

Labour Migration on the Post-Soviet Territory



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1 Introduction

Temporary labour migration between republics was a natural phenomenon in the Soviet Union, where it used to be an integral component of the labour market and internal spatial mobility. Massive seasonal movements were a specific Soviet feature. While others sought recreation tens of thousands of people mainly went, to the sparsely populated and resource-rich areas of the Far North, Siberia, the Far East and Kazakhstan to find employment. Within a short period of time, workers earned the equivalent of what an engineer in Central Russia or Ukraine might have earned on a semi-annual basis.

Limited international labour migration between the USSR and other countries of the Socialist bloc also existed in the Soviet period. Since the late 1970s, every year several tens of thousands of people from the former socialist countries, such as Bulgaria, Vietnam, and North Korea, were sent to work in industrial companies in the largest cities as well as in forestry enterprises in northern Russia and the Far East. For example in 1981 the governments of the USSR and Vietnam signed an agreement regarding the employment and professional training of Vietnamese citizens. In just 10 years, under this agreement, 103,000 people were employed by 370 Soviet enterprises in seven Union republics, although mainly in Russia.

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After the breakdown of the USSR, labour migration between the former republics turned from internal to international. Issues of its regulation became an important part of relations between the CIS member states and their economic policies. The destinies of millions of households in the donor countries, such as Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and in the recent past, Azerbaijan, now Ukraine, depend on the export of migrant labour force. For these countries, money remitted by migrants is one of the main sources of foreign currency. In destination countries, primarily in the main centre—Russia, labour migrants have occupied important niches in the labour market, greatly contributing to the work of entire sectors of economy and meeting the needs of private households.

Over the past quarter of the century, the volume, geography and structure of labour migrant flows in former Soviet countries have changed under the influence of economic and political factors as well as institutional reforms. The emergence of workers from foreign states, mostly China and Turkey, became a new phenomenon in the CIS countries. These workers were primarily involved in Chinese and Turkish investment projects of their home countries in the CIS countries of destination. In this chapter, we will examine the features of labour migration during the past three decades (and thus three-time intervals): the 1990s, the 2000s and the 2010s. Each of these periods is specific in terms of the hierarchy of migration factors, status of the regulatory framework, primarily in the receiving countries, and availability of labour migration statistics. Describing the most recent decade, the situation in Russia is considered in detail, with more generalised information being provided in regards to other CIS countries. The analysis begins with a brief description of data sources and statistics available to researchers.

2 Status of Labour Migration Statistics

Systems for measuring labour migration in the newly independent states were created at different times. Statistics come from varying sources, are often incomplete, and the quality of this data varies not only by countries, but also by different time intervals (in the same country). The uneven development of migration data collection systems in the CIS countries, differences in definitions of migrant workers, as well as the varying nature of statistics obtained from administrative sources, censuses and surveys, complicate the cross-country comparisons.

In Uzbekistan, which is currently the largest donor country of labour migrants, migration statistics remain virtually closed. The visa regime between Turkmenistan and the CIS limits the labour migration between these countries. The number of foreign workers from Turkmenistan can be estimated based on the Russian, Kazakh or Belarusian data. However, almost nothing is known about foreign workers from Turkey, Ukraine, Russia and other countries working in energy-rich Turkmenistan.

Much attention is paid to labour migration issues in statistics collected from donor countries due to the significant monetary contribution migrants make from abroad. Here, population censuses and sample surveys, including labour force, living standards or combined household surveys, are used to measure labour migration

(Prokhorova 2018: 6). Censuses as well as household and labour force surveys held in Armenia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan included questions about absent household members and returned migrants. Such surveys are also the main source of statistical information on labour migration in Ukraine. Great assistance in conducting specialized surveys on labour migration issues is provided by international organisations: International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank. One method of gathering data used for assessment of the outgoing flow of labour migrants in Tajikistan includes migration cards filled out by the citizens at the border before traveling abroad.

Records of issued work permits are kept with a minimum set of characteristics of a labour migrant. Sample surveys to measure and study labour migration in these countries are not sufficiently applied. In Kazakhstan, the labour force survey questionnaire has a module on migration questions, but the data are practically not used. Over the post-Soviet period, Azerbaijan has conducted two surveys in 1999 and 2009 at border checkpoints (Allakhverdiev 2010; Nasibov 2014) to study migration processes.

Russian state statistics about foreign labour migration is based on registration of work permits, including patents, on employers' notifications about hiring foreign workers, and on registration data at residences for the purpose of "employment". The period of employment of most foreign workers is limited to 1 year. The exception is a small category of highly qualified specialists who can obtain work permits for a period of up to 3 years. In Russia, national sample surveys are not yet a significant source of information on labour migration. For example, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) till 2019 did not have any purpose to study the situation about international migrants. Only in 2019 the questions on country of birth and year of arrival were included into the questionnaire. In 2014, a single modular survey of the use of migrant labour by households and individual entrepreneurs was conducted as a part of the LFS. The survey methodology, which is based on answers of employers, and the obtained results on the scale of labour migration undergo critical assessment by the Russian migration experts. Labour migration statistics, like the migration laws, is in a continuous process of reforms. Registration criteria are changing, new migration channels are emerging, and the zone of free movement of labour force is expanding. For this reason, the data reflecting labour migration dynamics should be carefully interpreted, and it is necessary to be mindful of the thousands of illegal labour migrants who are not included in the statistics.

A significant part of labour migrants from the CIS countries are working abroad, including Russia, illegally (ILO 2009a). The visa-free border crossing regime that was established between the CIS countries immediately after the breakdown of the USSR contributes to the problem. Thus, migrants from visa-free CIS countries who are not members of the Eurasian Economic Union (Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine) can stay in Russia continuously for 90 out of 180 days. Some of them use this time for employment purposes. Illegal migration creates difficulties in assessing the actual volume of labour migration in the CIS region.

3 Labour Migration in the 1990s

In the first post-Soviet years, it was difficult to distinguish between temporary labour migration and migration for permanent residence, as well as between legal and illegal employment of immigrants from the former Soviet republics. This was due to border transparency (visa-free travel agreements between CIS states), a large number of people with USSR passports, and an excessively long period of the formation of national citizenship institutions in the former Soviet republics. The situation was affected by the absence of laws defining the legal status of foreigners in the new independent states, as well as incompletely formed institutions and the legal framework of national citizenship in these countries.

