

# Kyrgyz Republic

*Draft*

Migration Profile Light

2013

The text of the Migration Profile Light on the Kyrgyz Republic has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Prague Process based on the available public sources. The text was forwarded to the State Migration service under the Government of Kyrgyz Republic on 1 February 2016 for consideration, comments or approval. In anticipation of reply, this version is published as a draft. The draft is a consultation document and cannot be considered as reflecting the official position of the country.



# PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND DISCLAIMER

After the adoption of the Building Migration Partnerships Joint Declaration in Prague in April 2009, the Building Migration Partnerships initiative (BMP) started to work on establishing the BMP Knowledge Base. The Knowledge Base, nowadays known as the Prague Process Knowledge Base, consists of a set of Extended Migration Profiles<sup>1</sup> elaborated and endorsed in 2010-2011 and the interactive online map (i-Map), which visualizes the available information.

The Prague Process Targeted Initiative (PP TI) is an EU-funded project, which builds upon the BMP initiative and implements selected priorities identified in the Prague Process Action Plan endorsed in Poznan in November 2011. One of the objectives of PP TI is to maintain the Knowledge Base, keep it up-to-date and develop it further.

While continuous attention to updating and developing Extended Migration Profiles remains, the PP TI has taken into account the feedback received from the Prague Process participating states and has proposed the concept of the Migration Profile Light. In comparison to the Extended Migration Profile, which from its name indicates that the information should be of thorough and detailed nature, the Migration Profile Light should be a handy tool with a limited number of pages clearly indicating the areas of interest. The Migration Profile Light should aim at key priorities and problems, easy annual updatability and standardized data for all countries involved.

The proposed Migration Profile Light (MPL) concept has been well received by the Prague Process participating states and Germany volunteered in testing the concept by filling in the template. The MPL on Germany has been developed and the process of its establishment has led to identification of gaps in the first template, which have been covered in cooperation with the PP TI Support Team at ICMPD. At the time of the publication, MPLs were prepared by Germany (2013), Hungary (2014), Republic of Armenia (2014), Czech Republic (2015), Republic of Kazakhstan (2015), and Republic of Uzbekistan (2015).

The aim of the PP TI is to establish the Knowledge Base as a useful tool consisting of state-owned migration profiles with standard and comparable data categories. While aiming at the seven leading states of PP TI and the PP TI non-EU participating states, the interest of the Prague Process is to collect national MPLs for all 50 Prague Process participating states.

The MPL is an exercise, which targets all states, believing that this will lead to mutual understanding of the migration situation in partner states, existing migratory flows, priorities, problems and interests. The MPL should serve as an informative but also policy making tool. In case of need, methodological and expert support is planned to contribute to development of MPL in states with limited experience with such exercise.

Ownership and responsibility of the content in terms of data provided in this Migration Profile resides solely with the country elaborating the report.

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1 Albania (endorsed 2010), Armenia (2011), Azerbaijan (2010), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010), Czech Republic (2010), Georgia (2011), Hungary (2011), Kazakhstan (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2011), Poland (2010), Romania (2010), Slovakia (2010), Tajikistan (2010), Ukraine (2011).

The PP TI Support Team within the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is ready to help and can be contacted at [ppti@icmpd.org](mailto:ppti@icmpd.org). The Knowledge Base of the Prague Process is accessible at [www.pragueprocess.eu](http://www.pragueprocess.eu) and [www.imap-migration.org](http://www.imap-migration.org), section Prague Process.

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# 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNTRY

## 1.1. Size, population, bordering countries and length of borders

Official name	Kyrgyz Republic; Kyrgyzstan
Capital	Bishkek
Territory	198 thousand sq. km
Population	5,477,620 (as of the beginning of 2012)
Neighboring countries	Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China
Length of borders	3,051 km (858 km with China; 1,224 km with Kazakhstan; 870 km with Tajikistan; 1,099 km with Uzbekistan)

## 1.2. Short characteristics of the country

During the dissolution of the USSR, the Kyrgyz Republic proclaimed its sovereignty on August 31, 1991. After acquiring its independence, Kyrgyzstan has become an active participant of migration processes. The most numerous flows are directed towards Russia and Kazakhstan. Some representatives of the relevant ethnic groups returned from Kyrgyzstan to Germany, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Israel, and Tajikistan. Kyrgyzstan, in its turn, has become the host state for citizens of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, and China.

Due to high relevance of the migration issues, the Government of the Republic gives migration its close attention. The first Migration Department was established in the 1990s under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. In 2005, a State Committee for Migration and Employment was established within the structure of the Kyrgyz Republic Government at the Migration Service Department of the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Department of Population Employment of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. In October 2009, the Committee was reorganized into the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Migration, which evidences a priority approach to migration issues on the part of the Republic Government. The Ministry was given the functions of migration control and regulation, which earlier belonged to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and participates in developing the legislative framework in the migration area and migration strategy, protection of labor migrants' and refugees' rights, facilitates return to the Republic of ethnic Kyrgyz residing abroad, and takes part in the activities of international communities (CIS, CSTO) and joint international projects on migration.

Currently, the implementation results of a government program “Kairylman” for 2006-2008 to create conditions for acceptance and legalization of ethnic Kyrgyz immigrants in the Kyrgyz Republic are being reviewed (adopted in October 2006). Due to the program, some 90% of the returned Kyrgyz were granted citizenship under a simplified procedure provided for by the Provision “On a Simplified Procedure of Acquiring Kyrgyz Republic Citizenship for Citizens of the the Republic of Tajikistan” (2006) and Provision “On Procedure of Reviewing Applications for Granting Citizenship of the Kyrgyz Republic” (2007).<sup>2</sup>

As part of the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017, approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan No. 11 of January 21, 2013, a Program for Facilitation of Population Employment and Regulation of External Labor Migration until 2020 was adopted. The population employment and migration policy aims to regulate migration processes, create conditions for civilized development of the external labor migration, and enhance competitiveness of the economically active population.

