

MIGRATION IN RUSSIA: OLD TRENDS AND NEW PROBLEMS¹

Yu. Florinskaya, N. Mkrtchyan

According to the 2016 results, in Russia migration growth is likely to return from lower rates to the level of the past few years. As before, migration virtually ensures completely population growth in Russia. The two largest metropolitan areas (Moscow together with the Moscow Region and St. Petersburg together with the Leningrad Region) and the Krasnodar Territory are the main centers which attract migrants.

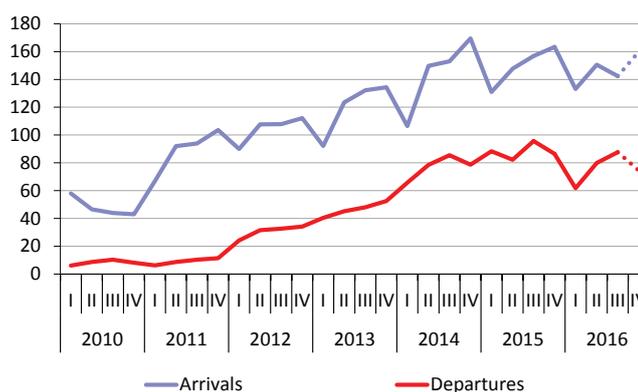
Also, there is a renewal of growth in temporary foreign migration (season migrants) in a summer period. The number of season foreign migrants is below the level of 2013–2014 and even that of 2015. In 2016, the issues related to regulation of labor migration have become more topical: the number of work permits required for employment keeps falling.

The Long-Term Migration

In 2016, the international migration to Russia (its *long-term* component) was at a stable level in the past few years. By our estimate, on the basis of the results of the year the number of migrants who arrived will not exceed 600,000 people, while departures are expected at the level of over 300,000 people. As a result, within a year migration growth will remain at the level of the past few years: according to our estimates it amounts to about 280,000 people. The extent of statistically registered arrivals more than doubled, while departures increased by times; it is to be noted that migration growth stabilized at the level of 250,000–300,000 a year (Fig. 1), that is, the level it was at in the late 2000s.

Migration makes a decisive contribution to the dynamics of the number of population in Russia and ensures completely its growth. The role of the long-term migration in making up for a decrease in the number of active working age population is not quite significant; in the past few years it covered only 15% of losses of that age group.

As compared to 2016, migration growth increased, but it happened on the back of a drop in the last year's index; generally, the values remain at the level of the past few years (Table 1). The above growth was ensured by renewal both of a migration increase in the exchange of migrants with Uzbekistan and standard volumes of growth in the



Note. The 4Q 2016 data were calculated on the basis of distribution of numbers of arrivals and departures by quarter in 2015.

Source: Rosstat and the authors' calculations.

Fig. 1. International migration to Russia, the 2010–2016 period, quarterly data, thousand persons

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exchange of migrants with Tajikistan. It is to be noted that Ukraine is still Russia's main migration donor: in 2016 it ensured almost 50% of migration growth in the international migration. As compared to the previous years, the net influx of migrants from most CIS states decreased, while growth in the exchange of migrants with Kazakhstan remains at a stable level.

Table 1

**THE NET-MIGRATION OF RUSSIA'S POPULATION WITH FOREIGN STATES,
JANUARY–SEPTEMBER 2012–2016, THOUSAND PERSONS**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
International migration, total	217.5	214.0	185.1	169.1	196.5
Including that with CIS states	197.6	199.3	179.6	165.1	191.9
Azerbaijan	13.7	12.8	10.0	8.1	7.9
Armenia	23.6	25.2	18.6	15.7	8.9
Belarus	8.7	2.1	5.1	3.2	1.6
Kazakhstan	25.9	29.5	28.8	24.9	25.6
Kirgizia	19.2	14.2	11.7	5.6	9.3
Moldova	13.1	15.0	12.3	12.5	10.6
Tajikistan	22.9	24.2	13.7	5.8	19.4
Turkmenia	2.5	2.3	1.4	1.3	0.8
Uzbekistan	41.7	47.0	30.7	-17.2	14.2
Ukraine	26.4	26.9	47.3	105.2	93.6
With far abroad countries	20.0	14.8	5.5	4.0	4.5

Source: Rosstat.

