

Relationship Between Trends of Highly Qualified Immigration to Russia and Demand of the Russian Labor Market

Sergey V. Ryazantsev^{1*}, Galina N. Ochirova¹ and Anastasia S. Maksimova¹

Abstract

In this article, we have argued that highly qualified worker (HQP) immigration to Russia does not correspond to the demand of the Russian labor market due to an inappropriate established criterion in Russian immigration policy. Our examination of the statistical data of the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation show that there is a high demand for specialists with higher qualifications in the healthcare, education, and science, and technology spheres, while foreign HQWs mainly work in spheres such as real estate, sales, manufacturing, etc. It is therefore clear that HQW immigration to Russia does not fully correlate with the needs of the Russian labor market. Furthermore, the attraction of foreign HQWs is not solving the root cause of the deficit of skilled labor in the country. Moreover, taking into account the rising number of foreign HQWs in Russia and considering possible economic benefits and human capital development, HQW immigration policy should be also furthered in accordance with the balance of supply and demand on the labor market in the context of economic activities and with consideration of the real needs of the economy with regard to specific specialities.

Keywords

Highly skilled workers; highly qualified labor; skilled migration; labor immigrants; Russian labor market

Introduction

Most developed countries try to solve the issues of population ageing and declining fertility rates through welcoming immigrants (Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2010). However, after high inflows of immigrants and guest workers from post-colonial countries, receiving countries implemented an immigration policy which separates immigrants into different categories, implementing stricter measures in relation to “undesirable” migrants, and more flexibility to attract “desirables”, such as highly qualified specialists, students, businessmen, investors, etc. (Hampshire, 2013). As a result of the developments of the globalization processes in science and technology, there is a growing demand for highly qualified workers all over the world, and this may lead to an outflow of the qualified labor force from less to more economically and technologically developed countries (Joppke, 1998; Menz, 2009).

Recently, the issue of attracting foreign highly qualified employees on the Russian labor market has become quite prominent. According to Russian state migration policy until 2025 (The Order of the President of the Russian Federation, 2012), the following description for foreign highly qualified workers (further HQW) applies: “an inducement for human capital

¹ Institute of Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

*Sergey V. Ryazantsev, corresponding author. Email riazan@mail.ru

development and the economic growth of the state, attracting these workers has an important meaning for the developments in science, economics, and new technologies in Russia". Human capital formation in the Russian Federation is undergoing the demographic challenges caused by the decreasing working-age population, the growing demographic load, and the negative natural population growth (Ryazantsev, Gusakov & Manshin, 2014). Increasing trends in the reduction of labor potential and changes in the structural demands in the labor force due to new technologies and modern standards of production cause the strengthening of the qualitative and quantitative imbalance of supply and demand in the labor market (Topilin, 2015).

Thus, in this article, we argue that HQW immigration to Russia does not correspond to the demand of the Russian labor market due to an inappropriate criterion in Russian immigration policy. Therefore, we have examined Russian state policy as it pertains to foreign HQW attraction and which defines the main criteria for foreign HQWs, and have observed different approaches to the definition of the highly qualified (skilled) specialists (workers) implemented by other countries and shared by international scholars in order to compare and determine the advantages and disadvantages of the status of foreign HQWs in Russia. In addition, we have analyzed the legal basis and prerequisites for HQW immigration policy. Further, we have reviewed the major trends of HQW migration to Russia and determined the demands of the Russian labor market by a statistical analysis of the data using compilations of the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2015; 2017a; 2017b; 2018) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding highly skilled immigration to Russia.

Literature Review of Definitions of Highly Qualified Workers

The topic of highly skilled migration has been widely examined from different perspectives from the economic (e.g. Cornelius, Espenshade & Salehyan, 2001; Chalamwong, 2005) to the transnational aspects (Peixoto, 2001; Vertovec, 2002; Beaverstock, 2005). Despite a myriad of research in the field of highly skilled migration, there is no common approach to the definition of HQWs in the academic and political spheres in Russia and other countries. Inevitably, the characteristics that immigration policy applies to the term "highly skilled worker" will affect the outcomes of these policies. Thus, it is important to clearly determine what exact labor force the state needs because an inappropriate and insufficient definition established by the law can lead to a deterioration of the labor market situation.

