

Kazakhstan



General Information



Population

19 621 972 (World Bank 2022)

18 984 845 (STAT KZ 2021 1 June)



Immigration

3 732 073 (UN DESA Immigration Stock 2020)

11 447 (Flow STAT KZ 2020)



Emigration

4 203 899 (UN DESA Emigration Stock 2020)

29 110 (Flow STAT KZ 2020)



Working-age population

12 222 736 (World Bank 2022)

9 180 800 (STAT KZ 2020)



Unemployment rate

4.9 % (World Bank 2022)

4.9 % (STAT KZ 2020)



GDP

225 496 328 925.5 current prices USD (World Bank 2022)

70 714 083 600 000 current prices KZT (STAT KZ 2020)



Refugees and IDPs

Refugees

345 (UNHCR 2023)

425 (annual data, CIS 2020)

Asylum Seekers

637 (UNHCR 2023)

88 (annual data, CIS 2020)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2023)



Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2022)

By Descent

Yes (conditional) (GLOBALCIT 2022)

Years of Residency

5 (GLOBALCIT 2022)



Territory

2 724 900 km² (CIA World Factbook)

Migration Authorities Responsible Body

Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population

Line Ministries

Ministry of Interior

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Agencies

Committee of labor, social protection and migration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Committee of migration service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan

National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Key Policy Documents

2011 Law on Migration

1995 (2021) Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners

2009 (2021) Law of Refugees

Relevant Publications

Advanced Migration Profile 2014-2019

Migration Profile Light 2015

Extended Migration Profile 2010

Analytical Report '**Combating irregular migration and human trafficking in the CIS countries**'

Background Note '**Asylum seekers from the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian Countries in the EU**'

Background Note '**Migration and Mobility in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: What to expect in times of COVID-19?**'

Policy Brief '**The EU Central Asia Strategy and Its Impact on Migration**'

Analytical Report '**China's "Belt and Road" Initiative and Its Impact on Migration Flows and Policies in Central Asia**'

Analytical Report '**Addressing the Challenges of Labour Migration within the EAEU**'

With an overall population of nearly 19 Mio, Kazakhstan is both a receiving and sending country of migrants. Over the past decade, the **net migration rate** has been negative with an overall 360,000 people leaving and some 230,000 entering the country. Since 2005, international migration to Kazakhstan has been steadily declining, reaching approximately **12,000** people in 2019 and 11,441 in 2020. Meanwhile, out-migration from Kazakhstan has been on the rise, amounting to **45,225** people in 2019. In 2020, the outflow dropped to **29,088**, presumably owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over 80 % of emigrants, the majority of whom statistics define as ethnic Russians go to Russia. Ethnic Germans and Ukrainians account for 7-8 % and 6-7 % of the emigration flow respectively. A similar trend of ethnic emigration, albeit much larger in scale, occurred in the 1990s following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While reasons behind the accelerated ethnic exodus differ, **experts tend to agree** that socio-economic factors play perhaps the major role. This also explains the growing share of ethnic Kazakhs among migrants leaving mostly for Russia and Germany in search of better economic and educational opportunities. According to the Eurasian Economic Commission, in 2019, **over 136,000 citizens of Kazakhstan** came to Russia for employment purposes and **over 63,000 students** studied in Russian universities in the 2019/2020 academic year. 10 % of all Kazakh students are believed to study abroad and some **35 % may never return home**.

Germany is the second most popular destination for migrants from Kazakhstan. For the past decade, the number of Kazakh citizens with valid residence permits in Germany has amounted to some **40,000** annually. Over two thirds of them received permits on family grounds valid for 12 months or more. The Czech Republic leads on first-time residence permits issued for educational activities valid for a year or longer. Meanwhile, shorter-term residence permits in the EU are mostly issued by Poland for educational or other purposes. There are not many Kazakh asylum-seekers in the EU. However, in 2019 their number suddenly exceeded **1,400 persons** representing a record figure for the past decade. Hosting over **600 recognised refugees** from Kazakhstan, France represents the prime destination within the EU. Worldwide, the number of Kazakh refugees slowly increased from **2,263 in 2015 to 2,766 persons in 2020**, over 1,000 of whom are hosted by the US. At the same time, the number of Kazakh asylum-seekers grew substantially, from **2,235 in 2015 to 6,984 in 2019 and 5,974 in 2020**. Most applications were submitted in the US and the Republic of Korea.

According to various estimates, Kazakhstan is home to some 3-4 million immigrants who mostly originate from Russia, Germany, Ukraine and Belarus. Immigration to Kazakhstan is also closely related to ethnic repatriation actively supported by the state. **Ethnic Kazakhs**, which account for over 50 % of the overall flow, migrate to Kazakhstan from Uzbekistan (50.72 % in 2019), China (19%), Turkmenistan (12.6%) and Russia (6.8%). In recent years, ethnic immigration has declined along with the overall migration flows, foremost owing to the threefold depreciation of the flow from Uzbekistan.

Statistics on labour migration show two different trends. The number of migrant workers coming through the quota system - mostly from China, Uzbekistan, Turkey and India - have been on decline since 2016. Meanwhile, the number of migrant workers receiving work permits or patents - predominantly from Uzbekistan - grew remarkably from 141,000 in 2015 to

531,000 in 2019. Labour migrants from the EAEU, who do not require a work permit in Kazakhstan, come mostly from Russia. Among others, Kazakhstan is an increasingly **attractive destination for students**, the number of whom increased from a little over 9,000 in 2014 to nearly 40,000 in 2019. Most students originate from Uzbekistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Given its geographical location, Kazakhstan is experiencing **significant irregular migration**. By the end of 2019, 76.200 foreigners had administrative penalties, with 9.000 expelled from the country. Of the 90,000 migration violations recorded in 2018, more than 87,000 pertain to CIS nationals. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, each year over 100.000 foreign nationals are held administratively liable and over 10.000 are expelled from the country.

Kazakhstan endorsed the Global Compact for Migration and is a party to various regional migration dialogues. Acknowledging the growing role of labour migration for socio-economic development, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population **gradually overtakes various functions** in the area of migration from the Ministry of Interior. In particular, as of 2022, the latter will no longer issue work permits to labour migrants nor decide upon refugee status. In May 2020, Kazakhstan amended the designation of ethnic Kazakhs returning to the homeland from "oralman" (returnee, repatriate) to "andas" (tribesman) in its legislation. The same year, the country **launched the e-visa services** issuing electronic visas for business, tourist and medical purposes. In 2021, **Kazakhstan will develop** a new Concept of migration policy for 2022-2026.