

Migration between CIS countries¹

The objective of this work is to show the picture of permanent and temporary international migration movements between the independent states of the former Soviet Union during the years of their independence. Following this objective, we have used all the sources of information available in the CIS countries: censuses, results of the current migration registration, as well as surveys of population and migrants.

Common patterns of migration between the countries of the CIS

As it is known, the Soviet Union was a fairly closed country. Until the fall of the Iron Curtain and liberalization of the procedure of leaving the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, the population of the Union republics was changing by its natural increase and net migration exchange with other republics. In all in the USSR according to the Census 1989 more than 30 million people or 10.6 per cent of the population resided not in the republics, where they were born.

At present, the CIS migration situation is characterized by absolute predominance of resettlements within the region, the remaining role of Russia as the main hosting country for the migrants from the other CIS countries, as well as significant amounts of the temporary forms of migration, by many times exceeding the permanent migration; the data of the national statistical offices about the flows of migrants show that 92 per cent of all immigrants coming from the other CIS countries, and about 75 per cent of those who leave, move also to the other countries of the Commonwealth. The national censuses accomplished in the CIS after the collapse of the Soviet Union, also show that among the lifetime migrants born abroad, who have indicated their birth place, the vast majority (90% and more) are the natives of the other CIS countries - the former Soviet republics. Temporary labor migration also mainly occurs within the CIS (between Russia and other countries, between Kazakhstan and the Central Asia states), the share of workers from the Central Asian states in the region amounts to 80-90 per cent¹; the citizens of the European part of the CIS to over 50 per cent.

In the future, Russia's role as the main center of attraction of permanent and temporary migrants from the CIS will remain. Provided, the economic and demographic factors create the necessary conditions for attraction of migrants, as sufficient ones should be recognized the deep historical/geographical/social aspects: availability of personal links between the residents of

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Russia and the CIS countries, as well as between extensive diasporas, knowledge of the language and daily life in Russia by the majority of migrants; geographical location and preserved transportation links over the former Soviet territory, visa-free entries for the citizens of the CIS countries.

Flows of migrants for permanent residence (long-term migration)

In 1990's the system of ongoing statistical registration of migration flows that was unified for all the republics, went out of order, and the quality of data on migration worsened.² Table 1 shows the estimations of the total immigration and emigration flows in the CIS countries during the past decade according to current migration statistics. Quality of migration statistics in that period improved essentially.

Table 1

Net migration flows of migration in the CIS countries, 2000-2010 (thousands)

Countries	Period	Arrivals	Departures	Net-migration
Armenia	2000-2009	14,0 (0,2%)	90,0 (2,4%)	-76,0
Azerbaijan	2000-2009	25,2 (0,3%)	40,6 (0,5%)	-15,5
Belarus	2000-2010	196,6 (2,0%)	119,8 (1,2%)	76,8
Kazakhstan	2000-2010	617,9 (4,1%)	791,2 (5,3%)	-173,3
Kyrgyzstan	2000-2010	45,4 (0,9%)	385,0 (7,9%)	-339,6
Moldova	2000-2006	21,7 (0,6%)	50,2 (1,4%)	-28,5
Russia	2000-2010	2389,4 (1,6%)	823,8 (0,6%)	1565,6
Tajikistan	2000-2010	14,7 (0,2%)	108,1 (1,8%)	-93,4
Turkmenistan	2000-2010	5,1 (0,1%)	95,5 (2,0%)	-90,5
Ukraine	2000-2010	451,4 (0,9%)	526,5 (1,1%)	-75,1
Uzbekistan	2000-2006	47,5 (0,2%)	631,0 (2,6%)	-583,6
	2000-2010	-786,5

* - In brackets - the ratio of the population in 2000

Source: data from national statistical agencies, CIS Statistical Committee

Speaking about the trends of long-term migration to Russia, one should note the reduction of flow of immigrants from Ukraine, and especially, from Kazakhstan, two countries that in 1990s were the main suppliers of migrants. Between 2000 and 2011 the share of immigrants from Kazakhstan to Russia reduced from 35 to 10 per cent, from Ukraine went down from 21 to 12 per cent. However, the share of Kyrgyzstan migrants increased - from 4 to 12 per cent, Uzbekistan migrants - from 11 to 18 per cent, Tajikistan migrants - from 3 - to 10 per cent. Thus, in Russia, there is a tendency of gradual transition of the former temporary labor migrants to the category of migrants for permanent residence.