## 2. MIGRATION FLOWS AND STOCKS OF IMMIGRANTS AND EMIGRANTS

### 2.1. Migration Flows

The National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic provides information on migration flows to Kyrgyzstan on an annual basis. This information includes data on the number of long-term migrants, visitors, and tourists. Because citizens moved abroad for permanent residence and employment, the Republic has a negative annual international migration balance. The migration situation in 2012 was characterized by reduction in the external migration activity of population. According to the Committee data, in 2011 the migration outflow of population was 38,500 persons (5,700 came for permanent residence and 44,200 left), while in 2012, with the negative migration balance of 7,487 persons, the gap between those who left the country (13,019) and those who came for residence (5,532) reduced more than five times.

The main countries of destination for Kyrgyz emigrants traditionally include Russia and Kazakhstan. Due to a visa free regime between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic, labor migrants can legally enter Russia on their internal passports. According to the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, over 90% of labor migrants exit to work in Russia. In 2012 9,475 persons left Kyrgyzstan for Russia. According to the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth, over 529 thousand labor migrants left Kyrgyzstan for Russia in 2013.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The information was provided by the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth, 2010

<sup>3</sup> The information was posted on the News Agency “24.kg” web-site at <http://www.24kg.org/parlament/167990-v-2013-godu-iz-kyrgyzstana-v-rossiyu-vyexalo.html>, last accessed on March 25, 2014.

Among non-CIS states the main destination countries for Kyrgyz nationals in 2012 were Germany (86 persons), USA (77 persons), and Canada (34 persons). Since the end of 1990s, the number of emigrants to non-CIS countries has been gradually reducing. This reduction was primarily caused by a gradual decrease in the number of migrants to Germany, with 5,507 persons immigrating there in 1996, whereas in 2000 – 2,421 persons, in 2005 – 790 persons, and in 2009 – 139 persons.

**Table 1. Emigration flows from Kyrgyzstan, 2009-2012<sup>4</sup>**

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,380</b>			<b>13,019</b>
To the CIS countries	<b>33,032</b>			12,799
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	29			10
<b>Armenia</b>	0			1
<b>Belarus</b>	55			25
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	3,209			3,055
<b>Russian Federation</b>	29,429			9,475
<b>Tajikistan</b>	57			45
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	4			-
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	192			138
<b>Ukraine</b>	53			48
<b>Other CIS countries</b>	4			2
Non-CIS countries	<b>348</b>			220
<b>Germany</b>	139			86
<b>Israel</b>	13			-
<b>US</b>	91			77
<b>Other non-CIS countries</b>	<b>105</b>			<b>57</b>

Source: National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

The countries of origin of the immigrants arriving to Kyrgyzstan as well as countries of destination for emigrants from Kyrgyzstan are CIS states, specifically the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Labor migrants from China fill about 77% of the jobs, made available under an annual quota. This category of labor migrants mainly fills the jobs that were freed by the outflow of Kyrgyz citizens for employment to the RF.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. The documents are available in Russian and Kyrgyz at: <http://www.stat.kg/stat.files/din.files/census/5010014%20%20.pdf>; [http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/Yearbook/Demo/3.%20vneshn.migraci9\\_.pdf](http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/Yearbook/Demo/3.%20vneshn.migraci9_.pdf), дата обращения 02.04.2014.

<sup>5</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

**Table 2. Number of immigrants in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2012<sup>6</sup>**

Country	Number of immigrants
<b>Total</b>	5,532
<b>CIS countries, total</b>	5,437
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	637
<b>Russian Federation</b>	4,376
<b>Tajikistan</b>	286
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	117
<b>Ukraine</b>	14
<b>Other CIS countries</b>	7
<b>Other countries, except CIS, total</b>	94
<b>Germany</b>	12
<b>US</b>	9
<b>Canada</b>	-
<b>Israel</b>	1
<b>Turkey</b>	11
<b>China</b>	38
<b>Other countries</b>	33

Source: National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

The ethnic Kyrgyz (persons of Kyrgyz origin who are citizens of foreign states or stateless persons of Kyrgyz origin) returning to their homeland make up the main group of the immigrants.<sup>7</sup> According to a 2008 study, the number of ethnic immigrants residing in the Kyrgyz Republic exceeded 25,000; at the end of 2013, their number was about 40 thousand persons, with most of them employed in the agricultural sector, retail trade, and hired labor sector.

Since the independence, the negative migration balance reached its peak in 1993, when over 140 thousand persons left the country. Later, the emigration volumes reduced to 15,671 persons in 1998. Since 1999, emigration grew annually, having reached a new peak of 54,000 in 2007.

## 2.2. Migrant stocks

From the moment of acquiring its independence, the Kyrgyz Republic has been witnessing a negative migration balance. The main countries of destination for Kyrgyz emigrants traditionally include Russia (72.7% of the total number of emigrants or 9,475 persons in 2012) and Kazakhstan (23.5% or 3,055 persons). In 2012, the number of emigrants to the CIS countries was 98.3% (12,799 persons). According to the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 45,700 citizens left the country in 2011, 90% of

<sup>6</sup> External migration of population in 2012, National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic data. The document is available in Russian and Kyrgyz at: [http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/Yearbook/Demo/3.%20vneshn.migraci9\\_.pdf](http://stat.kg/images/stories/docs/Yearbook/Demo/3.%20vneshn.migraci9_.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> In 2009, ethnic Kyrgyz accounted for 41.5% of the total number of immigrants (1,590 persons out of 3,829). Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth data for 2010.

which exited to Russia and 10% to Kazakhstan. A similar trend can be observed in the preceding years. Apart from moving abroad for permanent residence, the tendency of labor migration to Russia persists. According to expert assessments, over 500,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan work abroad.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3. Emigration flows from Kyrgyzstan, 2006 – 2009**

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,423</b>	<b>54,608</b>	<b>41,287</b>	<b>33,380</b>
To the CIS countries	<b>33,813</b>	<b>54,078</b>	<b>40,877</b>	<b>33,032</b>
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	22	20	11	29
<b>Armenia</b>	2	2	1	0
<b>Belarus</b>	140	93	57	55
<b>Georgia</b>	2	0	2	0
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	5,192	4,243	3,068	3,209
<b>Russian Federation</b>	28,070	49,333	37,472	29,429
<b>Tajikistan</b>	67	77	52	57
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	1	1	1	4
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	185	190	154	192
<b>Ukraine</b>	131	117	59	53
<b>Other CIS countries</b>	1	2	0	4
<b>Non-CIS countries</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>Germany</b>	317	282	153	139
<b>Israel</b>	16	38	24	13
<b>US</b>	153	128	93	91
<b>Other non-CIS countries</b>	124	82	140	105

Source: EUROSTAT database

The main factors behind a decision to emigrate include: high unemployment level, especially among the youth; inability of the growing sectors of economy to provide sufficient number of new jobs; and low development level of the social insurance sphere. An acute demand for labor in the host countries and, as a consequence, an attractive migration policy of these countries are among the most significant motivation factors for leaving. Generally, labor migrants are attracted by relatively high salaries and pensions, and a possibility of getting education.

