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MIGRATION BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE CIS: TRENDS AND POLICIES

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OBJECTIVE

In this paper it was investigated both permanent and labor migration between the newly independent states. Comparative analysis of the volume of migration flows and the stock of migrants obtained from different sources also helps to assess the quality of migration statistics in those states. While presenting the current migration situation over the territory of the former Soviet Union, one should remember that quite recently all the former Soviet republics were part of one single country, and migration between them had an in-country nature.

MAIN RESULTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Net-Migration in the former USSR by the ten-year periods, 1950-2009. (In thousands)

Countries	1950- 1959	1960- 1969	1970- 1979	1980- 1989	1990- 1999	2000- 2009
Belarus	-925	-225	-100	-39	11	-92
Moldova	59	62	-18	-80	-856	-34
Russia	-884	-1281	302	1590	4660	2158
Ukraine	583	486	280	-99	-331	-153
Azerbaijan	-28	-46	-79	-276	-166	151
Armenia	18	144	107	-119	-22	-668
Georgia	-30	-109	-161	-88	-700	-50*
Kazakhstan	997	616	-547	-820	-3146	21
Kyrgyzstan	-69	110	-90	-168	-276	-249
Uzbekistan	62	460	190	-581	-925	-1022
Tajikistan	74	136	11	-115	-584	-98
Turkmenistan	-37	9	-8	-83	294	-65
Latvia	381	146	102	89	-180	-25
Lithuania	438	34	63	96	-205	-83
Estonia	254	82	67	44	-153	1

* - Without Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Until the late 1980s, population of the Union republics was changing due to the natural increase and net migration exchange with the other republics. Volumes and directions of migratory flows (table) had ultimately reflected the placements of investment over the country. Migratory flows were also affected by the differences between the republics in the rates of their population growth and quality of life. Immediately after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the volume and structure of international migration over its territory have dramatically changed. Russia became the main destination for permanent and temporary migrants from all over the former Soviet republics: between 1992 and 1999, about 6 million migrants from the republics of the former USSR arrived to this country. The increased migration to Russia was partially due to the mass inflow of refugees and forced DPs, caused by high levels of political tension and inter-ethnic conflicts. However, political factors ultimately reflect the divergence in economic and demographic development between CIS countries.

The current migration situation in the CIS countries is characterized by absolute dominance of the inner flows within the region, the remaining position of Russia as the main destination for migrants from the other CIS countries, as well as significant amount of temporary forms of migration. Data from national statistical offices show that 92% of all immigrants are arriving from the other CIS countries, and about 75% of those who leave, also move to other countries of the Commonwealth. Only during the last decade about 4 million residents of the CIS countries have changed the country of their residence.

The scale of labor migration in the CIS is enormous, despite the ongoing economic crisis. In 2011, in Russia the regular work permits (as by quotas) were granted to 1.2 million persons, more than 50,000 obtained work permits over the quotas, in addition 856,000 license (patents) for labor activity were sold. As a result, the total number of aliens who were granted temporary admission to the Russian labor market has reached two million. Immigration for permanent residence was over 350 thousand persons. In Kazakhstan, the number of foreigners who were granted work permits is close to the number of immigrants - both flows are about 30-40 thousand per year.

There are obvious differences between countries in the priorities of migration policy, connected with the different demographic trends and economic interests. Some countries are making efforts to encourage immigration from other countries, stipulate requirements for permanent residence of aliens and create preferences for naturalization. Other countries are trying to influence the hosting countries to obtain guarantees for minimal social support and respect the rights of their citizens living abroad as temporary labor migrants. Gradually emerges understanding of both donor and recipient countries for development of the organized forms of recruitment of foreign labor, training of migrant workers, integration programs, etc.

Despite the large number of bilateral and multilateral agreements between CIS countries, we cannot speak yet about the formation of a common labor market and free movement between the countries. CIS countries apply the whole system of constraints - in the form of quotas for work permits, bans for professions for migrant workers, and so on. The lack of efficient control over the enforcement of restrictive rules and regulations only supports the large scale of illegal employment of foreign workers in the CIS.