

**UZBEKISTAN EXTERNAL MIGRATION:
KEY TRENDS AND DIRECTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

At present Uzbekistan is the largest Central Asian exporter of labor and education migration. Remittances play important role in the national economy. The article examines the emergence and main factors of migration in contemporary Uzbekistan. Based on the study of diversity research literature and sources, it was used the comparative study of key trends, dynamics, and transformation of labor and educational migration from Uzbekistan to Russia, the Republic of Korea, and Turkey. It elaborates on the internal factors of the migration issue in Uzbekistan and provides an analysis of the status, conditions, and challenges of the migrants in foreign countries.

Keywords: Migration, Uzbekistan, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, mobility.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Central Asians have been actively involved in migration processes. Economic, social, political, and cultural factors impacted the lives of nations and have led to the process of human migration from one region to another. Today, the migration factor covers all countries of the world. A group of demographers from around the world have predicted that the total number of migrants in the world will reach 230 million by 2050 and will make up over 2.6% of the total world population. According to the UN, almost 3.5% of the world’s population or 272 million people are currently involved in migration flows in 2019. Two-thirds of them are directly related to labor migrants (World Migration Report, 2020).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, different scale reforms were carried out in Uzbekistan, including the simplification of the procedure for the population to travel abroad, but also rise of employment.

The population of Uzbekistan by the end of 2020 exceeded 34.5 million people, which is approximately half of the population of Central Asia (Table 1).

Table 1. *Population growth in Uzbekistan (1991-2020)*

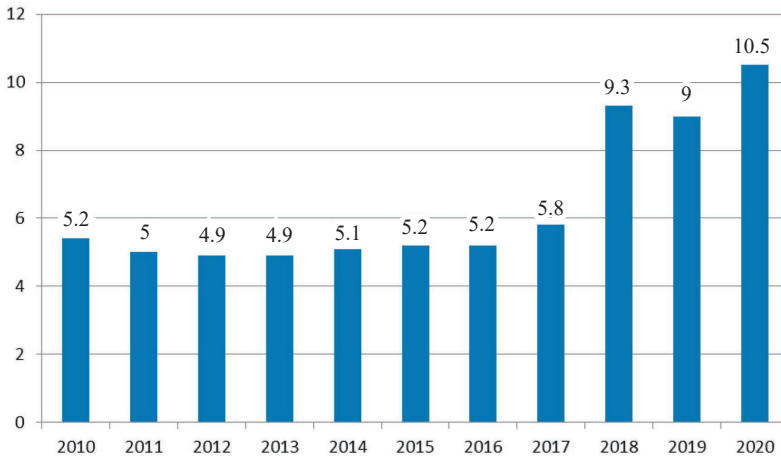
Years	Population at the beginning of the year		
	Total	City	Countryside
1991	20,608	8,305	12,303
1995	22,462	8,671	13,791
2000	24,488	9,166	15,322
2005	26,021	9,442	16,579
2010	28,001	14,424	13,577
2015	31,022	15,748	15,274
2020	34,558	17,487	17,071

Source: Data of the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan.

However, it should be noted that the last census of the republic’s population was carried out only in 1989. It is necessary to accelerate this process, which will determine the exact number of population and fellow citizens living in different countries of the world.

In addition to the high population growth, the unemployment rate is also growing in Uzbekistan. For instance, in 2010, the unemployed accounted for 5.4% of the total population, while by 2020 this figure climbed to 10.5%. And this, in turn, is one of the main causes of labor and education migration among unemployed citizens in the country.

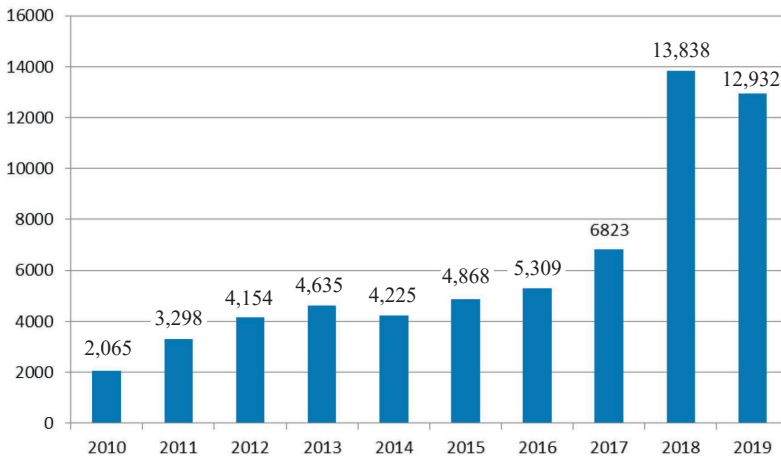
Graph 1. *Unemployment in the Republic of Uzbekistan (%)*



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2020.

Since the beginning of the millennium, Uzbekistan has established processes of external migration to foreign countries for work, study and other purposes (Graph 2). But the official statistics is not elaborating fully due to the lack of methodology and defining measures.

Graph 2. *The number of people who left the Republic of Uzbekistan for foreign countries*



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2020.

Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Germany, South Korea, and Japan are the most popular directions for Uzbekistan’s migrants. In recent years, the Uzbek government has signed bilateral agreements on the regulation of the migration issue with these and other countries. On a World Bank report the volume of remittances from abroad to the economy of Uzbekistan amounted to 14.8% of GDP (World Bank, 2019). So external migration and flows of remittance play an important role in Uzbekistan’s economy.

MIGRATION FROM UZBEKISTAN TO RUSSIA

In the post-Soviet time the main direction of migration flow from Uzbekistan was the Russian Federation. In particular, during these years 45-48% of Russians, 16-17% of Tatars, 5-6% of Ukrainians, 5-9% of Jews, 2-3% of Germans, and 7-8% of Uzbeks who lived in Uzbekistan left the country (Maksakova and Mamadaliyeva, 2014). Moreover, 500 thousand people completely migrated from Uzbekistan to Russia from 1990 to 1998. These are people who initially came to Uzbekistan during the period of the industrialization of the country, evacuated with the factories where they worked during the Second World War, as well as, arrived to restore Tashkent after the earthquake in 1966 (Maksakova, 2000: 43). Over the years, the share of the Russian diaspora significantly decreased in the country's population. Russian people decreased from 1.7 million in 1989 to 900 thousand in 1997 (Vitkovskaya, 1998). The flow of labor migrants from Uzbekistan to Russia has increased since the late 1990s (Rasulova, 2010: 84). The development of this process was facilitated by several factors, such as returning to the historical homeland, closing some enterprises, losing jobs and others.

At the same time, Russia's total population has been declining by 0.4% annually since 2000 (World Bank, 2019). By turn, the development of construction, industry, and other sectors in the country has led to an increase in demand for foreign labor migrants in Russia. Russia has not seen a significant increase in demographic growth in recent years. In particular, there was a decline in population between 2017 and 2019. For example, the birth rate and mortality rate per 1,000 population were 10.1 and 12.3 in 2019 (Demoscop Weekly, 2020). Currently, the Russian government is implementing a number of measures, including improving the demographic instability by attracting migrants from the CIS countries to all regions of Russia and preventing the growth of demand for labor in all sectors of the economy. In this regard, President Vladimir Putin noted "The Russian Federation is interested in the influx of migrants. It is quite obvious that with the development of the economy in Russia we no longer have enough, and soon there will be a very noticeable lack of labor, and this is becoming a real, objective limitation of economic growth in the country" (TASS, 2020).

Russia has been attractive for migrants from Uzbekistan. These include the fact that Russia and Uzbekistan were part of the Soviet Union and Uzbeks are familiar with the traditions, language, and culture of the Russian people. Moreover, a bilateral agreement on a visa-free regime, the presence of the networks of air, rail, and road transports between Uzbekistan and Russia can be also considered as suitable conditions for the flow of migrants.

Many employers in Russia focus on employees' specific skills, age, and level of Russian language proficiency, which is one of the main requirements. Unfortunately, most labor migrants from Uzbekistan do not have enough skills and experience and do not speak Russian well enough. These factors might cause migrants to work in low-paying jobs without working conditions and lead to many other difficulties in finding work.

Due to the fact that older and middle-aged migrants lived and studied in the former Soviet Union, as well as served in the military within the territory of

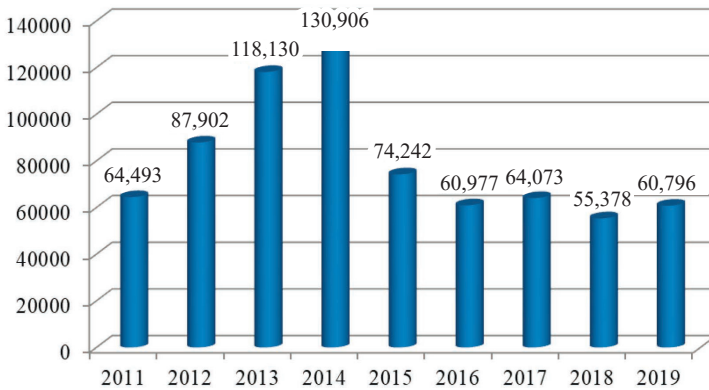
the USSR, and worked during this period, their level of Russian language proficiency is much higher than younger migrants. These advantages are important in communicating with the local population, and in making them aware of their rights through various regulations issued by the government on migrants. Furthermore, they also have the right not to take the Russian language proficiency exams in order to work in Russia. They had to graduate from a school or other educational institution during the rule of the Soviet Union and had a certificate issued in this period for this purpose (Syzykova, 2017).

