# New Approaches to Managing Labor Migration under Integration in Eurasec

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# Abstract

This paper deals with features of labour migration in countries of the Eurasian migration subsystem. A description of migration patterns in Central Asian countries is given. The author captures the tendency of forming the Russia-Central Asia migration subsystem, which is typified by the strong flows of migration and their stable geographical focus. Socio-economic consequences of migration are shown for receiving and sending countries. Monitoring gives grounds to assert that remittances do not affect medium and long-term development of economies of donor labour countries (the effect of "short money"). A serious humanitarian aspect of the problem of labour migration is existing. The analysis of materials indicates the actual formation of a forced labour segment in certain sectors of the Russian economy. Migrant workers live in poor housing conditions; they are discriminated and receive low wages. Currently, regulation of labour migration in the group of countries occurs in isolation and often asynchronously, which leads to discord in the regulation of labour migration. Regulation of labour migration processes does not occur in a coherent manner, even in the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Community. Russia and Kazakhstan as the main receiving countries of cheap labour take spontaneous attempts to regulate the number and quality of workers. However, steps of receiving governments are often highly politicized and aimed at unreasonable restrictions. Labour migration must and may be one of the main means of regulating the labour market of the Eurasian Economic Community. The author proposes to apply the approach to its regulation, differentiated by sectors, to enhance the effectiveness of employment and labour migration in the EEC. The main point of the approach is to divide the policy in respect of two sectors: "tradable" and "non-tradable" goods/services. With increasing and effective use of Russian investments to build agricultural production in the major labour donor countries, we can be expect a reduction of the inflow of illegal migrants to Russia and Kazakhstan.

**Keywords:** labour migration, the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC), the Eurasian Economic Space (CES), the Customs Union, migration patterns, remittances, migration policy, Russia, Central Asia

#### 1. Introduction

Economic integration of the Eurasian Economic Community is one of the main resources of strategic interaction of the EEA countries, as well as Kyrgyzstan, Armenia and Tajikistan. In 2013 President Vladimir Putin also proposed to include Vietnam into this group. Economic integration is the basis for the development of labour migration between the member countries of the association. Labour migration originated and developed based on a set of factors: cultural and historical; infrastructural and geographical; economic; social and demographic. In the group Russia and Kazakhstan are the recipients (receiving countries), other states-donors of migrant workers. Labour migration is a form of real socio-economic cooperation between the countries of the post-Soviet space; it contributes to unification of countries (integration) (Ludema, 1997; Riazantsev, 2007; Niagard et al., 2005; Karabulatova & Polivara, 2013; Schamiloglu, 2006). Economic integration of the countries also promotes liberalization of foreign trade, which in turn later leads to increased migration exchange between the member countries of the group.

Between Russia and Kazakhstan on the one hand and the countries of Central Asia on the other hand a migration subsystem created, specified by large-scale flows of migration and a persistent geographic focus. The main flow of labour migrants to Russia and Kazakhstan during the last decades comes from Central Asian states. In addition, labour migration "intertwines" and transforms into other forms (migration for permanent residence,

marriage migration, educational migration). Increasingly, temporary labour migrants from Central Asia receive Russian citizenship and remain for permanent residence in the Russian Federation.

In Russia and Kazakhstan downsizing and aging of the population are noted which will have a range of demographic, socio-economic and geopolitical consequences. Prospects for the development of the demographic situation in the EEC countries are, on the one hand, under the influence of global processes and trends, and on the other hand, are under the influence of specific characteristics of a particular country, region. We can assume that the deficit will worsen at the labour market, competition for labour will increase, and labour migration will be activated. The demographic situation in the countries of Central Asia looks completely opposite. By 2050 the population of working age will grow: in Uzbekistan-6.4 million, Tajikistan-2.8 million people, Turkmenistan-900 thousand, Kyrgyzstan-600 thousand people. Even with rapid economic development in these countries not all working-age population can be employed. Therefore, in the short term, the countries of Central Asia will remain the high-probability migration donors for Kazakhstan and Russia (Akramov, 2006; Bayzhigitov, 2013; Karabulatova, 2008; Aydrus & Writing, 2008; Rybakovsky, 2008; and others).

