

MIGRATION SITUATION REPORT

UZBEKISTAN

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)
MOBILITY TRACKING MATRIX (MTM)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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INTRODUCTION

The report aims to present the most up-to-date data on migration dynamics in Uzbekistan, drawing upon data for 2022, 2021, or the latest available year from national and international datasets on migratory movements and migrant population groups. The report covers the recent major global and regional developments which will continue to have an impact on internal and international migration in the country, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on mobility caused by travel restrictions and stricter border controls; the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting humanitarian crisis across the country and the region; the specific bilateral labour agreements issued by Uzbekistan with partner countries; and the climate change as push factor of human mobility, to name a few.

METHODOLOGY

The compilation of this report was done through literature review and desk analysis of relevant datasets. IOM compiled and processed the statistical data and produced the narrative analysis under the guidance of the IOMs Regional Office in Vienna Data and Research team. The different aspects covered by the regional report on migratory movements in the country are reported analysing secondary sources.

The research and analysis included literature review of reports and publications from international organizations, national research centres and authors of relevance for Central Asia region. The following data providers were the main data sources for this report:

- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA),
- World Bank (WB),
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),
- National Statistical Offices and Central Banks.

LIMITATIONS

The research presented in the report does not aim to cover all migration topics, instead focusing on those most relevant for Uzbekistan, for which recent and reliable data was available. The international migrant stock, the permanent residence permits in the country, the emigrant stock, and flows from Uzbekistan to the main destination countries and remittances, are central in the following analysis. For this purpose, different sources have been used which (1) may not have available data for 2021-2022, (2) may not have compatible disaggregation or breakdowns with other data, or (3) may not have their methodology publicly available. For more information, please refer to the sources listed in the bibliography.

INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK AND FLOWS

According to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in 2020 Uzbekistan hosted 1.6 million of international migrant stock, almost 3.5 percent of its population at the time. In 2020, most international migrants in Uzbekistan were from the Russian Federation (871,047), followed by Ukraine (123,658), Belarus (26,330), Azerbaijan (20,201), and Kazakhstan (13,092). At the same time, over two million of Uzbek citizens were estimated to be residing abroad as international migrants, equal to 6.1 per cent of the country population: the five main countries of destination of Uzbek migrants were the Russian Federation (1.1 million), followed by Kazakhstan (296,511), Ukraine (223,491), Turkmenistan (67,003) and United States of America (63,496) (UN DESA, 2021).

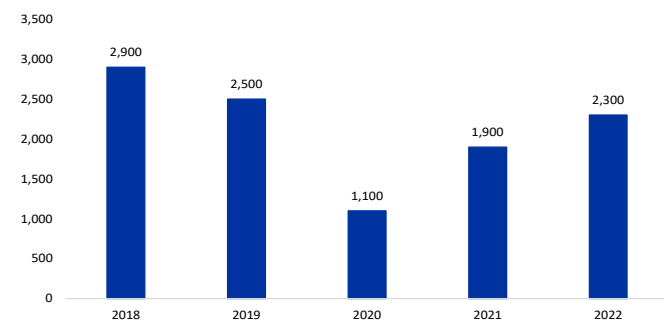
According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in 2021 Uzbekistan welcomed more than four thousand international students, while in 2020 it was the second highest sending country from South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEEECA) with 85,876 international students mainly to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Korea, Latvia and the Republic of Türkiye (UIS, 2023).

As of June 2022, there were around 13 thousand refugees in Uzbekistan (UNHCR, 2022) and, as of the end of 2022, no IDPs are recorded in the country (IDMC, 2023). As of mid-June 2022, around 4,324 refugees and 8,720 asylum seekers from Uzbekistan were registered worldwide: the top three countries for Uzbek refugees were United States of America (33%), Germany (19%), and Sweden (12%), while Uzbek asylum seekers were mainly in the United States of America (78%), Sweden (5%) and United Kingdom (4%) (UNHCR, 2022). In November 2021, the Government of Uzbekistan reported that 13,020 Afghan citizens had arrived in the country in 2021 on short-term visas after the Taliban takeover. In light of the conditions in Afghanistan, challenges to return are present, and UNHCR considers that they may need international protection (UNHCR, 2023).

