

## MIGRATION IN RUSSIA IN JANUARY–APRIL 2014

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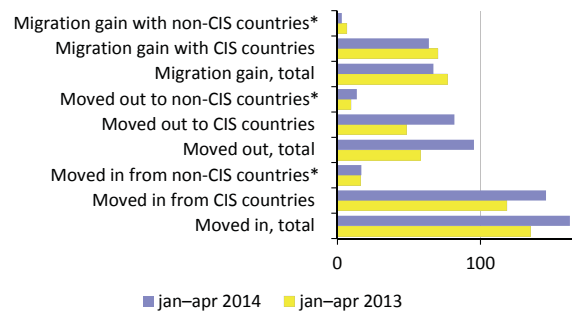
*This review covers long-term migration trends in Russia in the first half of 2014 and the latest changes in the Russian migration rules and regulations regarding the implementation of the National Migration Policy Concept in the Russian Federation through 2025 and the response to certain foreign policy events (the crisis in Ukraine).*

Territorial changes in Russia in March 2014 have resulted, among other things, in overnight increase in its population which totaled 146,0 million as of May 1, 2014, of which 2.3 million persons reside in a newly established Crimean Federal District. Therefore, beginning with 2014 the Crimean population will be included into the balance of population in this country governed by natural population growth (decline) and migration gain (loss). All other calculations and analysis will therefore rely upon this fact.

Migration gain in the country totaled 67,100 persons in the period of January to April 2014, including 64,000 persons with CIS countries. Therefore, irrespective of the political events taking place within the territory of the former U. S. S. R., no increase in volumes of the so-called long-term migration has been recorded in the Russian statistics, as supported by comparing the data available on the current year with that on the corresponding period in 2013 (*Fig. 1*). The lack of uptrend in migration gain may be associated primarily with the applicable procedure for registration of those who arrive to and move out of the country (since 2011 the procedure covers all persons newly registered at the place of residence and at the place of stay for a period of nine months and beyond, persons are automatically deemed to be moved out upon the expiration of the registration period<sup>1</sup>), which has led to overall increase in statistically recognized migration. Furthermore, it is important that the main events in Ukraine which had migration effects, took place in May and June 2014, therefore they couldn't be reflected in the analyzed statistical data within the period under review.

The fact that the long-term migration statistics now may show a certain number of temporary migrants is evidenced by almost double growth in those who move out to CIS countries, throughout the entire 2000s until the migration registration procedure was changed, remaining at a similar low level. In 2013, the share of those who moved out to CIS countries (to their previous place of residence) from the territories of their temporary stay (in Russia) upon the expiration of termination of period of stay was 87%. The foregoing im-

<sup>1</sup> Regardless of whether a person has moved out for real or not.



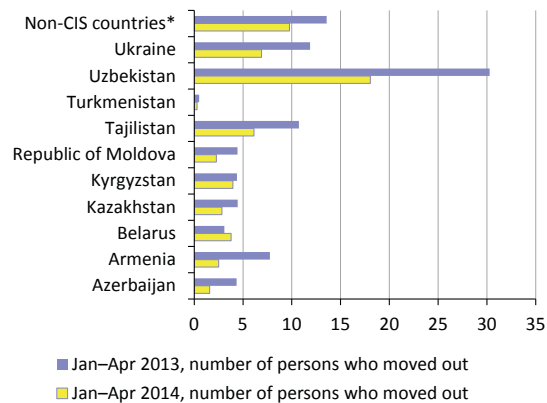
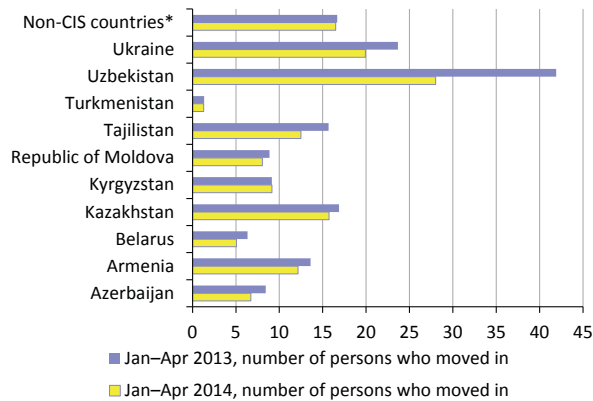
\*Non-CIS countries are countries other than CIS countries including Georgia and Baltic states.

Source: Демография в январе-апреле 2014 года // Росстат, 2014 [Demography in January–April 2014 // Rosstat].

*Fig. 1. Overall migration of Russia's population in January to April in 2013 and 2014, thousand persons*

plies that we are facing the situation when the definition of “migration gain” undergoes changes, which from this point of view is to a far more less degree associated with the formation of the standard residential population in the country. However, the data obtained from labor migrant surveys showed repeatedly that a certain share of them (25 to 30%) stay in Russia for a long time, following a model of almost permanent stay in the country and therefore having direct relationship with the standard residential population of the country.

Russia's mutual migration flows (both those who arrive in and move out from the country) have become more intensive with all CIS countries, except Belarus (*Fig. 2*). Migration to Belarus didn't decline relative to the corresponding period of 2013, and throughout the entire period of the 1990s to 2000s the scale of migration from Russia to Belarus was quite steady compared to the number of migrants to all other republics of the former Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.). This fact also goes to prove that regardless the efforts made to enhance migration statistics, other components – modification of the “design” of migration flows (transformation of migration models, departure from simple migration schemes – “for good” or “for a season” alone, as it was the case with the post-Soviet period, towards various options), formation of “migrant” sectors of the eco-



\*Non-CIS countries are countries other than CIS countries including Georgia and Baltic states.

Source: Демография в январе–апреле 2014 года // Росстат, 2014 [Demography in January–April 2014 // Rosstat].

Fig. 2. Migration relations between Russia, CIS countries and non-CIS countries in January to April in 2013 and 2014, thousand persons

nomy, etc. – makes the migration picture even more complicated. This trend has been seen worldwide. It is not the Russia's unique character but its heterogeneous territory, open frontiers and retaining the community with the former Soviet republics, as well as regular changes in the migration rules and regulations that strengthen the trend in Russia.

The beginning of 2014 is described as a new wave of changes in the migration rules and regulations regarding the implementation of the National Migration Policy Concept through 2014, as well as the current political situation. By the end of June 2014 a part of new provisions were already adopted while others were under discussion.

Federal Law on Granting of the Russian Federation Citizenship to Foreign Nationals – speakers of the Russian language was adopted in April 2014. The idea of adopting the law emerged after the onset of the events in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>. The Law provides for a simplified procedure for acquiring the Russian Federation citizenship, the term of consideration of applications for the citizenship (between six to three months), a procedure for entering the territory of Russia, acquiring the residence permit. A specially established commission may recognize foreign nationals or stateless persons as native speakers of the Russian language, provided that they use the Russian language in their “social, family, and cultural life, provided that these persons or their lineal ancestors permanently reside or previously resided on the territory of the Russian Federation or a territory situated within the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union, within the Russian Federation border”. To prevent any inappropriate usage, the residence permit

will be cancelled if persons obtained it will fail to submit an application for the Russian Federation citizenship upon the expiration of two years.

Additionally, renunciation of any other citizenship is a condition for acquiring the Russian Federation citizenship. According to some experts, e.g. Director of CIS Countries Institute K. Zatulin, this restriction may have a serious adverse impact on those nationals from CIS countries who thought about acquiring the Russian Federation citizenship<sup>2</sup>. As a reminder, the number of persons who acquired the Russian Federation citizenship dropped by three times after the former procedure for simplification was abolished (since 2010)<sup>3</sup>. According to the data provided by the FMS of Russia, almost 135,800 persons acquired the Russian Federation citizenship in 2013. Within the first five months of 2014 59,700 persons acquired the Russian Federation citizenship, a growth of only 11 p.p. over the corresponding period in 2013.

About 27% of persons who moved in Russia from other countries in 2013 were citizens of the Russian Federation. Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Moldova contributed most in the share of such persons (Fig. 3). Almost the same proportions remain in migration flows out of Russia to these countries.

