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REGIONALISATION AND INTEGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA: MIGRATION ISSUES

Leila Delovarova – Fatima Kukeyeva*

ABSTRACT

Regionalisation and integration processes are an integral part of the process of globalisation in the early 21st Century. Of particular relevance this issue is in the region of Central Asia, which emerged after the disintegration of the USSR. Faced with a variety of common problems in the process of co-existence for over 20 years, the countries of the region have not yet found effective ways to address it and have not developed the mechanisms of integration. Migration processes in the region, along with security issues, environmental and energy problems are an important component of the sustainable development of the countries in question. These processes have a significant impact on the socio-economic, political and demographic landscape of the region and cause the need to develop new approaches, based on cooperation and integration.

Key words: regionalisation, integration, migration, Central Asia, Kazakhstan.

Introduction and methodology

The disintegration of the Soviet Union caused the new realities and the processes of globalisation in the 21st Century presented the states of Central Asia with an array of new challenges. Among the number of issues the countries face are interstate relations within Central Asia itself, strengthening the stability and security of the Central Asia space as a whole, and the creation effective mechanisms for political and economic cooperation and integration. Regional cooperation and integration in Central Asia is often analysed in terms of established theories of integration. Mentioning Central Asia integration, it is important to focus on recent developments in regionalisation studies, which focus specifically on the post-Soviet space. Integration processes, regionalism and regionalisation are topical issues for the academic community within more

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than twenty years. In contemporary international relations, regionalism, along with globalisation and democratisation is one of the key tendencies defining the world's new design.

Despite the number of studies have been devoted to exploring the concept of a "region" there are still many gaps to clearly point it out. The majority of experts view the formation or existence of the region of Central Asia from the perspective of *regionalism* and *regionalisation* (Delovarova, Davar, Asanov, & Kukeyeva, 2013). Defining regionalisation as a more comprehensive and sustainable form of interaction than regionalism, experts focus on the scope of actual and potential cooperation on the cross-border trade, prevalence of cross-border investment, business networks and international labour migration. This approach to the concepts allow for more accurate analysis to determine developing regional systems. It makes much more convenient the examination of opportunities for regional integration as a whole and for more detailed research of development trajectories and the courses of politico-economic transformation on the way of effective regional cooperation.

1 Central Asia: how to define the region?

After 1991 disintegration of the Soviet Union Central Asia – a new geopolitical and important region – appeared in the heart of Eurasia. In this article, we take the region of Central Asia to mean the area of five former Soviet republics: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan, which defined themselves as a region in 1993 during Tashkent Summit. The countries of the region are characterised by a long period of shared economic and political history, geographic and cultural values, as well as significant interdependencies. On the other hand, Central Asia is in many ways still developing as a region and is under the constant influence of a large array of internal and external factors. At the same time, within the common bounds of resource-based economies and autocratic regimes, the five countries gradually became more differentiated as their governments introduced national strategies for transition to a market-based economy (Pomfret, 2006). It was the result of the objective needs and the countries were faced with the necessity to quickly form new transnational political and economic ties. At the same time, the Central Asia states began to demonstrate attempts at regional cooperation. The need for integration strengthened with the understanding that the region was facing a complex of shared socio-economic and security issues that could be

solved by joint efforts.

After twenty years of different processes accompanied the integration efforts, the question stands as to how Central Asia can be perceived as a region. If one examines the Central Asia's five independent states through the lens of their shared geography, culture, and economic systems, it would seem appropriate to refer to Central Asia as a region. Today's Central Asia countries are fundamentally exporters of raw materials and energy sources – commodities dependent on the conjecture of global, rather than regional markets. Furthermore, the economic criteria for regionalisation are directly tied to integration, which is most stable when the goals and preferences of all countries converge. When large gaps exist between the preferences of neighbouring states, the harmonisation of their national interests becomes significantly more difficult.

This can be explained by the fact that regionalisation is directly tied to integration; consequently, the analysis of interdependencies in trade, investment, labour migration, and the energy sector can be effectively used as a measure of region formation in Central Asia.

Central Asia is widely considered to possess the theoretical prerequisites for region formation. Generally speaking, it is a group of countries with shared characteristics, objective interests, and developed transnational ties. The countries of the region share a range of characteristics which allow for their examination as a promising space for integration. These factors include: a geographic location in the centre of the continent, providing the countries with geopolitical significance from the perspective of ensuring security and stability for a large part of Eurasia; interdependency in the context of water and energy systems and connected transport infrastructure.

