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International Migration and Migration Policy Reforms

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the problems of regulating illegal migration by developed countries and the European Union, the achievements that cause not always correct criticism, and the possibilities of using the experience of a number of countries and new approaches in this regulation are shown. Particular attention is paid to international organizations dealing with the problems of international migration. It was concluded that there is no clear division of their functions by type of migration, which prevents the formation of long-term policies. Proposals were formulated to strengthen the role of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in rule-making and norm-setting on labor migration, which plays an increasingly important role in sustainable development. It was concluded that it is necessary to change the status of the migration conventions, otherwise effective regulation of labor migration is impossible. The countries of the Persian Gulf that attract external labor immigrants despite the rapid growth of the local population are highlighted. The difference in countries' policies towards labor migration in the 21st century compared to the 20th century is shown. The concept of "fiduciary duty" of federal governments in relation to external migration was introduced.

Keywords: international migration; migration policy; remittances; migration management and regulation; foreign labor force; migration corridors; illegal migration; irregular migration; convention on migration

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INTRODUCTION

The world is facing a whole set of acute issues that have come to be called a polycrisis. Are migration issues among them? After all, there are both different points of view and a general consensus about it as a crisis phenomenon that threatens developed countries with an invasion of asylum seekers living off the social support system once they have been granted asylum. It would seem that the crisis is borne out by impressive figures that have a strong impact on the average person and are used by politicians to their advantage. There is even a shift in the policies of many European countries that has been labelled “ominous”. Certainly, the figures for 2022 alone, showing a 64% increase in illegal border crossings in EU member states compared to 2021, are puzzling to say the least.¹ The figures for 2023 indicate the continued complexity of the situation.

Catastrophic events² favour mass emigration, with refugee numbers exceeding millions — these can be civil wars (Sudan, Syria), acute internal systemic crises (Venezuela) and even ethnic cleansing (Myanmar). In these cases, an important, if not the main role belongs to the UN and its international organisations, primarily the Agency and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose main task is humanitarian assistance, although many countries send it directly to the affected areas. In the top five countries where the maximum number of refugees have settled, there is only one highly developed country — Germany (2.5 million people), whose policies in the 21st century have generally been more lenient than those of other European states. Pakistan (1.7 million), Colombia (2.5 million), Iran (3.4 million) and Turkey (3.6 million) are also in the top five. Obviously, these countries are neighbouring territories where extreme events have caused mass flight.

¹ Migration Outlook 2023. Ten migration issues to look out for in 2023: Origins, key events and priorities for Europe. ICMPD, 2023. 35 p.

² What the UN (UN Refugee Agency) defines as events seriously disturbing public order (seriously disturbing public order).

The number of forcibly displaced persons has doubled over the last decade, reaching 114 million in 2023, as a result of a doubling of armed conflicts, the highest number since the beginning of the 21st century. For 2023, the EU received more than 1 million asylum applications — 21.3% more than in 2022 (the largest increase since the 2016 migration crisis).³

It is quite expected that in the 21st century there are two main points of mass immigration — Western Europe and North America, which is caused not only by the level of their prosperity, but also by their territorial accessibility for the outflow of migrants from neighbouring countries. The most acute and controversial issue in the US in recent decades is the problem of illegal migration, addressing which the authorities seek to expand its legal avenues and enforce the law. Thus, the Biden government deported home about half a million people who had no legal status to stay in the US.⁴

Despite the fact that EU countries have generally emerged from the migration crisis, the issue remains very important not only for them, but also for the countries from where emigrants come to Europe, with a clear preference for those states with a higher level of social guarantees for migrants, including refugees. The World Bank (WB) presents the issue of migration as a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly necessary “for countries of all income levels”.⁵ This is confirmed in the United States, where “continued growth in immigration is the main driver of the country’s modest population growth rate”.⁶ The same is true in a number of other highly developed countries.

³ Migration Outlook 2024. Ten migration issues to look out for in 2024. ICMPD, 2024. 40 p.

⁴ URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/01/us/undocumented-immigrants-exodus-us.html>

⁵ World Bank 2023. World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The World Bank; 2023. 318 + xxviii p.

