

## Central Asia: the crisis of the migration model and its potential impact on the EU

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Over the past fifteen years, the presence in Russia of several million labour migrants from Central Asia has been a key determinant of the region's stability. This migration has contributed to reducing internal problems and has helped provide a source of income to societies in specific countries. At present, due to the economic crisis, Russia is unable to continue its involvement in relieving socio-economic tensions in the region. Remittances from migrants have declined by 50% over the last three years. Undeveloped Central Asian economies are unable to offer an alternative to labour migration and other states which migrants previously chose as destination, such as Kazakhstan, Turkey and China, are not in a position to replace Russia in this respect. Potentially, this generates the risk of a destabilisation of the socio-political situation in the most vulnerable countries of the region and may trigger a flow of migration from Central Asia to countries other than these three countries, including to the EU. This latter phenomenon has already occurred on a limited scale in Tajikistan, the state which most depends on labour migration. Over the last two years, there has been a rapid, more than five-fold increase in the number of citizens of this country who have applied for asylum in the EU. Even if large-scale migration pressure from Central Asia to the EU is unlikely, an increase in the number of migrants from Central Asia to the EU is conceivable. Due to the fact that Russia is a key transit route, Moscow may use this as an instrument of pressure towards the EU, especially the Central and Eastern European states which, in turn, would be more dangerous than the migration pressure itself.

### The migration trends recorded in the region so far

In Central Asia, migrations have a well established historical and social background. The large number of migration processes and their reach observed both in the Soviet era<sup>1</sup> and during the first years following the collapse of the Soviet Union have resulted in the emergence of social and cultural standards which popu-

larised migration in the region and fostered increased mobility in the local population<sup>2</sup>.

At present, the basic migration model is labour migration to Russia, mainly from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Migrations became a large-scale phenomenon at the beginning of the present century and at its peak in 2013 more than 2.7 million citizens of Uzbekistan, more

<sup>1</sup> For example evacuations during the Second World War, the forced resettlement of whole nations (for example Chechens to Kazakhstan or Crimean Tatars to Uzbekistan) or in later times major Soviet agricultural and industrial projects carried out in the region.

<sup>2</sup> For example the numerous migrations to historical homelands (mainly to Russia and Germany and, in the case of Crimean Tatars – to Ukraine) or countries pursuing an active policy of repatriation of ethnic minorities (for example to Poland and Israel). In Tajikistan, which saw a civil war in 1992–1997, refugees and internally displaced persons were an additional problem (as high as 1.2 million individuals).

than 1.2 million citizens of Tajikistan and almost 600,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan were working in Russia<sup>3</sup>. Labour migrations from Central Asia are caused by multiple factors including the rapid demographic development<sup>4</sup> of Central Asian states, structural poverty resulting in the lack of alternatives to labour migration as viewed from the perspective of entire societies, easy access to the Russian labour market for citizens of the region's states and Russia's demand for cheap labour. Moreover, labour migration is facilitated by authoritarian governments in the region's states, who treat them as a unique safety valve enabling them to rid themselves of the most active individuals, i.e. those who pose the biggest threat to the regime. Besides them leaving the country, they also secure a source of income for society.

### Remittances from labour migrants are the main source of income for the impoverished societies of some Central Asian states.

Remittances from labour migrants are the main source of income for the impoverished societies of some of Central Asian states. In 2013, the final year preceding the economic crisis in Russia, their value was nearly US\$ 13.6 billion, of which US\$ 6.7 billion was sent to Uzbekistan, US\$ 4.2 billion to Tajikistan and US\$ 2.1 billion to Kyrgyzstan<sup>5</sup>. Tajikistan is the most striking case –

<sup>3</sup> Data compiled by the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation: [http://www.fms.gov.ru/fms/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya\\_v\\_otnoshenii\\_inostrannih\\_grazh](http://www.fms.gov.ru/fms/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya_v_otnoshenii_inostrannih_grazh)

<sup>4</sup> Between 1990 and 2015 the region's population increased by 36.9% – from 50.216 million to 68.755 million. When analysed taking into account migration from the region following the collapse of the USSR, this increase is *de facto* even more prominent. Data compiled by the World Bank: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2015&start=1990>

<sup>5</sup> The value of remittances from natural persons. Data compiled by the Central Bank of the Russian Federation: [http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?Prtid=svs&ch=Par\\_17101#-CheckedItem](http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?Prtid=svs&ch=Par_17101#-CheckedItem)

in 2013 remittances compared with country's GDP were equal to about 41% of its size (which is the highest coefficient globally)<sup>6</sup>.

