
TAJIKISTAN: BRAIN DRAIN REACHES NEW HIGHS

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In 2016, 14,000 Tajik family units filed residency applications with Russias Interior Ministry under a state resettlement program designed for former citizens of the Soviet Union.

The number of applications marks a notable increase from 13,000 in 2015 and 10,000 in 2014.

Of those, in 2015, 1,200 families received residence permits, and that figure rose to 1,850 in 2016.

The Russian Interior Ministrys representative for migration affairs in Tajikistan, Vladislav Makarevich, noted that preference is given to highly qualified applicants.

First of all education and work experience are considered. Almost everybody who takes part in the program has higher or at least basic education. We are talking about medics, teachers, accountants, entrepreneurs, Makarevich told Asia-Plus website.

Among all former Soviet nations, Tajikistan generates the greatest number of applications to relocate to Russia.

Russias gain naturally translates into Tajikistans loss, which continues in a climate of enduring economic stagnation to struggle in holding onto its qualified workforce.

Once families decided to relocate, the move is typically permanent.

The number of Tajik citizens that has received Russian citizenship in the past two decades is by some estimates placed at anywhere between 300,000 and 500,000. Arriving at an exact number is complicated by the fact that some people move to Russia for work and only apply for citizenship for several years after residing there.

Many Tajik citizens pursue dual citizenship because of the appeal of Russian pensions, which far outweigh anything they could currently expect in their native country. Russian military pensions hold particular appeal. People that have served in Tajikistans armed forces can once they obtain Russian citizenship expect to get military pensions from their new host country.

Tajikistan has a bilateral agreement with Russia on dual citizenship. Even after people move permanently to Russia, they are able to retain their Tajik citizenship.

In November, however, Tajikistans parliament approved changes to the law barring people with dual citizenship from holding government jobs or working in the state security apparatus.

Russia is not the only destination sought out by Tajiks hoping for a better life.

According to figures reported by the BBC, in the past year, between 3,000 and 5,000 Tajik citizens have sought asylum in the European Union. That cohort includes not just political activists, but also journalists and entrepreneurs.

The number of Tajik compelled to seek asylum has increased sharply in the wake of the wave of political repression that followed an alleged coup attempt in September 2015. The main destination in Europe for feeling Tajiks are Poland and Germany.

Kaynak/Source: