

Kyrgyz Republic



General Information



Population

6 974 900 (World Bank 2022)

6 636 800 (STAT KG 2021 June 1)



Immigration

199 011 (UN DESA Immigration Stock 2020)

5 822 (STAT KG 2020)



Emigration

774 377 (UN DESA Emigration Stock 2020)

961 (STAT KG 2020)



Working-age population

4 255 513 (World Bank 2022)

4 113 295 (STAT KG 2021)



Unemployment rate

4.1 % (World Bank 2021)

5.8 % (STAT KG 2020)



GDP

11 543 966 558.8 current prices USD (World Bank 2022)

598 344 500 000 current prices SOM (STAT KG 2020)



Refugees and IDPs

Refugees

253 (UNHCR 2023)

Asylum Seekers

775 (UNHCR 2023)

IDPs

0 (UNHCR 2023)



Citizenship

By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2022)

By Descent

Yes (conditional) (GLOBALCIT 2022)

Years of Residency

5 (GLOBALCIT 2022)



Territory

199 951 km² (CIA World Factbook)

Migration Authorities

Responsible Body

Ministry of Health and Social Development

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Line Ministries

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Interior

Agencies

State Border Service

State Committee for National Security

Key Policy Documents

2006 (2020) Law on External Labour Migration

2002 (2020) Law on Refugees

2007 (2016) Law on Citizenship

1993 (2020) Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens

2005 (2018) Law on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

2007 (2015) Law on state guarantees for ethnic Kyrgyz migrating to the Kyrgyz Republic

Concept of the migration policy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2021-2030

Programme "Kairylman" to assist ethnic Kyrgyz resettling in the Kyrgyz Republic and kairylmans for 2017-2022

National Development Strategy 2018-2040

Relevant Publications

Extender Migration Profile 2015-2018

Migration Profile Light 2013

Extended Migration Profile 2011

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**'

The Kyrgyz Republic is predominantly a country of emigration. Over the past decade, however, both out-migration from and in-migration to the country declined considerably. While the net migration remains negative, the population of Kyrgyzstan is growing at 2 % per year due to high fertility rates, placing the country among the fastest growing in Asia, after Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen.

According to the Statistical Committee of Kyrgyzstan, the number of persons who left the country for permanent residence abroad decreased from over 45,000 in 2011 to 5,822 in 2020. In ethnic terms, migration outflows are essentially comprised of Kyrgyz, Russians, Uzbeks and Germans. Russia and Kazakhstan continue to represent the two main countries of destination. Moreover, the two countries are home to the largest Kyrgyz communities abroad along with Germany, Ukraine and Tajikistan.

While permanent migration is less widespread, temporary labour migration flows from Kyrgyzstan remain considerable. Similar to the overall migration flows, labour migrants primarily target Russia (some 80 %) and Kazakhstan (up to 10 %; it attracted **more Kyrgyz labour migrants in 2020**). **Other destinations** include Turkey, the Republic of Korea, and the United Arab Emirates. According to the **Eurasian Economic Commission**, the number of Kyrgyz migrant workers in Russia exceeds 300,000 persons since 2015. The only exception was the year 2020 when the flow dropped below 200,000. Moreover, 2015 and 2019 saw peak numbers surpassing 500,000 and 450,000 respectively. Almost 40 % of Kyrgyz **labour migrants in Russia are women** employed in the services, catering, textile and domestic sectors with many of them working informally. **Within the EU**, Czechia and Poland were issuing the most first-time residence permits for remunerated activities to Kyrgyz nationals in 2017-2019. Meanwhile, Italy and Germany host the majority of Kyrgyz holders of residence permits issued for work purposes valid for one year or more.

Overall, labour migration is an integral part of the subsistence of many Kyrgyz families that rely heavily on remittances, which account for nearly **30 % of the country's GDP**. Experts argue that **around one million Kyrgyz** nationals of working age support their families by working abroad. Their decision to migrate arises primarily from **economic motives** such as the lack of employment and low wages at home. Out-migration for other reasons is much smaller in scale. For comparison, over the past three years, only 5,000-6,000 Kyrgyz nationals received residence permits for family reunification inside the EU. **In the first half of 2021**, only 79,000 Kyrgyz nationals entered Russia for purposes other than work, representing 17 % of the overall flow from Kyrgyzstan to Russia. Since 2015, neither the number of Kyrgyz **asylum-seekers nor the number of Kyrgyz refugees** exceeded 3,000 persons respectively, with the majority hosted by the US.

Immigration to Kyrgyzstan for permanent residence is insignificant. In 2020, it reached a historical minimum of 960 persons, mostly originating from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia. The same year, the number of **labour migrants who came to the Republic under the allocated annual quota** amounted to some 10,000 persons, of whom over 60 % came from China and 14 % from Turkey. As a rule, Chinese nationals make up the majority of labour migrants in Kyrgyzstan, working in the industry, construction, transport, energy, mining, and catering, as well as on joint Sino-Kyrgyz ventures. Immigration flows to Kyrgyzstan also include ethnic Kyrgyz whose return is supported through the **state programme**

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'

'Kairylman' (returnee). In 2018, the stock of kairylmans living in Kyrgyzstan was estimated at over 35,000.

As of 1 January 2021, Kyrgyzstan also hosted 199 refugees, of whom 84 originate from Afghanistan. In view of the volatile situation in Afghanistan in summer 2021, Kyrgyzstan announced its readiness to host over 1,000 Afghan refugees.

The volume of irregular migration in Kyrgyzstan is limited with less than 400 irregular migrants deported in 2018. Most irregular migrants are CIS nationals violating entry, exit and stay regulations.

In 2021, Kyrgyzstan reformed its state structures and shifted most migration-related responsibilities to the newly formed Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While the former will be responsible for refugees, ethnic Kyrgyz and victims of trafficking, the latter will deal with external migration from Kyrgyzstan and support Kyrgyz migrants abroad. In July 2021, the MFA launched a new website meant to assist Kyrgyz labour migrants.

In May 2021, Kyrgyzstan adopted the new Migration Policy Concept 2021-2030, identifying four priority areas. The first aims to improve conditions for citizens, compatriots, immigrants and stateless persons in Kyrgyzstan in educational, labour, professional and cultural terms. The second area aims to utilise the migration potential of the population, compatriots, immigrants and stateless persons for national development. The third area shall protect the rights of Kyrgyz nationals abroad, along with those of immigrants, compatriots and stateless persons inside the country. Finally, the fourth area will support the creation of a safe migration environment. The Concept will be implemented in two stages, each featuring a five-year implementation plan for 2021-2025 and 2026-2030.