⁶ URL: https://www.brookings.edu/articles/immigration-is-driving-the-nations-modest-post-pandemic-population-growth-new-census-data-shows/?utm_campaign=Brookings%20Brief&utm_medium=email&utm_content=288933888&utm_source=hs_email

The WB believes that migrants and diasporas⁷ can contribute to the further integration of their countries of origin into the world economy and even facilitate trade and foreign direct investment flows. This suggests that the new economy of the twenty-first century, in addition to its recognised technical and economic characteristics, will also be supported by labour migration, without which it can no longer be ecologically equilibrated.

The UN Secretary-General in 2018 asked on behalf of the global community, “What do we want: migration as a source of prosperity and international solidarity, or migration as the epitome of inhumanity and social divisions?”⁸

MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

An important role in the development and functioning of international mechanisms of migration regulation and in the decision-making of the world community regarding migration issues is played by: the International Organization for Migration (refugees) — IOM, the International Labour Organization (labour migration) — ILO, the World Bank (remittances) — WB and a number of other organizations and associations, e.g., OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).⁹

It was not until 2005, when the UN General Assembly decided to hold a High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September 2006 (Resolution 60/227), that these issues received the attention they deserve. This resulted in the creation of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD),¹⁰ which was first held in Belgium in 2007.¹¹ Much

earlier, in 1985, 19 of the world’s most developed states, which are the main recipients of external migration, established a multilateral organisation, the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC),¹² whose membership allows them, in their view, to influence international governance and decision-making mechanisms in relation to migration, including determining the direction of migration policies. While participation in the IGC entails helping to ensure orderly and humane migration management and promoting international co-operation in this field, the European migration crisis of 2014–2016 has demonstrated significant difficulties in finding practical solutions to problems of both geopolitical and economic nature.

Experts from international organisations and independent researchers have been studying the impact of migration on wages in host communities for a long time and have concluded that wages do not decrease when the number of workers increases due to external migrants. For example, this thesis is supported by a large new study of such an impact in Mexico → USA, Canada flows at the level of local North American communities in the period 2000–2015, which includes the Great Recession (Great Recession, 2008–2013) [1, p. 8].

LABOUR MIGRATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

To protect migrant workers and their families, the ILO has a number of conventions, both specialized and related to the regulation of other issues: women’s and child labour, forced labour and others. To fully protect the migrant, both in the country of arrival and origin, it is neces-

⁷ Diaspora / Demographic Encyclopaedia. Moscow: Encyclopaedia; 2013.

⁸ World Bank 2023. World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The World Bank; 2023. 318 + xxviii p.

⁹ International organisations dealing with migration issues. url: <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/network-terms-of-reference>

¹⁰ URL: <https://www.gfmd.org/>

¹¹ The first Global Refugee Forum did not take place until 2019.

¹² The Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) is an informal forum for intergovernmental information exchange and policy discussions on all issues related to the regulation/management of international migration flows. It is the world’s first intergovernmental consultation mechanism on migration issues.



sary for them to ratify the convention(s). The ILO has introduced Fundamental Conventions which all member states of the organisation are obliged to ratify. These include two conventions on forced labour, with the 1930 convention having a protocol adopted in 2014 and, in accordance with ILO standards, subject to separate ratification.¹³ All Persian Gulf states¹⁴ have ratified both forced labour conventions (which helps to protect migrant workers, including at the international level), but only Saudi Arabia has ratified the protocol. Thus, in 2016. The International Trade Union Confederation filed a lawsuit¹⁵ against the UAE for non-compliance with the ILO Convention on Forced or Compulsory Labour (No. 29) [2]. The UAE government's responses were mainly limited to the practice of implementing child labour provisions (special attention was paid to camel riders).¹⁶ As the ILO notes, the UAE "lacks an adequate legal framework that would prevent migrant workers from being subjected to situations or practices that amount to forced labour" [2, p. 2562]. The ILO monitors both the extent to which UAE law meets the requirements of ratified conventions and its implementation. For example, it requests the government to provide statistical information on the number of migrant workers, including domestic workers, who have sought legal assistance; on the outcome of migrant labour disputes.¹⁷

Ratified conventions are themselves the legal basis on which national legislation must be brought into conformity. The UAE ratified the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

(No. 105) as early as 1997, unlike, for example, neighbouring Qatar (2007), so the delay in enacting legislation is indicative of the difficulties in implementing the norms of even ratified conventions.

