PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & REGIONAL STUDIES 9th Year, No.1 (17) - 2016 Galati University Press, ISSN 2065 -1759

MIGRATION ISSUES MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION: THE KAZAKHSTANI CONTEXT

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Abstract

The Post-Soviet space and Post-Soviet Central Asia are an important area of permanent geopolitical changes and transformations.

For Kazakhstan, as for the young and dynamically developing state the regulation of migration processes is becoming an important area of social and economic development of the country, designed to meet the needs of economy with highly qualified personnel by bringing in foreign labor.

The demographic aspect and the immigration issues are strategic areas, both in the context of internal development and in the context of regional and interregional cooperation, as well as the maintenance of international stability and security

Keywords: EEU, Labor Migration, Kazakhstan, Eurasian Integration

Introduction

The process of globalization has increased the mobility of people, capital, ideas, information, and culture and has created new political, social and demographic trends forming system of international relations. At the same time, migration impacts globalization, the sustainable development and integration processes by its scale and consequences. Integration trends and issues are substantive constitutive/substantial part of sustainable regions development process.

The Post-Soviet space and Post-Soviet Central Asia are an important area of permanent geopolitical changes and transformations.

For Kazakhstan, as for the young and dynamically developing state the regulation of migration processes is becoming an important area of social and economic development of the country, designed to meet the needs of economy with highly qualified personnel by bringing in foreign labor.

1 Kazakstan

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The demographic aspect and the immigration issues are strategic areas, both in the context of internal development and in the context of regional and interregional cooperation, as well as the maintenance of international stability and security. In general, Kazakhstan's migration policy includes three key directions: repatriation, international labor migration and internal migration. These main aspects are defined in the migration law of the country¹.

The priority directions of migration policy are also reflected in the basic law and in the framework of a new development strategy "Kazakhstan-2050"².

Kazakhstan, as a second migration hub (after Russia) in the Post-Soviet Central Asia is interested in the stable, regulated and secured migration flows. This seem to be reached also trough the integration projects.

The development of the integration processes reflects one of the key directions on Kazakhstan's modern foreign policy. Thus, the Eurasian economic integration is considered as one of the most effective ways to promote the country on a stable position in the world economic system³. In this context, the strategic objective was defined by the strengthening of the Customs Union and Common Economic Space, in order to build on this basis, the Eurasian Economic Union. Focusing on the migration component in the framework of Eurasian integration, it should be noted that the work on the development of the legal framework and other components were important for all members of the organization including Kazakhstan. The successful development of the project is promising both in terms of economic development and sustainable migration policy.

The Eurasian Economic Union and migration issues

¹ Law No. 477-IV of 22 July 2011 on Migration of the Population. 2014-2016 Integrated Plan for Solution of the Migration Problem, Enhancement of the Control of Migration Flows from Neighboring States, Creation of Favourable Conditions for Domestic Skilled Labour in Order to Prevent Excessive Outflows of Skilled Manpower to Overseas Labour Markets for the Years 2014-2016, approved by Government resolution No. 1593 of 31 December 2013.

² Message from the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Leader of the Nation Nursultan Nazarbayev to people of Kazakhstan Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050". New political course of established state // <<<u>www.strategy2050.kz</u>>> [22.07.2015].

³ Kazakhstan's foreign policy concept for 2014-2020 gg. Approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated January 21, 2014 No 741. - Astana 2014.

The Eurasian Economic Union was created as a result of a two-decade cooperation and transformation processes within the organization's initiators on the basis of the Custom's Union. The organization was initiated by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, which was signed in Astana on 29 May 2014. The main purpose was to strengthen the economies of the member countries to modernize and improve the competitiveness of the participating countries on the world market¹. This will be achieved through the provision of the Union of freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, as well as conducting a coherent, coordinated and unified policy in the sectors defined by the Treaty on the Union.

This Treaty entered into force on 1 January 2015 and it currently counts Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation².

It could be defined as the most effective agreement on labour migration management in the Eurasian space. The permanent supranational regulatory body of the Eurasian Economic Union is the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC).

The structure of the organization includes a special body on migration. The labour migration issues within the purview of the Department of development of business activities of the ECE, which is supervised by the Ministry for Economy and Financial Policy of the ECE. The division of labor migration to monitor and control the implementation by Member States of the Union Treaty in the field of labor migration, the Agreement on cooperation on combating illegal migration from third countries on 19 November 2010 and the planned monitoring of the development of bilateral agreements³.

Measures are being taken to ensure workers' awareness through media publications, presentations at international conferences, participation in the forums.

