



CARIM EAST – CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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Integration of Migrants: Republic of Belarus

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CARIM-East
Creating an Observatory of Migration East of Europe

Research Report
CARIM-East RR 2012/37

Integration of Migrants:
Republic of Belarus

Larisa Titarenko

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CARIM-East – Creating an Observatory East of Europe

This project which is co-financed by the European Union is the first migration observatory focused on the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union and covers all countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative (Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and Russian Federation.

The project's two main themes are:

- (1) migration from the region to the European Union (EU) focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and
- (2) intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

The project started on 1 April 2011 as a joint initiative of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy (the lead institution), and the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, Poland (the partner institution).

CARIM researchers undertake comprehensive and policy-oriented analyses of very diverse aspects of human mobility and related labour market developments east of the EU and discuss their likely impacts on the fast evolving socio-economic fabric of the six Eastern Partners and Russia, as well as that of the European Union.

In particular, CARIM-East:

- builds a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science).
- develops a comprehensive database to monitor migration stocks and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives;
- undertakes, jointly with researchers from the region, systematic and *ad hoc* studies of emerging migration issues at regional and national levels.
- provides opportunities for scholars from the region to participate in workshops organized by the EUI and CMR, including academic exchange opportunities for PhD candidates;
- provides forums for national and international experts to interact with policymakers and other stakeholders in the countries concerned.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.carim-east.eu/>

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Executive Summary

This report examines the issue of integration of migrants in the Republic of Belarus. In the framework of migration policy strategy of the Republic of Belarus protection of migrants' rights and their social integration represent important tasks which are set forth in the Concept of National Security of the Belarusian state, and finding solutions to them implies development of special integration mechanisms.

This research explores

1. the countries are in the focus of interest of migrant integration policy, in the context of all countries from which migrants come to Belarus,
2. the basic groups of migrants and their adaptive capabilities,
3. the typical features of migration processes in Belarus that shape and define the mechanisms of migrants' integration, as stipulated in the official documents of the Republic of Belarus, and applied in practice,
4. the strengths and weaknesses of Belarusian migrant integration policy.

Methodology of this research is based on the analysis of the social and economic situation in Belarus conducted by Belarusian researchers, statistical data, and opinion polls. Descriptive statistical method, structural functional analysis of empirical information, comparative method, in-depth interviews, and interviews with experts are used in the framework of this paper.

In the context of this paper integration means long-term process of inclusion of migrants --as persons equal in their rights to the citizens of the host society-- in the main spheres of life of Belarusian society, i.e. its social, economic, cultural, etc. To some extent integration is necessary for all types of legal migrants who arrive to the country as it helps them settle in the new place, start working or studying, learn to some extent the national language of the country, its culture, and it contributes to formation of populations' positive (or neutral) attitude towards migrants. One of the prerequisites for successful integration is compliance of the migrants with the laws of the country of stay.

This report uncovers various mechanisms of integration of the persons who arrive to Belarus for permanent residence (or those inclined towards long-term stay), strategies of attracting to the country and integrating target groups of labor migrants, as well as some measures aimed at integration of short-term migrants. It is demonstrated that integration does not only imply actions performed by the state, but also positive reaction of the migrants in response to these actions, which is not always the case. There is an assumption about future growth of the number migrants and possible growing significance of the issue of their integration in the conditions of loss of control over this process.

Recommendations include elaboration of better outlined measures for attraction of skilled and highly qualified labor force from abroad, rejection of the targeted state support of attraction to Belarus of poorly qualified migrants as unpromising strategy, creation of favorable conditions for return of Belarusian researchers and specialists, who went abroad.

Introduction

The problem of migration became particularly acute in the post-Soviet space immediately after the collapse of the USSR and emergence of fifteen independent republics instead. Millions of people willfully or forcibly became aware of the need to change their place of residence. Initially the Republic of Belarus was among quieter countries, not subject to large migration flows: although they existed, their volume did not pose a demographic, cultural or social political threat to the society. However, for the two post-Soviet decades the issue of migration from rather potential threat for Belarus became quite an acute problem, despite the fact that today it is viewed in a number of official sources as not such an important problem, compared to economic issues. Currently it is time for serious analysis of migration issues and problem of migrants' integration in the Belarusian society.

Social actors who have social impact and who are in charge of resolution of migration issues, are not always interested in having all of the aspects revealed, so that they do not become the topic of public discussions. There are not enough specialized studies in the Republic of Belarus devoted to migration issues (at least those financed by the government authorities). This makes it more important to discuss these issues in regional (post-Soviet, European) and global contexts: modern world is a common space, therefore there cannot be a single state isolated from globalization processes. Thus, for example, if the seriousness of migration issues and necessity of migrant integration is widely known in the Russian Federation, the state which is in the Common Economic Space with Belarus (and with Kazakhstan), and in the Union of two countries (Russia and Belarus), it can be logically concluded that for Belarus these issues will be important as well. Not coincidentally the President of Belarus in his speech emphasized that the issue of migration has become more significant recently due to the fact that more and more people arrive to Belarus across virtual Russian-Belarusian border, with the intention to get in one way or another to the countries of European Union (Lukashenko 2012a).

The objective of this article is to analyze characteristic features of integration of migrants in the Republic of Belarus taking into account social economic and political conditions of the situation in this post-Soviet country.

