MIGRATION IN RUSSIA IN JANUARY–JULY 2015

L.Karachurina

For January–July 2015, overall migration results demonstrate a rather sustainable situation. Migration growth constituted 131.4 thousand persons. This is barely 11.5 thousand less (9 p.p.) than for the same period last year. Major changes taking place in Russia's migration pattern consist in the fact that for the first time over many years migration exchange with Uzbekistan has come out negative. The Ukraine is undoubtedly leading in the migration increment whose share amounts to 65% of the total net-migration. Over nine months of the current year, total number of issued work patents has shrunk by a quarter. After all, due to the replacement of work permits for visa-free citizens with work patents system not only for employment by individuals (existed last year) but also by legal entities in a stable situation, migration flow should have grown. Nearly threefold fell the number of issued work permits for highly qualified and qualified specialists. Thus, indicators registered by external labor migration compared to long-term one clearly indicate to the crisis features in the Russian economic system.

Long-term migration

At first glance, total migration results for January–July 2015 register a rather stable situation. Migration growth has constituted 131.4 thousand persons. It is barely 11.5 thousand (9 p.p.) less than over the same period last year. Decrease was due not to a fall in the number of newcomers (as could have been expected amid crisis and national currency devaluation. In reality the situation is quite opposite: the number of newcomers originated form the CIS member states has even grown and from far abroad[1] has remained unchanged) but due to the number of departures. From the point of view of statistics, the number of departures has changed more significantly: it has increased and has reached nearly 200 thousand persons against 171 thousand over the same period last year. However, major changes in the migration exchange occurred with the CIS member states unlike the emigration to far abroad (which splash was expected), than one can project that the general migration parameters nonetheless reflect previously expected (before crisis) and migration events which statistics reflect later and are the result of migration registration methodology operating since 2011[2].

Crisis developments in migration are registered by changes in the existing migration pattern. However, even in this aspect 'net' effect of the crisis has been blurred by two important features: by the events in Ukraine and by changes in the rule of stay and work for visa-free migrants which became effective since 1 January 2015. In other words, according to current registration rules, Russian migration growth includes all migrants who register for a period over nine months; labor migrants (usually described as "temporary migrants") can be included in the so called "permanent" or "long-term" migration and affect its statistical indicators.

Major changes taking place in Russia's migration pattern consist in the fact that for the first time for many years, migration exchange with Uzbekistan has come out negative. For a long time this migration exchange has been not simply positive but always was one of the strongest one and was in proportion to the population of that country not only in Central Asia but among CIS member states as a whole. Even a year ago, migration growth from Uzbekistan was positive for Russia and took second place. Currently, Ukraine is undoubtedly in the lead which accounts for 65% of net migration (*Table 1*). On the whole, one country dominance in migration growth over all other states has become so pronounced as it was during the period of forced migration in early 1990s. If we exclude Ukraine from the total net migration into Russia, than in January–July 2015 Russia's immigration has grown barely by 47.5 thousand while the same indicator for the last year points to 114.0 thousand people. Net migration exchange with Central Asia has fallen most of all: with Kirgizia – by 2.8fold, with Tajikistan – by 2.7fold, and as we noted, drastically with Uzbekistan.

Net migration with China happened to be similar to the Uzbek one. Moreover, it was caused not by a decrease in the newcomers (down 15.5 p.p.) but in the growth of the departures (up 49 p.p.).

Statistical data on the real state of emigration from Russia, as before, is masked by forms of emigration and format of collected information: via temporary

1 From the statistical point of view, Baltic States and Georgia also form part of this group.

2 See in detail: Lilia Karachurina. Migration Policy and Migration Processes. Russian Economy in 2013. Trends and Prospects. Issue 35. Moscow. Gaidar Institute, 2014, chapter 5.2, pp. 333–349.

Table 1

RUSSIA'S MIGRATION GROWTH WITH CIS MEMBER STATES, JANUARY–JULY 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2015, THOUSAND PERSONS

	2008	2009	2012	2014	2015
Total	145.6	152.5	167.1	142.9	131.4
With CIS member states	141.2	148.6	152.5	135.4	128.8
Of which:					
Azerbaijan	13.3	13.2	10.7	8.6	6.2
Armenia	20.8	21.7	17.8	14.6	13.0
Belarus	1.1	1.7	7.0	4.4	2.7
Kazakhstan	20.1	20.8	20.0	23.1	19.3
Kyrgyzstan	13.7	14.0	15.7	9.4	3.3
Republic of Moldova	8.6	9.3	9.9	9.5	9.4
Tajikistan	11.2	16.3	17.4	11.1	4.0
Turkmenia	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.0
Uzbekistan	25.4	25.7	31.7	24.5	-14.0
Ukraine	24.7	24.0	20.5	28.8	83.9
With far abroad countries	4.4	3.9	14.6	7.5	2.6
Of which:					
Germany	–0.8	-0.8	0.3	–0.4	–0.3
Georgia	5.2	4.2	4.0	2.2	2.1
China	0.7	0.4	2.4	1.9	–1.0
Latvia	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.3
Lithuania	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1
USA	–0.7	–0.5	–0.2	–0.5	–0.3
Estonia	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2