Some researchers define a HQW as a person with a higher education degree who occupies a position in the scientific, technical, teaching, and management spheres (Topilin & Malakha, 2004; Grossman & Stadelmann, 2011). In her research on the impact of the economic crisis on migration policy in European countries, Lucy Cerna has added the criteria "level of salary" to the previously given definition (Cerna, 2016). In contrast, Bailey and Mulder determine the term, HQW, by the level of education and work experience (Bailey & Mulder, 2017). In the research of Michael C. Ewers, HQWs are defined only by occupation: "as business professionals, high-tech workers and engineers, medical workers, students and scholars, NGO workers and entrepreneurs" (Ewers, 2007, p. 121). Exploring how American and Canadian migration policies are related to the flows of HQWs from China and India, Lo, Li, and Yu use the terms "HQW" and "highly talented workers" as synonyms; moreover, aside from those who have completed higher education, they consider students as potential HQWs (Lo, Li & Yu, 2017).

In a broad sense, a HQW is a person who has gained a bachelor's, master's or PhD degree (UNESCO, 2012). However, depending on economic, social, or political preferences, every receiving country sets own criteria for defining a HQW. According to Chaloff and Lemaître (2009), most host countries use three criteria for defining a HQW: salary, level of qualification, and type of occupation. For example, to be referred to as a HQW in Ireland, a migrant has to have a salary of no less than 60,000 euros per year, or to be a specialist in physical science and to have a salary of no less than 30,000 per year. In Australia, a person can be qualified as a HQW if the migrant holds the required level of education and his or her occupation is in the approved list of eligible skilled occupations. Nevertheless, some countries also use additional criteria such as work experience, language proficiency, age, family ties, etc. For instance, the required minimum salary depends on the age of a HQW applicant in the Netherlands: if a person is younger than 30, that person's salary should not be less than 3,229 euro per month; if older than 30 years, the monthly salary should be no less than 4,404 euro. However, we should take into account that in some cases one criterion may not correlate with another. For example, Bouvier and Martin (1995) found that, at the beginning of the 90s, 31% of engineers, and 38.7% of mathematicians and scientists in the field of information technology did not hold any degree; moreover, among foreigners, this proportion was much lower.

The strategies implemented in countries attracting highly skilled migrants are referred to in the following models:

- the state regulation of HQW flows, for example, through establishing a quota for HQWs in accordance with economic needs (with these needs being assessed analytically or the assessment being based on data from employers);
- HQW flow based on employers' requests;
- Selection of HQWs according to a points-based immigration system.

A points-based system is a tool that has a better separation effect in terms of the quality of immigrants attracted, and the threshold of the minimum required number of points may vary. One of the best examples is Canada, where such a tool is used, and it takes into account the following criteria: language proficiency; level of education or qualification; age; work experience; and ability to adapt depending on the presence of relatives, previous experience of living and working, the level of the partner's (spouse) language proficiency, and previous experience living and working in Canada.

Legal Basis of Foreign Highly Qualified Workers in Russia

In the case of foreign HQWs in Russia, in 2010 the definition of such was set by article 13.2 of the Federal law of 25.07.2002 N 115-FZ (as amended on 19.07.2018) (2002), "About the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation" (further to Article 13.2). According to article 13.2, a foreign HQW is "a foreign citizen who has work experience, skills or achievements in a specific occupation", the salary of whom must be at least 700,000 to 2 million Russian roubles a year, depending on the specialization of the HQW and the employer's residence. For example, the lower salary threshold for foreign HQWs attracted by employers who are residents of technology-innovative special economic zones is the lowest, relatively speaking, at 58,500 roubles per month (702,000 roubles per year). Scientific workers and teachers attracted by accredited educational and scientific organizations, as well as other specialists attracted by employer-residents of special economic zones and organizations operating in the field of IT, health, sports and recreation can be classified as foreign HQWs when their salary is not less than 83,500 roubles per month (1,002,000 roubles per year). This salary threshold also applies to foreign HQWs attracted by legal entities of the Republic of

Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol. The highest lower threshold is 167 thousand roubles per month (2,004 thousand roubles per year), which refers to HQWs who are not in the listed categories. Furthermore, the salary criterion does not apply to foreign HQWs applying to work in the implementation the Skolkovo project, as well as for the implementation of the project for the establishment and operation of the innovative science and technology centre. Thus, the main fixed criterion for HQWs in Russia is the salary level and, in some cases, the type of occupation; for example, for workers in medical, pedagogical, and scientific fields.