A visible growth (by 2.3 times) was observed through the participation in the State Program to Assist Volun-

1 The Federal Law of the Russian Federation of April 20, 2014, No. 71-FZ ‘On the Amendments to the Federal Law ‘On the Russian Federation Citizenship’ and Certain Legal Acts of the Russian Federation’.

2 Нагорных И., Кузьмина З. Правительство внесло в Госдуму законопроект о гражданстве // Коммерсантъ. 13 марта 2014 года. [Nagornykh I. Kuzmina Z. The Government has submitted a draft law on citizenship to the State Duma // Kommersant. March 13, 2014.]

3 For more details see Карачурин Л.Б. Миграционные процессы // Российская экономика в 2011 году. Тенденции и перспективы (Выпуск 33). –М.: ИЭПП, 2012. Раздел 5.2. с. 344–360 [Karachurina L.B. Migration Processes // Rossiyskaya Ekonomika in 2011. Trends and prospects (Issue 33). M: IET, 2012. Section 5.2. pp. 344–360.]

tary Resettlement of Compatriots Living Abroad to the Russian Federation as another “channel” of simplified acquisition of the Russian Federation citizenship. Therefore, almost 27,700 compatriots (together with their family members) were registered with FMS territorial branches within the first five months of 2014. At its meeting in June 2014 the Intergovernmental Commission for the Implementation of the State Program of Resettlement recommended to submit to the Government of Russia a draft Decree of the President of Russia which was prepared by the FMS and allows compatriots who have been granted a temporary asylum in Russia to apply to FMS territorial branches for the participation in the said resettlement program<sup>1</sup>.

Another Decree of the President of Russia was signed on June 23, 2014, which expands the list of foreign nationals and stateless persons who may be entitled to acquire the Russian Federation citizenship through a simplified procedure (i.e. without having to observe the terms of residence)<sup>2</sup>. These are:

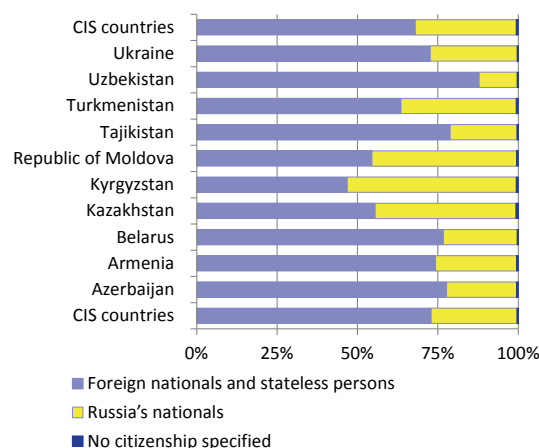
- self-employed entrepreneurs running their business in Russia for a period of at least three years, with annual earnings being equal to at least Rb 10m;
- qualified specialists (according to the list of occupations, specialties, positions) employed in the country for a period of at least three years;
- persons who co-own a 10% interest in the charter capital of a Russian company, provided that the company’s assets total at least Rb 100m and it has paid at least Rb 6m annually to the Russian budget system within the last three years (i.e. companies that can be attributed to medium-sized and small business) – the so-called “investment-based citizenship” (following the example of certain European countries).

Additionally, foreign students will have an opportunity to acquire the Russian Federation citizenship through a simplified procedure, who beginning with July 1, 2002 received a Russian vocational education and have been legally employed in Russia for at least years before the date of application for the citizenship<sup>3</sup>. Such persons previously could become Russia’s citizens using a sim-

1 For more details see ФМС России. Заседание Межведомственной комиссии по реализации Государственной программы переселения. [FMS of Russia. A meeting of the interdepartmental commission on the implementation of the State Relocation Program. ] [http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/news/news\\_detail.php?ID=93197](http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/news/news_detail.php?ID=93197)

2 The Federal Law of June 23, 2014, No. 157-FZ ‘On the Amendments to the Federal Law ‘On the Russian Federation Citizenship’.

3 According to Rosstat’s data, the number of students from CIS countries who studied under higher vocational education programs in Russia’s educational institutions totaled 133,800 at the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year [Россия и страны СНГ-2013. Росстат, 2014 [Russia and CIS countries-2013. Rosstat, 2014. ]



Source: data provided by Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service of Russia).

