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NEW POLITICAL IMMIGRATION FROM RUSSIA TO GERMANY

Analytical Report

IMPRESSUM

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SUMMARY

This study aims to describe the phenomena of "new political immigration" applied to those who have recently moved from Russia to EU countries (mainly to Germany). The study was conducted in March and April 2021 and relies primarily on secondary data and a series of short expert interviews. This research is focused mainly on emigration from Russia and emphasizes its motives, channels, resources, and mechanisms. The following sections provide an analysis of who is leaving now and why and how they integrate into the host society in Germany. This study focuses on analysing the life trajectories of those Russians who come to Germany and also includes broader questions of the analysis of emigration.

Due to increasing pressure on Russia's civil society, the inflow of Russian migrants into the European Union (EU), particularly Germany, is expected to intensify. Over the past three years, the number of asylum requests by Russian citizens in the EU amounted to 15,000 annually. The stock of Russian migrants is likely to be underestimated resulting from unconventional means of immigration, such as professional and educational visas, which are later transformed in permanent residencies. Despite the significance of Russian migration, a strategy on how to deal with the influx of Russian citizens is missing.

The recent movements are deeply intertwined with domestic developments and have to be analyzed in this context. Contemporary scholars identify three major types of politicly motivated migration from Russia: (1) Refugees and asylum seekers (2) political emigrants and (3) atmospheric emigrants.

Refugees from the North Caucasus, LGBT refugees, religiously and politically persecuted refugees belong to the first type of politically motivated emigration. All these people are unable or unwilling to return to Russia owning to a fear of being persecuted for reasons of religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

The second type encompasses political emigrants who either imminently face political pressure in form of fabricated criminal prosecution, police violence or threats or those who expect political pressure in the future based on the experiences of their family, friends, and peers. Although this type of politically motivated migrants often have a right to apply for asylum, they enter Germany mainly through job offers, educational opportunities, language courses, research offers, grants or internships. Political emigrants are highly educated and often speak English. They have extensive international networks and are known for their work beyond Russia's borders, which endangers them additionally.

Atmospheric emigrants – the probably most numerous group of political emigrants from Russia – is a fairly new phenomenon and should be closely watched as the number is expected to increase over the next years. For atmospheric emigrants, the decision to leave Russia does not stem directly from any kind of persecution, imminent or expected political pressure. Often, they are not personally involved in politics, their decision to leave their home country is rather influenced by a feeling of dissatisfaction, apathy, and a hopelessness. Those emotions are caused by various factors: the deterioration of the situation in the country, Russia's growing alienation from the Western world, the absence of a free and competitive market, free media, professional and financial prospects, or the rule of law, repressions against the civil society, constraints on the freedom of expression and the lack of free political participation. Atmospheric emigrants belong to Russia's middleclass which is characterized by its economic resources, educational qualifications and achievements including foreign language skills. Being convinced of the lack of domestic change in the near future, they leave Russia to live in a more comfortable, predictable and secure environment. Although the political regime causes the economic problems which motivate their emigration, atmospheric emigrants not necessarily consider politics a direct motive for their departure from Russia.

The different ways political migrants choose to enter Germany do not allow to trace the majority of Russian migration in Germany. The lack of a

comprehensive methodology complicates estimations on past and future emigration from Russia. Furthermore, existent migration statistics lack information about social and demographic characteristics.

Hence, more research about Russian migrants is urgently needed. Without comprehensive data it is difficult to develop effective policy measures and recognize the advantages stemming from the influx of highly educated and politically active Russian citizens. As a starting point, we suggest the adoption of the following policy recommendations:

1. Conducting quantitative and qualitative studies about political migrants from Russia to Germany to gain a holistic picture of their socio-economic and demographic background, political views, values, expectations and integration into the host country.
2. Supporting (in a legal, financial, informational way) German NGOs which support Russian migrants with resettlement, employment and further education in Germany.
3. Improving the efficiency of existing government institutions in their work with politically motivated migrants arriving in Germany and the development of services for spreading information on legal rights, German legislation and the job market.
4. Developing emergency legal mechanisms for working with political immigrants, being ready to evacuate NGO employees, or staff of international, particularly German, and partner organizations.
5. Offering officials responsible for migration advanced training programs and in-depth insight into the current domestic developments of Russia.
6. Considering granting political asylum for humanitarian reasons to Russians.
7. Involving representatives of Russian political migration in tackling Kremlin propaganda in Europe by providing legal and development support for various civic initiatives of Russians within Germany which should focus on Russian domestic affairs, the Russian society, politics, and democratic values.