The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics (UzStat) provides up-to-date figures on both the internal and international migration to and from the country, due to differences in the data collection period and definitions, the data presented in this report might differ from that of UN DESA. According to UzStat, as of 1 January 2023, the total population of the country is equal to 36 million people and the migrant stock is equal to 2.3 thousand immigrants, of which 1.1 thousand were men and 1.2 thousand were women. In 2022, the migrant stock has decreased by 21 per cent compared to 2018 (UzStat, 2023). The drop in 2020-2021 period could be attributed to global travel restrictions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

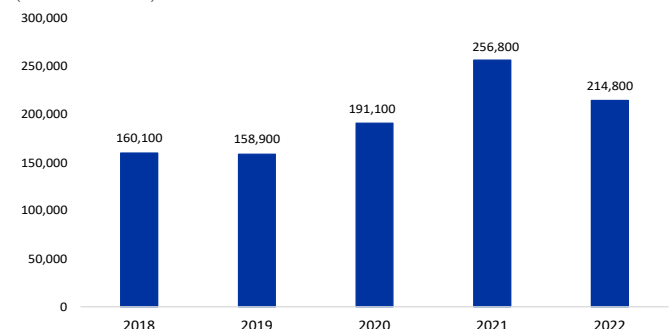
In 2022, the number of registered internal migration within Uzbekistan was 214,821 thousand, of which 40 per cent (equal to 85.6 thousand) were men, and 60 per cent (129.2 thousand) were women. In 2022, the internal migrant flows increased by 34.1 per cent compared to 2018. (UzStat, 2023).

FIGURE 1: INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK IN UZBEKISTAN, 2018-2022 (MILLIONS)



Source: UzStat, 2023

FIGURE 2: INTERNAL MIGRANT FLOWS IN UZBEKISTAN, 2018-2022 (THOUSANDS)



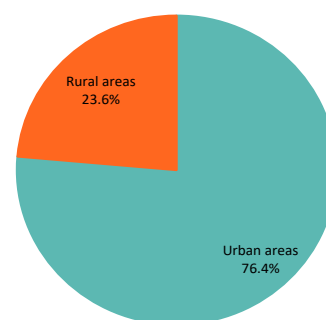
Source: UzStat, 2023

In 2022, the international migrant flows in Uzbekistan were equal to 2,300 persons decreased by 20.7 per cent compared to 2018: 52 per cent were women, while 48 per cent men (UzStat, 2023).

Looking to the territorial distribution, Uzbekistan is currently experiencing a high level of constant internal migration from its rural to its urban areas. The plurality to both internal and international arrivals were living in urban areas (76%, 164,300 thousand, while the remaining, while the remaining 24 per cent (50.5 thousand) were living in rural areas (UzStat, 2023).

Uzbekistan and other Central Asia (CA) states are among the countries most susceptible to environmental disasters. By 2030, the population of Uzbekistan is estimated to reach 39 million people. Without support to adapt and reduce disaster risks, climate change impacts are likely to be unequal, affecting Uzbekistan's poor and marginalized communities most, also in terms of migratory movements (WB and Asian Development Bank, 2021).

FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION INTERNAL MIGRATION, 2022 (%)



Source: UzStat, 2023

DESTINATION COUNTRIES: KAZAKHSTAN, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The migratory movements to and from Uzbekistan have been highly influenced by the presence and access of migration corridors. There are cultural, historical, and language ties which are defining and drawing movements along these the migration corridors. In addition to these social impactors, legal frameworks made by bilateral and regional movement and labour agreements are also a factor. These legal agreements include, fast track procedures in the Russian Federation for migrants from CA , as well as free labour mobility among Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Member States (IOM, 2023). In addition to these official figures there are also observed and reported cases of informal work without official work or residence permits and people travelling for work under other visa schemes, particularly to the Russian Federation (Ryazantsev et al., 2021). Another indication could be that the Turkish Presidency for Migration Management (PMM) has also recorded 7,553 irregular Uzbek migrants in 2022 and 4,954 as of August 2023 in Turkish territory. To provide a more holistic understanding and overview of these trends it is of particular relevance to complement the official Uzbek statistics with the official statistics from national stational offices of Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Republic of Türkiye, and Republic of Korea .

