

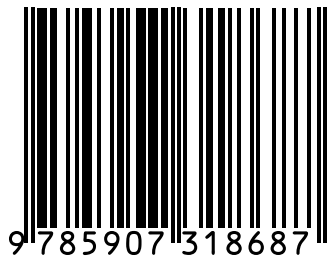


The Social Problems of International Migrants

Dmitry Poletaev,
Andrei Korobkov

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Valdai Discussion Club, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

ISBN 978-5-907318-68-7



© The Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club, 2022

16/1 Tsvetnoy Boulevard St., Moscow, Russia, 127051

About the Authors

Dmitry Poletaev

PhD (Economics)

Lead Researcher, Institute of Economic Forecasting,
Russian Academy of Sciences,

Director at the Regional Public Organization
“Migration Research Center”

Andrei Korobkov

PhD (Economics), PhD (Political Science)

Professor of Political Science and International Relations,
Middle Tennessee State University (USA)

Contents

- 3** Introduction
- 6** Groups of host countries and their attitude to migrants
 - Countries of traditional immigration
 - Former multi-national empires
 - Countries that faced a rapid change in their position in the global migration chain
 - Countries that have experienced explosive economic growth
- 16** Migration, poverty and social inequality
- 21** Migrants and crime
- 23** Migration, health, fertility and disease
- 26** Migrants, human rights violations and discrimination
- 29** Migration, economic problems and corruption
- 31** International and national mechanisms for protecting migrant workers' rights
- 34** Conclusion

Introduction

The host countries' societies do not always appreciate a seemingly obvious fact: migrants are not just a "workforce" or some "median population." They move from one country to another in search of jobs and better life opportunities. They have their own problems and vulnerabilities.

Usually, this understanding comes when countries receive large numbers of migrants. This was the case in West Germany after it implemented its guest worker programmes in the 1960s. This is happening now in Russia, a country that became the centre of a vast Eurasian migration system relatively recently, with the collapse of the USSR. It rapidly turned into one of the world's largest immigration systems – alongside those in North America, Western Europe and the Middle East (centred on the Persian Gulf).

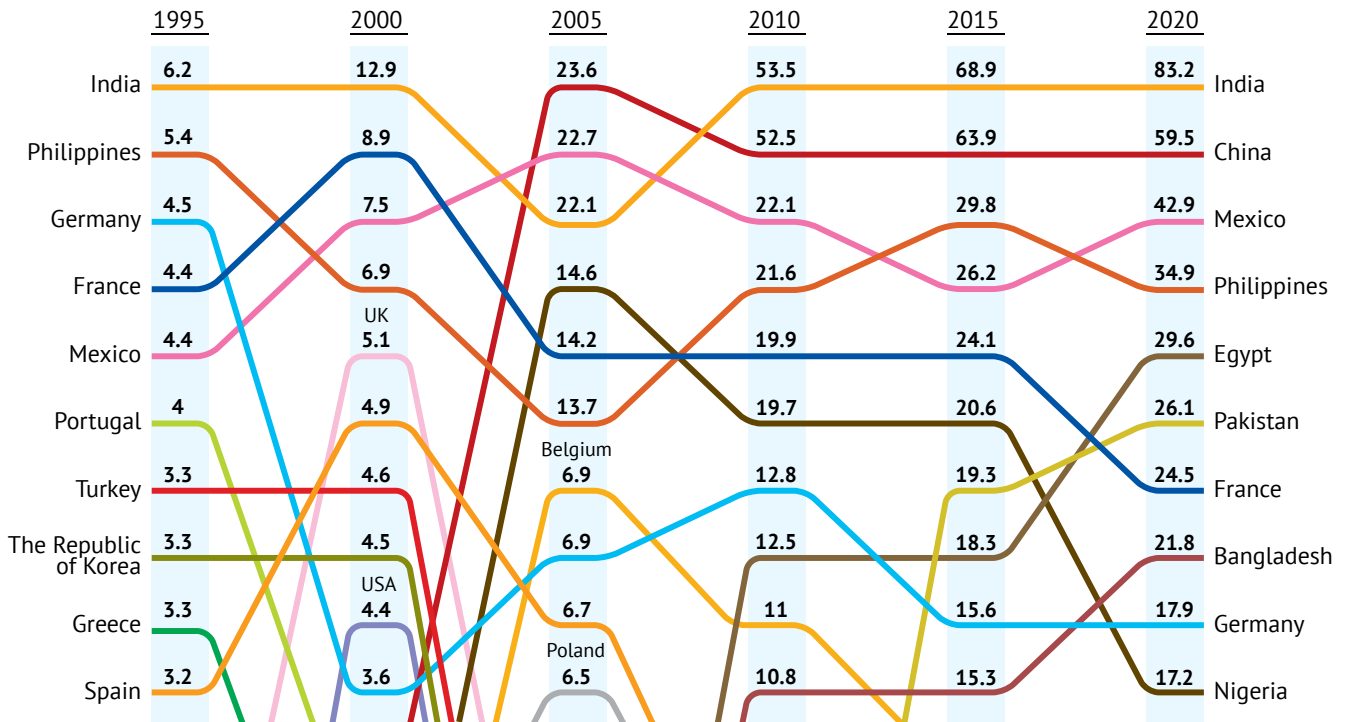
Over 281 million people, or about 3.6 percent of the planet's population, are now involved in the processes of international migration. This is 128 million, or three times more than in 1990.¹ Thus, international migration is exerting an enormous influence on the demographic dynamics, labour markets and socio-economic processes – both in host states and countries of origin.

The academic community as well as politicians and journalists tend to approach migration as a macroeconomic process, ignoring the needs of individual migrants. Meanwhile, it is no less important to see how migration affects the destinies of individual migrants and their family members, not just the economies and societies that are involved in migration processes.

While at the first sight, the guest workers' social problems are far removed from the local residents and their communities, the reality offers quite a very different picture. The scarcity of the legal adaptation channels and the absence of official services for the guest workers in the host countries are leading to the proliferation of alternative practices that are not entirely legal but help solve these problems. There are grounds to say that immigration has a direct impact on the host society: the pushing of migrants into a grey zone expands the sector of services not controlled by the state and is directly or otherwise linked to the shadow or sometimes criminal economy. To change this situation, it is necessary, **first**, to understand the social problems facing migrants (they may be revealed by continuous monitoring and studies) and, **second**, to create, develop and support the official services, including the digital ones, able to resolve the social

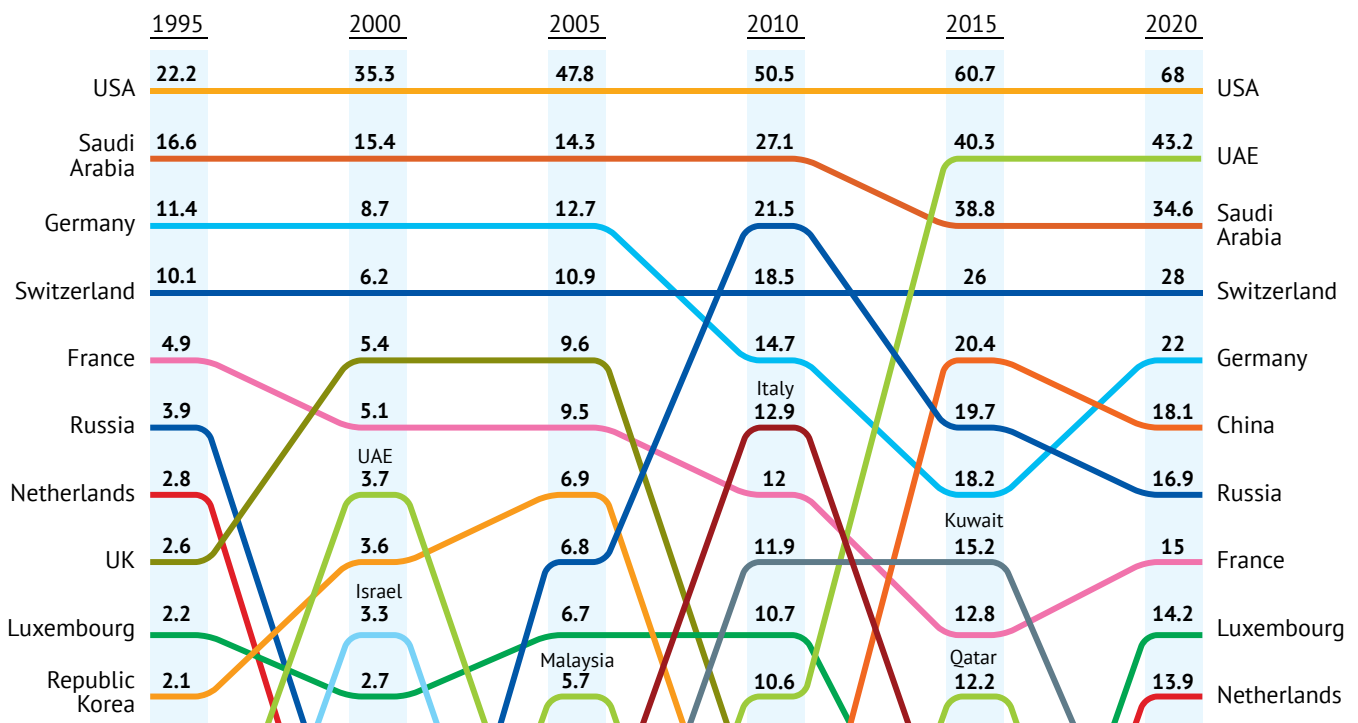
¹ International Organization for Migration (2022). World Migration Report 2022. URL: <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/>