² One of the first investigations of this topic was made in the UN Population Division more than 10 years ago: Population Division, DESA. International Migration from countries with economies in Transition 1980-2000. United Nation, ESA/P/WP.166, 2001

Stocks of permanent-type migrants from the newly independent states

The most important characteristic of the outcome of migration is the data on migrant population (stocks) residing in the country of destination. In this respect, for the countries that not so long ago made up a single state - the Soviet Union, there are certain difficulties, since the criterion of the country of birth is hardly applicable for most migrants. An impressive number of "international" migrants born "outside" Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and other countries - participants of the CIS in the late 1990s is largely a result of resettlements done prior to disintegration of the USSR. Thus, according to the Russian census of 2002, out of 145.2 million of permanent population, 12 million people were born in other countries, (of which 10.2 million - in the CIS countries). This figure (12 million) with the light hand of experts from the UN Population Division and the World's Bank was presented to the world community as an estimate of the number of international migrants in the Russian Federation.³ But a large part of those millions were internal migrants, i.e. were changing their places of residence within the borders of one country. For this reason, data on the stock of population born outside of the CIS countries should be interpreted with caution (if it is not possible to specify the year of migrants' resettlement) because they do not always reflect the migration situation of the recent years. Over time the replacement of the generations of lifetime migrants of the Soviet period with the real international migrants of post-Soviet period will occur gradually.

Let us refer to the results of the population censuses conducted between 1989 and 2010.⁴ Census of Belarus (1989, 1999, 2009), Kazakhstan (1989, 1999, 2009), Kyrgyzstan (1989, 1999, 2009), Russia (1989, 2002, 2010) and Ukraine (1989 and 2001) show that the number of lifetime migrants from the CIS countries among the resident population is decreasing in all the listed republics of the former Soviet Union, with the exception of Russia (Table 2). This reduction was strongest in Kazakhstan (54 per cent) and Kyrgyzstan (65 per cent). There was substantial increase of the number of those who did not indicate their places of birth as Belarus (188 thousand by 2009) and Russia (4.5 million people by 2010).

Table 2

Distribution of population of some CIS countries by their birthplace (in thousands)

Countries	Born in:	1989	Around	Around	[2000] to [1989]	[2009] to [2000]	[2009] to [1989]
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³ Migration and Remittances. Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Eds. Mansoor A. and Quillin B. Europe and Central Asia Region. The World Bank 2006.

⁴ Census of Azerbaijan (1999 and 2009.), Georgia (2002) and Moldova (2004) did not cover all the territory of these countries. In Azerbaijan and Tajikistan the data on the place of birth were not published. One should keep in mind that the definition of resident population in the last Soviet census is different from those that were introduced in the next censuses. By the methodology of 1989 USSR population census, the resident population covered all those who resided at a specific place for 6 months and longer, including those who were temporarily absent if their absence did not exceed 6 months. In the following censuses as time criterion for determining permanent residence was used the term of 1 year in accordance with the recommendations of the UN.

			2000	2009			
Belarus	CIS countries	1182,3	1069,8	850,2	0,90	0,79	0,72
	Belarus	8883,3	8886,4	8388,8	1,00	0,94	0,94
	Other	55,1	89,0	264,9	1,62	2,98	4,81
Kazakhstan	CIS countries	3518,2	1946,1	1608,5	0,55	0,83	0,46
	Kazakhstan	12714,7	12840,0	14196,6	1,01	1,11	1,12
	Other	213,8	167,1	204,5	0,78	1,22	0,96
Kyrgyzstan	CIS countries	636,4	378,3	219,5	0,59	0,58	0,34
	Kyrgyzstan	3585,8	4425,4	5126,6	1,23	1,16	1,43
	Other	33,5	19,2	16,8	0,57	0,87	0,50
Russia	CIS countries	10196,5	11254,5	10458,7	1,10	0,93	1,03
	Russia	135549,8	131608,7	127116,4	0,97	0,97	0,94
	Other	994,1	2303,5	5281,4	2,32	2,29	5,31
Ukraine	CIS countries	6606,8	4837,3	-	0,73	-	-
	Ukraine	44332,1	42909,5	-	0,97	-	-
	Other	454,9	318,9	-	0,70	-	-