Despite the ever-increasing number of migrants in the world, most countries have not ratified the ILO Conventions on migration. For example, the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) has been ratified by only 54 States, among which there are no Gulf States, but there are major recipients among developed countries: Germany, France, Italy, Spain, New Zealand. The Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)¹⁸ has even fewer ratifications (30); there are no recipient countries other than Italy and no major economies of the world among the ratifiers.

Our attention to the Persian Gulf countries is due to their uniqueness: they need and attract labour migrants as *temporary* labour force and at the same time have a rapidly growing local population due to fertility. For example, the UAE's population (by 2022) has grown 31-fold since the date of state formation (1971). The number of migrants (foreign nationals) varies by emirates, their minimum share in Al-Fujairah is 61 per cent of the total population, their maximum share in Dubai is 91 per cent; and their share in the employed population is 96 per cent [3, p. 11].

It should be noted that none of the Persian Gulf countries has ratified the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers, 2011 (No. 189), although this is the most important sector for attracting immigrants along with construction. For example, 52 per cent of migrant women are employed in the domestic sector in the UAE [3, p. 3]; of the more than 1 million Filipinos, 20 per cent are domestic workers (mainly nannies and maids) [4, p. 4].

Despite the efforts of the ILO, it is not possible to solve the problem of the low level of ratification of many conventions as a source of

¹³ Many countries have taken advantage of this, as 181 out of 187 have ratified the convention and only 60 have ratified the protocol.

¹⁴ Hereinafter refers to the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf).

¹⁵ In 2001 and 2002, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions also complained to the ILO about the UAE's violations of conventions.

¹⁶ Cases of involuntary emigration/removal of minors from South-East Asian countries.

¹⁷ URL: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13101:0::NO:13101:P13101_COMMENT_ID:4049842.

¹⁸ Full title: Convention No. 143 concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers.

regulation of social relations [5, p. 38]. This certainly hinders the expansion of international law in the field of migration. Therefore, it is necessary to achieve ratification of the “migration” convention(s) by all recipient countries. But this can only be done if the ILO Governing Body makes a proposal, and the International Labour Conference decides to make Convention No. 143 fundamental. This is a complex process, but without its solution effective regulation/management¹⁹ of labour migration in the modern world is impossible.

Labour migration policies are changing even in rather conservative countries, with Saudi Arabia in 2023 expressing a desire to attract foreign workers through less restrictive policies.²⁰

CHALLENGES OF A COMMON MIGRATION POLICY IN THE EU

In order to effectively regulate external migration flows (especially in case of their rapid and significant growth), the principle of supranational co-operation is of great importance [6], which in the EU, despite the failure of attempts at coordinated resettlement of refugees from countries of arrival in Europe, had another purpose — monitoring of external borders to deter irregular migration.

The EU budget allocated 10 billion euros for migration and asylum management in 2014–2020. Over the period 2021–2027, this amount will increase to 22.7 billion euros [7, p. 56]. Such differences in funding indicate, in our opinion, that the seriousness of the situation was not immediately realised. At the same time, EU countries are also pursuing national migration policies that are subjected not only to public but also to research criticism. Assuming, as some researchers do, that expert and governmental circles in Germany “did not take into account that migration over time

erodes the identity of the state, changes its internal political landscape” [8, p. 53], we cannot but note that at the same time assimilation and adaptation of migrants within the existing identity is taking place.

Objective difficulties of adaptation²¹ lead to emotional denial of the positive features of migration, which is used in political struggles that are far from public interests. Those political forces (parties, politicians, public unions) that play on the anti-migration sentiments of a part of the population and propose knowingly unlawful restrictions are considered dangerously populist and even extremist.

The Schengen crisis seems to be the most serious in the transition from integration to fragmentation of European economies, although the Schengen area is not a direct consequence of the EU and was incorporated into the single legislation only under the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999). The creation of internal barriers preventing migrant refugees from moving from one country of the Union to another was a very harmful solution for integration, and also ineffective in the long term [9]. The EU Commission’s plan for a permanent refugee resettlement mechanism could not be adopted — it was rejected, but supranational cooperation was strengthened to manage flows and monitor Union borders [6, p. 1122].

