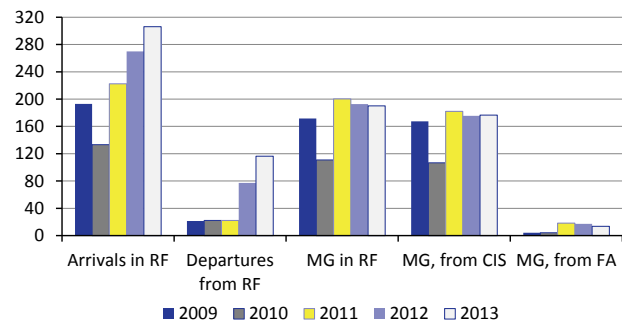


RUSSIA'S MIGRATION PROCESS IN 2013

L.Karachurina

The year 2013 brought no changes to the existing situation as compared with the previous year – either in terms of its overall development or from the point of view of the fact that Russia's migration growth statistics now include also a certain part of temporary (labor) migration. The share of positive net migration is increasingly concentrating specifically in several RF subjects. While in 2009 the top ten regions housed 67.3% of positive net migration, in 2013 this index amounts to 87.7%. This means that only 12–15 regions in this country appear to be attractive to migrants – that is, enjoy economic stability. On the whole, such an evident shrinkage of growth poles in the country is a clear sign of a looming economic crisis, made visible by the phenomenon of migration. It is very difficult to find any objective economic sources of the October 2013 events in Moscow's Biryulevo district. Or, to be more correct, such sources may indeed exist, but they mostly have to do with property redistribution, and not with migration issues. The entire discourse going on around these events lies in a political dimension; once again, a hot discussion centers around the negative and positive effects of migration for Russia's economic system and – due to lack of well-substantiated studies on the economics of migration – the emphasis is placed, first of all, on its negative features.

Russia's migration growth index over the first 8 months of 2013 (January–August) amounts to 190 thousand, remaining practically unchanged by comparison with the same period of last year. In continuation of the trend observed in 2012, Russia experienced a relatively insignificant natural population decline (-6.6 thousand). Seen against this background, migration growth functioned not only as a replacement component compensating for natural population decline, but also as a population growth factor. However, it should be reminded that, from 2011 onwards, Russia's migration growth statistics have been incorporating not only those migrants who are registered at their place of residence (as it had been since 1995, when this type of registration replaced the previously existing permanent residence registration system), but also those who are registered at the place of their stay for a period of 9 months or longer. The alterations introduced in the methodology of keeping statistical records were reflected by changes in the statistics of *arrivals* in Russia almost from the very beginning of the year 2011, and towards the end of that year and in early 2012 (that is, with a distinct time lag) the corresponding changes became visible in the statistics of *departures* from Russia, which demonstrated a dramatic upsurge: departures were now registered 'automatically' – for example, at the end of the 9-month period of registration at the place of stay (Fig. 1). In this sense, the year 2013 introduced no changes in the overall picture by comparison with year, either in terms of its general trends or from the point of view of the temporary (labor) migration component that is now incorporated in Russia's migration growth statistics.



Note. MG – migration growth; FA – far-abroad countries.

Source: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii* [The Socioeconomic Situation in Russia]. January–September 2010, 2012, 2013. Rosstat.

Fig. 1. General Parameters of Russia's External Migration, January–August 2009–2013, Thousand Persons

Being observed in conjunction with the internal population redistribution between Russia's regions, the spatial projection of recorded external migration growth has several specific features.

