

LABOR MIGRATION AND LEGAL GUARANTEES IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: This article examines the essence, socio-economic significance and multifaceted nature of labor migration, paying special attention to its role in modern Uzbek society. Labor migration is not only an economic phenomenon, but also a social process that affects demographic dynamics, labor market development and household well-being. Labor migration in Uzbekistan has become one of the main mechanisms for job creation and poverty reduction, as it provides citizens with the opportunity to find work abroad and contributes to the growth of the national economy through remittances.

The study analyzes the current regulatory and legal framework regulating external labor migration and identifies priority areas of state policy to protect the rights and freedoms of labor migrants. Special attention is paid to constitutional guarantees, the provisions of the Law "On External Labor Migration", relevant concepts and programs aimed at supporting labor migrants and their family members. In addition, the article reviews international labor standards and documents adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and other global institutions, highlighting Uzbekistan's efforts to harmonize national legislation with international norms.

Keywords: labor migration, legal guarantees, foreign labor, Uzbek legislation, international labor law.

Introduction. In recent years, as a result of globalization and economic integration processes, labor migration has become a widespread phenomenon worldwide. The population prefers to work abroad in order to improve their living standards, earn a stable income, and improve their skills. Uzbekistan is no exception to these processes; millions of our compatriots work in Russia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Turkey, and other countries. This situation is not only an economic but also a legal issue. Because the working conditions of migrants in foreign countries, their rights and freedoms, social protection, and guarantees provided by the state require strengthening on a legal basis. Therefore, special laws and regulatory legal acts regulating labor migration have been developed in Uzbekistan, and cooperation with international labor organizations has been established. Labor migration is the process of moving the population from one region to another in connection with the process of employment and finding a job. This process can occur both within the country and between countries.¹ Internal labor migration occurs through permanent relocation or temporarily, that is, while maintaining a place of residence. Temporary forms include seasonal, episodic, and pendulum migration. International labor migration, on the other hand, can in some cases be permanent, that is, by moving permanently from one country to another. However, it is often limited in time: for example, working on a contract basis, traveling as a seasonal worker, or commuting from border areas. In this case, migration takes on a temporary character.

¹ [Labor migration - Demography portal](#)

In order to effectively manage labor migration processes in the Republic of Uzbekistan and strengthen the protection of citizens' rights, a number of legal acts have been adopted. In particular, the Law "On Protection and Support of the Rights of Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan Carrying Out Temporary Labor Activities Abroad", the Law "On Private Employment Agencies", the Labor Code, as well as a number of Presidential Decrees and Cabinet of Ministers resolutions serve to legally regulate the sphere of labor migration. At the same time, international documents acceded to by Uzbekistan, including the UN Convention "On the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families", also strengthen the legal basis of these processes. One of them is the Decree "On Additional Measures to Regulate the Processes of Carrying Out Labor Activities Abroad". The main task of this Decree is to improve labor activities abroad, strengthen legal protection of migrants and support for them. In this regard, the "Activity of the Agency for External Labor Migration" has been established, a system of providing legal and consular services to migrants has been introduced. In addition, a 24/7 Call Center has been established for citizens working abroad, and a mechanism has been developed to provide them with free advice and practical assistance.²

The Republic of Uzbekistan has identified the protection of the rights and interests of its citizens temporarily working abroad as one of the priorities of its state policy. In particular, Articles 5 and 9 of the Law "On Legal Protection of Citizens Temporary Working Abroad" (U'RQ-642), adopted on October 20, 2020, oblige state bodies and diplomatic missions to protect the rights and interests of citizens and provide them with legal assistance. At the same time, based on the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-3839 (July 28, 2018), the activities of the Agency for Foreign Labor Migration have been expanded, and it is established to organize the placement of citizens, prevent illegal migration, establish pre-departure training centers, and establish vocational and language courses. In addition, a number of important areas of support for labor migrants are highlighted: protection of the rights and interests of citizens, providing them with material and social support, in cooperation with diplomatic missions and consular institutions of Uzbekistan in foreign countries; establishing close ties with compatriots and national-cultural organizations abroad, and organizing cultural and educational events in collaboration with them; Conducting public awareness campaigns among citizens about the socio-economic reforms and opportunities being implemented in Uzbekistan; Providing practical assistance to citizens who have experienced crime, violence, forced labor, abuse, accidents, or financial hardship while abroad; Providing citizens with information and advisory support on the procedure for using state services and consular assistance.³

