

## **Labor Migration in Kazakhstan**

At present, post-Soviet countries arrived at different stages of social and economic development. They are characterized by various degrees of ability to be adapted to the requirements of the world economic system. Each post-Soviet country has a unique migratory regime depending on its social and economic development level, situation on the international labor market, the quality and quantity of human potential.

Russia is the most economically developed country on the post-Soviet space, and that is where the main flow of the post-Soviet guest workers is aimed. Kazakhstan in turn, became the regional center of increased migratory activity in Central Asia. With average annual rates of economic growth at 9-10%, the Republic of Kazakhstan appeared among the first ten most dynamically developing countries in the world. Kazakhstan's GDP grew by 10.6% in 2006, compared with 2005. This stable economic growth caused a steady increase of level of the monetary indicators of citizens' welfare.

Being the country with an expanded employment opportunities Kazakhstan attracts attention of citizens from less developed countries. All kinds and forms of labor migration, with complex manifestations, are actively present in Kazakhstan. The Republic of Kazakhstan is country of origin, transit and destination of labor migration. Large numbers of people move through this territory. According to estimations of UN experts, Kazakhstan occupies the 15th place in the world for intensity of emigration and immigration. Therefore, country possesses the entire set of problems linked with labor migration.

As an origin country of labor migration, Kazakhstan directs its citizens to the developed countries with the purpose of upgrading their qualifications, learning new specialties and obtaining new work skills in the sphere of advanced technologies and organization of the labor process, leading thus to an increase in the competitiveness of the national labor market.

Kazakhstan's advantageous transit/geopolitical situation between East and West mean that country is an active participant of global migratory processes. Migrants from Central and South-East Asia transit to Europe via Kazakhstan. Serious challenges which countries of transit zones face are problems of illegal migration, drug trafficking, religious extremism and international terrorism.

As a country of destination of migration, Kazakhstan has two flows of external labor migration directed at it: legal and illegal. According to expert estimates, the scale of "shadow flow" exceeds the number of the legally drawn in labor force by many times and this factor influences the post-Soviet labor market. The World Bank report on ratings of countries receiving migrants, states that the 1st place is occupied by the USA, the 2nd by Russia. Kazakhstan is in 6th place.

Kazakhstan is one of a few of countries which proclaim and realize an ethnic migratory policy. It should be noted that with increasing numbers of ethnic Kazakhs (oralmans) arriving in Kazakhstan, there is also a tendency towards an increasing return of former Kazakhstan citizens of working age.

The illegal form of international labor migration to Kazakhstan is widespread in all its manifestations. This is the main cause of all the labor migration problems. Long, insufficiently controlled borders stimulate development of illegal migration across the frontiers from neighbouring states.

In order to regulate this inevitable labor migration, to utilize its positive aspects and to neutralize its negative manifestations, Kazakhstan takes measures for its legalization. Legalization actions taken by the law enforcement bodies showed that from the total number of legalized migrants to date there are 72.8% citizens of Uzbekistan, 13.2% - from Kyrgyzstan, 6.4% - from Russian Federation and 2.9% - from Tajikistan. Amongst the complex aggregate of factors “pushing out” the labor force from their own countries the dominant factors are agrarian overpopulation, high unemployment levels, low income levels and general poverty of the population. The restriction of migration of the excess able-bodied population would be a reason for the worsening of the situation in individual states and in Central Asia as a whole. For these countries external labor migration, both legal and illegal, acts as the shock absorber of social inequality. Recent years showed economic growth in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, however it is not sufficiently job creation oriented, especially in terms of working places for young people. Taking into account the social and economic situation in Central Asia, Kazakhstan does not attempt to toughen migratory legislation, which in turn would have increased the set of problems of migrant workers in their labor and domestic relations with law-enforcement bodies, employers etc.

The stable growth of Kazakhstan economy of, with its stable political, social and economic situation, allows a forecast of an increase in the scale of inter-state migration.

However, the mechanisms the interaction between the national labor markets in their scale and nature do not yet satisfy the requirements of civilized inter-state labor force migration.

It is necessary to establish systematic monitoring of the labor markets of the industrially developed countries of the world with the aim of implementing selective policy in order to attract immigrants with high educational, innovational, financial and investment potential.

On the regional level, in order to strengthen inter-governmental collaboration, a unified policy should be created in the Central Asia, in relation to labor migration and its regulation. An effective mechanism to fight illegal migration should also be developed. A global programme is much needed, directed at the elimination of the reasons for migration, including aiming world trade, investment and development aid to the countries that are the sources of migrants.

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