Source: data from national statistical agencies

Analysis of the data by the regions of birth shows that in all of the countries that we deal with, the number of those who were born in the European part of the CIS was reduced (table 3). But it was especially significant in the Central Asia. In Kazakhstan, the total number of natives of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Moldova has decreased by 70 per cent, in Kyrgyzstan - by 80 per cent. Obviously, this dynamics is the result of the repatriation of the population of European descent. The characteristics of population dynamics should also be taken into account. The share of persons born in other Slavic republics and Moldova decreased in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, due to the reduction of migration exchange between them.

Table 3

The population of some CIS countries by the region of birth (thousands)

Countries	Region of birth	1989	Around 2000	Around 2009	[2000] to [1989]	[2009] to [2000]	[2009] to [1989]
Belarus	European part of CIS	1076,3	946,6	726,0	0,88	0,77	0,67
	Central Asia	30,0	31,9	33,0	1,06	1,03	1,10
	Transcaucasia	76,0	91,3	91,2	1,20	1,00	1,20
Kazakhstan	European part of CIS	3125,4	1593,2	941,9	0,51	0,59	0,30
	Central Asia	297,2	302,1	628,5	1,02	2,08	2,11
	Transcaucasia	95,6	50,7	36,1	0,53	0,71	0,38
Kyrgyzstan	European part of CIS	414,2	184,6	83,5	0,45	0,45	0,20
	Central Asia	210,4	187,3	132,7	0,89	0,71	0,63
	Transcaucasia	11,8	6,3	3,3	0,53	0,53	0,28
Russia	European part of CIS	6494,1	5236,8	4541,5	0,81	0,87	0,70
	Central Asia	2646,9	4061,3	4225,8	1,53	1,04	1,60
	Transcaucasia	1055,4	1956,4	1691,4	1,85	0,86	1,60
Ukraine	European part of	677,2	490,3	-	0,72	-	-

	CIS						
	Central Asia	5729,2	4133,1	-	0,72	-	-
	Transcaucasia	200,4	213,9	-	1,07	-	-