During the economic crisis and political transformations of the early and mid-1990s, the flows of labour migrants were insignificant as compared to Soviet times. Back then, the migration was based on the forced migration flows, as well as voluntary repatriation, or resettlement, of representatives of certain ethnic groups to their historical homeland. Gradually, with the formation of the economic growth centers and increasing demand for labour in certain countries, the spread of poverty and unemployment in others, labour migration in the post-Soviet space began to recover, simultaneously changing its characteristics. Russia became the dominant centre of attraction. Labour migration outside the USSR in the 1990s had just started to develop. Despite the economic crisis, some particular sectors—such as services, trade, finance, restaurants, real estate and security that were previously underdeveloped during the Soviet period, rapidly progressed. Private entrepreneurship, as well as the emergence of foreign companies, provided new opportunities. High income populations started seeking workers for household work, primarily for building or renovating residences. Unlike the Soviet period, labour migrants from the Soviet republics did not go to the Far East or the Far North, as these regions had been in a long-time crisis accompanied by significant outflow of the population. Instead, they migrated to the regions with a high demand for labour such as the Moscow metropolitan region and to other large Russian cities, including St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Kazan, Samara. The West Siberian centre of oil production was another area of attraction for labour migrants.

From 1994 to 2000, according to data of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation (FMS), the annual number of foreigners who received work permits in Russia did not exceed 138,000. On average for the period—one-third of the migrants were from Ukraine, 13% from Turkey and 11% from China. The number of documented migrants from some states of Central Asia and Transcaucasia was relatively small. At the same time, an extensive shadow labour market was being formed. Illegal employment of migrants was conditioned by a visa-free border crossing regime established between the CIS countries and by the absence of clear rules determining the status and conditions for stay of foreign citizens in Russia. In the late 1990s, the number of labour migrants from the CIS countries to Russia, according to the experts' estimates, amounted for more than 3,000,000; however, the

majority of these migrants worked in the country illegally (Krasinets et al. 2000; IOM 2002: 119).

After Ukraine, the second largest donor of labour migrants (including unregistered) to Russia in the 1990s was Azerbaijan. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, up to one million citizens of this country came to Russia during this time, with 9 out of 10 violating the Russian migration laws (Kovalchuk 2004: 174). At the same time, the share of Azerbaijan citizens among those who received work permits in Russia in from 1994 to 2000 did not exceed two and a half percent, and the largest number of permits issued in these years was 2200 (in 1997). The total number of labour migrants from Armenia, both short and long term, accounted for about 500,000 people, of which 280,000 worked in Russia (Mukomel 2005: 328). The flows of undocumented labour migrants from Georgia and Moldova were also large. However, the indigenous people of Central Asia (the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Kyrgyz) on the Russian labour market in the late 1990s were few. The flow from this region was mainly represented by the continuous active migration of the Russian-speaking population who moved to Russia for permanent residence. Starting from 1997, citizens of Belarus obtained equal rights with Russian citizens in terms of access to the Russian labour market, in accordance with the agreements within the Russia–Belarus Union State.¹ As a result, they were not included in statistics on international labour migration. The government of Turkmenistan, having withdrawn in 1999 from the 1992 agreement on visa-free border crossing with other CIS countries, almost excluded the country's population from labour migration within the post-Soviet space.

4 Influx of Labour Migrants in 2000s

The role of external labour migration in the development of all CIS countries, both receiving and donor countries, was clearly marked in the beginning of the new century. The need for a massive inflow of foreign workers to Russia, and then to Kazakhstan, was caused by an increased demand for labour due to their economic growth, especially in such sectors as construction, transport, services and agriculture. The outflow of excess labour eased social tensions, and migrants' remittances supported the standard of living of the population and the national economy in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Moldova.

¹The Union State of Russia and Belarus was founded on 2 April 1996 with the aim of developing integration in the political, economic and social spheres.

4.1 *Russia*

In Russia, according to the Federal Migration Service, the inflow of documented labour migrants increased from 175,000 in 2001 to 570,000 in 2006. After the anarchy of the 1990s system, to improve controllability of migration flows in general and labour migration in particular, the Law “On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens” was adopted in 2002. Referred to as the Law of 2002, it unified the procedures for issuing work permits, introduced a system of invitations from employers, who, in turn, were required to obtain permission to employ foreign labour. Work permits were issued to foreigners only for a specific employer and assumed a specific type of occupation. Certain administrative measures (mainly—penalties) were introduced in relation to persons who illegally hired foreign workforce.

However, these new procedures for obtaining work permits given the high labour demand turned out to be complicated and the documents registration process was lengthy. In particular, it affected migrants from the CIS countries and their employers whose interests were almost ignored by the Law of 2002, and the number of such persons was increasing. Despite the obvious increase in the number of issued work permits, the number of illegal migrant workers also increased. According to the most reasonable estimates in the first half of the 2000s, the number of illegal labour migrants ranged anywhere between 3,300,000 and 5,000,000 (Ryazantsev 2007: 158; Mukomel 2005: 197).

In 2006, in order to reduce illegal migration, some amendments to the Law of 2002 “On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens” were adopted in Russia, which simplified the procedure of registration at the place of temporary stay and obtaining work permits for migrants from the CIS countries. At the same time, quotas were introduced for work permits to the citizens of these countries.² The first quota for 2007 was set at the level of 6,000,000. Its size, according to the authors of the amendments, should have covered the entire labour migration, both legal and illegal, and should have allowed legalisation of the largest possible number of foreign workers. Based on the final indicators of labour migration in 2007, in 2008 the work permits quota was sharply reduced—from 6,000,000 to 3,400,000, and the number of work permits issued in accordance with quota between 2011 and 2014 amounted to about 1,700,000 million.

Due to liberalisation of legislation in 2006, the status of many labour migrants was settled. The number of people who received work permits increased from 570,000 in 2006 to 1.1 million in 2007. During this year, the number of documented migrants from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan increased four times, from Tajikistan—three times, from Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan—more than 2.3 times, from Ukraine—1.7 times. According to experts, the share of legal migrants in the total

²According to the first edition of this amendment, the quota was to be annually established by the Government of the Russian Federation only for foreign workers from visa countries.

number of foreign workers increased from 5–10% in 2000 to 35–40% in 2007 (Zayonchkovskaya and Tyuryukanova 2009: 94).

The changes in the Russian legislation changed the composition of migrants by country of origin. In the first decade of the 2000s, there was a change in leadership of specific countries in the number of legal labour migrants in Russia. Back in 2006, about half of the work permits were issued to citizens of CIS countries. Citizens of China (20%) and Ukraine (14%) formed the major portion of this flow. In 2008, almost 3/4 of the 1.3 million work permits were issued to citizens of CIS countries, and more than a half to the citizens of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Central Asia became the main source of temporary labour migrants to Russia. The volume and composition of the flow of labour migrants has repeatedly changed due to both new regulatory acts and fluctuations in the economic situation. According to experts, during the economic crisis of 2008 and 2009, the total amount of labour migrants decreased by about 15–20%, and its legal component by 30% (Zayonchkovskaya and Tyuryukanova 2010: 21).

