

Theme G: International migration and migrant populations
MIGRATION FLOWS BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Background and purpose of the research

Belarus is located in the geographic center of the European continent, on the crossroad of main transportation routes from central regions of Russia to Western Europe and from the Baltic states to the Black Sea countries. Migration of population plays an important role in the Belarus society. Since the second half of the 1980's cardinal changes in the volumes, intensity and directions of migration flows in the Republic of Belarus have taken place. The most considerable impact on the changes in the trends of migration flows had the collapse of the USSR, as well as the reorganization of economic and political life in the republic and the consequences of Chernobyl nuclear power-station catastrophe in April 1986.

Data and methods, which were used

The major information sources for the assessment of migration processes are the data of current statistics of the Ministry of Statistics and Analysis of the Republic of Belarus, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, and results of the sample surveys conducted by the Institute of Economics of NAS Belarus.

Main results

On the whole, the migration turnover of the Republic of Belarus with other countries decreased continuously in the 1990's. It was made up of the two multidirectional flows: *the first one* with CIS countries and Baltic states, and *the second one* with other countries of the World excluding CIS countries and Baltic states. In the first flow Belarus during the 1990's had a continuous positive net increase, the maximum one being achieved in 1992. In the second flow the increase was always negative, the peak being observed in 1990.

Conclusions

The role of migration processes in the development of the Belarus society remains very important, although it undergoes essential changes. Currently the internal migration mobility of population is relatively not large. However, as the socio-economic situation in the country becomes more stabilized, the internal migration mobility will increase. The population in Belarus is reproduced only by 60 per cent due to the vital processes, and this will last for a long time, that is why migration will compensate the population deficit resulting from depopulation. An effective long-term migration policy in Belarus should be aimed at the active attraction of immigrants, their successful integration into the Belarus society, and neutralization of possible negative aftereffects of the growing share of immigrants for the national population. Developing and implementing migration policy, qualified manpower and brain drain should be taken into account. To smoothen this process, it is necessary to develop counter-measures that would contribute to the inflow of highly qualified manpower into our country. It is also necessary to stimulate returning in the republic of the nationals who previously moved to other countries for permanent residence. Besides, an actual issue for Belarus as a transit country is the problem of effective management of the international migration processes and, first of all, combating illegal migration and illegal migrant transfer.

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