<sup>8</sup> In 2009, with the OSCE support, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and the European Commission carried out a survey “Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Labor Migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia”, focusing on migration processes, analysis of interviews with labor migrants and their families working in Russia, and the impact of the financial crisis on the situation of labor migrants in Russia. In 2012, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) carried out a survey “Labor Market and Employment Policy in the Kyrgyz Republic”, supported by the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth, focusing on the trends of labor migration abroad, as well as general trends on the Kyrgyz labor market.

**Table 4.** Number of residence permits issued to Kyrgyz citizens in 2009-2012 as of December 31 of each year in the European Union Member States (flows)<sup>9</sup>

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012
Austria	9	15	35	40
UK	-	-	-	355
Belgium	6	111	88	84
Bulgaria	0	0	0	1
Czech Republic	128	-	131	293
Denmark	0	0	1	0
Germany	2	2	4	6
Estonia	10	10	11	13
Ireland	6	3	0	0
Greece	0	0	0	0
Spain	1	151	168	127
France	0	1	2	3
Italy	89	112	170	201
Cyprus	0	0	0	0
Belgium	131	117	59	53
Latvia	0	0	13	14
Lithuania	20	18	17	17
Luxembourg	-	1	1	1
Hungary	0	5	5	5
Malta	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	1	8	8	4
Poland	4	43	47	42
Portugal	2	2	2	2
Romania	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	0	2	8	7
Finland	0	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>1268</b>

Source: EUROSTAT database

<sup>9</sup> EUROSTAT database, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> last accessed on March 26, 2014.

## 3. LEGAL MIGRATION WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON LABOUR MIGRATION

### 3.1. Responsible state authorities

The main government agencies responsible for migration relations are the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The MFA is responsible for the issues related to external migrants and only those Kyrgyzstan citizens who are already abroad and facing difficulties. The Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth is in charge of the policy related to potential labor migrants and their pre-departure preparation. Over 50 territorial divisions of the Ministry provide consultative and information services to potential migrants and take targeted effort to attract persons to work abroad.

**The Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth** was established on November 17, 2009, and assumed the responsibilities of the former State Committee for Migration and Employment (established in 2005) in the sphere of migration. The main responsibilities of the Ministry include development of the policy on employment, labor protection, legal aspects of salaries, children protection, illegal migration (including trafficking in human being), and refugee protection.

The Ministry deals with the following groups of immigrants and internal migrants:

- 1) Foreign citizens seeking employment in Kyrgyzstan;
- 2) Ethnic Kyrgyz returning to Kyrgyzstan from abroad;
- 3) Internal migrants coming from remote districts and seeking employment in Bishkek and adjacent territories;
- 4) Refugees seeking asylum in Kyrgyzstan.

In December 2009, a government reform resulted in the creation of the **Overseas Employment Center for KR citizens (OEC)**. Prior to the reform, some tasks of the Center were performed by the Information and Consultative Center (ICC) in Bishkek and its regional offices, as well as by the State Committee for Migration and Employment. Center's main tasks: providing assistance to KR citizens to work abroad; protection of their rights abroad; issuance of permissions entitling employment agencies to hire people to work abroad (there are 15 private agencies entitled to send Kyrgyz citizens to work abroad); paying out compensation fees for transportation of the bodies of the citizens who died abroad during labor activities.<sup>10</sup> In 2012 during the government structure reform, the Information and Consultative Center and the Overseas Employment Center for KR citizens were transformed into a unified **Employment Center** with an office at the Bishkek Municipal Employment Department.

The **Bishkek Municipality** reports to the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Migration, and Bishkek mayor, and has the following structure: Department for Regulation of Migration and its four regional divisions, Department for Employment, and a Human Relations Department. Bishkek Municipality has the following responsibilities: implementation of the state policy in the area of migration in the Bishkek city; assisting in

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<sup>10</sup> Assistance in arranging transportation from the RF is specifically provided by diasporas. The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

integration of ethnic Kyrgyz from Tajikistan, Afghanistan, China, Uzbekistan; close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior on trafficking in human beings; and consultative work in relation to potential labor migrants.

Beside the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)** plays an important role in migration management in Kyrgyzstan. The MFA is responsible for the visa policy and for issuing all types of visas. The rules of visa issuing are set forth in an inter-agency instruction developed by the MFA and providing for cooperation between relevant government authorities. Since many citizens of Kyrgyzstan work abroad, predominantly in Russia and Kazakhstan, the MFA provides them with protection and assistance and participates in negotiations on protection of rights and labor conditions of the Kyrgyz labor migrants abroad. Maintaining relations with the Kyrgyz diaspora abroad is also an MFA task, which, *inter alia*, supports cultural centers and events organized by the diasporas numbering 45 in the Russian Federation alone.<sup>11</sup>

**The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)** is the main institution in charge of returns/deportation of illegal migrants. Together with the State National Security Service, the MIA is responsible for implementation of control mechanisms in the field of domicile registration and issuing of work permits.

Each Ministry has established and operates Public Supervisory Boards, whose members are representatives of the above agencies.

The key international partners in the sphere of migration include the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**, the **International Labor Organisation (ILO)**, and the **International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)**. Cooperation exists also with the Red Cross, the Soros Foundation, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and others. OSCE is an important cooperation partner, providing expert knowledge and consultations on migration, specifically in the sphere of human trafficking. Active cooperation is also maintained with different non-governmental organizations, private employment agencies abroad, air and rail ticket offices, and diaspora organizations abroad.