The five main countries of destination for migrants from Uzbekistan were the Russian Federation (1.1 million), followed by Kazakhstan (296 thousand), Ukraine (223 thousand), Turkmenistan (67 thousand) and United States of America (63 thousand) (UN DESA, 2021). However, in 2022, the main destination countries of people who immigrated to foreign countries for permanent residence from Uzbekistan were Kazakhstan (79.5%), followed by the Russian Federation (16.4%), other destinations outside of CA countries (2.7%), Kyrgyzstan (0.7%), Tajikistan (0.5%), and Turkmenistan (0.3%) (Uzstat, 2023)

TABLE 2: PERMANENT RESIDENCE PERMITS FOR UZBEKS BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION, 2022 (ABSOLUTE VALUES)

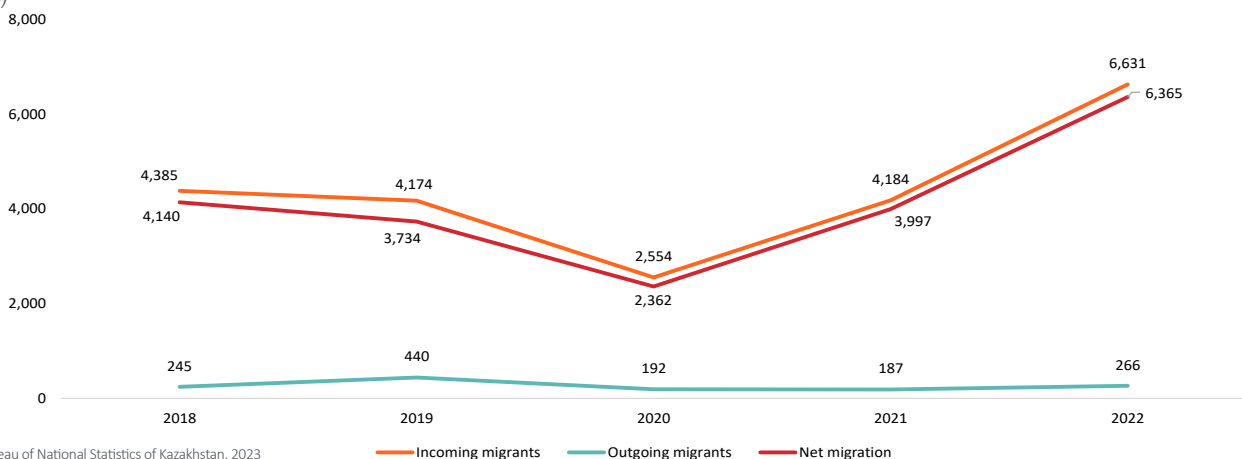
Country	Number of permanent residence permits	Percentage
Kazakhstan	6,985	79.5%
Russian Federation	1,441	16.4%
Other destinations outside CA	236	2.7%
Kyrgyzstan	63	0.7%
Tajikistan	41	0.5%
Turkmenistan	24	0.3%
Total	8,790	

Source: UzStat, 2023

KAZAKHSTAN

According to the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan, in 2022, 6,631 Uzbek citizens arrived in the country. Uzbek sources cite a similar number of 6,985 (6,985) of the total Uzbek migrant presence to have received an official permit for residence for Kazakhstan (Uzstat, 2023).

FIGURE 6: INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT FLOWS (INCOMING, OUTGOING AND NET) OF UZBEK CITIZENS IN KAZAKHSTAN, 2018-2022 (ABSOLUTE VALUES)



Source: Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2023

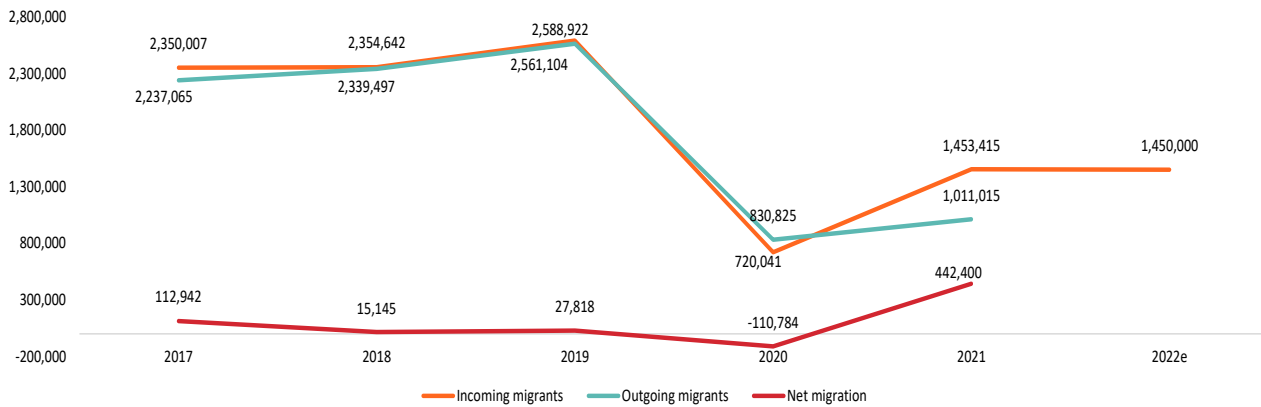
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