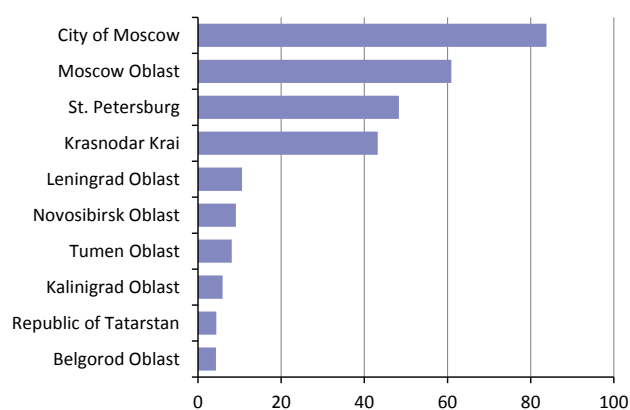
Firstly, in spite of the presence, in the migration growth data, of the temporary migration component, migration flows are on the decline in 47 regions (in fact, more than half of Russia's regions) – a phenomenon indicative of their lack of attractiveness from the point of view of any form of mobility, or permanent or temporary migration. Back in 2009, when the indices of net migration were lower (and included almost no data on temporary migration), migration growth was noted in 54 regions, against the present-day 36 regions. Population decline¹ is now recorded not only

¹ Taken as an aggregate index of all external and interregional migration flows.

in all the northern regions, the Caucasus (with one inexplicable exception represented by the Republic of Ingushetia), half of the regions situated in the Volga Federal District, and in 21 of the 27 regions situated east of the Urals (including the RF subjects of the Urals Federal District); this phenomenon is currently noted also in some big regions centered about 'millionaire cities', like Sverdlovsk Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, and Rostov Oblast. In this latter case this is evidently the upshot of the recent 'pumping over' of all types of resources (including human) into *Olympstroy* (the State Corporation for Construction of Olympic Venues and Sochi Development as an Alpine Resort), with the ambition to create a 'second Moscow' in the south of Russia. In fact, Krasnodar Krai has always been attractive to migrants: Russia cannot claim being blessed with a superabundance of coastal territories with favorable climatic conditions. The *Sochi 2014* mega-project functioned as an additional 'pump' in the redistribution of all forms of migration flows (domestic and foreign, fully or partially legitimate). However, now, when little time is left before the start of 2014 Winter Olympic Games, Sochi is hectically trying to get rid of any migrants¹.

Secondly, the positive component of net migration is increasingly concentrating in a few RF subjects (Fig. 2). While in 2009 Russia's top ten regions accounted for 67.3% of positive net migration, in 2013 this index amounts to 87.7%. This means that only 12–15 regions are actually attractive to migrants (instead of the 36 regions with a positive net-migration index) and thus can be estimated to enjoy economic stab. Among these, the following four regions are indisputable leaders: the City of Moscow; Moscow Oblast, St. Petersburg; and Krasnodar Krai. On the whole, such a dramatic drop in the number of growth focal points in this country is a signal of an economic crisis, sent by migration – a phenomenon called by Zh. A. Zaionchkovskaia, back in the 1990s, a 'barometer of the socioeconomic situation in the country'².

In Russia's arrivals statistics, the share of Tajikistan, and especially that of Uzbekistan, continue to increase and together constitute 40% of all arrivals. Simultaneously, the number of arrivals from Belarus and Kyrgyzstan is on the decline. In abstract terms, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Armenia remain significant sources



Source: *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii* [The Socioeconomic Situation in Russia]. January–September 2010, 2012, 2013. *Rosstat*.

Fig. 2. The Regions of Russia with Positive External Migration Growth, January–August 2009–2013, thousand persons

of migration flows into Russia (in addition to already mentioned Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). On the whole, the role of the CIS in shaping up Russia's migration flows is very prominent, and it is not losing its importance. The CIS accounts for 88.4% of all migrant arrivals in Russia and thus for 92.9% of Russia's aggregate migration growth. The exchange with 'far abroad' is also dominated by former Soviet republics – the Baltic States and Georgia, which provide another 2.4% of arrivals and 2.9% of net migration.

In the recently published Report of the UN Secretary General on the 46th Session of the Commission on Population and Development, Russia, by the number of international migrants (12.3m), is ranked second after the USA (42.8m)³. In this connection, it must be specified that here *international migrants* are understood as people of foreign origin. When applied to Russia, this term includes everyone who is alive, was born in the USSR and then resettled in Russia at any age, in any period of time (for example, in the 1960s). This principle is also applicable to other fragments of the former Soviet empire, thus pre-determining, say, the ranking of Ukraine (10th) on that list of countries⁴.