A special chapter on labour migration was incorporated into the Treaty, Chapter-XXVI⁴. It regulates common issues of cooperation in the area of labour migration, including a glossary of common terms, conditions for labour activity, and the rights

^{1 &}quot;Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union" (signed in Astana 29.05.2014) (Ed. By 10.10.2014, as amended. On 08.05.2015) // <<

http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_163855 >> [07.08.2015]

² Eurasian Economic Union // << http://www.eaeunion.org./#about >> [05.01.2015]

³ Eurasian Economic Commission, Labor migration and social security of workers in the Eurasian Economic Union, Aliyev S.B., Moscow, 2016, pp 12.

and obligations of migrant workers of member States on the territory of others. These are reflected on the Articles 96-98 of the Chapter. Key provisions fix the main things concerning labor migrants' key rights:

- Labor-migrants are not required to obtain permits for employment. Implementation of the work is done on the basis of a labor contract.
- Workers (and family members) may stay on the territory of another State without registration up to 30 days.
- The period of temporary stay for workers (and family members) is determined by the duration of the employment or civil contract.
- The national regime in social security (social insurance) is working;
- Labor migrants are taxed on a par with the working state of employment.
- Direct recognition of diplomas and qualifications, except the fields of the strategic for economy and development of the member-states.
- Children of the workers are entitled to attend pre-school institutions in accordance with the laws of the state of employment.
- Labor experience (including insurance) is taken into account for social security purposes.
- Emergency medical care is provided to workers (and family members) in the same manner and under the same conditions as the citizens of the state of employment, free of charge, regardless of medical policy
- The Developed Treaty on compulsory:
 - The payment of pension contributions;
 - Export of pensions

All these provisions are important and determine the general rules of labor mobility within the Union, taking into account the essential requirements and the necessary conditions for migrant workers. Very important achievements of the common dialogue between the member-states are some social insurances given by the employers as compulsory insurance against temporary disability, compulsory insurance related to

^{4 &}quot;Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union" (signed in Astana 29.05.2014) (Ed. By 10.10.2014, as amended. On 08.05.2015) // http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_163855 >> [07.08.2015]

motherhood, compulsory insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases.

Difficulties and obstacles

Along with this, there are many difficulties that impede closer and active labor mobility in demanded professions. So recognition of diplomas does not apply to teachers, lawyers, pharmacists and physicians. Representatives of these professions for employment in another country of the Union must undergo the procedure of recognition of documents on education, established by the legislation of the state of employment. Similar procedures are to expose documents on scientific degrees and academic titles.

Member states can still restrict labor flows to establish and apply restrictions for reasons of national security, including the industries of strategic importance, as well as public order, in respect of ongoing workers of the local employment, occupation and territory stay.

Some weak sides and gaps concerning migration flows and regulation within the Union:

- Two big sending countries Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are missing in the Union, but they are potential members;
- Interaction between the responsible Departments and Agencies is not well coordinated; but it is improving based on good practices;
- Experts are pessimistic on economic benefits of the Union, especially for Kazakhstan, but it opened great possibilities for it as a transport-logistic hub and this will also promote movement of the labor.
- One of the serious issues remains is the data collecting, exchange and analysis.

The functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union and the start of the free labor movement is a serious step ahead in terms of both the creation of the effective mechanism of migration regulation and strengthening the development effects in the sending countries and destinations.

The Kazakhstani context

Kazakhstan is the active initiator of the Union and a dynamically integrated state. Since January, 2016, the country started its

Chairmanship and has promoted international cooperation of the Union with the third states and enlarged the use of the economic potential. The important questions concern the coordination of the free movement market issues. In general, it covers three important directions.

The first covers the consistency, the volume and direction of migratory flows from the point of view of stability and regulation.

The second aspect involves the coordination of departments at various levels to create an efficient and flexible labor market, taking into account all the realities, problems and prospects.

The third aspect, in our view, is the development of international migration cooperation of the Union with the active participation of Kazakhstan taking into account the major national, regional and global trends in the development of the modern system of international relations.

The First aspect. From the viewpoint of the regional migration system and sub-system, volumes and direction of migratory flows, it is important to note that in addition to the fact that Kazakhstan has positioned itself as a second destination in the region of Central Asia (after Russia) in the framework of the EEU, this is also a sending country. Kazakhstan accepts labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Russia. Labor migrants from Kazakhstan directed mostly to Russia. In this context, we are talking about skilled labor movement and regulated migration.

Overall, the involvement of foreign professionals into the economy of Kazakhstan remains one of the most important national policy issues in the field of labor migration in general, and within the organization. In 2015 the quota for foreign labor force is set at 0.7% of the economically active population of the country (about 63.9 thousand)¹.