Moreover, HQWs conducting preaching or other religious activities and serving customers in the retail trade are prohibited with the exception of coordinated activities. Except for this prohibition, Article 13.2 does not restrict the list of specialities which can count as qualified under HQW status. Moreover, according to the All-Russian classifier of occupations (The Resolution of the State Standard of the Russian Federation, 1994), more than 100 types of specialists are defined as specialists of the highest level of qualification, the level of education of whom should correspond to a higher education and academic degree. According to the Federal Law "About education in the Russian Federation" (The Federal Law of 29.12.2012 No. 273-FZ, 2012), higher education includes a speciality, a bachelor's or master's degree, and postgraduate education (aspirantura, military adjuncture, medicine residency). However, in accordance with official commentary on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, the occupation of HQWs need not necessarily correspond to the All-Russian Classifier of occupation.

It is worth noticing that the text of the Article does not contain any requirements for the work experience, skills, and achievements of the HQW. Kurbanov calls it a lexical paradox that a "highly qualified worker" need not necessarily be qualified in Russia (Kurbanov, 2018, p. 56). In this respect, checking the level of qualifications and competencies of a HQW applicant is the prerogative of an employer rather than of state bodies. This is why the state entrusts this duty to an employer since the employer is interested in HQWs and is willing to pay a specified salary to these employees. However, there is a possibility of abuse of this duty by the employer (Kalaida, 2015, p. 113) because employers do not need to obtain permission for attracting foreign HQWs and do not have to provide any evidence of foreign workers' high qualifications. Also, the lack of quotes makes the process of hiring much easier for employers. These low requirements for foreign HQWs are mainly perceived as a tool of attraction, but it is vital to keep in mind that the Russian government's softening of the requirements for foreign HQWs can lead to a mismatch regarding the goals and outcomes of migration policy.

In accordance with Russian migration legislation, foreign citizens and stateless persons need to obtain a work permit in order to work as a HQW (Article 13.2). Due to the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union in January 2015, citizens of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan no longer need to acquire any permits for employment in Russia. Therefore, from the visa-free countries, only citizens of Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine are required to obtain a work permit for employment as a HQW.

In order to attract foreign workers as HQWs, the state provides a number of benefits for the holders of HQW status (Ryazantsev & Belova, 2017, p. 105-106). First, the lack of quotas on issuing invitations for entry and work permits for HQWs and their family members. Secondly, the issue of work permits with a maximum period of three years with possible prolongation. Thirdly, the opportunity to issue residence permits in a simplified order. Fourth, reduced non-residents' income tax of 13%. In addition to this, a HQW does not have to pass an examination in the Russian language concerning the history of Russia and basic aspects of the legislation of the Russian Federation.

Moreover, in 2012 the Russian government approved criteria for the recognition of foreign degrees of higher education in Russia (The Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 389), which can help employers to independently assess foreign education degrees and qualifications. At the moment, the Government of the Russian Federation has approved a list of 216 foreign scientific organizations and educational organizations from 22 countries whose academic degrees and documents confirming academic titles' and education and/or qualifications are automatically recognized in Russia (The Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 798-p, 2019). In addition to this, Russia has agreements with many other countries on the mutual acknowledgement of education and academic degree documents (Main State Center for Education Evaluation, 2019).

Prerequisites to Highly Qualified Workers Attraction Policy

The policy aimed at attracting foreign HQWs is not only a state device to achieve innovative and technological progress but is also driven by the demand for filling the deficit in HQWs on the Russian labor market. Instead of solving the main cause of the deficit, the state attempts to fill a deficit in HQWs in Russia by attracting foreign HQWs, and highly skilled compatriots from other countries along with foreign students and training for Russian HQWs etc. Moreover, since 2014 the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo abroad has been actively involved in promoting Russian higher education; in addition, foreign citizens have the opportunity to study at Russian universities at the expense of the federal budget within the established quota.