### 3.2. Policy and policy documents

The main legal acts, regulating legal relations on external migration and determining the legal foundations of external migration in the Republic, include:

- ❖ Act on External Migration (2000);
- ❖ Act on External Labor Migration (2006) regulating foreigners' or stateless persons' conditions of access to the Kyrgyz labor market;
- ❖ Act on Internal Migration (2002);
- ❖ Government Regulation on Invitation of Foreign Labor No 639/2006 regulating labor activities by foreign citizens or stateless persons;
- ❖ Act on Refugees (2002);
- ❖ Act on Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Kyrgyz Republic (1993);

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<sup>11</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

- ❖ Code of Administrative Liability in the Kyrgyz Republic (1998);
- ❖ Act on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2005);
- ❖ Criminal Code (Art. 124) on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

Currently, the main objectives of the state migration policy on labor migration include: harmonization of the national legislation with international regulations, development of bilateral cooperation with partner countries and multilateral cooperation within regional communities. Bilateral government agreements on labour migration were signed with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Korea. Specifically, Kyrgyzstan concluded bilateral agreements with Russia and Kazakhstan on avoidance of double taxation.

In 2013, a **General Agreement** between the Government of Kyrgyzstan, Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan, and Republican Unions of Employers for 2013-2015 was signed and included obligations of the parties to observe the provisions on protection of the labor migrants' rights set forth in the agreements between trade unions of Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Kazakhstan. A developed draft law "On Private Recruitment Agencies" envisages obtaining of a permit for activities related to providing employment abroad, as well as development of relevant control and monitoring mechanisms.

The Kyrgyz Republic takes an active part in resolution of migration challenges within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Specifically, Kyrgyzstan has ratified the Convention on Legal Status of Migrant Workers and Their Family Members of the CIS member states.

The import and use of foreign labor is regulated by the Labor Code of the Kyrgyz Republic and Acts "On External Migration" and "On External Labor Migration". The government establishes an annual quota for labor migrants. Foreign citizens obtain work permits in such areas as trade, industry, construction, agriculture, and transport. The Interagency Licensing Commission reviews applications for import and use of foreign labor and entrepreneurship by foreigners and stateless persons in the Kyrgyz Republic. The labor migrants' countries of origin include Russia, China, Turkey, and Kazakhstan.

Cooperation has been established with international and non-governmental organizations on development and implementation of migration-related projects. IOM, for example, in conjunction with the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth, helped establish a national "189" hot line on migration and combating trafficking in human beings. Over 50 NGOs successfully implement different migration-related projects. Access to the Internet is provided virtually in the entire country.

The main challenges faced by the government authorities in the sphere of labor migration are related to the risks that come together with external labor migration, such as trafficking in human beings, low awareness level, legal illiteracy of potential labor migrants, their poor language and professional skills, and lack of competence in social security issues.

The Government of Kyrgyzstan acknowledges the issue of external labor migration to be the state policy priority area. In April 2004, a Concept of State Migration Policy until 2010 was adopted, defining the main tasks and principles of the state migration policy, as well as measures to protect the rights of Kyrgyz labor migrants abroad and attract foreign labor. The Government has also developed and implemented a number of programs facilitating regulation of the migration processes: "Country Development Strategy for 2007-2011", "National Employment Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2010" (August 2006), a State Program of the KR on Regulation of Migration Processes for 2007-2010 (approved on September 25, 2007), State Migration Management Strategy until 2015, and others. The approved National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017 determines the goals of the state policy on the labor

market and migration and includes the tasks of regulating internal migration, providing conditions for development of external labor migration, and increasing competitiveness of the economically active population.

In September 2013, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted a Program to Facilitate the Procedure of Population Recruitment and a Provision on External Labor Migration until 2020. The Program for Facilitation of Population Employment and Regulation of External Labor Migration and its Implementation Action Plan for 2013-2015 target creating conditions for employment of the labor force and cutting unemployment and imbalance in demand and supply on the labor market. This task envisages proactive measures to promote effective use of the national labor resources on the one hand, and to protect the rights of the Kyrgyz citizens working abroad on the other. The Program develops an employment system and optimizes the process of foreign labor attraction.

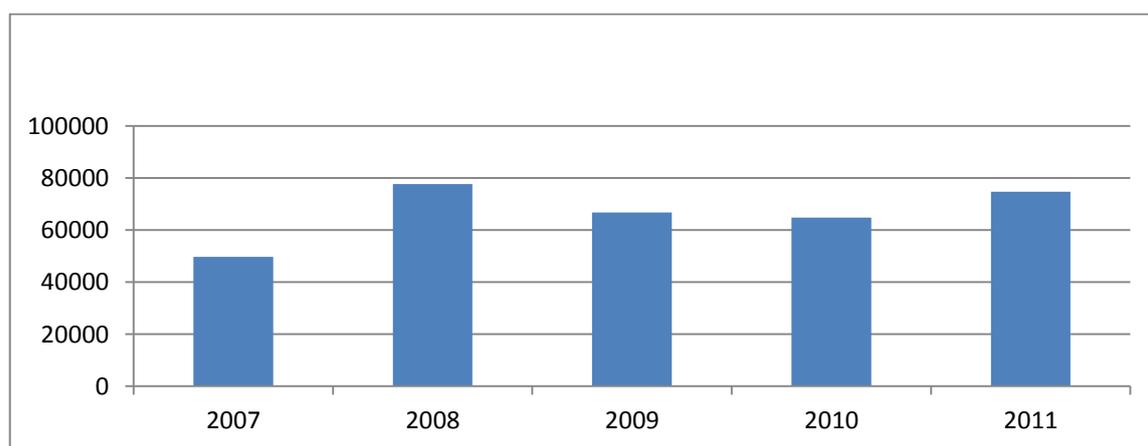
### 3.3. Statistics

#### Labor immigrants in Kyrgyzstan

As in the case of most CIS countries, Kyrgyzstan is a sending and receiving country, where labor force export dominates over import. The annual quota for attraction of the external labor force is determined by the regions. In 2014 it amounted to 12,996 persons, 77% being filled with Chinese citizens engaged in construction and gold mining.<sup>12</sup>

According to the Department of Registration Service of the State Registration Service, in the period from 2007 to 2011 the Republic registered 333,556 foreigners, out of which 49,726 in 2007, 77,585 in 2008, 66,754 in 2009, 64,801 in 2010, and 74,690 in 2011.

