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CHARACTERISTICS OF EXTERNAL LABOUR MIGRATION FROM INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

In this conference paper, we analysed the general characteristics of external labour migration from independent Ukraine. The massive character of the fourth migration wave is partly explained as a realisation of migration potential, which had been formed in the Soviet era. We defined motives, sources and vectors of migration, the educational level of labour migrants, the volume of remittances and their role in the economy.

Keywords: *migration, international labour migration, migration motives, personal remittances.*

In Ukraine, a phenomenon of external labour migration became widespread since the 1990s. A number of its aspects attract the attention of many modern researchers. Some of these aspects are causes of the migration flows formation, different labour migration types, identification of motives for migration, discussions of positive results and negative consequences, methods of "combating" external migration and so on. The last one includes formulating of preventive measures of both brain drain and brain waste². In the context of the deteriorating demographic situation, the study on labour migration as one of the triggers for the departure of citizens abroad to change the country of living is of particular importance.

The main characteristic of the so-called fourth migration wave was its mass character. It seems a little paradoxical despite the restoration of state independence, doesn't it? But it should be noted that the migration potential of the Ukrainian population formed during the long Soviet era. The economic model of the USSR did not provide for the possibility of including labour in the international labour market (as we know, migration within the USSR was not considered as an international one). Instead, the able-bodied population did considered as labour resources subject to centralized distribution. The economic basis of the Soviet policy of the labour movement was to increase economic potential. It required the settlement of remote areas (mostly eastern), the involvement of labour in large-scale construction of union importance and the development of USSR industrial

²By "brain drain" we understand the emigration of highly qualified people, whose employment in the country of destination meets their qualification level. In the global context, this phenomenon is better known as "intellectual migration", as it has a negative connotation only in the local context. Meanwhile, "brain waste" is the same emigration, but in this case, further employment doesn't meet the qualification level of highly qualified people [6, p. 75, 77].

areas (organized labour recruitment). Mandatory referral to a work of both graduates of secondary vocational and higher education institutions were widely spread. It took into account only the needs of the Soviet country, regardless of neither the graduates' wishes nor the current place of their living. Restrictions on free movement, demand for better living standards and working conditions, high professional level and willingness of young professionals to change the place of living became the prerequisites for the formation of significant emigration potential in the second half of the 20th century. Eventually, this released potential transformed Ukraine into an exporter of labour resources in the years of independence. As a consequence, we have a tremendous amount of labour migrants. Currently, the total number of migrant workers, who work abroad at the same time, is estimated at 1.5 to 5 million people according to various methods of calculation.

The voluntary nature of migration has left its mark on the leaving country drivers of Ukrainians in the independent period. With the disappearance of forced relocations and all of mentioned above, it appeared new key motives for international migration. It was improving welfare, higher wages, self-realisation and social comfort. In recent years, military aggression in the east of the country and the visa-free regime have become migration motives too. The situation on the world, so as on the European, labour market has left a significant imprint on Ukrainians' decisions regarding work abroad. For example, Polish workers move to more developed countries, such as Germany and Great Britain, in search of a better life, higher wages and better social benefits. Meanwhile, Polish employers had to reduce the requirements or even train and retrain workers at their own expense for 1–2 months. That is why Ukrainians are welcome in Poland – they replace empty jobs. Also, migration often plays the role of a social elevator in modern Ukraine. It means that employee would rather give up a position that does not meet his requirements or qualification level in Ukraine. But he would agree to hold a similar one abroad.

The western border regions of Ukraine were more involved in international migration flows in the first years of independence. Now there is an equalization of migration mobility with the central and southern regions. In general, in 2002–2012, the most significant sources of international migration flows were Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Luhansk regions, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Kyiv. Since 2013 (in different years), Odesa, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhia, Lviv and Rivne regions became the main sources of migration flows too. Since 2014, official statistics data haven't taken into account part of the Anti-Terrorist Operation and the Joint Forces Operation zones, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Hence the sharp reduction in the number of interstate migrants from Luhansk and Donetsk regions [according to: 1].

The vectors of labour migration diversified significantly compared to earlier migration waves. The direction of migration flows was obvious, mainly to the countries with a higher living standard. In general, the main destination countries

of international migrants were invariably Germany, the United States and Israel (along with the Russian Federation and Belarus) in 2002–2012[according to: 1].

Labour migration is a significant source of foreign exchange earnings to Ukraine. Personal remittances from abroad ensured the survival of many Ukrainian families in the hard economic circumstances of the 1990s. World Bank data prove a steady increase of personal remittances to Ukraine(Fig. 1).