Source: data from national statistical agencies

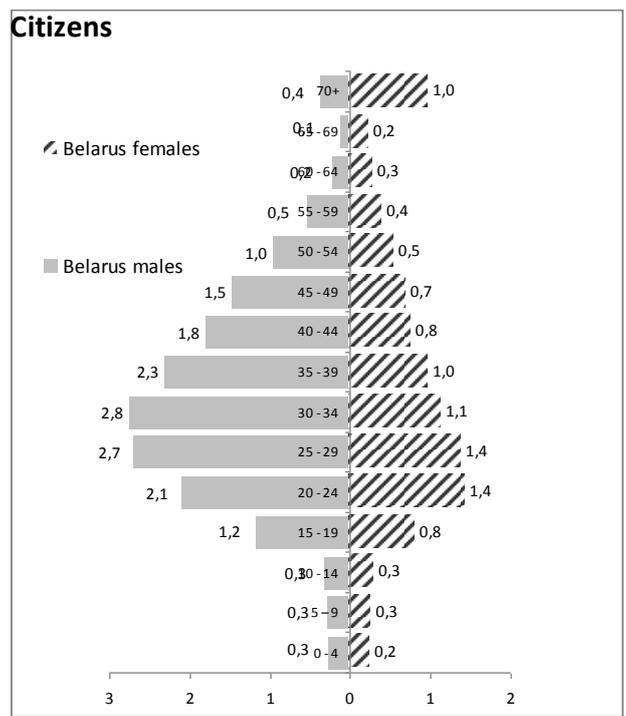
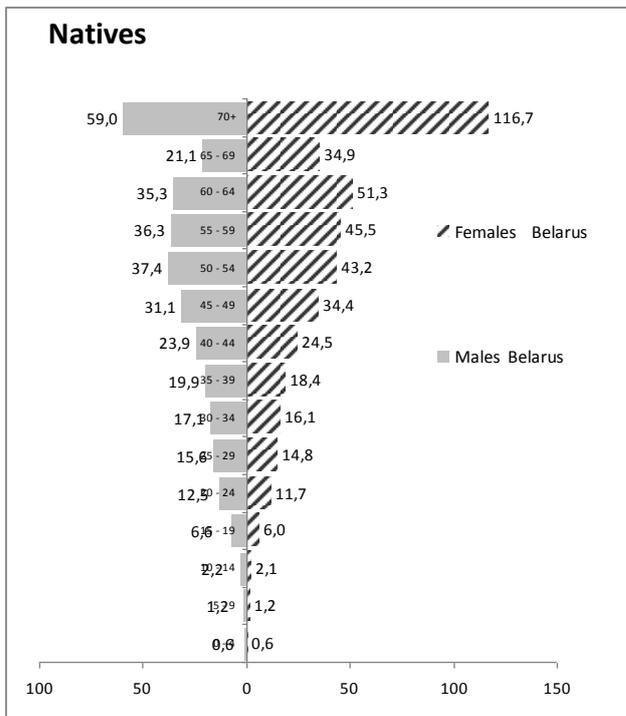
The number of immigrants born in Central Asia has increased in Russia, in Kazakhstan and in Belarus. In Kazakhstan and in the other republics of the Central Asia, the number of natives of the other Central Asian republics is growing not only because of economic migration, but also due to active policy of attracting repatriates (compatriots). The feature of Kyrgyzstan for two decades is that in this country the number of natives of almost all former Soviet republics has been reducing. The number of natives of the countries of Transcaucasia has increased in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, mostly due to the lasting cultural/historical links and geographical proximity.

In general, before the collapse of the USSR approximately 26 million people who were born in other countries of the Commonwealth resided in the future CIS countries, by 2010 this number, by our estimations reduced to 18 million people. This decrease was mainly due to the reduction of the number of non-native-born not in Russia, where over the past two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has even increased, but at the expense of the other former Soviet republics.

Russian Population Census 2010 proved that “statistical” migrants (persons that moved before the breakdown of the USSR from other republic of the country) are replaced by real international migrants that moved after the breakdown of the USSR. Comparison of age-sex pyramids of foreign and foreign born population residing in Russia demonstrate consequences of the recent trends in migration: predominance of labour migration with prevalence of young males in these flows. Census also illustrated the historical aspect of migration to Russia and big differences between stocks of migrants from Slavic republics of the CIS area and its Central Asian part. Figures 1 and 2 show the most typical cases - stocks of migrants from Belarus and Tajikistan.

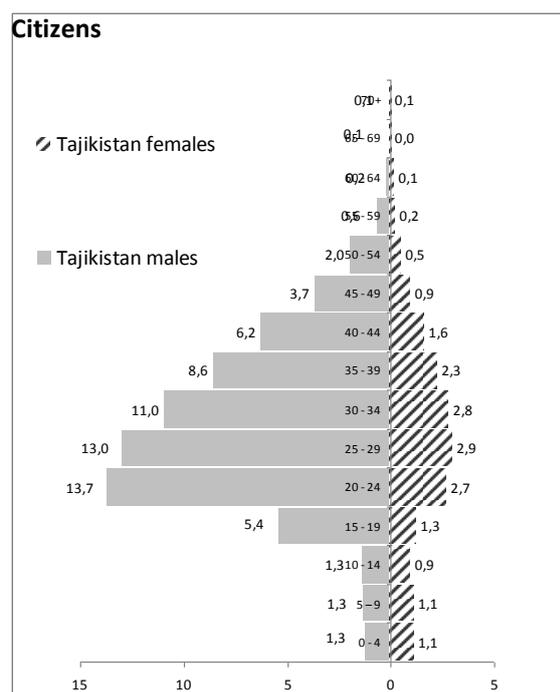
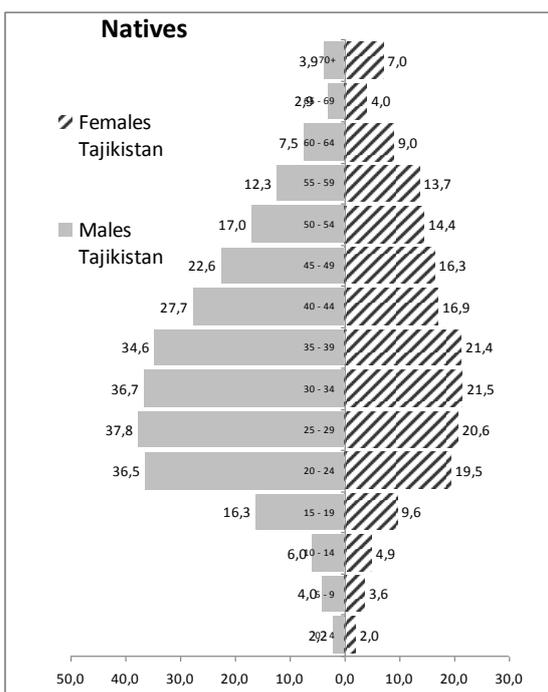
Figure 1