Of the above-listed factors, the most important from today's standpoint is the region's interdependencies in its water and energy systems, investment possibility of creation economic institutions and labour migration. Labour migration also plays a specific role in regionalisation, enforcing shared economic and cultural ties between countries in a region.

2 Current migration situation

Migration processes in Central Asia are an important component of the development and transformation of the region since independence in the post-Soviet period. After disintegration of the USSR there were large scale

repatriation processes, which were put in practice spontaneously and were often forced. Millions of people were separated from their families or became foreigners in their countries of origin due to absence of strict borders during Soviet rule. In the early 2000s these processes were replaced by new trends and characterised as part of the global migration process. Labour migration is one of the main migration trends that dominate Central Asia.

In Central Asia, most labour migrants move from south to north – from countries deprived of natural resources and with a labour surplus to resource rich countries where labour is in short supply. Russia is the first migration hub for Central Asia migrants and Kazakhstan became an important destination state since early 2000s. Three other CA countries – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are sending states. Despite the fact that Russia is not a part of Central Asia, it cannot be excluded due to the fact that it remains a major centre for migrants from the countries of the region. It is really difficult to argue about the migration system/sub-system in Central Asia as there are difficult points of view regarding this issue. Some of the Central Asia experts argue that Kazakhstan has become the hub in the regional migration sub-system (Sadovskaya, 2009). Other Central Asia experts (Olimova, Olimov, 2010) challenged this point by emphasising Turkmenistan (which is very passive in the field) and Tajikistan (which migration is exclusively directed to Russia). It seems like both statements are true to certain extent and CA migration system could be analysed as system included five CA countries and Russia. This approach will allow studying current migration issues in the region more holistically.

These migration processes are significant even within the context of the global migration system. According to the UN data, the portion of migration from three Central Asia countries – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan – to Russia and Kazakhstan is about 16% of global migration flows (UN, 2011).

Considering the general migration trends in the region, it should be noted that all types of modern migration are actively present – repatriation, seasonal labour migration, forced migration, frontier and transit migration. The main trends in Central Asia are the labour migration and the steady growth of illegal migration. Migration vectors are not only of unidirectional and permanent nature; they are becoming increasingly multi-directional, often occurring on a temporary basis, and often circular.

The flows that are significant on a “global-scale” have not been static over time. These changes relate primarily to several aspects: forms of migration, types of migration, population structures of the sending countries,

ethnic structure of migrants and gender characteristics of migration. Explaining the nature of these changes can give a picture of new migration situation.

Forms of migration (from forced migration to voluntary, like economic migration). Repatriation processes, also called family reunion processes, replaced by voluntary migration (Iontsev, Ivakhnyuk, 2012).

Types of migration (from permanent to seasonal labour migration). Labour migration had become the most massive migration already in the second half of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s. The reasons for this included the aforementioned exhaustion of the reserves of ethnic repatriates, the moderation of minority policies, official recognition of the freedom of exit and entrance, and the beginning of market reforms. Simultaneously, the falling living standards, the erosion of the welfare state, and growing unemployment forced many residents of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) to seek alternative and independent from state sources of income (Korobkov, 2007). Therefore, seasonal labour migration is a strong phenomenon which is tied heavily to the social, economic and demographic potential of the CA region.

Population structures of the sending countries. Population of regional states became mono-ethnic, as a result of forced migration, repatriation processes and demographic increases in some countries like Uzbekistan (Denisenko, Mkrtchyan, 2012). *Forced migration and repatriation were part of nation-building process.*

Ethnic structure of migrants, during recent years increasing migration flows of i.e. Tajiks to Russia, Uzbeks to Kazakhstan. This point shows social demand of CA population to find better living conditions outside their motherland. *Given a context of these mono-ethnic states these migration flows are running counter to nation building processes. Now migration from these mono-ethnic states reverses this process.*

Gender characteristics of migration (from “family migration” in 1990 with equal numbers of males and females to seasonal male migration in 2000). After 2000 we noted largely an increase in female labour migration.

Based on the above trends, it should be noted that on the one hand, they are part of common global processes, and on the other hand, they have their own features specific to the Central Asia region.