Labour migration is both long-term – a portion of labour migrants permanently settle in Russia and are even granted Russian citizenship – and seasonal, mainly in the third and fourth quarter of the year. Migrants from Central Asia are scattered across Russia, with major groups living in big cities, mainly Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and, to a lesser extent, in Siberia. Due to the diversified nature of migration in Russia highly active, mainly informal, Central Asian ethnic migration networks have emerged.

### The exhaustion of the current model

A number of economic and social processes seem to suggest that the current model of migration from Central Asia is beginning to wear out. At the same time, these processes may foster increased migration flow from this region to countries other than Russia, including the EU states.

The economic crisis in Russia and the devaluation of the rouble are the main factors driving the change of the current migration model. They have caused a rapid, progressing decline in the value of remittances from labour migrants stemming from Central Asia. Due to the crisis, these remittances declined by 48% – from US\$ 13.6 billion in 2013 (the final year preceding the crisis) to US\$ 6.9 billion in 2016 (a drop of 2.95% compared with 2015). When broken down into the individual countries of the region, this decline is the biggest in the case of Uzbekistan (around 59%, from US\$ 6.7 billion to 2.7 billion) and Tajikistan (54%, from US\$ 4.2 billion to 1.9 billion). It is less prominent in the case of Kyrgyzstan (17%, from US\$ 2.1 billion to 1.7 billion)<sup>7</sup>. It is worth noting that Russian media

<sup>6</sup> Author's calculation, data from the Central Bank of the Russian Federation and the World Bank.

<sup>7</sup> Remittances from natural persons. Data compiled by the Central Bank of the Russian Federation.

claims that there has been an increase<sup>8</sup>, instead of a decrease in the value of remittances, result from applying incorrect or possibly manipulated methods for calculating this value<sup>9</sup>.

**Central Asian economies are undeveloped and backward – they are unable to generate the number of jobs required by societies with booming demographic statistics.**

The above-mentioned decline in the value of remittances from labour migrants is partly offset by a considerable depreciation of the currencies of Central Asian states against the US dollar (and the remittances are usually made in US dollars). Although in the short term this helps reduce (but not eliminate) the negative impact of the declining value of remittances from labour migrants, in the long term it will lead to inflation and the continued deterioration of socio-economic standards in the countries of the region. This, in turn, will contribute to maintaining the need for large-scale labour migration from the region's states.

The decline in the value of remittances is accompanied by a drop in the number of labour migrants from Central Asia in Russia, but the relation is not linear. In the case of Uzbekistan in 2013–2016 this number fell by 28%, in the case of Tajikistan by 36%, whereas the figure for Kyrgyzstan remained unchanged (when compared to 2015 an increase of 13% was recorded result-

ing from Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union)<sup>10</sup>. The non-linear proportion between the value of remittances and the number of migrants results from the lack of alternatives to working in Russia. Central Asian economies are undeveloped and backward – they are unable to generate the number of jobs required by societies with booming demographic statistics (for example in Tajikistan 35% of citizens are aged 15 or under<sup>11</sup>). In addition, over ten years of large-scale labour migration to Russia has solidified the socio-economic model in which the main source of income for society (in particular in Tajikistan) are the wages earned by migrants.

### Searching for alternatives to labour migration to Russia

The countries of the region are aware of the fact that the current model is unsustainable and their governments are making formal attempts to seek out new labour markets for their economic migrants. One example of these attempts is the decree by the government of Tajikistan issued in August 2016 which orders specific ministries to launch actions to seek new labour markets for Tajik migrants, other than the Russian market<sup>12</sup>.

Countries other than Russia have already been the destination for labour migrants from Central Asia. As many as several hundred thousand labour migrants from this region are working in Turkey, Kazakhstan, China and the East Asian states, with the largest group, most probably

<sup>8</sup> For example <http://www.fergananews.com/news/26167>

<sup>9</sup> This mainly concerns the Fergana news agency which until 2016 was using the Central Bank's data regarding remittances made via money transfer systems (in Russian: Трансграничные переводы, осуществленные через платежные системы), and since the beginning of 2016 it has used data regarding remittances made by natural persons (in Russian: Трансграничные переводы физических лиц по основным странам-контрагентам). Comparing figures calculated according to the method applied in 2015 to those calculated according to the other method applied in 2016 indicates an increase. This, however, is manipulation.