Turkey occupies a special place in the EU migration crisis. On the one hand, it raises the practical question of using refugees to rebuild the country after the devastating earthquake of 2023, and on the other hand, referring to UN proposals to the EU and Western countries in general, it asks for trade on condition of creating sustainable jobs in the formal economy for Syrian refugees and locals. Thus, both the much-coveted development and labour adapta-

¹⁹ We use a double term because most international organisations translate the word “management” as governance, which is not true in all cases.

²⁰ URL: <https://www.bloomberglia.com/english/saudi-arabia-wants-to-attract-foreign-workers-with-less-restrictive-policies/>

²¹ The migrant community, regardless of its form — diaspora or settlement (urban enclave of migrants), is a functional system that can ensure homeostasis both through interaction with the local community and through purely internal sources, closing in on itself.



tion of refugees/migrants requires new investments by the same highly developed countries. Let us look at these costs as an example.

EXTENT OF INVOLUNTARY AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

At the beginning of 2023, there were 108.4 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide,²² of whom 76 per cent were in low- and middle-income countries and another 20 per cent in least developed countries.²³ The reason for the mass emigration, or set of reasons, is clearly identified by the migrants themselves, whose march from Central America to the United States, for example, has been labelled “Exodus from Poverty”.

An impressive example of the scale of the war-induced migration wave and methods of defence against it is the Syrian catastrophe during the armed conflicts in that country and the subsequent systemic crisis. To mitigate this wave, an agreement between the EU and Turkey was concluded in spring 2016 to reduce as much as possible the number of migrants entering the EU via the Central Mediterranean route, which was based on an agreement on financial assistance in the amount of 6 billion euros, the lifting of visa restrictions for Turkish citizens under certain conditions and a number of other issues. Despite predictions of failure on the part of third countries and discontent within the EU itself, the agreement is not only still in force (Turkey has already received 9.9 billion euros), but has also successfully solved the problem of the refugee invasion of Europe: as of 2023, the largest number of refugees — 15.22 thousand — was received by Germany, followed by France and the Netherlands — more than 5.5 thousand; significantly smaller in population Sweden and Finland resettled 3.1 and 2.7 thousand people, respectively. If we compare these countries in terms of relative rate per 100,000 population, Finland leads (49.4), followed by the Netherlands

(31.6) and Sweden (30.4). Germany has a much lower rate (18.3), but it is higher than Belgium and France (8.7). It is quite wrong to speak of a wave of Syrian migrants “flooding” Western countries based on these figures — just over 37,000 people have moved to the West.²⁴ Therefore, Turkey’s role as a successful barrier to migrant refugees cannot be overlooked in the future policies of EU countries and others experiencing similar problems. A similar thing would be effective on the path of migrants to North America via Mexico, but these flows, which cause such heated political battles in the US, are not mainly made up of refugees fleeing from disasters, but of those seeking a better fortune for both purely economic and a combination of various reasons.

In addition to the Central Mediterranean flow, there is a second major destination — Italy, where the flow of irregular migration to Italy increased by more than 50% amounting to 158,000 people in 2023.²⁵ Libya and Tunisia have also become key transit hubs, including for refugees and those seeking a better life. However, attempts by a number of Mediterranean countries (Italy) to create a buffer have not yielded noticeably positive results.

The extraordinary burden of unregulated migration flows that has been placed on a number of countries has led to the search for entirely new solutions to the problem. The most unexpected was the British government’s attempt²⁶ to negotiate with the Rwandan government to resettle those who have not been granted asylum in the UK in that African country. This plan can be assessed as a grandiose one,²⁷ although it is too complicated to be realised quickly. Its successful implemen-

²⁴ The author’s data and calculations on: URL <https://de.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/03/31/was-wird-aus-dem-eu-migrationsabkommen-mit-der-turkei-wenn-die-opposition-die-wahlen-gewin>

²⁵ URL: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205>

²⁶ UK Home Office statistics show a 60 per cent increase in illegal migration to this country in 2023 compared to 2022. URL: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/migrants-return-to-lorries-as-weather-thwarts-channel-crossings-7rtlwp3pw>.

²⁷ For both political and economic reasons and their consequences.

