

## LABOR MIGRATION POLICY IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

**Pernebek Anel Yerlankyzy**

[anel.pernebek@gmail.com](mailto:anel.pernebek@gmail.com)

4th year undergraduate student of the Faculty of  
International Relations of L. N. Gumilyov ENU,

Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Supervisor – Bolysbekova M.K

**Abstract:** this article reveals the situation with labor migration in the Republic of Korea. Mainly, considering the labor migration policy and current situation in the country.

**Keywords:** *labor migration, South Korea, policy, programs*

### Introduction

At all times and everywhere there was a concept of migration, which today has become one of the global problems of many developed countries. However, another type of migration direction that has acquired the name "labor migration" has become more important migrations for both countries and individuals. Since this type of migration has a positive effect on both sides.

In the field of labor, countries are divided into two sectors. The first sector is the countries receiving labor resources with the best living and working conditions, and the second sector is the countries exporting or donating labor. The first sector (host countries) mainly includes developed countries such as the United States, many European countries, Korea, China, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia and others. The second sector (exporting countries) includes the CIS countries, Africa, and some countries of Southeast Asia.

In the past, the Republic of Korea was part of the sector of Asian countries exporting labor resources. However, closer to the 1990s, the Republic of Korea began to move from the sector of exporting countries to the sector of the host country, improving the sphere of work and working conditions in the country not only for citizens, but also for foreign workers.

Korea has developed several programs to attract foreign labor. One of the first was the internship program - Industrial Trainee System. This program was designed for unskilled workers in small medium-sized enterprises. The goal of this program was to raise the qualifications of the enterprise, reduce the unemployment rate, and also one of the most important goals is to prevent the aging of the population of South Korea. Due to the fact that after the end of the Korean War in 1953, many local Koreans began to leave the country to find work and permanent residence, where it was much safer and the economy was developed than Korea at that time. Thus, South Korea until the 1990s rapidly lost its population from 20 to 40 years old, which were the main working class for the country.

Therefore, after the launch of the first program, the country began to receive an influx of migrant workers, mainly from South-East Asian countries (Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, etc.). In the early 1990s, the number of labor migrants were about 100,000 in 1992, and in 1996, it was increased to 160,000 migrant workers in the country [1, p.354].

Thus, after the first program, Korea created more advanced programs, which later had a positive impact on the country's economy and on the labor sector.

### Labor migration policy of the Republic of Korea

Since the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Korea is beginning a transformation in the field of employment, to accept foreign labor, which would have a positive impact on the development of the country's economy, since the first program created was unsuccessful. Therefore, after reviewing all the laws and working out the disadvantages of the previous program, new conditions and laws for hiring foreign workers are created. Also, due to the flow of foreign workers, the problem of illegal migrants appeared, this was another problem that the country was trying to solve. Only in 2000, about 64% of foreign migrants were working illegally in the country.

Therefore, when developing the recruitment of foreign workers, the state took into account the experience of countries that faced labor migration. There were three types of programs in their labor migration policy:

- A work permit system where a foreign worker is only allowed to work in a specific location;
- Training/apprenticeship system, no permanent employee status;
- Integrated form - training + employment, that is, the combination of two higher-level systems [2, p.71];

So that in the 2000s, Korea began developing a training program that would then allow migrants or students to find a job for 1 year. In 2002, this program was extended until 2012.

After criticism of the first Industrial Trainee System (ITS) program, in 2003 the Employment Permit System (EPS) program was presented through the act of hiring foreign workers. Employment Permit System is a program for temporary labor migration to Korea, specifically to facilitate movement around the country for low-skilled workers. This program was initially agreed with only six countries, but then expanded to 16 countries. The Republic of Korea has EPS agreements with China, Mongolia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, East Timor, Laos, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. As of August 2012, about 188,000 workers from these countries were officially working in the Republic of Korea as E-9 EPS visa holders [3, p.5]. One of the major countries who send a large number of labor resources to Korea from the start of the program until 2018 are Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia. In terms of the quantity of active participants in 2016, the first with 14.5% was Vietnam, followed by Cambodia with 13.5%, Indonesia with 11.5% and Nepal with 10.6% [4, p.74].

Moreover, one of the important decisions was the partial return of ethnic Koreans to their homeland, that is, in 2007, the state launched the Working Visit System program, which allowed ethnic Koreans who live in China and also in some CIS countries (Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine) to work and live in the Republic of Korea [5, p.72].

Also, in addition to attracting foreign workers, the state also works with the local population, that is, certain program policies are created to equip local residents about other cultures and nations, conduct public rules regarding foreigners, and more. Thus, in Korea were created two basic plans for immigration policy .

The first basic immigration policy plan (2008-2012) was aimed at protecting national security, which had 4 main areas: competitiveness of the labor force, support for multicultural families, ensuring compliance with immigration laws and border controls, as well as preventing discrimination and protecting the human rights of migrants, including refugees.

The Second Basic Immigration Policy Plan was created only for 4 years from 2013 to 2017 . Here, this program was based more on the settlement of problems of integration of immigrants, that is, multicultural families, also aimed at working with society. The role of crime and criminal behavior of foreigners, which causes security problems in the country, was also noted. Therefore, the plan recommended that more research and educational projects be carried out for the local population and that children be included in the curriculum to raise awareness of other cultures [6].

In that case, we can see that the government works not only with foreign migrants, but also with the local population, which helps prevent interethnic problems between Koreans and other nations and also allows the country to maintain security in the country.

The situation with labor migration in South Korea can be described as actions that will create a desirable place where foreigners will want to come, migrate and work. Moreover, the state's policy is aimed at attracting more labor and achieving harmony between the local population, that is, Koreans, and foreigners. Therefore, by creating new programs for foreigners, Korea is trying to create better working and living conditions that would attract foreigners. They also do not forget about the local population, who also need equipment and knowledge of other nations, as well as confirmation of security in their country.

In conclusion, it can be highlighted that with the pace of development of Korea and the development of programs for foreigners, the trend of temporary work in the country will grow. Since today Korea is one of the leading host countries who accept labor resources from all countries.

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