4.2 *Kazakhstan*

With its large mineral reserves, Kazakhstan, in the beginning of the recent economic growth became the second centre of attraction for labour migrants from other countries. By some estimates, 300,000 illegal migrants worked in the republic as early as 2000 (IOM 2002: 90). To protect the domestic labour market, the Government of Kazakhstan started setting quotas for foreign workers to limit their number in various sectors of the economy. Quotas were set as a percentage of the economically active population. The practice of quota implementation was subsequently formalised in the Law “On Migration of the Population” adopted in 2011. Initially, the quota amounted to 0.15% of the economically active population, which did not exceed 10,000–11,000 people per year. Between 2004 and 2008, the quota annually increased, and by 2008, reached the level of 1.6% or 132,800 people. However, due to the effects of the global economic crisis in 2008 and 2009, it was reduced. In 2014, it amounted to 0.7% of the economically active population of the republic (Sadovskaya 2014).

According to official statistics, the maximum inflow of legal labour migrants was observed in 2007 with 58,800 people. Out of these, more than 90% came from outside the CIS, mostly from Turkey and China. From 2005 to 2009, the share of citizens from these countries in the labour migration flow was 40% and 16%, respectively. Unlike Russia, where most of the legal migrants had jobs that did not require high qualifications, the migration policy of Kazakhstan focused on attracting qualified specialists, largely due to the fact that in the migration exchange with Russia, Germany, and Ukraine, Kazakhstan had lost more than 2,000,000 people, including numerous engineers, doctors, technologists and technicians, scientists and university professors.

Significant demand for unskilled labour was satisfied through illegal migration from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. A large informal sector has contributed towards a situation where large numbers of low skilled migrants are working in breach of Kazakhstan's minimum labour standards (Anderson and Hancilova 2009). In 2006, the labour migrants' regularization campaign identified 164,500 foreign citizens who were employed without relevant documents (Ni 2008: 12). According to experts' estimates, the number of illegal migrants in the second half of the 2000s was in the range from 250,000 to more than 1,000,000 (IOM 2002: 33; Sultanov and Abishev 2013: 35).

4.3 *Other Countries*

The rest of the CIS countries also received a certain number of labour migrants from abroad, but to a much smaller extent than they were giving to Russia, Kazakhstan and foreign countries. For example, in 2010 Azerbaijan attracted 15,500 labour migrants to the economy, Ukraine—13,700, Belarus—6800, Kyrgyzstan—10,100 (Statcommittee of the CIS 2011: 387). In other countries, the official figures related to the number of foreign workers were noticeably lower. In contrast to Russia, which attracted labour migrants from all over the CIS, labour migrants were supplied by the states outside the CIS mainly by Turkey, China, and countries from the European Union. Apart from Russia, only Belarus received a relatively large number of migrants from the CIS, with most being from Ukraine.

Azerbaijan is positioned as a receiving country for labour migrants. But, as noted above, this was not always the case. In the 1990s, many citizens of Azerbaijan worked in Russia. The flow of labour migrants from Azerbaijan decreased in the period of rapid economic growth in Azerbaijan itself, which began in 2005 with the development of new oil and gas fields and subsequently with the launch of international projects for their development (Allahveranov and Huseynov 2013). From 2005 to 2008, GDP growth rates were among the highest in the world, with an average of 24.2% p.a. There is no direct evidence of a decrease in labour migration, since Azerbaijan did not have statistics on Azerbaijani citizens leaving the country to work abroad. In Russia, where Azerbaijanis predominantly migrated to, changes in the immigration laws did not allow to get comparable time-series data. We can indirectly estimate the reduction in the inflow of migrants from Azerbaijan by such facts as the disappearance of the topic of Azerbaijani migrants in the Russian mass media, which had been popular in the 1990s, and the decrease in the number of Azerbaijanis in the Russian population between 2002 and 2010. According to official data, in 2007 and 2008, 42,000 and 39,000 citizens of Azerbaijan, respectively, received permission to work in Russia, with these being the maximum figures for the period under review.

At the same time, Azerbaijan became attractive to foreigners. Azerbaijan needed more and more highly qualified specialists. Quotas were introduced to regulate their number, since Azerbaijan was a country with a young population and did not

generally have a large need for foreign workers. In 2010, the quota amounted to 10,700 people. Most foreigners were employed in the construction, oil and gas, and information technology sectors. Almost 5000 of them came from Turkey, and about 1500 from the UK. The phenomenon of illegal labour migration is associated with the beginning of the economic boom. According to some estimates, more than 60,000 people worked with violation of immigration laws (Aliyev 2006: 29), many of them came from Georgia, Iran and Turkey.

Despite the fact that almost all CIS countries since the late 1990s have used foreign labour, in contrast to Russia and Kazakhstan, many more citizens of these countries left to work abroad. Each country that exported labour had its specifics, both in terms of destinations and the structure of migrant flow. The level of labour migrants from Armenia in the 2000s was high. According to estimates of the Head of the Migration Service of Armenia, 600–700,000 long-term and 80,000 seasonal labour migrants left the country in 2010 (Yeganyan 2010). Out of them between 85% and 95% worked in Russia (ILO 2009b; IOM 2014).

Before 2009, Georgia was a part of the CIS but the number of registered labour migrants was very small. In Russia, the number of work permits issued to Georgian citizens reached its peak of 6400 in 1995, and, starting from 2000, did not exceed 3000. The visa regime established between Georgia and Russia in 2000 weakened the migration links between the two countries. Flows of migrant workers began to turn towards EU countries and Turkey. After the Russian–Georgian armed conflict in 2008, Turkey became the main destination for labour migrants, accumulating up to a third of the flow. Azerbaijan and Ukraine remained to be significant partners from the CIS area (ETF 2013: 4).

From 2000 to 2009, labour migration from Central Asia had been the most dynamic. According to Statistics Agency of Tajikistan, between 2005 and 2010 the number of citizens of this country who went to work abroad independently grew from 412,000 in 2005 to 736,000 in 2010 (Tajstat 2016: 268). More than 95% of them worked in Russia (Olimova 2010: 369; ILO 2010: 13). In 2006 in Kyrgyzstan, according to the data of the One-Time Employment Survey, 161,000 household members went abroad for the purpose of obtaining work. As of the date of the 2009 census, the number of labour migrants in the country reached 225,000 people. The flow of labour migrants over the year was estimated at 300,000 to 500,000 people (ILO 2008: 40), of which 85% went to Russia, and the rest to Kazakhstan. The total number of Kyrgyz citizens who obtained permission to work in Russia, according to the Federal Migration Service, in 2008 amounted to 106,000 people. Based on the results of sample surveys and data from host countries, experts estimated labour migration from Uzbekistan in the late 2000s of at least one million people (Maksakova 2010: 341). Of these, two-third worked in Russia, and the other one-third in Kazakhstan, as well as in other foreign countries.³

³Here we speak primarily about South Korea, which is the employment destination for members of the large Korean diaspora in Uzbekistan.