<sup>10</sup> Data compiled by the Federal Migration Service (FMS) of the Russian Federation in April 2016: [http://www.fms.gov.ru/fms/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya\\_v\\_otnoshenii\\_inostrannih\\_grazhdan](http://www.fms.gov.ru/fms/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya_v_otnoshenii_inostrannih_grazhdan). In April 2016 the FMS was dissolved and its duties have been transferred to the Ministry of the Interior – since then the statistics regarding the number of foreigners in Russia had not been updated until February 2017, which was when another, non-compatible method was adopted.

<sup>11</sup> Data compiled by the World Bank: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS>

<sup>12</sup> Previously, similar actions had been carried out also in Uzbekistan; <http://www.fergananews.com/news/25178>

between 150,000 and 300,000 individuals, working in Turkey<sup>13</sup>. Although the number of migrants is increasing, due to several factors, such as availability of a local workforce and legal barriers<sup>14</sup>, these countries may serve as an alternative only for specific groups of labour migrants, not for all of them. In addition, as with Russia, some of these countries, for example Kazakhstan, are themselves going through an economic crisis, which in turn limits their absorption capability.

**The economic crisis in Russia and inability of the usual destination countries to fully absorb labour migrants from Central Asia indicate that the interest in the EU as a potential destination for labour migration will likely increase.**

The economic crisis in Russia (understood not only as a decline in the GDP growth rate, but also as a situation in which this figure remains at the same crisis level or records a slight increase<sup>15</sup>), the drop in real wages offered on the Russian market<sup>16</sup> and the usual destination countries' inability to fully absorb labour migrants from Central Asia all indicate that the interest in the EU as a potential destination for labour migration will likely increase. This is fostered by a number of social factors which make EU countries increasingly attractive to migrants from Central Asia. The relatively high wages, even in eastern EU countries, are one

such factor, especially when compared to the declining US dollar equivalent of salaries offered in Central Asia and Russia. Another important, albeit hardly measurable factor, is the region-wide conviction that Central Asia and Europe, especially the countries of the former Communist bloc, are closely related when it comes to cultural heritage. This conviction is the legacy of the Soviet era and has already impacted migration behaviour in Central Asia<sup>17</sup>. In addition, from the vantage point of migrants from Central Asia, access to the EU is relatively easy when it comes to logistics, despite the visa regime. Despite considerable geographical distance, the number of borders which need to be crossed is small. Russia and Belarus are easily accessible, means of transport (a well-developed logistical base facilitating travel to Russia, and a transportation network centred around Moscow) are widely available – especially to migrants who are already in Russia. Another psychological factor impacting the decision to travel to the EU involves Russian propaganda frequently using the motive of the 2015 migrant crisis in the EU to show that European institutions and states are unable to stop large-scale migration<sup>18</sup>.

### **The migration trends from Central Asia to the EU and human rights**

Since the collapse of the USSR, the main form of migration from Central Asia to EU countries has been the planned repatriation of ethnic minorities by European states which are the historical homelands to these minority groups.

<sup>13</sup> Most of them are staying there illegally, which makes it difficult to quote a precise number. In Turkey, which is the main destination for labour migration to countries other than Russia, there are around 70 000 citizens of Central Asian states (Turkmenistan in particular) legally living and working there; <http://m.turkinfo.nl/turkiye-de-yasayan-yabancı-sayısı-650-bin-kisiyi-geçti/13956/>

<sup>14</sup> For example citizens of Uzbekistan are not required to obtain an Uzbek exit visa when travelling to Russia.

<sup>15</sup> As forecast for example by the IMF: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2016/cr16229.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-studies/2017-02-06/painful-adaptation-social-consequences-crisis-russia>

<sup>17</sup> For example groups of around 200 Kazakh Salafis, who in 2006 chose the Czech Republic as destination for their emigration due to having been persecuted in Kazakhstan. They were convinced of cultural proximity and aware of the importance the Czech Republic attaches to the question of human rights (as evidenced by the location of the main office of Radio Free Europe in Prague); [http://rus.azattyq.org/a/Salafit\\_Salafits\\_Kazakh\\_refugees\\_/1378639.html](http://rus.azattyq.org/a/Salafit_Salafits_Kazakh_refugees_/1378639.html) and <http://pravozashitnik.at.ua/news/2009-10-05-327>