Age-sex pyramids population born in Belarus and population of Belarusian citizenship residing in Russia (Census 2010, thousand)



Population born in Belarus is rather old, most of these people arrived in Russia long before the breakdown of the USSR, while population born in Tajikistan is much younger: part of these people arrived in 1990-ies under pushing circumstances, the other are former (or actual) migrant-workers. Age and sex composition of citizens of two countries has much more in common and reflects the results of contemporary labour migration.

Figure 2
Age-sex pyramids population born in Tajikistan and population of Tajikistan citizenship residing in Russia (Census 2010, thousand)



Labor migration

Millions of the CIS residents are involved in labor migration each year. However accurate calculation of migrant workers leaving the CIS countries is not available, since all countries are making their measurement using different criteria. Only Russia annually hosts over a million of legal migrants (number of work permits issued in 2010 was 1.2 million and 863 thousand migrants were employed). The number of migrants working illegally in Russia, can be three to five times larger, experts estimate it as 3-4 million. Besides Russia, significant flows of migrants from Moldova and Ukraine move to the EU countries (according to national surveys - 29 per cent and over 40 per cent, respectively). Over one third of labor migrants from Uzbekistan choose Kazakhstan. Assuming that Russia takes over 70 per cent of the flow, the total number of labor migrants from the CIS countries in the former Soviet territories can be estimated as 7-8 million. Table 4 presents some estimation of the volumes of flows of labor migrants from certain countries of the Commonwealth.

Table 4

Estimations of flow or the number of labor migrants from the CIS countries, 2005-2010.⁵

Country	Labour migrants (thousands)	Proportion of population in 15-59 ⁶	Proportion of migrants working in Russia (%)	Source:
Armenia	127 (up to 300 in Russia)	(15%)	85-95	Living standard survey 2008, (experts' estimates) ⁷
Azerbaijan	(up to 350)	(5 %)	85%	(experts' estimates) ⁸
Belarus	41,8 (at the census date), (up to 300 in Russia)	(5 %).	90	Population Census 2009 ⁹
Kyrgyzstan	225 (at the census date) (outflow up to 500 per year)	(15%)	83-89	Population Census 2009; (experts' estimates) ¹⁰
Moldova	300 per year (to	(20%)	60	Labour force survey 2009-2010 ¹¹

⁵ Russia and Kazakhstan plan to conduct surveys with a set of questions on labor migration in the future. Perhaps they will reveal the scale of departures from the countries that are currently considered in the region only as hosting countries for migrant workers.