These shifts have been accompanied by numerous issues that either sprang directly from the changing landscape and gradually evolved to pose significant new challenges that have yet to be resolved. The most visible is the lack of guiding framework/legal structure for labour migration. Labour migration

within the Central Asia region is largely uncontrolled, in a visa-free regime within most countries of the region on the one hand, and the restrictive official permission for official labour activity in Russia and Kazakhstan (Delovarova, Shkapyak, Kukeyeva, 2013).

Labour migration remains one of the sustainable trends during the last decade in the CA region. The process in the region is divided into irregular flows: the legal foreign labour force attracted to the country (LFLF) (or its overseas employment), uncontrolled migration, the volumes of which greatly exceed the volume of legally attracted LFLF, and illegal migration. Labour migration is very often on the verge of the illegal migration due to underdevelopment of the legal framework and illegal employment of migrants.

As for statistics on the number of migrant workers in the Central Asia region, for example, in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the annual number of them, according to expert estimates, is about one-third of the economically active population (Sadovskaya, 2010). In Uzbekistan the official data on this issue are not available, but given the state of the economy, the private mode and demographic potential of the country, we can assume the scale of labour migration.

Kazakhstan has become a relatively new power player in this regional relationship. It has emerged as a major economic force in Central Asia largely on the strength of its significant oil and gas reserves. Improvement of the economic situation in Kazakhstan, a favourable investment climate, and a national policy aimed at modernisation and sustainable development have made the country very attractive to migrant workers from neighbouring countries. The country has been forced to embrace the reality of large-scale labour migration, that receiving countries face an objective necessity to control the process. To achieve this goal Russia and Kazakhstan have toughened immigration and labour laws and increased administrative penalties for using illegal labour. However, these measures have had only a limited effect. The huge scale of migration, especially combined with a climate of rampant corruption, make it difficult to control it.

For both Russia and Kazakhstan, as for other countries of destination, it is necessary to pursue a more balanced and comprehensive approach for the implementation of more effective immigration policies. Experts suggest different approaches to this issue but generally there is agreement around points like the need for adapting national law to the international law in the migration field, to promote information support activities for labour migrants, to promote

cooperation of local, regional and national official structures in the field of migration control and support, to pay more attention to the integration of migrants into the local communities (even seasonal workers), and to securing their rights (Veshkurova, 2011, pp. 11-13).

More specifically, states should ratify the ILO Conventions relating to the protection of migrants' rights and implementation of migration. It will promote better and faster cooperation in national and international law harmonisation.

Information support activities could take form of promotion and organisation of information centres for the dissemination of information on immigration and labour laws of the host country, and the rights and freedoms of labour migrants. This would combat the information vacuum and gaps in the field. Non-governmental organisations and ethnic communities should also be heavily involved in this function. Information about the rules, regulations and procedures concerning the recruitment of foreign workers should be extended not only among the migrant workers, but also to potential employers (Delovarova, Shkapyak, Kukeyeva, 2013).

Enhancing the interaction between employers, employment agencies and local authorities to ensure the priority of protecting local labour markets will be fruitful both for developing national migration control and support system in the receiving countries and for migrants. For Russia and Kazakhstan it is desirable to promote the employment of migrant workers, providing their legal protection and integration.

In addition, it would be useful to simplify the procedure for obtaining permission to hire foreign workers for employers while increasing responsibility for illegal hiring. Employers operate in an environment where illegal labour is not only free from bureaucratic procurement, but available at a substantially cheaper rate. This is obviously not a problem unique to this labour environment, but it makes it no less pernicious.

Finally, it is necessary to develop a system of accounting for workers, inclusive of social and psychological adaptation to the local community, in order to avoid negative consequences for both the host country and for the migrants. This is certainly not the sole burden of the receiving countries. It is a challenge most effectively addressed through coordinated action among sending and receiving countries.

3 Home countries issues

There are several prominent shared push factors in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, including the lack of legal infrastructure supporting economic development and the weakness and ineffectiveness of political and social reforms. However, it is worth briefly examining the individual country profiles as there are salient differences.

