mechanisms for the benefit of all parties involved [5].

In recent years, the EU has been an important destination for labor migrants from EECA countries, primarily for citizens of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Russia, with both flows and numbers of labor migrants constantly growing. In the EU, Poland and Italy were the most popular destinations among labor migrants from EECA countries. It is still difficult to say whether the consequences of the war in

Ukraine will have a long-term impact on the dynamics of labor migration from the region to the EU. In 2023, it is important to monitor whether labor migration trends from Moldova, Georgia and Belarus to the EU have changed due to the large influx of Ukrainian citizens into the EU labor market and the corresponding excess supply of labor. Such changes will certainly have a negative impact on households in those countries that depend on remittances, and will increase emigration pressure in other regions of the world or intensify patterns of irregular migration in the EU [6].

**Central Asia.** Migration in Central Asia continues to be affected by pre-existing factors, most notably economic vulnerability, partial unemployment of a growing and predominantly young population, proximity to Afghanistan, intra-regional conflicts and climate change. In 2022, these factors have been exacerbated by Russia's war in Ukraine and the resulting political and economic fallout, which has led to even greater uncertainty in Central Asia. In 2022, Central Asian states saw the largest influx of Russian migrants since their independence. Kazakhstan has become one of the main destinations for Russians fleeing mobilization. It is estimated that over two weeks in late September and early October 2022, more than 200 thousand Russians, mostly young men, arrived in Kazakhstan. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of Kazakhstan, by the end of 2022, the total number of Russian citizens reached approximately 298 thousand people [7].

In addition, the Kazakh Prime Minister announced the country's intention to absorb about 250 international companies that have ceased operations in Russia, calling on the government to create a favorable business environment for foreign investors. A similar trend in business relocation is observed in Kyrgyzstan. According to some reports, more than 50 companies from Russia and Belarus are registered in the country, with many relocating workers and their families there, which strengthens the economy of Kyrgyzstan as a whole. For Kyrgyzstan, the increase in arrivals from Russia has had a positive impact on the economy. Although exact data is not yet available, both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have seen an influx of Russians fleeing conscription. In Uzbekistan, this assumption is indirectly confirmed by data on remittances from Russia, which increased from 54.1% in the pre-war period to 80.0% in 2022. Moreover, migrant workers from Central Asia are likely to face problems as the wars in Ukraine. Outgoing labor migration and remittances are a lifeline for the population of Central Asia. As in previous years, Russia remained an important labor market for Central Asian migrants in 2022 and is likely to continue to attract them in 2023, given expected severe shortages in Russia and socioeconomic push factors in source countries. This is especially true for migrants from Tajikistan, who have few real alternatives other than the Russian labor market. At the same time, the Russian economy, which has so far withstood harsh international sanctions, is beginning to slow down. Migrants, for whom economic considerations are particularly important, may vote with their feet and seek alternative destinations because returning home, where jobs are scarce, is impractical. This will pose a major challenge to national economies, especially Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, where remittances account for 32% and 31% of GDP respectively, making them the fourth and fifth largest remittance dependent countries in the world. The onset of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the rapid devaluation of the ruble, and the fear of conscription into the Russian army motivated the departure of some migrants from Central Asia, but people eventually returned in the second and third quarters of the year as Russia's economic prospects improved [8].

The situation in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover in August 2021 continues to resonate in Central Asia through a security lens. In 2021, all five Central Asian countries generally refused to accept refugees from Afghanistan, but some limited numbers of Afghans continued to filter through the borders of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, all of which border Afghanistan. In 2022, the three countries

opened their borders, but only to holders of Afghan passports and visas. As a result, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan reported no new arrivals from Afghanistan in 2022. Meanwhile, approximately 7,000 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers remain in Tajikistan, of which 5,710 have arrived since August 2021. The exact number of arrivals is estimated to be more significant, but reliable and up-to-date data are not available. In 2022, the deportation of Afghans from Tajikistan raised concerns among UNHCR and attracted media attention, with even more Afghan citizens at risk of forced return. Notably, proximity to Afghanistan, in addition to regional instability, stimulates both internal and international migration from Tajikistan's border areas. Tajik experts note fear-driven movements of Tajik citizens between Russia and Tajikistan due to concerns about the security situation in neighboring Afghanistan, as well as possible conscription into the Russian army [9].

### *Conclusion*

Another challenge for Central Asia is the periodically renewed military clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which requires appropriate attention in 2023. In mid-September 2022, the conflict between these two countries led to the death of about 100 people on both sides and displaced more than 140 thousand Kyrgyz people move to the border zone in the southern part of the Batken region. Poorly demarcated borders in the Fergana Valley, where Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan intersect, are one of the reasons for recurring confrontation, in addition to lack of access to water and land resources. In relative terms, this conflict relates to the nexus of migration and climate change.

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