A common past, a historically integrated common space, an attitude to Russia as the 'big brother', marked differences in the demographic potential and socioeconomic situation are the factors that shape the current labor migration flows inside the CIS and give

1 For the law violations and absurdities involved in the process, see Loginova O. *Sochi proshchaetsia s migrantami* [Sochi Says Good-bye to Migrants] // *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* [The Independent Gazette]. 31 October 2013.

2 Zaionchkovskaia Zh. A. *Migratsiia naseleniia kak indikator sotsial'noi situatsii v postsovetskom prostranstve* [Population Migration as an Indicator of the Social Situation in the Post-Soviet Space] // *Problemy prognozirovaniia* [Forecasting Issues]. 1997. No 3. P. 119–128.

3 United Nations, Economic and Social Council. New trends in migration: demographic aspects / Report of the Secretary-General. E/CN.9/2013/3.

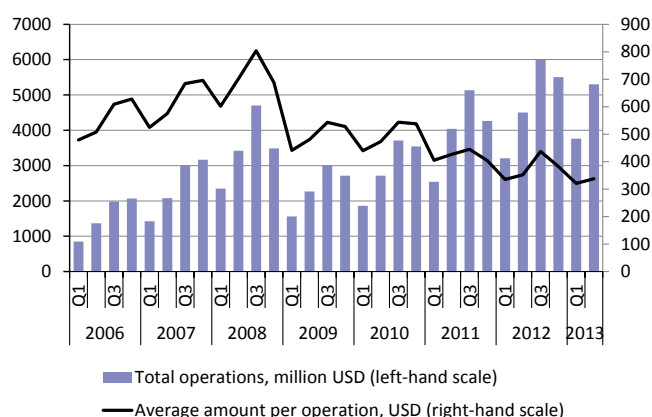
4 For more details, see Shcherbakova E. M. *Mirovye tendentsii mezhdunarodnoi migratsii i migratsionnoi politiki* [World Trends in International Migration and Migration Policy] // *Demoscope Weekly*. 2013. No 555–556. See http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2013/0555/barom01.php#_FN_9

rise to both the real and speculative issues associated with migration.

According to data released by the Federal Migration Service of Russia (RF FMS), over the first 9 months of 2013, a total of 951.9 thousand work permits were issued (for employment by legal entities) and 1,197.5 thousand patents (for employment by individuals). Another 80.5 thousand people obtained work permits to be employed as highly qualified workforce, and 260.5 thousand people were issued temporary residence permits or permit for residence in Russia¹. So, over the January–September period of 2013, no less than 2.5m of foreign citizens were granted a legal employment status in Russia. This roughly corresponds (a rise by 6.5%) to the indices observed over the same period of last year. The bulk of growth (by 15%) was produced by the increased number of patents, which make it possible to legalize the employment status outside of the continually sequestered quotas. Besides, patents seem to have become an important budget-forming component, as revenues in a total amount of Rb 6,028m were generated by that source, against Rb 4,815m received last year. On the whole, over the first 9 months of 2013, (legalized) migrants generated for Russia's budget a total of Rb 27,872m (via the Federal Migration Service).

An analysis of the cash flow in an opposite direction, based on the statistics of cross-border money transfers by physical persons² over the period of Q1 and Q2 2013, points to the same trend that has emerged earlier: each quarter demonstrates an increase, by 1.17–1.25 times on the same period of previous year, in the amount of money transfers from Russia to the CIS members. Thus, in Q1 2013, physical persons transferred, from Russia to the CIS, 1.17 times more money that they had done in Q1 2012. At the same time, the average money transfer amount continued to display a downward trend (Fig. 3), and the balance of operations with Kazakhstan remains positive (for Russia).

