



## PRESS RELEASE OF WORKING PAPER 3.21

### MIGRANTS AT THE RUSSIAN LABOUR MARKET: CHARACTERISTICS, STATUS, MOBILITY

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July 2013

#### OBJECTIVE

This paper presents the main findings of recent sociological survey on labour migration in Russian Federation. Over the last two decades, international migration in Russia has become a marked socio-economic phenomenon. Overall, more than 11 million work permits were issued to foreign nationals during the 2000s. In 2012, the number of labour migrants legally working in Russia exceeded 2 million people. According to experts and senior officers of the Federal Migration Service 3-5 million of foreigners are annually engaged in labor activities in the country without an official permit. However Russia has not enough information about migrants: their socio-demographic characteristics, spheres of activities, living and working conditions, mobility, etc. A lack of reliable information creates a distorted image of a migrant, leads to inadequate assessments of their place in Russian society and labour market.

#### MAIN RESULTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In November, 2011, at the request of the Highest School of Economics, NGO “The Centre for Ethnopolitical and Regional Studies” conducted a sociological survey aimed to analyze migrants’ status in the Russian labour market, as well as issues associated with their adaptation and integration. The survey was conducted in eight Russian constituent areas: Moscow, Moscow Oblast, St. Petersburg, Astrakhan Oblast, Samara Oblast, Sverdlovskaya Oblast, Permskiy Krai, Primorsky Krai. The total number of interviewed migrants was 8499. Respondents were foreign citizens, regardless of their legal status and ethnicity. Most migrants arrived in Russia from Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan), they account for three-fourths of all respondents (72,0%).

The analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of interviewed migrants makes it possible to conclude that the Russian labour market is becoming increasingly

attractive for young migrants, mostly, from Central Asian countries, having a low level of education, professional training and knowledge of the Russian language. For example, poor knowledge of Russian was demonstrated by a third (32,3%) under 20, representing peoples of Central Asia, which is almost twice as high as by 30-50-year old migrants from the same countries.

Migrants are concentrated in the low-skilled work segment in the sphere of trade, construction, communal and personal services. The demand for labour in these branches of industry is highly elastic. Migrants' labour utilization serves as a mechanism of adapting this labour market segment to fluctuations of the economic conditions.

Migrants' work is characterized by an increased time of work. The most wide-spread working regime among migrants is work without any days-off, i.e. 7 days a week, which was reported by 36,7%. Informal employment, when the relationship with the employer are not legalized, is widespread among migrants (57,8%). Informally employed migrants work 6 hours longer than their colleagues with official employment arrangements (63,7 hours and 57,7 hours, respectively). The wage, which migrants receive in Russia, is considerably higher than the pay level in their origin country (average migrant's wage was near 650 US dollars). Migrants' wage increases with their experience of stay in Russia. The earlier, a migrant came to Russia, and, therefore, the longer he has worked in its territory, the bigger wage he receives. This dependence reveals itself both at the level of specific industries and at the level of gender and educational groups.

A typical path of migrants who come to Russia for the first time is finding employment in the workplace which does not correspond to the level of their professional training and special skills. There is little or no demand for migrants' professional skills, education and qualification, first of all, those of the highest level, in the Russian labour market. A change of the place of work in the Russian territory leads to an increase in the concentration of foreign workers in specific types of economic activities (trade, construction, communal services, and transportation). In addition, it allows migrants to occupy work places more appropriate for their level of qualification and education, which is indicative of their economic adaptation.

It can be argued that a special largely migrants segment is developing in the labour market of Russia. It is the specific character of the demand for labour that determines peculiarities of migrants' (an increased intensity, informal and unstable employment relationship).

The Survey findings support the opinion that the system of attracting labour migrants into Russia is not effective. The mechanism of selection of foreign workers from the CIS countries by professions and qualifications does not meet the needs of Russian employers. Most foreign workers' labor contracts are limited to 1 year which does not contribute to the employers' interest to invest in professional training of migrants.