As we have already mentioned, labour migration from Turkmenistan to CIS countries was very small due to the established visa regime. At the same time, the country received specialists from other countries. In 1999 there were approximately 3000 highly qualified foreign workers. Nationals from Turkey, Ukraine, France and Iran worked in construction, textile industry, in oil and gas sectors, as well as in the energy sector (Malinovska 2006).

The trends of labour migration from the countries of the European CIS countries significantly differed from migration in Transcaucasia and Central Asia. Migration from Moldova and Ukraine during the first decade of the 2000s began to shift from Russia towards European countries. According to the national survey of labour migration, 1.4 million people left Ukraine for the purpose of obtaining employment from 2005 to 2008, of which less than half (48%) had left for Russia (UCSR 2009). According to the labour force surveys, from 2007 to 2010, over 300,000 labour migrants annually left Moldova and of these 60% went to Russia (Statistica Moldovei 2019).

The 2009 census held in Belarus showed that slightly over 40,000 people indicated the location of their place of employment as “abroad”. However, Belarusian experts commented that at that time there were no well-established estimates of labour migration from Belarus, and all the values quoted differed substantially (Shakhotko 2011). All experts believed that the overwhelming majority of citizens of Belarus (about 90%) worked in Russia. However, the number of Belarusian citizens, including migrant workers, in Russia is difficult to estimate, since Belarusian citizens in Russia, just like Russian citizens in Belarus, (as was stipulated under the Treaty on the Union between Belarus and Russia) use the legal practice of not registering with the migration authorities. Not having to register for 90 days and the proximity of the Russian–Belarusian border make regular visits of employees to their homeland more convenient. In addition, no effective mechanisms to control the date of arrival exist as the citizens of Belarus are not obliged to fill in migration cards either.

Generally speaking, a system with two centers of attraction of migrants has been formed in the post-Soviet space during the 2000s. The main centre where migrants from all CIS countries (excluding Turkmenistan, and then Georgia) were attracted is Russia. Kazakhstan, to a smaller scale, attracted mainly migrants from three Central Asian states: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Before the 2008 economic crisis, Azerbaijan occupied an intermediate position, acting simultaneously as a donor and a recipient country for migrants. The specifics of Moldova and Ukraine were characterised by the fact that a significant part of their migrants rushed beyond the borders of the former USSR, mainly to the EU countries, although the majority still worked in Russia. Russian citizens also went to work in the CIS countries, but in small numbers and mostly as highly qualified specialists. In the same capacity they traveled to work in the West, but in smaller numbers than Ukrainians or Moldovans. During the period of economic growth, Russia had many opportunities to offer well-paid jobs. Georgia, although it splintered labour relations with Russia, retained them with Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Turkmenistan, as already noted, was not a part of this system. Based on the data of host countries—Russia and Kazakhstan, in total, in the

post-Soviet space, up to 7,000,000 people, including undocumented migrants, were involved in labour migration before the 2008 economic crisis. The tendency to migrate to Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan mitigate the financial and economic crisis caused by a twofold plunge of global oil prices at the end of 2014.

5 Mixed Trends in the 2010s

In the 2010s, the nature of migration in the CIS region has dramatically changed twice. Improvements in the economic situation and changes in the Russian migration legislation related to the opening of new migration channels contributed to a rapid increase in the flow of labour migrants in the post-Soviet space from 2010 to 2014. In subsequent years, the situation was affected by strong and multidirectional factors. The propensity to migrate to Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan was weakened by the financial and economic crisis that was caused by a twofold plunge of global oil prices at the end of 2014. The slump of the exchange rate between national and foreign currencies in these countries coincided with a respective drop in foreign workers' wages that were not tied to dollar or euro. In Russia, the crisis was exacerbated by the introduction of anti-Russian sanctions in connection with the events in Ukraine. The decreased propensity to migrate to Russia, at least legally, occurred also due to the new rules of access to the Russian labour market, which significantly increased the financial costs of migrants' documentation. However, other factors worked to strengthen the migration processes.

First, the armed conflict in the south-east of Ukraine and the economic crisis in this country created a flow of asylum seekers and labour migrants to Russia, Belarus, Poland and other EU countries. Second, three countries from the Eastern Partnership States⁴ have entered into visa-free travel agreements with the European Union: Moldova (2014), Georgia (2017) and Ukraine (2017). Visa-free space expanded in accordance with international agreements. Besides, labour migrants from Ukraine were granted significant preferences in finding employment in Poland (refer to Z. Brunarska and O. Malinovska chapters).

Third, in 2014, Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation formed the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which established the single labour market and free movement of labour. In 2015, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joined the agreement. This agreement was supposed to increase the intensity of migration between the member countries of the Union. Thus, the countries that are a source of foreign workers for Russia were divided into three groups. Citizens of countries included in the first group—the participants of the EAEU (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan)—do not need to obtain permits to work in Russia. Citizens of

⁴The Eastern Partnership is a project of the European Union, aiming to develop integration of the European Union with six countries of the former USSR: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan need to obtain a kind of a licence—so-called patent, to work in Russia. Citizens of other states must apply for work permits.

5.1 Russia

Russia has been the main centre of attraction for labour migrants in the post-Soviet space that, in accordance with surveys and experts' estimates attracted between 50% and 80% of all workers moving from CIS countries abroad (Chudinovskikh 2015: 6). Changes in migration laws and, in particular, the creation of new channels of labour migration, influenced the size and structure of flows into the country. Until 2014, one of the main documents giving the right to work in Russia was a regular work permit, and since 2007, the number of such permits was a subject to setting quotas. Work permits were valid up to one year. Between 2010 and 2014, about 6.2 million permits were issued in total. Most of them were received by the citizens of Uzbekistan (40.7%), Tajikistan (15.1%), and Ukraine (10.9%). Non-CIS countries received about 17.7% of issued permits, of which almost half were received by Chinese citizens. However, as noted above, small businesses and individual entrepreneurs were actually deprived of the opportunity to participate in the quota formation process due to the established rules (Kuzminov et al. 2013). In addition, the established rules made it difficult for large companies to hire highly qualified foreign specialists. To overcome the shortcomings of the quota system in Russia, new, quota-free channels of labour migration were opened, including those operating on the basis of a special work permits for qualified specialists since 2009, highly qualified specialists since 2010 and so-called “patents” or licences that allowed to work with physical persons in private households since 2010 (see Table 1). Since January 1, 2015, work permits have been issued only to foreign nationals who enter

Table 1 Number of work permits issued in Russia through main labour migration channels in 2010–2017, thousands

Type permits	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Standard work permits	1164.8	1218.7	1403.6	1219.8	1142.0	113.2	93.0	103.8
Qualified specialists	–	–	44.1	129.4	158.6	22.1	14.8	18.0
Highly qualified specialists	3.1	11.3	11.8	26.3	34.2	41.8	25.5	26.5
Patents	156.8	862.4	1279.1	1534.1	2379.4	1779.8	1492.2	1682.6
Total	1324.6	2092.4	2738.6	2909.6	3714.2	1956.9	1625.5	1830.9

Source: MDM

Russia on the basis of a visa⁵, and all workers from the CIS, except EAEU and Turkmenistan, must have a patent. For this reason, the number of issued work permits decreased dramatically. In 2018, the Main Directorate for migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (MDM), the former Federal Migration Service (FMS)⁶, issued almost 1.7 million patents and 130,100 work permits, of which 28,100 were issued to highly qualified specialists.