At the beginning of 2015 on the territory of Kazakhstan 30,700 labor migrants were counted. Up to 70% of them are highly skilled professionals.

¹ Migration within the CIS acquires a peculiar dynamics // <<htp://www.ritmeurasia.org>> [05.06.2015]

In general, in Kazakhstan the most significant portion of foreign labor comes for the fields of construction (44.4%), mining (13.4%) and manufacturing $(5.4\%)^1$.

Since the beginning of the Union's functioning, migration flows from member countries intensified. According to data of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, even in 2014 there was an increase the number of citizens of Kazakhstan, engaged in labor activity in the Republic of Belarus by 3.9 times and in the Russian Federation by 27%².

According to Russian sources, there is a significant increase of the citizens of member countries of EEU. Thus, the number of citizens of Kazakhstan increased by 46,8 thousand (7.8%), Belarus - 18,5 thousand (3.6%), Armenia - 16,3 thousand $(3.4\%)^3$.

By early April 2015, in accordance with these data, in Russia, there were 644,4 thousand citizens of Kazakhstan, 536.3 - Belarus citizens, 507,4 - 496,4 citizens of Kyrgyzstan and Armenia accordingly. By June - 668,160 citizens of Kazakhstan (including 393,523 men and 274,637 women) and 508,123 citizens of Kyrgyzstan (307,713 men and 200,410 women) were fixed in Russia.

At the beginning of the 2015 in Kazakhstan marked increase in the number of workers from Belarus by 1.6 times and from Russia by 22%⁴.

According to expert estimates of Kazakhstan's researchers, the volume of migration within EEU increased overall by 17% during the first half of 2015. At the time of 2016 it is decreased by 22 %. Illegal migration flows are not estimated.

For Kazakhstan, as for migrants and employment sectors there are no clear statistics. Kyrgyzstan's accession, which is a donor country, both in Russia and in Kazakhstan, is an additional factor in enhancing flows both high-skilled and low-skilled labor

¹ Analytical report on the theme: "Actual issues of migration policy: assessment of the current state of the forecast demand for migrant workers in accordance with their qualifications. Illegal labor migration. Experience of foreign countries» // http://economy.gov.kz/economyabout/9716/64172/

² ibid

³ Statistics of the FMS of Russia shows the dynamics of growth of labor migration from Central Asia // << http://migrant.ferghana.ru/newslaw.B2.html. >> [06.16.2015]

⁴ Svetlana Zhakupova: "Risks for which we do not expect the national labor market» // <http://ia-centr.ru> [05.07.2015]

force, the so-called domestic workers in the domestic labor market.

More complete statistics presented by Russian agencies show that the Union member states are more stable in migration flows despite the crisis effects.

Table 1. The number of citizens of certain CIS countries and

Georgia to Russia in March 2015- February 2016. (Number of

persons):

	March 2015	December 2015	February 2016**
Azerbaijan	562,887	530,000*	519,942
Armenia	484,892	488,500*	468,686
Geogia	31,076	31,000*	30,375
Kyrgyzstan	523,221	542,928	563,080
Tajikistan	963,489	896,159	861,045
Turkmenistan	24,340	24,724	20,335
Uzbekistan	2,131,300	1,880,547	1,784,151

* Rounding to hundreds.

** Data published on the FMS website on February 12, 2016.

Source: Labour migration in the EEU at the beginning of 2016 (Report of EEC) <u>http://evrazklub.ru/analitik/trudovaya-migratsiya-v-eaes-na-nachalo-2016-goda-doklad-eak.html</u>

Some other data show the level of remittances from Russia.

Table 2. Statistics of remittances to some countries of the CIS and Georgia in 2014-2015. (\$ Millions):

Country						Chang
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	quart er 2014	quart er 2014	quart er 2014	quarte r 2015		quarte r 2015	e in rubles
Azerbaijan	111	162	183	59	107,3	105,9	-21.8%
Armenia	114	182	261	60	124,5	154,2	-1.1%
Georgia	48	59	67	25	33,7	33,7	-11.8%
Kazakhstan	31	44	83	21	44,9	52,1	+24%
Kyrgyzstan	207	307	395	142	246,6	240,5	+15%
Tajikistan	484	796	1,092	260	391,3	590,1	-13.5
Turkmenista n	3	5	5	2	2,4	2,1	-18.1%
Uzbekistan	783	1427	1821	395	749,1	861,9	-17.8%
Dollar, rubles rate *	32,65	35,6	33,84	56,23	57,65	55,84	

* On the first day of the quarter

Source: Labour migration in the EEU at the beginning of 2016 (Report of EEC) http://evrazklub.ru/analitik/trudovaya-migratsiya-v-eaes-na-nachalo-2016-goda-doklad-eak.html

The statistics also shows that in almost all cases, the dollar value of remittances - declined, but this is due, above all, to the depreciation of the Russian ruble against the dollar.