<sup>18</sup> One example of this are reports aired in a popular opinion journalism broadcast "Vesti Nedeli" on the Russian state television channel Rossiya 1, see for example <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2663652>

It culminated in the 1990s and early 2000s. Refugee migrations are another phenomenon which has been recorded over the last decade, although so far its scale has been limited. Even serious crises in Central Asia, which generated large number of refugees in the region itself (for example the 2005 rebellion in Andijan in Uzbekistan and the 2010 conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan), resulted in the number of Central Asian refugees in EU countries increasing merely by several hundred individuals, perhaps as many as one thousand. However, the situation has changed over the last two years; this is evidenced by an unprecedented increase in the number of asylum applications submitted in the EU by citizens of Tajikistan, the poorest country in the region. A more than five-fold increase in this number has been recorded – from 590 individuals in 2014 to 3,205 individuals in 2016<sup>19</sup>. This increase has been caused by both actual human rights violations in the region and by socio-economic factors.

In Central Asia, human rights violations are widespread, with the situation in some countries, for example Tajikistan, deteriorating even further<sup>20</sup>. Cases of human rights violations happen not only in authoritarian states such as Uzbekistan<sup>21</sup>, Turkmenistan<sup>22</sup> and Tajikistan<sup>23</sup>, but also in the relatively open and democratic Kyrgyzstan<sup>24</sup>. Persecution for being practicing independent (not necessarily radical) forms of Islam occurs in all the countries of the region<sup>25</sup>. This results both in increased numbers of persecuted individuals (on political or religious grounds), for whom asylum in the EU is the

only alternative (it is not possible for them to stay in CIS countries), and in attempts by labour migrants to obtain asylum and thereby legalise their stay in the EU.

**Over the past two years, there has been a more than five-fold increase in the number of asylum applications submitted by citizens of Tajikistan in the EU.**

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) and the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) are very good examples of the phenomena discussed above. Hizb ut-Tahrir is a political organisation aiming to create a caliphate using peaceful, political methods<sup>26</sup> – although the organisation’s goal is radical, its operating methods fit in the political spectrum. HT operates legally in the EU (until recently its main headquarters were in London), whereas in the CIS (besides Georgia and Ukraine) it is considered a terrorist organisation and membership of it is punishable<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, for HT members from Central Asian states, migration to Russia is not an option and asylum in the EU is frequently the only way of escaping persecution.

The case of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) shows a different side to the problem. The party was established on the basis of Islamic opposition in the aftermath of the civil war in Tajikistan. Until 2015 it had representation in the Tajik parliament and was the only legally operating Islamic party in the region. Despite its name, it is not a strictly religious party and its main declared goal is the secular modernisation of the state with respect for Islamic values. Its members included believers in various lines of Islam. In the 2013 presidential race, in concert with the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan,

<sup>19</sup> Data compiled by Eurostat: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyapctza&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyapctza&lang=en)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/tajikistan>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253193.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.humanrights.gov/dyn/countries/turkmenistan.html>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/tajikistan/report-tajikistan/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://freedomhouse.kg/prava-cheloveka-v-kyrgyzstane/>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=1780](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1780)

<sup>26</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir condemns politically-motivated violence and is strongly disliked by Islamic radical and terrorist organisations.

<sup>27</sup> For more on Hizb ut-Tahrir see <https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/homojihadicus.pdf>

it supported Oynikhol Bobonazarova, a secular oppositionist and human rights defender<sup>28</sup>. In 2015, the party was formally dissolved by the government, and was later considered a terrorist organisation and banned<sup>29</sup>. Under pressure from the government, most of its members had left the party before it was formally dissolved<sup>30</sup>, with only a small and easily identifiable group remaining active in exile (including the leader Muhiddin Kabiri) or being a victim to repression by Tajik government<sup>31</sup>.

In public debate, the rapid increase in the number of asylum applications submitted in the EU by citizens of Tajikistan (this has been observed over the last couple of years) has been associated with the situation surrounding the IRPT<sup>32</sup>. Although it is beyond doubt that the rising number of citizens of Tajikistan seeking asylum in the EU does include IRPT members who are under threat of persecution, the number of active IRPT members, who do not cooperate with the government and are really threatened by persecution, is smaller than the number of individuals applying for asylum in the EU<sup>33</sup>. This increase is mainly related to the deteriorating economic situation in Russia, which forces citizens of Tajikistan to seek other destinations for labour migration. Alongside this, the actual

human rights violations in the region (including in Tajikistan) enable labour migrants to use asylum as a method for legalising their stay in the EU. This fosters the merging of these two groups and results in mixed migration flows, similar to the 2015 migration crisis and Syrian refugees who accounted for a mere 28% of the total number of individuals seeking asylum in the EU<sup>34</sup>.