Qualified specialists are determined by the list of professions which is annually approved by the Ministry of Labour of the Russian Federation. The first list appeared in 2009 and contained only 17 professions. By 2017, the list expanded to 72 positions, which mainly included managers of organisations, engineering and technical specialists, workers in the field of medicine, culture and arts. The opportunity to get a work permit without a quota increased the interest of employers and the workers themselves to this system, and in 2014 the number of people who got access to the labour market as qualified specialists reached its maximum of 148,000. The lack of qualification requirements led to the fact that many unskilled workers were registered as technicians and technologists. The majority of such permits were issued to citizens of CIS countries. They are issued, like regular permits, for up to one year. In 2017, out of 18,000 such permits, almost 40% were obtained by citizens of China, and from 10% to 14% of permits were issued to citizens of Vietnam, North Korea and Serbia.

Highly qualified specialists are the only category of long-term labour migrants, as they can obtain a special residence permit for up to 3 years with the possibility of extension, and can bring their families. The main criterion for determining a highly qualified specialist is the amount of his/her salary. For most potential employees, it should be at least two million rubles, which is slightly more than 66,000 dollars for the initial year, and about 30,000 at the end of 2018 for teachers and researchers, at least one million rubles per year; and for certain categories of specialists a flexible salary scale is applied.⁷ In total, over 180,000 of such work permits were issued between 2010 and 2017. More than 90% of them were issued to citizens of foreign countries beyond CIS, predominantly to Chinese citizens. From 2014 to 2017 the number of highly qualified specialists from the EU, the USA and Canada was decreasing. In 2017, 26,000 highly qualified specialists received work permits in Russia. Most of them were citizens of China (4000 or 16%), Turkey (3200 or 12%) and Ukraine (1600 or 6%).

⁵The exceptions are foreign students studying in Russia. In the case of employment outside their educational institution, they should obtain a work permit.

⁶In April 2016, the Federal Migration Service was abolished and its functions and responsibilities were transferred to the Directorate General for Migration Issues of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

⁷In addition, the criterion “at least one million rubles per year” applies to specialists working in special economic zones in the Republic of Crimea; the criterion “not less than 700,000 rubles a year”—for foreign citizens working in the high technology economic zone. There are no wage requirements for foreign citizens participating in the Skolkovo innovation project.

Since 2010, foreign workers from countries with visa-free arrangements have had the opportunity to work for individuals on the basis of a *patent* that, in accordance with the Law, was acquired for “carrying out work or providing services for personal, domestic and other similar needs not related to entrepreneurial activities”. The initial cost of patents was equal to 1000 rubles per month, which in 2010 was equivalent to about 30 dollars and was the same in all the regions of Russia. In contrast to work permits, the number of patents was not a subject to quota setting. Initially, migration under patents supplemented labour migration under regular work permits. The first served households, and the second—enterprises and individual entrepreneurs.

In 2010 about 1,300,000 of all types of work permits and patents were issued to foreigners in Russia. In 2014, the number of permits issued reached its historic high of 3,700,000, of which 1,300,000 were work permits and 2,400,000 were patents. Approximately 41% of these documents were issued to citizens of Uzbekistan, 18.2% to citizens of Tajikistan, and 12.2% to citizens of Ukraine. In total, citizens of CIS countries with a visa-free entry to Russia received almost 95% of all permits. To estimate the total number of labour migrants these figures should be supplemented with citizens of the member countries of the Customs Union: Belarus and Kazakhstan⁸, 86,000 and 59,000 migrants registered for the purposes of employment, respectively. Additionally, 3,700,000–4,000,000 undocumented migrants should be included into the estimates (Egorova 2015; Romodanovskiy 2014). Thus, given all these estimates it can be assumed that the total number of labour migrants in 2014 was not less than 7,500,000. This was the maximum annual flow for the entire post-Soviet period. Given the foreign citizens permanently residing in Russia on the basis of a residence permit or temporary residence permit, the total number of foreign workers in 2014 exceeded 8,000,000.

Since January 1, 2015, as noted above, regular work permits and work permits for qualified specialists are issued only to foreign nationals who enter Russia with a visa. From then onward, all foreign workers who arrived in the Russian Federation on a visa-free basis, with the exception of highly qualified specialists and citizens of the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, must obtain a patent. In 2017, out of 1.7 million registered patents, almost one million patents (57%) were issued to citizens of Uzbekistan, 470,000 to citizens of Tajikistan (28%), and 133,000 to citizens of Ukraine (8%). The remaining 6%, or about 108,000, were almost equally divided among labour migrants from Moldova and Azerbaijan.

Since 2015, the cost of patents has become regulated by regional authorities, and in most regions it has dramatically increased. In 2018, the cheapest patents were in Chukotka, in the Chechen Republic, in the Saratov region (2023 rubles or about

⁸The Customs Union was established on the territory of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia on January 1, 2010. Since the citizens of these countries were not required to obtain work permits in these member countries of the Union, they were not included into the Russian, Belarusian or Kazakh statistics of external labour migration. Since January 1, 2015, the Customs Union transformed into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which includes, in addition to these three countries, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

30 US dollars); the most expensive patents were in the gas producing area of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District (8354 rubles or 125 US dollars). In Moscow, which is the main centre of destination for foreign workers, the patent costs 4500 rubles or 65 dollars per month.⁹

Due to the fact that a large group of migrants (citizens of the EAEU countries) do not need to obtain work permits or patents, to estimate the number of labour migrants in Russia in recent years, one should focus on the results of registration at the place of stay indicating the purpose of entry. The importance of this source increased in 2014 with the adoption of an amendment to the Law “On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens”, according to which, when applying for employment, migrants must present a migration card¹⁰, which indicates “work” as the purpose of entering Russia.