**Diagram 1. Number of registered foreign citizens in Kyrgyzstan, persons**



<sup>12</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

**Table 5. Structure of labor migrants in Kyrgyzstan<sup>13</sup>**

	2005	2006
<i>Total men and women</i>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>517</b>
<b>Men</b>	5,600	265
<b>Women</b>	5,500	252
<i>Employed migrants</i>		
Total men and women	4,200	-
<b>Men</b>	3,300	-
<b>Women</b>	800	-
<i>By sectors of economy</i>		
<b>Agriculture, forestry, hunting</b>	300	-
<b>Manufacturing</b>	700	-
<b>Construction</b>	500	-
<b>Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and household appliances</b>	600	-
<b>Provision of other communal, social and personal services</b>	1,900	-
<i>Activity types</i>		
<b>Senior officials and managers</b>	300	-
<b>Professional activity</b>	1,000	-
<b>Technicians and support personnel</b>	800	-
<b>Service sector workers, shop and market workers</b>	500	-
<b>Qualified agricultural and fishery workers</b>	400	-
<b>Craftsmen</b>	800	-
<i>By employment status</i>		
<b>Hired workers</b>	4,200	-
<b>Individual workers</b>	1,700	-
<b>Other</b>	2,100	-

*International Labor Organization database*

### External Labour Migration

The title population dominates in external labor migration, especially within the CIS. Labor migration from Kyrgyzstan is mainly mass-scale and spontaneous, and its main flows can be classified as temporary and circular. Reliable track keeping of these processes in the Republic is difficult, and the official statistics does not reflect the actual situation due to data-collection challenges.<sup>14</sup>

The labor migration flow for the most part is an irregular process, as the country lacks a labor migration management system. The legal basis and the administrative structures still lack sufficient resourced for efficient resolution of migration issues. The country also lacks rules of recruitment, which, coupled with a

<sup>13</sup> The data is available at <http://laborsta.ilo.org> > International Labour Migration Statistics > Kyrgyzstan > 2005-2008.

<sup>14</sup> Aynura Eyelebayeva, *Labor Migration in Kyrgyzstan. General Characteristics*. Overview on the Trade Union web-site of the labor migrants working in construction, housing and communal services, and adjacent sectors. Available at: [http://www.profmigr.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=36](http://www.profmigr.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=36), last accessed on April 1, 2014.

week legal and information awareness of migrants, often leads to exploitation situations. Over 60% of Kyrgyz migrants work illegally, and over half of all the Kyrgyz migrants have to work long hours.

Most official sources cite 600,000 migrants working in Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, United States and the Baltic States, which translates to 11.7% of Kyrgyzstan's total population. According to the Federal Migration Service of the RF, 118,300 work permits were issued to Kyrgyz nationals over 11 months of 2013, the total number of Kyrgyz citizens who entered the country being 624,600 persons; 123,900 permits were issued in 2012, the total number of Kyrgyz citizens who entered the country being 543,900 persons.<sup>15</sup> 146,000 work permits were issued in 2009 (the total number of Kyrgyz migrants in the RF being 501,000 people); 177,000 permits were issued in 2008 (the total number of Kyrgyz migrants in the RF being 580,000 persons).<sup>16</sup> According to some estimates, over 300,000 labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan permanently reside in Russia and over 150,000 in Kazakhstan. Up to 71% of Kyrgyz migrants exiting to Kazakhstan and Russia work there on a seasonal basis, returning home for the winter months. The average age of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan is 32, and more than half of them have secondary or university education. Ethnic Kyrgyz comprise 79 % of all the labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan, followed by Uzbeks (9%) and Russians (7%).

The largest migrant-sending region is the Osh oblast; roughly 35% of all the Kyrgyz migrants originally come from the oblast or Osh city. It means that every fifth citizen of Osh of employable age exits the country to work abroad. The region lacks jobs because the Osh oblast is more densely populated than other parts of the country due to a high birth rate in the 1980s and 1990s. Today most people residing in the region have reached their employable age, but are limited in their employment opportunities according to their qualification in the region due to a job deficit.<sup>17</sup>

The Batken and Jalalabad oblasts send approximately 11.7% and 12.9% of their workers, respectively, meaning one of every eight residents from these oblasts becomes a labor migrant. Residents of the Chui, Talas and Issyk-Kul oblasts in the northern part of the country prefer Kazakhstan over Russia.

According to a survey on employment, unemployment, and labor migration conducted in 2006 by the National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan in conjunction with the State Committee on Migration and Employment of Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyz migrants are employed in the following sectors: construction (46%), commercial trade (36%), agriculture (6%), and various sectors of industry and service sphere (3%). Men prevail in external migration flows, and in some countries (Korea, China) labor migrants consist almost exclusively of men.<sup>18</sup>

According to the EUROSTAT statistics, **491** Kyrgyz citizens worked legally in the EU MS in 2012.

The largest group of Kyrgyz labor migrants is employed in Germany and Italy.

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<sup>15</sup> Federal Migration Service of Russia data quoted on the "Mail.Ru" news resource. Available at: <http://news.mail.ru/inworld/kyrgyzstan/society/16156987/>, last accessed on April 3, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> A reduced number of migrants registered in 2009 was caused by the global economic crisis. The data was obtained during an expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on April 5-8, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

**Table 5. Number of residence permits issued to citizens of Kyrgyzstan for employment in 2009-2012.<sup>19</sup>**

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012
Austria	45	48	39	44
UK	11	14	17	18
Belgium	9	4	10	6
Bulgaria	0	-	1	0
Czech Republic	16	12	2	26
Denmark	2	4	0	8
Germany	148	143	137	155
Estonia	0	0	1	0
Ireland	0	1	0	1
Greece	0	0	-	0
Spain	9	2	3	4
France	2	1	1	1
Italy	260	442	218	115
Cyprus	3	4	3	2
Belgium				
Latvia	2	3	10	1
Lithuania	5	2	3	8
Luxembourg	0	-	0	0
Hungary	0	0	1	2
Malta	0	0	0	1
Netherlands	1	2	3	3
Poland	7	33	-	46
Portugal	0	-	1	0
Romania	0	0	-	0
Slovenia	0	0	-	6
Slovakia	1	1	0	0
Finland	6	6	24	6
Sweden	2	11	32	19
Switzerland	-	-	-	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>491</b>

Source: EUROSTAT database

<sup>19</sup> EUROSTAT database <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>, last accessed on April 1, 2014.

