

## MIGRATION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TODAY<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** *The article overviews immigration in the Russian Federation in the period 2015–2017 and analyses the situation faced by people with a migrant background in Russia. A detailed description is given of regions that are popular among immigrants and the underlying reasons for their choices. Foreigners' purpose for being in Russia and their impact on the Russian economy is also studied. Statistics show that Moscow, the Moscow Region, Saint-Petersburg, the Leningrad and Voronezh Regions, along with the Krasnodar Territory attract most immigrants with their high economic level and many work places. Ever more people have recently been arriving in the Novosibirsk and Tyumen Regions (industrial regions), drawn by the greater job opportunities and relatively high payments for workers made by regional enterprises there. Immigrants typically come to Russia from ex-USSR (post-Soviet) states for employment (long-, short-term, seasonal) reasons. Over 80% of immigrants in Russia are men in their active working age. The article also considers statistics on refugees and people without Russian citizenship. The research looks at the Russian Federation's migration policy that aims to help immigrants assimilate and live comfortably in Russia while also ensuring the country's national security and economic stability. The article relies on data from the Federal Migration Service, the Federal State Statistics Service, the Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Central Bank of the Russian Federation.*

**Keywords:** *migration situation in Russia; immigrants; migration sources; Russian state migration policy*

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## Introduction

### *General Description of Migration Processes in Russia*

The (im)migration of a population indicates the well-/ill-being of a state, making it important to observe and analyse its dynamics and directions. Immigration significantly influences a state's demographics (including in Russia), determines the status of the regional (and local) labour market, part of which entails the need to analyse the current situation to ensure successful control of the country's social, economic and security dimensions. It is known that migration can be both a financial source for the state and its economic users. This highlights the value of analysis that identifies the numbers of immigrants in Russia, the reasons for their arrival and the directions of migrant streams. This research study's purposes are to: 1) examine the latest statistics for 2015–2017 on immigration in the Russian Federation; 2) analyse immigration in Russia today and to find out the destination points (regions within the RF) of these immigration streams and the reasons for this; 3) identify the source states of immigration to Russia, the purposes of them coming, their age, sex, education level, and influence on the Russian economy; 4) analyse Russian legislation in the sphere of foreign migration policy; and 5) predict the directions and scope of future foreign migration flows.

The Russian Federation has the second highest number of immigrants in the world. Migration accordingly has a great impact on the country's socio-economic and demographic situation. Both Russian and foreign academic studies have examined this topic: Peter Gatrell (2006), Marlene Laruelle (2007), Alin Chindea, Magdalena Majkowska-Tomkin, Heikki Mattila, Isabel Pastor (2008), Marthe Handa Myhre (2012), Lyubov Bisson (2016), Ilkka Liikanen, James W. Scott, Tiina Sotkasiira (2016), Jozef Lang (2017), V. S. Malakhov (2015), A. V. Solodilov (2016), L. R. Gadelshina, D. V. Zubaidullina (2017) etc. However, in this article the author considers the latest statistical data (2015–2017) that have not been fully described and analysed elsewhere.

In the past two decades, population growth by way of immigration has helped compensate for the 50% rate of the population's natural decrease. The Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) gives estimates of the population size by 2030 (high and medium scenarios) based on results of the All-Russian population census and the dynamics of demographic processes in past years, stating that "at the beginning of 2025 the country will have a population of between 142.8 and 145.6 million people"<sup>2</sup>. According to Rosstat, as at 1 January 2017 Russia had a population of 146.8 million.

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<sup>2</sup> Accessible at <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15635>.

The migration situation in Russia today relates to the country's socio-economic and political development. It is a fact that, compared to European Union member states, that the Russian Federation is less attractive to migrants for several climatic, economic and social reasons. People arriving in Russia are mostly citizens of the former Soviet Union republics (these days referred to as the Commonwealth of Independent States; CIS). The new generations of migrants coming from the CIS to work in the Russian Federation have lower education levels, Russian language knowledge, professional training and qualifications than people who immigrated to Russia in earlier periods. The Federal Migration Service states that at present Russia has 1.3 million migrants working legally and 3.5 million illegally<sup>3</sup>. Figures from the Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service (FSS) included on Rosstat's website show that in 2016 there was a total 27,811.917 immigrants in Russia. The total number those arriving in Russia in 2016 alone was 575,158, most of whom are of active working age (information was given to Rosstat by the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation)<sup>4</sup>.

People arriving from the former Soviet republics (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Tajikistan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Ukraine etc.) constituted 89% of all immigrants in 2016 (see Figure 1). Jozef Lang states, "Over the past fifteen years, the presence in Russia of several million labour migrants from Central Asia has been a key determinant of the region's stability. This migration has contributed to reducing internal problems and has helped provide a source of income to societies in specific countries" (Lang, 2017: 1). M. Laruelle adds: "These migrations confirm the emergence of new interactions between Russia and Central Asia. Their consequences could include the risk of confrontation, but also the continuation of cultural exchanges and the preservation of ethnic diversity" (Laruelle, 2007: 101).