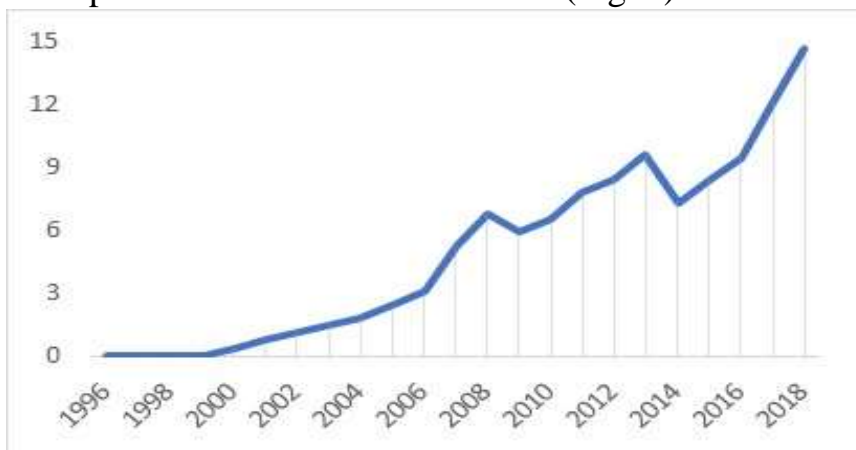


Figure 1. Personal remittances, received (current bln US\$), Ukraine (1996–2018)

Data Source: The World Bank [2].

Both absolute values of personal remittances and its share in the country’s GDP represents its role in Ukraine’s economy. Thus, in 2018, the World Bank estimated the volume of personal remittances to Ukraine from abroad at more than 14 billion dollars, which was more than 11% of GDP (Fig. 2). A disappointing trend is that remittances from abroad are rarely used in start or develop a business. Instead, the main part of it goes to savings (42%) and consumer spending (25%) [3, p. 20].

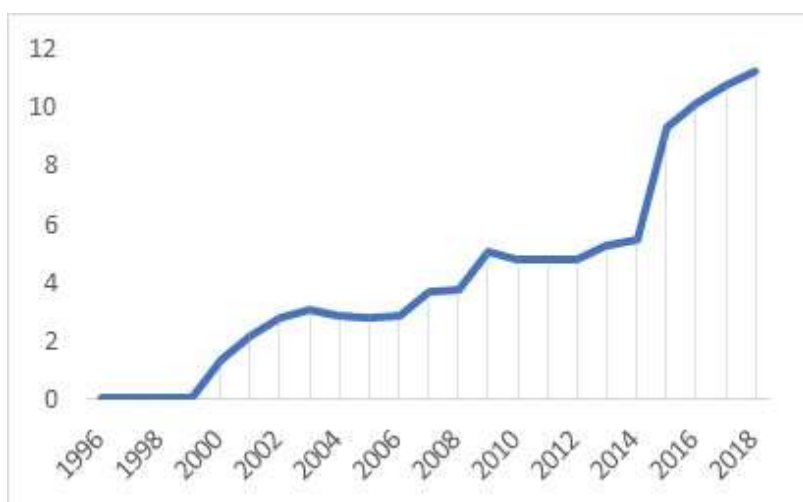


Figure 2. Personal remittances, received (% of GDP), Ukraine (1996–2018)

Data Source: The World Bank [2].

The educational level of migrant workers during the period of independence had a wave-like dynamics. There was a high rate of highly skilled and intellectual components of labour migration in the period up to the mid-1990s. Up to 60% of migrant workers had higher education than. By the end of the 1990s, labour

migration spread to wider segments of the population, and the rates declined. Closer to 2010, the share of highly educated migrants increased again and in 2014–2015 amounted to 36% [4, p. 121; 3, p. 12]. In this part, the study of academic migration and migration of the modern high-class specialists (especially IT professionals) is very promising.

Migration is one of the drivers of global development and scientific progress. And we fully agree with the opinion of Academician Libanova that “migration is not a problem that needs to be solved, but a reality that needs to be taken into account and needs to be improved” [5, p. 314]. Therefore, it is advisable to focus public policy on mitigating the possible consequences and reducing the scale of migration. Today this advice is accurate as never before. The global crisis caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 is gaining new signs. Closed borders and terminated international passenger services is a new but not typical for the globalized world reality. It doesn't mean that Ukrainian authorities have to use this situation to keep Ukrainian citizens in the country artificially, for example, by putting forward their demands to the countries of labour migration destination. Creation of high living standards, social benefits, the possibility to realise an intellectual potential are still the best way to attract people to stay in the country or even to come back here. Because, first of all, people have the right and freedom to choose the place of living and working.

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У статті подано загальну характеристику зовнішньої трудової міграції з України в роки незалежності. Масовий характер четвертої міграційної хвилі частково пояснюється реалізацією міграційного потенціалу сформованого у радянські часи. Визначено мотиви, вектори спрямування та джерела трудової міграції, рівень освіченості трудових мігрантів, обсяги грошових переказів та їхню роль в економіці.

Ключові слова: міграція, міжнародна трудова міграція, мотиви міграції, грошові перекази.

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