Main research questions explore :

1. countries which are in the focus of interest of Belarusian migrant integration policy, in the context of all the countries from which migrants come to Belarus. Clarification of the place of migrant integration issue in the official migration policy of Belarus;
2. basic groups of migrants falling under the official integration policy, as well as other groups of migrants who do not fall under this policy. In particular, we are interested in revealing the adapting capabilities of different groups of migrants, and characteristics of the group of migrants which is more prone to integration in the Belarusian society;
3. characteristic features of migration processes in Belarus which define mechanisms of migrant integration appearing in the official documents of the Republic of Belarus and applied in practice. In particular, the question of how the interests of migrants are accounted for in the integration mechanisms,
4. strengths and weaknesses of Belarusian migrant integration policy, including possible directions of improvement.

Besides the issue of integration of migrants who arrive to Belarus we also mention the issues concerning possible integration of Belarusian emigrants in Russia. This issue of integration of emigrants from Belarus in the host Russian society is of interest as it helps to understand which of these two countries holds currently a more efficient integration policy.

Since till present time the number of immigrants arriving to Belarus is not comparable to the scale of migration in the Russian Federation the issue of attitude of the Belarusian population towards migrants is

not widely discussed in mass media, and it is not in the focus of attention of this article. We mostly base our discussion of this issue on the data received in interviews, both with Belarusians regarding their attitude towards migrants, and with migrants about the attitude of Belarusians towards them.

In the nearest future, according to the plans of Belarusian authorities, a significant inflow of Chinese citizens to the country is expected, for construction and exploitation of high technology park in vicinity of Minsk, whereas Chinese capital is invested in its development, and Chinese labor force is attracted (Lavnikovich 2012). It is possible that the situation will somewhat change at that time, but for now it is just an assumption.

This report consists of several chapters. The first chapter describes methodology and research data, second chapter - the countries which are in the focus of Belarusian migrant integration policy, in particular, integration policy related to them. The next chapter is devoted to the characteristics of integration potential of various groups of migrants, to which integration migration policy applies (or does not apply). The last chapter describes advantages and disadvantages of integration migration policy of the Republic of Belarus and sets forth some recommendations for its improvement.

Methodology and Research Data

In the most general sense this paper is based on the methodology of social and economic analysis of the contemporary Belarusian society developed by sociologist G.N. Sokolova (Sokolova 2010; 2011). This author clearly defined and motivated the key problem on which virtually all other social and economic problems of Belarus depend, and which thus determines social policy of the state in the basic spheres of life. This is the issue of economic efficiency of the Belarusian economy, the need to reform it in such a way so that the economy would become competitive, and the wages of the workers (from lower to higher level) would at least become comparable to the wages in similar sectors in the neighboring Russia - the main destination country for labor migrants from Belarus. Even the issue of integration of people from other countries and regions in Belarus directly depends on the economic reforms: successful reforms can attract additional funds to the state budget, which are needed for financing migration programs.

The materials and conclusions of this report are also based on the existing research in the field of migration of the population and labor market in Belarus. Previous studies on migration issues which were used by the author include studies by L.P. Shakhot'ko (Shakhot'ko 2006), M. Artyukhin (Artyukhin 2012), A.Luchenok (Luchenok 2012), as well as public opinion polls which included migration questions. Besides, the author studied the experience of the neighboring countries, Russia and Ukraine, on migrant integration issues, in order to make comparison, when applicable, between these countries and the Republic of Belarus on the issues of integration of migrants.

An important source is statistical data on migration from the National Statistics Committee, and various information agencies.

Conceptually, the author relies on the definition of integration as a long-term process of inclusion of migrants --as persons equal in their rights to the citizens of the host society-- in social, economic, cultural, ETC. spheres of life of the Belarusian society. This process is multilateral, and also includes such aspects as economic (employment), social (obtaining housing, medical assistance), cultural (knowledge of the language and customs of the country, right to education), political (right to have own non-profit organizations, to obtain residence permit and acquire citizenship) aspects, which are regulated by the laws of the Republic of Belarus and guarantee to the migrants compliance with their rights and protection against discrimination. Integration process includes several different levels - from minimum integration to complete integration which takes many years.

Main indicators of integration are legal status of migrants' stay in the country, their access to labor market, legislative protection against discrimination, cultural adaptation to the country of stay (at least

minimum knowledge of the national language of the country, mutual respect or neutrality towards the culture of "the others"). Complete integration is self-identification of oneself as a "local" and correspondent attitude of the local population towards the migrant as "one of the locals". A prerequisite for successful integration is compliance of the migrants with the laws of the country of stay.

This study uses a number of scientific methods of collection and analysis of the information, as well as several theoretical approaches (first of all, historical and comparative), which allow to analyze the subject of the research from different points of view, describe the discussed issue of integration of migrants in Belarus, reveal certain common trends and characteristic features in the integration migration policy, as well as in the implementation practice of this policy in Belarus.

The principal methods used in this research: descriptive statistical method, structural functional analysis of empirical information, comparative method, in-depth interviews and interviews with experts.

Thus, the original starting point of analyses is based on theoretical findings elaborated by other authors.

An important source of empirical information for this report, based on which the conclusions of the research were drawn, included the materials of 15 in-depth interviews conducted by the author. Interviewees were migrants -- persons who had arrived to the Republic of Belarus. Sample was formed according to the "snowball" method. Interviewees were asked questions from social demographic block, then they were asked to tell their story, and a lot of details were uncovered along the way. At the end of the interview respondents shared their opinions on work of migrants, their need to integrate, etc.

Five in-depth interviews were conducted with experts, who included representatives of executive authorities in one way or another involved in migration policy, as well as researchers who work in the field of migration and related fields.