The Russian government introduced a labor patent system for citizens of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Ukraine. This process was initially introduced on July 1, 2010. According to it, migrants who wanted to work for individual employers were required to obtain a patent, while those who wanted to work for legal entities were required to obtain a special permit. However, the patent system was simpler and cheaper than the special permit system. That's why the mass of migrants tried to obtain labor patents instead of a special permit. In order to avoid such illegal consequences, the government amended legislation for the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation (Federal Act of the Russian Federation No. 357-F3 of 24 November, 2014). According to this law, from January 2015, a single patent permit was introduced for all migrants who entered Russia without a visa. Also, the cost of a patent varies by region of the country, and a patent permit obtained from one region does not give a permit to work in another region. The price of the patent includes the cost of preparation and execution of documents, medical insurance policy, a general examination that aimed to evaluate the knowledge of the language, history, and legislation of Russia, banking, translation, and notary services (Ryazantsev, 2016). As a result of such changes in Russian legislation, the flow of Uzbek migrants decreased by 18.9%, the flow of Ukrainian migrants by 14.2%, the flow of Tajik migrants by 15.6%, and migrants of many other nationalities also left the country en masse (Musina, 2019).

According to the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia, the flow of migrants from the Republic of Uzbekistan to Russia increased from 15 to 25 thousand people annually from 2011 to 2014. The main reasons for these are the stable situation in Russia, the absence of devaluation of the ruble against the US dollar, as well as high demand for workers in the country.

In 2014, the number of Uzbeks who went to Russia was almost 131 thousand. This figure was the highest among those who left between 2011 and 2019. However, the number of Uzbek labor migrants decreased by 43.3% and an estimated 74.2 thousand people in 2015. During this period, Uzbek labor migrants returned to their homeland owing to the reduction in wages paid to migrants in Russia. In addition, many Uzbeks, who returned from Russia, chose Turkey or Kazakhstan as an alternative direction of migration flows. However, as Russia's economic outlook started to improve (by 0.2% in 2016, 1.8% in 2017, and 2.8% in 2018) (International Monetary Fund, 2020), and Central Asian migrants soon returned to Russia due to huge construction projects such as building infrastructure for 2018 FIFA World Cup created tens of thousands of jobs for migrants (Eraliyev and Urinboyev, 2020). This process led to an increase in the number of labor migrants from Uzbekistan going to Russia and the volume of remittances (Graph 3).

Graph 3. *The number of migrants from Uzbekistan to Russia*



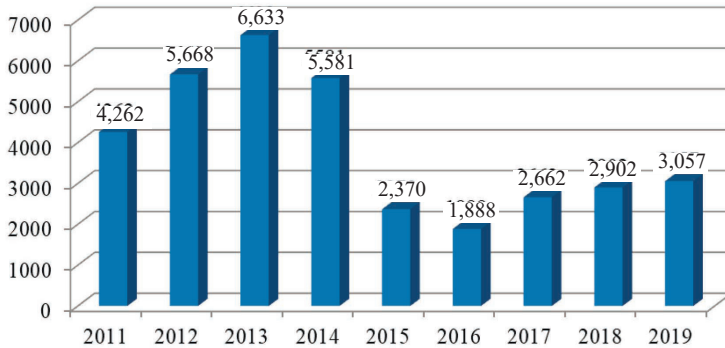
Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by Federal State Statistics Service, 2020.

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the increase in unemployment in Russia as well. As a result, many migrants in the country returned to their homelands. In 2020, the number of foreign labor migrants in different regions of Russia decreased from 20% to 50%. According to it, their share decreased in the services sector by 33.5%, in the household sector by 28.6%, in the water supply and other utility sectors by 25.8%, and in the construction sector by 22.2% (Izvestsiya, 2020).

According to the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia, 1.032 million patent work permits were issued to labor migrants from Uzbekistan in 2019, and in 2020 their number amounted to 662.3 thousand (Rosstat, 2020). However, Uzbekistan ranked first among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in terms of obtaining patents. Uzbek labor migrants were mainly engaged in construction, transport, trade, restaurant services, utilities, various consumer services in Russia.

The volume of remittances from Russia to Uzbekistan was different over time. (Graph 4.) Remittances from migrants to the economy of Uzbekistan increased steadily during the period from 2011 to 2013. In 2014, economic instability in Russia, various economic sanctions by Western countries, a sharp drop in oil prices on world markets, the double devaluation of the ruble against foreign currencies led to a decrease in the number of Uzbek migrants in the country and their remittances accordingly.

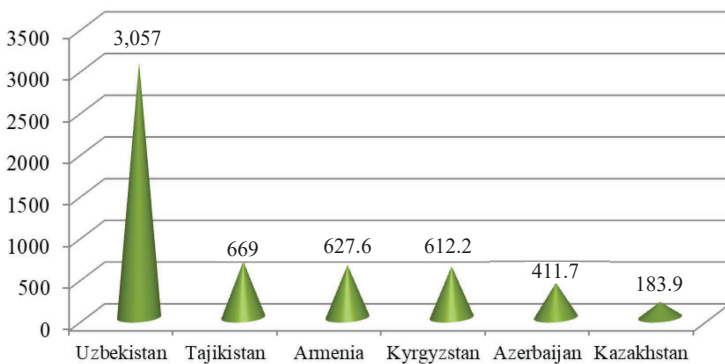
Graph 4. Remittances from the Russian Federation to Uzbekistan during 2011-2019 (million USD)



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, 2020.