²² The most catastrophic period was the mid-2000s.

²³ Global trends forced displacement in 2022. Copenhagen: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; 2023. 48 p.

tation would lead not only to the solution of the problem in Britain, but also to the development of Rwanda itself. Such an unusual project arouses resistance from Britain (decisions of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal) and international organisations (Human Rights Watch) and scepticism from part of the international community. Without explicitly assessing the ongoing efforts of the British and Rwandan governments to find a way out of the deadlock and start accepting migrants in Rwanda, we can at least conclude that this unexpected project shows very broad possibilities of finding solutions in crisis situations.

It should be noted that the “Turkish corridor” was followed by migrants from the Middle East, while the “Mediterranean corridor” was followed by representatives of African countries. Thus, in the first flow in the year of the peak of the migration crisis (2015), citizens of Syria prevailed (50% of all those who received protection status in EU member states²⁸), and they were the majority among emigrants in Greece (57%), where 22% of them came from Afghanistan and 5% from Iraq. Eritrean nationals (25 per cent), Nigerian and Somali nationals (10 per cent each) predominated among those who moved to Italy, while migrants from Syria represented only 7 per cent [7, p. 56].

If the international community pays and is likely to pay a lot of attention to events causing migration waves, the main burden falls on the world’s most developed countries, including those already providing development aid support. But many European experts do not stop there and believe that the success/effectiveness of regulating irregular migration will depend on the extent to which countries in the Global North would support the countries most affected by rising food prices by stimulating food production and increasing the resilience of the agricultural sector [10]. One cannot but agree that this is an important factor in controlling irregular migration flows, but the future of the least developed countries in such a

case will be linked mainly to the constant growth of aid to them and the growing “burden” of the “rich” countries. Such a path seems to be the most obvious and simple one, but it does not lead to the goal of sustainable development of their economies, but rather to the emergence of new problems.

The most prominent permanent migrant flows are: Russia ↔ Central Asian countries, USA ↔ Mexico, Germany ↔ Eastern European countries — strongly affecting demographics and economies in the host communities.

Despite the position of many developed countries (including Russia) that it is necessary to apply a selective approach to the entry of migrants with *high qualifications* and scarce professions, all of them simultaneously need and attract low-skilled labour force [11], the need for which will exist for a long time to come. Seasonal migration, which plays an important role in large economies, has a special place in this confrontation. Seasonal workers have lower skills, and therefore the emigration of unskilled and low-skilled labour will continue in countries with the strictest selective policies. The example of U.S. farmers’ losses during the government’s 2017–2020 tightening of the admission of seasonal workers across the Mexican border (especially in California)²⁹ demonstrates the importance and necessity of foreign workers.

MIGRATION STATISTICS AND DATABASE ISSUES

The main data on migration are obtained from national censuses. The second most important source is special surveys, such as the European Union Labour Force Survey, one of the largest.³⁰ The United Nations Population Division, which provides estimates of international migrants, serves as a database for developing countries.

One of the world’s main centres of information on migration is the World Bank, which is gradually expanding its set of indicators of international mi-

²⁸ In 2019, EU countries granted protection to 295,800 asylum seekers, of whom almost one in three (27%) came from Syria.

²⁹ URL: <https://immigrationimpact.com/2017/08/14/farmers-struggle-labor-food-prices/>

³⁰ URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>



gration flows. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) also has a migration database. It started as a logistics organisation for refugees and displaced persons, becoming a UN subsidiary in 2016,³¹ and coordinates the UN Migration Network, established in 2019, which also includes Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN World Food Programme and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In turn, International Organisation for Migration can look to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as a non-binding framework for state cooperation. The global mandate of International Organisation for Migration includes assistance not only to refugees and involuntary displaced persons, which UNHCR also deals with, but also to labour migrants, where its work overlaps with ILO's work. Attention to the functions of UN organisations in the field of migration is not only related to an analysis of their capacity to regulate migration flows alongside national governments. The problem is that these organisations are also involved in humanitarian assistance to *internally displaced* persons as a result of disasters, and their funding (which is usually required on an emergency basis) significantly reduces the possibilities for their systematic work in the field of international migration, which cannot but affect the effectiveness of addressing migration issues.