According to Rosstat, in 2022 around 1.4 million Uzbek citizens entered the country, which is in line with 2021 levels. In 2021, 74 per cent of 1.45 million Uzbek migrants to the Russian Federation travelled there for work. This represents an increase of more than 100 per cent in the arrivals compared to 2020, equal to only 720 thousand. This low figure was likely due the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in October 2021, the Russian Federation established dedicated migrant quotas⁵ for Uzbekistan citizens to work in the critical industries, such as construction and agro-industrial sectors. In November 2022, the Russian government lifted quotas in place since the year before that allowed only 11,000 workers from Uzbekistan to work in the above-mentioned sectors at any one time under organized migration schemes.

⁵ For more information: <https://base.garant.ru/77324140/>

FIGURE 7: INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT FLOWS (INCOMING, OUTGOING AND NET) OF UZBEK CITIZENS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, 2018-2022 (ABSOLUTE VALUES)



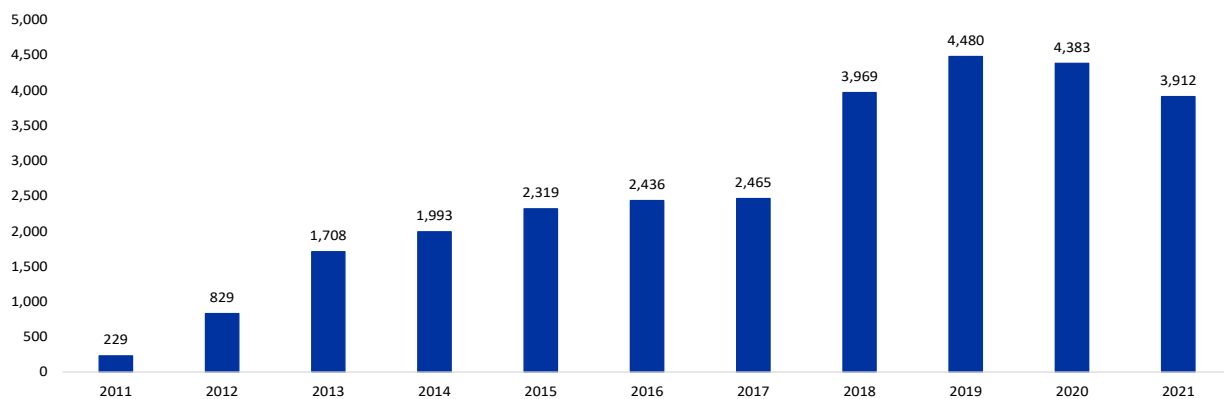
Source: Rosstat, 2023

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE

Among other destinations, it is worth analysing the important migration corridors between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Türkiye and that between the country and the Republic of Korea, which is one of the emerging labour corridors in the Central Asia (IOM, 2021).

According to PMM, as of 6 April 2023, Uzbek citizens represent the second largest group of holders of permits for family reasons (9,749 individuals) and the fifth largest nationalities of holders of short-term permits (38,763 individuals) in the destination country. Included in the residence permits counting are also work permits: according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, as of 2021, there were 168,1035 foreigners with work permit in the Republic of Türkiye and only 0.23 per cent is represented by Uzbek citizens. However, analysing the historical trend, in the last ten years, the number of work permits given to Uzbek citizens has grown by 1,068 per cent from 229 permits in 2011 to 3,912 in 2021 (Turkstat, 2023).

FIGURE 8: NUMBER OF WORK PERMITS GIVEN TO UZBEK CITIZENS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE, 2011-2021 (ABSOLUTE VALUES)