The implementation of these policy recommendations will not only help political migrants to integrate into German society and allow them to continue their political and civic activities from abroad; it will also enrich the existing Russian diaspora in Germany by spreading democratic values and encouraging social engagement within the community. Furthermore, political migrants bear tremendous potential for creating a functioning democracy and civil society in Russia once its political system will face fundamental changes.

PREAMBLE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Emigration from Russia in general and political emigration in particular are important topics of the current political and journalistic agenda. The economic and political processes in modern Russia are pushing some part of the population out of the country. Some people leave searching for a better life, trying to apply their professional skills in other countries. They think about their comfort and safety, the future of their children, affordable and high-quality medicine, social welfare, and the environment, planning their decision to emigrate and preparing for this process. This group often includes highly qualified professionals whose skills are in demand on the international market – programmers, engineers, biologists, chemists, and representatives of other professions. Others are forced to plan their departure more suddenly and crumpled, and rather for reasons that can generally be described as "the deterioration of the situation in the country": the narrowing of the space for political and civil freedoms as well as pressure on the media and universities. Finally, there are still others: those who were searched by the police, detained at a rally, declared a foreign agent or extremist, against whom a politically motivated criminal case was brought. This group includes people engaged in certain activities: human rights defenders, environmentalists, independent researchers, journalists, university professors, representatives of the third sector, activists, among

others. Often these people do not have the opportunity to plan their departure or take any specific steps to obtain permission to stay in another country. All those three groups often choose the European Union countries, particularly Germany, as a new place of residence. Who are these people? How and why do they come here? What do we know about them? What should we do with them?

In all the cases mentioned above, the reasons for leaving can be very different. The factors that are squeezing Russians out of the country are bizarrely added up in various combinations. We need to understand to what extent the political motivation to leave is important and what it means for the future life of these people abroad: what are they doing in the new country? Do they plan to stay? To what extent can they integrate into the host community? More details about the factors of emigration are in Section 2, "Factors and Causes of Migration."

Political emigrants from Russia are a visible part of the Russian-speaking diaspora in Germany. These people are involved in organizing events related to the Russian political agenda, working for German NGOs, media, research institutes, universities, and the like. We know that these people exist, but we know very little about them, their sociodemographic characteristics, values, and political views. The study allows some conclusions to be drawn about these people:

- The category of political immigrants in Germany is almost impossible to describe based on Russian or German statistics. Details will be provided in section 1.2., "Statistics of migration flows from Russia to Germany", trying to calculate the approximate number of political emigrants from Russia and pointing out the problems of their registration.
- An application for political asylum (which is the most logical legal channel in the event of political persecution in Russia) is not filed by all those who have the right to do so and/or have proper reasons for leaving Russia. Data from German departments give us an idea of the

number of refugees from Russia. However, interviews with experts show that becoming a refugee – that is, in the complete legal sense of the word, a political immigrant – is the last scenario that Russians choose. For more information on why this is happening, see Section 3, "The Phenomena of New Political Immigration," paragraph 3.2.1. "Refugees." Most experts advise against applying for refugee status even in the case of Russians who have all legal reasons for doing. Refugee status – in particular, waiting for a decision after submitting documents – significantly affects applicants' rights, restricts their opportunities for travel, public activity, work, education, and so forth.

- In the group of those who seek political asylum, there are those people who, in the total sense, cannot be called "political" emigrants from Russia. Many of them were not directly involved in any activities that the Russian Federation recognizes as a threat. Many of them were far from activism, social work, opposition, media, universities, but their other characteristics, like their belonging to specific communities or groups, make them vulnerable in the face of contemporary Kremlin internal politics. Should we call such people political emigrants? This question forces us to reconsider the attitude towards domestic politics in Russia. From legislation to law enforcement officers and courts, the internal structure of Russian society makes the persecution of various groups of people possible and institutionalized. The political factors and the political context that form the motives for leaving, are discussed in Section 1.1.3. "Motives and Factors of Emigration", as well as different categories of emigrants in Section 3.2. "Political Emigration".

- Among many other events and political processes, the Bolotnaya Square case (2012) and annexation of Crimea and Russia's military aggression against Ukraine became the countdowns of the "newest" political migration.

- Not all of those who leave for political reasons are subjected to direct pressure: not all of them have been searched by the police or The Fed-

eral Security Service or have been prosecuted. But as the pressure intensifies in a wide variety of areas, more and more Russians have a friend, colleague, or relative who has left. The more rallies occur in Russia that lead to harsh arrests and criminal trials, the more people become objects of close attention from the police, the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Ministry of Justice, as well as other bodies, the more Russians begin to feel that space is narrowing and the pressure is growing. This is how emigration sentiments are formed and under the influence of these processes (for more details, see Section 1.1.5. "Emigration Sentiments"), and it is this type of emigration that experts begin to call "atmospheric emigration" (for more details about these people, see Section 3.2.3. "Atmospheric Emigrants").

