



# Kazakhstan

## General Information



### Population

20 592 571 (World Bank 2024)  
20 243 981 (STAT KZ 2024)



### Immigration

2 089 797 (UN DESA  
Immigration Stock 2024)  
20 383 (STAT KZ Flow 2024  
Q3)



### Emigration

2 796 572 (UN DESA  
Emigration Stock 2024)  
10 201 (STAT KZ Flow 2024  
Q3)



### Working-age population

12 761 934 (World Bank 2024)  
9 735 000 (STAT KZ 2024 Q3)



### Unemployment rate

4.9 % (World Bank 2022)  
4.6 % (STAT KZ 2024 Q3)



### GDP

291 480 274 648.8 current  
prices USD (World Bank 2024)  
119 748 439 100 000 current  
prices KZT (STAT KZ 2023)



### Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

#### Refugees

65 028 (UNHCR 2025)  
259 (CIS 2023)

#### Asylum Seekers

229 (UNHCR 2025)  
316 (CIS 2023)

#### IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2025)



### Citizenship

#### By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2024)

#### By Descent

Yes (conditional) (GLOBALCIT  
2024)

#### Years of Residency

5 years of residence required  
(GLOBALCIT 2024)



### Territory

2 724 900 km<sup>2</sup> (CIA World  
Factbook)

# Migration Authorities

## Responsible Body

Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population

## Line Ministries

Ministry of Interior

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Agencies

Committee of labor, social protection and migration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Committee of migration service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan

National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan

## Key Policy Documents

Migration Policy Concept 2023-2027

'Kazakhstan-2050' Strategy

Strategic Development Plan until 2025

Concept of Migration Policy for 2017-2021

2011 (2018) Law on Migration

1995 (2021) Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners

2009 (2021) Law of Refugees

## Relevant Publications

Russian "Relokanty" in the Caucasus and Central Asia

Combating irregular migration and human trafficking in the CIS countries

Asylum seekers from the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian Countries in the EU

Migration and Mobility in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: What to expect in times of COVID-19?

The EU Central Asia Strategy and Its Impact on Migration

Addressing the Challenges of Labour Migration within the EAEU

China's "Belt and Road" Initiative and Its Impact on Migration Flows and Policies in Central Asia

Kazakhstan Extended Migration Profile 2010

Kazakhstan Migration Profile Light 2015

Advanced Migration Profile 2014-2019

Overview of the migration situation in Kazakhstan — Quarterly Report (January - March 2023)



The Republic of Kazakhstan is an important migration hub in Central Asia. In 2021, it ranked among the top 15 global destination and origin countries for migrants in 2021. Since 2001, Kazakhstan's population has steadily grown, surpassing 20 million in 2024.

Migration in Kazakhstan is mostly a regional phenomenon, with most movements occurring between Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. According to the [IOM's World Migration Report 2024](#), the Kazakhstan-Russia migration corridor ranked 8th globally. In 2020, Kazakhstan remained home to **3,732,073** migrants, most of whom come from Russia (2,211,875), Ukraine (317,803), and Uzbekistan (264,862).

In 2023, Kazakhstan experienced positive net migration for the first time in a decade, with over **25,000** persons arriving for permanent residence and **16,000** leaving the country. Compared to 2022, arrivals increased by 45.7%, while departures decreased by 33.3%. CIS countries accounted for over 86% of arrivals and 77% of departures, with most new arrivals from Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The positive migration balance with Uzbekistan was a key factor in Kazakhstan's overall positive net migration in 2023. Meanwhile, departures to Russia among permanent migrants outnumbered arrivals. From non-CIS countries, most flows for permanent residence into and from the country were with [Mongolia, China, Türkiye](#). Temporary residence permits increased significantly, from **530,000** issued in 2022 to **713,000** in 2023. Additionally, a growing number of ethnic Kazakhs are returning to their homeland, with **16,026** obtaining *kandas* status by September 2023.

It is important to note that the overall migration flows to and from Kazakhstan are much larger when considering border crossing data. For example, in [the last quarter of 2023](#), Kazakhstan saw over 3.4 million arrivals and over 3.2 million departures, mostly from and to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. The total number of arrivals exceeded **14 million** in 2023, up from **6.9 million** recorded in 2022. Arrivals from Russia has also been notably large in 2022, with nearly **a million** persons crossing into Kazakhstan in the immediate aftermath of the September mobilisation in Russia. However, reportedly only about **150,000** Russians remained in Kazakhstan in late 2023.