Methods. Also, The Republic of Uzbekistan is implementing a number of effective measures to support labor migrants. In particular, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction and the Agency for Youth Affairs, the "Labor Migration" software complex has been developed, and it is planned to integrate it with information systems created for assistants to governors and the "Youth Portal" electronic platform. This software complex will serve to provide comprehensive support to labor migrants and their families. It is also planned to create a special page within this complex, through which family members of labor migrants will have the opportunity to use material assistance and various referrals. A

² [President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev delivered a speech at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly](#)

³ [No. PQ-3839 dated 05.07.2018. On additional measures to further improve the external labor migration system of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

number of procedures have also been established: assistance funds and referrals are provided only to citizens registered in the “Labor Migration” software complex. At the same time, applicants can apply to the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations electronically through this complex. In general, the implementation of the “Labor Migration” software package is significant in that it will provide social support to labor migrants and their families, strengthen their legal guarantees, and serve to more effectively regulate labor migration processes.⁴

According to statistics, the Russian Federation remains the main destination for labor migration for Uzbeks as of February 2025. According to the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, there are about 766,000 migrant children under the age of 18 living in the country, but only 20 percent of them are officially registered. The share of Uzbek children in this group is 13.4 percent (TASS, 2025). At the same time, the Russian government announced that it will introduce a digital migrant profile system from June 30, 2025, which will completely replace paper-based patents. Currently, there are about 640,000 illegal migrants in the country, but no specific information is provided about their countries of origin.

Results and Discussion. According to preliminary data from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as of April 1, 2025, the country's population was about 37.6 million people. This indicator indicates an increase of 2% compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The gender composition of the population is also evenly distributed, with 18.7 million or 49.6% being women and 18.9 million or 50.4% being men. At the same time, starting from the first quarter of 2025, UzStat has updated the reporting form on migration statistics. While in previous years, quarterly data covered the country's internal and external migration flows, as well as the sources and destinations of migrants and emigrants, now the data is provided in a more concise and systematic manner. In particular, according to the statistics published for the 1st quarter of 2025, a total of 63,077 immigrants were registered, of which 62,755 were internal migrants, and 322 were external migrants who came to Uzbekistan for permanent residence from abroad. Emigration processes were also observed during this period, and a total of 65,126 people were registered. Of these, 62,755 were internal emigrants, and 2,371 were external emigrants who left for foreign countries for permanent residence. These figures show that the external migration flow had more emigrants than arrivals, and the external migration balance for the first quarter of 2025 recorded a negative result.

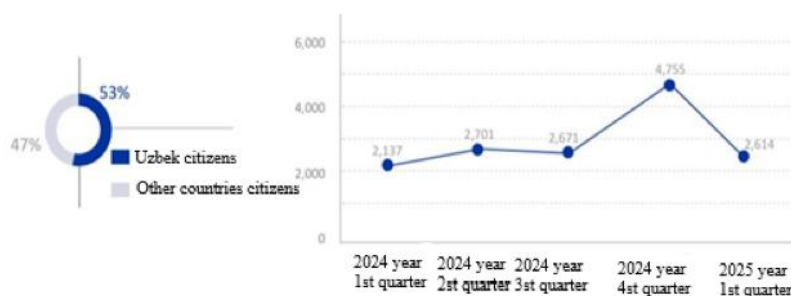


Fig.1. According to the National Bureau of Statistics under the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan (QazStat).

In the 1st quarter of 2025, 2,614 Uzbek citizens moved to Kazakhstan for permanent residence. This figure significantly decreased compared to 4,755 people in the 4th quarter of 2024. It is

⁴ [Mirror](#)

noteworthy that among all foreign citizens who arrived in Kazakhstan for permanent residence in the 1st quarter of 2025 (4,920 people), Uzbek citizens accounted for more than half of the total migrants (QazStat, 2025).