## 4. IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN THE COUNTRY

### 4.1. Responsible state authorities

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is in charge of returns and deportation of illegal migrants. The MIA on a permanent basis cooperates with the Border Guard Service and the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth, specifically in the irregular migration combating area. Every year an action called “Illegal Migrant”, which is a complex of measures to prevent illegal migration, is conducted with assistance of the Border Guard Service under the Coordinating Council of the Heads of Migration Services within the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The action, conducted by the border guard service, migration police, and passport-visa services, is an example of a six-year-long joint effort focused on tracing the channels of and combating illegal migration of third-country nationals.<sup>20</sup>

The OSCE has been an important cooperation partner by providing expertise and consultancy in such migration area as trafficking in human beings.

In the field of emigration, Kyrgyz diplomatic representations abroad are responsible for registration of Kyrgyz citizens. Because a lot of migrants remain abroad illegally, it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics on the Kyrgyz citizens abroad. The Kyrgyz authorities usually work with the statistics provided by the migration authorities of host countries.

### 4.2. Policy and policy documents

The state migration control system is based both on external and internal control methods. Unless set forth otherwise in an international agreement, a foreign citizen must produce a valid identity document and have a valid visa to enter the Republic. The system of control of foreign citizens includes verification of their right to enter, stay, and work.

There are several common methods of violating the declared purpose of entry by foreign citizens during their stay in Kyrgyzstan: entrance on tourist or transit visas, whereas the actual reason for entering the country is employment; crossing the border outside the border-crossing points. According to the Act “On External Migration” adopted in July 2000, in the case of foreign nationals and stateless persons who have entered the Kyrgyz Republic without a relevant permit, competent government authorities must ensure their exit from the Republic at the expense of the foreign nationals and stateless persons, and in absence of such means – at the carrier's expense (Art. 63). A foreign citizen who has not exited the Republic after expiration of his/her visa or failed to submit documents for its extension may be held administratively liable. In the case of violation of the migration procedure, the Kyrgyz legislation provides for expulsion of foreign nationals from the country based on a court decision.

Government authorities disseminate information aimed at preventing illegal migration through official channels and mass media. In particular, an Information Center was established under the Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth in Bishkek where one can receive information on migration. There is also a “189” hot

<sup>20</sup> The data was obtained during an expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on April 5-8, 2010, p. 4.

line, on which one can get acquainted with the provisions related to international migration. The Kyrgyz Republic offers a visa-free regime for 56 countries to encourage tourism.<sup>21</sup>

The largest number of problems arises in the sphere of illegal migration to the RF and Kazakhstan. The Border Guard services do not conduct special trainings on migration issues for its personnel, which is explained by the fact that most border guards get their training in Russia, where they learn the basics of the migration legislation and practical aspects of working with illegal migrants.<sup>22</sup>

A provision adopted by the Federal Migration Service of Russia, according to which, starting 2015, entry to the Russian Federation for foreign nationals will be allowed only with an international passport, may facilitate prevention of illegal migration and entail stricter migration control in the Kyrgyz Republic.

### 4.3. Statistics

Statistical data on illegal migration in Kyrgyzstan is collected on a quarterly basis and compiled in a report annually.

According to MIA data, 41 foreign nationals were apprehended for violation of the rules of stay in Kyrgyzstan in 2013, and 95 foreigners were apprehended while attempting to cross the border illegally.<sup>23</sup>

36 cases of trafficking in human beings were registered in 2006; 34 in 2007, 51 in 2008, and 60 cases in 2009. The main destination countries for traveling by cars or trains are Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, the United Emirates, and countries of Western Europe. The main flying routes include Bishkek-Dubai, Bishkek-Istanbul, and Osh-Shardza.

The main countries of origin of the irregular migrants coming to Kyrgyzstan are Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Russian Federation, Afghanistan, Chad, and India. For most of these citizens, Kyrgyzstan is a transit country on the way to Europe, including via Yerevan (several cases recently). Migration of Chinese citizens, including irregular movements, has been gaining ever higher significance in the past years. Cooperation with China is based on a cooperation agreement between Kyrgyzstan and China signed in 1992 and a protocol of 2008. Further, two Chinese officials ensuring communicative support to migrants on the spot are stationed at the Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan.

Starting 2009, citizens of Malaysia began transiting Kyrgyzstan by entering the country legally and then traveling further on forged Greek or Bulgarian passports. In general, approximately 30% of irregular migrants cross the border outside BCPs, while 70% enter the country legally on visas. After this they either overstay their visas or change their identity using old Kyrgyz or East-European passports.<sup>24</sup>

Foreigners, especially from the CIS countries, overstay their visas or change the purpose of their visit, for which the visa was originally issued: e.g., foreigners arrive on a tourist visa and then get employed. In some

<sup>21</sup> Official MFA site [http://www.mfa.kg/common/otveti-na-voprosi-grajdan-kr-v-konsulskoi-sfere-5\\_ru.html](http://www.mfa.kg/common/otveti-na-voprosi-grajdan-kr-v-konsulskoi-sfere-5_ru.html), last accessed on April 1, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> The data was obtained during a "Building Migration Partnerships" mission to Kyrgyzstan on August 13-15, 2009.

cases of illegal residence foreigners are fined and their visas can be extended.<sup>25</sup> 41 cases of illegal migration and 95 cases of illegal border crossing were recorded in 2009. Preventive measures are usually based on fines. 164 foreigners were expelled from the country on court orders in 2005, 537 in 2006, 34 in 2007, 51 in 2008, and 330 in 2009.

The main routes of arrival to Kyrgyzstan go through air and land border crossing points, while the country is mostly exited by air or railroad crossing points. The airports Manas and Osh remain the key arrival points used by criminal groups to organize illegal migration channels.<sup>26</sup>

Over 60% of labor migrants work illegally, i.e. without registration and/or work permit, and over half of all the Kyrgyz migrants have to work overtime.

According to expert estimates, labor migration from Kyrgyzstan involves some 600,000 Kyrgyz nationals working abroad, with 360,000 of them working abroad illegally. As the main flows of Kyrgyz labor migration are directed to Russia and Kazakhstan, the majority of irregular migrants are concentrated in these two countries. This data is also corroborated by the Russian and Kazakh media, including the information on the challenges faced by Kyrgyz migrants in these countries.