HOW THE TOP TEN REMITTANCE RECIPIENTS HAVE SHIFTED SINCE 1995 (\$ BILLION)



Source: World Bank

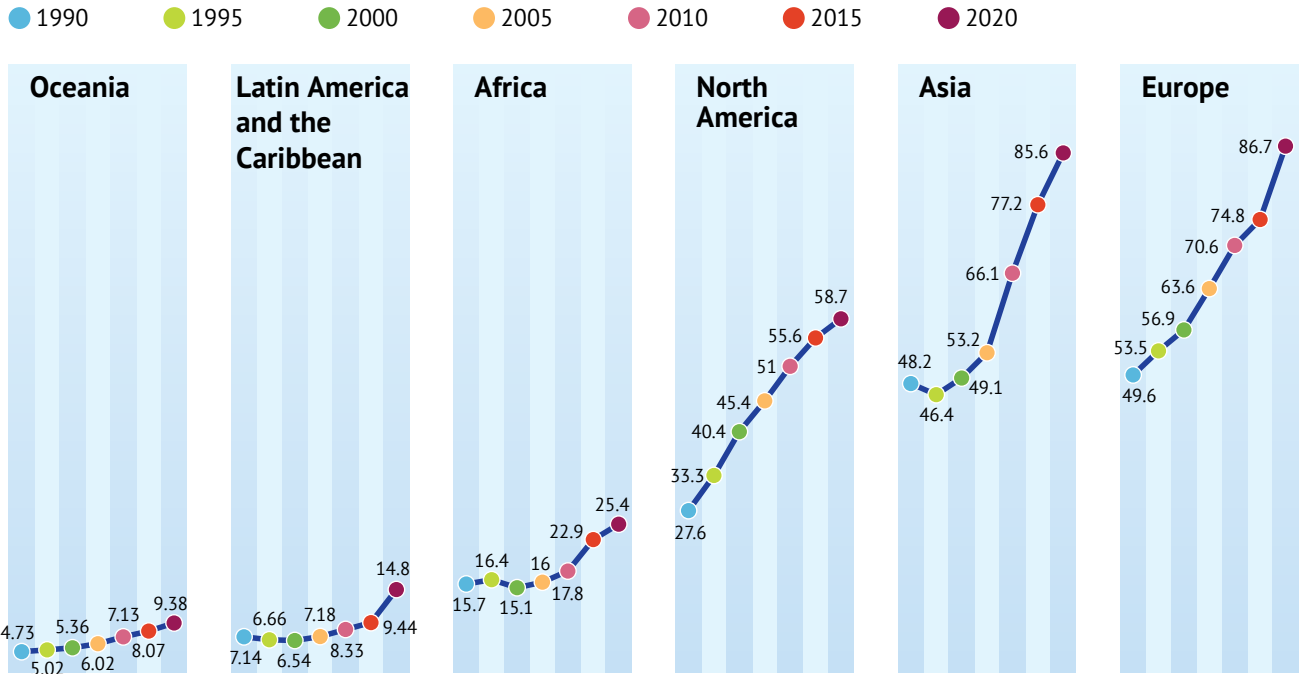
HOW THE TOP TEN REMITTANCE SOURCES HAVE SHIFTED SINCE 1995 (\$ BILLION)



Source: World Bank

MIGRATION, MILLION

The number of international migrants has increased in all UN regions, With the greatest increases in Europe and Asia



Source: UN DESA 2021

problems in a state-controlled legal field. Experience shows that NGOs created in the host societies in order to resolve these problems are playing a vital role in organising this work as distinct from the national and cultural associations. The latter’s main mission is to preserve the culture and language rather than protect the people from the vicissitudes of life.

In this report, we will discuss the types, the origins, and the consequences of social problems and mechanisms for protecting the rights of guest workers in various host countries. For all the diversity, they have one common feature: the problems of migrants are always resolved with less satisfying results and slower than those facing the countries’ citizens. This is so for one simple reason – foreigners have almost no opportunities to influence the situation, in part, by taking part in elections. As a rule, their problems are resolved in the context of a macroeconomic view on migration (aimed at improving the control over migration processes, benefitting a host state). Another factor is apprehensions of the host countries’ authorities with regard to potential discontent of the local residents related to the consequences of the guest workers’ unsolved problems. Societies are generally negative towards about migration. Moreover, politicians, bureaucrats and the media are exaggerating those aspects of migration that they perceive as exerting an unequivocally negative influence on the host side in such areas as social inequality, healthcare, demography, corruption and crime.

Groups of host countries and their attitude to migrants

The host countries may be divided into a number of groups that are very different from each other in the efficiency of their migration policy and attitude to individual migrants.

Countries of traditional immigration

In addition to the United States, the countries of traditional immigration include Canada, Australia, New Zealand, as well as South Africa and Israel. The latter two countries stand apart. South Africa has recently faced a massive outflow of elite migrants and a significant inflow of low-skilled irregular workers from the neighbouring African states. Israel's immigration policy emphasises its ethno-religious aspects and has a comprehensive approach to the attraction and adaptation of migrants, including those belonging to the elite categories.

In general, the majority of countries in this group have a large share of immigrants in the population. They pursue a consistent migration policy and their states and societies have a tolerant attitude to migrants (with some exceptions in South Africa).

Canada and Australia were the pioneers in introducing the "points" systems, giving substantial advantages to skilled people up to 35 years of age (40 years in Australia), as well as academics or skilled professionals at the expense of other categories of migrants. The Canadian system was created by the reforms launched in 1967.² Today, many other host countries are starting to copy this selective policy that is largely discriminatory in its essence.

² For a more detailed explanation of the Canadian immigration system go to: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/apply-who.asp>

Former multi-national empires

The countries that were once centres of multinational empires (for instance, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and Belgium), and especially the territorially contiguous ones (Germany, Austria and Turkey) have received in the aftermath of their collapse considerable migrant flows of two major types. Initially, this was the return migration of the representatives of a former core state, going to their ethnic homeland (Britons, French, Turks, etc). Later, this was migration from the former colonies, primarily of the people who spoke the former metropole's language, knew its culture and could rely on the support of their long-established ethnic diasporas.

While the majority of the countries in this group are among the leading democratic states and have vast social support programmes, the formation of such diasporas often fuels xenophobia and expands the ultra-right parties and movements influence.

Countries that faced a rapid change in their position in the global migration chain

These states have faced a rapid change of their position in the global migration chain and the need to urgently create new migration agencies, adopt the laws regulating migration, and determine the goals of their migration policy. Their position is complicated by the fact that in the past they did not encounter a massive influx of culturally alien migrants and the rapid formation of large diasporas of "visible" minorities. Moreover, the majority of these countries simultaneously border on much more or much less developed countries, which also contributes to the formation of sustainable immigration flows that are often homogenous in the ethnic, religious, and linguistic respects.

Included into this group could be Russia and the countries of Central, Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as the representatives of some other regions, including those that belong to the Global South. This group may soon expand by including some new members. In addition to Russia, a similar migration situation dynamic and a multiplicity of roles in the global migration network are also typical of other BRICS member states, including China, which is facing serious demographic challenges, and, hence, the labour resources problems.