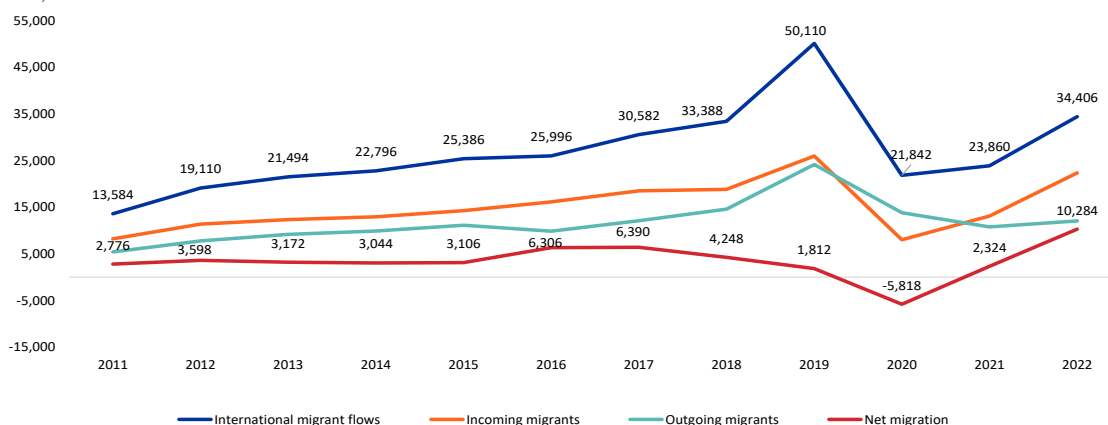


Source: TurkStat, 2023

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

According to KOSIS (Korean Statistical Information Service), due to the COVID-19 pandemic the international migrant flows of Uzbek citizens halved from 50,110 thousand people in 2019 to 21,842 migrants in 2020, producing a negative net migration value (-5,818 people). In 2022 almost 34.5 thousand of Uzbek international migrants were in the Republic of Korea, although the net migration number⁶ is around ten thousand. Out of 34,406 Uzbek migrants, 68 per cent were men while 32 were women (KOSIS, 2023).

FIGURE 9: INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT FLOWS (INCOMING, OUTGOING AND NET) OF UZBEK CITIZENS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, 2011- 2022 (ABSOLUTE VALUES)



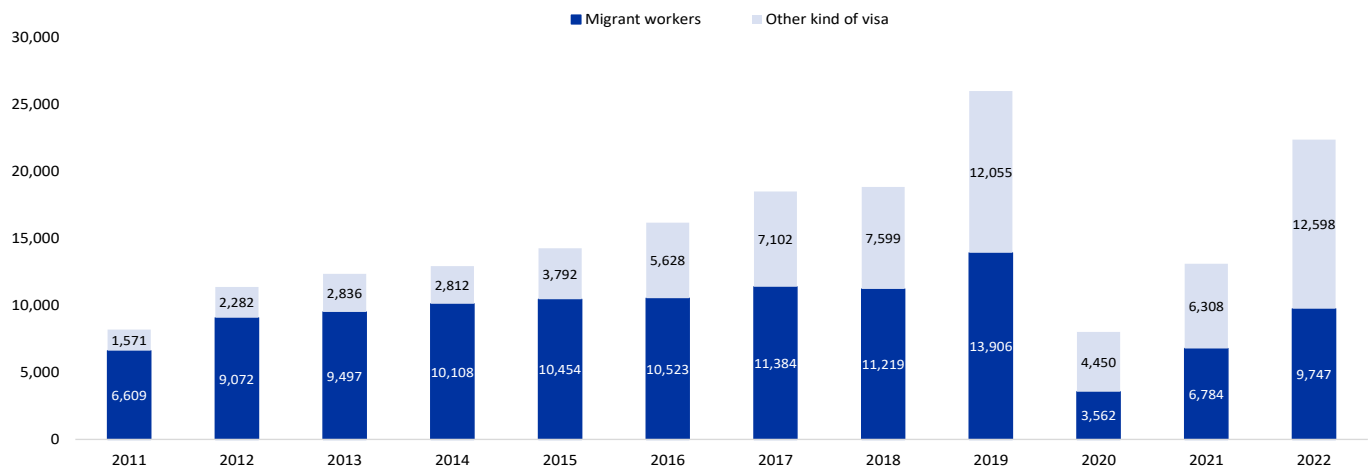
Source: KOSIS, 2023

⁶ The net migration number is obtained by the subtraction of outgoing migrants from incoming migrants.

The bilateral relations between the two countries are flourishing in trade, economic, political, cultural, humanitarian, transport, communication, and other spheres (Dadabaev and Soipov, 2020). In particular, the continuous economic growth automotive and technology industries in the Republic of Korea have met the need of a new important commercial partner for Uzbekistan, after the Soviet Union dissolution (Rakhimov, 2022).

