

## **UZBEKISTAN-KOREA COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF LABOR MIGRATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The article describes the stage of development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea on labor migration based on collected statistical data adhering to the principles of consistency, logic, and scientific analysis. Also, scientific analysis of cooperation processes aimed at further developing the socio-economic potential of the citizens of the two countries was carried out by solving issues in the field of human resource development. On a scientific basis, not only material interests in the development of the human resources development program were analyzed, but also the prospects for the development of socio-cultural ties in the process of rapprochement between the two countries. The study also highlights social problems in Uzbekistan, the situation with unemployment, and ongoing reforms to eliminate them, based on directing human resources to useful and targeted work.*

**Keywords:** *Strategy of action, migration, labor relations, investment cooperation, crime, social protection, immigrant, interethnic harmony, cooperation, solidarity, socialization, cultural ties, international money transfer, labor migrant, macroeconomic processes, labor resource, increasing of population, monetary policy, historical event*

### **ANNOTATSIYA**

*Mazkur maqolada O'zbekiston va Koreya Respublikasi o'rtasidagi mehnat migratsiyasi bo'yicha o'zaro hamkolik aloqalarining rivojlanish bosqichi to'plangan statistik ma'lumotlarni izchillik, mantiqiylik va ilmiy tahliliy tamoyillar asosida yoritilgan. Shuningdek ikki mamlakat fuqarolarining inson resurslarini rivojlantirish bilan bog'liq muammolarini hal etish orqali fuqarolarning ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy imkoniyatlarini yanada rivojlantirishga qaraqtirilgan hamkorlik jarayonlari ilmiy tahlildan o'tkazilgan. Inson resurslarini rivojlantirish dasturining rivoji jarayonida nafaqat moddiy manfaatdorlik yotishi balki, ikki davlat o'zaro yaqinlashuv jarayonida ijtimoiy-madaniy aloqalarning rivojlanish istiqbollari ilmiy asosda tahlil etildi. Mazkur tadqiqot ishi doirasida O'zbekistondagi ijtimoiy muammolardan*

*hisoblangan ishsizlik bilan bog'liq holatlar va ularni bartaraf etishda inson resurslarini foydali hamda maqsadli mehnatga yo'naltirish bilan bog'liq islohatlar mazmuni ham yoritilib o'tilgan.*

***Kalit so'zlar:** Harakatlar strategiyasi, migratsiya, mehnat munosabatlari, investitsion hamkorlik, jinoyatchilik, ijtimoiy himoya, hukumatlararo bitim, muhojir, millatlararo totuvlik, hamkorlik, hamjihatlik, ijtimoiylashuv, madaniy aloqalar, xalqaro pul o'tkazish, mehnat migrant, makro iqtisodiy jarayonlar, mehnat resursi, aholining o'sishi, pul-valyuta siyosati, tarixiy voqea.*

### **АННОТАЦИЯ**

*В статье описывается этап развития сотрудничества между Узбекистаном и Республикой Корея по вопросам трудовой миграции на основе собранных статистических данных придерживающихся принципов системности, логики и научного анализа. Также был проведен научный анализ процессов сотрудничества, направленных на дальнейшее развитие социально-экономического потенциала граждан двух стран путем решения вопросов в сфере развития человеческих ресурсов. На научной основе проанализированы не только материальные интересы в развитии программы развития человеческих ресурсов, но и перспективы развития социально-культурных связей в процессе сближения двух стран. В исследовании также освещаются социальные проблемы в Узбекистане, ситуацию с безработицей и проводимые реформы по их устранению, основывавшихся на направлении человеческих ресурсов на полезную и целевую*

***Ключевые слова:** Стратегия действий, миграция, трудовые отношения, инвестиционное сотрудничество, преступность, социальная защита, иммигрант, межнациональное согласие, сотрудничество, солидарность, социализация, культурные связи, международные денежные переводы, трудовые мигранты, макроэкономические процессы, трудовые ресурсы, рост населения, денежно-кредитная политика, историческое событие.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since ancient times, mankind has always been forced to move from one region to another in search of a better and fuller life or due to natural processes. As the consciousness of mankind improved, the desire for newness in the way of life, the desire to travel the world, and to work in new destinations at the level of one's capabilities appeared. In the current period of rapid development, the demand for workers and specialists in various fields is increasing as a result of the continuous development of the economy of some countries. Against the background of these

processes, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been establishing cooperative relations in the economic and social spheres with countries with highly developed economies in order to provide jobs to the population of the country since the first period of independence.