⁶ Authors' estimates for the reference period

⁷ In accordance with experts' estimates in the beginning of 2000-s the total number of migrant workers from Armenia – both short- and long-term, made about 500 thousand persons including 280 thousand that worked in Russia (Mukomel V. (2005), Migration Policy in Russia. M., 2005. p. 328 (in Russian)). In 2010 the head of the Migration service of Armenia estimated the stock of labour out-migrants as follows: over 600-700 thousand of long-term and over 80-thousand seasonal migrant workers (Yeganyan G. Armenian net. Armenian news in Russian 19.07.2010: <http://armeniya.net/2010/07/19>)

⁸ According to MOI of Azerbaijan information in the beginning of 2000-s up to 1 million Azerbaijan citizens stayed in Russia as migrant-workers, 9 of 10 violated migration law of the RF (Irregular Migration/ Otechestvennye Zapiski, 2004 № 4 6 p. 174 (In Russian): <http://www.strana-oz.ru/2004/4/nelegalnaya-migraciya>); Denisenko M. Migration and remittances in Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (in Russian) ESCAP, Bangkok, 2010. http://www.unescap.org/sdd/meetings/egm_mig_sep2010/mig_egm_paper_russian.pdf.

⁹ National experts of Belarus note that there are no any more or less agreed estimates of volumes of labour out-migration from the country; all available values differ by one order (Shakhotko L. International Labour Migration of the Citizens of Belarus. Voprosy Statistiki, 2011, No.8 (in Russian).

¹⁰ Before the crisis – up to 500 thousand. Kyrgyzstan: Economic Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction. UNDP, ILO 2008

	Russia up to 300)			
Tajikistan	430 (700)	(20 %)	95-99	Labour force survey 2008; Азиатский банк развития; (experts estimates) ¹²
Uzbekistan	(1200-1600 in Russia)	(more than 10%)	60-65	(experts' estimates) ¹³
Ukraine	1476 (within 2005-2008)	(5%)	48	Ukrainian External Labour Migration. National survey 2005-2008 ¹⁴

Note: including undocumented migrants; in brackets – experts' estimates.

The main difference of the flows of foreign labor between Russia and other countries of the region is not only in their volume, but also in composition of migrants by citizenship. The share of legal labor migrants from other CIS countries during the recent years in Russia has reached 75 per cent¹⁵, in Belarus - about 40 per cent, in Ukraine – 30 per cent, in Moldova - roughly 20 per cent. In Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan the share of migrants from the CIS did not exceed 10-12 per cent. Among the attracted foreign labor from the remote foreign countries in the CIS dominate the citizens of China, Turkey and Vietnam. Taking into account the patents that were sold, the proportion of citizens of the CIS in the flow of labor migrants in Russia are currently over 90 per cent. Currently, among foreign workers who arrived in the Russian Federation predominate citizens of the Central Asia - Uzbekistan (38 per cent) and Tajikistan (16 per cent). The flow of migrants from China is also significant (7 per cent). Since 2010, Russia accepts a special category of foreign workers, the so-called highly qualified specialists (HQS)¹⁶. In this so far small group of migrants (the stock of HQS by the end of 2011 made about 10 thousand people) share of CIS citizens was less than 7-8 per cent.

A typical feature of labor migration in the CIS is a huge number of migrants with irregular status or working without permits. The main reason for this is believed to be a very limited ability to control the situation from the side of the governments of the receiving countries (first of all - Russia and Kazakhstan); the exaggerated scale of "gray" economy, that employs most of the illegal migrants, the high profitability of using such migrants, that maintains the

¹¹ LFS of Moldova demonstrate a certain dynamics of migrant-workers stock from Moldova abroad (thousand): 2006 – 310, 1; 2007 – 335, 6; 2008 – 309, 7; 2009 – 294, 9. According to the Census 2004 data 273 thousand of residents of Moldova stayed abroad, including 242 thousand that left with a purpose to work.

¹² Kuddusov J. Impact of the world financial crisis on Tajikistan migrant workers: migrants' opinion / ILO, Ministry of labour RT (in Russian); Olimova S. (2009) Tajikistan: from forced migration to labour migration In: Post-Soviet transformations: reflection in migrations. Ed. by Zaionchkovskaya Zh. and Vitkovskaya G. M. (in Russian) p. 391; Migrant Remittances to Tajikistan, The Potential for Savings, Economic Investment and Existing Financial Products to Attract Remittances ILO, 2010

¹³ Denisenko M. Migration and remittances in Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (in Russian) ESCAP, Bangkok, 2010. http://www.unescap.org/sdd/meetings/egm_mig_sep2010/mig_egm_paper_russian.pdf.