- Both potential refugees as well as potential and current political emigrants from Russia often choose other immigration channels to Germany than refugee status (the channels of emigration are described in Section 1.1.1.). This phenomenon occurs because political asylum provides only a minimal number of rights, seriously reduces opportunities of work, study and travel, and makes the applicant's life unstable for several months or years. People who can afford other types of a residence permit with their resources (profession, language skills, involvement in social networks, and other) will avoid becoming refugees. And this again leads to the fact that we do not understand how many political immigrants there are in Germany because they are invisible to the existing statistical structures (see Section 3.2.1).

- Economic factors (both push and pull) still play the most crucial role in deciding whether to emigrate. At the same time, their influence is difficult to intertwine with the political situation in Russia, legislative novelties, peculiarities of law enforcement, and degradation of democratic and political institutions. For many potential emigrants, the problem is the number of resources they possess, necessary for successfully implementing the emigration project. A detailed deeper reflection on migration resources can be found in Section 1.1.4.

- The social and demographic characteristics of emigrants from Russia can only be described based on a small number of qualitative studies conducted in Germany, the USA, the UK, and some other countries. These studies and some indicators of Russian and foreign statistics allow us to express that emigrants are gradually becoming younger and coming from more and more regions of Russia. The professional working skills in demand on the international labour market are higher education degrees (sometimes several degrees), being between the age of 30-34, knowing one or more foreign languages, and having experience living and working abroad. Temporary migration, whether due to labour contracts or for educational purposes, often transforms into a permanent emigration. More details of these and other characteristics of Russian emigrants are provided in Section 5, "Portrait of a New Political Emigrant."

- The general characteristics of immigrants from Russia to Germany are of great interest regarding their values, political views, and ideas about returning to Russia. Further research shows that there are more opponents of the Putin regime among emigrants than supporters of the regime. Many of these people are critical of the political processes taking place in Russia in recent years and for them certain events became a reason for leaving. We refer to the description of expatriate value systems and their political views in Section 5, "Portrait of a New Political Emigrant", and our ideas about them are based on a study carried out by the Atlantic Council and the Levada Centre in 2019.

- Political emigrants from Russia are trying to maintain their active political and civic position and continue their activities abroad in new cultural, social, and economic conditions. Often not only their family remains in the country of origin, but also their colleagues, profession, field, responsibilities, and expertise. Hence, these people often continue to work, primarily if their activities were related to the protection of human rights, the environmental agenda, gender equality, research, and expertise on the civil, social, and political structure of Russia.

- In an attempt to substantiate the idea that modern political emigration from Russia has new features, it is necessary to turn to modern research on this topic. The "newest" emigration from Russia is more connected with political factors than economic ones and is under the complex influence of political changes in Russia. Political repressions directed against certain activities, specific organizations, and political positions cannot yet be called "massive". Still, it would be incorrect to say that they are of a "pointed" nature. An increasing number of people find themselves under direct or indirect political pressure in Russia and decide to leave. More details about the qualitative and quantitative differences that emigration from Russia now has from previous waves also will be discussed in Section 3 of this report, „The Phenomena of New Political Immigration". In addition, Section 4, "The Case of Belarus", in this report briefly refers to an analysis of the case of emigration from Belarus after the events of August 2020 to describe how a political crisis could unfold, how repression could accelerate, involving an increasing number of people who believed they were safe.

- Political emigrants experience the same difficulties as all other categories of migrants in the world: a lack of information, difficulties in learning a new language and integrating into the host community, and mastering informal rules and culture of a new country. Often these difficulties are associated with insufficient resources but in many situations they are effects of the bureaucratic system and related institutions in the host country.

- Interviews with experts provide an insight into what steps can be taken within Germany to change the situation of new political immigrants from Russia and facilitate their better integration into German society. One of the tasks here, we see an opportunity to preserve their main activity, since in most cases, it is associated with the processes of democratisation in Russia, the development of civic initiatives, projects related to human rights, independent journalism and research,

environmental initiatives, gender equality, and other ideas that correlate with ideas about liberal Western values. More details about possible actions and recommendations in this field - for example about the necessity to support NGOs working with political immigrants from Russia and migrants in general are discussed in the section “Conclusions”.

GOALS AND METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this report is to describe the “new political immigration” as a phenomenon and to give all its possible characteristics (if data is available, quantitative, but primarily qualitative). We see it as our main task to draw such a description for subsequent use in promoting the topic and substantiating its importance. We believe it is applicable for conducting a more voluminous and meaningful study in the future, working with groups of new political immigrants, and substantiating recommendations for the formation and change of domestic policy in Germany, etc.