We would like to emphasize the fact that neither migrants nor experts expressed their readiness to have their names mentioned in the report. Anonymity is an integral right of any person participating in opinion poll. It is guaranteed by the Code of Professional Activity of sociologists. Therefore, the names are not mentioned in the report; we shall call the interviewees by letters, and if necessary, we shall provide additional social and demographic information, or other information about the interviewee.

Countries in the Focus of Belarusian Migration Policy

National program of demographic security of the Republic of Belarus (2011) and State migration program are the baselines for development of migration policy in Belarus, including the issue of migrants' integration. Migration is viewed as an important resource in the economy. The main concept of this program is active state regulation of legal flows of migration, combating irregular migration. According to the program one of the prerequisites for efficient external migration policy is "creation of favorable environment for social and economic adaptation and integration of migrants in the Belarusian society" (Government of the Republic of Belarus, 2011).

In terms of geographic destinations this program mentions only the CIS (in particular, Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan) (Government of the Republic of Belarus, 2011). This emphasis is not coincidental: there is a serious political and social economic reasoning behind it. As stated by the President of the Republic of Belarus, "serious changes took place in the country due to external economic and political position of the state", namely, Belarus acceded to the Common Economic Space (Lukashenko 2012b). Common Economic Space was created on the basis of the Customs Union and implies close economic integration of member-states, including alignment of legislations, ensuring free movement of labor force, goods, and capital. Member states of this economic commonwealth should become closer. This is why citizens of these countries do not need employment authorizations or residence permits in any of the member states: citizens of these

countries have equal rights on the territory of any of the countries. This explains a significant number of people moving from Russia and Kazakhstan.

Additional political reasons for focusing Belarusian migration policy on the aforementioned countries include the following: firstly, the Union between Russia and Belarus exists since 1997 and makes external policy of these countries better coordinated; secondly, existence of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), members of which are Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, along with several other former Soviet republics. CSTO has important functions on regulating collective external security of the borders; coordination of activities of its members also contributes to their affinity.

Although Ukraine is not in the Common Economic Space and CSTO, Belarus and Ukraine develop good relations, whereas cultural and historical similarities of the people of these two countries contribute significantly to maintaining family, friendly, business ties between the citizens of Ukraine and Belarus. No visas are needed for crossing the border, although there is passport control.

Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan account for the highest number of external migrants arriving to Belarus - about 90% of all migrants from CIS countries (Government of the Republic of Belarus 2011; Annex Table 1). Roughly half of people arriving from Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan list "family situation" as reason for their arrival to Belarus, which can be evaluated as preservation of ties which remained since Soviet times (Annex, Table 2). Important share of immigrants who stayed from the same three countries (especially from Russia and Ukraine) list such reasons as "return to the previous place of residence" or "creation of a family". To sum up, these reasons are listed by two thirds of immigrants from Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, or over 60% of all migrants from CIS, and from the number of those who stated a specific reason of the move - 80% of those covered by the official statistics (19950 of 25776 persons).

Other countries of the CIS and Baltic states are also in the sphere of interest of Belarusian migration policy, because the population of these countries is viewed as the most advantageous resource of migration which does not require significant financial investments and social cultural adaptation of the people. Integration of these categories of people is facilitated by the facts that (1) they often have relatives or friends in Belarus, who can provide support and social assistance to them if necessary, (2) part of them have (maintained since old times) property in the Republic of Belarus (house in the village, apartment, land parcel), which enhances their integration potential, (3) these people know Russian, and among their family members there are always enough of those who preserve common habitual culture inherited since Soviet times. In other words this category does not have any social and cultural difficulties in terms of adaptation when they move to Belarus. This conclusion is also valid in those cases when people arrive from the countries listed above to Belarus for work or study: in this case even if they do not have relatives, culturally they still feel comfortable, and they do not have language barrier which allows them to adapt to and integrate easily in the Belarusian society. As a matter of fact, it is virtually impossible to distinguish them from native citizens of Belarus in everyday life: there are no ethnical, social, or cultural differences.

This conclusion is confirmed by the data of the interviews with migrants from Russia, who moved to Belarus. Thus, migrant A., who arrived from Siberia for contract work in Minsk, did not have any relatives in Minsk. Her colleague, whom she met in Russia earlier, helped her find a job here. A. did have means to support her move. She mentioned that there are no crucial differences between Belarus and Russia, it's just that Belarus "is closer to Europe", and she particularly likes this. She does not intend to leave the country. People treat her nicely. Another migrant from Russia, B., explained his move to Belarus by the fact that "life here is easier and cheaper", than it was in Russia. Both respondents noted that they were accepted as "locals", and they did not experience any serious adaptation or integration problems. By law, being citizens of the Union country, Russia, they benefit from the same rights as citizens of Belarus. They do not need any registration as migrants. If they fall under category of persons who are categorized as beneficiaries of facilities by the Department of Migration and Citizenship of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, they benefit from such integration mechanism as receiving monetary compensation to cover their moving expenses.

Those people who do not have any relatives or acquaintances in Belarus and who come here for work or for studying, potentially may face problems. These reasons of the move were mentioned by roughly one sixth of those who arrive from CIS countries and almost half of those who arrive from outside of the CIS countries (Annex, Table 2). In the latter case people who come from the countries which are not part of the CIS, do not know or have insufficient knowledge of the Russian language (let alone Belarusian), often they have poor knowledge of the Belarusian culture and mentality. It is hard for them to settle in a foreign country, especially if by default they do not intend to stay here permanently and consider the territory of the Republic of Belarus as a country for temporary stay (for the time of study, work, or before moving to a third country). Thus, a Chinese student complained that it is difficult for him to communicate with Belarusian students because he has hard time understanding Russian, for the same reason his studies are not going very well, his everyday life is difficult, so he is forced to discuss and solve any issues he might have with his compatriots (students from China).