The situation with irregular migration from Kyrgyzstan to the EU MS is stable, which evidences that the majority of irregular migrants from Kyrgyzstan are destined for other CIS countries, mainly the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. In 2013, about 430 Kyrgyz citizens were recorded as illegally staying in the EU (in 2012 their number was about 720 persons), and 515 Kyrgyz nationals were ordered to leave the EU (1,055 persons in 2012).

**Table 7: Kyrgyz citizens staying in the EU illegally and the number of Kyrgyz citizens who were court-ordered to leave the EU MS of their stay (rounded data, persons), 2009-2013<sup>27</sup>**

Country	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Citizens	Decisions								
Austria	10	25	70	5	65	15	40	35	40	25
UK	20	20	25	25	15	15	20	20	20	20
Belgium	5	30	10	20	5	30	5	135	10	-
Bulgaria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Czech Republic	50	40	45	55	40	45	25	15	25	20
Denmark	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Germany	35	10	40	20	45	20	75	20	70	-
Estonia	0	0	0	0	5	5	10	10	10	10
Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
Spain	0	5	0	0	5	5	0	0	5	0

<sup>25</sup> The data was obtained during a “Building Migration Partnerships” mission to Kyrgyzstan on August 13-15, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> The data was provided by the Kyrgyz Border Guard Service, June 2010.

<sup>27</sup> EUROSTAT database <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/database>, last accessed on April 1, 2014.

France	10	25	20	25	10	20	10	40	10	30
Italy	15	15	10	10	5	5	0	0	5	5
Cyprus	0	0	5	0	5	0	5	0	5	0
Latvia	5	10	5	0	0	80	0	80	0	75
Lithuania	40	55	50	50	210	210	295	295	-	-
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	5	-	0
Hungary	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	0
Malta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	0	5	5	10	0	25	-	20	-	20
Poland	0	15	5	15	10	15	15	25	35	35
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finland	0	5	5	0	0	10	10	5	5	10
Sweden	140	45	390	105	310	315	210	345	190	265
Switzerland	5	-	10	-	10	-	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>1055</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>515</b>

Source: EUROSTAT database

## 5. RETURN, READMISSION AND REINTEGRATION

### 5.1. Responsible state authorities

Ethnic Kyrgyz are integrated on the municipal level. The Bishkek municipal government responsibilities include: implementation of the state policy in the area of migration in the Bishkek city; assisting in integration of ethnic Kyrgyz from Tajikistan, Afghanistan, China, and Uzbekistan; close cooperation with the MIA on trafficking in human beings; and consultative work in relation to potential labor migrants.

### 5.2. Policy and policy documents

The ethnic Kyrgyz returning to their historical homeland are supported under the Law of the KR “On State Guarantees to Ethnic Kyrgyz Returning to Their Historical Homeland” of November 26, 2007. This support targets legalization of their stay, increasing legal literacy, improving family living conditions, establishing relations with the local population, support to immigrant children, visa support and humanitarian aid.

Ethnic Kyrgyz who resettled from Tajikistan are legalized under a government-to-government Agreement on Simplified Acquisition of Citizenship.

An issue of current importance for ethnic Kyrgyz is acquiring the status of *kairylman* and KR citizenship, as well as employment. Lack of the official status or Kyrgyz citizenship limits the right of movement and social guarantees, such as access to education, healthcare, and state-guaranteed social benefits among the ethnic Kyrgyz immigrants. They also face other difficulties, specifically during registration of marriage, children's place of birth, and employment.

The KR Government is considering simplification of granting the *kairylman* status to ethnic Kyrgyz for their subsequent acquisition of the Kyrgyz citizenship<sup>28</sup>, as well as improvement of legal regulation of the issues related to working with ethnic Kyrgyz and of the return of ethnic Kyrgyz to their historical homeland with due account for the law enforcement practice of the effective legislation. Today Kyrgyzstan does not have an agency recognizing and issuing certificates confirming nationality.

### 5.3. Statistics

The official data for 2013 estimates the number of ethnic Kyrgyz residing in Kyrgyzstan at about 40,000. 18,000 of them are citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the “*kairylman*” status was granted to 6,000 ethnic Kyrgyz.<sup>29</sup> According to preliminary data, as of January 1, 2013 the number of ethnic Kyrgyz, who do not have Kyrgyzstan citizenship and reside in the Kyrgyz Republic was 8,924 persons. Over 4,000 of them are ethnic Kyrgyz who came from Uzbekistan, and over 2,000 came from Tajikistan, while the rest immigrated from other countries. Today, the Ministry's regional structures continue accepting applications from ethnic Kyrgyz for granting the *kairylman* status.

## 6. INTEGRATION

### 6.1. Responsible state authorities

The Bishkek Municipality continues assisting ethnic Kyrgyz from Tajikistan, Afghanistan, China, and Uzbekistan in their integration.

### 6.2. Policy and policy documents

From February 2010 through the first half of 2012 Kyrgyzstan implemented a 24-month project “Social and Economic Integration of Internal Migrants through Training and Development Programs” under a European Commission program “Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development” (NSA&LA). The project was

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<sup>28</sup> *News of the Day: a society in Kyrgyzstan*, available at <http://rus.kg/news/obshetvo/14065-okolo-9-tys-etnicheskih-kyrgyzov-ne-imeyut-grazhdanstva-kr.html>, last accessed on April 1, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Azattyk News Radio, available at [http://rus.azattyk.org/archive/ky\\_news\\_in\\_russian\\_ru/20130917/4795/4795.html?id=25108244](http://rus.azattyk.org/archive/ky_news_in_russian_ru/20130917/4795/4795.html?id=25108244), last accessed on April 1, 2014.

implemented by the Kyrgyz Adult Education Association (KAEA) in partnership with the International Cooperation Institute of the German Adult Education Association, and locally – by the Training and Development Centers in the cities of Karabalta, Bishkek, and Tokmok, and the village of Belovodskoye in partnership with the district and municipal authorities, as well as with the Committees on Migration and Employment on the district and municipal level.<sup>30</sup> The implemented integration and adaptation programs for internal migrants as one of the most vulnerable groups of population aimed at reducing poverty and social tension.

