

Migrant workers from Central Asia in the housing and utilities sector of Moscow

Housing and utilities (HUS) is an important economy sector in the Russian Federation. According to the official data from the Federal Migration Service of Russia, this sector employed 53 thousand people from Central Asia. Some estimates give a number of the next-high order, that is hundreds of thousands of people. Were interviewed 101 migrant workers from Central Asia in Moscow. Migrants were mostly interviewed in their native languages, Tajik and Kyrgyz, sometimes in Russian.

Demographic composition of migrant workers from Central Asian countries employed in HUS in Moscow is mostly men. Interviews showed that as a rule young and middle aged people work as street cleaners or complex cleaning workers in Moscow. Older people usually work as electricians, mechanics, assistant workers or repair workers.

Labour migration from Central Asia to Russia for the most part is of an irregular, spontaneous nature. Most migrant workers leave for employment in spring and in summer and come back during autumn and winter. They leave seeking employment either on their own, or with the help from their relatives and friends, or from intermediary persons who do not have a proper licence for employment services.

The study shows that employing migrant workers from Central Asian countries is very common in the housing and utilities sector in Moscow. Even though official number of foreign workers in the sector does not seem very impressive, their labour is used almost everywhere.

Migrant workers live in bad conditions, are paid a lot less, are exploited by employers, their labour and human rights are widely violated. Dumping the labour price makes local workers not want to have a job in the sector, and the employers are not interested in hiring local workers.