However, countries which are exporters of labor migrants and/or students from these countries are not in the focus of attention of Belarusian integration policy with respect to migrants. Therefore persons who arrive from these countries for studying or for work cannot count on significant assistance from Belarusian society in the process of their adaptation and integration (except for those who arrived legally and can benefit from services of university departments dealing with foreign students, or companies which invite foreign specialists for work).

As a rule, foreigners who arrive to Belarus officially for studying or for work, have their own organizations which are responsible for their stay and adaptation in Belarus: associations of fellow-countrymen, friendship societies, Unions, other ethnical (territorial) non-government organizations. For example, chief of one Turkish non-government organizations functioning in Belarus stated in his interview that companies hiring Turks for work in Belarus assume the full responsibility for their stay in the country. Firms try to isolate their employees from contacts with the population of Belarus. As soon as their contract expires, these companies ensure that the employees depart home. At the higher education institutions, to which a lot of foreigners arrive (for example, Belarusian State University), there are departments which help them adapt and at the same time ensure that citizens of other countries do not violate visa regime: they have to depart from Belarus after the end of their studies. One of the officials working with foreigners stated that there were multiple cases when students from some Asian states wanted to stay illegally after the end of their studies, which made competent state authorities reconsider their approach to issuing student visas to citizens of some countries (decrease the numbers), up to inclusion of these countries in the list of "undesirable" sources of migration, because adaptation of such persons and their integration does not correspond to the priorities of the Belarusian state.

Official migration policy of the Republic of Belarus is not aimed at attracting all types of migrants: according to the statistics, most of the migrants who have already arrived to Belarus are persons whose qualification and level of education is lower than average level of education and qualifications of the population of Belarus, whereas their age is higher than average age in Belarus. In the long run, as it is stipulated in the National Program of State Demographic Security (2011), Belarus should attract more qualified personnel to the country. Besides, economic reforms in the labor market should change the employment structure and increase labor productivity in Belarus without additional growth of employment.

Compared to the policy of integration of Belarusian labor migrants in the Russian Federation in the framework of which attraction of Russian-speaking migrants from the CIS countries is viewed as an important part of "Strategy-2020", Belarusian migration policy on attraction of citizens from the CIS can be evaluated as less efficient one. There are no special means for integration of Russian migrants in the Belarusian society (at least ideological or propagandistic ones), whereas Belarusian workers and

students are welcome in Russia. For example, a number of universities create financial subsidies for Belarusian students, thus attracting students to study there.

Based on the existing financial possibilities of the country, Belarusian migration policy has its target goal the regulation of migration and hence all the resulting problems (National program 2011, paragraph 6). It includes measures aimed at attracting qualified labor force in the priority sectors of the economy, providing migration facilities to those foreign undergraduate and graduate students who successfully completed their studies in Belarus and are invited to work here, as well as some measures for return of Belarusian scientists from abroad, whose activity could contribute to innovative processes in Belarus. However, compared to Russia, this financial support is quite limited (Artyukhin 2012; BelaPAN 2012), therefore it is not efficient enough for achieving the given objectives. In the migration policy in general, and migrant integration policy in particular, there is a seeming lack of financial resources for achievement of the set objectives.

Peculiarities of Migrant Integration Process in Belarus

Migration situation in the Republic of Belarus is rather quiet according to the official statistics (Annex Table 3). Never in the history of independence of the Republic of Belarus did the migration balance achieve the figure of 12500 persons. At that, although this balance with the CIS countries was rather low, it remained positive, whereas the balance with non-CIS countries became positive only since 2008 (although it never reached the number of 2000 persons).

Thus, according to the official statistics the number of migrants in Belarus is not critical and has not been critical for the past post-Soviet years, either in political, or social-economic, or cultural sense for the country as a whole. This is another reason why the problem of integration of migrants, despite its practical significance, is rather a potential problem based on the official statistical data. Thus, according to the interview with an expert who belongs to the executive authorities of Minsk, when the officials of this executive body had a meeting with the Minister of Internal Affairs, the problem of migration was not mentioned among those problems which deserve special attention. This opinion is not singular among representatives of executive authority.

However, the argument of non-priority nature of migration issue is not convincing, as there is also unofficial migration, therefore, the total number of immigrants to the Republic of Belarus exceeds the official numbers (although it is hard to determine precisely what these numbers are). A certain part of immigrants (as well as emigrants) do not register: some people do not wish to do this, others do not have to do it (citizens of Russia can live and work on a par with citizens of Belarus, Russian retirees can live in Belarus without registration, etc.) This is why the political effect of integration of migrants consists of keeping this problem under control and not allowing any conflicts between migrants themselves and the citizens of Belarus and people who come to Belarus. Belarusian state does a good job in this regard dealing with the problem, and has a good reputation among the CIS countries and beyond.

From the economic point of view, due to low birth rate it is possible that soon Belarus will not be able to fill in the "gaps" without an inflow of labor migrants. Already now migrants from other countries (including those which are not on the priority list of migration policy) work in certain industries (for example, in construction), let alone those highly skilled professionals who are sometimes specially invited from other countries in order to achieve good results, increase the competitiveness of the organization, etc. Thus, in the beginning of August 2012, according to the data of the Committee on labor, employment and social protection of Minsk city Executive Committee, in Minsk alone there were registered over 1.4 thousand labor migrants working on contractual basis: 262 workers came from Turkey, 251 - from Ukraine, 228 - from China, 215 - from Lithuania, 169 citizens of Uzbekistan, 100 - from Latvia, 31 - from Tajikistan, 17 - from Vietnam, etc. Most of them work in construction (brick masons, carpenters, concrete workers, steel fixers, installation fitters), some of them work as heads of organizations. (BelTA 2012)

The process of post-Soviet external migration in Belarus had varying course, depending on certain periods of time. Migration policy also had its peculiarities during each of these time frames. We shall define the main stages of the course of external migration in the Republic of Belarus.