One of the important directions of cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea is the implementation of projects related to the development of human resources, which is considered as the implementation of these relations. To date, in the relations between Korea and the Republic of Uzbekistan, the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Ministry of Employment and Labor of the Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan on sending migrant workers to Korea through the employment assistance system is developing year by year.<sup>1</sup>

According to the "Memorandum of Understanding," from 1995 to 2019, more than 52,000 citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan engaged in labor activities in production enterprises and service sectors in the Republic of Korea through the Employment Permission System (EPS).<sup>2</sup>

## **LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODS**

Historically, many people have been actively involved in migration processes throughout their lives. The main reason for this is that the economic, social, political, and cultural difficulties of a particular country have had a negative impact on the lives of the population. This, in turn, has led to the development of the process of human migration from one region to another. Today, migration takes place in all countries on earth. A group of demographers from around the world have predicted that the total number of migrants in the world will reach 230 million by 2050, making up over 2.6% of the total global population. According to the UN (United Nations), as of 2019, almost 3.5% of the world's population (272 million people) are currently involved in migration flows. Two-thirds of them are the direct relatives of labor migrants. 52% of migrants globally are men, and 48% are women. Current instability in the world, economic crises, various political disagreements, and other factors have led to the rapid development of migration processes (World Migration Report 2020:2).<sup>3</sup> Since the beginning millennium Uzbekistan, it has been grooving external migration processes to foreign countries for work, study, and other purposes

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<sup>1</sup><https://lex.uz/docs/2777700>

<sup>2</sup>Очёт справки/04.07.2019/N=02/00-02/11-3263

<sup>3</sup>Yoqubov.F. "UZBEKISTAN EXTERNAL MIGRATION: KEY TRENDS AND DIRECTIONS" EURASIAN RESEARCH JOURNAL, ERJ, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 27-47, January 2022

(Graph3). However, official statistics are not elaborating fully due to a lack of methodology and measures.

In addition to the high population growth, the unemployment rate is also growing in Uzbekistan. For instance, in 2010, the unemployed accounted for 5.4% of the total population, while by 2020 this figure climbed to 10.5%. In addition, this is one of the main causes of labor and education migration among unemployed citizens in the country.

If we take into account that 60% of the population of Uzbekistan is made up of young people under the age of 35, then the majority of the population is considered to be persons with active working capacity. And providing them with jobs is an important social issue for the state. Considering the current problems in the country's economy, if the situation is realistically assessed, employing such a large number of citizens in our economy is an urgent task.

The population of Uzbekistan by the end of 2020 exceeded 34.5 million people, which is approximately half of the population of Central Asia. (Graph 1).

**Graph 1.** *Population growth in Uzbekistan (1991-2020)*

Years	Population at the beginning of the year, thousand people		
	Total	City	Countryside
1991	20 608	8 305	12 303
1995	22 462	8 671	13 791
2000	24 488	9 166	15 322
2005	26 021	9 442	16 579
2010	28 001	14 424	13 577
2015	31 022	15 748	15 274
2020	34 558	17 487	17 071

Source: Data of the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan (<https://stat.uz/ru/ofitsialnaya-statistika/demography>)

In the process of resolving the mentioned issue, the Republic of Korea plays a significantly prominent role and holds a high position. The reasons for attracting foreign workers to the country's economy by Korea are fundamental and can be understood through the following information.

By the end of the 20th century, the Korean economy grew at a high rate, and by 1990 it was \$ 200.5 billion and the annual GDP growth rate was almost 10%. During this time, the country's lack of labor in industries such as manufacturing and the shipbuilding industry led to an increase in the influx of many illegal migrants.

