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**Problems of migration and ways of solving them within the territory of the
Eurasian Economic Community**

The scale of international migration confronting the world at the turn of the twenty-first century is one of the manifestations of the objective process of globalization. The widening gap between standards of living in different countries as well as social polarization in individual countries are leading to a high level of population mobility in various countries around the world today.

1. A few words about the Eurasian Economic Community

The Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC) has existed since October 2000, when the Heads of State of five countries — Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan — signed the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community in Astana.

The Community's goal is integration, first and foremost in the economic field: the completion of a free trade zone, the establishment of a Customs Union and the creation of a Single Economic Space. At the same time, the Community devotes considerable attention to the development of co-operation in the social sphere and, in particular, the shaping of a co-ordinated migration policy. The goals and tasks in this area were set out in the document entitled "Priority Areas for the Development of the Eurasian Economic Community during the Period 2003 to 2006 and Beyond". The essence of the Community's aspirations is to ensure free movement of citizens, establish normal conditions in new places of residence or work and draw up certain rules to protect both the rights of migrants and the interests of the countries where they are given the opportunity to live and work.

2. Trends in the migration of the population of EURASEC member States, and basic problems

The first years following the collapse of the USSR were marked by a surge in migration processes: the residents of many republics of the former Soviet State faced the dilemma of having to choose their citizenship and permanent place of residence. The peak of

this mass migration occurred during the period from 1992 to 1997, when some four million people changed their place of residence. The principal reasons behind this growth in migration included local armed conflicts and a general deterioration in the socio-economic situation, resulting in a desire on the part of many people to leave their homes in search of work and a better life.

Russia with its large labour market remains the most attractive country for migrant workers. Increasing numbers of foreign workers are also employed in Kazakhstan, where there are stable indicators of economic growth.

According to figures provided by the Ministry of the Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic, every fourth Kyrgyz citizen of working age works in Russia, where there are more than 500,000 such persons.

A national survey conducted by the "Sharq" Research Centre revealed that between 29 and 39 per cent of the population of Tajikistan left the country during the decade beginning in 1992 in order to find work (most of them have moved to the Russian Federation).

It is also important to take into account the fact that in countries like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan external labour migration plays an extremely important role in cushioning social discontent. It has made it possible for a considerable part of the population to survive a time of falling production and mass unemployment and to attract additional resources to the country.

Migrants, especially seasonal workers, fill vacancies in sectors not prestigious enough for local inhabitants, and are content with lower pay. This enables local manufacturers to reduce the cost of providing goods and services, thus increasing their competitive advantage.

The need for foreign labour and the flow of migrants is, by and large, also connected with the unfavourable demographic situation, especially in Russia. To a certain degree, this also applies to Kazakhstan. An analysis of the demographic situation has shown that the working population is decreasing in a number of regions in these two countries. Experts forecast that because of the high death rate and low birth rate Russia's population may drop from the current 143 million to between 130 and 135 million by the year 2015.¹ In Kazakhstan, with its population of 15 million, population growth remains very low.

The other side of the coin is that illegal migrants do not pay taxes but do use a range of social services. They frequently represent competition for the local population in the national labour markets, reducing their chances of finding work.

The attitude towards migration in EURASEC member States, like everywhere else in the world, is complicated. Enterprises making use of low-paid workforces do nothing to improve working conditions or to increase their workers' qualifications. Illegal migration is frequently accompanied by an increase in criminal offences, drug-related activities and trafficking.

1 *Globalnye tendentsii razvitiya chelovechestva do 2015*, Ekaterinburg, 2002, p.29.

In addition to the obvious benefits for all participants in migration processes, the countries of the Eurasian Economic Community are facing a multitude of problems because of the absence of effective mechanisms of control and regulation. The difficulty is that visas are not needed to cross borders within EURASEC. Until 24 May 2005, there was a procedure in operation that allowed citizens of EURASEC countries to enter the territory of Community States using any document, in addition to a passport, from a list of more than ten such documents. This, coupled with the absence of an effective mechanism for registering persons entering the country, led to a situation where in Russia, for example, there was no really accurate information on the number of citizens of Community countries present on its territory.² According to the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation, between five and seven million foreign citizens and stateless persons without legal status are living permanently in Russia.

Many of these people are employed illegally. On the one hand, this means that the necessary social and legal protection is not provided and, on the other, it makes it possible to avoid paying taxes while also creating a fertile environment for criminality.

The situation that has arisen is prompting EURASEC member States to regulate migration processes.

3. Formation of a co-ordinated migration policy within EURASEC

The Community has drawn up and adopted a number of documents concerning the development of a co-ordinated migration policy within the territory of the Community:

- Agreement between the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation on simplifying the procedure for obtaining citizenship, of 26 February 1999;
- Treaty on the legal status of citizens of one State permanently residing on the territory of another, of 28 April 1998;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on reciprocal travel without visas for their citizens, of 30 November 2000;
- Agreement on the reciprocal provision of equal rights to emergency medical treatment to citizens of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan, of 24 November 1998.

The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community has adopted a model law on migration and a standard draft law on internal migration, on the basis of

2 Of the member States of the Community, only Russia has begun to create a unified database of foreign citizens. It plans to introduce a pilot project database in 2005. The Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Russian Federation, Mr. Alexander Chekalin, spoke about this in an interview with the news agency "Interfax".

which parliamentarians of EURASEC member States have devised and adopted the relevant normative and legal acts at the national level.

Since 2003, Community experts, together with specialists from executive and legislative authorities, leading academic centres and international and non-governmental organizations, have been developing a draft agreement on temporary employment of citizens of EURASEC member States within the territory of the Community. The document will determine the legal status of migrant workers, establish a system for their social protection and create a mechanism for regulating inter-State relations in this field.

At the international congress “EURASEC — Business World” held in September 2004, an investment project entitled the “Eurasian Database of Migrants” was submitted to the Secretariat of the Integration Committee of the Eurasian Economic Community.

The aim of this project is to regulate labour migration at an inter-State level by means of monitoring, through the creation and maintenance of an Inter-State Database of Migrants.

In order to achieve the project’s goal, it is proposed that the migration situation in EURASEC member States be analysed and that foreign experience in solving migration problems with the help of international organizations dealing with these issues be studied. We are also counting on co-operation with the OSCE.