Local international organisations and foundations play a significant role not only in the regulation of migration, but above all in its research and accumulation of a database. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), which has 20 member states and operates in more than 90 countries, should be mentioned. In its reports/statements since 2019, it analyses migration flows to European host countries and the situation in the main countries of origin of migrants, using a regional approach.

The World Bank's statistics on international migration, unfortunately, identifies overly en-

larged groups of countries. The group with low and medium per capita income is particularly unsatisfactory, as it includes the least developed countries (where emigrants are refugees and illegal immigrants) and countries with above-average income (e.g., Russia, Kazakhstan), where labour migrants who arrived for economic reasons predominate. Therefore, the main migration flows noted by the World Bank are poorly comparable. Thus, it is very important to single out the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf not only because of their significant share in global migration – 17%, but also because of the role of labour migrants in their economies (up to 70% of the total labour force) and the huge gender differences of migrants, which are not found in any other flows (up to 90% of men). In addition, as a peculiar phenomenon among global migration, it is worth noting the rich countries of this region, which fall into two groups: those that need migrants as a result of a shortage of working-age population and labour force, and those that want to ease the pressure on the national labour market by emigrating due to a rapidly growing population.

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF MIGRANT REMITTANCES

In 2022, the World Bank's Global Knowledge and Policy Advice Centre on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) established the International Working Group on Improving Data on Remittance Flows [12]. This is due not only to the need for more accurate and streamlined remittance statistics, but also to the importance of this indicator in relation to the UN SDGs, including Goal 10 to reduce the cost of remittances to 3% by 2030.

In 2023, more than 200 million migrant workers sent US\$ 669 billion to 800 million family members.³² In 2023, the countries with the highest volumes of remittances received (the top five) are the fast-growing economies: India, Mexico, China, Philippines, Egypt (*see Table*). In addi-

³¹ We do not touch upon the predecessors (predecessor) of IOM, which are included in the history of its activities 1951–1989 rather conventionally/conditionally.

³² URL: <https://www.ifad.org/en/ffr>

Table

The largest countries in outflows and inflows of remittances, USD \$ million

Country	2022		Country	2023	
	sending remittances	share in GDP,%		receiving remittances	share in GDP,%
US	81 636	0.3	India	125 000	3,4
Saudi Arabia	39 349	3.6	Mexico	67 000	3,7
UAE	39 673	7.8	China	49 500	0.3
Switzerland	33 550	4.1	Philippines	40 000	9,2
China	18 256	0.1	France	34 000	1,1
Kuwait	17 744	10.1	Egypt	24 200	6.1

Source: compiled by the author on the basis of WB data: World Bank-KNOMAD, December 2023.

tion, the importance of remittances³³ for national economies is reflected in their share in a country's GDP. Tajikistan (48 per cent), Tonga (41 per cent), Samoa (32 per cent), Lebanon (28 per cent) and Nicaragua (27 per cent) have a significant share of remittance inflows in their GDP. But even these countries are interested in return migration and reintegration [13]. Since 2005, the Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID)³⁴ has been organised to maximise the development impact of these "vital flows".³⁵

The Table selects countries where outward transfers exceed \$ 10 billion.³⁶ Among the largest recipient countries, Pakistan (\$ 24bn) and Bangladesh (\$ 23bn) have almost the same volume as Egypt, and it is equally significant for these economies, with a share in GDP of 7.0 per cent and 5.2 per cent respectively. Both groups include China, for whose economy both types of personal transfers are not noticeably important.

It should be noted that in 2022 in Russia *for the first time* incoming remittances began to *exceed*

outgoing remittances, which is typical of developing countries, especially poor ones, for which the inflow of remittances plays a major role [14, p. 42]. The same situation has been observed in France for a long time, which is explained by its special position/place among the EU countries; its share among the remittance-receiving countries in the EU exceeds one fifth of the total volume (20.4%), which is much higher than that of Germany (13.7%) and Belgium (8.7%).³⁷ The inflow of remittances to France demonstrates the great potential of seasonal and cross-border migration for the states of the integration union. Thus, due to cross-border and seasonal migration of the French, their remittances in 2022 from Switzerland to their home country totalled € 19.2 billion and from Luxembourg it totalled € 7.1 billion.³⁸ France's continuing ties with countries that were its sphere of influence in the 19th century encourage labour immigration, so the highest outflow of personal transfers to countries outside the union in the EU is between France and Morocco — € 2.7

³³ The high share emphasises the importance of remittances in financing the current account and the budget deficit.