Note. Since 2011, statistical registration procedure was changed.
Source: author's calculations. Socio-economic Outlook of Russia – 2015, 2012, 2009 (January–August). Moscow. Rosstat, 2015, 2012, 2009.

work, probation, training, as downshifters or rent seekers, but in any case, without cancelling registration. At the same time, on the one hand, according to Moscow realtors' data, in H2 2014, demand for real estate originated from Russians went up by 7 p.p. compared to H1 2014[1]. Information agencies regularly report about businessmen, actors and top-managers leaving the country. On the other hand, various sociological centers released information which speaks about an unheard-of uniformity of opinions regarding emigration intentions of Russians. For instance, regular survey of the emigration intentions in Russia conducted by the Levada-center in mid-September 2015 showed one of the lowest levels of intentions to emigrate (11%[2]) over recorded history (since October 1990). About the same share (13%) would have "rather" migrated for permanent residence abroad according to July VTSIOM survey. Meanwhile, similar "low" level of intentions the Levada-center observed in April 2009 (13%), i.e. during the height of the previous crisis.[3] Lev Gudkov, sociologist and the director of the Levada-center, links it with "politics and growth of patriotism as well as with the first reaction to the unfolding crisis: "People prefer to take a closer look at the new realities and only then decide to emigrate or not. Immediately after the 2009 crisis, 2011–2014 emigration wave followed (those who wanted to stay numbered 69–77% and who wanted to leave – 22%). The same picture we can observe in 2016–2017."[4] V. Federov, the head of VTSIOM, explains these findings by the fact that "many Russians 'had suffered from the sanctions, contraction of ties with the West' but this is 'one side of the coin', the majority of the citizens understand that they have 'nowhere' to go and 'the West has an array of problems' including those linked with immigration."

Prior to 1 August 2015, migration for Ukrainian citizens was exercised according to the special favorable treatment of the residence regime. It actually permitted to stay in Russia during an indefinite period[5] without leaving the country, obtaining new migration card and repeated application to FMS (Federal migration

1 Sorokin E. For the Exit. New Izvestia, 2015, 24 February.

2 "West": Understanding and Intension to Emigrate. Levada Center. 13.10.2015. http://www.levada.ru/2015/10/13/zapad-vospriyatie-i-stremlenie-emigrirovat/

3 Crisis forced the Russians to forget about emigration. Levada-center. 20.03.2015. http://www.levada.ru/2015/03/20/krizis-vynudil-rossiyan-zabyt-ob-emigratsii/

4 Korchenkova H. Russian Are Not Ready to Leave. Kommersant. 2015, 13 July.

5 To be precise, Ukrainian citizens could independently of their status stay in Russia up to 90 days and then this period was automatically prolonged every three months.

service) of Russia, as it is required from the citizens of other CIS member states. Moreover, the latter can con stay in Russia more than 180 days per year. Effective since 1 August 2015, rights of Ukrainian citizens got equal rights with the citizens of other CIS member states. Prior to 30 November 2015, Ukrainian migrants, less those arrived in extreme circumstances from the southeast regions of Ukraine[1] have to apply to FMS of Russia for processing documents required for employment in Russia. It is still unclear in what way Ukrainian migrants will be switched from favorable treatment to the common regime.

According to FMS of Russia, there are about 2.6 million Ukrainian citizens[2] in Russia, of which about one million are from the southeast regions.[3] Large number of the southeast regions inhabitants asked for temporary asylum (395.1 thousand people) and permit for temporary residence (260 thousand people).[4]

Over January–July 2015, regional analysis of migration as well as other indicators of migration represent not so much crisis indicators as characterize last year migration trends because practically all changes taken place in migration growth in the regions are not linked with arrivals (this year indictors) but with departures (registration during last year). For example, contraction of migration increment in Kaluga region from 4.9 thousand persons for January–July 2014 to 0.2 thousand persons for the same period of 2015 happened due to the growth of departures amid practically unchanged number of newcomers. The same way unfolds the situation with the number of regions of central Russia.

In the overwhelming majority of regions, the number of departures changed more significantly than the number of newcomers and these changes characterize their growth (*Table 2*).