Kazakhstan's proximity to other Central Asian countries, opportunities on its labour market, and its [growing economy](#) have long attracted Central Asian labour migrants, many of whom work on a temporary and seasonal basis. Spikes in labour migration to Kazakhstan [often correlate](#) with the unfavourable conditions in Russia – continuing to attract a lion's share of Central Asian labour migrants – and its restrictive migration policies. Uzbek labour migrants are by far the largest group of foreign workers in Kazakhstan. According to the [IOM mobility assessment for December 2023-January 2024](#), there were nearly half a million Uzbek labour migrants, followed by 70,000 Russians, 27,000 Kyrgyz, and 21,000 Tajiks. Overall, the number of foreign workers in Kazakhstan increased by **47%** in 2023 compared to 2022.

Kazakhstan also faces challenges with irregular migration, involving individuals seeking employment and [violating migration law](#) in Kazakhstan, or those fleeing political or economic instability in their home countries, mainly within the CIS, such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Following the Crocus City Hall terrorist attack near Moscow on March 22, 2024, reportedly carried out by several ethnic Tajiks, Kazakhstan has [intensified](#) its crackdown on illegal migration in response to an unexpected influx of workers.

As of mid-2020, UN DESA estimated the stock of migrants from Kazakhstan at **4,203,899**, with most settled in the developed regions in Europe and North America. At the same time, the Fund of Compatriots of Kazakhstan claims that this number is approaching **5 million**, of which **1.6 million** Kazakhs reside in China, 821,000 in Uzbekistan, and 591,000 in Russia. Sino-Kazakh relations have deep historical [roots](#) and have been further strengthened by the introduction of a visa-free regime in 2023. Additionally, significant Kazakh [populations](#) are found in Mongolia (121,000), the Kyrgyz Republic (35,000), Türkiye (30,000), the United States (17,000), Iran (10,000), and Turkmenistan (9,000). As to migration flows, from **16,000 permanent residents** who left Kazakhstan in 2023, **73%** moved to Russia, 14% to Germany, 3% to the USA and 2% to Poland.

EU Member States, particularly those in Central and Eastern Europe facing growing labour shortages in key industries, are becoming increasingly attractive to labour migrants from Kazakhstan. In 2023, Kazakh nationals held twice as many valid residence permits for employment in Poland (3,943 vs 1,673) and Hungary (1,103 vs 450) compared to 2021. However, family reunification and education remain the most common grounds for issuing residence permits to Kazakh nationals in the EU, who held **78,567** valid permits at the end of 2022, with half issued by Germany, and primarily for family reasons. Spain and France equally issued most permits on family grounds, with over 3,600 and close to 3,000 permits respectively. Meanwhile, the Czech Republic issued 9,039 permits, mostly for education. In 2023, Kazakh nationals received over **18,500** first-time residence permits in the EU, an 11% increase from 2022 and a 47% increase from 2021. Most permits were issued in Poland (15% increase from 2022), Lithuania (sixfold increase from 2022), and the Czech Republic (10% increase from 2021). Kazakh citizens are also increasingly seeking employment abroad in countries such as [Japan](#), the [United Kingdom and South Korea](#) (the [number](#) of Kazakhs in South Korea may vary from 10,000 to 40,000).

According to [UNHCR](#), 11,277 people from Kazakhstan sought asylum in 2023. The most common destinations included the United Kingdom, Germany and Canada. In 2022, Germany hosted **4,417** Kazakh nationals with refugee status, a significant increase from just 86 recorded the previous year. France hosted the second largest number of Kazakh refugees in the EU, with **543** individuals.

Irregular migration of Kazakh nationals in the EU remains considerably low, while return rates exceeding average 60% since 2015. For example, in 2023, **635** Kazakhs national were returned out of **1055** who were ordered to leave. In the first quarter of 2024, **215** Kazakh citizens were ordered to leave the EU, with most orders issued by Sweden (50), Lithuania (35) and France (30). During the same period, **160** persons were returned following an order to leave, primarily from Sweden (65) and Lithuania (25). The number of Kazakhs remaining irregularly in the EU surpassed **2,000** persons in 2023, the highest figure recorded since 2014, nearly doubling the average of around 1,000 in previous years.

Kazakhstan endorsed the Global Compact for Migration and is a party to various regional migration dialogues. Acknowledging the

growing role of labour migration for socio-economic development, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population [gradually overtakes various functions](#) in the area of migration from the Ministry of Interior. As of 2022, the latter no longer issues work permits to labour migrants nor decides upon refugee status. In 2022, the Migration Policy Concept 2023-2027 [was approved](#) by the Government of Kazakhstan. In early 2023, in response to the influx of Russian citizens, Kazakhstan introduced restricted visa-free stay for citizens of the Eurasian Economic Union to a maximum of 90 days within any 180-day period. Key strategic documents such as the ["Kazakhstan-2050" Development Strategy](#) and the [Strategic Development Plan](#) until 2025 focus on strengthening human capital and improving the quality of life, including for those involved in migration. In his 2021 address, President Tokayev emphasized the significant impact of migration on the labour market where Migration Policy Concept 2023-2027 plays the important role.

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