Countries that have experienced explosive economic growth

The Gulf states (as well as Singapore and a number of other countries in Southeast Asia and some other regions) are the typical representatives of states that encountered an explosive economic growth in the past few decades and are compelled to encourage large-scale labour immigration of both the elite and the low-skilled guest workers. For many of them, such policy has created significant splits in society between the local citizens and the disenfranchised, often illegal immigrants that have a different language and religion. In most of these countries, the situation is further aggravated by their authoritarian political systems and very weak civil societies. In the meantime, in many of them, migrants have long become the majority of the population (for instance, in the UAE their share in the population is 88 percent, and in Qatar, 77 percent).³

Thus, many migration problems in the social and other spheres which the Russian Federation is facing now are far from unique. To a certain extent, this is linked to the fact that after the Cold War, the attitude to migrants' problems in general and refugees in particular started to change rapidly, primarily in the West. Freedom of immigration from the communist countries was one of the main Western slogans during the bloc confrontation. It was relatively easy to enter the countries of North America and Western Europe as well as to receive a refugee status there.

³ Batalova J. Top Statistics on Global Migration and Migrants // Migration Policy Institute. Migration Information Source. 21.07.2022. URL: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/top-statistics-global-migration-migrants>

When this issue lost its political significance with the disintegration of the communist bloc and the USSR and the doors were opened for exit, the West rapidly lost interest to migrants and started to view them as a burden. The liberalisation of emigration from Russia was accompanied by the toughening of immigration rules in the West, which made it more difficult for foreigners to enter the most attractive countries.

The situation is further aggravated by the change in the ethnic, racial and religious makeup of the migrant pool. It is expanding the cultural gap between them and the population of the host countries, despite their official policies of multiculturalism and political correctness. A sharp contrast between the Europeans' current attitude to migrants and refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, on the one hand, and Ukraine, on the other, is a graphic illustration of this problem's seriousness.

Parallel to the toughening of the immigration regime in Europe and North America, new migration centres of gravity emerge. Many are located in the Global South countries, accounting for about a third of all international immigrants. As noted, the People's Republic of China (PCR) may soon become a new immigration centre. It has already encountered a sharp decline in the population growth and employment, as well as serious gender imbalances linked with the consequences of its demographic policy in the previous decades.

The domestic difficulties in the European Union (EU) countries and other regions of the Global North are playing a significant role now. These difficulties are of economic (a decline in the economic growth rates and the increasing perception of migrants as rivals in both the labour market and the social welfare areas) and political nature (the escalation of ethnic tensions and a series of conflicts in some host countries, leading to a rapid upsurge of the right-wing nationalist parties and groups in many countries, thereby reducing the aliens' opportunities to enter them. This applies, in particular, to France, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, the US, Germany, Hungary, Britain and Australia.)

The arrival of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (in the case of the EU) and from Latin America (in the case of the US) is exacerbating the economic problems and escalating the ethnic tensions. In this context, citizens of many host countries are increasingly demanding the introduction of strict immigration limits and the re-orientation

of migration policy towards attracting predominantly the highly qualified professionals at the expense of all other categories of migrants, including the refugees. Following the example of Canada, Australia and South Africa, other countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and even the isolationist Japan are moving to adopt the elite points system as well. Donald Trump also announced his intention to adopt a policy of the preferential admission of elite migrants before his departure from the White House.

In his time, the then President of France Nicolas Sarkozy acted as a cynical and open exponent of this utilitarian approach to migration policy. He spoke about the need to move from the “suffered” to “chosen” immigration.⁴ European experts also distinguish between the “desirable” and the “unwanted” migration. The former implies skilled labour, whereas the latter consists of two subgroups: the inevitable migrants (illegal and mostly low-skilled) and those that are accepted involuntarily since they are using the right to family reunification or seek asylum, relying on the international and constitutional commitments of these states.⁵

These statements are not purely declarative. Since the establishment of the Schengen zone in 1990, the adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty and the proclamation of the goal of creating an area of “freedom, security and justice” in Tampere in 1999, the EU has been increasingly moving to the parallel formation of two strictly defined migration regimes. One guarantees freedom of movement and the creation of the common labour market in the EU territory (the UK and Ireland abstained from participation in the Schengen process). The other provides for the construction of strict barriers around the EU that will cut off the unwanted migrants or at least complicate their entry into the EU. Not infrequently, these regimes are described as oriented to guaranteeing the rights (the internal European regime) or ensuring security (the external, prohibitive, regime). They are also called “Europe without borders” and “The Fortress Europe,” correspondingly.

⁴ Joppke Ch. Trends in European Immigration Policies. In: J. Peter Burgess and Serge Gutwirth, eds. *A Threat Against Europe? Security, Migration and Integration*. Brussels: VUBPress, 2011. P. 17.

⁵ Carling J. The European Paradox of Unwanted Immigration. In: J. Peter Burgess and Serge Gutwirth, eds. *A Threat Against Europe? Security, Migration and Integration*. Brussels: VUBPress, 2011. Pp. 134–35.

The restrictions that are being introduced are as follows – the delay of the Schengen accession for new EU members for years; strict requirements in regard to immigration law reforms, including the introduction of a rigid border regime with non-EU neighbours; signing agreements with EU neighbours on the mandatory return of migrants from their territory in case they fail to receive a legal status in the Schengen countries; the toughening of criteria for granting a refugee status (including the demand that the potential refugees apply for a refugee status in the “first country of arrival”); and the reduction of benefits, to name a few.

A massive inflow of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa in the 2010s and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2022 led to a drastic expansion of restrictive trends, the spread of xenophobia in the host societies and a leap in the popularity of ultra-right political parties.

The appearance of Donald Trump on the American political scene showed that similar processes were also underway in the United States, a country of traditional immigration with the world’s largest immigrant community: in 2019, its population included 44.9 million people who had been born abroad.⁶ This means that the share of immigrants in the US amounted to 13.7 percent – an impressive figure and a record for the past century but less than in 1890, when it stood at 14.8 percent.⁷

The US migration policy experience has always been particularly valuable not only because of the size of its immigrant diaspora but also because of its long history. For the past few decades, the immigration flow to the US was dominated by one ethnic and religious group: the Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, the majority of whom were Catholics. In 2019, 44 percent of immigrants (19.8 million) identified as Hispanics. This group amounted to 60.5 million⁸ in the US. This fact created parallels between the attitude to migration in the US and a number of other countries with quite different immigration patterns. These include the apprehensions

⁶ Esterline C., Batalova J. Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States // Migration Policy Institute. 17.03.2022. URL: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requestedstatistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

about the growth of crime, national security threats, the increasing pressure on the labour market and social support sphere, and the erosion of Americans' ethno-religious identification.

However, the migration situation in America is better than in the majority of other host countries because it has the shortest cultural distance between the locals and the bulk of immigrants, who are Christians speaking one of the major European languages. Today, immigrants account for 17 percent of the country's economically active population (including the job seekers), or 28.6 million. Their share in this population category more than tripled since 1970, when it was 5 percent.⁹

Immigration provides for about a third of the aggregate population growth and is seen as an impetus for the economic activity. It supplies the economy with both low-paid labour and highly qualified workers (an added benefit is the considerable savings on their education). Importantly, immigrants are a very successful group: the median income of their households in 2019 amounted to \$63,600 as compared with the national average of \$66,000. The share of immigrant families with the annual income below the minimum subsistence level of \$25,700, was 14 percent compared with the national average of 12 percent.¹⁰

The modern immigration model took shape after 1965, when the Immigration Act was adopted. It radically changed the main principles of immigration policy. The act renounced the national origins quota system and opened the US borders to residents of developing countries, qualified specialists and family members of US citizens. Today, US immigration policy pursues a number of goals:

- ensuring a steady demographic growth of the population;
- expanding its ethnic and racial makeup;
- providing the economy with different categories of workers;
- accepting refugees on political, religious, ethnic and other humanitarian grounds;

⁹ Esterline C., Batalova J. Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States // Migration Policy Institute. 17.03.2022. URL: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requestedstatistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

¹⁰ Ibid.

- encouraging the flow of highly-qualified workers, thereby alleviating the burden on the US educational system, reducing the costs for the education of professional elites, and producing substantial revenues for US universities and the national budget (the latter may be used to finance research and subsidise American students);
- providing education to foreign students at US universities on a large scale in order to select the best specialists and grant them jobs and residency in the United States simultaneously encouraging the formation of pro-American groups among those who return home to advocate a new political culture and ideology. Today, foreign students and immigrant employees account for more than a half of the US academic personnel in natural sciences.

US immigration policy is a major soft power foreign policy mechanism. The US Professor Joseph Nye describes soft power as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcome one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment.”¹¹

However, the immigration policy today is heavily criticised in the United States as well. The focus is on the illegal immigration. The potential solutions range from a full amnesty for 11 million illegal immigrants to their large-scale deportation. Deep differences between the proponents of the opposing views on US immigration policy prevented the US from conducting any major structural reforms since 1986, when the Immigration Reform and Control Act was adopted. At that time, the US authorities amnestied about 2.7 million illegals out of 6 million living in the country. All presidents after Reagan have either failed in their attempts at the radical changes in this area or were unable to pass their proposals through Congress.