It is a paradox that the contrary situation is unfolding in capital regions: the city of Moscow registers a significant increase of the number of newcomers amid stable situation posted in the Moscow region when St Petersburg and the Leningrad region register a considerable decline.

Significant growth of all migration indicators applied to the Crimea as a whole and to the city of Sebastopol separately. The Crimean federal district register 17.4% of total net migration which characterizes this region as a very attractive one for the migrants.

Table 2

CLASSIFICATION OF RF CONSTITUENTS BY MOVEMENT OF NEWCOMERS AND DEPARTED JANUARY–JULY 2015 AGAINST THE SAME PERIOD 2014, NUMBER OF REGIONS

	Below 90%	90–95%	95–105%	105–110%	Above 110%
Newcomers to Russian regions	6	6	43	10	20
Departures from Russian regions	3	6	37	20	19

Source: author’s calculations on data: Socio-economic Situation of Russia – 2015 (January–August). Moscow. Rosstat, 2015.

Thus, regional newcomers’ statistics have turned out to be barely susceptible to the ongoing crisis, and often its signals are directly contrary to the trends demonstrated by industry or the investment process. For example, in the regions with the highest industrial recession such as Kaliningrad and Kaluga regions with automobile assembly plants migration has responded with growth in the former (by 11 p.p. against the same period 2014) and stability in the latter. Unemployment level in Russia as a whole is not high and is rather stable. It has no correlation with migration.

Domestic migration

Over seven months of 2015, domestic migration constituted 2,216.5 thousand persons up 4.6 p.p. compared to the same period of 2014. The reasons for this growth are hard to explain: there are no visible reasons for growth; the upper turning point mainly makes people to wait and see than to proactive migration intensions. In addition, the present crisis is rather eroded in the regional terms[5]: there are no obvious leaders and outsiders at the regional level which usually contribute to domestic migration.

At the turn of the summer, RF Government adopted a resolution “On Adoption of Rules for Granting Subsidies to the Constituents of the Federation for Co-financing Regional Programs Aimed at Increasing Mobility of Labor Resources” (as of 2 June 2015, No. 530). This regulation was hatched in the framework of the state program “Promotion of Employment” adopted in 2012. In accordance with the regulation, assistance will be granted to citizens (about 3.3 thousand people) who are moving for employment to the

1 In their case, their residence procedure remains unchanged.

2 FMS of Russia. http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/news/news_detail.php?ID=174273.

3 FMS of Russia. Information regarding the situation with Ukrainian citizens or for citizens without citizenship, who left the territory of the country in extreme and mass circumstances (as of 30.09.2015). http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/info_o_situatsii_v_otnoshenii_grazhdan_ukrainy/

4 In detail about differences which impose various statuses on migrants, see.: Karachurina L.B. Migration Processes. Russian Economy in 2014. Trends and Prospects. Issue 36. Moscow: Gaidar Institute. 2015, chapter 5.2, pp. 315–331.

5 Economic crisis – social truce: information and analytical bulletin. Russian Presidential academy of national economy and public administration. Ed. Tatiana Maleva. 2015. No. 3, p. 60.

regions which are on the priority migration list of RF constituents. The amount of financial assistance granted to employer for attracting one employee amounts to Rb 225 thousand of which Rb 150 thousand at the expense of the federal budget and Rb 75 thousand are at the regional budget. The approved list[1] consists of fifteen regions. The list[2] is indicative of the fact that it took some time to draft in favorable circumstances when "the needed requirement in employees for the implementation of investment projects exceeded the number of unemployed and pending for firing"[3]. Up to date, according to data released by the Federal Service for Labour and Employment the need for workers submitted to the state bodies of employment went down as of the end-July 2015 by 39.5 p.p. against July 2014. In Kaluga oblast down 3.2fold, Murmansk oblast down 1.7fold, Lipetsk oblast down 1.6fold, etc. Budgets of RF constituents lack funds for financing additional powers. It is highly likely that this initiative will remain unimplemented similar to the initiative which was not implemented in the course of the previous crisis and which was aimed at moving unemployed people and those seeking jobs to other regions. Then (in 2009) it was envisaged that assistance would be granted to a hundred thousand migrants[4], however at the stage of contracts conclusion this number fell to 15.9 thousand and only 11 thousand received assistance[5].

Overall in 2000–2010s, other all-Russia and local initiatives related to organized domestic migration fell through.