First stage – the 1990s.

Immediately after the collapse of the USSR a lot of Jewish people left the Republic of Belarus - either for Israel or for the USA. These two countries were top two in the rating of host countries for Belarusian migrants. At the same time in the first half of 1990s thousands of ethnical Belarusians returned to the country from other parts of former USSR, as well as citizens of other ethnical origin, who had friends or relatives on the territory of Belarus and decided to move here.

No special financial mechanisms were developed with respect to these categories of migrants in the framework of migration policy which would contribute to their integration, although Belarus welcomed ethnical Belarusians and former Soviet citizens who wished to move to Belarus for permanent residence, offering them such opportunity. Former migrant from Tajikistan, currently citizen of Belarus, says proudly that he came here as high school student, successfully graduated from high school, acquired a profession, found a good job. His Belarusian relatives helped the family of migrants at the initial stage, but soon the family could stand on its own feet. There were tens of thousands of such families. Positive migration balance (Annex, Table 3) helped Belarus solve its own labor issues.

These groups of immigrants in 1990s integrated quite easily, since in social, political, cultural, religious or linguistic context they did not have any difficulties. These groups can be considered the most efficiently integrated immigrants, most of them acquired citizenship. In the beginning of the 21st century, according to the population census, about 1.8 million citizens of the Republic of Belarus stated that they were born outside of Belarus.

Hence, characteristic feature of migration at the first stage is large inflow of persons from other post-Soviet countries, with simultaneous significant outflow of the population of Belarus to non-CIS countries.

Second stage – the 2000s.

A characteristic feature of this stage was gradual decrease of positive migration balance with the CIS countries down to insignificant values. At the same time negative migration balance with non-CIS countries first decreased, and since 2008 it turned into positive balance.

Due to simultaneous decrease of birth rate and growth of death rate, labor market problems became more significant. Therefore attraction of labor migrants, in particular, qualified labor force became a priority of the national migration policy. More attention was paid to the problem of migrants' integration; it was included in the National Program of Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus (2011). Today in order to enhance international migration processes in Belarus schemes of placement of foreigners have been developed. Electronic city data bank of job vacancies is formed in Minsk, which provides the possibility to invite foreigners to the vacancies which have remained unfilled for a long time. At the same time, in order not to miss control over migrants, state authorities perform actions aimed at identification of foreign citizens who are staying in the city without legal grounds. As a result, combination of these mechanisms aimed at attraction of desirable labor migrants, for example, for the first six months of 2012 Department of Citizenship and Migration of the City Department of Interior, the Minsk City Executive Committee, issued over 2,400 special employment authorizations in Belarus, and 80 foreigners were refused (BelTA 2012b) .

During these years, as the incomes of citizens of Belarus were significantly behind the incomes of the citizens of Russia, let alone countries of European Union, labor migration processes not registered by statistics authorities intensified. Among those leaving Belarus, according to the research data

(Luchenok and Kolesnikova 2011), there is a large share of highly educated specialists: doctors (about 12%), engineers (10%), and biologists (7%). At the same time, almost 30% of immigrants from Belarus do not have a qualification: they are attracted by higher wages abroad. Belarus itself also became more attractive mostly for less skilled labor migrants from Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Ukraine. Thus, there is a real "brain drain" in the country, which aggravated after the currency crisis (2009) and continues to worsen till nowadays, becoming a new characteristic feature of contemporary migration reality in Belarus (Andreeva 2012).

However, one should not disregard financial flows coming from Belarusian labor migrants back to the country. Belarusian economists did the calculations according to which overall approximate volume of remittances from Belarusian emigrants and immigrants to Belarus in 2010 constituted about 1.3 billion dollars. At that, Belarusian migrants in 2010 transferred to the homeland more than 1 billion dollars, whereas foreigners residing in Belarus sent home about 200 million dollars (Luchenok 2012). Inflow of cash to the Republic of Belarus in the amount close to 2% of GDP and 2.6% of gross external debt of the country shall be considered as quite significant support for the national economy in case if the money earned and transferred to the Republic of Belarus in the foreign currency equivalent shall exceed the earnings of these workers in the country.

Hence growth of labor emigration and significant increase of cash inflow to the country from migrants who went abroad can be considered a characteristic feature of the contemporary stage of migration in Belarus – a feature which to some extent brings Belarus closer to other post-Soviet countries, where volumes of migration flows have already become a subject of scientific discussions and political decisions (Armenia, Moldova).

Integration Potential of Migrants

Various groups of migrants have various interests. Some of them would like to settle down in Belarus substantially and for a long time, acquire citizenship or residence permit, whereas others do not have such objectives. Certain integration mechanisms apply to each target group in particular. For undesirable migrants there is a mechanism of control and strict compliance with legitimacy of their stay in their country.

We shall consider some typical groups of migrants with different integration potential.