Kyrgyzstan, with a population of 5.4 million people (UN, 2009) has no large reserves of natural resources and its economy is still weak. Frequent revolutions (2005, 2010) further weakened the country and accelerated the migration process. According to various estimates there are nearly half a million people involved in labour migration in Kyrgyzstan, and their remittances reach 14 - 16% of GDP. According to estimates of Kyrgyz economists, the number of migrants varies from 10 to 18% of the economically active population of the country, and the money transfers made from 10 to 25% of GDP (200 - 500 million) (UN, 2011). Either projection paints a picture of an overly dependent economy lacking in domestic growth.

The main push factor for the labour force of the country, not surprisingly, is the deep poverty of the majority of the population. The main labour donors are the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan-Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken. As in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the land-poor and overpopulated Ferghana Valley is the source of significant numbers of workers abroad (Olimova, Olimov, 2010).

Uzbekistan has different push factors than Kyrgyzstan but labour migration here is much more intense. Uzbekistan has very good economic potential and a population of over 28 million (UN, 2011). Uzbekistan would benefit greatly from the development of a regional infrastructure and cooperation due to its central location. However, excessive political pressure and a closed regime seriously hamper its development. Labour migration from Uzbekistan, particularly, is opaque to analysis, and there are no reliable expert estimates of the number of migrant workers and remittances.

The number of Uzbek labour migrants in Russia reached approximately one million in 2010 (UN, 2011). In addition to Russia, Uzbek migrants go to work to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan mainly attracts labour from the border areas of Uzbekistan, which would seemingly constitute an easier geographic/cultural transition. The remittances of workers to Uzbekistan, according to some estimates, reach at least 4% of the GDP of Uzbekistan. In absolute value, they are significantly higher than the amount of the country's

foreign direct investment (FDI) (Reznikova, 2008). Uzbekistan has the unique national approach to labour migration that it is “personal choice”. In this convenient formulation, at least from the perspective of national actors, the burden is much less to systematically improve the domestic economy and other factors that impact the domestic labour climate. Uzbekistan is not transparent for International Organisations’ reports and reviews. This explains the lack of information on migrants and remittances.

The situation in Tajikistan is quite different. It is transparent for international organisations and is actively trying to adapt migration policy in compliance with regional needs. Tajikistan is the poorest country in the region with the population of over 7 million (UN, 2011). The total number of migrant workers from the country is about 1.3 million people. About 85% of them are oriented to Russia. At least a quarter of Tajik workers are concentrated in Moscow. Including Tajik labour in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, projections for labour migration are as high as 1.5 million (UN, 2012).

In some regions of Tajikistan, especially hard-hit by the civil war and total chaos of the 1990s, the pull to work abroad captures most able-bodied men. Thus, according to the World Bank, in 1996, 70% of the adult male population of the town of Kurgan-Tube and Garm worked in Russia and Iran (Ollimova, Olimov, 2010). According to the World Bank, Tajikistan is one the most remittances dependent countries in Central Asia and Eastern Europe in 2009 (UN, 2011).

Generally speaking, all three countries face significant challenges in the area of transformation and development. In Tajikistan, half of the active labour force is unemployed, while Kyrgyzstan suffers from massive rural unemployment. Before the crisis hit, up to five million people from these countries left home for Russia and Kazakhstan to take on poorly paid and unskilled jobs which are largely rejected by local people (International Crisis Group, 2010). Thus, the situation shows that for the countries of origin labour migration is a very important part of their policy and development. Very strong push factors are forcing migrants to be active actors of labour migration in the region. However, the process is not painless and home countries face a number of challenges. These challenges cover several aspects: regulation of large-scale seasonal labour migration, developing legislation in the field of emigration and protection of migrants’ rights in the host countries, and promoting better conditions for them. Another big issue is a re-integration or adaptation of migrant workers into the home/sending society after returning from abroad.

These issues cannot be effectively addressed unilaterally.

Legislation in the field of migration is developing much slower than the migration situation itself, and has not been very responsive to emergent challenges. The current formulation for most countries simply reflects migration orientation. For example, the home countries – Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan – as export-oriented labour markets, have legislation on the protection of migrants in the host countries. In Uzbekistan, the process has been a bit more deliberate and effective. However, all of the sending countries of the region suffer from incomplete and often contradictory legislation. Intra-country legislation differences will be increasingly difficult to reconcile if the situation persists. Uzbekistan has not adopted the UN and ILO Conventions on migrants' rights, for example. Supportive framework legislation remains a crucial area for improvement across the region.