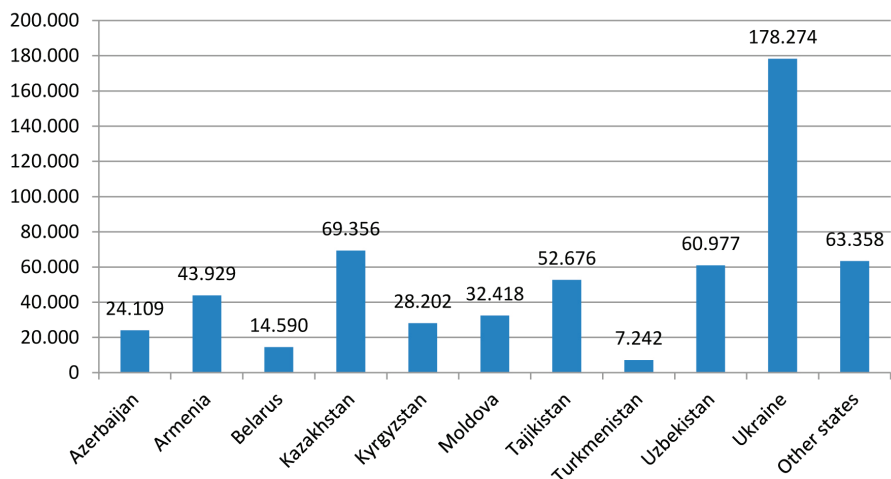
Most migrants coming from other states to Russia in 2016 for various purposes (employment, private, tourism etc.) were from China (8,027), South Korea (7,377), Georgia (6,511), Germany (4,153), Vietnam (3,735), Turkey (1,626), Latvia (1,428), Morocco (1,303), Estonia (1,163), the USA (1,137), and Syria (1,107). A detailed description of the situation of migrants Central Asia in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg is presented in the research of Marthe Handa Myhre (see Myhre, 2012). Jozef Lang also considered the problem of migrants from Central Asia in Russia (Lang, 2017).

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<sup>3</sup> Accessible at <http://www.baltinfo.ru/2014/04/29/FMS-V-Rossii-naschityvaetsya-pochti-4-milliona-nelegalnykh-migrantov-422465>.

<sup>4</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/Main.htm](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/Main.htm).

Figure 1: NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING IN RUSSIA FROM THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (EX-USSR STATES)  
IN 2016



Source: Rosstat<sup>5</sup>.

The above statistics may be compared with information (data for period end 2015-first half 2016) on the number of Russian citizens living abroad: the most popular destinations are the USA – 415,000, Canada – 214,000, Israel – 268,000, Estonia – 89,000, Germany – 201,000, Spain – 66,000, Czech Republic – 33,000, Latvia – 42,000, Austria – 30,000, Finland – 30,000, Bulgaria – 17,000<sup>6</sup>. As a rule, Russians emigrate for employment, education and tourism purposes.

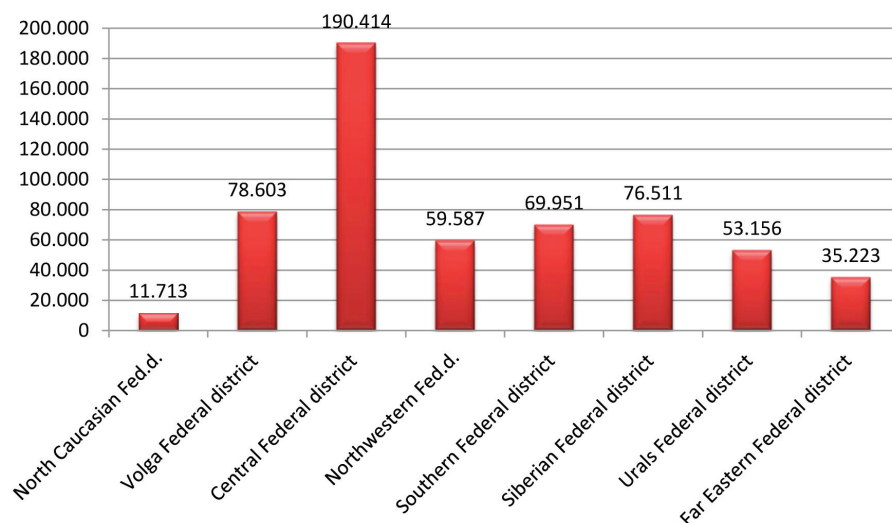
### Regions Popular Among Immigrants

In 2016, the primary destination of most immigrants was the Central Federal District (namely, Moscow and the Moscow Region), with 190,414 foreigners moving there, Northwestern Federal District (namely, the Leningrad Region and St. Petersburg) which was joined by 59,587 foreigners, Southern Federal District (69,951), the Siberian Federal District (76,511) and the Volga Federal District (78,603). The regional distribution of the flow of migration in 2016 can be presented in a bar graph (see Figure 2).

<sup>5</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-01-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-01-16.xls).

<sup>6</sup> Accessible at <http://emigranto.ru/spravochnaya/emigraciya/iz-rossii.html>.

Figure 2: DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS ACROSS REGIONS (RUSSIAN FEDERAL DISTRICTS, STATISTICS FOR 2016)



Source: Rosstat<sup>7</sup>.