Migrant Students

Migration for studies is one of the most accessible ways to get to the labor market of another country after receiving education at the universities of this country. Attracting foreign students for education represents a practice of acquiring highly qualified specialists at low social and financial costs, and is used by many Western countries. Retaining university graduates in the country became an important issue for Belarus as well: young specialists are looking for a better place for themselves. Belarus strives to develop education services for other countries, because this way one may hope that a part of foreign students studying in Belarus will remain here to work.

Russian-speaking students (like all Russian-speaking immigrants) represent an important resource for development of Belarusian society. Their interests at least partially coincide with the interests of Belarusian state to retain highly qualified labor force in the country. This is why, when young specialists from Russian-speaking post-Soviet space express their willingness to live and work in Belarus, the state should create conditions for their settling down. It is stipulated in the National program, but it is not always shown in practice.

Therefore, an important migration resource for Belarus is integration of youth from the CIS countries who arrived to the country to study at university. First of all, since this category shares a lot of cultural characteristics common for post-Soviet space, their integration is simpler than for persons

from the third countries. Secondly, as they receive higher education, their integration in Belarusian economy contributes to the growth of education and qualification level of the employed population. Thirdly, young specialists usually maintain connections with their country of origin, they are included in the social networks of their community, and this fact may enhance the competitiveness of Belarus, expand its trade and other connections with other countries.

Thus, migrant student S. from Kiev studying at a prestigious university in Minsk is sure that there is a bright future for him in Minsk. The reason is that his whole family moved to Minsk several years ago due to business problems and established the necessary connections in Belarus. Today their financial capital has grown even more, and they do not face the same problems and harsh competition in the market like they did in Kiev. Therefore the young man is content with his new place of residence: Belarus enhanced the stability of the family business.

Russian-speaking student T. arrived from Lithuania because he wanted to get education in the field which is not taught in his country. He wants to stay after his studies in Belarus, because he can see career prospects for himself here, although in the future he will move to another country (possibly Ukraine, because his mother is Ukrainian). He maintains his Lithuanian citizenship in spite of the fact that his adaptation and integration in Belarus went quite smoothly.

Student M. from Smolensk (Russia) arrived to Minsk because she had relatives here, and because it is cheaper to study here. She mentioned that she is accepted everywhere as one of the locals, and she does not feel great difference compared to Russia. However, she is unsure whether she would stay here for good.

Non-Russian speaking students are a non-target group of migrants for Belarus. Currently most such students come from China. A lot of them would like to stay in Belarus in the future to work, because the Chinese state pays significant bonuses to the citizens who find employment abroad. This is why Chinese students look for jobs very actively. Their chances increase due to construction of the park of high technologies in the suburbs of Minsk. Thus, interviewee P. who understands Russian quite well, said that he learned Russian with the objective to find a job and stay in Belarus. However, he does not intend to integrate fully in the Belarusian society: his own diaspora is quite numerous, and all the problems can be solved there. In the opinion of the expert who works with foreign students in Belarus, the long-term objective of such students is move to Western European countries, and the potential threat for Belarus is that migrants from the third countries may create their ghettos in Belarus, Chinatowns, and other ethnic communities, which will exist by their own laws, and will not integrate in the host society. The expert said that recently several former Chinese students were hired in the park of high technologies under construction. All documentary formalities and change of visa status were performed officially. However, in general the Republic of Belarus does not want to encourage such transfers, and one of the reasons is "they are impossible to integrate: they live in their own community and follow only their own interests".

Migrants from the Third Countries (non-target groups of labor migrants)

As for migrants from the third countries, their interests are more distant from the interests of Belarus, compared to migrants from the CIS. As a rule, they want to do business here, live independently from the local population, and they do not want to study its traditions and culture. So far there haven't been any serious conflicting problems similar to those occurring in Russia, but potentially they are quite possible.

In the opinion of one of the experts, labor migrants from some countries undertake certain efforts in order to settle down in Belarus. For example, many Turkish citizens marry ladies from Belarus in order to receive official possibility to live in Belarus permanently. They have strong ethnic organizations which provide material incentives to those who come here to work, open business in Belarus, creating favorable conditions for arrival of more and more labor migrants from Turkey.

Guinean national B. also wanted to stay after graduation from institute in Minsk, married a Belarusian woman. He found a job corresponding to his specialization. Now he lives here permanently, he has children. He does not complain that Belarusians are treating him poorly.

Integration of labor migrants working in commerce is even more problematic. Thus, a citizen of Vietnam told us that she came to Minsk for studies, met her future husband here, he came earlier for business; they got married, and now they run together commercial business. According to her, the Vietnamese do not communicate with any "foreigners", because their diaspora is quite numerous - it includes over two hundred people who arrived in the recent 5-6 years. In order to solve their problems, according to her, they use all the possible resources, including bribing local officials, in order to obtain the necessary legal documents.

Temporary Migrants from the Third Countries

These migrants in most of the cases also do not wish to integrate, they fully maintain their national identity, connections; they communicate first of all among themselves. Many of them do not even learn the national language, and prefer to communicate through their intermediaries. In the opinion of the expert who represents official public authorities, a part of these migrants arrive to Belarus for purposes different from those declared by them. As a rule, these objectives are related to interests different from interests and objectives of Belarusian migration policy. Nevertheless, since they come on legal grounds, reside in Belarus for some time, unwilling to integrate and adapt, the authorities try to keep an eye on them, in order not to permit violation of the laws of the country.

Thus, citizen of Iran who arrived to Minsk for studies (and officially there are hundreds of such migrants), was reluctant to tell us about himself. According to him, he was not free to choose himself where to go for studies and work, and others decided for him (he did not say who). Now he already has a business here, but intends to move to Germany in the future. He does not want to integrate since he considers that officials are corrupt, and Belarusian mentality is too different from his own. He even complained of "white chauvinism", therefore he has a critical approach towards Belarusian laws, especially with respect to foreigners, and considers that Belarusian authorities "do not do anything" for them.