Donald Trump was the first president in decades to put the migration issue at the centre of his election campaign in 2016 and to win substantial support of American voters. His success was determined by the growth of the anti-immigrant and xenophobic attitudes in the US society. His voters perceived his anti-immigrant rhetoric as a thinly veiled criticism of the Affirmative Action policies, giving preferences to various different minority groups and denouncing the migration policy priorities

¹¹ Nye J. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

that took shape in the aftermath of the 1965 immigration reform. As a consequence, today the share of Europeans in the immigration flow is below 10 percent as compared with about 90 percent before 1965.

Trump's election promises included the deportation of illegal immigrants (their number exceeded 11 million – most of them arrived in the US legally but lost their status later on), the introduction of a temporary ban on the entry of migrants from a number of Muslim countries, the abrogation of a temporary legal status granted to hundreds of thousands of children of illegal immigrants under the DACA Act during the Barack Obama presidency, and the sharp limits on the admission of refugees into the country. As a result of this policy, the number of refugees admitted to the US went down from 84,998 in 2016 to 29,916 by 2019¹² or by 2.8 times. In 2020, the US admitted a mere 11,800 refugees.¹³

With the start of the pandemic, the Trump Administration adopted and enforced hundreds of new restrictive measures that layered on the general escalation of the xenophobic aspects of US domestic and foreign policy, de facto suspending the work of the majority of US consular offices, introducing strict limits on passenger traffic with other countries and restrictions on the entry into the US. As a result, many of those who received work and study permits, were allowed to reunite with their families, were granted asylum or belonged to other legal categories of immigrants, could not enter the United States. However, this did not lead to a sharp reduction in the number of immigrants, including the illegals, because most of them preferred to stay in the country for a fear of not being able to come back later.

The start of Joe Biden's presidency saw a growth of expectations of the liberalisation of immigration policy. Biden promised, in part, to hold a broad immigration amnesty and sharply increase the refugee quotas – up

¹² 2019 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics // U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Office of Immigration Statistics, 2020. URL: https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2019/yearbook_immigration_statistics_2019.pdf

¹³ U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-Present // Migration Policy Institute, 2022. URL: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-refugee-resettlement>

to 62,500 in 2021 and 125,000 in 2022. That said, the President promised to admit 100,000 refugees from Ukraine during 2022 and 2023. About 75,000 Ukrainian citizens who had already been in the US, were granted the “temporary protected status,” which allowed them to extend their legal stay in the country for up to 18 months. This status entitles its holders to a work permit, a social security card and a driving license.¹⁴

However, the subsequent events showed that Biden did not receive sufficient support in Congress for deep reforms of the immigration policy and the immigration issue as such was not central in his political agenda. Moreover, it became clear that immigration is one of the issues on which the US society remains deeply divided.

Nonetheless, despite all the political upheavals of the past few years, the experience of the US and European countries shows the substantial benefits of migration and the ability of a state and society to integrate considerable numbers of migrants without endangering the foundations of the democratic political system.

In addition to numerous roles played by Russia in the migration chain, its distinctive features are as follows: it belongs to many of the aforementioned types of immigration countries and occupies a relatively new position as one of the leading countries of international migration. It is no surprise that its migration policy is continuously changing and is somewhat inconsistent and contradictory. A state begins to fully realize the importance of a comprehensive nationwide migration policy only when it starts to create special programmes to address the social problems that arise or become aggravated due to the mass migration and when new NGOs are established with the federal, regional and municipal budget support. The appearance of similar “services” in the migrant community that attempts to resolve its issues on its own is an indicator of the unsolved social problems.

¹⁴ Sacchetti M. U.S. grants temporary protected status to tens of thousands of Ukrainian immigrants already in the United States // The Washington Post. 3.03.2022. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nationalsecurity/2022/03/03/us-grants-temporary-protected-status-tens-thousands-ukrainian-immigrants-already-united-states/>

Migration, poverty and social inequality

As of today, countries in North America and Europe, including Russia, are home to 52 percent of the international migrants. Another 18 percent have moved to North Africa and West Asia, primarily the Gulf states. This suggests that the global migration flows have retained their asymmetrical character. The United States confidently tops the list of the host countries. While having around 5 percent of the world population, the United States accounted for 18 percent of all international migrants, or more than 50.6 million, as of 2020. This means the United States hosts more immigrants than the next four host countries – Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia and the UK – combined (50.2 million).¹⁵

Interestingly, Europe and North America are also the regions that send the most migrants abroad (24 percent). They are followed by the Central and South Asia (18 percent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (15 percent). In some cases, there exist the narrowly focused flows of international migration – for example, 97 percent of Mexican migrants live in the United States.^{16,17}

International migrants represent a critical component of the world's workforce, about 5 percent (169 million). The share of such workers is particularly high in agriculture, construction and services. About 70 percent of migrants are of working age; 42 percent are women. Along with replenishing the labour markets in host countries, migrants have a major impact on the socioeconomic situation in their countries of birth, including the financial remittances back home. Migrant remittances increased from \$126 billion in 2000 to \$702 billion in 2020,¹⁸ after a slight

¹⁵ Batalova J. Top Statistics on Global Migration and Migrants // Migration Policy Institute. Migration Information Source. 21.07.2022. URL: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/top-statistics-global-migration-migrants>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Отдельные показатели миграционной ситуации в Российской Федерации за январь – декабрь 2021 года с распределением по странам и регионам // МВД.РФ. 25.01.2022. URL: <https://мвд.рф/deyatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya/item/28104344/>

¹⁸ World Migration Report 2022 // International Organization for Migration, 2022. URL: <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/>

decrease from the 2019 total (\$719 billion) due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is of particular importance that in 2020, \$539 billion of that amount (\$548 billion in 2019) went to the developing countries, stimulating their economic development.¹⁹

The largest recipients of migrant remittances in 2020 were India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt. Those countries received 36 percent of the total volume of remittances, or \$250 billion. However, while India ranks first among the recipient countries, migrant remittances account for about 3 percent of the country's GDP, while that share is 38 percent for Tonga, 35 percent for Somalia, 33 percent for Lebanon, and 29 percent for South Sudan and Kyrgyzstan.²⁰

International refugees are a highly significant component of migration flow, numbering 26.6 million at the beginning of 2022, plus 4.4 million asylum seekers; the 50.9 million²¹ internally displaced persons can be safely added to these figures. These people are in the most vulnerable category of migrants who need protection.

In Russia, three out of four foreign workers come from Central Asian countries,²² so we will focus on this group when considering the social problems of foreign migrant workers. We should say at the outset that the problems of internal labour migrants in Russia are a whole separate topic, which is not a part of this report; the particular social difficulties of the educational, forced or permanent migrants are also outside the scope of this study.

Foreign workers in Russia are a permanent fixture on the labour market, and have a firm hierarchical position as one of the lowest-income

¹⁹ Batalova J. Top Statistics on Global Migration and Migrants // Migration Policy Institute. Migration Information Source. 21.07.2022. URL: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/top-statistics-global-migration-migrants>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Отдельные показатели миграционной ситуации в Российской Федерации за январь – декабрь 2021 года с распределением по странам и регионам // МВД.РФ. 25.01.2022. URL: <https://мвд.рф/dejatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya/item/28104344/>

segments of the population in the public consciousness. This is only partially true, however. According to research,²³ most workers from Central Asia do not enjoy a high standard of living back home; however, the poorest people cannot afford migration. To relocate, a person needs to purchase a ticket, and must have enough money to pay for the work permits required in Russia, rented housing and food, at least until they find a job and get their first wages.

Most of the labour migrants in Russia can only find low-skilled jobs with tough working conditions. Despite the shortage of workers in the Russian industry,²⁴ labour migrants do not always have sufficient skills to apply for these jobs. Most well-paid jobs requiring qualified training and competencies, as a rule, are taken by the local workers.

The life strategies of foreign workers in Russia mainly revolve around the support for their families back home. As a rule, they cannot afford to improve their skills by paying for additional training, even short-term programmes. If anything, their skills can be improved on the job.²⁵ Those who choose to move to Russia permanently can refocus their lives, but the change mainly impacts their children, for whom they want a better future. They are therefore ready to spend their hard-earned money on their children's education.