In 2016, remittances from Russia to Uzbekistan decreased by 3.5 times compared to 2013 and amounted to \$1.8 billion. Over the next three years, remittances grew steadily and increased by 29% in 2017 compared to the previous year, by 34.9% in 2018 and by 38.2% in 2019. In addition, the volume of remittances of Uzbeks in 2019 was several times higher than remittances from migrant workers from other CIS countries visiting Russia. For example, it is al-most 5 times more than in Tajikistan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, 7 times more than in Azerbaijan, and 16 times more than in Kazakhstan (Graph 5).

Graph 5. The amount of remittances from the Russian Federation to the CIS countries in 2019 (million USD)



Source: data compiled by authors on the basis of statistics provided by the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, 2020.

The emergence of the COVID-19 virus and its spread around the world has had a negative impact on all countries. As a result, the closure of many countries' borders for a certain period of time, temporary suspension of activities of employers, has had a negative impact on Uzbek migrants. Furthermore, Vice President for Human Development and Chair of the Migration Steering Group of the World Bank Mamta Murthi said "The impact of COVID-19 is pervasive

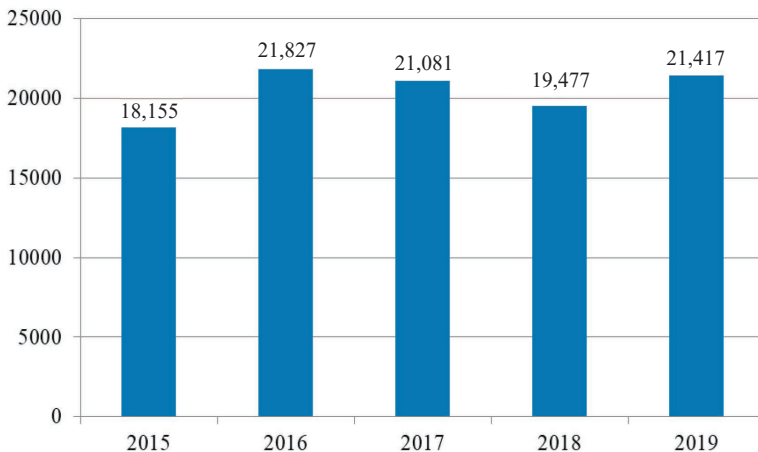
when viewed through a migration lens as it affects migrants and their families who rely on remittances” (World Bank, 2020).

According to the World Bank, remittances to Europe and Central Asia due to the pandemic are projected to decline by 16% in 2020 and 8% in 2021. This is due to the fall in oil prices in the global economy and the devaluation of the Russian ruble, which led to a decrease in remittances (World Bank, 2020).

In addition, migrants from Uzbekistan often use informal remittances system from Russia to Uzbekistan (Interview Akramov, Pulatov, and Sultanov, November, 2019). They send money through their friends, relatives, or colleagues who are returning to their homeland. This is due to the fact that expensive banking fees, excessive paperwork, and formalities encourage migrants to choose informal methods of sending money. As a result, it causes certain difficulties in calculating the exact amount of remittances.

It is worth mentioning the role of the first and second Uzbek-Russian educational forums held in October 2018 and in May 2020 in boosting the educational migration between the two countries. It was held in the offline and online format and brought together representatives of over 150 universities of Uzbekistan and Russia. As a result, in 2020, more than 30 thousand Uzbek students were studying at different Russian universities and institutes from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok. According to our interview with Uzbek students (interviews with Ibragimov in October 2017 and Bekmuradov in September 2020), the main reasons for their study in Tomsk University and Kazan State University were good quality and reasonable education fees (Graph 6).

Graph 6. Educational migration from Uzbekistan to Turkey



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2020.

To sum up, due to traditions of the Soviet time Russia has been attractive for migrants from Uzbekistan and their number over million and the volume of remittances several times higher than remittances from migrant workers from other CIS countries. It is also highly educational mobility from Uzbekistan to Russian universities and educational establishments.

MIGRATION FROM UZBEKISTAN TO SOUTH KOREA

Koreans were forced to migrate from Russian Far East to Central Asia in the first part of the 20th century (In, 2012). Currently, there are over 200 thousand Koreans in Uzbekistan. This diaspora is the fourth largest in the world, after China, Japan, and the USA. Korean diaspora is also an important factor of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan's relations with South Korea (Rakhimov, 2020).

By the end of the 20th century, the Korean economy grew at a high rate and by 1990 it was \$200.5 billion and the annual GDP growth rate was almost 10%. During this time, the country's lack of labor in industries such as manufacturing and the shipbuilding industry led to an increase in the influx of many illegal migrants.

Furthermore, the deteriorating demographic situation in Korea can be cited as one of the reasons for the shortage of labor in the country. Demographers estimate that by 2050, Korea's population over the age of 65 will account for 35% of the total population, making it the second-largest country in the world and that the working-age population will decrease by 9% between 2005 and 2030, and by 26% in 2050. There are currently 7.6 potential workers per retiree; this ratio is projected to fall to 2.8 by 2030 and 1.6 by 2050 (Hayutin, 2009).