To be more precise, in 2016 the most popular regions were Moscow and the Moscow Region (attracting 25,788 and 35,267 immigrants), St. Petersburg (22,391) and the Leningrad Region (10,890), the Krasnodar Territory (23,550) and the Voronezh Region (18,580). These regions are known for their better job opportunities, relatively high levels of pay, good climate and numerous tourist attractions. For many years, people of different nationalities and religious faiths have lived there without acute ethnic conflicts. The Siberian part of Russia attracts large numbers of immigrants workers due to its high level of industrial development: in 2016, 22,360 immigrants arrived in the Novosibirsk Region, 14,471 in the Krasnoyarsk Territory and 11,853 in the Tyumen Region. The Far Eastern Federal district of Russia chiefly attracts Chinese workers – 11,458 immigrants arrived in the Khabarovsk Territory and 129,139 in the Maritime (Primorye) Territory in 2016. Of those migrating to the Russian Far East, 60% of them were working-age Chinese. The fewest immigrants were registered in the Nenets Autonomous district (199), the Republic of Kalmykia (104), and the Chukotka Autonomous district (81)<sup>8</sup>.

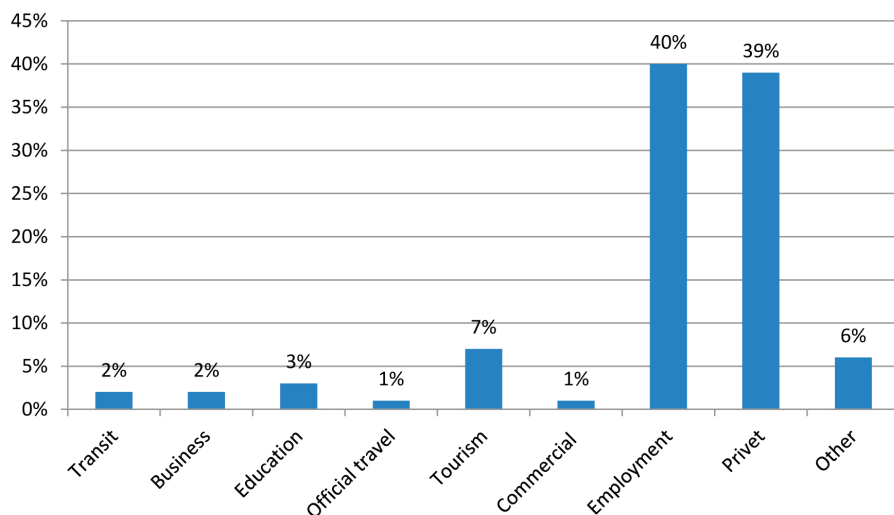
<sup>7</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-03-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-03-16.xls).

<sup>8</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-03-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-03-16.xls).

## Purpose of Foreign Citizens' Stay in Russia

According to the Main Migration Directorate of the Ministry for Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (April 2016), one of the prime purposes of immigrants moving to Russia is employment (40%). Next in importance are private visits (39% come for personal reasons) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: PURPOSE OF FOREIGN MIGRANTS' VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION (APRIL, 2016)



Source: The Main Migration Directorate of the Ministry for Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation<sup>9</sup>.

We now turn to the education level of CIS citizens who arrived for “employment” purposes in 2016, given that this accounts for the biggest share of those coming to Russia (see Table 1).

Immigrants mainly work in food-processing (4%), house building/construction (34%), marketing (9%), home help (10%), industry (10%), agriculture and forestry (7%), transport (3%), other (23%) (Prokopenko, Vorobjeva, 2016). Some of them start up a business, mainly in the catering sphere, trading, transport, logistics etc. Immigrants holding a higher education diploma or Candidate of Sciences/Doctor of Science degree as a rule work in preschools, schools and higher education, medicine, economics, law, hold top management jobs in various companies etc. As regards immigrants from countries other than the CIS, most of those with a higher education are from Germany (1,069), Georgia (876), Abkhazia (395), China (391),

<sup>9</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-11-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-11-16.xls).

Latvia (403), Syria (304), Turkey (324), and Estonia (381)<sup>10</sup>. In 2016, there were 5 migrants with a D.Sc. degree who arrived in Russia from Georgia and 4 from Syria; 6 Candidates of Sciences came from Syria and 5 from Georgia (the highest figures).

Table 1: EDUCATION LEVEL OF IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING IN RUSSIA IN 2016 (14 YEARS AND ABOVE)<sup>11</sup>

Regions of the world	No. of migrants aged 14 years and above	No. of migrants who have higher education	No. of migrants with Doctor's degree	No. of migrants with Candidate's degree	No. of migrants who have incomplete higher education	No. of migrants who have secondary special education	No. of migrants who finished secondary school	No. of migrants who didn't complete secondary school or without any education	No. of migrants who didn't specify educational level
<b>Commonwealth of Independent States, total</b>	457,590	94,660	190	343	12,429	125,181	104,671	30,811	89,838
Azerbaijan	22,490	2,203	3	5	395	3,961	9,205	2,056	4,670
Armenia	40,562	5,855	19	24	848	9,177	12,696	3,306	8,680
Belarus	13,828	3,338	5	10	242	4,203	1,704	317	4,024
Kazakhstan	60,626	15,847	19	32	1,675	16,981	10,071	3,591	12,461
Kirgizia	25,609	2,773	5	15	509	5,299	7,842	2,369	6,817
Moldova	29,385	6,010	14	24	952	8,674	5,705	1,872	6,172
Tajikistan	47,933	4,543	21	20	975	7,811	19,870	4,908	9,826
Turkmenistan	6,973	566	2	–	300	849	2,980	203	2,075
Uzbekistan	55,963	7,356	30	31	1,121	15,708	13,870	3,839	14,069
Ukraine	154,221	46,169	72	182	5,412	52,518	20,728	8,350	21,044
Other states	59,543	7,728	44	61	1,629	11,026	18,067	1,945	19,148

Source: Rosstat.