Many migrant workers regularly send money to their families at home²⁶ (90 percent of respondents from Tajikistan, 85 percent of respondents from Kyrgyzstan and 87 percent of respondents from Uzbekistan said so in a survey of labour migrants from Central Asia in

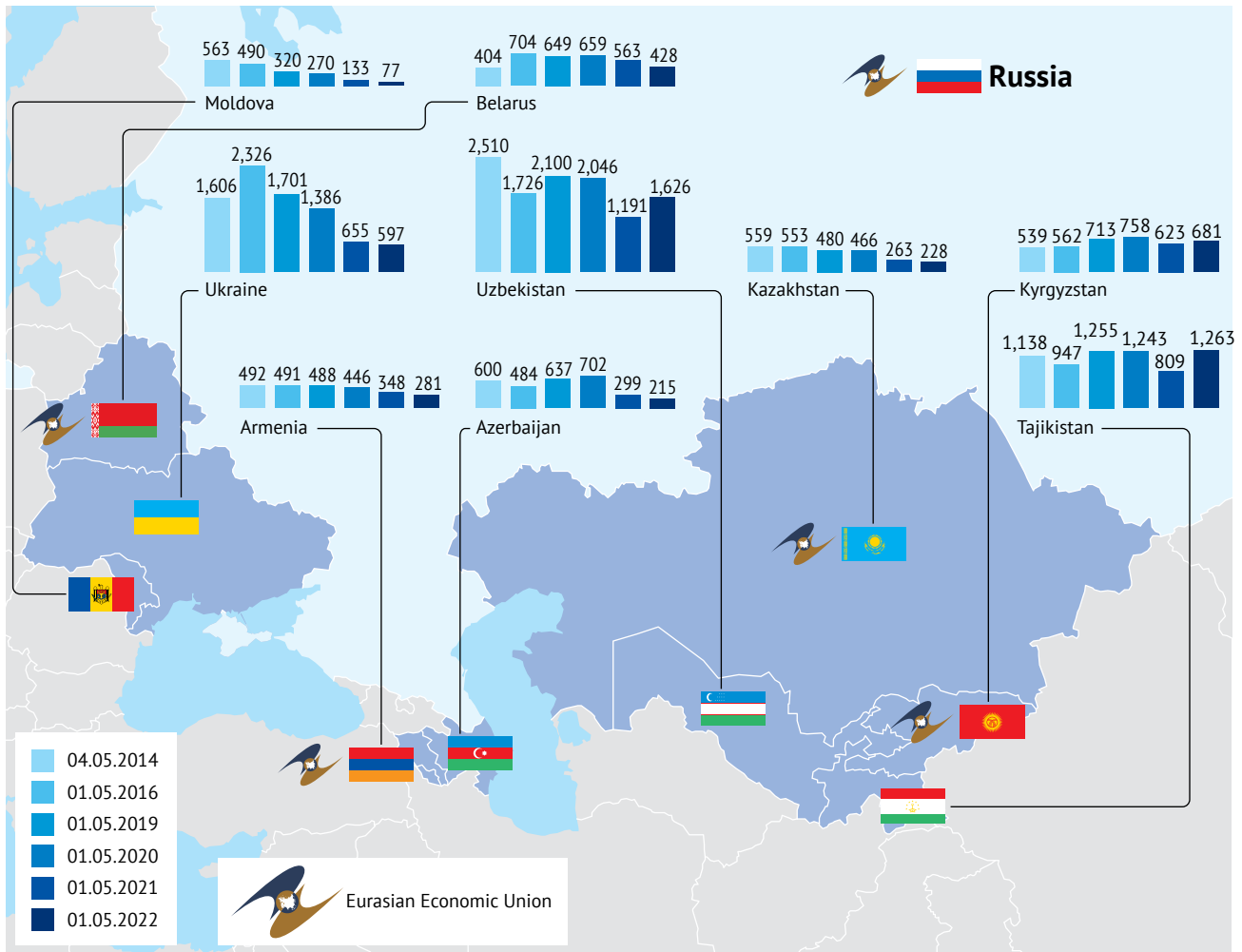
²³ Полетаев Д. Отчёт о результатах исследования социально-экономических последствий пандемии COVID-19 для мигрантов из Центральной Азии, пребывающих на территории Российской Федерации // MOM. 2021. 166 с. URL: https://russia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1036/files/documents/survey_rf_covid_2021_small_0.pdf

²⁴ Круглов Е. В России возник острый дефицит рабочих рук // Парламентская газета. 18.05.2022. URL: <https://www.pnp.ru/social/v-rossii-voznik-ostryy-deficit-rabochikh-ruk.html>

²⁵ Насритдинов Э., Олимова С., Полетаев Д. Анализ конъюнктуры рынка труда в РФ в целях эффективного трудоустройства трудящихся-мигрантов из КР и РТ. Трудовая миграция в РФ, КР и РТ. Аналитический доклад // Бишкек: Тянь-Шаньский аналитический центр, 2016.

²⁶ Полетаев Д. Отчёт о результатах исследования социально-экономических последствий пандемии COVID-19 для мигрантов из Центральной Азии, пребывающих на территории Российской Федерации // MOM. 2021. 166 с. URL: https://russia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1036/files/documents/survey_rf_covid_2021_small_0.pdf

STAY OF FOREIGN CITIZENS FROM THE CIS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON THE DATE, THOUSAND PEOPLE



Source: World Bank, UN DESA

Russia in 2020). They eat poorly, work hard and only spend money on healthcare in the life-threatening situations. A significant part of migrants gets their very first jobs in Russia.²⁷ With a low level of education and poor Russian, they can only get jobs that are not competitive in the Russian labour market, and where they have to compete mainly with the Russians without any special skills or competencies. They also often occupy the lower places in the social hierarchy.

²⁷ Мукомель В. Профили трудовых мигрантов в России (по материалам социологического исследования). Выступление на Двенадцатом заседании Научного совета Федеральной миграционной службы, 24 апреля 2012 года.

Given the significant income gap in the Russian society, migrants from Central Asia join the “working poor” class,²⁸ along with a significant share of the Russian population.

When discussing the migration and poverty, we must mention the positive effect that cross-border remittances have on the economies of countries that send migrants, reducing the level of poverty there. Foreign workers’ remittances to their home countries play a very important role,²⁹ enabling their households – albeit through their family member’s hard work outside the country – to secure the necessities of life. Populist politicians in Russia refer to cross-border remittances from migrant workers as a capital flight, but this position does not stand up to criticism: a situation where labour migrants would not be able to dispose of their hard-earned wages as they wish or would work in Russia for free is unrealistic. If foreign workers are not allowed to remit their earnings to their homelands, labour migration will lose its economic feasibility and will hardly remain possible, as a phenomenon. Labour migrants’ remittances consolidate Russia’s relations with the countries of Central Asia, providing not just the economic, but also the geopolitical mutual benefits, contributing to the long-term strengthening of friendly relations between Russia and the origin countries of labour migrants, primarily in Central Asia.

In recent years, a segment of the Central Asian workers in Russia, however small, has shifted their attitude from avoiding any conflicts with their employers or not demanding respect for their labour rights to actually attempting to assert their rights. During the pandemic, the Delivery Club employees in Moscow confronted their management for increasing the fines;³⁰ that conflict continued in 2022.³¹ Their awareness that they can resist the unfair monetary valuation of their labour combines with a strong cohesion within the migrant communities, which is confirmed by select case studies in Russia and abroad,³² conducted at different times.

²⁸ Рябушкин Н., Капелюк С. Работающие бедные в России: оценка масштабов проблемы // Экономика труда. 2020. Т. 7. № 6. С. 489–498. URL: <https://1economic.ru/lib/110529>

²⁹ COVID-19: к 2021 году ожидается сокращение объема денежных переводов на 14% // Всемирный банк. 29.09.2020. URL: <https://www.vseмирnyjbank.org/ru/news/press-release/2020/10/29/covid-19-remittanceflows-to-shrink-14-by-2021>

³⁰ Профсоюз сообщил о забастовке курьеров Delivery Club. РБК. 07 июля 2020. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/>

³¹ «Курьеру» доставили уголовное дело. Коммерсант. 27.04.2022. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/532858>

³² Сафонова М. Концепции функционирования мигрантских сообществ в американской социологии // Социологические исследования, №5 (337). 2012. URL: <https://publications.hse.ru/pubs/share/folder/q6llxt1i6m/60635781.pdf>

Concluding the discussion of migration and social inequality, we emphasise that foreign workers in Russia, as in other host countries, are in an ambiguous position: on the one hand, they have a low social status, while on the other, their status as well as that of their households at home is higher in the social hierarchy compared with other workers and households. That is why their poverty in Russia is a relative and ambiguous concept.