Until 1991, the government did not have a system for the management of migrant labor, despite the fact that the massive influx of unskilled labor migrants to Korea (Gray, 2007). During this time, the number of illegal migrants increased, although migrants were only required to independently register their stay in the country. In 1991, the Industrial Skill Trainee System was established in order to mitigate the negative consequences of migration. Later, the system was renamed the Industrial Trainee Program. Within the framework of this program, small and medium-sized enterprises with a capacity of 300 people were provided with labor migrants. In 2003, the government introduced the Employment Permit System instead of the Industrial Internship Program to strengthen control over migrants and improve their legal protection (Draudt, 2019).

“As of February 2013, there are 36 visa types to enter and remain in Korea. The official immigration information website groups all visa types into six categories according to the purpose of visit: tourism/transit, temporary visiting, business, work, visit and stay with family including overseas Koreans, education and others” (Kim, 2016). The visas (E-9 and H-2) are established for labor migrants wishing to work in unskilled jobs in Korea, but the H-2 visa is given only to ethnic Koreans living in China and the CIS countries. However, these types of visas are similar in purpose, but they are radically different in terms of issuance requirements, characteristics, quota places, and others.

Migrants with E-9 visas are mainly involved in such jobs, which are classified as 3D (Dirty, Dangerous, Difficult). That is why the government does not allow migrants coming through such visas to change their jobs. They are mainly engaged in agriculture, processing, and fisheries.

Migrants visiting Korea through the Employment Permit System are allowed to change their place of work or extend their stay in the country for another 1 year and 10 months only with the written consent of the employer. Migrants also have the right to change jobs if it turns out that the employer is mistreating the

migrants and the company ceases to exist (Stokes, 2021).

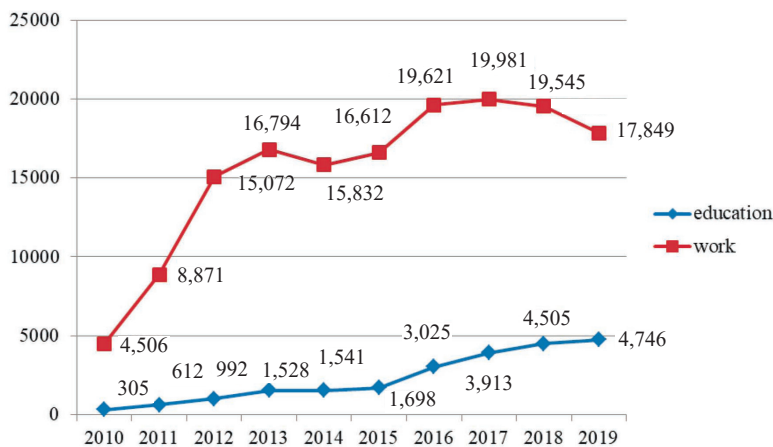
In July 2013, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov signed a resolution “On measures on further expanding cooperation in labor migration with the Republic of Korea”. According to the resolution, several government agencies have been entrusted to assist citizens wishing to engage in labor activities in the Republic of Korea (Uzdaily, 2013). Currently, the following requirements apply to Uzbek labor wishing to work in Korea: applicants must be between 18 and 39 years old; the absence of a conviction and ban on leaving the Republic of Uzbekistan, the applicant must be medically and physically healthy (Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020).

Candidates who meet the above requirements will be tested to determine their level of knowledge of the Korean language. Such tests are carried out through accredited centers authorized by the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Applicants who score high on the test exams will be given special certificates. This process will provide them the opportunity to take a Korean language proficiency test conducted by the Human Resources Development Service of Korea (Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020).

It should be noted that that in 2011, Korea’s GDP was \$1.25 trillion and reached \$1.72 trillion by 2018 (World Bank, 2019). As a result of such a rapid development of the country’s economy, the influx of immigrants from different countries began to increase sharply. In particular, the growth of the number of small and medium-sized businesses in the country has significantly contributed to the development of external migration. In particular, in 2015 their number reached 5,889,611, and this figure increased by 12.7 percent to 6,638,694 in 2018 (Ministry of SMEs and Startups, 2018). During this period, the number of Uzbek labor migrants willing to work in Korea has also increased. According to the State Statistics of Uzbekistan, 4,506 Uzbek labor migrants worked in Korea in 2010. Furthermore, their number increased almost 5 times for the period of 2010 and 2018 years.

However, according to the Ministry of Labor of Uzbekistan, the demand for Uzbek labor migrants in Korea has been declining in recent years (Graph 7). There are several factors that contribute to this process. The main reason for decreasing flow of Uzbek migrants includes leaving their jobs for various reasons, staying illegally in the country regardless of the expiration of their employment contracts and visas, lack of knowledge of the Korean language, customs and culture, disagreement with employers, excessive alcohol consumption (Kun.uz, 2021). Currently, Uzbek labor work in the field of industry, construction, agri-culture, fisheries, warehousing, and others.