³⁴ Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development.

³⁵ URL: <https://gfrid.org/about/>

³⁶ This is what Russia was until 2022; the maximum in pre-crisis 2013. — USD 37.217 billion.

³⁷ URL: <https://biteffect.net/ru/kto-lider-po-denezhnym-perevodam-v-evrope/>

³⁸ URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Personal_transfers_and_compensation_of_employees#Western_European_countries_were_amongst_the_main_senders_and_recipients_of_these_cross-border_flows



billion (2022).³⁹ But while France is at the beginning of the second twenty countries of the world by such an important macroeconomic indicator as GDP per capita, slightly ahead of the average GDP per capita in the EU, Russia is at the end of the list of the first fifty countries, falling in 2022 by another 5 places compared to 2021.⁴⁰ This fact reflects the general economic situation affecting the inflow of foreign labour into the Russian economy.

The volume of remittances sent by labour migrants from Russia fell 3.8 times in 2023 compared to 2018 (the maximum after the 2015/2016 crisis), indicating that migrants reacted primarily to the depreciation of the rouble and worsening employment conditions that caused the outflow of foreign labour. The so-called “covid drop” was only a quarter (24.4%), while the balance of external migrants decreased by almost 2.7 times in 2020.⁴¹

The significant and growing role of migrants’ remittances for their countries of origin is widely covered in the scientific literature [15–17]. Therefore, let us focus only on one problem of this economic, financial, and social phenomenon — the cost of remittances (personal transfers). Reduction of this indicator is one of the UN SDG 10 (indicator 10.A) and can have the most noticeable impact not only on families and households of migrants, but also on the economy of their countries of origin.

According to the World Bank’s World Remittance Price Database, the fees charged for remittances remain stubbornly high: as of Q2 2023, they averaged 6.2 per cent for sending US\$ 200⁴² — higher than a year ago. Banks are still the most expensive channel for sending remittances (about 12.1% on average), followed by post offices (7%), money transfer operators (5.3%) and mobile phones (4.1%).⁴³

The importance of remittances and their value is emphasised not only by global organisations but also by the G20 Group, as faster, cheaper, and more transparent cross-border payment services can improve the lives of millions of people, above all reducing poverty in migrant households [18], supporting economic growth, international trade, global development, and access to financial services. The G20 prioritises such progress. But this does not apply to irregular migrants, who in most cases are deprived of the possibility to send personal transfers through legal sources and have to use personal channels. Reaffirming the UN Sustainable Development Goal, the G20 has set a target that by 2030 the average global cost of sending remittances should be no more than 3 per cent (per US\$ 200) and there should be no migration corridors where it exceeds 5 per cent.

Realities show that the cost of transfers between developing countries themselves is not only many times higher than this threshold, but also seems unthinkable in the 21st century. For example, fees exceed 50% for funds sent from Turkey to neighbouring Bulgaria, while in sub-Saharan Africa remittances from Tanzania to Uganda and Kenya are subject to fees exceeding 30%. In South Africa, sending across borders with neighbouring Botswana, Eswatini and even the South African enclave, the Kingdom of Lesotho, is particularly expensive. At the same time, it should be emphasised that, on the one hand, South Africa became a member of the G20 in 2023, and on the other hand, this club has a *G20 plan to facilitate remittance flows*, in which South Africa’s actions are already prescribed, and the average cost of remittances in 2021 was supposed to decrease to 5%. In 2021, however, the G20 average was 8.12%, almost four times lower than South Africa’s current fee. One can only hope that the country’s accession to the Club will contribute to lowering this target,⁴⁴ — without which the G20 plan will fail.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ Calculated according to: URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD>

⁴¹ Calculated according to: URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/compendium/document/13283>

⁴² URL: <https://remittanceprices.worldbank.org/>

⁴³ URL: [https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/12/18/remittance-flows-grow-2023-slower-pace-migration-development-brief)

12/18/remittance-flows-grow-2023-slower-pace-migration-development-brief

⁴⁴ As suggested, by promoting competition and pressurising the cost of remittances in South Africa.

