



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE COMMONWEALTH  
OF INDEPENDENT STATES

***Preparatory Meeting of the Heads of the Migration Agencies of the CIS Member States  
for the 2013 High-level Dialogue of the UN General Assembly  
on International Migration and Development***

**Labour Migration as a Factor of Development  
in space of the Commonwealth of Independent States**

*Background document to the CIS Member States' Joint Statement  
on the Regional Position on Migration*

**Part I. Brief overview of migration situation in the space of the CIS**

According to the UN estimated data 24,6 million international migrants were present on the CIS territory in 2010 (11,5% of the total number of international migrants in the world). Provided that 90% of international migrants are citizens of the former USSR republics who change the states of residence within the region.<sup>1</sup>

The Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan are the main countries of destination for migrants in the CIS, while the main countries of origin are Central Asian states (Republic of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic), as well as the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Moldova.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Assessment is developed by the Regional office of IOM in Vienna based on UN 2013 data. UN data is available at the link: *Trends in international migrant stock: migrants by destination and origin* [Trends in the number of international migrants: Migrants by countries of destination and the outcome]. Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN. Population Division. The database of the UN, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2012, July 2012.

<sup>2</sup> According to the data of migration service and other government agencies in 2011 Russia and Kazakhstan became the leaders by the number of foreign workers brought into the economy from the other countries. These two states had the highest size of the average monthly nominal wages (by the average annual rates of national currencies to the dollar, they amounted to 796 and 642 USD respectively). The Interstate Statistical Committee of The Commonwealth of Independent States. *The Commonwealth of Independent States 2010-2012, 2012*. The statistical Agency under President of the Republic of Tajikistan. *Labour market in the Republic of Tajikistan, 2012*. [http://www.stat.tj/ru/img/a6069090cb7edbe5efb67aec241e9816\\_1358702884.pdf](http://www.stat.tj/ru/img/a6069090cb7edbe5efb67aec241e9816_1358702884.pdf)

At the same time the direction of migration flows is gradually starting to diversify. New migration patterns are developing outside the region: to the European Union (for migrants from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – more than one third of migrants), to the Middle East, China and South Korea. Immigration flows are also increasing in the region preferably from the neighbouring Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, China and Vietnam, and are mostly of transitory nature, with migrants en route via CIS to other countries, mainly to Europe.

For the most part migration in the region remains economically-driven. One of the main pull factors is an exercise of temporary employment.

Competent agencies in the field of migration as well as employers of the Commonwealth are paying special attention to the promotion of legal labour migration issues.

At present the CIS Member States mutually recognize the existence of special problematic issues, that are related to poorly-developed infrastructure of the organized foreign labour recruitment and to lack of the public sector involvement in this procedure.

Therefore, the parties take the appropriate measures:

- national legislation is being modernized;
- a normative and legal base in the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation is being developed;
- representatives of the scientific community and international organizations are being engaged in the development and promotion of development programs by the competent in the field of migration CIS agencies;
- "pilot" projects aiming at development of the most appropriate tools and mechanisms for the regulation of migration flows in the region are being implemented, etc.

Labour migration is deemed to be one of the key elements of economic development for the States of the region.<sup>3</sup> Large remittance flows have a positive impact on the balance of payments of migrants' countries of origin, as well as stimulate consumer demand contributing to the development of manufacturing and services.

Besides migration has a positive impact on the demographic and socio-economic situation in host countries: migrants are successfully employed in professions that are not in demand among

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<sup>3</sup> According to the World Bank data Russia was ranked fourth in the world after the USA, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia in 2011 by the volume of remittances sent by migrant workers from Russia to their home countries. In 2011 volumes of money transfers from abroad amounted in Tajikistan to 47 % of GDP, in Kyrgyzstan to 29 %, in Moldova to 23 %, in Armenia to 13 %. (*World Bank staff calculation based on data from IMF Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook 2012 and data releases from central banks, national statistical agencies, and World Bank country desks*).

residents in the labour market of host countries, at the same time making a reasonable contribution to the economy of host countries.

For countries of origin unregulated migration creates a labour deficit in a number of sectors of the national economy and a brain drain of qualified personnel. This furthermore has been having a negative impact on the demographic situation, as it is predominantly the younger working-age population which migrates.

Up to that problems related to irregular immigration raise some concerns in the CIS countries.

This phenomenon has a number of negative impacts both on the conditions of stay and employment of foreign nationals in host countries, and on the economic and social situation in them.