Short-term Migrants

There are groups of migrants from third countries who come to Belarus for special reasons. According to the interviews with citizens of some Asian countries, they come regularly to the Republic of Belarus for a short period of time (from several days to several weeks) in order to attend casinos, other similar venues, and also for sex tourism. In September 2012 Belarusian press published information that a brothel was discovered in one of the prestigious Minsk casinos, which did not only provide legitimate services, but also sex services to their clients. A lot of clients were foreigners. It is quite clear that this group of foreigners (they can be considered circular migrants, because they perform regular trips to Belarus) is not interested in any kind of integration into Belarusian society.

Interviewee from Turkey who arrived to Belarus as a tourist, after some general phrases about his "interest in sights of Belarus", admitted that he came for a couple of days which he wants to spend at casinos and other entertainment venues he knows about from his fellow citizens, who visit Belarus regularly for similar purposes. It can be stated that such tourists have "adapted" well to those characteristics of Belarusian economy which Belarusian citizens are generally not always well aware of. Nevertheless this kind of "tourism" attracts a significant number of foreigners from the countries where casinos and similar entertainments are either not available, or much more expensive.

Refugees

The total number of refugees in the Republic of Belarus is relatively small. As of July 1, 2012 refugee status in Belarus was granted to 845 foreigners from 15 countries. Four more foreigners from these countries were granted complementary protection. In addition to this, 89 foreigners who were denied refugee status and complementary protection, benefited from non-expulsion decision, and were granted temporary residence permits in the Republic of Belarus (Government of the Republic of Belarus 2012b)

This group of forced migrants is non-homogenous and their integration in the society depends on which country they arrived from. Most refugees in Belarus are from Afghanistan, because these persons previously studied in Belarus, they have lived here, a lot of them have Belarusian wives (Selivanov and Shadurskiy 2009). It is quite natural that they decided to claim asylum in Belarus. There are two mechanisms for integration of such refugees: their Belarusian relatives and community, other non-governmental organizations which help them to settle down, find job, etc.

Not all the refugees are employed; a lot of them run their own business. Such persons lose a number of facilities granted by the Belarusian state. Nevertheless, as a rule, refugees with status do not cause as many problems as those who have not received such status or live in the expectation of the decision on such status. Part of them would like to move to the West, but they do not have the necessary documents. If there are any problems with them the authorities are forced to take measures to maintain security and state of law inside Belarus and at border crossing.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Belarusian Migration Integration Policy

Just like other post-Soviet countries, the Republic of Belarus has strengths and weaknesses in this field. The strengths include the following:

- Granting equality in front of Belarusian system of law to officially registered migrants who obtained official employment authorization or residence and labor permit in Belarus,
- possibility for migrants to officially benefit from medical assistance in Belarus, rent housing, study (usually on paid contractual basis),
- possibility to receive financial assistance for those migrants who fall under legislation, and who are considered to be desirable for Belarus,
- no racial, religious, ethnic prejudices and obstacles for occupying certain positions, for residing in the country,
- neutral or positive environment for migrants in the country (although possibly this does not apply to all categories of migrants, but rather to those arriving from former USSR countries, and is related to small number of groups of migrants from non-CIS countries).

Disadvantages of migration policy include first of all insufficient capacious integration potential of Belarusian society (low wages, few prestigious employment opportunities), scarce financial resources allocated officially for support of migrants, insufficiently efficient mechanisms for attraction of highly qualified labor force to the country, little attention paid by the authorities (and in some cases even counteraction) with respect to labor emigrants, Belarusians who go to work in the CIS countries (first of all, to Russia). There is virtually no special policy for return of so-called intellectual migrants who moved abroad in the post-Soviet years.

Level of economic development of Belarus, insufficient rate of economic modernization (compared to Russia) represent the main obstacles on the way of improvement of migration policy. Low level of wages in Belarus does not leave much hope that these obstacles will be removed in the nearest future, whereas further development of integration processes in the framework of Eurasian Economic

Community stimulates emigration spirit among groups of Belarusian citizens who can get a better paid job and easily adapt to Russian conditions.

As for migrants from the third countries it can be reiterated that they often conflict with state integration policy because for a number of reasons and given their private interests they are not interested in integration in the Belarusian society viewing Belarus as a country for transit to the West.

Taking into account the information above we would like to note that in the framework of National Program of Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus it is necessary to outline more clearly measures for attraction to the country of qualified and highly qualified labor force from abroad.

Considering the experience of other post-Soviet countries which faced the problem of migrants' integration to a greater extent than Belarus it can be recommended to have a closer look at some reputable mechanisms contributing to better adaptation and integration of migrants.

Thus, from Russian experience (which is confirmed by information received in interviews with Russian-speaking migrants), it can be stated that these are easily integrating groups of migrants. They feel as ones of the locals, and they are treated wonderfully by the citizens of Belarus. Instruments of their integration are not very specific; they need the attention of the public authorities and of the population in general.

Temporary labor migrants who do not intend to stay in Belarus for a long time require social integration means (housing, work, legal stay), the purpose of which is not to worsen the criminal situation in the country, not to aggravate interethnic and other possible conflicts between citizens of Belarus and migrants.