Fig. 3. Breakdown of persons moved in Russia, by country and citizenship, 2013, %

plified procedure, provided that they were nationals of one of the ex-U. S. S. R. member-states. Furthermore, the issue of simplified acquisition of the Russian Federation citizenship for foreign nationals who have bought a real estate at a specified price (at least a 10% interest in a condominium worth \$300,000 or more<sup>4</sup>) – such a policy is applicable in certain European countries, was discussed but not recognized in the Decree.

The situation in Ukraine has intensified migration processes with this country. According to the latest information received from the authorities of a few Russia’s regions bordering with Ukraine, the processes have become even more on-way comparing to the previous years. At the same time, according to the Ukrainian data, migration flows of long-term migration have ceased to be unilateral over the past few years. In particular, according to the Russian statistics on permanent migration in the period of 2012 to 2013, 3–4 persons moved out from Ukraine to Russia accrued to one person moved out from Russia to Ukraine, however “the Ukrainian statistics shows a positive balance of migration with Russia” (relative to the period of 2011 to 2012)<sup>5</sup>.

Refugees from Ukraine have appeared and a network of temporary accommodation facilities (points) has been established for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union. There is no proof however

4 Туманов Г., Бутрин Д. С чего наживается Родина // Коммерсантъ. 12 февраля 2014 года [Tumanov G., Butrin D. From where the motherland originates // Kommersant. February 12, 2014. ]

5 Малиновская Е.А. Внешние миграции населения Украины периода независимости // Демоскоп Weekly. 2013. № 563–564. 19 августа – 1 сентября. [Malinovskaya E.A. External migration of the Ukrainian population in the period of independence // Demoscope Weekly 2013. No. 563–564. August 19 – September 1.] <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2013/0563/tema02.php>

that the number of refugees has become “astronomical”, “approximated to million” etc. Seven thousand 7,000 persons applied for asylum and refugee status as of June 20, 2014, according to the FMS (Federal Migration Service of Russia). A total of 90 thousand persons have applied to the FMS of Russia for the recognition of their legal status (temporary residence permit, work permit, patent).<sup>1</sup> In the same way as before, Ukraine’s nationals may stay in Russia within 90 days without having to get registered with migration authorities, therefore some of them are trying to “wait out the situation” staying with their relatives or friends residing in Russia and reluctant to apply for the refugee status or temporary asylum. At the same time, it cannot be ruled out that some of those who have recently applied to FMS territorial branches for the recognition of their legal status have long been staying and employed in Russia, but previously had no opportunities to obtain the legal status.

The situation in Ukraine has triggered the transformation of a series of regulations. In particular, a draft Executive Order of the Russian Government on that the temporary residence permit (TRP) quota may be adjusted within a year on the basis of a “substanti-

ated application submitted by a regional governor”<sup>2</sup> is being under public discussion so that in case of unforeseen situations (emergencies) government authorities have opportunities for maneuver.

Under the rules applicable since 2003, the TRP quota must be determined once a year based on the proposals of regional government authorities made on the basis of the demographic situation and the ability of a constituent entity of Russia to provide the necessary facilities and conditions to foreign nationals, and the decision on the quota, and is not subject to revision, being binding. In practice, however, the temporary residence quota turns out to exhaust at the beginning of a year, and migrants who are not entitled to social benefits (these benefits are provided for those who migrate under the program of voluntary resettlement of compatriots, start a family in Russia, have old-aged parents and some other categories of persons permanently residing in Russia) have to wait for all the year to have an opportunity to be covered by the quota. Not all of them have success though.

The next volume of the journal will contain an article with analytical review of labor migration in Russia in the first half of 2014. ●

1 Пресс-служба ФМС России. 20 июня 2014 г. [Press Service of the FMS of Russia. June 20, 2014] [http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/news/news\\_detail.php?ID=93195](http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/news/news_detail.php?ID=93195)

2 Грицюк М. Квота открывает двери //Российская газета. 16 июня 2014 года [Gritsuk M. The quota opens the doors // Rosyiskaya Gazeta. June 16, 2014. ]