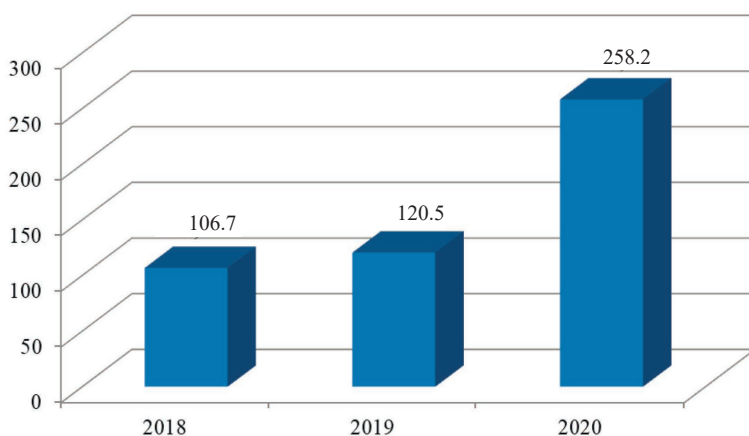
Graph 7. Dynamics of visits of citizens of Uzbekistan to the Republic of Korea for study and work



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2020.

Over the past three years, the volume of cross-border remittances from Korea to Uzbekistan has grown steadily. In particular, in 2018 it amounted to \$106.7 million. By 2019, the total volume of cross-border remittances increased by almost 13% to \$120.5 million. In 2020, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus to in world led to the closure of the borders of many countries. As a result, migrants sent their savings to their families using international money transfer systems. And this year, the transfers increased by 2.2 times compared to 2019 and amounted to \$258.2 million (Graph 8).

Graph 8. The volume of cross-border remittances of individuals from the Re-public of Korea to Uzbekistan(million USD)



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021.

In addition, remittances from Korea to Uzbekistan are made in different ways. It

is known that remittances are officially sent through banks' remittance systems. However, this process is also made in informal ways (Interview of Askarov, Mahmudov and Juraev in December 2019). For example, migrants pay a certain amount of money to individuals engaged in informal money transfer activity in the country where they are. These individuals provide their partners in Uzbekistan with information about the migrant, the amount of money, and to whom it should be given. After that, they deliver the money to the migrant's family members, friends, or acquaintances. The service fee of this system is much cheaper than banks and official remittance systems. Therefore, it is not possible to calculate the exact amount of remittances from Korea to Uzbekistan.

However, there are cases that Uzbek girls engaged in labor activity and education are also getting married to Korean men. As a result, the number of inter-ethnic marriages has been increased in recent years in rural areas of the country. As the population of rural Korea has been declining for the past 30 years, the government has allocated subsidies ranging from 3 million won (\$3,600) to 10 million won (\$12,000) to help Koreans pay foreign girls and other expenses necessary for marriage. According to the Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, the cost of marrying Uzbek girls among other nationalities is the most expensive, costing an average 18.3 million won (\$21,960), Filipinos 15.2 million won (\$18,240), Cambodians 14.4 million won (\$17,280), and Vietnamese 14.2 million won (\$17,040), while the Chinese account for 10.7 million won (\$12,840) (Straits Times, 2019). One of the main reasons for the introduction of such measures is that Korean girls move and stay in large cities in search of work, which leads to destabilization of the demographic situation in the country. The Korean government cites such a demographic situation as one of the economic problems and considers problems in the labor market and the shortage of girls for marrying Korean boys through the immigration factor (Draudt, 2019).

At present Korean universities in the list of the best universities in the world. For example, according to a list compiled by QS World University Rankings in 2021, Seoul National University ranked 37th, Korea University of High Technology ranked 39th, Korea University ranked 69th out of more than 1,000 universities in the world (QS Topuniversities, 2021). Therefore, many Uzbek students try to enter such kind of prestigious universities in Korea in order to increase academic mobility through external migration. In particular, there is a steady growth of Uzbek students in Korean universities between 2010 and 2019 (Graph 7).

To sum up, based on an intergovernmental agreement there has been a growth of labor migration from Uzbekistan to Korea. Over the past three years, the volume of cross-border remittances from Korea to Uzbekistan has grown steadily, but the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus in the world led influenced the process. There are cases of intermarriage, especially Uzbek girls getting married to Korean men in rural areas of the county, including based on economic reasons. Korean universities are among the most prestigious ones for studying, training, and academic visits.

MIGRATION FROM UZBEKISTAN TO TURKEY

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, labor migrants from CIS began to visit the Turkish Republic. In 1991, Turkey was among the first who recognized

the independence of Uzbekistan. During this period, relations between the two countries in the economic, political, and cultural spheres have been developing on different scales. Today, Turkey is one of the largest partners of Central Asian republics in the Middle East.

Turkish companies entered into agreements to develop industries in the CIS in the 1990s and Turkish workers, engineers, and business managers visited these countries (Kirisci, 2003). Moreover, 150,000 labor migrants entered the CIS from Turkey between 1990 and 2005 (Icduygu, 2009). In particular, many light industry enterprises and large shopping centers with the participation of Turkish companies opened in Uzbekistan.