One critical area in which legislation could be very beneficial is in guaranteeing better conditions for migrant workers. Creation and development of the infrastructure for migrant workers in receiving countries, in particular to facilitate the procedure of emigration and employment promotion would be beneficial for all parties, ultimately.

Other reforms could include the creation of a current vacancies database in the host countries and responsive centres for training and retraining of migrants to meet these needs. Core training could also include Russian language training, which is the language of international communication in the Central Asia, but lost its former importance in some of the former states (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Development of cooperation within sending countries and on the regional level with the host countries could be a valuable point of insertion for the work of NGOs. The development of effective cooperation between all participants of the migration process could be particularly effective at addressing the problem of reintegration of migrants into local communities.

Key factors leading to labour migration in the region are population surplus related to opportunities, especially in rural areas, and the search for jobs and economic opportunity. Unemployment and poverty are considered factors forcing labour migration. Challenges faced by sending countries are complex and should be responded by the active position of governments which do not really concerned by labour migrants' issues.

Migration flows in Central Asia is not a painless process and every year it becomes less controllable, especially after September 2001.

Governments of the regional countries are increasingly thinking of the management of these processes, as migrants are involved in social and economic spheres of the host states. Sending countries are also faced with many challenges like social, demographic and political issues.

Since labour migration in the CA countries was rapidly gaining momentum immediately after the disintegration of the Soviet Union quickly became necessary to protect at least the most essential rights of migrant workers, despite the fact that the necessary control structures, and dual national legislation in some countries were only starting to form, and in others their creation has not even started yet. On April 15, 1994 an agreement on cooperation in the field of labour migration and social protection of migrant workers in the CIS countries was signed by all CIS countries in Moscow and consequently ratified by all countries except Uzbekistan. This agreement is still the core document for the partnership in the sphere of labour migration in the CIS. The 1994 Agreement contains very general description of migrant's rights. Although it is intended "to regulate the main directions of cooperation between CIS countries in the field of employment and social protection of migrant workers and their families in receiving countries", it covers a very narrow scope of regulation. CIS Agreement was one of the first documents of the Commonwealth enacted in the period of maximum economic downturn in all countries, the Tajik civil war, massive flows of immigrants from Central Asia to Russia. As a result, labour migration is not included among the priorities of CIS countries.

The 1994 Agreement is affected by the fact that the CIS has not yet adopted new labour laws and has not created institutions for the management of migration. The agreement clearly exhibits insufficient knowledge of how to use the relevant international law and the peculiarities of the job market conditions. All this is explained in general, without details. A serious drawback of the document is the lack of provisions on non-discrimination by sex, age, ethnic, racial, religious or other grounds. It seems that in the period marked by nationalism and ethnic conflict the CIS countries were not willing to follow this principle. Agreement on labour migration complements the CIS cooperation in combating illegal migration, signed in Moscow on March 6, 1998. It was not signed by representatives from Georgia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The centre of the Agreement is monitoring and punitive functions. It says nothing about governmental management and cooperation. The CIS Council of Heads of Government approved Programme of Action for development on June 20,

2000, including the development of a Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The work in this field is progressing very slowly. On June 22, 2007 draft convention was finally reviewed and approved by the Advisory Board on Labour, Migration and Social Protection of State of the CIS countries. The project was developed in the context of relevant international conventions and covers a wider range of issues compared to the 1994 Agreement. In the case of adoption of the convention it could constitute a good basis for further intergovernmental cooperation. Decision of the Council of Heads of CIS States on October 5, 2007 (Dushanbe) adopted the Declaration on Coordinated Migration Policies.

The declaration of such a high level is an evidence of acute relevance of migration issues in the CIS, the recognition of the relevance of all the countries on the one hand, and on the other – an attempt to strengthen joint efforts in this field.

We maintain that it is important to consider this dimension, as all countries in the Central Asia region are members of the CIS. Another important point is that in spite of the failures of integration in the post-Soviet space in past 20 years cooperation it took shape in the CIS instruments regulating migration processes. How effective this regulation is proves difficult to judge, but this is the only mechanism designed to date.