If the foreign policy pressures in the above examples are beyond reasonable economic ties and in this aspect with regard to remittances do not raise questions, the cost of foreign labour transfers between countries integrating their economies on the basis of the African Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA),⁴⁵ shows the disinterest of the signatory states in giving it substance — the elimination of borders for the free movement of capital, goods, services and, of course, labour force.

It is also worth noting that the number of labour migrants is increasing slower than the volume of their remittances, which may indicate that the average earnings of migrants are increasing as a result of higher qualifications and better quality of the labour force.

REGULATION OF ILLEGAL/ IRREGULAR MIGRATION

The situation is viewed from a perspective centred on international law, from the point of view of the country of origin and where the country of influx is going to send the migrants — whether this region (country) is safe for them or not. Therefore, migrants/refugees coming from a country that is not dangerous for them would not be considered as potential refugees, but as disadvantaged migrants who are not eligible for refugee status and are not in need of international protection.

Although the European migration crisis is considered to be a thing of the past, irregular migration is still a problem for almost all European countries with access to the Mediterranean Sea. Spain, for example, experienced a new wave of irregular migration in 2023: the number of irregular arrivals increased by 82.1 per cent, putting a significant strain on the host country. This is especially true for the Canary Islands, which are easily accessible by water — in 2023, the number of arrivals there increased by more than 2.5 times (by 154.5%), and reached 39.9 thousand people.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The African Continental Free Trade Area.

⁴⁶ Source: Information from the Spanish Ministry of the Interior Affairs. file:///C:/Users/Asus/Downloads/Presentaci%C3%B3n%20de%20

Despite the predominance of research on immigration problems in developed countries, its main corridors remain those within developing countries. Attitudes towards these flows have changed dramatically in the 21st century. Uganda's 2016–2020 and 2021–2025 national development plans, for example, were designed to provide an integrated development solution for refugees and their host communities, and the country became one of the first in the world to integrate refugees into national development plans. To achieve this, a *common approach* across all government agencies was adopted,⁴⁷ involving district level interventions to serve the entire population, both Ugandans and refugees.

CONCLUSIONS

The World Bank advises national governments to ensure the participation of the private sector, civil society and local authorities in the development of migration policy. With the urgent need for its correction in the Russian Federation, as evidenced by numerous initiatives of the legislative, executive branch and public associations, the state and society need to realise the role of private business and local authorities in a forward-looking vision of the immigration problem, which is more fruitful than a policy of rapid response to frequent changes in the situation of an opportunistic and economic nature. In addition, local authorities/municipalities are at the forefront of decision-making on the problems of migrant response and integration. Therefore, it is necessary to rely on them, which is especially important for large countries such as Russia, the USA and Canada.

In the 21st century labour migration is an important macroeconomic factor for both developing countries and the “old” world, the impact of which will only increase due to the objective process of demographic ageing and declining birth rates in developed countries. This is why many countries

PowerPoint%20-%202024_informe_quincenal_acumulado_01-01_al_31-12-2023%20(1).pdf.

⁴⁷ We emphasise this fact, because in Russia even statistical data on migrants from different agencies diverge considerably.



of origin of labour migrants are pursuing special migration policies,⁴⁸ something that is so lacking in the post-Soviet states.

It is necessary to emphasise the difference in the attitude towards migration in the policies of receiving countries in the present and past centuries, which is that the skills and qualities of immigrants should now match the needs of their host countries. It is very important that this principle is shared by many out-migration countries, which seek to regulate processes in this way. These changes lead to the optimisation of regulated flows and the maximisation of their benefits for

both receiving and destination countries.

The migration policies of states such as the United States, Canada, and Germany should be based on the federal governments' fiduciary duty to protect the reputation of these countries as equal communities for any external migrants, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or gender identity.

To conclude the study, let us turn to the epigraph of the World Bank report, taken from a Parsi legend: "They [foreigners] will dissolve in society as sugar dissolves in milk, sweetening the life of society but not disturbing it" [3, p. iv]. Are modern societies able to accept migrants from very different cultures in the same way as Parsi society did 1,000 years ago?

⁴⁸ For example, the Papua New Guinea Government to facilitate labour migration to Australia under the Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme.

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