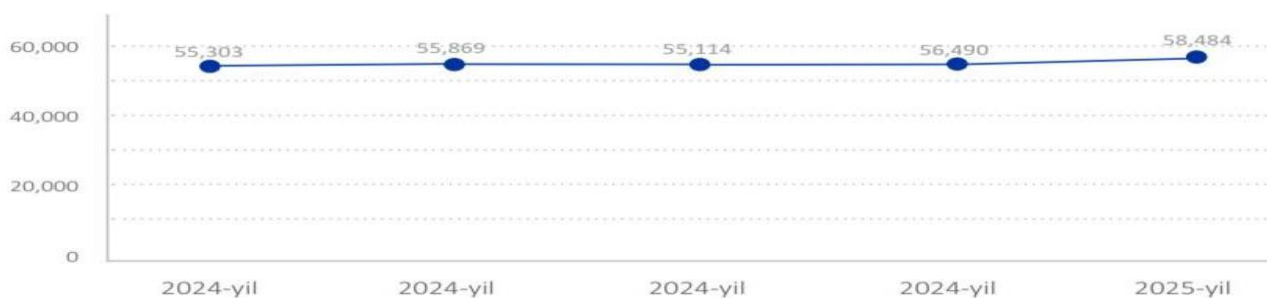


Fig.2. According to official data published by the Presidency of the Migration Board of the Republic of Turkey (MBR).

As of March 2025, the number of Uzbek citizens with residence permits in this country reached 58,484. This figure brought Uzbek migrants to the seventh place among foreign citizens residing in Turkey. At the end of December 2024, this number was 56,490, an increase of 3.5 percent in the first three months of 2025. This dynamics, in turn, indicates that Turkey is strengthening its position as a sustainable migration destination for Uzbek citizens. According to the MBR, at the end of March 2025, the number of Uzbek citizens with short-term residence permits was 21,114, placing them in ninth place among foreigners. The number of those with family residence permits was 15,714, placing Uzbek citizens in second place. Also, 5,961 Uzbek students in Turkey had student residence permits, placing them in seventh place among international students.⁵

Looking at world practice, different countries have developed their own mechanisms for regulating labor migration. The press service of the Foreign Labor Migration Agency reported on the introduction of a number of innovations in the legislation of the Russian Federation regarding labor migrants. These changes are also relevant for citizens of Uzbekistan and serve to regulate their labor activities and legal status. First of all, foreign citizens who have a patent or are studying in Russia will now have the right to extend the temporary stay of their minor children. Also, citizens of “visa-free” countries, including citizens of Uzbekistan, will have the opportunity to change the purpose of visit on the migration card to “work” without leaving the territory of Russia. This process is carried out when applying for a patent and only requires submitting a notification to the Migration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The process of obtaining a patent has also been simplified. If a foreign citizen has a taxpayer identification number (TIN/INN) and indicates it in the application, the documents will be considered within 5 business days. In the absence of a TIN, this period is 10 business days. In addition, it has been established that foreign citizens engaged in labor activities in Russia must undergo a mandatory medical examination once a year. Foreign students studying in vocational educational institutions will now have the right to work officially. Another important innovation is that in the event of the cancellation of a temporary residence permit (RVP) or residence permit (VNJ), foreign citizens must leave the territory of Russia within 15 days. In

⁵[report-on-the-migration-situation-in-uzbekistan-January-March-2025.pdf](#)

general, these changes are aimed at more clearly defining the legal status of labor migrants, regulating their labor activities, and preventing illegal migration. In 2024-2025, labor migration to Germany will be simplified thanks to the new law on the immigration of skilled workers, which includes a “map of opportunities” for finding a job and simplified conditions for vocational education specialists. Legal guarantees include access to the “EU Blue Card” for highly qualified specialists with higher education and salaries above the established thresholds, as well as a simplified procedure for permanent residence for “blue card” holders. Key changes and opportunities “Chancenkarte” (Chancenkarte) From June 1, 2024, non-EU citizens can receive an annual “Chancenkarte” to look for work in Germany. Simplification for qualified professionals The law, which came into effect on March 1, 2024, will make it easier to employ qualified professionals⁶

In conclusion, labor migration is developing rapidly in all countries today. In particular, in our country, we can see that the rights and interests of labor migrants are protected by law and broad opportunities are created for them. In foreign countries, we can also see that our compatriots are protected by the homeland. We can emphasize that not only our citizens, but also citizens of foreign countries have guarantees in labor migration. Of course, in every developing area, there are both negative and positive sides, therefore, the state is carrying out reforms to further accelerate and develop the reforms taking place in labor migration.

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