Migrants and crime

The relationship between migration and crime is a widely discussed topic in the media and political landscape, above all in the countries that receive large flows of migrants and refugees, especially from the different cultures. In the United States, 32 percent of respondents believe that a high population share of migrants leads to the proliferation of crime; when it comes to the irregular immigration, that figure reaches 58 percent. These proportions stand at 40 to 55 percent for the respondents in France, 33 to 63 percent in the UK, and 46 to 63 percent in Germany, respectively.³³

At the same time, studies conducted in various countries have failed to confirm the beliefs about the high level of crime among migrants. A recent study in Texas, one of the main host states for migrants in the US, showed that illegal immigrants were more than 50 percent less likely to get arrested on the violent crime charges than the native-born American citizens. Illegal immigrants were also 60 percent less likely to be arrested for drug-related crimes and more than 75 percent less likely to be arrested for property crimes, relative to the US-born citizens.³⁴ Another group of researchers, also in Texas, arrived at similar conclusions: in 2018, the criminal conviction rate stood at 782 per 100,000 illegal immigrants; 535 per 100,000 legal immigrants; and 1,422 per 100,000 American citizens born in the United States. In other words, the criminal

³³ Bell B. Crime and Immigration // IZA World of Labor. URL: <https://wol.iza.org/articles/crime-and-immigration/long>

³⁴ Light M.T., He J., Robey J.P. Comparing crime rates between undocumented immigrants, legal immigrants, and native-born US citizens in Texas // PNAS. 7.12.2020. Vol. 17, 51. 117 (51). URL: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2014704117>

conviction rate among the illegal immigrants was 45 percent below that of US natives.³⁵ At the same time, migrants, according to statistics, are more likely to be the victims of crimes than the local residents; they also face discrimination from employers and law enforcement agencies.³⁶ But this does not stop the populist politicians and the media in many host countries from exploiting the topic of migrant criminality.

This is a sensitive issue in Russia as well, in and out of headlines in the Russian media and the public discourse.³⁷ However, after a substantive analysis, the “migrants” or “foreigners” mentioned in relation to greater security risks for the Russian citizens turn out to be the visiting criminals from the other regions of Russia. This is evidenced by the Ministry of the Interior’s research,³⁸ as well as its annual official reports, which mention an unchanged crime level among foreigners that accounts for an estimated 3–4 percent of the total.³⁹ This was also the case in 2021, when crimes committed by foreign nationals and stateless persons accounted for 3.5 percent of the overall number of crimes investigated.

The frequent discussions of the migrants and crime topic have a discriminatory context. Instead of considering ways to reduce the crime rate, they aim at stigmatizing the foreigners as a group of suspicious strangers, whose inflow be better restricted, if not fully precluded.⁴⁰

³⁵ Nowrasteh A. New Research on Illegal Immigration and Crime // Cato at Liberty. CATO Institute. 13.09.2020. URL: <https://www.cato.org/blog/new-research-illegal-immigration-crime-0>

³⁶ Полетаев Д. Выйти из тени: коррупционный фактор в миграционной политике // РСМД. 16.01.2019. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/interview/vyyti-iz-teni-korruptsionnyy-faktor-vmigratsionnoy-politike/>

³⁷ Вся власть – приезжим: мигранты готовы реализовать план бунта в городах России // Первый русский. 19.12.2021. URL: https://tsargrad.tv/investigations/vsja-vlast-priezzhim-migranty-gotovy-realizovat-planbunta-v-gorodah-rossii_464905

³⁸ Рашитов Л. Понятие, состояние и структура преступности мигрантов в со временной России // Вестник Казанского юридического института МВД России. 2021. Т. 12, № 2 (44). С. 214–219. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/ponyatie-sostoyanie-i-struktura-prestupnosti-migrantov-v-sovremennoy-rossii/viewer>

³⁹ Состояние преступности в Российской Федерации за январь-декабрь 2021 года // Министерство внутренних дел Российской Федерации ФКУ «Главный информационно-аналитический центр». Стр. 56. URL: <https://media.mvd.ru/fi les/application/2315310>

⁴⁰ Ксенофобия и мигранты // Левада-центр. 24.01.2022. URL: <https://www.levada.ru/2022/01/24/ksenofobiya-i-migranty/> (Levada Center was labelled a foreign agent under the Russian foreign agent law).

This approach does not involve any “economic thinking”⁴¹ and is usually peddled by individuals, politicians, associations and radical groups that are not responsible for the economic development of their city, region or country, and have no intention whatsoever of taking that responsibility.

It is necessary to take into account the complex nature of migration. Along with the obvious economic benefits, this complex phenomenon has its challenges, which require addressing the host population’s phobias and financing the efforts for migrant integration.⁴² The populist politicians may be attracted by the opportunity to play with the population’s fear of outsiders without the risk of losing voters (since foreigners are not the category of the population that goes to the polls in the host country), but this is hardly a constructive policy for a migrant receiving community.

Migration, health, fertility and disease

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated many social problems and increased pressure on labour markets and social safety nets, while placing a drastic psychological strain on the host countries’ populations. In a number of countries, this has had a direct impact on the electoral outcomes, contributing to the rise of the right-wing populist leaders and movements. The pandemic had a particularly adverse effect on migrants. The European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson said: “The pandemic had a significant impact on migration and on the migrants themselves who often played a vital role in the EU’s response to Covid-19, while also facing the disproportionate risks.”⁴³

⁴¹ Хейне П. Экономический образ мышления: пер. с англ. 5-го изд. М.: Новости, 1991. URL: https://libertarium.ru/lib_thinking

⁴² Полетаев Д. Глобальная мигрантофобия: как избежать войны всех против всех // Международный дискуссионный клуб «Валдай». 24.06.2020. URL: <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/globalnayamigrantofobiya-kak-izbezhhat-voyny-vsekh/>

⁴³ Migration Statistics Update: The Impact of COVID-19 // European Commission. 29.01.2021. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_232

Migration wears down migrant workers. Migrants themselves note⁴⁴ that their health and the general state deteriorate over time. The surveys of labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan to the Russian Federation in 2016 and 2017 showed a deterioration in respondents' health, especially among those who had stayed in Russia for a long time. This becomes most noticeable after five years.⁴⁵

In most cases, these people's work is not protected by a contract, which leaves the door open for the overwork and abuse. Their intensive work, which does not always meet the safety regulations in the Russian law, the uncomfortable living situations, few days off and irregular working hours, as well as the need to scrimp on food and medical care harm labour migrants' health imperceptibly, but inevitably. As a rule, most migrant workers see a doctor only if they have serious health problems; in all other cases, they have "no time to be sick." Medical insurance, which would include preventive health monitoring, is expensive and inaccessible to foreign migrants. They tend to postpone any treatment they need and prefer getting it during their trips home, to their country of origin, which makes sense given the significant discrepancy of healthcare costs in Russia and at home.

The Covid-19 pandemic proved a major challenge for migrant workers from Central Asia.⁴⁶ Living in cramped quarters left them no chance for social distancing, which was one of the main precautions against the virus. For the same reason, migrant workers have always been vulnerable to a wide range of infections, including tuberculosis, as well as HIV. (The latter is due to low awareness of the virus⁴⁷ and their sexual standards changing due to relocation).

⁴⁴ Полетаев Д. Отчёт о результатах исследования социально-экономических последствий пандемии COVID-19 для мигрантов из Центральной Азии, пребывающих на территории Российской Федерации // МОМ. 2021. 166 с. URL: https://russia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11036/files/documents/survey_rf_covid_2021_small_0.pdf

⁴⁵ Полетаев Д. Здоровье трудовых мигрантов из ЕАЭС в России (на примере мигрантов из Киргизии) // ИНП РАН. 30.12.2020. URL: <https://ecfor.ru/publication/zdorove-migrantov-v-rossii-na-primere-migrantov-izkirgizii/>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Вятчина М., Кашницкий Д., Барский К., Абросимова З., Федоряк А. Ситуационный анализ по вопросам предоставления медицинских услуг в связи с ВИЧ для иностранных граждан-мигрантов в Российской Федерации. Региональная экспертная группа по здоровью мигрантов. М., 2021.

Labour migration from Central Asia is showing a gradual feminisation in Russia, which is especially true of the inflow of migrants from Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁸ Studies show⁴⁹ that a significant proportion of female migrant workers from Central Asia end up in risky living conditions during pregnancy and childbirth in Russia, and that happens precisely because of migration. According to a 2020 study,⁵⁰ only one in five female migrants from Kyrgyzstan (or 23 percent) had a compulsory medical insurance policy, even though this policy can be obtained free of charge if a worker from one of the EAEU countries has a legal contract. Another 17 percent of migrant women from Kyrgyzstan had commercial medical insurance, but in 95 percent of cases, it was a 6,000 ruble package, which covered a minimal set of medical services. The situation is similar for migrants from Tajikistan (31 percent) and Uzbekistan (27 percent) who bought health insurance in Russia: the vast majority of them (100 and 94 percent, respectively) used a 6,000 ruble or even cheaper package because it was required to obtain a patent, but not for a comprehensive medical care.

