

# Tajikistan



## General Information



### Population

8.636.896 (World Bank 2020)

9.506.300 (STAT TJ 2021)



### Immigration

276.031 (UN DESA  
Immigration Stock 2020)

40.859 (STAT TJ 2019)



### Emigration

586.851 (UN DESA Emigration  
Stock 2020)

54.495 (STAT TJ 2019)



### Working-age population

5.695.500 (World Bank 2020)

5.907.300 (STAT TJ 2021)



### Unemployment rate

7.5% (World Bank 2020)

2.1% (STAT TJ 2020)



### GDP

8.194,15 mln, current prices  
USD (World Bank 2019)

79.109,8 mln, current prices  
TJS (STAT TJ 2019)



### Refugees and IDPs

Refugees:

5.588 (UN Refugee Stock  
mid-2020)

Asylum seekers:

408 (UN Asylum Stock  
mid-2020)



### Citizenship

By Birth: No

By Descent: Yes

Years of Residency: 10



### Territory

144,100 km<sup>2</sup> (CIA World  
Factbook)

# Migration Authorities Responsible Body

Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Population

## Line Ministries

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ministry of Justice

## Agencies

Migration Service

## Key Policy Documents

1999 (2018) Law on Migration

2002 (2014) Law on Refugees

2014 (2019) Law on Combatting Human Trafficking

2015 Citizenship Law

2018 Law on the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons

2019 Amnesty Law

National Development Strategy until 2030

## Relevant Publications

Migration Profile Light 2013

Extended Migration Profile 2010

Analytical Report ‘**Combating irregular migration and human trafficking in the CIS countries**’

Background Note ‘**Asylum seekers from the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian Countries in the EU**’

Background Note ‘**Migration and Mobility in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: What to expect in times of COVID-19?**’

Policy Brief ‘**The EU Central Asia Strategy and Its Impact on Migration**’

Analytical Report ‘**China's "Belt and Road" Initiative and Its Impact on Migration Flows and Policies in Central Asia**’

For the past 30 years, Tajikistan’s population has been prone to migration. The volume of international migration flows in both directions has increased in recent years. In 2019, **54,000 persons left the country, while 40,000** persons entered it. Whereas the 1990s saw major ethnic emigration and considerable forced migration resulting from civil war, the past decade has mainly been characterised by economic migration.

The poverty rate remains high with **over 26 %** of the population living below the national poverty line. The national labour market is **weak** and cannot provide employment for everyone. **Structural challenges** in the Tajik economy also weigh on the country’s development prospects. In 2020, the unemployment rate increased to 7.5 % with some **52,000** unemployed registered by governmental employment services alone. Meanwhile, the national population continues to grow at a **2.3 % rate** owing to high fertility, notwithstanding the decade-long negative net migration. Over **half of the population** is under 25 years of age. Around **150,000 young people** enter the labour market every year but **20.5 %** of them remain without a job.

Tajikistan belongs to the most remittance-dependant countries in the world. In 2013, the **share of remittances** to the national GDP was 49%. In 2018, this indicator stood at **31%** placing Tajikistan third worldwide. About **70% of Tajik families** are believed to live off such transfers, generated by the almost **one million Tajik citizens** estimated to work abroad. Most Tajik labour migrants are **young men** working in construction, trade, housing and cleaning services, agriculture, and maintenance. Over 90% of them work in the Russian Federation on a seasonal and temporary basis. Their number amounted to more than **530,000 in 2019**, according to Tajik sources. Meanwhile, **Russian sources** recorded twice as many that year. For comparison, only **9,000** Tajik nationals worked in Kazakhstan in 2019.

Permanent migration from Tajikistan to Russia has also been on the rise. Over 63,000 Tajiks obtained Russian citizenship and over 93,000 held permanent residence permits **in 2020**. These figures amounted to 44,000 and 89,000 respectively **in the first half of 2021**. Educational migration has also been growing: in 2000/01, less than 1,000 **Tajiks studied in Russia** but their number exceeded 18,000 in 2019/20. **A recent study** confirms that education and work represent the two main migration motives among youth from Tajikistan in particular and Central Asia as a whole. Even though more than 70% of the young migrant workers intend to return home, most of them also want to “gain a foothold” in a destination country.

Over the past decade, both the number of **first time and overall residence permits** issued to Tajik nationals inside the EU increased. The former rose from 251 permits in 2010 to 1,585 in 2019. The latter has nearly tripled from 1,432 in 2011 to 4,714 in 2019. In 2019, most residence permits in the EU were issued by Germany for refugee status (including subsidiary protection), followed by education and family reunification. Meanwhile, Poland issued most permits to Tajiks for remunerated activities. The number of **Tajik refugees** has doubled over the past five years but totals less than 2,500 worldwide. Germany, the US and Austria are the prime destinations for refugees and asylum-seekers from Tajikistan.

According to UN DESA, Tajikistan hosts over 276,000 immigrants, most of whom originate from Russia, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. These four countries also top the statistics in terms of short-term travellers entering Tajikistan. Overall, their number decreased from some **48,000 in 2018** to

17,000 in 2020, with most coming from Uzbekistan for private reasons. Tajikistan issued nearly 7,000 work permits to foreign nationals in 2018 and over 3,000 in 2020. Two thirds of them come from China. Tajikistan further continues to host over 6,000 stateless persons but aims to end statelessness on its territory. Since 2014, some 40,000 people had their nationality confirmed. Finally, there are no accurate estimates of irregular migration in Tajikistan. Reportedly, most irregular migrants are stateless persons and over-stayers entering visa-free from Uzbekistan.

In-migration to Tajikistan also features a considerable number of Tajik migrant workers returning home. Over 275,000 Tajik nationals in Russia committed administrative violations, resulting in a re-entry ban. In response, Tajikistan developed an employment programme tailored to labour migrants prohibited from entering Russia and other countries. More generally, Tajikistan is actively supporting the reintegration of Tajik labour migrants.

Sharing a 1,300 km border with Afghanistan, Tajikistan has received a growing number of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers. Since 2015, their number tripled to 6,000 in 2020. Following the Taliban's return to power in 2021, Tajikistan expressed its readiness to accommodate up to 100,000 Afghan refugees. With some 25% of the 37 million Afghan population being ethnic Tajiks – arguably more than the ethnic Tajik population of Tajikistan – many more might aim for Tajikistan given the volatile situation in Afghanistan. Moreover, the Tajik-Afghan border remains permeable in some areas with border outposts facing occasional attacks by Afghan smugglers. Already in 2015, Tajikistan adopted an Action Plan in the event of a mass arrival of asylum seekers, identifying possible locations of field camps along the Afghan border.

Tajikistan endorsed the Global Compact for Migration and is a party to various regional migration dialogues. In recent years, the country revised a number of laws in the area of migration. In 2018, Tajikistan adopted the Law "On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Tajikistan", allowing foreign citizens to stay in Tajikistan without registration for up to 10 working days. The same year, Tajikistan ratified a readmission agreement with Kazakhstan, two agreements with Uzbekistan and Armenia on mutual trips of their citizens, and another agreement with Kazakhstan concerning the stay of own nationals on each other's territory. Meanwhile, the Amnesty Law of 2019 allows irregular migrants from the former USSR and stateless persons who entered the Republic before 31 December 2016 to legalize their status and obtain a residence permit. Finally, in 2020, two laws liberalised the Code of Administrative Offences and the Procedural Code, abolishing the requirement to extradite foreigners who violated national residence rules.