Furthermore, the deteriorating demographic situation in Korea can be cited as one of the reasons for the country's labor shortage. Demographers estimate that by

2050, Korea's population over the age of 65 will account for 35% of the total population, making it the second largest country in the world, and that the working-age population will decrease by 9% between 2005 and 2030, and by 26% in 2050. There are currently 7.6 potential workers per retiree; this ratio is projected to fall to 2.8 by 2030 and 1.6 by 2050 (Hayutn, 2009:13).<sup>4</sup>

The legal basis of cooperation in the field of migration is primarily the establishment of diplomatic cooperation, equality in foreign policy, and mutual trust. For this purpose, the Republic of Korea has created ample opportunities for more than 3,500 citizens of the Republic of Korea to come to Uzbekistan to live and work.<sup>5</sup> Bilateral agreements are of particular importance in the regulation of labor relations between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea. The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the Republic of Korea "On Temporary Work of Citizens of One State in the Territory of Another State"<sup>6</sup> signed on August 23, 2011, entered into force on March 1, 2012, December 13, 2012, Uzbekistan Among such documents is the memorandum of understanding on sending workers to the Republic of Korea under the employment permit system signed between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Employment and Labor of the Republic of Korea.

To effectively implement this agreement on further expansion of investment cooperation with the Republic of Korea, on November 28, 2012, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a decision "On measures to further expand investment cooperation with the Republic of Korea".<sup>7</sup> As a result of the signed cooperation in the economic sphere, the creation of additional jobs and the implementation of many promising plans for the exchange of experience in this regard are being ensured.

It should also be noted that on July 1, 2013, to further develop cooperation with the Republic of Korea in the field of labor migration, the decision of the President of Uzbekistan "On measures to further expand cooperation with the Republic of Korea in the field of labor migration" was adopted.<sup>8</sup>

Based on this decision and the "Memorandum of Understanding" signed between the countries, the Ministry of Labor of Korea allocated the following number of quotas, and based on these quotas, the number of citizens sent by our country under the EPS (Employment permission system) shown in the section.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Yoqubov.F. "UZBEKISTAN EXTERNAL MIGRATION: KEY TRENDS AND DIRECTIONS" EURASIAN RESEARCH JOURNAL, ERJ, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 27-47, January 2022

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of allocated quotas</b>	<b>The exact number of sent citizens</b>	<b>The Difference</b>
2013	5400	3283	2117
2014	3900	2660	1240
2015	3600	2718	882
2016	3400	2446	954
2017	3000	2379	621
2018	3100	2251	849
2019	3200	844 (according to the situation on July 2, 2019.)	2356 (in these days in the sending process)
Overall	25600	16581	9019

The table shows the difference between the number of quotas given by the Korean Ministry of Labor and the number of sent citizens caused by the following circumstances:

1. Exceeding the specified age (citizens not younger than 18 and not older than 39 are allowed in the contract).
2. Unfit from the point of view of health (a full medical examination is provided before departure).
3. Prohibition to go abroad by court order.
4. Termination of contract due to family circumstances.

Citizens who were sent abroad by our state under a contract or who go to work based on their own capabilities, bring foreign currency to our country to improve their social conditions, which helps small businesses, family businesses, and various services. causes the creation of rendering enterprises. As a result, additional jobs will increase, unemployed youth will be provided with work, and the scale of crime caused by youth and unemployed in our government will decrease sharply.

In addition to sending citizens of our country to work abroad, vocational training centers are being established at the expense of the state budget and at the expense of foreign investors and sponsoring organizations in order to ensure that they become skilled owners of various modern professions. For this purpose, the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 122 of May 15, 2015 "On measures to establish a vocational training center in the city of Samarkand with the involvement of a grant from the Republic of Korea", 2017 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan Decision VMQ-135 dated March 14, 2007 "On measures to establish a Vocational Training Center in Shahrizabz with the involvement of a grant from the Republic of Korea", Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan VMQ-170 dated August 13, 2007, No. "Decisions were made

on measures to establish a Vocational Education Center in Tashkent with the participation of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).<sup>5</sup>

Based on the agreement and program of the Republic of Korea on the allocation of grant aid dated August 5, 2014, the Republic of Korea to the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan "Establishment of a Vocational Education Center in Shahrizabz and a Consulting Center for Vocational Education Capacity Building in Uzbekistan" allocated a grant for the implementation of the project.

At the same time, taking into account the increase in the number of countries and foreign companies that have expressed the desire to employ citizens of Uzbekistan, as well as the regulation of the departure of citizens of the republic to work abroad, further development of the infrastructure of labor bodies that ensure the employment of citizens abroad on November 12, 2003, the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to improve the organization of labor activities of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad" was adopted.<sup>6</sup>

In accordance with this decision, the Agency for Foreign Labor Migration under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan (now the Ministry of Labor), as well as the agency for employment of citizens abroad in the cities of Tashkent, Bukhara, Fergana, Karshi and Nukus. Regional bureaus have been established. Several positive achievements were made before the end of the activity of these bureaus in 2008.