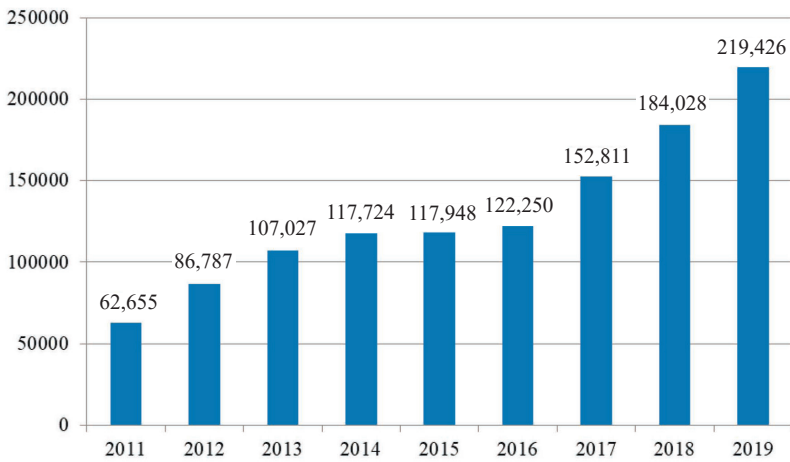
During the 1990s, the number of traders from the CIS countries in Turkey began to increase. They visited Turkey as tourists and bought food, clothes, and other products for the citizens of their country from the Turkish markets. Furthermore, the inflow of these entrepreneurs into the country amounted to more than 1 million people a year (Icduygu, 2009).

Since 2000, the growth of the Turkish economy, the reluctance of the local population to work in low-paid jobs, and expansion of migration flows of able-bodied Turks to Western Europe such as Germany, France and Austria have contributed to an increase in the number of immigrants from different countries to Turkey.

Foreigners wishing to work in Turkey need a special work permit. In this case, the foreigner submits his passport, visa application, and a letter from the employer to the Turkish embassy in his homeland. These documents will be sent to the Turkish Ministry of Labor and Social Security. The application will be considered by the Ministry within 10 working days from the date of submission. Migrants will also be required to pay fees such as entry into the country, a work permit, and residency in the country in order to obtain a work visa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, 2020). Citizens of CIS and Eastern European countries visit Turkey as tourists and work informally in the country in local homes, construction, light industry, restaurants, and shops (Icduygu, 2009).

In the last decade, the volume of visits of Uzbek citizens to Turkey has grown significantly. A visa-free regime between Turkey and Uzbekistan, an affinity of language, customs, and culture of Turks and Uzbeks and other common features contribute to the development of migration relations between the two countries. In 2011, 62,655 Uzbeks visited Turkey, and by 2016 this figure doubled. The main reasons for this are the economic instability in Russia in 2014 and changes in the legal framework for migrants in 2015. It is known that Uzbeks visit Turkey not only for work or study but also for business and travel.

Graph 9. *The number of travels by citizens of Uzbekistan to Turkey*



Source: data compiled by authors on the basis of statistics provided by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2020.

The strengthening of Turkish-Uzbek relations in recent years played an important role in increasing the volume of migration. In particular, during the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Uzbekistan on April-May 2018, Uzbekistan and Turkey signed an agreement on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families. According to the agreement, it provides legal protection of the rights of migrant workers from Uzbekistan and Turkey and their families.

Furthermore, according to the decree of the President of Turkey on 10 November 2018, citizens of Uzbekistan have the opportunity to stay in Turkey for 90 days without a visa. Before the decree, Uzbek nationals had the right to stay in the country for 30 days without a visa. If they want to extend their stay in the country, they will need to apply for a residence permit. The residence permit costs 25 dollars for the first month, 5 dollars for the following months, and 80 dollars per year (Kun.uz, 2018).

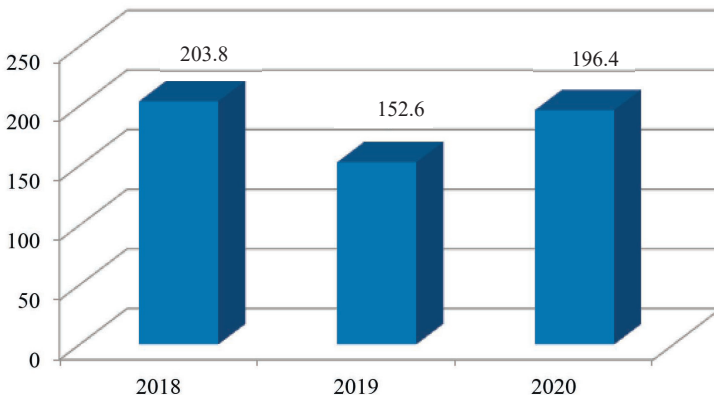
Uzbek labor migrants work mainly at hospitals, restaurants, and household services in Turkey. But female migrants usually work as nurses for the elderly or children in Turkish homes in various developed cities of Turkey. The main reasons for the great demand for Uzbek migrants are that their salaries are much cheaper than local workers, the presence of the ability to learn quickly Turkish because of the similarity of languages (Interview of Sultanov and Abdurahimov in October, 2017).