## Reasons for Coming to Russia

1. Economic. The longstanding friendly relations between Russia and the other former Soviet Union member states and the visa-free regime enable people to travel relatively freely in search of employment. Immigrants for work reasons chiefly come from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine. The pay level is lower in those countries than in Russia.

2. Return of ethnic Russians to Russia (mostly from former Soviet republics). According to M.S. Palnikov, a leading research scientist at the Institute

<sup>10</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-14-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-14-16.xls).

<sup>11</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-14-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-14-16.xls).



of Scientific Information for Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences, "from 1989 to 1995 the migration flow to Russia was 75% ethnic Russians from the ex-USSR countries"<sup>12</sup>. For the last two decades, the number of ethnic Russian migrants willing to return to Russia has dropped considerably given that most Russians (in some countries up to 99%) have already left the ex-USSR countries. For example, according to Georgia's population census as of November 2014, Russians make up 0.7% of the total population of this ex-USSR state, whereas before the collapse of the Soviet Union (in 1989) Russians accounted for 24% of the total population of Georgia (Vavilova, Kaygorodova 2014: 9). The situation is similar in the other ex-USSR countries; for example, in Uzbekistan where 1.8% of the population is Russian, a notable drop from 8.36% before the collapse of the USSR; in Tajikistan the Russian population has fallen from 7.6% in Soviet times to 0.5% today. Russians left Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and the other ex-USSR countries following the collapse of the Soviet Union due to the genocide against the Russians there, the mass killings of hundreds of thousands of Russians by the indigenous population triggered by national and religious hate (Semyonova, 2010: 7-9).

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3. Political (including military). One reason people come to Russia is their opposition to the politics of the government or a military conflict in their home state. In 2016, there was an influx of people from Syria (1,107), Ukraine (including its western part - 178,274), Iraq (995) and Afghanistan (847). As L. Bisson states, "it is very important to note that since the Ukraine crisis, Russia has become one of the largest recipients of refugees and people seeking temporary asylum among European countries. People's tolerance towards foreigners actually increased over this period" (Bisson, 2015: 16).

4. To acquire education (academic mobility). Information from the Russian Ministry of Education and Science shows that in 2016 there were about 237,538 foreign students in Russia, 6% of all students in Russia. Most are students from ex-USSR countries, while 18.5% of foreign students come from Northern Africa and the Middle East, 56.8% from Asia, 15.9% from Africa to the south of the Sahara Desert, 3.8% from Northern, Western and Southern Europe, 3.3% from South America, 1.2% from Eastern Europe, 0.5% from North America, Australia and Oceania. Most foreign students from countries other than the ex-USSR states come from Asia (56.7% of all foreign students, half of these are from China). Besides, there are 4,958 people without citizenship who are receiving education in Russia (Gromov, 2016: 5). The share of foreign students studying in Russia at higher education

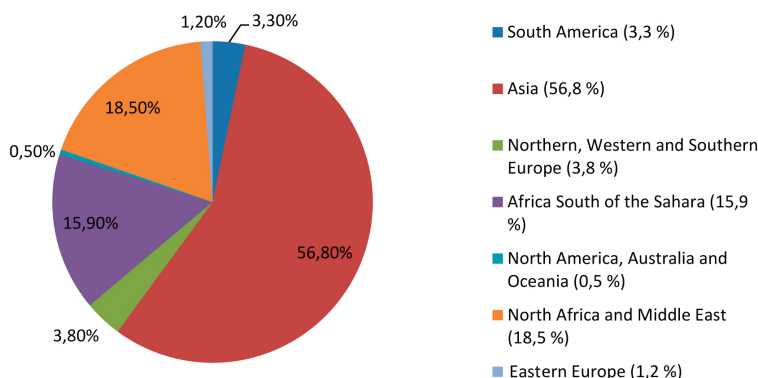
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<sup>12</sup> Accessible at [http://www.perspektivy.info/book/immigracija\\_v\\_rossiju\\_iz\\_postsovetских\\_respublik\\_chast\\_pervaja\\_2009-07-16.htm](http://www.perspektivy.info/book/immigracija_v_rossiju_iz_postsovetских_respublik_chast_pervaja_2009-07-16.htm).



institutions is presented below (see Figure 4). "Russia appears attractive to foreign students not only because of its high standard of university tuition but also because of the simplicity of entry and residence rules" (Bisson, 2015: 19).