### 6.3. Statistics

Active internal migration in the country is explained by an unbalanced economic development of the country's regions. Decline of agriculture and industry and lack of employment opportunities lead to internal migration from the Southern regions to the Chui oblast. Approximately 5,000 internal migrants from 4 project areas of the Chui oblast received direct assistance in economic integration and adaptation through training and development programs in partnership with the local government authorities.

## 7. MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### 7.1. Responsible state authorities

All the ministries and agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as the Parliamentary Committee for Social Policy, take part in the implementation of the migration policy. International and non-governmental organizations assist the government in this area.

### 7.2. Policy and policy documents

The benefits for the Kyrgyz Republic from having labor migrants working abroad include the following elements: Remittances (support to families, children education, improvement of life conditions, and creating conditions for small businesses), reduced tension on the internal labor market, appearance of new technologies, acquisition of professional skills, and cultural exchange.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic actively pursues improvement of its migrants' rights to enhance the positive effect of labor migration and develops a system of organized employment abroad and prevention of illegal immigration. The past decade has seen adoption of laws to improve the legislation in each migration sphere (“On External Migration” (July 2000), “On Internal Migration” (October 2002), “On Refugees” (March 2002), “On Prevention of and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings” (March 2005), “On External Labor Migration” (January 2006), “On State Guarantees to Ethnic Kyrgyz Returning to Their

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<sup>30</sup> Information Bulletin of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) Office in Uzbekistan, available at [http://dvv-international.blogspot.co.at/2010/04/blog-post\\_8572.html](http://dvv-international.blogspot.co.at/2010/04/blog-post_8572.html), last accessed on April 2, 2014.

Historical Homeland” (June 2013)). The Criminal Code incorporated Art. 124 addressing trafficking in human beings. In June 2013, a Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On the Foundations of the State Policy to Support Compatriots Abroad” was adopted. The Law supports national Kyrgyz diasporas of labor migrants in Russia and Kazakhstan.

### 7.3. Statistics

According to the World Bank, labor migrants' bank remittances to **Kyrgyzstan** amounted to \$1.3 bln in 2010, \$1.67 bln in 2011, and \$1.89 bln in 2012.<sup>31</sup> According to the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan, the volume of remittances by natural persons through remittance systems over 11 months of 2013 was \$2 bln 59.7 mln, which is an 11.6% increase over 11 months of 2012. The Russian Federation accounts for more than 97% of the overall remittance flow through the remittance systems (\$1 bln 609 mln over 9 months of 2013). Geographically, the specific weight of other countries is insignificant: about \$19 mln were remitted from Kazakhstan and \$16 mln from non-CIS countries. The scope of official remittances from labor migrants exceeded the incomes of the Republican budget by 33%.<sup>32</sup> Remittances are 2.4 times higher than the official assistance for development coming to the country from foreign sources and exceed direct foreign investment and international assistance programs.

According to the National Bank, in 2013 the volumes of remittances **from Kyrgyzstan** grew by 44% and amounted to \$326.9 mln. \$226.1 mln was sent in the period from January through November 2012.

## 8. ASYLUM AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

### 8.1. Responsible state authorities

The Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Migration is the main state institution responsible for policy-making and inter-agency coordination in such migration fields as refugee protection and asylum applications in Kyrgyzstan.

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<sup>31</sup> Due to the global financial crisis of 2008, the inflow of remittances from Russia in 2009 reduced by 19.8%. In the ensuing years, the remittance growth rate restored and in 2012 was about 34%. Starting 2012, there has been a decline in the growth rate of remittances from the migrants to 17%. In 2013, the remittance growth rate remained positive, but continued its slowing down trend. KyrTAG, available at <http://www.kyrtag.kg/news/detail.php?ID=1432>, last accessed on April 2, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> *Evening Bishkek* newspaper, available at [http://www.vb.kg/doc/251208\\_perevody\\_ot\\_migrantov\\_prevysili\\_dohody\\_budjeta\\_na\\_tret.html](http://www.vb.kg/doc/251208_perevody_ot_migrantov_prevysili_dohody_budjeta_na_tret.html), last accessed on April 2, 2014.

## 8.2. Policy and policy documents

Recognized refugees in Kyrgyzstan can make use of integration programs operated by UNHCR. The programs concern citizenship, employment, education and medical assistance issues. Refugees are provided with all unnecessary conditions for living: accommodation, parcels of arable land, education opportunities, medical, care and employment opportunities. Assistance in acquiring the Kyrgyz citizenship manifested itself in the fact that from 2002 to 2010 over 9,000 persons obtained Kyrgyz citizenship. According to the High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Guterres, this indicator is a unique experience in international practice of solving refugees' problems.

Recognized refugees are granted some privileges in acquiring the Kyrgyz citizenship, because in accordance with the Kyrgyz Republic Act "On citizenship" (para 4, Part Two, Art. 13), they are required to reside in Kyrgyzstan for at least 3 years (whereas for other foreigners the minimum requirement is 5 years).

Education opportunities for refugees to access secondary education are the same as for Kyrgyz citizens. Medical services for refugees are provided with the assistance of UNHCR. Other refugee rights, such as to work or to pursue business activities, purchase real estate (and other property), get access to legal protection and other rights are provided for by the effective legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

## 8.3. Statistics

Currently, there are approximately 1,000 asylum seekers in Kyrgyzstan. An EU-funded reception center for refugees located in Bishkek is run by the Kyrgyz Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration.

According to the UN High Commissioner statistics, as of December 2013, 126 people submitted their applications for asylum in Kyrgyzstan. According to the MIA data, 38 persons were granted the refugee status in 2013, most of them having arrived from Afghanistan and Pakistan. While citizens of Afghanistan view Kyrgyzstan as a transit country on their way to the EU MSs, citizens of Pakistan (over 10 persons) arrived to Kyrgyzstan on a visa and later submitted their applications for the refugee status.<sup>33</sup>

According to statistics, there are 449 refugees and over 13,500 stateless persons in Kyrgyzstan. At the beginning of 2013 the figures were twice higher. Due to assistance in replacement of the Soviet passports with Kyrgyz, the number was halved. Most frequently the issue of no citizenship arises in relation to the people residing in the border area.

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<sup>33</sup> The data was obtained during a Pilot Project II expert mission to Kyrgyzstan on March 11-14, 2014.



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