The data presented in Table 3 show that the number of potential labour migrants in Russia has increased in recent years. However, experts speak about a decrease in the number of migrants at least before 2017, and this is attributed to a decrease in the number of both legal and illegal migrants. The reduction in the number of illegal migrants was due to the ease of obtaining patents, but also to the increased responsibility for illegal migration¹¹. Besides, due to the entry of Kyrgyzstan and Armenia into the EAEU, citizens of these countries who violated immigration laws were no longer considered to be illegal migrants.

However, some migrants do not file documents necessary to obtain a patent in order to save money and avoid dramatically increased costs of the legal access to the labour market. In most cases, those are persons who arrive in Russia for up to 90 days. The main stimulus is saving the money for issuance of a patent, the total one-time expense for which, e.g. in 2018 reached in Moscow and the Moscow Region 35,000 rubles or about \$500.¹² This is about the average 4–5 month salary for a worker *in* Tajikistan. Some migrants, upon entrance, indicate in the migration card a purpose other than employment (for example, “private visit”), but despite that they get employed in violation of Russian law. According to estimates of the Main Directorate for Migration, illegal migration in 2017 was about 2,600,000 (Gorovoy 2017). According to some expert’s estimates, the number of such migrants is less

⁹In 2017, Moscow and the Moscow Region issued about 40% of all patents sold in Russia to foreign workers.

¹⁰A migration card is a document that is filled in by a foreign citizen upon entry into the Russian Federation. It contains some personal characteristics of the visitor as well as information on the supposed duration of stay and the purpose of the trip.

¹¹In 2013–2014, a number of regulatory documents were adopted that tightened responsibility for violating immigration laws adopted in 2013–2014. As a result, by the middle of 2016, almost two million foreign citizens, mainly from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, were denied entry into Russia for a period of 3–10 years (Kirillova 2016).

¹²The cost includes the cost of a patent for one month, a certificate of passing a test in the Russian language and history, medical documents, translations of documents.

than a million (Mkrtychyan and Florinskaya 2018: 187). Given that in that year the number of foreigners who arrived in Russia with the purpose “work” amounted to 4,854,004, the total number of labour migrants can be estimated at a level of 6,000,000 people.

As shown in Table 2, more than half of potential labour migrants (in 2018, 60%) come to Russia from two countries—Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Their share in the flow has been steadily increasing in recent years. Due to the geographical location and close economic ties with Russia, the visa-free border crossing arrangements, the level of education and qualifications, it is difficult for citizens of these countries to find alternative employment opportunities outside Russia, Kazakhstan and other CIS countries. Migration ties with the EAEU member states are maintained at an intensive level; they are expanding in the case of Belarus and Kazakhstan, and remain at a high level in case of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, after these countries joined the organisation in 2015. At the same time, the number of labour migrants from Ukraine and Moldova has decreased in the last three years. However, Russia remains, as before, an important destination for the citizens of these countries. From 2017 to 2018 after a few years of reduction, the inflow of labour migrants from non-CIS countries, including China and Turkey, has increased.

5.2 *Kazakhstan*

Although the number of legal foreign workers in Kazakhstan increased, it did not reach the pre-crisis levels that exceeded 50,000. The number of officially registered qualified migrants with work permits continued to decline in recent years: from 37,000 in 2015 to 28,000 in 2017. At the same time, the problem of illegal labour migration which mainly involves citizens of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan still remains topical in the country. Available estimates of illegal migration vary from 300,000 to 1.5 million people (FIDH 2016: 9). The most common estimate is 1 million people. Due to the 2014 financial and economic crisis, some migrants from Central Asia changed their focus from Russia to Kazakhstan. This caused increase of illegal migration in this country in 2014–2015 (Sarbasov 2016).

In December 2013, the Head of State signed the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts on Labour Migration Issues”, which simplified the procedure for issuing permits to foreign citizens who work for individuals. Since April 2014, the bodies of the migration police started to issue permits for labour immigrants who work for individuals in private households. Due to these measures, only in 2015 more than 140,000 migrants were withdrawn from the shadow sector (Sultanov and Abishev 2017: 62).

Table 2 Number of people registered at a place of temporary residence in Russia with declared purpose “work” (thousand), 2014–2018, thousands

Countries	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	4045.2	4517.5	4284.2	4854.0	5047.8
Uzbekistan	1252.0	1331.6	1433.6	1822.9	2007.4
Tajikistan	697.0	795.5	837.7	936.8	1018.5
Ukraine	510.4	587.4	504.1	503.3	460.6
Kyrgyzstan	371.7	512.4	361.9	376.9	352.0
Armenia	194.7	264.1	209.9	232.2	207.9
Azerbaijan	161.5	199.2	199.2	201.6	186.2
Moldova	271.5	305.5	242.0	227.0	177.5
Belarus	86.2	86.5	97.7	124.6	134.7
China	144.3	113.8	104.0	108.5	123.4
Kazakhstan	58.7	70.1	71.6	88.2	111.5
Turkey	57.8	46.0	25.8	21.7	29.2
Vietnam	17.5	15.5	16.7	21.1	17.4
North Korea	31.7	29.1	27.4	23.9	8.8
Turkmenistan	3.0	3.1	2.1	2.0	2.8
Other countries	187.2	157.7	150.5	163.3	209.9

Source: For 2016–2018—MDM 2019, for other—unpublished materials of FMS

5.3 Other Countries

Unfortunately, data on labour migration in recent years in some of the former Soviet republics such as Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan is not available. Current migration trends in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia are discussed in detail in the relevant chapters of this book. Therefore, we will briefly review the changes in labour migration in the remaining CIS countries through the lens of their statistics.

Estimates of labour migration in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are lower than those provided by official Russian statistics. In Kyrgyzstan, the number of labour migrants staying abroad in 2017 accounted for 236,000 according to the integrated household and labour force survey (StatKG 2018: 5). More than 96% of all labour migrants indicated Russia as their destination country, and only 2% indicated Kazakhstan (Omyrkulova-Ozerska and Kiyizbaeva 2018: 56).

Tajikistan’s data obtained from migration cards show a steady decline in the number of labour migrants leaving the country: from 793,000 in 2013 to 450,000 in 2017, and these figures strongly differ from Russian estimates. According to the Main Directorate for Migration of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MDM), in 2017, 489,000 citizens of Tajikistan received patents for work in Russia, and 936,752 were registered at the place of temporary residence indicating the purpose of entry “work”.