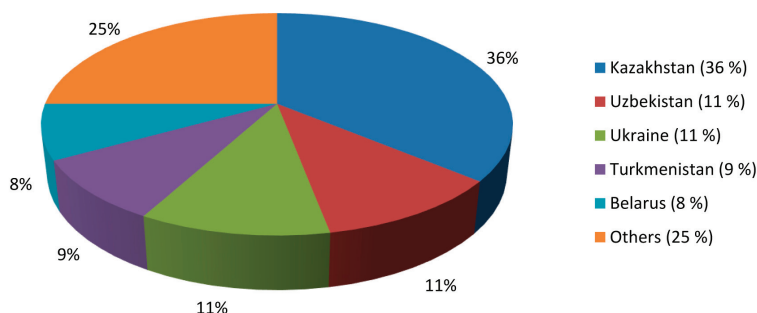
Figure 4: FOREIGN STUDENTS IN RUSSIA IN 2016



Source: Gromov, Alexander, Dmitrievich (2016). Academic mobility of foreign students in Russia.

As regards students from ex-USSR countries, the ones most represented are Kazakhstan (providing 36% of all students from former Soviet republics), Uzbekistan (11%), Ukraine (11%), Turkmenistan (9%), and Belarus (8%) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN RUSSIA FROM COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (POST-SOVIET STATES) IN 2016



Source: Gromov, Alexander, Dmitrievich (2016). Academic mobility of foreign students in Russia.

## Migrants from ex-USSR states

As noted above, most immigrants in Russia come from ex-USSR states: Ukraine (178,274), Kazakhstan (69,356), Uzbekistan (60,977) and Armenia (43,929). According to data for 2016 from the Directorate of the Federal Migration Service, migrants from ex-USSR countries (CIS) are people of active working age (namely, between 16 and 54 for women, 16 and 59 for men according to Russian law) (see Table 2). Statistics show they are looking for employment or have a private reason to visit Russia.

*Table 2: SHARE OF MIGRANTS FROM DIFFERENT COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS, OR POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES) BY AGE*

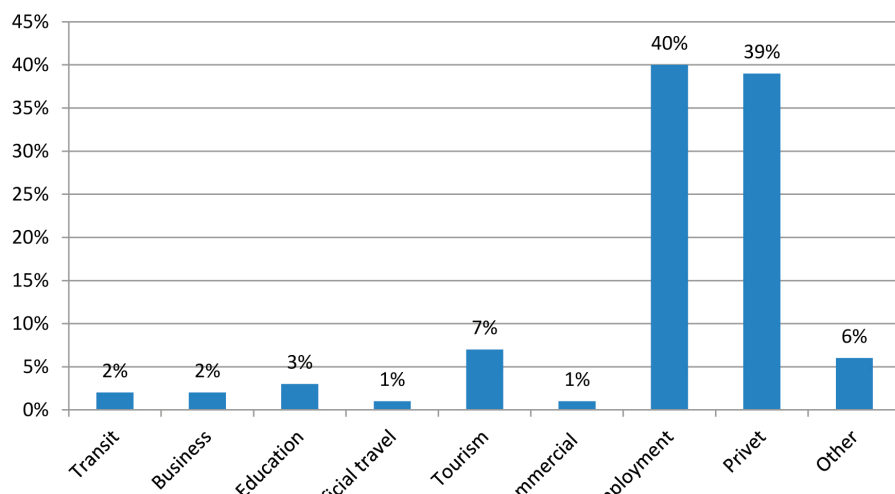
Ex-USSR states (CIS)	Migrants arriving in Russian Federation in 2016, total	Migrants younger working age (0–15 years old)	Migrants of working age (16–54 for women, 16–59 for men)	Migrants older working age (55 and older for women, 60 and older for men)
	<b>511,773</b>	<b>61,631</b>	<b>393,424</b>	<b>56,718</b>
Azerbaijan	24,109	1,915	21,004	1,190
Armenia	43,929	3,921	34,071	5,937
Belarus	14,590	866	12,577	1,147
Kazakhstan	69,356	9,929	50,096	9,331
Kirgizia	28,202	3,042	23,093	2,067
Moldova	32,418	3,501	26,290	2,627
Tajikistan	52,676	5,424	45,169	2,083
Turkmenistan	7,242	323	6,374	545
Uzbekistan	60,977	5,731	47,906	7,340
Ukraine	178,274	26,979	126,844	24,451

Source: Rosstat.<sup>13</sup>

One can present the share of immigrants younger than working age, of working age and older than working age in the following bar graph (see Figures 6, 7).

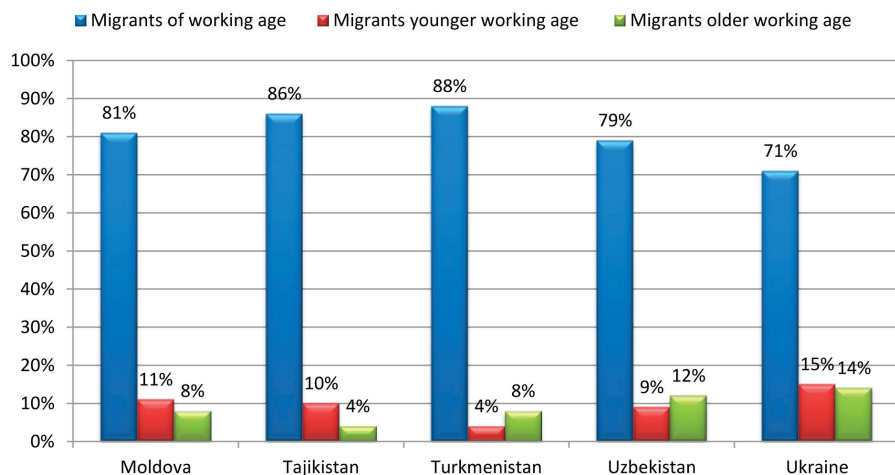
<sup>13</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-17-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab2-17-16.xls).