After substantial growth due to aggravation of the situation in Ukraine in the 2014–2015 period¹, forced migration to Russia stopped growing. As of the beginning of 2015, in Russia 237,800 people were registered as temporary refugees, while as of the beginning of 2016 their number amounted to 313,700 people and as of 1 October 2016 – 249,300 people. In January–September, the number of people who received temporary refuge in Russia amounted to 17,200 people, while in the respective period of the previous year it was equal to 130,300. In future, if no aggravation of the situation happens the number of such people will decrease as they settle in the territory of Russia or return to Ukraine.

As regards far abroad countries, there is still small migration growth, but one can trust the Rosstat's data on emigration from Russia with some reservations: if it is judged on the basis of recipient countries' statistical data, emigration from Russia is highly underestimated.

In 2016, the extent of the **domestic** migration did not virtually change having increased by 42,900 people or 1.4% as compared to January–September 2015. It means that on the basis of the results of the year the number of domestic migrants will exceed 4 million people and be at the level of 1980–1990 which situation was largely contributed to by changes in the methods of accounting of migration in 2011.

The two largest metropolitan areas (Moscow together with the Moscow region and St. Petersburg together with the Leningrad Region) and the

¹ In 2014, hundreds of thousands of people from Ukraine started to come to Russia and apply for a temporary refuge. In 2015, after some stabilization of the situation in the Donetsk Region and the Lugansk Region the influx of people seeking temporary refuge largely decreased.

Krasnodar Territory are still the main centers which attract migrants. Considerable migration growth is registered in the Tyumen Region, Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, the Kaliningrad Region as well as individual regions of Central Russia.

A general increase in migration growth of Russia's population, even such an insignificant one as in 2016, results in reduction of the number of regions which lose population due to migration as population growth based on international migration makes up for the losses caused by domestic migration. Also, the migration balance of Central Russia's regions was affected by the fact that in January–September 2016 as compared to the respective period of 2015 migration growth of Moscow which is formed up to one-third at the expense of regions bordering on the Moscow metropolitan area decreased.

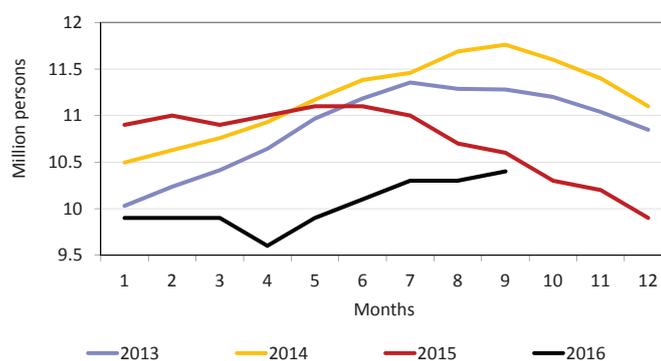
As before, migration leads to a loss of population by most regions of the Privolzhsky Federal District, the North-Caucasian Federal District and the Siberian Federal District, as well as all the regions of the Far Eastern Federal District, except for the Sakhalin Region. Early in 2016, reports came in that migration decreased in Far Eastern regions, however, according to the results of 9 months of 2016 it is not quite so. Migration fell from 16,100 people to 7,200 people, but on the basis of the results of this year it will not probably exceed 10,000 people. It is too early to speak about the breaking point of the trend.

Temporary Migration

It is noteworthy that H2 2015 and the entire 2016 demonstrate substantially lower quantitative indices of presence of foreign nationals in Russia as compared to the level of 2013–2014 (Fig. 2). In 2016, the number of temporary foreign migrants in Russia became even lower than in 2015. In some months, the difference amounted to 1.4m people. At the same time, the 2016 data point to the fact that foreigners get one way or another accustomed to the Russian economic situation as growth in the number of foreign migrants was registered in summer (it means that season migrants returned to Russia again). As of the end of September 2016, 10.4m foreign nationals stayed in Russia. By the end of the year, their number is likely to fall.

Most foreigners in the territory of the Russian Federation are still nationals of CIS states; their share is constantly within the range of 85–86%; as of the end of September 2016 that index in absolute figures amounted to 8.8m people (Table 2).

As compared to 2014, the number of CIS nationals became on average 7–10% lower, though as regards individual countries – the main donors of workforce to Russia – the reduction was more substantial: from 10–15% (Tajikistan) to 30% (Uzbekistan). At the same time, the number of nationals from member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union keeps growing; it is



Source: the Central Database of Accounting of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons (CDAFNSP).