### **Russia is playing the key role when it comes to the increased migration flow to the EU.**

Another factor that may foster increased migration flows from Central Asia to the EU is potential destabilisation of the situation in the region; this cannot be ruled out in the long term. The deterioration of the socio-economic situation due to the crisis in Russia increases this risk. In addition, several permanent structural threats to the region's stability have emerged<sup>35</sup> and serious local crises tend to occur regularly every couple of years. Examples of such crises include the previously mentioned 2005 rebellion in the city of Andijan in Uzbekistan and the ethnically motivated conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010. These two events generated large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons – in 2010 110,000 individuals fled from Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan and another 300,000 were internally displaced<sup>36</sup>. Due to increased interest in the EU as a potential location for seeking asylum, prolonged destabilisation in the whole of Central Asia or in any of the region's states, contrary to similar situations in the past, will likely trigger increased numbers

<sup>28</sup> <http://avesta.tj/2013/09/17/kabiri-prosit-sezd-podderzhat-ojnihol-bobonazarovu/>

<sup>29</sup> For more on IRPT see <https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/homojihadicus.pdf> and <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2016-03-16/tajikistan-a-chronic-stagnation>

<sup>30</sup> <http://old.news.tj/ru/node/210335>  
The fact that the IRPT is heavily infiltrated by Tajik security services is another question.

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2016/06/160602\\_tajikistan\\_islam\\_party\\_trial](http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2016/06/160602_tajikistan_islam_party_trial)

<sup>32</sup> For example <https://amnesty.org.pl/tadzycy-uchodzcy-na-polskiej-granicy/>

<sup>33</sup> According to the party's governing bodies, it had up to 40,000 members in its peak years. However, this number seems to have been massively overestimated, as evidenced both by problems with collecting signatures ahead of the 2015 presidential election and the scale of the wave of arrests and persecutions that followed these events (several hundred individuals). A more credible number would be several thousand members in the party's peak years. The vast majority of them left the party in August and September 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Data compiled by Eurostat: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyapctza&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyapctza&lang=en)

<sup>35</sup> For more see <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-studies/2014-10-28/hostages-to-moscow-clients-beijing-security-central-asia-role-west>.

<sup>36</sup> [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full\\_Report\\_490.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf)

of refugees who may consider the EU to be an attractive destination<sup>37</sup>.

## Under Russia's control

Russia is playing the key role when it comes to increased migration flow to the EU. At present, in Russia there are at least 3.5 million labour migrants from Central Asia who may be the first source of such a migration flow. Moreover, the transport route from Central Asia to the EU runs through Russia. Nor should it be ruled out that Moscow may wish to use the question of migration from Central Asia and Chechnya to the EU to exert political pressure on EU member states or to stoke tensions within the EU connected with the problem of controversial migration.

Russia has both the possibility to generate migration pressure and to later manage the problem when it naturally occurs. Firstly, similar to Turkey in the case of Syrian refugees, Russia is a major centre for labour migrants from Central Asia. Secondly, Moscow has a vast array of means to control them at its disposal. These include legal and administrative instruments (the question of legalised stay and work permits), the threat of deportation, and social pressure (the possibility of managing the dislike of migrants from Central Asia which Russian society manifests). Thirdly, Central Asian societies have almost exclusively been part of the Russian information area, which enables Moscow to shape the social mood in the region's states. Finally, Russia and Belarus have a logistical base for routes from Central Asia to the EU – there is a well-developed network of transport connections from Central Asia to Russia and there are criminal groups who have been involved in facilitating illegal migration to the EU, including via Belarus (for example of Chechens or citizens of Vietnam), for years now<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> For comparison, the civil war in Tajikistan, which took place in the 1990s, resulted in 1.2 million refugees and internally displaced persons (mainly Afghanistan and the post-Soviet states).

<sup>38</sup> <https://ria.ru/world/20160927/1477929324.html>

One example of Moscow's readiness to use migration pressure for political purposes involves the emergence of a migration route, used for example by Syrians, running via Russia to Finland and Norway<sup>39</sup>. Although the number of individuals who have made it to Norway and Finland using this route is small when compared to the main migration routes, this situation generated complex political consequences, especially for Finland, which is an EU member state<sup>40</sup>.