Figure 6:



Source: Rosstat.

Figure 7:



Source: Federal State Statistics Service.

The reasons immigrants from CIS states choose to come and live and work in Russia these days are as follows:

- the majority of immigrants know the Russian language well more or less, some have received an education in Russia or in their home country during the Soviet Union period under to Soviet education system;

- most immigrants understand the Russian culture, traditions, habits, spirit values and mentality due to having once had a common border and a shared history. Russians also understand the mentality and traditions of those who arrive from CIS states. Moreover, they have a lot in common and this reduces any cross-cultural problems;
- older-generation migrants have the same Soviet work experience as their Russian contemporaries;
- there is a well-developed transport network with Russia and a simplified visa system for citizens from CIS;
- many migrants have relatives in Russia, who hold Russian citizenship;
- migrants from CIS states organise their own ethnic diasporas, national communities, public organisations, student associations, cultural centres etc. in Russia. The largest diasporas are Tajik, Uzbek, Armenian, Georgian etc., and are ready to provide related informational, moral and financial support.

### Remittances by Foreigners from Russia to the CIS and Other Parts of the World

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The Russian Central Bank estimates that in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017 cross-border transfers made by foreign private customers amounted to USD 2,217 million; USD 905 million of this amount went to non-CIS states and USD 1,312 million to CIS countries. The average sum transferred to non-CIS and CIS states was USD 4,658 and USD 218 dollars. Accordingly, foreign citizens' money transfers from Russia to the CIS states in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017 account for 59% of all cross-border transfers. Data showing transfers from Russia by private customers who are non-residents of Russia (foreign citizens) are presented in Table 3. The remittances made by CIS immigrant workers in Russia play a huge role in their domestic budgets. For example, as stated by the assistant to the RF's President at the Council of Foreign Politics Yuriy Ushakov in 2017, the "sum of money transfer to Tajikistan in 2016 amounted 1,9 milliard dollars USA, that equals the third part of the gross domestic product of Tajikistan"<sup>14</sup>. The same point of view is expressed Nargiza Muratalieva, scientific Secretary of the Institute of Strategic Analysis and Forecasting of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (Kyrgyzstan), "nowadays money transfers of Kyrgyz citizens working in Russia amount 32% of Kyrgyzstan's GDP"<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Accessible at <https://www.news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/economic/20170224/denezhnie-perevodi-migrantov-iz-rossii-ravni-treti-vvp-tadzhikistana>.

<sup>15</sup> Accessible at <https://www.ritemeurasia.org/news-2016-01-27-perevody-trudovyh-migrantov-sostavljajut-do-32-vvp-kyrgyzii-21588>.

Table 3: STATISTICS ON THE VOLUME OF CROSS-BORDER TRANSFERS IN 30 COUNTRIES – COUNTERPARTIES TO THE RUSSIAN CENTRAL BANK MADE BY FOREIGN PRIVATE CUSTOMERS (1<sup>st</sup> QUARTER OF 2017)

State where the sum was transferred to	Transfer amount (USD million)	Average amount of one transfer (USD)	State where the sum was transferred to	Transfer amount (USD million)	Average amount of one transfer (USD)
<b>Ex-USSR states (CIS)</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>218</b>	15. USA	127	31,290
1. Uzbekistan	467	288	16. Great Britain	37	9,468
2. Tajikistan	290	142	17. China	91	14,537
3. Kirgizia	251	220	18. Spain	21	19,922
4. Ukraine	57	254	19. Germany	35	10,355
5. Azerbaijan	68	294	20. Cyprus	16	58,181
6. Armenia	58	165	21. Austria	12	13,851
7. Kazakhstan	38	327	22. Luxembourg	6	61,401
8. Moldova	55	255	23. Italy	19	7,019
9. Belorussia	27	333	24. Netherlands	15	12,874
10. Turkmenistan	1	438	25. Turkey	38	2,251
<b>Other states</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>4,658</b>	26. Monaco	5	62,638
11. Switzerland	99	113,474	27. Georgia	28	391
12. Latvia	25	14,743	28. France	27	8,956
13. Israel	36	41,025	29. Singapore	2	13,621
14. Czech Republic	20	3,818	30. Un. Arab Emirates	18	24,826

Source: Russian Central Bank<sup>16</sup>.