#### 2. Methods of the Research

In this research we used statistical methods for assessing dynamics and trends of migration processes between the EurAsEC countries, as well as the method of expert assessments of migration policies of countries which send and receive migrants. As statistical sources, we used data of Federal Migration Service of Russia on the number of work permits issued and patents for foreign citizens in Russia, as well as national data of migration services of Central Asian countries that are major donors of labour migrants in Russia. We used the method of comparative analysis of statistical data of countries that send and receive migrant workers. Data of the World Bank on assessment of volumes and directions of remittances made by migrant workers from Russia and Kazakhstan to Central Asia was used as well. Besides, we conducted a sociological survey of experts from among representatives of national migration services, government agencies related to labour migration in Russia and Central Asian countries. In total 25 interviews were taken on the basis of the guide, which included questions assessing the number of labour migrants working in Russia and Kazakhstan, as well as the assessment of parameters of migration patterns of Central Asian states, as well as evaluation of the part of labour migration in the economic progress of the receiving (host) countries. The most rigid model of regulation of emigration is formed in Turkmenistan, where emigration is under full control of the state. In Uzbekistan, labour emigration is also regulated rather strictly by the state, but several bilateral agreements with several host countries are concluded. A migration model in which the state itself supports the very processes of emigration characterizes Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. On the basis of generalising data interviews with experts, we developed recommendations to improve migration policies in the context of integration processes in the Eurasian Economic Community.

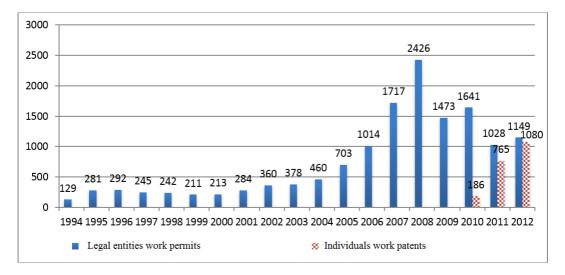


Figure 1. The number of work permits that was issued to foreigners in 1994-2012 in Russia (during the relevant year), thousand. Source: Federal Migration Service. http://www.fms.gov.ru

## 3. Results

After simplifying procedures to register and to obtain work permits in Russia for CIS citizens in January 2007, percentage those citizens in the total number of foreign workers increased and amounted to about three quarters. Russian authorities, in July 2010, have actually legalized the legal status of foreigners who worked in private sector by introducing patents-special work permits to foreigners from non-visa countries working in the private sector. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Ukraine are the largest suppliers of foreign workers. Foreign migrant workers on the territory of Russia are unevenly distributed. An undisputed leader, the first center of attraction is the Central Federal District, in which about half of all officially registered foreign workers work. Within the region, the absolute leader is Moscow, which concentrates about a third of all migrant workers in the country.

The research determined that the amount of remittances which migrant workers send from donor countries to their country of residence is significant. During the period from 2007 to 2012, migrant workers sent 14,875 million U.S. dollars to Tajikistan, 7,494 million U.S. dollars-to Armenia, 7,466 million U.S. dollars-to Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, spending received remittances in the donor countries is irrational-the major share of funds is mainly spent on current consumption: food, purchase and repair of housing, consumer goods, weddings and funerals. In rare cases, the money is invested in local infrastructure (water, gas, roads, etc.), small business, enterprise; it can be invested in production and deposited to savings accounts. Thus, remittances, unfortunately, do not play a significant role in the medium-term development of the economies of countries, which are donors of workforce. Its effects are short term (the "short money").

Demand for employment is very high in terms of a powerful demographic "press" in the country and the restricted number of jobs in Uzbekistan. Public enquiry for employment abroad exceeds offer (on the Kazakh-Uzbek border Uzbek migrants' accumulated, online resource). As a result of labour migration to the host countries, Russia and Kazakhstan, ambiguous socio-economic consequences appear. On the one hand, workers fill the most of non-prestigious niches in the labour market characterised by hard conditions of work that locals do not always agree at. Due to migrant workers, whole sectors of the economy develop. A good example is the construction industry in major Russian cities, the growth of which is associated with the use of cheap labour from abroad. In 2011, K. O. Romodanovsky, Director of the Russian Federal Migration Service, noted that migrant labour created about 8% of Russia's GDP. According to expert estimates, in Kazakhstan the share of GDP generated by migrant workers is up to 1%. At the same time, for the host countries a labour migration has a number of negative consequences. For example, it stimulates the growth of the shadow economy, wage dumping, transforms ethnic composition of the population, forms ethnic enclaves and contributes to inter-ethnic tensions. Some researches show that labour of migrant workers from different countries is widely distributed in different sectors of Russia's economy, their labour is used almost everywhere. In many industries a mechanism was established where officially Russian workers are registered at enterprises, but foreign migrant workers are actually employed. An illustrative example-housing and communal services. Since migrants' wages are much lower, the difference between these costs is net income for business owners. A serious social or humanitarian aspect of the problem is existing. Migrant workers live in poor conditions, receive the lowest wages, and are subject to exploitation by employers who everywhere violate their human and labour rights. In fact, we can talk about the forming of a segment of forced labour in some sectors of the Russia's economy. Because of price dumping on labour a part of local workers do not want to look for a job in this industry, so employers lose interest in their employment.