Fig. 2. The number of foreign nationals in the territory of Russia as of the end of a month, million people, 2013–2016

to be noted that in 2016 the number of Kyrgyz nationals grew at a particularly high rate. Employers seek to take advantage of the situation with such migrants as neither permit documents for employment are required, nor need any additional monthly patent payments be made, while migrants from other CIS states have to pay for it. It is to be noted that employment rules for such migrants are virtually the same as for Russian nationals.

Table 2

**THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN NATIONALS FROM CIS STATES IN RUSSIA
AS OF THE SPECIFIED DATE, PERSONS**

	03.09.14	01.10.2015	01.10.2016
Azerbaijan	610159	537475	531471
Armenia	531691	518731	523124
Belarus	476187	622786	741453
Kazakhstan	581257	704535	613067
Kirgizia	550136	519487	582863
Moldova	582375	525903	490844
Tajikistan	1163199	967751	999035
Uzbekistan	2509666	2038155	1779002
Ukraine	2446123	2596092	2581380
CIS, total	9450793	9030915	8842239

Source: Main Department on Migration of the RF Ministry of Internal Affairs, CDAFNSP.

The number of foreigners from developed western countries keeps falling: from 2014 their number decreased by nearly 60%, while by some countries, even more (Table 3). So, the number of foreigners from the US and Spain fell by 80%, while that from the UK, by 83%.

Table 3

**THE NUMBER OF FOREIGNERS FROM SOME EU COUNTRIES
AND THE US STAYING IN RUSSIA AS OF THE SPECIFIED DATE, PERSONS**

	13.11.13	01.10.15	01.10.16
Germany	352335	148414	116948
Spain	77200	23144	16011
Italy	77193	34908	28114
The UK	174061	50478	29739
Finland	108312	47360	94557
France	65559	38645	29697
The EU as a whole	1177829	546341	513367
The US	220086	68367	53978

Source: Main Department on Migration of the RF Ministry of Internal Affairs, CDAFNSP.

The average annual number of foreigners coming to the Russian Federation to work (the purpose of visit is specified in the migration card at arrival) amounts to about 4m people: about 3.8–3.9m labor migrants and 170,000–180,000 labor migrants from the CIS and far abroad countries, respectively.

At the same time, the number of work permits secured by migrants in the Russian Federation does not comply with the number of migrants arriving in Russia for employment purposes. So, the issues related to regulation of labor migration are still topical, the more so in 2016 they became more acute (Table 4).

As of the end of September 2016, only 1.8m foreigners had valid work permits, while 4m foreigners stayed in the Russian Federation then as labor

migrants. Even if one deducts from 4m foreign migrants about 900,000 of those who had the right to work without permit documents, that is, nationals of the member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union – it appears that *about 1.3m people were illegal labor migrants* (it is to be noted that in addition to the above there is a large number of those migrants who came to Russia on a private trip, but stayed to work without securing any work permits). The number of migrants who enter into official relations with Russian employers is even smaller. So, within 9 months of 2016 employers sent to the RF migration authorities about 800,000 notifications on entering into a contract with those migrants who had a work permit or a patent. So, over 55% migrants who initially were legal on the labor market maintained informal relations with their employers (both legal entities and individuals). It is to be noted that out of 900,000 migrants from member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union who arrive in the Russian Federation for employment purposes, over 60% worked on an informal basis.

Table 4

**EXECUTION OF WORK PERMITS FOR MIGRANTS IN THE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION, JANUARY–SEPTEMBER, PERSONS**

	9 months 2014	9 months 2015	9 months 2016
Work permits for foreign nationals*	965856	172335	95158
Work permits for skilled* and high-skilled workers	121516	46376	29362
Patents**	1943810	1479673	1193811
Total	3031182	1698384	1318331

*From 1 January 2015, work permits are issued only to foreign nationals from countries the Russian Federation maintains a visa regime with.

**From 1 January 2015, patents are issued to foreign nationals from countries with a visa-free regime for employment both with individuals and legal entities.

Source: RF Federal Migration Service, 1-RD form.

The number and share of illegal migrants are growing. It can be explained both by economic problems and legislative barriers (the cost of execution of contractual relations and monthly payments is rather high; in addition to that a large number of migrants are banned to enter the country, so they cannot have their contractual relations executed on a legal basis).

However, even with a lack of official contractual relations with employers migrants replenish regional budgets of the Russian Federation. So, within 9 months of 2016 monthly patent payments alone (advance payments on the individual income tax) amounted to Rb 34bn with over 80% of such payments ensured by migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.●