External labor migration

In 2015, main changes in the sphere of temporary labor migration consisted in the replacement of work permits[6] for visa-free migrants with work patents which allowed employment both by private persons and by legal entities. The project aimed at the elimination of corruption "trap" posed by quotas, as well as to make labor migrants pay taxes. For the first time regional authorities have turned to migration issues not in the capacity of executives of the federal orders and state programs but as an interested party. Now they will designate agencies which will prepare documents, organize the procedure and issue patents and the proceeds generated by the sale of patents will stay in the regions.

However, implementation of this originally good idea in reality turned out to be rather difficult. The difficulties are:

- too long list of documents required for the purchase of a work patent[7];
- much time required to obtain a work patent and organizational hurdles linked to it which migrants face not solely at the turn of the year when the new system entered into force but up till now: queues, difficulties with obtaining INN, etc.;
- as before, the same related to work permits, the patent will grant the migrant right to work only in the specific Russian region but not in the neighbor region;
- high price for a set of documents and finally for legalization of labor activity. For instance, in Moscow to have the set of document done one has to pay a lump sum of 19.5 thousand rubles[8] (plus monthly amount[9] of four thousand rubles), in Primorsky krai – about forty thousand rubles[10];
- each region sets monthly fee for a work patent (for the whole calendar year) and it serves as a signal for the migrants regarding whether they are needed in the region or not. In the wake of the crisis, wages cuts and ruble depreciation, it turned out to be excessive for the majority of migrants, which forces them to "withdraw into the shadows".

A separate issue for migrants and a new corruption mechanism consisted in obtaining federal (more expensive but effective throughout the country) or regional certificate of the Russian language, history and basic knowledge of law. Experts consider that the Moscow language test to be very simple and a share of migrants who fail to pass it at the first attempt amounts to 18%. In other regions where only 7–15% of migrants fail to pass a difficult federal test is explained

1 Adopted by Government regulation of 20 April 2015. No. 699-p.

2 Amur, Arkhangelsk, Kaluga, Lipetsk, Magadan, Murmansk, Novosibirsk, Ulyanovsk regions, Zabaikalsky, Kamchatka, Krasnoyarsk, Perm, Primorsky, Khabarovsk and Chukotka autonomous okrug.

3 From a note to regulation of RF Government of 20 April 2015. No. 699-p http://government.ru/docs/17787/

4 Get to place of work. "SmartMoney", 2009, 18 May.

5 Monitor of regional programs implementation envisaging additional measured aimed at reducing labor market strains (January-December 2009). Moscow, Rostrud, 2010, p. 11. In the framework of subprogram, the government guaranteed to cover transport, rent of accommodation (550 rubles per day under average period of three months) and per diem during migration.

6 Which were tied to annually approved and, as a rule, annual reduced quotas.

7 In more detail see: Lilia Karachurina Migration Processes. Economic Development of Russia. 2015. No. 7, p. 45–47.

8 Labor Migration Situation in Russia: Costs Increase, Benefits Dwindle, Stocks Drop. Russian Migration Brief. March 2015. Issue 1, p. 2.

9 According to the new migration law, monthly fee for work permit is considered as a personal income tax and is charged in advance.

10 For migrant workers it is cheaper to live in Russia than to work. Information agency REGNUM. 3 March 2015. http://www.regnum.ru/news/society/1901202.html

by the presence of corruption component[1]. Moreover, passing the text does not make an immigrant fluent in Russian and unlikely contributes to it.

The number of foreign citizens registered as migrants over nine months of 2015 has remained unchanged against the same period of 2014 and came to 10.6 million persons. At the same time, out of the total number of registered migrants significantly increased the registered number of members and their dependents within the state program “Compatriots” (as a result of events in Ukraine and emigration from there), while the registered number of visa-required foreigners fell by 13 p.p. Apparently, this is the result of the crisis and geopolitical situation. Another manifestation of the crisis is the absence of the regular seasonal labor migration. As a rule, the lowest indicators fall on the winter, in spring there is growth and in summer – stabilization. This year, the August indicator of foreign migration in Russia turned out to be insignificantly but lower than in January.

It is also indicative that total number of issued work patents (1,480 thousand) has shrunk by a quarter. Nonetheless, its number due to replacement of work permits with work patents for visa-free foreigners employed both by individuals (existed last year) and legal entities should have increased. However, it has failed to materialize. The number of issued work permits for highly qualified specialists has dropped threefold. Thus, indicators registered by foreign labor migration on the contrary to long-term migration indicate to the crisis features of the Russian economic system. Against this background, the only positive thing is the amount of receipts generated by the sale of patents: Rb 23,428 million up 1.7fold against 2014.

1 Economic crisis – social dimension: information and analytical bulletin. Russian Presidential academy of national economy and public administration. Ed. Tatiana Maleva. 2015. No. 3, p. 90.