Some important events and agreements should be mentioned:

- on November, 13, 1992 by the decision of CIS Heads of Government the Advisory Council on Labour, Migration and Social Protection was created. It includes the heads of ministries and departments regulating issues of labour migration and social protection of the population, which has been assigned to develop coherent policy on critical issues of common concern.

- on April, 16, 2004 the Joint Commission of States - Participants of CIS cooperation in the fight against illegal migration was established, with the main goal to improve cooperation among states in the fight against illegal migration.

- on October, 5, 2007 the CIS Council of Heads of Migration Services has been created with a major role in the coordination and cooperation across the range of migration issues.

- At present, the work continues to optimise the activities of the CIS bodies exercising functions in the field of migration, with the aim to empower the Council of Heads of CIS States.

- In February 2009 at a meeting of the expert group of representatives of the Commonwealth and the CIS bodies draft documents were submitted by the

Council for consideration; it was agreed that the Council together with the CIS Executive Committee would prepare proposals for the development of a mechanism for coordination of the activities of sectoral cooperation, including consideration of migration issues.

More effective mechanisms are developing within the framework of Customs Union since January, 2012. The members of the Union are Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. The agreement on labour migration from 2012 is valid vis-à-vis third sides like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, but the key question remains the implementation and control.

The existing and draft documents regulated the cooperation of the states - participants of CIS countries in the field of migration regulation associated with the active interest of the Commonwealth to build a long-term integrated economic and political union. But the process of integration is really slow in the CA region.

Many questions remain without answer and still under development. Moreover, the hope is that the basis of the CIS provides a solid base for the development of mechanisms for regulating labour migration in Central Asia and Russia without the strong cooperation and political will is very weak.

Permanent attempts to create more durable and capable structures within the CIS strongly inhibit the adoption of uniform legislation, because every time the process starts from the beginning instead of elaborating on previous documents. Thus, the cooperation of the regional countries in respect of addressing migration in the region within the CIS is in a very precarious state and, above all because of the status of this Union. All documents initiated cannot affect the major problems associated with migrant workers in the field of regional control and regulation. Moreover there is no any solid base of five states in the self-titled region. The bases for regulatory issues in the field of migration are bilateral agreements. An important obstacle is the reluctance of the ruling elites to strengthen integration in the region.

Furthermore, CIS and Customs Union, some other regional and international structures are involved in migration issues regulation but mostly within security context. This refers to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). However, despite the objective need of actualisation and more close cooperation on migration issues regional and extra-regional (Russia and China) actors have different visions of the problem. It makes the process more ineffective.

The regional countries work out their own Laws on Migration and adopt legislative acts at the national level; this approach, however, cannot solve the problems associated with managing multiple and uncontrolled migratory flows. In this context, the key point of the migration policies of the countries caught up in the face of migration challenges is the transition from conducting certain activities to develop a systemic model of migration management. This will strengthen the stability and internal development of regional integration, as well as help to achieve the necessary level of security, which will be protected by the national interests of all partners. Very important step on the way is to create information sharing system.

Conclusion

Regionalism, regionalisation and integration in Central Asia are complicated and slow, and long-term processes. Despite the fact that in the region there are many factors like security issues, economic misbalances, ecology issues, different ways of social and political transformations and labour migration which should be harmonised and contribute to the integration, the process is not fast and effective.

Labour migration in Central Asia is an important phenomenon which has been increasing over the last ten years and became a serious factor demanding comprehensive approach and immediate cooperation. Regional migration system in Central Asia can be characterised as still forming, complicated and controversial. Host and home countries issues need to be revised and adapted to the unfavourable and difficult conditions of reality including migrants' issues, low and slowly legislation development and really weak component of cooperation. The joint efforts of governments, effective regional institutions, NGO's and experts can really and effectively contribute to setting up such system.

Kazakhstan as an active actor of integration projects in Central Asia and new and leading actor of migration processes has real potential to be a strong migration hub and promote regional cooperation in the regional integration. Kazakhstan's efforts would be further supported by its economic stability, dynamic development, and its role as a source of investment. However, the lack of institutional effectiveness in Central Asia and intra-regional cooperation, weakness of political elites, corruption, and wide-spread approach to the problem of migration as a domestic issue slow down the process. Looking at the

prospects of integration and migration processes in the region, in our opinion, the main hope may be assigned exactly to Kazakhstan which has the great potential and significant interests in the field of effective integration including economic, social and political dimension.

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