However, all these measures do not look at the root cause of the situation. The deficit is a direct outcome of continuing intellectual emigration from Russia, not, of course, on the same scale as in the 90s but still significant (Latova & Savinkov, 2012; Ryazantsev & Pis'mennaya, 2013). For example, Russian highly qualified specialists along with educational migrants, investors, middle class and retired people are classified as a new (third) wave of emigration from Russia (2008-2016) (Ryazantsev, Pis'mennaya, Lukyanets, Sivoplyasova & Khramova, 2018, p. 94). Thus, there are state attempts to prevent the emigration of highly skilled and talented people from Russia. For example, in order to exclude or minimize emigration through foreign grants and scholarships, in 2013, the state program "Global Education" was implemented to provide financial support to Russian citizens to study at top universities. The program's goal is to fill a deficit of highly qualified workers in Russian organizations and to accelerate modernization as well as to introduce new technologies for social sector reform, science, and education.

Nevertheless, prevention is not equivalent to a solution. Intellectual emigration from Russia is an outcome of the depressing socio-economic conditions of the Russian state, its society, science, and education. According to analysts at the Higher School of Economics, in 2016, Russia was in the top 10 countries in terms of domestic spending on research and development based on purchasing power parity despite a decrease since 2013. Taking into account the dynamics of the foreign exchange market, this indicates a constant intensification of budgetary funds' infusion into the scientific research field in Russia. In addition, the declining prestige of Russian science and education plays an important role. Yurevich and Tsapenko argue that intellectual migration has become more mercantile: if in the early 90s scientists left Russia because of poor working conditions, then, in 1996, low wages and insufficient material needs were the dominant motives for emigration (Yurevich & Tsapenko, 2009). According to Vorobieva and Grebenyuk (2016), a reduction of budget expenditures on science, education, and medicine entails a decrease in life quality, and limited opportunities for creative and research development, which are the main push factors for Russian skilled specialists to

emigrate. Furthermore, the primary reason for the emigration of IT specialists from Russia is the difference in salary and working conditions between Russia and the host country (Smirnova, 2016).

In contrast to other receiving countries, such as the USA or Germany, Russia is forced to play multiple roles: on the one hand being a sending country; on the other hand, a receiving one (Ryazantsev et al., 2018); and sometimes as a transit destination (Trofimova, 2010). This is why the Russian government cannot conduct a merely one-sided migration policy aimed just at controlling immigration, there is also a need to retain their own highly skilled labor force in the country in order to minimise labor force loss (Topilin & Malakha, 2004, p. 136).

Nowadays, without solving the main issue, it is hard for Russia to compete with more economically and technologically developed countries, foreign HQWs, and a home-grown highly-skilled labor force. Therefore, in addition to the investments in development in the scientific and technological spheres of the economy and softening of the requirements for obtaining the official status of a HQW, there is a need for a noticeable improvement in general standards of living and in other socio-economic spheres of society which could be considered as vital pull factors for the immigration of skilled foreigners and Russian compatriots from abroad.

Demands of the Russian Labor Market

The stimulation of immigration of HQWs to Russia is due not only to demographic needs and the desire to keep up with competitors in the “race for talents” in order to develop science, education, and new technologies but also due to the need to fill the deficit in the Russian labor market.

According to the results of the sample survey of organizations conducted by the Rosstat, the demand of organizations for HQWs slightly decreased from 228,200 people in 2012 to 200,000 in 2016 (Rosstat, 2013b; 2017a). However, experts in the fields of public health, education, science, and technology are still in high demand. In addition to the educational and healthcare spheres, high demand for HQWs is found in the sphere of “real estate transactions, renting, and provision of services” (Table 1).

Table 1: The demand for HQWs to fill vacant jobs by professional groups and areas of economic activities on 31 October 2016.