The decision of the Cabinet of Ministers "On approval of the normative documents necessary for the implementation of the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On state pension provision of citizens" and "The procedure for maintaining the labor register" dated January 29, 1998, under paragraph 2.171 of the instruction on "Records of work activities of citizens of Uzbekistan in foreign countries, unless otherwise stipulated in international agreements, upon payment of insurance premiums to the off-budget Pension Fund under the Ministry of Finance ng is entered based on the information provided by the Agency for Foreign Labor Migration. This situation serves to fully ensure the pension and social security rights of our citizens who worked in Korea following bilateral agreements.

## **RESULTS**

In 2003, a center for preliminary training and training of citizens was established under the Foreign Labor Migration Agency in order to train citizens who are going to

<sup>5</sup> <https://mehnat.uz/uz/subordinate-organizations/position/244/>Тошкент шаҳар Ишсиз фуқароларни касб-хунарга ўқитиш маркази тўғрисида низом.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.lex.uz/acts/246880/>«Ўзбекистон Республикаси фуқароларининг чет эллардаги меҳнат фаолиятини ташкил этишни такомиллаштириш чора-тадбирлари тўғрисида»

work abroad.<sup>7</sup> The main tasks of the center are to prepare and train citizens in advance according to the contracts concluded with the Agency for Foreign Labor Migration, to familiarize citizens going to work abroad with the main legal documents, traditions and norms of behavior of the country where they are sent to work on the basis of a contract. providing information about the country of destination, handling the language of the country of destination and performing labor functions, training to the level of knowledge of the rules of technical safety and labor protection in the productions where they are employed under the contract, the health status of citizens sent to work abroad taking into account the requirements of foreign employers, it includes tasks such as conducting a comprehensive medical examination involving competent medical institutions.<sup>8</sup>

The memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Employment and Labor of the Republic of Korea on sending workers to the Republic of Korea for the second time under a new procedure (Tashkent) in the city of May 31, 2016) regulates the processes of sending citizens of Uzbekistan in an organized manner according to the requirements of the Korean Employment Solution System, as well as determines the entities of the sending and receiving parties, whose work It is intended to regulate the intergovernmental coordination of the process of language and professional testing, the process of collecting candidates, concluding a contract with them, issuing visas, the entry and placement of workers, and the process of employment management. A memorandum was signed (November 8, 2017) between the Korean Institute of Skills Development and the Foreign Labor Migration Agency under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in order to familiarize the citizens sent to the Republic of Korea with the Korean language and culture.<sup>9</sup> In the document, Korean-Uzbek centers for Korean language learning were established in the cities of Tashkent, Fergana, and Nukus in order to improve the Korean language learning system knowledge level of EPS-TOPIC tests.

"On measures of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to further expand cooperation in the field of labor migration with the Republic of Korea" dated 07.01.2013. According to the decision No. PQ-1993, the Foreign Labor Migration Agency under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of

<sup>7</sup><http://www.lex.uz/acts/246880/>Чет элларга кетаётган фуқароларни олдиндан кўниктириш ва ўқитиш маркази ташкил этиш бшйича.

<sup>8</sup>[www.migration.uz/Chet\\_ela\\_ishga\\_jo\\_natishdagi\\_tibbiy\\_ko\\_rik/](http://www.migration.uz/Chet_ela_ishga_jo_natishdagi_tibbiy_ko_rik/)

<sup>9</sup>Очёт справки. N=02/00-02/11-3263. 2019. 04.07.



Uzbekistan is designated as the competent body for sending citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Republic of Korea.<sup>10</sup>

According to the agreement signed between the two countries, more than 18,000 citizens of Uzbekistan have had the opportunity to study and work in the Republic of Korea.<sup>11</sup>

During the labor activities of Uzbek migrants in the country of Korea, they have the opportunity to improve their economic opportunities, as well as to use and develop the professional and professional achievements they have achieved in the enterprises and service sectors where they worked in their homeland. This will enable them to achieve economic prosperity by implementing their plans.