## Russian Budget Income from Immigrant Workers

Experts assess the income for the Russian state budget deriving from immigrant workers differently, yet they all agree that such migration makes a significant contribution to the Russian economy. In 2013, Vyacheslav Postavnin, ex-deputy head of the Russian Federal Migration Service, stated that the income for the Russian economy from immigrant workers was USD 400 billions<sup>17</sup>. V. Postavnin noted that this represents 15–20% of the gross national product. According to calculations by Sergey V. Ryazantsev<sup>18</sup>, “profits from foreign labor migrants for period January–May 2015 were 5,2 milliards dollars USA” (Ryazantsev S., 2016: 27). The Minister of Internal Affairs of Russia Vladimir Kolokoltsev stated that the work permits (*‘patents’*) immigrant workers must purchase under Russian legislation added more than 38 billion rubles (about USD 70 million) to the state budget in 2016 and 28.5 billion rubles (about USD 50 million) in 2015<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Accessible at <http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?PrId=svs>.

<sup>17</sup> Accessible at <http://www.finmarket.ru/news/3568203>.

<sup>18</sup> A Doctor of Economic Sciences, Head of the Centre for Social Demography and Economic Sociology, Institution of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>19</sup> Accessible at <https://news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/society/20161214/trudovie-patenti-migrantov-za-god-prinesli-v-byudzhet-rossii-bolee-38-mlrd-rublei>.

## Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Russian Federation

According to Rosstat data, as of 1 January 2017, Russia had registered:<sup>20</sup>

1. 598 foreign refugees (including 292 migrants from Afghanistan, 188 from Ukraine and 118 from other countries);
2. 4,684 displaced persons (including 6,242 from Georgia, 1,973 from Uzbekistan, 4,366 from Kazakhstan and 2,103 from other countries; and
3. 228,392 people who were granted temporary asylum (including 226,044 people from Ukraine, 1,317 from Syria, 417 from Afghanistan and 614 from other countries).

## The Russian Federation's Migration Policy and its Aims

Since 2012, Russia has been updating its legislation in immigration to the country and revising the main guidelines of the Federation's migration policy. The Russian President's decree of 13 June 2012 finalised the Russian Federation state Migration Concept for the period up to 2025. The document specifies the following key objectives of the state migration policy:

1. ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation, the maximal protection, comfort and well-being of its population; and
2. ensuring the stability and steady growth of the resident population of the Russian Federation<sup>21</sup>.

## Implementing the concept underlying the Russian Federation's migration policy for the period to 2025:

1. The first stage (2012–2015) was reserved for developing and adopting laws and regulations of the Russian Federation; developing and approving programmes on migration; building infrastructure to help immigrant workers adapt and stay in Russia. The first stage of realising the Concept finished in 2015, resulting in a major reform of migration laws and regulations. Special steps taken in 2015 complemented and consolidated the mechanisms for further implementing the state migration policy along the following lines:
  - a) several documents were developed to curb illegal migration;
  - b) in order to aid Russian expatriates, emigrants and certain categories of citizens willing to return to the Russian Federation, the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation was given authority to facilitate the voluntary migration to the Russian Federation of Russian nationals living abroad;

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<sup>20</sup> Accessible at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab3-03-16.xls](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_107/IssWWW.exe/Stg/tab3-03-16.xls).

<sup>21</sup> Text of Migration Concept accessible at <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15635>.

- c) laws on providing accommodation to displaced people in the territory of the Russian Federation came into effect;
  - d) to ease the adaptation and integration of migrants, from 1 January 2015 all categories of foreign citizens (except highly qualified specialists) who need a temporary residence permit, a permanent residence card, a work permit or a *patent* are to pass an exam in Russian, Russian history and the basics of Russian law;
  - e) from 1 January 2015, visa-free foreign visitors can work in the Russian Federation if they have a *patent*. Since 2015, over 3 million patents have been issued. In order to get the papers need to work in Russia, a foreigner is to specify the purpose of his visit as “employment” on his migration card. If an employer breaches the law on employing migrants (for example, if the migration card has expired or the purpose of the visit stated on the migration card is other than “employment”), he must pay a fine of up to 1 million rubles;
  - f) the Federal Migration Service effectively uses a special automated system to detect people who stay in the Russian Federation beyond the due time and subsequently prevent them from entering Russia. In the past two years, this closer monitoring has resulted in more than 1.8 million foreigners being banned from entering Russia. This preventive measure motivates immigrants arriving in the country to obtain legal status and adhere to the law.
2. The second and third stages of implementing the Concept (2016–2020 and 2021–2025) envisage the adopting of additional updating programmes to refine the document, if necessary, in the course of its implementation and the monitoring of migration data.

## The Future Situation of Immigrant Workers in Russia

Researches by the Russian Academy of Sciences estimates the number of legal immigrant workers in Russia will reach 8,096,000 by 2020 (Vasilyeva Aleksandra V., Aleksandr A. Tarasyev, 2014: 293). The most attractive regions for immigrant workers will be the Moscow region (where it estimated there will be 1,044,000 of such people), Moscow city (1,016,000), Saint Petersburg (837,000), the Tyumen region (675,000), the Krasnodar territory (609,000), and the Sverdlovsk region (471,000). It is also underlined that the anticipated unemployment level of foreign workers of 12% will have a negative impact on the security and economic situation in Russia. We note these estimates only took vacant work places into account; in reality, immigrant workers might displace local citizens from the labour market since they are willing to work for a lower salary than the local people. This forecast is particularly made for regions with high unemployment levels



(Primorsky territory – 20%, Leningrad region – 19%, Kaluga region – 17%, Ryazan region – 17%).