	Executive Directors	Specialists of the highest qualification level	Including specialists in the areas					
			of science and technology	of healthcare	of education	of business and management	of information and communication technologies	of law, liberal arts
Total	27,052	173,984	39,665	58,475	30,866	18,152	9,447	17,379
Agriculture, hunting, and forestry	786	2,427	1,703	361	8	178	43	134
Fishery, fish farming	70	207	155	2	2	22	1	26

	Executive Directors	Specialists of the highest qualification level	Including specialists in the areas					
			of science and technology	of healthcare	of education	of business and management	of information and communication technologies	of law, liberal arts
The exploitation of natural resources	636	1,532	1,279	16	4	140	32	62
Manufacturing	4,089	12,517	8,551	117	19	1,980	758	1,092
Production and distribution of electricity, gas, and water	2,274	4,571	3,099	21	55	680	197	519
Construction	974	2,213	1,781	19	-	217	61	136
Wholesale and retail trade; repairing motor vehicles, motorcycles, household products, and personal items	3,324	7,591	1,041	811	10	4,889	479	360
Hotels and restaurants	941	668	114	144	82	233	31	62
Transport and communication	4,199	10,047	4,735	175	121	3,360	1,063	593
Operations with real estate, renting, and provision of services	4,510	26,945	13,771	506	154	4,294	5,640	2,580
Scientific research and development	910	9,008	4,838	419	20	624	2,406	702
Education	1,784	29,917	1,159	898	25,210	751	501	1,398
Healthcare and social services	1,857	63,587	1,288	55,193	2,546	933	441	3,187
Provision of other communal, social, and personal services (except activities of public associations)	1,608	11,763	989	215	2,655	473	201	7,230

Source: Rosstat, 2017b.

In spite of the high demand of organizations for HQWs, the number of unemployed Russians with higher education increased by almost 160,000 from 2014-2016. Consequently, there is a noticeable growth in the number of unemployed specialists who have the highest level of qualification among Russians (Table 2).

Table 2: The number of unemployed Russians by professional groups in 2012, 2014, 2016 (thousands)

	2012	2014	2016
Total number of unemployed	4,131	3,889	4,243
Directors (representatives) of the government and managers at all levels, including heads of institutions, organizations	128	136	115
Specialists of the highest qualification level	221	256	365

Source: Rosstat, 2013c; 2015; 2017b.

The presented statistics can raise a question about the expediency of the attraction of HQWs if the state has its own unemployed highly skilled labor force. However, there is a need to take into account the existing structural imbalance in the Russian labor market due to the mismatch

between professional training of university graduates and labor market demands. Furthermore, because of the development of innovative technologies, there is a demand for professionals in highly specialized spheres, which Russian higher education institutions do not yet provide.

Main trends in the number of foreign highly qualified workers and issued work permits in Russia.

Due to new amendments in migration legislation introduced in 2015 and the currency crisis of 2014-2015, there was a considerable decline in the number of work permits issued, from 1,505,500 in 2014 to 214,000 in 2015. However, the number of work permits issued for foreign HQWs in 2015 exceeded the numbers of previous years (FMS, 2016, p. 19). Moreover, the proportion of HQWs among foreign labor migrants who obtained a work permit in 2015 increased ten times in contrast to 2014 from 2.40% to 20.29% (FMS, 2016). However, from 2016-2017, there was a decrease in the total number of work permits issued and the number of work permits issued for foreign HQWs (table 3).

Table 3: The number of issued work permits during 2014-2017

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total number of issued work permits	1,505,558	214,559	149,013	148,326
Work permits for HQWs	3,6281	43,555	26,995	26,531
The proportion of issued work permits for HQWs	2.40%	20.29%	18.11%	17.88%

Source: Federal Migration Service of Russia, 2016; Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, 2017; 2018.

Despite the decrease in the number of work permits issued for HQWs, a generally positive trend should be noted: more and more foreign HQWs move to Russia each year. The number of foreign HQWs increased from 12,139 in 2012 to 41,295 in 2016 (Rosstat, 2015; 2017b). At the same time, the list of sending countries did not change. From 2012 to 2016, China, Germany, Vietnam, Turkey, Ukraine, France, Uzbekistan, and the USA were consistently among the leading countries providing a highly qualified labor force for Russia (Rosstat, 2015; 2017b).