Here is another fact that indirectly confirms the negative impact of migration on women's health in the case of migrant workers from Central Asia in Russia: in 2020, the share of women who lost a child due to miscarriage or stillbirth was very high among workers from Kyrgyzstan (28 percent) and Tajikistan (29 percent), and several times higher than the number of abortions in those countries (8 and 14 percent, respectively). This points to the poor conditions in which women carry a child and the unsatisfactory state of their health. Most migrant workers do not get regular antenatal care before giving birth. As a result, when they go into labour, they are put in the infectious wards at maternity hospitals for childbirth. The lack of professional help in the pregnancy management, treatment and diagnosis leads to sad consequences.

Migration also has an impact on migrant workers' reproductive planning. The proportion of female migrants from Kyrgyzstan who

⁴⁸ Полетаев Д. Женская трудовая миграция из Таджикистана и Киргизии в Россию // Народонаселение. 2018. Т. 21. №4. Сс. 68–78. URL: https://www.isras.ru/index.php?page_id=2384&id=6378&l=&j=8&base=&yclid=l4dzt9wf0336361196

⁴⁹ Poletaev D. Pregnancy, childbirth and health of female labour migrants from Central Asia in Russia // Population and Economics. 2021. № 5(4). Pp. 50–65. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3897/popecon.5.e73815>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

postponed having children because of migration remained at 12–18 percent in 2015–2020. The figure fell from 19 percent in 2015 to 6 percent in 2020 among migrants from Tajikistan; it was 16 percent in 2020 among migrants from Uzbekistan. Delaying childbearing is also a risk factor for women's health, as pregnancy and childbirth at an older age often negatively affect the child's and the woman's health.⁵¹

A brief and disappointing summary of this chapter: labour migrants pay for their earnings with their health, and so far, this problem remains outside a wide public discourse both in Russia and in the migrant sending countries in the Eurasian migration space.

Migrants, human rights violations and discrimination

Migrants often face human rights violations even as they cross the border. This is especially true of asylum seekers and seaborne refugees.⁵² The 2015–2016 migration crisis in Europe has brought into focus the migrants rights violations, especially those of women and children, who often reside in unliveable housing, are subjected to violence, and have no access to education in the host countries.⁵³ Human trafficking and torture are a part of migrant life in all the host countries as well.⁵⁴

⁵¹ DV Poletaev (2021) Pregnancy, childbirth and health of female labour migrants from Central Asia in Russia. *Population and Economics* 5 (4):50–65. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3897/popecon.5.e73815> <<https://doi.org/10.3897/popecon.5.e73815?fbclid=IwAR1XxYqtlxSwYLF1TL47UKDbk7DwEAt8myJwF7npHqWq0C6M4XzXVhuGN8g>>

⁵² Паскарь С., Калугина А. Современные тенденции позднего материнства // *Российский вестник акушера-гинеколога*. 2018. №18(3). С. 9–12. URL: <https://www.mediasphera.ru/issues/rossijskij-vestnik-akushera-ginekologa/2018/3/1172661222018031009>

⁵³ Трудности в области защиты прав человека, влияющие на мигрантов, перемещающихся по морю // Управление Верховного комиссара по правам человека ООН. 11.12.2014. URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/ru/stories/2014/12/human-rights-protection-challenges-affecting-migrants-sea>

⁵⁴ Матвеевская А., Погодин С., Ван Ц. Проблема нарушения прав человека в период миграционного кризиса в Европе // *Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Философия и конфликтология*. 2021. №37(3). С. 508–515. URL: <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu17.2021.311> <https://philosophyjournal.spbu.ru/article/view/12030/8311>

Admittedly, migrant phobia⁵⁵ and everyday xenophobia are the constant challenges. Unfortunately, Russia is very much like the other host countries in this regard. Foreign migrants take discrimination in Russia as given. They tend not to press claims for equal status with the local residents, for example, when it comes to labour rights. In selective surveys, they usually say that local residents treat them well.⁵⁶ However, they often face discrimination when renting housing or interacting with local residents or government officials. Fluency in Russian is important: the better a foreigner speaks Russian, the less discrimination and vulnerability they experience.

It is common for labour migrants to become victims of human trafficking, servitude or forced labour, because of their vulnerable status as migrants, the difficulties with finding employment, the undocumented employment, and the poor integration into Russian society.⁵⁷

The official human trafficking statistics do not capture the true scale of the problem. Many factors make it difficult to solve such crimes, including the fact that victims of human trafficking are recruited, transported, sold, and exploited in different countries, the latency of human trafficking-related crimes, the victims' reluctance to act as witnesses at trials for fear of stigmatisation and retaliation on the part of the traffickers' accomplices, the inadequate training of the law enforcement personnel that prevents the successful investigation of such crimes, and the poor funding for the witness protection programmes in human trafficking cases.

In Russia, which is the number one destination for labour migrants within the Eurasian space, 38 human trafficking episodes were identified in 2020. As a result, 33 people were successfully prosecuted for crimes

⁵⁵ Доклад Специального докладчика по вопросу о пытках и других жестоких, бесчеловечных или унижающих достоинство видах обращения и наказания // ООН. 23.11.2018. URL: <https://undocs.org/ru/A/HRC/37/50>; Защита прав человека в период транзита и на межгосударственных границах // Управление Верховного комиссариата по правам человека ООН. URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/ru/migration/humanrights-transit-and-international-borders>

⁵⁶ Полетаев Д. «Застарелая болезнь» мигрантофобии в условиях замедления глобальных миграций // Международный дискуссионный клуб «Валдай». 08.06.2021. URL: <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/zastarelaya-bolezn-migrantofobii/>

⁵⁷ Изменение практик поведения трудовых мигрантов из Средней Азии в России см. в сборнике: Восток на Востоке, в России и на Западе: трансграничные миграции и диаспоры // Нестор-история, 2016. URL: <https://book.ivran.ru/f/transgranichnyye-migracii.pdf?ysclid=l4e0sqjnai345218957>

against 31 victims in total. The number of people in Russia convicted of human trafficking decreased from 48 in 2015 to 16 in 2019.⁵⁸ However, in the Russian judicial practice crimes covered by 14 articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation⁵⁹ are often directly related to human trafficking. About 120,000 crimes covered by these articles were committed in 2013–2017, which provides a completely different perspective on the scope of this phenomenon.⁶⁰

Of particular concern lately is a vulnerable group comprised of women and girls who were forced to leave their homes as a result of the conflict in south-eastern Ukraine. Since 2014, they have been at increased risk of falling into sexual slavery or prostitution. The situation appears to have worsened since the conflict escalated in 2022.⁶¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased migrant workers' vulnerability to human trafficking in the destination countries, since the number of undocumented workers has increased under the epidemiological restrictions. For example, the 2020–2021 IOM study⁶² showed that, with the pandemic underway, about 48 percent of migrants

⁵⁸ Тюрюканова Е. Принудительный труд в современной России: нерегулируемая миграция и торговля людьми. Изд. 2-е, перераб. и доп. Международное бюро труда, 2006. URL: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_082007.pdf

⁵⁹ В Верховном суде сообщили о снижении числа осужденных за торговлю людьми // ТАСС. 20.07.2020. URL: <https://n.tass.ru/obschestvo/9010073>

⁶⁰ That includes crimes such as kidnapping (Article 126 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation; all articles below are from that Code); murder (Article 105); beatings (Article 116); torture (Article 117); coercion to remove human organs or tissues for transplantation (Article 120); unlawful deprivation of liberty (Article 127); rape (Article 131); sexual intercourse and other acts of a sexual nature with a person under the age of 16 (Article 134); illegal adoption (Article 154); organisation of a criminal community (Article 210); involvement in prostitution (Article 240); organisation of prostitution (Article 241); illegal distribution of pornographic materials or products (Article 242); production and circulation of materials or objects with pornographic images of minors (Article 2421); abuse of office (Article 286); receiving a bribe (Article 290); illegal crossing of the state border (Article 322); organisation of illegal migration (Article 3221); forgery, production or sale of forged documents, state awards, stamps, seals, forms (Article 327).