During this period, there was a noticeable increase in the number of foreign workers in Belarus. If in 2010, according to the statistics committee of the CIS, their number was amounted to 6816, in 2014 it was 32,288 (excluding the member

countries of the Customs Union between Russia and Kazakhstan). This growth was due to the citizens of Ukraine, whose number increased from 2731 to 17,778 and citizens of non-CIS foreign countries (an increase from 3000 to 11,105). Subsequently, the inflow of foreign workers decreased to 12,621 in 2017. However, the outflow of labour migrants to Russia has not become less intensive, as can be seen from Table 2. At the same time, the flow of labour migrants to the countries of the European Union, mainly to Poland, increased. According to Eurostat, the number of citizens of Belarus who received residence permits issued for remunerated activities for a period of 3 months and longer in the EU countries increased from 5608 in 2014 to 26,582 in 2017, including from 3788 to 22,192 in Poland.

The role of Russia as the main destination of labour migration from Armenia has increased. A representative survey of households conducted in 2013 showed that Russia was the main destination for over 90% of all labour migrants that year (IOM 2014: 18). Subsequently, Russia remained the main country of destination for 76% of potential migrants, and only 7.5% of them planned to go to the EU countries (IOM 2014: 59). After Armenia joined the EAEU, Russia's importance as a country of destination continues to be high. One of the contributing factors is the presence of a large Armenian diaspora in Russia—1.2 million people, which makes about 10–12% of the total number of Armenians in the world. According to Russian MDM, in 2017, 232,247 citizens of Armenia were registered at the place of temporary residence indicating the purpose of entry “work”.

Thus, several years after the economic crisis of 2008–2009, labour migration in the post-Soviet space has not only returned to the pre-crisis level, but also reached its maximum figures. Due to the financial and economic crisis that began at the end of 2014, its levels decreased again. Currently, according to data of the main host countries (Russia and Kazakhstan) about 7 million people are involved in international labour migration annually in the post-Soviet space. This represents ~8% of the population of the CIS countries (including Georgia and Ukraine) aged 15 to 59 years migrating to Russia and Kazakhstan.

The labour migration system in the post-Soviet space has undergone not only quantitative, but also structural changes. With the formation of the EAEU between five countries (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia), a single labour market and free migration area are being created. Another group of the CIS countries, first of all, the main sources of labour migrants—Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as Azerbaijan have close ties with Russia and Kazakhstan. After the introduction of visa-free regime with the EU countries, Moldova and Ukraine took another migration step towards European countries: Flows to the west increased, although they remain closely connected with Russia. Turkmenistan and Georgia actually stay outside the regional system of labour migration.

6 Characteristics of Labour Migrants in Russia

The structure of labour migrant flows from different countries in the CIS is very heterogeneous. Since the majority of migrants in the post-Soviet space go to work in Russia, we will look at their characteristics (age, sex and occupations) using Russian data. It should be noted that since 2007 the activities of foreigners in certain areas became limited. Thus, in accordance with the annual decrees of the Government of the Russian Federation, foreigners were completely prohibited to be employed in the trade of alcoholic beverages and pharmaceutical products, as well as trade outside stores, and restrictions were imposed on the share of foreigners in the transportation sector.

The occupational and qualification characteristics of migrants are shaped by the employers' demand, whether they are private companies, state-owned enterprises or households. However, migrants from different countries (or groups of countries) occupy a specific position on the labour market, which is determined both by their individual characteristics and the migration channels through which they come to Russia. Many migrants from the CIS countries who were employed in their countries in public administration, health care and education, changed the scope of their activities to jobs that did not match the level of their education and qualifications. The change of migrants' profession and place of work on the territory of Russia leads to an increase in the concentration of foreign workers in certain types of economic sectors (trade, construction, housing and utilities, transport) (Varshavskaya and Denisenko 2014: 73).

In general, the majority of labour migrants mostly occupied "bad" jobs (low-paid, with difficult working conditions), unattractive for the Russian population (Kuzminov et al. 2013). Thus, in 2014¹³, according to the FMS of Russia, more than half of the migrants from Central Asia who obtained a work permit were either construction workers or unskilled workers in different sectors of the economy (Table 3). This share was slightly less than 50% among migrants from Moldova and Azerbaijan. In contrast, only one-third of Ukrainian migrants was employed in the construction industry or performed unskilled work, another third were skilled workers, and almost 20% were highly qualified specialists. Ukrainian educational standards were consistent with Russian ones, and all migrants from Ukraine speak Russian.

Most foreigners from developed countries come to Russia through a channel open to highly qualified specialists. In 2017, 95% of specialists who arrived from France, 86% from the Netherlands, and about 80% of workers from the UK, Germany, Italy and Japan received such work permits. Nearly 85% of all workers from developed countries had professions requiring a high level of professional training¹⁴, of which more than half occupied top management positions. Migrants from China and

¹³Characteristics of labour migrants in Russia for 2017 can be found in the chapter of V. Mukomel.

¹⁴Teachers, researchers in social and humanitarian areas, artists, athletes and other specialists fall into the category of "other qualification groups".

Table 3 Composition of foreign workers who received work permits in 2014 by major occupational groups (in %)

Countries	Heads of institutions, organisations and enterprises and their structural divisions	Specialists in the field of natural and engineering sciences	Mid-level qualification specialists	Trade and individual services	Skilled workers	Workers involved in mining, capital mining operations, construction and installation and repair activities	Unskilled workers	Other groups of professions and qualifications
Total	3.6	2.5	10.0	5.2	23.0	27.8	23.7	4.2
CIS total	2.3	1.5	10.3	5.7	23.1	26.6	27.6	2.9
Azerbaijan	7.8	1.5	11.2	12.7	18.0	32.0	14.4	2.4
Armenia	2.4	1.6	5.2	3.1	23.1	50.6	11.7	2.3
Kyrgyzstan	1.2	0.5	7.6	19.3	14.3	16.1	38.1	2.9
Moldova	3.9	1.6	9.0	7.3	27.5	23.4	22.9	4.4
Tajikistan	0.8	0.6	9.2	3.6	18.9	26.9	37.7	2.3
Uzbekistan	1.0	0.6	12.8	4.6	21.7	27.6	29.5	2.2
Ukraine	7.9	5.7	6.5	4.4	36.5	23.7	9.8	5.5
China	6.6	4.4	9.2	3.7	32.0	30.7	4.5	8.9
Turkey	9.3	14.3	6.2	1.2	16.5	45.3	0.5	6.7
Western countries	47.0	14.9	7.4	0.3	3.4	4.8	0.3	21.9
Others	10.0	8.8	7.6	1.3	19.0	38.2	1.8	13.3

Source: Based on unpublished data provided by the FMS

Turkey included many builders who worked mainly in Chinese and Turkish firms. Migrants from foreign countries had almost no unskilled workers among them.

Above we talked about migrants employed by enterprises. No administrative statistics is available on foreigners employed by individuals. A survey of the use of migrant labour by households conducted by Rosstat in 2014 showed that they were mainly engaged in the activities that did not require a high level of qualification. Almost 70% of all work performed by migrants was related to house construction and apartment renovation, 12.5% to agriculture and gardening.