Table 4: The number of foreign HQWs with a valid work permit (at the end of the year) (thousand people)

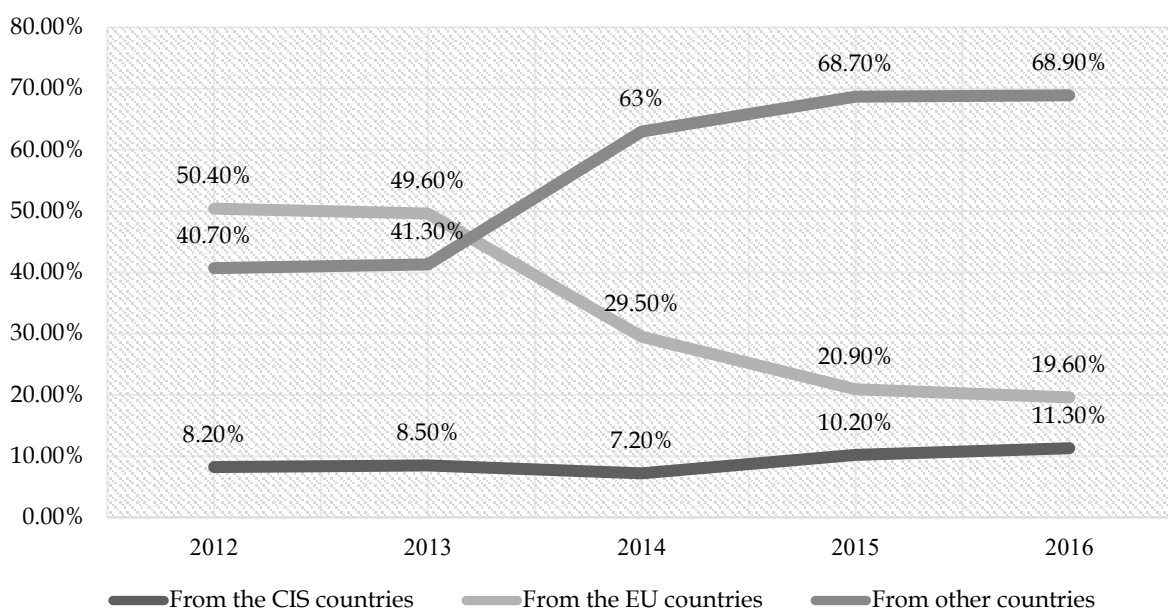
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	12,139	10,294	26,523	33,669	41,295
Including:					
From the CIS countries	993	882	1,919	3,441	4,665
Azerbaijan	75	64	126	364	665
Uzbekistan	102	67	281	761	1,048
Ukraine	602	583	1,045	1,503	2,092
From the EU countries	6,118	5,111	7,824	7,049	8,126
The United Kingdom	894	701	1,059	889	931
Germany	1,243	959	1,512	1,329	1,401
Italy	447	389	673	678	934
France	1,067	880	1,200	1,018	1,200
From other countries	4,948	4,252	16,726	23,132	28,450
Vietnam	312	353	3,576	5,438	5,019
China	693	567	5,426	7,625	9,863

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
USA	868	682	997	907	1,001
Turkey	598	608	2,306	2,878	3,055

Source: Rosstat, 2015; 2017b.

Despite the well-established list of countries providing HQWs for Russia, the number of foreign HQWs from other countries significantly increased over the past five years, mainly due to China and Vietnam. For example, in 2014, the number of HQWs from China increased tenfold and accounted for almost a quarter of the total number of foreign HQWs in 2016 (Rosstat, 2017b).

Figure 1: The number of foreign HQWs with a valid work permit at the end of a year (percentages)



Source: Rosstat, 2015; 2017b.

Due to the structural reorganization of the Federal migration service into the Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, there has been a lack of statistical data about the allocation of HQWs by type of economic activity and by professional groups in recent years. According to experts' calculations, during the period from 2010-2012, the greatest number of work permits for HQWs was issued for "real estate transactions 25%, wholesale and retail trade 22.9%, construction 13.9%, and manufacturing 13.0%" (Ryazantsev & Belova, 2017, p. 69). This allocation was only partially in line with the demand of the Russian labor market in 2012. It is difficult to imagine, without statistical data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to what extent this corresponds to the current reality. However, given the fact that no legislative changes have been introduced regarding the definition of the main economic areas in which there is a need for foreign HQWs, it can be assumed that the allocation of foreign HQWs at least corresponds to some degree to the real needs of the labor market in 2016.