## 4. Discussion

Currently Russia has no clear justification of a regulation process of labour migration (Juraeva, 2013; Ryazantsev, 2007; Turdiev, 2012; Olimova & Bock, 2011). Nowadays the state rather fixes labour migration from abroad than it manages it (Smith, 2009; Krasinets, 2008; Ryazantsev & Horie, 2011). The quota system of foreign labour in Russia raises serious concerns (Ryazantsev, 2010; Ryazantsev & Hongmei, 2010; Orazalieva, 2010; export labour from Uzbekistan, 2003; Yuldashev, 2012; Mitrokhin, 2012). First of all, because there is no clear evaluation mechanism and methods for determining the actual need for foreign labour, the system of issuing work permits is not clear transparent and hence is corrupt. It is common when one employer submits an application and another employer uses the quota. The one who stated his need for foreign workers is being denied-he "lacks quotas", although it is impossible to verify the system, it is not transparent (because of the crisis the number of labour migrants in Russia decreased by 13%, 2012).

Migration policy on labour immigration does not have flexible enough regulatory tools. The introduction of a patent system for migrant workers employed in the private sector of economy can be regarded as a revolutionary "breakthrough". Patents became very accessible, simple, and affordable form of the permits for migrant workers

in Russia. However, the implementation of such asymmetric flexible tools on a background of inflexible system of regulating labour migration in general can cause serious deformities of the labour market.

The system for issuing work permits in Russia is not clear both for employers and for workers. For example, those employers who have expressed the intention to hire some migrant workers in advance are not able to do it. The deficiency of a system of fixing quotas for particular employers, the corrupt and not transparent quotas system can be blamed for that. If the official state duty for obtaining quota is 2,000 roubles, the unofficial price is about 25-30 thousand roubles (through intermediaries). In addition, both employers are forced to pay for a permit for foreign workers from visa countries and migrant workers from visa-free countries who appeal to the FMS directly for a work permit. In fact, the country has developed a shadow trading system for foreign labour.

In Russia economic motivation of employers is to export cheap labor, Russian business is interested in-from small businesses to large ones. Receiving excess profits, businesses with few exceptions do not fund social projects aimed at the integration of migrants into the society. Moreover, businesses are not responsible for providing medical insurance and social services to migrant workers. The main burden of servicing migrant workers and their families rests on local social institutions (education, health, retirement systems). Thus, one of the main problems is that there is no a unified state program of social and cultural integration and language adaptation for migrant children to life conditions in the new environment (Karabulatova, 2013; Karabulatova & Polivara, 2013). As Karabulatova I. S. pointed out, while developing various adaptations and correcting programs for migrants, it is necessary to take into account that modern workers are carriers of several linguistic and cultural codes (Karabulatova, 2013, p. 794). The national legislation does not contain regulations, especially methodological developments at the federal level for education of migrant children (Karabulatova & Polivara, 2013, p. 832).

## 5. Conclusion

Currently, regulation of labour migration in the group of countries is carried out in isolation and sometimes asynchronously. Every country is trying to regulate migration solely in its own interests (Jervis, 1999; Anand & Vinod, 2006). Sending countries are trying to send abroad the maximum possible number of migrant workers in order to get more remittances from them. In the best case, sending countries are trying to protect the rights of its citizens abroad. They do not stimulate the economy by "tsunami of remittances." The host countries (Russia and Kazakhstan) are trying to attract cheap labour, periodically trying to limit the quantity and influence on the quality. However, under conditions of widespread exploitation of migrant workers, corruption schemes of quotas and work permits, the lack of clear requirements in labour force, the actions of host states are often politicized, aimed at unreasonable restrictions and are not always logical, consistent and understandable. If we follow the idea and the logic of integration between the groups of countries, one of the tasks should be to create labour market regulation which must be based on common interests and agreed arrangements. Labour migration can be a means of regulating the labour market of the Eurasian Economic Community.

