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LABOR MIGRATION IN EU COUNTRIES

ТРУДОВА МІГРАЦІЯ В КРАЇНАХ ЄС

The 21st century was marked by a growing trend of labor migration across international borders. This phenomenon has been caused by various factors, including globalization, economic inequality between countries and demographic changes.

Labor migration is a very relevant topic in the EU countries due to the increase in the number of labor migrants in the region. The EU has become a major destination for migrant workers from around the world due to its strong economy and high demand for labor in various sectors.

The relevance of the topic of labor migration in EU countries has been increasing in recent years, especially in light of the war that Russia started against Ukraine. The full-scale invasion led not only to an increase in the number of people in need of protection in other countries, but also to a significant increase in the number of Ukrainians looking for work abroad, with many choosing to migrate to EU countries.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of migrant workers in certain sectors, such as health and agriculture, and the challenges they face in accessing health care, job security and social protection.

International labor migration has a long history that can be attributed to various factors such as economics, politics, culture and social change [1; 2].

One of the early reasons for labor migration was economic motives. People went to work in other countries in search of better earning opportunities. For example, during the Middle Ages and the early modern era, artisans, merchants, and laborers moved from city to city and country to country in search of work and to improve their economic situation.

Political and social factors also influenced labor migration. Considering the period of colonial expansion and imperialism, many people from poor regions were forced to migrate due to colonial expansion projects, wars and persecution. Wars, revolutions and political changes can also cause mass migration of people in search of safety and protection from conflict and violence.

Ukraine is one of the main countries of origin of labor migrants to the European Union. According to Eurostat data, in 2022, about 2.3 million citizens of Ukraine lived in EU countries, the largest number – in Poland, Italy, Germany and France [6].

The main reason for forced labor migration from Ukraine to the EU was the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, and the lack of employment opportunities, low wages in Ukraine, as well as the desire for better living conditions and prospects for professional growth. Many Ukrainians also migrate to the EU to escape political instability and conflict in their country.

However, Ukrainian migrants in the EU face various challenges, including language barriers, difficulties in obtaining legal employment status, and discrimination. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the EU labor market, leading to increased unemployment and job insecurity for both EU citizens and migrants [3].

Due to the loss of employment opportunities or financial opportunities, many migrants, on the one hand, returned to their countries. On the other hand, there was a restriction on the admission of new migrants from countries that were particularly affected by the pandemic.

The top five EU countries by the number of non-citizens in 2022 were Germany (9.9 million), Great Britain (6.2 million), Italy (5.1 million), France (4.9 million) and Spain (4.7 million).

The main factors affecting labor migration from Ukraine to the EU are the political and economic situation in the country, family reunification, education and quality of life. Although labor migration poses challenges for both countries of origin and destination, it remains an important trend that is likely to continue in the future [4].

Labor migration has been found to be influenced by such things as economic differences, social aspirations, political instability, and geographic location. It is these factors that have the greatest impact on labor migration: migrants are looking for better living conditions, higher wages and a better future for their families; people move for work, study and personal development; wars, conflicts and persecution can force people to leave their home countries in search of safety; people looking for better career opportunities and living standards may migrate to regions close to economically developed countries. Cross-border migration of workers has both advantages and disadvantages. Labor migration contributes to global economic expansion. It benefits migrants by providing opportunities for economic development. It also benefits labor-importing countries by addressing labor shortages and promoting economic growth. However, there are challenges such as social integration, exploitation, wage pressures, brain drain, and the impact on the labor market and social cohesion.

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