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UKRAINE’S POSITION ON THE EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL MIGRATION MAP

The current mobility of people is higher than ever before in modern history and continues to increase sharply, becoming one of the determining global issues of 21st century. Today, there are over 258 million migrants around the world living outside their country of birth [1]. According to the United Nations Organization, migration is inevitable and potentially a beneficial component of modern life in each country or region of the world.

However, for present-day Ukraine migration is becoming a serious challenge. According to projections from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ukraine’s population will fall dramatically to 32.9 million in 2050 (a 9.9 per cent drop from 2016), with people older than 60 then accounting for more than 50 per cent of its population. This represents a substantial loss of human capital for Ukraine in terms of quantity and quality [2]. Some experts and researchers call Ukraine “Europe’s Mexico”

as it has become a supplier of cheap labour for the EU countries. The number of Ukrainians residing in the EU is constantly growing. In 2015, there were 905,200 of them. They constituted over 6% of all foreigners from third countries in the European Union. The majority of Ukrainians reside in Italy (238,000), Poland (336,000), Germany (112,000), the Czech Republic (113,000), and Spain (84,000) [3].

The main factor driving Ukrainians to travel abroad (both for earnings and for permanent residence) is the difference in wages. While an average salary in Ukraine is about €250, in Russia it is €500, and in the EU in 2018 it exceeded €1,500. Specifically, it was €750 in Poland, €870 in the Czech Republic, €1,760 in Italy, €2,300 in Germany, and €2,500 in Ireland. It is clear that the promise of Ukraine's government to increase wages to UAH 10,000, that is, to about €300, will not stop Ukrainians [4].

According to the State Employment Service, with a reference to the data of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about 5 million Ukrainians live and work abroad today. Two-thirds of Ukrainians are working abroad illegally. About 3 million of them are in Russia. This is due to the visa-free regime, the lack of a language barrier, and its economic domination. However, in the recent years, the annexation of Crimea and the visa-free regime between Ukraine and the EU triggered the intensification of migration to the European Union.

Experts are convinced that the crucial factor is how the country manages the current political and social situation, what action it takes to stem the outflow of skilled workers and address the decline in the quality of education and training over the coming years, and to what extent the elite takes all these challenges seriously.

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