To enhance the effectiveness of employment and labour migration in the EEC we propose to apply the approach to their regulation, differentiated by sectors. Its main point is to separate the policy regarding at least two sectors: "tradable" and "non-tradable" goods/services. For example, in relation to Russia, this division might look like as follows. In 2011 the Russian Federation issued 1,641,000 work permits for foreign migrant workers. "Tradable" goods/services make up to about 380 thousand permits, including manufacturing-221,500; agriculture and forestry-148,600; mining-33,200; Fishing-1,400 permits. "Non-tradable" goods/services amount to 1,240,000 permits, including building-595,200; wholesale and retail trade-272,100; real estate and geological studies-163,200; transport-70,600; utilities-43,200; recreation, culture, sport-7,200; financial services-6,400; health-4,800; education-3,700 permits.

Regulation of labour migration and employment in the sector "tradable" goods/services should be maximally connected with trade and investment cooperation. For example, Russia and Kazakhstan can "overcome" illegal migration and employment, primarily in production and processing of agricultural products, and not by the deportation of illegal migrants, but by increasing investments in agriculture of the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, which is a traditional sphere of labour for inhabitants of these regions, which went into decline after the collapse of the USSR. Currently Russia due to its dependence on imports of agricultural products mainly stimulates job creation in the EU, Turkey, Israel, etc. In this case, the main flow of illegal migrant workers employed in agriculture in Russia comes from Central Asia. It can be argued that with increase and effective use of Russian investments for creating agricultural production in the major donor countries, reduction of illegal migrants' inflow is possible on the territory of Russia and Kazakhstan.

To regulate labour migration in the sector of "non-tradable" goods/services (mainly construction, transportation, utilities sector, trade) it is necessary to directly regulate direct labour migration. As the demand for migrant workers in these sectors is likely to be maintained in the long term. However, the strategy of development of the economy in general, and those sectors of the economy in particular should be based on the idea of growth of labour productivity and reduction of inefficient employment. Currently in Russia and Kazakhstan employment in these sectors remains highly inefficient, and productivity is low. It is more advantageous for employers to use cheap labour and disenfranchised undocumented migrants than to invest in advanced technology.

In June 2012, Vladimir Putin, the President of Russian Federation, signed a new concept of the state migration policy, which says that Russia lacks for foreign labour and the system of its involvement is in need of improvements. However, conceptually the position of labour immigration is not determined in the overall structure of migration processes, as well as the possibility of its replacement by internal labour resources, mechanisms for combating corruption and the shadow quota market for work permits for employers and workers are not spelled out, possibilities to attract foreign students to Russian labour market are not provided. To be fair, we must admit some "breakthroughs." For example, for the first time Russia's priorities in attracting highly skilled migrants, migrant investors were spelled out in the concept. Actually, in the migration policy of Russia there was also a system of geographic priorities for hiring foreign workers-the CIS countries.

However, the concept of migration management requires a restrained position in relation to the admission of foreign migrant workers on the basis of the clear quota system when quotas will be assigned to specific employers without the right to resell them. According to the analysis of a current situation and the generalization of labour migration in the various countries of the world, the fundamental basis for a foreign labour migration policy should be a clear definition of manpower requirements. Primarily they should be based on economic and geopolitical interests of Russia.

A direct mechanism of labour migration regulation may be as follows. First, it is necessary to calculate needs in manpower of the host countries (Kazakhstan and Russia) on the basis of the balance of labour resources. Second, to define the countries own opportunities (potential unemployed, students, pensioners, the possibility of internal labour migration) and the clear need for foreign labour migrants. Third, to prioritize the immigration policy in respect of the partner countries in the context of political and economic integration and to sign international agreements on organized labour supply.

The experience of developed countries in Europe shows that the attempt to mechanically make up for working-age population in the labour market with cheap and undemanding to working conditions and wages immigrants can cost, ultimately, far more expensive to the society and the state. "Substitute" immigration that compensated the decline in population or a specific age contingent resulted in fiasco, at least in Europe. Scale "replacement" migration has brought many cultural, social and political problems. European immigration policy is becoming more selective with respect to workforce; the preference is given to people with high qualifications, educational workers integrated into the national labour market, to close ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups of the population. In addition, there is a growing trend of active formation of immigration flows with the desired structure in the countries of origin through the support of language courses, training qualifications, etc. Obviously, such a conceptual approach is necessary for Russia in modern conditions. This is the conceptual approach.

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