The "Migration shock" for the countries of Central Asia is much more significant: the number of immigrants from Tajikistan decreased by 10.6%, Uzbekistan - by 16.3%, Turkmenistan -16.5%. And this phenomenon is apparently mainly due to labor migration - reduction in the number of foreigners in Russia practically did not affect Kazakhstan (-0.8%), which came from the less come to Russia¹.

Thus, we see that the membership of the EEU had a significant impact on the dynamics of the number of migrant workers. Countries outside the Union most acutely experienced "immigrants in shock" and EEU member states have avoided it or survived in attenuated form, as in the case of Armenia.

Some processes can change the geography and the volume of migration flows within the Union including Kazakhstan. The signing of the Free Trade Agreement with some countries from

¹Labour migration in the EEU at the beginning of 2016 (Report of EEC) http://evrazklub.ru/analitik/trudovaya-migratsiya-v-eaes-na-nachalo-2016-godadoklad-eak.html

other regions can seriously change the landscape of migration flows.

Thus, the Agreement which has been signed with Vietnam is already working on the introduction of visa-free regime with Kazakhstan within the EEU.

This will increase the flow of migrants from the South-East Asia, which has become a stable trend since 2014. A separate question is about migrating from China in cooperation with the Union. Moreover, the Memoranda of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Singapore was signed. Both countries are interested in deepening cooperation until the signing of the Agreement on Free Trade Area. The Commission shall conduct a productive dialogue with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). We discuss the coordination of the integration process of our association with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The Eurasian Economic Commission have already signed the Memoranda of Understanding with Chile and Peru, they are negotiating to conclude a memorandum of cooperation on trade and economic issues with the Common Market of South America (MERCOSUR).

All these processes entail the emergence of new opportunities, expanding the geography, and also certain challenges, which is the expected result of the formation of new migration systems and subsystems, requiring timely and balanced measures.

The spheres of employment of the migrant workers from the Union in Kazakhstan mostly cover the following: construction, mining, and manufacturing and others. The monitoring of the largest recruitment companies' data and sites, shows positive dynamics in recruitment, promotion of jobs and employment in Kazakhstan. For example, according to one of the largest recruiting Service "Head Hunter-Kazakhstan" since the beginning of 2015 more than 9 thousand specialists have noted that they are ready to move to Kazakhstan for work. The majority of these resumes come from Russian citizens - 60.3%, Ukrainians - 22.6%, Belarusians - 4.7%. The next migrants come from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and other countries¹.

It is noted that most of these companies prefer foreigners and domestic staff are not in demand. Wages are usually a half to two times more than for local staff. Since the beginning of the work of the Union in Kazakhstan there is migration, not only

¹ In Kazakhstan flooded managers from Russia and Ukraine // << http://forbes.kz >> [05.07.2015]

managers (project managers, CEOs, etc.), but middle managers (department directors, HR directors), which is slightly a more competitive factor for local specialists.

Among the priority areas of employment, mainly the top management (17.5% of all foreigners who are ready to move to Kazakhstan), IT, Telecom (10.1%), manufacturing (9.6%) - Sales (9.5%), construction (8.4%) should be included¹.

Thus, the migration processes in the framework of the EEU to Kazakhstan retains its role as sending and receiving country. With regard to the enlargement of the Union, it will require a balanced and flexible policy, not only at national level but also within the organization.

This involves the coordination of appropriate departments and a more effective cooperation at all levels, and, in our opinion, it is the next important aspect of the migration processes within the EEU.

The Second aspect

Coordinating the work of the Union in the sphere of labor migration requires cooperation around the perimeter of the issues identified by members. This agreement on common approaches and principles, exchange of normative legal acts, information, experience, the implementation of measures aimed at preventing the spread of false information, conduct training and seminars, cooperation in the framework of the advisory bodies.

For the coordination of legal, social and other questions with the Department of labor migration there were involved several ministries and Kazakhstan's agencies - Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The permanent job is going within the framework of the Advisory Committee on Migration and the Advisory Committee on social security, with the respect of the Human rights, health care and professional activity of migrants from member states of the Eurasian Economic Union. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account the fact that the mobility process is developing much faster than the coordination and discussion of the situation. This makes it necessary to speed up the coordination, decision-making and the exchange of accurate information.