## One example of Moscow's readiness to use migration pressure for political purposes involves the emergence of a migration route running via Russia to Finland and Norway.

In a situation where there is a significant increase in the number of migrants coming from Central Asia and the emergence of a migration route via Russia and Belarus to the EU, it cannot be ruled out that citizens of other countries, who in large numbers are seeking asylum in the EU, may want to use it as well. This mainly includes citizens of Afghanistan (186,000 individuals in 2016, accounting for 14.8% of all asylum seekers in the EU)<sup>41</sup>, for whom the route via Central Asia and Russia would be a cheaper and safer alternative to the present route running through Iran, Turkey, Greece and the Balkans<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-and-norway-are-in-a-two-way-battle-to-repeatedly-reject-the-same-refugees-a6755031.html> and <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-norway-border-idUSKCN10Z11C>.

<sup>40</sup> For more see <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2016-04-06/enforced-cooperation-finnish-russian-migration-crisis>.

<sup>41</sup> Data compiled by Eurostat: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyap-ctza&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyap-ctza&lang=en)

<sup>42</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/FRAN\\_Q1\\_2016\\_final.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/FRAN_Q1_2016_final.pdf)

## Conclusions

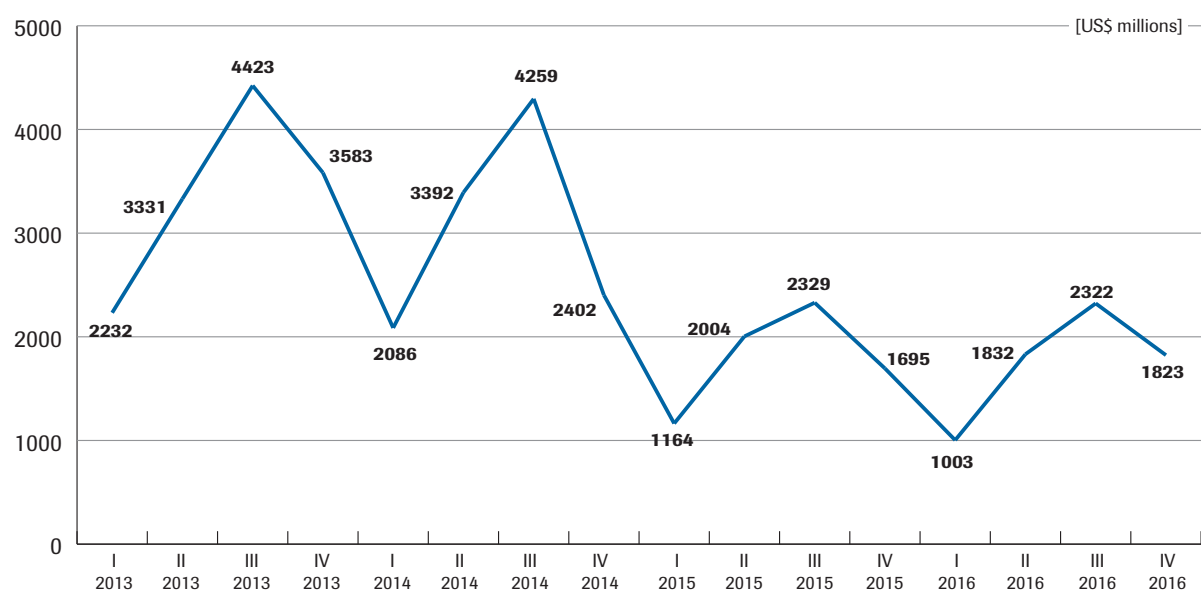
The risk of increased migration flow from Central Asia to the EU is mainly caused by the weakness of Central Asia's economies and their dependence on remittances from labour migrants working in Russia. The value of these remittances has declined rapidly in recent years. Certain threats may be connected with the merging of minor refugee migrations recorded to date, caused by actual human rights violations in the region, and labour migrations for which the instrument of asylum will be used as a method for legalising migrants' stay in the EU. On a small scale this has already been observed for citizens of Tajikistan seeking asylum in the EU. Over the last two years, they have increased in number more than five-fold. Considering the dynamics of the social process involving the increased migration (asylum seekers) of Tajiks to the EU,