⁶¹ Краснов рассказал о ситуации с торговлей людьми на территории РФ // Известия. 29.10.2021. URL: <https://iz.ru/1242821/2021-10-29/krasnov-rasskazal-o-situacii-s-torgovlei-liudmi-na-territorii-rf>; <https://rg.ru/documents/2019/12/31/pohisheniya-dok.html>; Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 // United Nations, 2020. URL: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tip/2021/GLOTiP_2020_15jan_web.pdf

⁶² Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM). Geneva, 2022. URL: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf

from Kyrgyzstan residing in Russia (the share of undocumented workers) were particularly vulnerable, including that due to the risk of human trafficking. This number was as high as 53 percent for the employed undocumented women and 42 percent for men. If we assume that the total number of labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan residing in Russia was 623,000 in May 2021 (data provided by the Main Directorate for Migration Issues of the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation)⁶³, then at risk were up to 300,000 Kyrgyz. With regard to labour migrants from Tajikistan, 62 percent of them in Russia were undocumented, this figure being roughly equal for men and women. So, assuming there were 809,000 Tajiks in Russia in May 2021, up to 510,000 were at risk of becoming the human trafficking victims. According to the Main Directorate for Migration Issues of the Interior Ministry, there were 1,191,000 Uzbeks in Russia in May 2021, 61 percent of whom were working without the official papers, meaning that an estimated 727,000 people were potentially vulnerable to human trafficking. In all, up to 1.5 million labour migrants from Central Asia residing in Russia in the first half of 2021 were at risk of becoming a human trafficking victim.

Migration, economic problems and corruption

There is a fair amount of corruption risk associated with migration, ranging from the illegal sale of citizenship⁶⁴ to the dishonest use of undocumented migrant labour, which is high on the list of activities supervised by law enforcement agencies in all the host countries.⁶⁵

⁶³ Полетаев Д. Отчёт о результатах исследования социально-экономических последствий пандемии COVID-19 для мигрантов из Центральной Азии, пребывающих на территории Российской Федерации // MOM. 2021. 166 с. URL: https://russia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11036/files/documents/survey_rf_covid_2021_small_0.pdf

⁶⁴ Мкртчян Н., Флоринская Ю. Миграция: основные тренды января-февраля 2021 года // Мониторинг экономической ситуации в России. 2021. №10 (142). С. 18. URL: <https://www.iep.ru/ru/publikacii/publication/monitoring-ekonomicheskoy-situatsii-v-rossii-10-142-iyun-2021-g.html>

⁶⁵ Гулина О. Правовая ответственность за найм нелегальных мигрантов: опыт ЕС и США // ИПП ЕУ СПб, 2013. URL: https://enforce.spb.ru/images/ar_0913_gulina.pdf

In 2021, the United States adopted its first anti-corruption strategy.⁶⁶ Migration is a factor that contributes to corruption, along with the deterioration of the business environment, the declining economic opportunities and the increased inequality. However, many economic problems and much of the corruption often associated with migration actually stem from⁶⁷ the poor migration management and the poor use of migration flows' economic potential.

A public discussion of the migration-related corruption is underway in Russia. However, there is little agreement on whether corruption is a consequence of migration processes and migrants' tendency to skirt the law to resolve their problems, or whether migrants are driven into the shadows by the existing circumstances in the host country.

Legalising their residence is the greatest challenge for migrants. Often, landlords are unwilling to officially register migrant workers (the international and domestic and internal migrants from other Russian regions alike). Landlords break the law by doing so, but this is how the rental market in Russia operates.⁶⁸ Migrant workers then have to register with their acquaintances, that is, somewhere they don't actually live, or to use the services of shady operators and to register under the false pretences. But who is behind these criminal activities? Is it the migrants or the unscrupulous and corrupt Russian citizens who have been practicing such "legalisation" for years, despite the law enforcement efforts to combat the practice of homeowners registering multiple tenants in one flat also known as "rubber flat"?

Studies show that even with an employment contract in place, the employer – a legal entity – does not always submit a notice of employment for a foreign national. If a foreign national fails to submit a copy of their employment contract or a civil law contract for the performance of work (rendering of services) with the organisation where they work to the

⁶⁶ United States Strategy on Countering Corruption // The White House. 2021/ URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/United-States-Strategy-on-Countering-Corruption.pdf>

⁶⁷ Таран П. Миграция – мировая проблема или локомотив развития экономик, народов и обществ? // Международный дискуссионный клуб «Валдай». 19.09.2016. URL: <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/migratsiya-mirovaya-problema-ili-lokomotiv/>

⁶⁸ Обязанности и риски: что нужно знать о временной регистрации арендатора // РБК.Недвижимость. 19.08.2021. URL: <https://realty.rbc.ru/news/611d4da19a79473ce7eaa870>

Interior Ministry within the two months from the moment of signing⁶⁹, they are in violation of the law and may see their license revoked.

According to the above studies, 62 percent of Tajiks, 48 percent of Kyrgyz and 61 percent of Uzbeks were working without a formal employment contract in Russia at the height of the pandemic (late 2020-early 2021). Such a significant share of undocumented employment is the reality of the Russian labour market.

This situation should be sorted out by the Russian law enforcement agencies with employers who dictate the terms of employment, rather than the employees who agree to anything in order to feed their families back home. Foreign workers are becoming a part of the existing mechanisms for hiring and working on the Russian labour market and quickly learn the most effective employment and behavioural practices from Russians. Since they are more vulnerable as the non-Russian citizens than the Russian labour migrants are, the foreigners try to adapt to the prevailing conditions and follow the established rules, choosing to resolve the problem quickly rather than legally or durably.

International and national mechanisms for protecting migrant workers' rights

There are several international documents designed to protect the rights of migrant workers that the host countries, including Russia, are in no hurry to join. The ILO Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (signed

⁶⁹ Федеральный закон от 25.07.2002 №115-ФЗ (ред. от 02.07.2021) «О правовом положении иностранных граждан в Российской Федерации» (с изм. и доп., вступ. в силу с 29.12.2021). URL: https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_37868/78903dca1f0ac1f3abc08d2f8cd1c0e2fddc826b/?ysclid=l4cm3g2cfn420895976

in 1990 and entered into force in 2003)⁷⁰ is the main ILO convention that incorporates the provisions of the previous conventions of 1949⁷¹ and 1975.⁷² It emphasises the need to respect the basic human rights of labour migrants that are approved by the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Russian Federation is a party, and requires the ensuring of equal treatment and equal working conditions for migrants and citizens of the host country. The gradual movement towards the ratification of this convention will help advance the protection of migrant workers' rights in the United States, the EU, and Russia.⁷³

Migrant workers can protect their rights in the host countries by engaging in the trade union movement. In recent decades, changes on the developed countries' labour markets have led to a general reduction in the number of unions, an increase in the average age of union members and a decrease in the number of unions in the sectors that are highly active. The trend has begun to reverse itself in recent years. For example, in the United States, where strikes are on the rise,⁷⁴ unions were formed in 2021–2022 at Amazon⁷⁵ and Starbucks.⁷⁶ The search for new members in areas that were previously outside the scope of trade unions, including areas with the migrant labour, has become an important part of the efforts to strengthen the labour movement. Examples include the American

⁷⁰ Международная конвенция о защите прав всех трудящихся-мигрантов и членов их семей. URL: https://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/migrant.shtml

⁷¹ Конвенция МОТ № 97 о трудящихся-мигрантах (1949 г.). URL: <https://base.garant.ru/2541192/?ysclid=l7ylde9cwr752521000>



⁷² Конвенция МОТ №143 о злоупотреблениях в области миграции и об обеспечении трудящимся-мигрантам равенства возможностей и обращения (1975 г.). URL: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---normes/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_c143_ru.htm

⁷³ Последствия ратификаций международных конвенций о правах трудящихся-мигрантов для экономики России. Аналитический доклад. Новопроф. 2022. <http://novoprof.net/novosti/hatifikatsiya-konventsii-o-pravakh-trudyashchikhsya-migrantov-posledstviya-dlya-ekonomiki-rossii/>

⁷⁴ U.S. Labor Strikes Rose to 18-Year High in 2019, Led by Teachers // Bloomberg. 11.02.2020. URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-11/u-s-labor-strikes-rose-to-18-year-high-in-2019-led-by-teachers>

⁷⁵ Amazon union workers won in New York – can they win across the country? // The Verge. 5.04.2022. URL: <https://www.theverge.com/2022/4/4/23006562/amazon-labor-union-jfk8-win-contract-negotiations-expansion>

⁷⁶ Higgins A. More Starbucks stores want to unionize. These women and nonbinary workers are leading the push // The Washington Post. 4.03.2022. URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2022/03/04/starbucks-employees-unionizing/>

 valdaitweets
 valdai_club
 Международный
дискуссионный
клуб «Валдай»
admin@valdaiclub.com