In order to coordinate efforts for counteracting irregular migration, CIS Member States conduct the relevant activity including the one within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Increased flows of refugees and asylum seekers resulting from the political situation in some countries of the world (Syria, Iraq) are putting additional burden on the migratory situation in some CIS countries.

In order to eliminate the current challenges in the region, the migration agencies of the countries of the Commonwealth are working closely together to build a step-by-step mechanism that would allow to reduce the overall volume of irregular migration, to make labour migrant flows more orderly and predictable and migrants themselves more protected from unscrupulous employers, as well as facilitating the adaptation and integration of migrants into the host society.

## **Part II. Regulating Labour Migration in the region: main areas of cooperation and achievements within the frame of the Commonwealth of Independent States**

The signing of the *Concept of the CIS Member States' Common Migration Space* in May 2012 has become a major achievement in the development of a unified regional approach towards the migration processes in CIS region regulation and presents a coordinated position of the CIS Member Nations towards the formulation and implementation of a common inter-State migration policy in the region. In accordance with the present Concept the following priority areas has been identified: creating favourable conditions for movement of the labour force and ensuring equal

treatment of migrant workers, widening of the channels of legal employment for migrant workers and enhancing the effectiveness of inter-State regulation in the area of migration management.

At present a qualitative shift in assessing the role of migration in regional development is taking place and a new, more proactive, targeted and simulative approach towards migration management is being adopted. Increasing inter-State cooperation, on both bilateral and multilateral levels, is playing a significant role, mainly within the frames of *the Council of the Heads of Migration Agencies of CIS Member States* (the Council), established in 2007, that is a cornerstone for such inter-State cooperation. The Council pursues activities in the following main areas:

- 1) Identification of priorities for cooperation in migration processes control;
- 2) Development of united approaches to harmonize national migration legislation and coordination of the collaboration among the migration and other relevant bodies of the CIS Member States on migration policy;
- 3) Ensuring protection of the rights and legitimate interests of migrants, citizens of CIS Member States as well as stateless persons permanently residing in the CIS;
- 4) Creation of information databases for CIS Member States;
- 5) Facilitating the implementation of inter-State and intergovernmental agreements achieved.

Within the framework of the Council, the following are the key priorities for cooperation among the CIS Member States in the migration sphere: facilitating legal migration, including regulation of migration flows, information exchange and counteracting irregular migration.

Among the main achievements of the Council is the development and adoption of the following documents: *The Convention on the Legal Status of Labour Migrants and their Family Members of CIS Member States* (November 2008) and the *Common Principles and Mechanisms of Organized Recruitment of Migrant Workers for Employment in the CIS Member States* (October 2009).

The following three key documents were signed to enhance the effectiveness of migration flows control, to improve information exchange and to counteract irregular migration:

- a) *Protocol for Information Exchange among CIS Member States* (October 2009);
- b) *Agreement on a Unified System of Registration of Third Country Nationals and Stateless Persons entering the territory of CIS Member States* (October 18, 2011);

- c) *Model Project on the Intergovernmental Agreement on Readmission and Implementing Protocol* to be used as a guide during negotiations on readmission issues (September 8, 2008).

On a country level national strategies and concept papers on state migration policies were developed and adopted by the CIS Member States (Kazakhstan, 2007; Armenia, 2010; Moldova, Ukraine, 2011; Russian Federation, 2012), as well as National action plans on its implementation have also been developed and approved.

As a main source country for labour force, the Republic of Tajikistan developed a National Strategy for the outward labour migration of Tajik citizens for the period of 2011-2015.

Certain achievements were also made in the development of national legislation and creation of normative frameworks for regulating the employment of foreign citizens. The introduction of the institute of labour patents became an innovative approach to regulating labour migration with a few equivalents in the world that regulate labour migrants employed privately.

Based on the example of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan developed a similar legislative proposal for the introduction of patents as work permit documents for migrant domestic workers, which was brought to the Parliament in 2012.

In practical terms sending labour force countries are starting to play more proactive role in preparing migrants for work abroad by establishing specialized centres for migrant information and orientation as well as by reforming their professional education systems for professions in demand in countries of destination.

To increase the positive effects of migration, some CIS Member States have developed national action plans to support diasporas abroad as well as to reduce the negative social consequences of migration at home.

Refining labour migration management is also shortlisted in the agenda of the other integration processes occurring in the CIS region. The most prominent achievement in this area has been the signing of two agreements – the *Agreement on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and their Family Members* and the *Agreement of Cooperation on Counteracting Illegal Migration from the Third Countries* – in the framework of Customs' Union (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) in 2010. This constitutes a significant step towards the creation of a common regional labour market.