As for migrants from the CIS and third countries who do not have sufficient Russian language skills, or who do not know the language at all but are law-abiding and stay in Belarus to live and work for a long period of time, there should be special integration mechanisms for them, possible compensations, assistance in finding job, enrolling for studies, finding housing. Some countries provide financial incentives to their labor migrants, thus selectivity is important in determining who needs support from Belarus, and who does not.

If migrants do not fall under priority category (according to the National Program of Demographic Security), permanent state control is required (exercised by law enforcement authorities, local authorities), as well as regulation of the situation, in order to avoid conflicts, undesirable agglomeration of migrants, etc. As it was recently stated in this regard by the President of the Republic of Belarus, the situation on the Belarusian-Russian border is "not so bright", implying "migration to the West through our country". Mentioning "a great upsurge of migration", the head of state stated that "reasons behind it are not clear" (Lukashenko 2012b).

As to refugees, it is possible to use the experience already accumulated by Belarus in solving this problem. Clearly outlined mechanisms are required for their adaptation (if they arrive for short period of time) and integration, if they intend to stay for a long time. It is unacceptable in any case for them to live in the conditions of social exclusion.

One of the recommendations for improvement of integration policy may include lack of potential behind attraction of unskilled migrants to Belarus, and providing them targeted state support. According to the studies performed on the assignment of Belarusian Institute of Strategic Research, initially cheap labor may provide savings in wages, but in the long run disadvantages outweigh the advantages. First of all, foreign migrants working "for food", with time may increase the burden of social costs (health care and education institutions, pension funds). Secondly, from the experience of Western European countries it is known that they increase the social economic tension in the society (Luchenok 2012). Therefore it is better to direct the funds at attraction of competitive highly educated migrants.

Second recommendation of this study is not to put up too much resistance against citizens of Belarus going for temporary employment in Russia, who adapt and integrate there successfully and

continue sending remittances back to Belarus. They support the budget of the country, and therefore in the conditions of common state of Belarus and Russia and common economic space such moves will benefit the economy of these countries.

Conclusions

The problem of integration of migrants in Belarus is not as serious as in some other post-Soviet countries. Currently the state deals with it successfully. At the same time, main characteristics of migration processes in Belarus are not particularly different from these processes in the neighboring countries. Thus, it can be assumed that in the future Belarus may also face aggravation of these problems, and the state should be ready for it. In the conditions of growth of labor migration in Belarus it will be necessary to provide infrastructure to labor migrants for their adaptation and integration in Belarus, for studying language and culture.

It is possible to counter aggravation of migration processes if the seriousness of the problem is acknowledged now, and measures are taken to solve it, such as: monitoring migration processes, renewal and improvement of the legislation, study of the positive experience of other countries in the field of working with migrants, creation of efficient mechanisms for integration of groups of target migrants who are of interest for the Republic of Belarus, as well as return of Belarusian emigrants back to the country, as they can contribute to the development of the country.

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ANNEX

**Table 1. External Migrants Who Arrived in the Republic of Belarus in 2005-2009,
By Citizenship, (in persons)**

Citizenship	Total	Including Men	Including Women
	39252	19827	19425
Republic of Belarus	10154	4739	5415
CIS Countries	21932	10786	11146
Non-CIS Countries	4792	3153	1639
Stateless Persons	1823	840	988

Source: Migration of the population of the Republic of Belarus. Statistical Bulletin. Minsk, 2011, p.26

Table 2. External Migrants Who Arrive in the Republic of Belarus in 2005-2009, by Reasons of Arrival (in persons)*

Citizenship	Total	Work	Studies	Creation of Family	Came Back	Family Reasons	Seek Asylum
	39252	2050	6891	2718	5164	14164	191
CIS countries, including:	32132	1653	3835	2316	4373	12781	138
Russia	18773	933	803	1241	3377	7929	35
Ukraine	5125	295	88	852	552	2162	8
Kazakhstan	3052	265	260	57	255	1549	26
Azerbaijan	432	51	86	50	7	139	4
Armenia	346	32	17	33	8	135	18
Non-CIS countries, including	4792	394	3051	321	789	1378	53
China	1424	32	1316	1	3	2	-
Lithuania	606	36	67	56	108	209	1
Latvia	551	25	22	38	128	224	-
Georgia	296	29	17	28	11	96	30
Germany	289	14	17	24	62	99	-

Source: Migration of the population of the Republic of Belarus. Statistical Bulletin. Minsk, 2011, p.25

*Note: not all migrants stated the reason for their arrival, hence the sum of the persons who stated their reason is not equal to the total number of migrants from the given country.

Table 3. Total Migration of the Population of the Republic of Belarus (in persons)

	1995	2000	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total arrivals	206 839	209 767	238 317	236 553	264 849	228 429	213 386
International migration	34 866	25 943	13 031	17 413	19 892	17 169	17 510
CIS countries	31 185	23 492	11 426	14 239	15 582	14 303	14 690
non-CIS countries	3 681	2 451	1 605	3 174	4 310	2 866	2 820
Total departures	207 044	197 636	236 368	228 408	252 600	218 126	203 486
International migration	35 071	13 812	11 082	9 268	7 643	6 866	7 610
CIS countries	25 607	7 249	7 520	6 856	5 313	5 040	5 799
non-CIS countries	9 464	6 563	3 562	2 412	2 330	1 826	1 811
Migration growth (loss)	-205	12131	1949	8145	12249	10303	9980
International migration	-205	12131	1949	8145	12249	10303	9980
CIS countries	5578	16243	3906	7383	10269	9263	8891
non-CIS countries	-5783	-4112	-1957	762	1980	1040	1009

Source: National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus. Annual Data. Population, <http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/indicators/population.php>