According to Turkish scholars surveys of female migrants from Uzbekistan, Bulgaria and other former Soviet republics in the Turkish cities of Antalya and Marmaris show that most of them have higher education and a certain specialization. In most cases, they become Turkish citizens by marrying Turks. Furthermore, they work as massage therapists, translators, tour operators, guides, and hotel receptionists in tourist areas of Turkey (Toksoz et al., 2012). In addition, the influx of Russian tourists visiting the tourist areas of Turkey is more than

other nationalities. There is a great demand for Russian-speaking migrants to provide Russian tourists with a high level of service. For that reason, many Uzbek labor migrants who know the Russian language work in these regions of Turkey.

Uzbeks often transfer their savings to the family from acquaintances returning to Uzbekistan, or they bring themselves after a certain period of time. Also, migrants use various international remittances from Turkey to Uzbekistan. According to the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, the volume of cross-border remittances from Turkey to Uzbekistan amounted to \$203.8 million in 2018, while its volume decreased by 25.1% to \$152.6 million in 2019 (Gazeta.uz, 2021). However, the spread of the COVID-19 virus around the world in 2020 contributed to rising in cross-border remittances from Turkey to Uzbekistan.

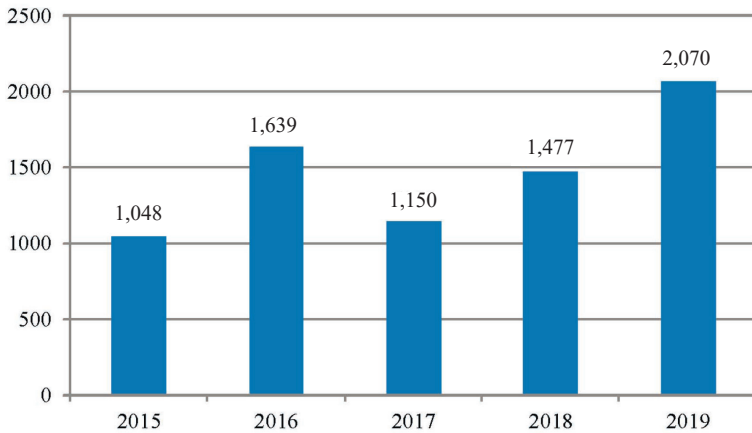
Graph 10. *The volume of cross-border remittances of individuals from Turkey to Uzbekistan (million USD)*



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021.

It should note that Turkish universities are popular among Central Asia students, especially from Uzbekistan (Graph 11). Due to improving bilateral political, economic and educational relations, it is a grove number of Uzbek students since 2017 to study at different universities in Turkey in order to get good knowledge and increase international mobility, including to study master program in the EU in general and Germany in particular (Interview of Ashirova and Bekmuradov, August, 2020).

Graph 11. *Educational migration from Uzbekistan to Turkey*



Source: data compiled by authors on basis of statistics provided by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, 2020.

To sum up, a visa-free regime between Turkey and Uzbekistan, an affinity of language, customs, and culture of Turks and Uzbeks and other common features contribute to the development of migration relations between two countries, which include work, study, business, and tourism. It should note that Turkish universities are popular among students from Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION

In the post-Soviet period, Uzbekistan has remained to maintain high-level migration. The main reasons for this is the high population growth in the country, a lack of demand for labor, the presence of a visa-free regime with a high demand for labor migrant countries, high wages outside the country. This, in turn, encourages many workers to work in foreign countries.

Currently, for migrants from Uzbekistan among popular destinations are Russian Federation, South Korea, and Turkey. At the same time, they also face various challenges in these countries. In particular, Russia and Turkey are distinguished by the availability of jobs for labor migrants in all their regions, appropriate wages, and other advantages. However, there are also disadvantages, such as the complexity of the work patent process, corruption, lack of organization of workplaces, and a large number of conclusions of a verbal rather than a written employment contract between the employer and the workforce.

The Republic of Korea is a desirable direction for Uzbek labor migrants. Because this country receives labor migrants from Uzbekistan based on interstate agreements and only on a contract basis and protects their rights of them. Korea differs from other Uzbek partners in labor migration by the systemic organization of labor and the creation of favorable conditions for the life and work of migrants. But it is necessary to create more training courses on legislation and on languages.

It should be noted that Russian, Turkish and Korean universities are likewise

attractive to students from Uzbekistan and other Central Asia republics due to their good quality of education and academic potential. In this regard, Uzbekistan should further develop relations with these countries not only in the field of labor migration but also in the field of academic migration and mobility.

Finally, it is necessary to adopt a regular census in Uzbekistan, which would help to determine the exact number of the population in foreign countries. In a very competitive international market, it is necessary for Uzbekistan to introduce new innovative approaches, the creation of an attractive and effective educational and academic environment that would become a matrix for the young generation to increase their migration and mobility, which would also lead to successful national development.

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