It is not easy to pinpoint an economic factor that triggered the October 2013 events in Biryulevo district of Moscow. Or, to be more correct, such a factor may well exist, but it has to do with property redistribution, and not with the migration issue. The entire discourse around these issues belongs to the domain of politics³. Once again, the argument as to the pluses and minuses of migration in the context of an economic



Source: RF Central Bank, http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?Pr tid=svs&ch=Par_17101#CheckedItem

Fig. 3. Cross-border Money Transfers by Physical Persons from Russia to the CIS, Q1 2006 – Q2 2013

system has received a powerful impetus, and the focus of attention, of course, in the downside of migration. Meanwhile, even before the riots in Biryulevo, during Moscow's mayoral election campaign, the administrative bodies began to implement a package measures designed to harden their stance towards migrants. One manifestation of the new policy, for example, was the opening, in the aftermath of the events at the Matveevsky Market, of a temporary camp for detained illegal migrants in the Golyanovo district of Moscow⁴, the events in which migrant foreign citizens were in no way involved; another was the general anti-migrant rhetoric applied in the course of the election campaign by several Mayoral candidates.

After the Biryulevo events, the authorities put forth a number of initiatives in the 'sphere of migration' that may entail certain specific economic and social consequences:

- the suggestion voiced by State Duma deputy Alexey Zhuravlev that the possibility for the children of migrants to be enrolled in schools and kindergartens must be linked to their parents' legal employment status and payment of taxes⁵;
- the Federal Migration Service of Russia, according to its Director Konstantin Romodanovsky, 'closes' the possibility of entry in the Russian Federation for those who have violated existing migration legislation, meanwhile applying the speedy deportation procedure to up to 3,000 persons per day⁶;

1 Federal Migration Service: Official statistics / Information on the migration situation in the Russian Federation over the first 9 months of 2013. See <http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/data/details/73472/>

2 The RF Central Bank's data. See http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?Pr tid=svs&ch=Par_17101#CheckedItem

3 See, for example, Zakharov M. *Kto vinovat v Biryulyovo* [Who Is To Blame for the Disturbances in Biryulevo] // Polit.ru, 14 October 2013. See <http://www.polit.ru/article/2013/10/14/biryulyovo/>

4 Chernykh A. *Palatochnaia distsiplina* [Field Camp Discipline] // *Kommersant*, 5 August 2013.

5 Podosenkov S. It is suggested that the children of unemployed migrants should not be accepted into schools and kindergartens // *Izvestia*, 27 September 2013.

6 *Tsivilizovanniy knut dolzhen byt'* [There Must Be a Civilized Whip]. An interview with Director of the Federal Migration Service Konstantin Romodanovsky // *Kommersant*, 16 October 2013.

- once again, there is a strong possibility that strict sanctions can be introduced against those who organize illegal migration¹, this category including employers and those who provide illegal migrants with lodging and residence registration. It is planned that the amount of fines imposed for tax evasion associated with the lease of residential property will be increased. So, this measure may directly affect those Muscovites (or residents of other Russian cities) who let their apartments to migrants²;
- a discussion has been launched as to whether the period of stay in RF territory for foreign citizens from visa-waiver countries should be shortened from the current 90 days to 45 days³;
- the discussion concerning the introduction of visa requirements for citizens from CIS countries has once again been revived.

The discussion around the issue of developing a new system for estimating the need for foreign workforce also continues. Another round of criticism has been launched against the existing system of quotas for the employment of foreigners⁴, and so on.

And finally, one of the most important consequences of the riots in Biryulevo has been an impressive upsurge in nationalist discourse, where migration is posed as nearly the gravest problem faced by Russia (and certainly – by Moscow); this theme strongly reverberates in the public mind. The migration issue is perceived as being so acute that it has become front-page news, dwarfing nearly all other issues irrespective of their importance. (For example, neither Moscow traffic jams nor the ongoing slump in industry can rival ‘the migrants’ in popularity). The latest opinion poll conducted by the Levada Center on the issue of migration and inter-ethnic tension⁵