The demographic structure of migrant workers is shaped by the demand for labour and is closely related to their qualifications. Thus, there is a clear male predominance among foreign workers. For example, in 2014 the share of men among all workers who received work permits and patents exceeded 80%. Men prevailed (90+ percent) among the citizens of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and North Korea who were mainly engaged in construction. Women were relatively numerous (more than a third) in the flows of migrants traditionally focused on the service sector (Kyrgyzstan), light industry (Vietnam), trade and “female” professions in construction (Moldova) (Fig. 1).

The age structure of labour migrants is characterised by predominance of young people (Table 4). Almost half of migrants from Central Asia (the largest group of foreign workers) are under the age of 30. At the same time, noticeably more mature workers can be found among the citizens of the countries of Transcaucasia and the European part of the CIS. The largest group of Chinese migrants consisted of people between 40 and 49 years old (37%). The majority (over 60%) of migrants from developed countries recruited in Russia are over 40 years old.

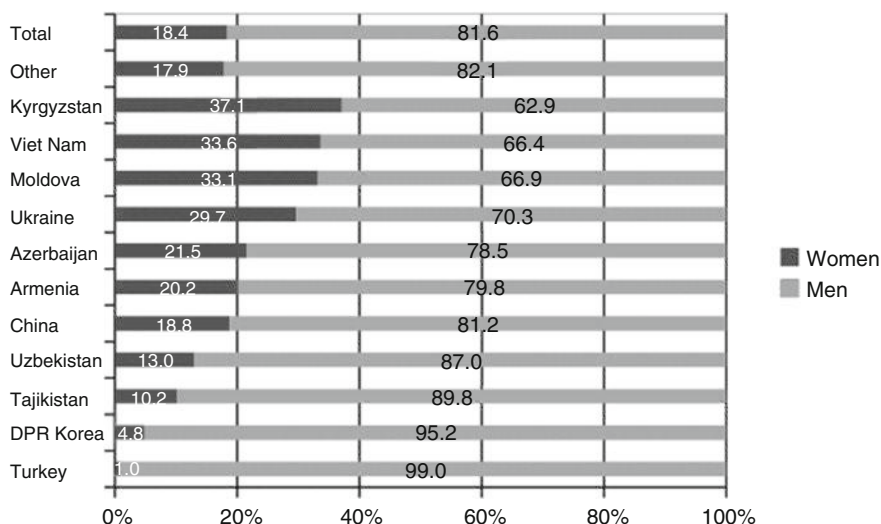


Fig. 1 Percentage of men and women among foreign citizens (from main countries of origin) who received a work permit or patent in 2014 (Source: Based on unpublished the data provided by the FMS)

Table 4 Age structure of labour migrants in Russia (percent)

Countries	Year	18–29	30–39	40–49	50 and older
Total	2017	41.6	29.6	19.9	8.8
CIS countries	2017	43.0	29.7	19.2	8.1
Tajikistan	2017	48.2	29.9	16.3	5.6
Uzbekistan	2017	44.1	29.7	19.4	6.7
Azerbaijan	2017	35.5	27.3	19.6	17.6
Moldova	2017	27.8	27.5	25.1	19.6
Ukraine	2017	25.4	30.8	24.7	19.1
Armenia	2014	37.3	23.9	19.0	19.8
Kyrgyzstan	2014	61.7	22.4	12.9	3.0
China	2017	15.2	26.2	36.6	21.9
Turkey	2017	21.5	40.6	27.0	10.9
Developed countries	2017	12.5	24.7	29.9	32.9
Other countries	2017	24.0	26.0	30.9	19.1

Source: Based on unpublished the data provided by the FMS

Therefore, labour migration in Russia is dominated by young men who are mainly employed in construction and in workplaces that do not require high qualification. Speaking of Tajik migration to Russia, a Tajik researcher S. Olimova described it as migration of “muscles, not brains”. Given the predominance of migrants from Central Asia, this metaphor can be used to determine the whole of labour migration to Russia.

7 Conclusion

The review presented in this chapter showed that labour migration in the former USSR existed even before 1991, but after the collapse of the Union has undergone fundamental changes. Throughout the post-Soviet period, it has been developing in accordance with the global patterns, as a result of significant economic and demographic differences between the CIS countries, acting as pull and push factors for migrant workers. In the same way, as the analysis of migration for permanent residence has shown, the trends of labour migration indicate that the post-Soviet space no longer remains a closed migration system, in which the main part of the flows move to the Russian Federation and (to a lesser extent) Kazakhstan. A significant part of the flows of labour migrants from the European part of the CIS has long been reoriented to states outside the Commonwealth and they occupy their niches in the labour markets of the EU and other countries.

The role of Russia, Kazakhstan and partly Azerbaijan as migrants receiving countries and their relative economic well-being is explained by extraction of hydrocarbons and other minerals, which generally determines peculiarities of need for labour in the CIS region.

The factors determining the scope and composition of labour migration in the CIS include not only differences in the economy and demography, but also migration policies in the host countries (mainly Russia). Changes in legislation to a certain extent demonstrate impulsiveness of policy-making and not always a good foresight of possible consequences. Throughout the post-Soviet history, one could observe examples of either liberalisation or tightening (often excessive) of migration law, which led to a reduction or, on the contrary, an increase in illegal migration, which scale in the CIS is very significant.

Trying to give a brief and, at the same time, comprehensive description of labour migration within the CIS, we can say that it is characterised by the predominance of migrants (mainly—young men with no professional training) from the Central Asian countries; by the continuing attractiveness of Russia as the centre of the migration system and—a significant number of undocumented labour migrants.

The economic role of labour migration in the CIS cannot be overstated. For a number of countries, such as Tajikistan, Moldova, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, the migrants' remittances as percent of GDP reaches impressive values, bringing them to the list of the main remittances receiving countries.

The analysis labour migration provided by periods allowed us to explain the changes in its trends, volumes and composition as well as to show this phenomenon in the context of the changing modern history. The post-Soviet space appeared to be open to workers from foreign countries outside the former USSR, (mainly skilled workers and managers from China, Turkey, Western countries). However their relatively small numbers do not change the overall character of labour migration in the CIS. Throughout the period, the role of low-skilled labour has increased, reflecting, to some extent, demand for such labour in the host countries.

The readers may have noticed that the analysis and description of labour migration trends was often followed by commentaries on the availability and quality of statistics. The uneven development of administrative data collection systems, the lagging of the main receiving countries in the region in conducting surveys on labour migration do not allow to shed the light on many important subjects related to the situation of migrant workers in the labour markets of the receiving countries. Within the CIS and EAEC there is no possibility of adequate measurement and comparison of labour migration in migrants-sending and -receiving countries, definitions of a migrant worker and methodologies of data collection considerably differ.

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