this should not be ignored, even if the scale of this phenomenon has so far been insignificant. It heralds increased interest in the EU as a destination for refugees and migrants. Taking economic factors in Central Asia and Russia into account, this means that within the next couple of years, even if no major destabilisation occurs in the region, the emergence of increased migration pressure from this region to the EU is likely and could involve between ten thousand and even several dozen thousand individuals per year. This concerns mainly those EU states which border Russia and Belarus: the Scandinavian countries, the Baltic states and Poland. Despite the incomparably smaller number of individuals involved, threats resulting from this pressure will be all the more serious for the eastern EU states than the 2015 migrant crisis because Russia is likely to use them to stoke tensions within the EU and gain political advantage.



## APPENDICES

### 1. Remittances from Central Asian labour migrants in Russia (in US\$ millions)



Data: Central Bank of the Russian Federation

### 2. Remittances from Central Asian labour migrants in Russia (in US\$ millions)

country/year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Uzbekistan	1693	3007	2071	2857	4275	5694	6689	5653	3059	2741
Tajikistan	1667	2549	1740	2229	3040	3651	4173	3853	2219	1928
Kyrgyzstan	771	1212	925	1129	1572	1859	2106	2062	1384	1743
Kazakhstan	195	297	216	309	442	461	560	577	514	559
Turkmenistan	30	50	34	35	35	36	41	30	16	9
Region	4356	7115	4986	6559	9364	11701	13569	12175	7192	6980

Data: Central Bank of the Russian Federation

### 3. Labour migrants from Central Asia in Russia (in thousands)

country/year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Uzbekistan	2333	2734	2581	2149	1756
Tajikistan	1061	1229	1178	999	879
Kyrgyzstan	524	576	552	508	574

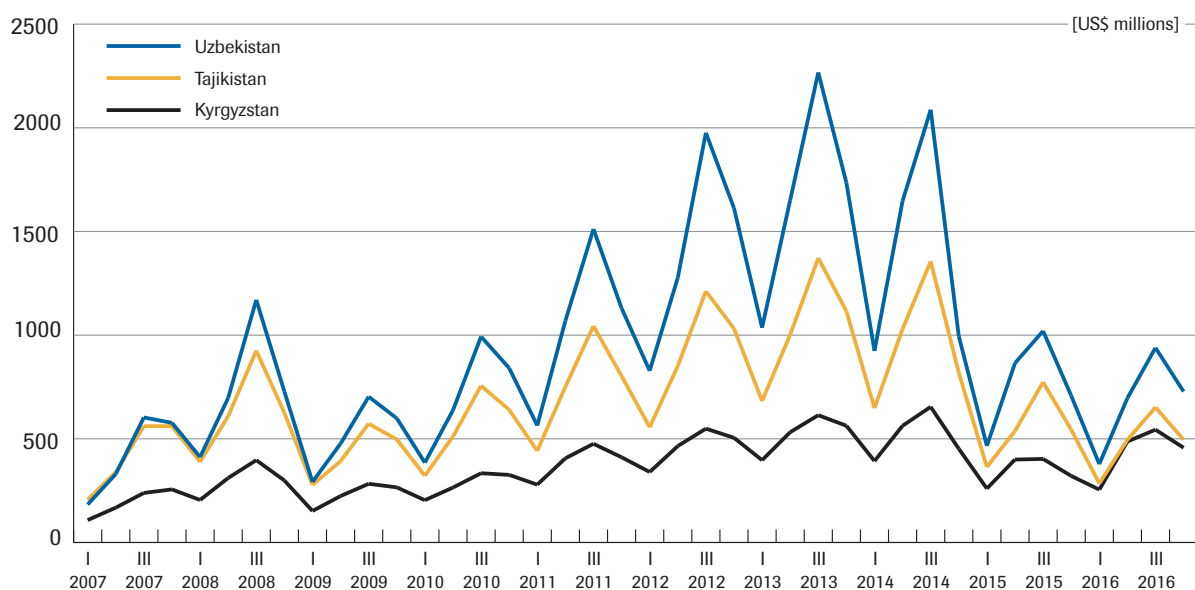
Data source: Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation

#### 4. Citizens of Tajikistan seeking asylum in the EU

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of individuals	205	210	210	295	590	1125	3050

Data source: Eurostat

#### 5. Remittances from labour migrants from Central Asia per country (in US\$ millions per quarter)



Data: Central Bank of the Russian Federation

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