Annually, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection presents the project of the Russian Government's decree which defines the need (permitted quota) for foreign workers arriving in Russia based on a visa by priority for professional qualification groups. Among those groups, there are two that could be classified as highly skilled: heads of institutions, organizations and

enterprises; and specialists in the field of natural and engineering sciences. Since 1 January 2015, the need for foreign workers is defined only for people arriving in Russia on the basis of a visa; in consequence, there was a significant reduction in the permitted quota (The Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1400, 2014), which is still less than the real need. For example, the quota for foreign heads of institutions, organizations, and enterprises has decreased from 79,000 in 2014 to 17,900 in 2015; the quota for specialists in the field of natural and engineering sciences from 22,800 in 2014 to 8,000 in 2015 (The Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 977, 2013; The Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1400, 2014). In 2018, these quotas were reduced to 6,000 and 3,100, respectively (The Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1479, 2017). In recent years, the annual quotas for these groups among all labor migrants did not exceed 7%. However, it is necessary to clarify that the state does not restrict the flow of foreign HQWs with quotas, officially. Most likely, these quotas are also intended for foreign specialists who possess the highest qualification level but whose salary does not correspond to the required minimum wage for obtaining the official status of a HQW. Furthermore, defining a HQW by the salary level in Russia, there remains a group of specialists of the highest qualification level who do not have the legal status of HQWs. These professionals may play no less an important role in the development of economics, science, and technology. For example, foreign professionals in the budgetary sphere of education and healthcare cannot obtain the status of HQW due to the low pay in those areas.

Among permanent immigrants, the proportion of arrived migrants with higher education increased from 12.2% in 2013 to 18.1% in 2017. Most immigrants with higher education come from the Ukraine and Kazakhstan (Rosstat, 2013a; 2018). However, the total number of immigrants with higher education, those with a PhD or Doctorate degree, make up less than 1%. The number of immigrants with a PhD remains stable; however, the proportion of them goes down from year to year.

Moreover, it is very difficult to assess the impact on the Russian economy of immigrants with a higher and/or postgraduate education since many of them do not work according to their qualification, and they tend to hold less skilled positions (Mkrtchyan & Florinskaya, 2018, p. 16).

Conclusion

Despite a positive trend of a rise in the number of foreign HQWs in Russia, there is a need to amend and clarify current Russian immigration policy. According to Russian migration legislation, almost any foreign citizen or stateless person can qualify as a HQW, and this does not fully correspond to the demands of the Russian labor market. An examination of the statistical data of the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russian Federation shows that there is a high demand for specialists of higher qualification in the healthcare, education, science, and technology spheres, while foreign HQWs mainly work in spheres such as real estate, sales, manufacturing, etc. Due to the shortage of statistical information about the allocation of foreign HQWs by occupation, presenting a comprehensive picture of HQWs on the labor market is challenging. Thus, a more detailed statistical data analysis is needed in order to assess the current situation and implement a more relevant and selective immigration policy towards HQWs.

Furthermore, the attraction of foreign HQW isn't sufficient to solve the root cause of the deficit of skilled labor in the country – an outcome of depressing socio-economic conditions in

Russian society, science, and education, which also influences immigration decisions on prospective HQWs. Thus, aside from an inappropriate immigration policy criterion, poor standards of living and life quality should also be considered in order to overcome the mismatch between the labor market demand for HQWs and real flows of foreign HQWs.

No less important, the flow of foreign HQW immigrants along with their economic benefits and contribution to the development of human capital should be in accordance with the balance between supply and demand in the labor market in terms of economic activities, taking into account the real needs of the economy in particular specialities. HQW immigration policy should be based on a strategic plan of state economic development. The absence of quotas for HQWs, of course, is an advantage of the status, but this can lead to an aggravation of the imbalance in the labor market, and, the creation of a list of highly qualified positions or occupations in high demand in the Russian labor market could potentially remove any questions about the expediency of foreign HQW attraction.

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