¹⁴ Ukrainian External Labour Migration. National survey 2005-2008. Kyiv, 2009

¹⁵ Until 2010 the RF data about the workers from the CIS countries represented foreigners that were legally *hired by* Russian employers (who sent a special notification to the migration authorities). Since 2011 the information is available only on the number of *issued regular work permits*. Over 83 per cent of these documents were granted to the citizens of the CIS countries.

¹⁶ The only criterion applied to migrants of this category is the wage - not less than 2 million rubles per year, and 1 million for professors and researchers (about 50 000 or 25 000 Euro respectively).

unpunished corruption schemes of hiring such foreigners. With all the relativity of data comparison, obtained from different sources applying different definitions of the migrant, they still make it possible to see that from the number of migrants who stayed in Russia to work, legally were employed no more than 60 per cent of the citizens of Moldova (2009) and 35 per cent of the citizens of Armenia (2008), less than 30 per cent of the citizens of Tajikistan (2009), about 30 per cent of the citizens of Kyrgyzstan (2009).

Concluding policy remarks

The presented picture of migration over the post-Soviet territory is one of the most large-scale on the map of the world. In the future, the weakening of migration flows should not be expected, especially between Russia and Kazakhstan on one hand, and the other former Soviet republics, on the other. Pushing factor of development of these relations will be the continued differences in the expected scenarios of economic and demographic development. In Russia, however, as well as in Ukraine and Belarus, a significant decrease of population of working age (up to 10 million by 2021) is expected, as well as the acceleration of the aging process. Along with this process, in three Central Asian countries - Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - the population of working ages will increase by 5.4 million people. At the same time, millions of natives of the Commonwealth, who do not reside in the countries of their birth, along with the migrant workers are the guarantors of maintaining personal ties between the different countries of the CIS, and keeping a common language area.

Understanding of the importance of migration, not limited by "economic sense" is growing in the countries. Along with this a need to establish mechanisms for migration management is growing too¹⁷. Gradually an understanding is getting formed of donor and recipient countries for development of organized forms of recruitment of foreign labor, professional training of migrant workers, learning the language of a hosting country, etc. However, despite the large number of bilateral and multilateral agreements between the CIS countries in the field of migration, it is still impossible to talk about the formation of a common labor market and free movement between the countries¹⁸. The CIS countries apply a system of constraints - in the form of quotas for work permits, employment bans for migrant workers, and so on. The lack of efficient enforcement of restrictive rules and regulations cause a large scale of

¹⁷ For more detailed information on migration policies in the CIS area, main mechanisms applied to regulate migration and obstacles for free mobility of labour in the region see: Chudinovskikh O. Migration and Bilateral Agreements in the Commonwealth of Independent States. In: Free Movement of Workers and Labour Market Adjustment. Recent Experiences from OECD Countries and the European Union. OECD 2012.

¹⁸ Zayonchkovskaya Zh. Interstate partnership of Russia and the countries of Central Asia in the sphere of labour migration. Paper presented at the Scientific Council of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, April 10, 2009 (in Russian): <http://www.fms.gov.ru/upload/iblock/4c6/zai.pdf>

illegal employment of foreign workers in the CIS¹⁹. Nevertheless, there are positive examples of interstate cooperation in migration management. The most vivid of these is the Customs union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and the agreement in the framework of the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

Due to these conditions, the future of migration situation in the CIS strongly depends on policy of the Russian Federation. In the regulatory framework of Russia, related to migration and naturalization, important changes occur during recent years. On June 13, 2012 the President of Russia has signed a new conception of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation. It is intended to increase the selective component of the migration policy, application of differential mechanisms of attracting and usage of the foreign labor, development of various forms of temporary employment, educational and academician migration. One of the key directions of the new migration policy is the development and implementation of the programs of integration of migrants.

¹⁹ Chudinovskikh O. Migration and Bilateral Agreements in the Commonwealth of Independent States. opt. cit.