In 2011 labour migration represented 80 per cent of the total visas released to Uzbek migrants in the Republic of Korea, while in 2022 migrant workers represent only 44 per cent of the total visas for Uzbek citizens. On the contrary, among the other kinds of visas, study represented only 7 per cent in 2011 while in 2022 education reasons constitute 28 per cent of the other total visas released (56% of the total visas at its turn) (KOSIS, 2023).

FIGURE 10: TYPES OF VISA RELEASED TO UZBEK MIGRANT IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, 2021- 2022 (ABSOLUTE VALUES)

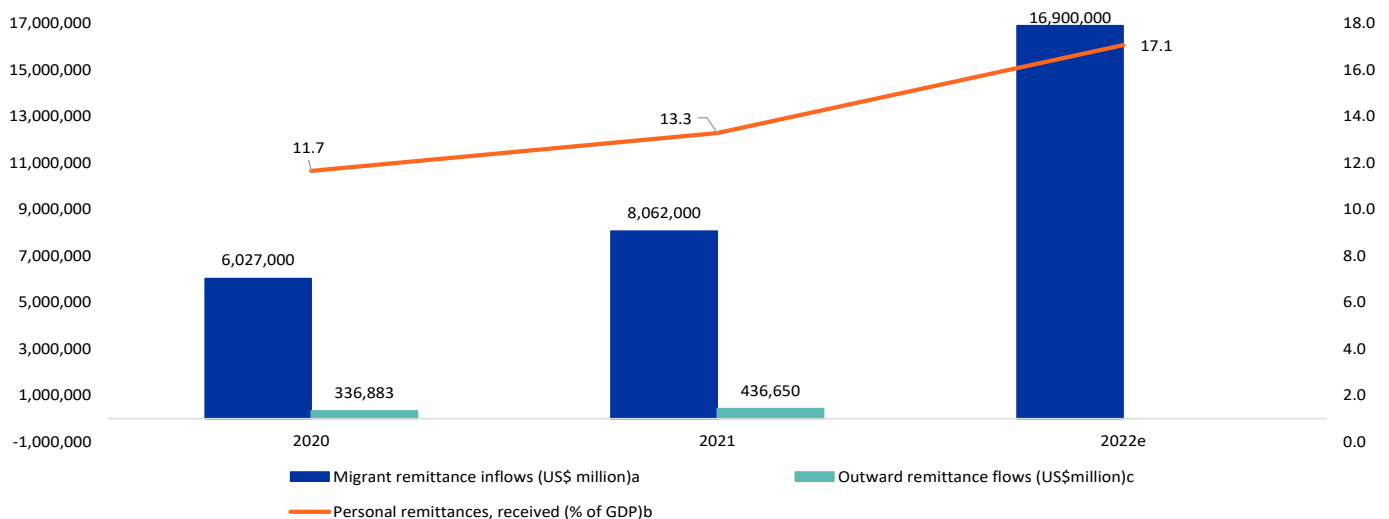


Source: KOSIS, 2023

REMITTANCES IN AND OUT OF UZBEKISTAN

According to estimates released by Central Bank of Uzbekistan (2023), in 2022, the remittances inflow to Uzbekistan were around 16.9 million USD constituting 17.1 of country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while 0.4 million USD represent the outward remittance flow from Uzbekistan to other countries in 2021 (WB, 2022). The remittances received by the country have increased (+180%) in the last three years, from 6.0 million in 2019 to 16.9 in 2022. This can be further explained by the restrictions to movements due to COVID-19 and by the higher use of official money transfer methods compared to previous years (WB, 2022).

FIGURE 11: REMITTANCE INFLOWS TO UZBEKISTAN AND SHARE OF GDP, 2020-2022 (MILLION \$ AND %)



Source: Central Bank of Uzbekistan (2023)a, WB (2023)b and (2022)c

Despite the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the imposed sanctions on the Russian Federation, the share of remittances received by Uzbekistan from the Russian Federation has been expanding with double-digit gains: from constituting half of total amount of the remittances received in 2019-2021 to reach 85 per cent (14.5 billion of USD) of the total amount in 2022 (Central Bank of Uzbekistan, 2023). The substantial part of this increase reflects migrant workers' greater use of formal channels to send money home, resulting in improved recording of cross-border flows (WB, 2022).

ACRONYMS

CA: Central Asia

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

EAEU: Eurasian Economic Union

IDCM: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons

KOSIS: Korean Statistical Information Service

PMM: Presidency of Migration Management of the Republic of Türkiye

SEECA: South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

UIS: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

UN DESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UZSTAT: The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics

WB: World Bank

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