Over the past three years, the volume of cross-border remittances from Korea to Uzbekistan has grown steadily. In particular, in 2018 it amounted to \$ 106.7 million. By 2019, the total volume of cross-border remittances increased by almost 13% to \$ 120.5 million. In 2020, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus to the world led to the closure of the borders of many countries. As a result, migrants sent their savings to their families using international money transfer systems. And this year, the transfers increased by 2.2 times compared to 2019 and amounted to \$ 258.2 million.

(Source: data compiled by authors based on statistics provided by the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan (<https://cbu.uz/en/>), 2021.)

## **DISCUSSION**

According to the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the working-age population in Uzbekistan is about 19 million, and the employed population is more than 13 million. More than 5 million of them are employed in the formal sector and about 8 million in the informal sector. The number of people working abroad is more than 2,300,000.<sup>12</sup>

Over the past years, 31,628 citizens have been employed through this system. The main purpose of this is to put the knowledge and skills acquired abroad into practice in the country after the citizens who are temporarily working in the Republic of Korea return to Uzbekistan. Currently, the Republic of Korea attracts workers from 16 countries through the "Free Recruitment System". The working period of Uzbek citizens employed in the Republic of Korea is up to 4 years and 10 months. In 2019, the process of employment of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Korea continued consistently. To fully cover these quota jobs, the

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<sup>10</sup><http://mehnat.uz/> Ўзбекистон Республикаси Бандлик ва меҳнат муносабатлари вазирлиги ҳамкорлик муносабатлари ривож.

<sup>11</sup><http://buxoro.adliya.uz/buxoro/uz/publikatsii/detail.php?ID=20605>

<sup>12</sup><http://uza.uz/uz/documents/aholi-bandligini-ta-minlash-borasidagi-ishlarni-takomillasht-16-07-2018>.

reserved number of available candidates to be presented to Korean employers today is 4,980, of which 4,800 are in the manufacturing sector and 180 are in the service sector.<sup>13</sup>

Due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, problems arose in labor migration issues. This problem was also reflected in the processes related to the departure of labor migrants sent abroad by Uzbekistan, as a result of which the number of citizens who should be sent as labor migrants to the Republic of Korea was drastically reduced.

In the framework of this research work, the lack of several newly established stable jobs, which is considered to be the central problem of the discussion, does not correspond to the requirements of the labor market, in order to prevent the imbalance in the labor market, the increase of the unemployment rate in some regions of the republic, the increase of illegal labor migration and informal employment. Various solutions have been developed by the official representatives of the two countries, and promising plans for solving this issue have been developed and are being implemented. In this process, there are the following problems and situations that need to be solved.

Stages of development of labor migrants movement in Uzbekistan: retrospective analysis;

Peculiarities of regulation of migration processes in Uzbekistan and Korea;

The impact of international migration on the country's national and economic security;

The place and role of external migration in the development of the real and financial sectors of the economy of Uzbekistan;

Legal and institutional basis of regulation of international migration;

Trends in the geography of labor migrants in Uzbekistan;

Peculiarities of the movement of labor migrants in the territories of the republic;

The place and role of international migration in the employment policy of Uzbekistan;

The impact of labor migration on macroeconomic processes and ways of optimization;

Ways of effective use of labor resources in the development of the social sector in the country;

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<sup>13</sup><http://old.mehnat.uz/cyrl/newnews/view/1584/> Ўзбекистон Республикаси фуқароларини Корея Республикасида ишга жойлаштириш бўйича 2019 йилга мўлжалланган квоталар оширилди. 20.03.2019

International migration as an important factor in increasing population incomes and reducing poverty;

The influence of migration processes on the fiscal and monetary policy of the state.<sup>14</sup>

Many problems need to be solved in the process of cooperation in the field of migration, the solution of which has always been the focus of attention of the parties.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it can be noted that at the same time, more than 17 thousand Uzbek labor migrants are working in the Republic of Korea.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that while working in the modern enterprises of the Republic of Korea, they acquire great experience and skills, investments, and technologies. After returning to their homeland, they use their investments and knowledge, potential, and experience in the enterprises of our country or organize their own business, and create new jobs. Close relations in this field are of great importance in further strengthening of socio-cultural relations between the two countries.

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<sup>14</sup><https://sdg.nuu.uz/en/2023/04/18/an-international-scientific-and-practical-conference-on-migration-in-uzbekistan-and-korea-current-situation-and-problems-was-held/>

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