has revealed that anti-migrant attitudes are becoming increasingly widespread in Russian society. In November 2013, being asked the question ‘What, in your opinion, must be done with illegal immigrants from the near abroad?’, 73% of Russian respondents replied: ‘They must be deported outside the borders of Russia’, which represents a rise by 20 pp. on November 2006 (when the September conflicts in Kodopoga had been fresh in the public memory). Accordingly, the number of respondents choosing the answer ‘They must be legalized and aided in finding employment and assimilating in Russia’ has dropped by almost half (from 31% to 15%). Only 11% of the respondents believe that ‘no restrictions on the residence of [representatives] of any nations should be imposed’ (against 21% in August 2004); 54% support the idea that a ban should be imposed on entry for those from the Caucasus; 45% support a similar ban for people from the former Soviet republics in Central Asian; the same percentage of the respondents are for banning Chinese immigrants from entering Russia. And finally, 63% are ‘for’ or ‘inclined to be for’ restrictions to be introduced against granting the right of permanent residence or employment not only to people from former USSR republics, but even to Russians arriving from other regions Russia proper.

At the same time, while speaking in London at Global Cities Initiative’s international conference, Rector of Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO Andrey Sharonov pointed out that ‘Moscow must welcome migrants who are willing and able to become law-abiding citizens, otherwise the economies of this city and the country as a whole will be faced with stagnation. Ignoring this opportunity for promoting economic growth may result in a Japanese-style stagnation trap... One of the causes of the lengthy stagnation in Japan is its closed borders. They have no migration, they allow access to nobody, so stagnation has been continuing for 25 years – no economic growth, no boom that they used to have 30 years ago’⁶. The rhetoric and actual policies of the past few months are not only detrimental to Russia’s attractiveness to migrants; they create no incentives for the migrants inside this country to integrate in any receptive social environment. ‘By shifting the emphasis onto the ethnic issue, society falls into a stupor and becomes divided. Muscovites en

1 1 *Tsivilizovanniy knut dolzhen byt'* [There Must Be a Civilized Whip]. An interview with Director of the Federal Migration Service Konstantin Romodanovsky // *Kommersant*, 16 October 2013.

2 Moreover, the Moscow authorities went as far as to declare that police would carry out checks of all apartments in the city in order to identify ‘illegal’ migrants among the residents. For more details on this and other problems involved in the ‘replacement of the corruption issue with the ‘ethnic’ one, see Rogov K. *Perevod strelok s korruptsii na natsional'nyi vopros* [A Shift of Focus from Corruption to the Ethnic Relations Issue] // *Novaya gazeta* [The Hew Gazette]. 21 October 2013.

3 Ms Yarovaya suggests that the period of a foreigner’s stay without a visa should be shortened from 90 to 45 days // *Interfax*. 22 October 2013.

4 *Tsivilizovanniy knut dolzhen byt'* [There Must Be a Civilized Whip]. An interview with Director of the Federal Migration Service K. O. Romodanovsky // *Kommersant*, 16 October 2013.

5 The survey was conducted on 25–28 October 2013 on the basis of a representative all-Russian sample of urban and rural population (1,603 participants aged 18 years and older) in 130 population units across 45 regions of Russia. For more details, see

Rossiane o migratsii i mezhnatsional'noi napriazhennosti [Russians Express Their Views on Migration and Inter-ethnic Tensions]. 5 November 2013. See <http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyanе-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti>

6 Sharonov: *bez migratsii ekonomika Moskvy i RF mozhет nachat' stagnatsiu* [Sharonov: Without Migration, the Economies of Moscow and the Russian Federation as a whole May Descend into Stagnation] // *RIA Novosti*. 31 October 2013. <http://ria.ru/moscow/20131031/973807714.html>

masse are for well-being, not war. They are certainly prone to xenophobia, but their xenophobia is nonaggressive both because labor migrants themselves are by no means aggressive, and because Muscovites do not compete with them on the labor market – on the

contrary, they widely use their services', writes Kirill Rogov¹.

1 Rogov K. *Perevod strelok s korruptsii na natsional'nyi vopros* [A Shift of Focus from Corruption to the Ethnic Relations Issue] // *Novaya gazeta* [The New Gazette]. 21 October 2013.