According to estimates by Irina V. Ivakhnyuk, doctor of economic sciences of the Centre of Strategic Researches, who forecasted the immigration situation in Russia up until 2035, “foreign net migration will consist from 250 thousands of people until 500 thousand of people annually who will move to Russia for permanent residence” (Irina V. Ivakhnyuk, 2017: 24). So, despite the huge additional incomes for the Russian budget from immigrant workers, there could be an adverse effect on the employment of local Russians.

## Conclusion

The problem of immigration into the Russian Federation is now being widely discussed by the Russian and foreign scientific community. According to L. R. Gadelshina and D. V. Zubaidullina, the biggest problems of immigrant workers in Russia are: “1. All the rubles earned by migrants leave the country and are spent outside Russia; 2. Migration processes raise the level of unemployment among the residents; 3. Most foreigners arriving to work for hire are illegal migrants. It means employers exploit them and pay nothing to the budget. Besides, if there is cheap labor, there is no need for new technologies and further development” (Gadelshina, Zubaidullina, 2017: 114). On the contrary, the Eurasian Integration Research Centre has a more positive assessment to the current situation of immigration in Russia as “over a million work patents were issued in 2016, mostly to citizens of the CIS (former Soviet republics) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEC). Due to the patent system regional budgets got almost 26 milliard rubles this year, twice more than in 2015” (Belov, Kozhaev, Gorenkov, 2017: 10). However, information on the crime rate between January and May 2017 from the Russian Federation General Prosecutor's Office is disquieting: “17,328 crimes were committed on the territory of the Russian Federation by foreign citizens and people without citizenship, including 15301 crimes committed by migrants from ex-USSR countries”<sup>22</sup>.

Yu. F. Florinskaya and N. V. Mkrtchyan state that “the number of work papers issued to migrants does not correspond to the number of people who arrive to find employment. Regularization of stay is still a problem which got even more acute in 2016. As of the end of September 2016, only 1.8 million foreigners had valid documents legalizing their employment in Russia (whereas 4 million migrants specified that their purpose was “working for hire”). 1.3 million migrants are not legalized. There is also a big

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<sup>22</sup> Accessible at <http://crimestat.ru/analytics>.

number of arrivals stating a private purpose of visit and yet employed off the books. And even fewer foreigners get officially hired by Russian employers. Out of 900 thousand citizens of the EEU member-states whose purpose was "to work for hire" over 60% worked unofficially" (Florinskaya, Mkrtchyan, 2016: 41). How many migrants are working illegally in Russia is a moot point. Experts from the Migration XXI Century Fund (N. I. Vlasova and V. A. Postavnin, ex-Deputy Head of the Federal Migration Service) assume there are between 5 and 6 million migrants working illegally in Russia nowadays (Postavnin, Vlasova, 2017: 200).

The problem of immigration into Russia is also described by foreign scientists. Unfortunately, most Western authors connect it with politics without providing adequate factual or statistical evidence. Scientific articles often reflect the narrow politicised opinion of people who have never visited Russia and have only a vague idea of immigration processes in the RF. In most cases, these scientists discuss "Russian nationalism and racism" and "slavery". Yet the number of foreign migrants coming to Russia for different reasons (include work) is growing every year and there is no proof of the existence in Russia of radical racism or wage slavery. Information provided by the Central Bank of the RF (the statistics presented above) shows the quantity of money being transferred abroad by foreigners to both Eastern and Western states.

Information that most corresponds to reality is presented in the foreign scientific works of Jozef Lang. He writes: "Moscow has a vast array of means to control them (labor migrants) at its disposal. These include legal and administrative instruments, the threat of deportation" (Lang, 2017: 7). Marlene Laruelle also underlines "Flows of seasonal workers have come mainly from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. These migrations play an increasingly important economic and social role in both the host country (Russia) and in the republics of Central Asia" (Laruelle, 2007: 101-102). In the opinion of Lyubov Bisson, "Illegal immigration is mainly driven by economic factors, in Russia as well as in the European Union. The pull-factor of a [relatively successful] economy is the main cause of illegal immigration in the world" (Bisson, 2016: 10).

Thus, over the past few years a sharp rise has been seen in the flow of immigrants (particularly from the CIS) whose purpose is to find employment in Russia as the living standards in Russia are higher than in most CIS countries and certain other neighbouring states, making Russia attractive to migrants. Russia has developed a certain practice of admitting, settling and integrating immigrants into its regional economies. The main regions with a high immigrant concentration are Moscow and the Moscow Region, St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region, the Krasnodar Territory, the Novosibirsk Region, and the Khabarovsk Territory. As a result, new

elements of the ethnic and cultural structure are taking shape in Russia. The high immigration level is creating ethnic, cultural, economic and national security problems which are quite new in Russia and some of the regions (for example, Siberia, Moscow and the Moscow Region). At present, Russia has standardised laws in place to regulate and legalise immigrant workers' stay and work and protect their labour and employment rights. Another relevant problem is the inaccuracy of the statistics on immigration. When calculating such data, it is necessary to add up the official and the unofficial figures. Experts say illegal migration is considerably more extensive than what is recorded officially.

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