At national level other institutions are also involved, i.e. the Department of Migration Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, the Agency on Statistics, etc. Despite certain difficulties and frequent miss-coordination, the work is going on the issues specified in articles 96-98 of the Treaty. One of the persistent issues is the problem of collection and processing of reliable statistical data. Various departmental subordination, or incompatibility causes a difference in the data selection criteria, doubts about the validity and reliability of qualitative and quantitative data, which leads to difficulties in providing quality analysis. Work in this area is ongoing and it is really important in terms of the full functioning of Kazakhstan as a leading member state.

The third, an important aspect for Kazakhstan is the development of international cooperation and its active participation in this cooperation. It is also important that the institutions of the Union take effective action in the field of migration. Since January 2016, the newly elected chairman of Kazakhstan has actively been involved in developing this course of action. EEU has an international legal status (Sec. 2, Article 1 of the EEU Treaty), which involves the development of international cooperation with states, international organizations and integration associations, concludes international treaties with them (claim 1, Article 7 of the EAEC Treaty) in order to promote basic directions of the Organization¹. The need for international cooperation is also important due to the fact that providing sustainable safe migration flows, based on respect for the rights of migrants and their families is vital not only within the Union, but also along its borders, where the situation is exacerbated by a change in the geopolitical realities and the exacerbation of different conflicts. A major step in this direction is the signing of the memorandum of cooperation with the IOM, UN agencies, with the CIS and others. Kazakhstan is an active member of many international organizations, projects and initiatives, including the

^{1 &}quot;Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union" (signed in Astana 29.05.2014) (Ed. By 10.10.2014, as amended. On 08.05.2015) // <<

http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_163855 >> [07.08.2015]

field of migration. So, one of them can be identified as the Almaty process. Almaty process is a constant dialogue platform initiated by Kazakhstan in 2011. The goal of the Almaty process is to jointly address the most pressing problems of refugees and international migration in a regional format, and in a global perspective. The Almaty process plays an important role in the development of mechanisms designed to comply with key national interests of countries in the region, such as border control and security, while ensuring access to asylum for those who need it, regardless of the circumstances in which they found themselves at the border¹. Thus, the coordination of cooperation within the Union and with international organizations is an important direction for effective functioning of the EEU.

One of the important initiatives of Kazakhstan is also the intensification of cooperation with China. Heads of Union countries and China have decided to pair the EEU and the Economic belt of the Silk Road. The agreed list of prospective projects for the implementation of the EEU and their interface with the Economic Belt of the Silk Road Project is already approved.

An important component of the EAEC cooperation with China within the framework of the project "Economic Zone" Silk Road is the sphere of innovation and technology which is also important for the high-skilled migration.

The international activities of EEU, including the conclusion of agreements on the free trade zone with the third countries, will contribute to the development of exports from the countries of the Union, investment and, in general, the growth of the Union's countries economy by creating the conditions for the diversification of trade and economic relations. All this will contribute to a sustainable and effective free labor movement.

Conclusion

The commissioning of the Eurasian Economic Union is a major advancement of integration processes on the Eurasian

¹ Astana to discuss issues of refugee protection and migration in Central Asia // << https://www.mzsr.gov.kz >> [05.07.2015]

space during last two decades. The countries involved are opening some new possibilities in custom, middle business companies' promotion, production exchange not only within the Union and even with third countries. Another opportunity is developing transport and transit potential, digital technologies and innovations.

It also contributes to the strengthening of the economies of member countries, and the creation of a free labor market is a serious aspect of strengthening and regulating of the migration processes.

Migrant workers from the Union member states may work without permission and a special quota is admitted on the basis of national treatment. Moreover, the bodies of the Union provide them social package, including access to health care, education for family members and pensions. These benefits also allow both coming and home communities to be easily integrated. Increasing and strengthening the remittance's processes in the space is one more aspect of the development.

Kazakhstan's context of migration processes in the framework of the EEU is determined by a number of factors including the direction of migration flows, volumes, effective coordinated cooperation within the organization, as well as the development of international cooperation. The creation of common labor market and the involvement of labor resources in the framework of the EEU can be a powerful incentive to strengthen the priority areas of the economy and the deepening of regional integration. Presented by the formation of an important flexible with a balanced migration policy, taking into account the specifics of the demographic potential and development of priority sectors of Kazakhstan's economy by attracting foreign high-skilled labor, as well as the preservation of their own intellectual potential. Very important is the stability, security and controllability of migration flows, based on a more integrated cooperation of your country of the member states, both within the EEU and around the perimeter of its borders.

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