To deliver this report, we used data obtained during expert interviews conducted in March 2021 (five interviews), as well as secondary sources (data from the Russian Federal Statistical Agency, data from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, statistical data from international organizations, scientific articles by researchers on migration from Russia and other countries, public interviews, recordings of discussions and round tables on emigration from Russia, texts of posts in Telegram dedicated to emigration from Russia, forums of emigrants and potential emigrants, and others).

NEW POLITICAL IMMIGRATION

1 | Factors and Causes of Migration

According to most authors working in this field, the motives of migration can be diverse; they remain associated with the essential characteristics of specific social groups. For example, the motives differ for skilled and unskilled immigrants; they vary not only by profession, but also by age group. For example, these aspects according to Florinskaya and Karachurina have not been sufficiently studied. The gap in our knowledge of migration motives is primarily due to the lack of data on this issue. It is possible to track migration channels (in fact, the type of documents) using data from consulates, visa centres, and official statistics of the ministries of foreign affairs. However, as we will show later, the motives for migration are not always directly related to the legal channels used by the migrants.

The theory that migration is determined by a combination of push and pull factors was formulated back in the 19th century by E.G. Ravenstein, but scientists' ideas about why people migrate have slightly changed. In the 1960s this theory was revised and developed by E. Lee, who described in detail not only the attracting and pushing factors, but added the concept of "holding" factors of migration.[1]

Lee attributed various economic factors (low income, high taxes, lack of economic development), social (poverty, discrimination), political (restriction of freedom of speech, war), as well as climatic, natural and other conditions to push factors.

Among the factors of attraction were the opposites of the push factors: high standard of living, high level of economic development, perspectives of high income, access to the labour market and other professional pros-

1 Everett S. Lee A Theory of Migration // Demography, Vol. 3, No. 1. (1966), pp. 47-57.

pects, high-quality health care, education and a wider package of social services, etc..

Restraining factors – or costs – Lee called those circumstances of life that impede the decision to migrate, even in the presence of push and pull factors. For example, these are transportation costs, lack of information or certain skills (language, profession), among others. Let us turn to the analysis of the factors determining migration in the Russian context.

1.1. Push-factors

Experts and informants in various studies cite as the main pushing factors the instability of the Russian economy and personal financial distress as well as uncertainty about the future (rising prices, small pensions and wages, social benefits, and other payments). Political reasons include elections, pressure on the opposition, and the adoption of specific regulations.

A study by the Atlantic Council emphasises that surges in emigration from Russia are mainly associated with the crisis conditions of the Russian economy.[2] While the report generally links the rise in the number of emigrants to political reasons, researchers do not deny that falling oil prices, tax hikes, pension reform, raising the retirement age, sanctions and counter-sanctions also played a role. In 2015, the standard of living in Russia decreased by almost 10%, and the fixed price increase, according to Rosstat, is 1-2% every six months.[3] This situation, however, is changing significantly due to the pandemic and other global problems: in January 2021, the annual increase in consumer prices was 7%, which was the highest rate since 2016 and led to the creation of price control measures.

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2 John E. Herbst, Sergei Erofeev, "The Putin exodus: The new Russian brain drain". Atlantic Council, 2019. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/the-putin-exodus-the-new-russian-brain-drain-3/

3 Official website of the Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (Rosstat), Consumer Price Index in March 2021. (RUS) https://gks.ru/bgd/free/B04_03/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d02/62.htm

According to the International Monetary Fund, in the ranking of countries by GDP per capita, Russia ranked only 50th in 2020 ($ 27,394 per year)[4] and in 136th place in terms of GDP growth.[5] According to the UN report for 2019, Russia ranks 52nd in the ranking of countries in terms of human development (three positions lower in comparison with the previous year).[6] As of 01 January 2021, the minimum wage in Russia is 12,792 rubles per month, which is approximately 170 USD.

Polls confirm that economic reasons are the main pushing factors, but the financial situation remains a deterrent. Moving involves at least minimal savings or, ideally, the opportunity to invest in real estate or business abroad. According to a Levada Centre survey conducted in the fall of 2020, the share of Russians who have savings remains stable (around 30% of those surveyed). Nevertheless, optimism about whether they will have the opportunity to save money in the future is gradually declining.[7] This means that even if Russians want to leave, they do not have the financial means to do so (or these funds are very limited).

Many informants cite the political situation as another important reason. Specific events play a role here: a wave of migration after the Bolotnaya case, the annexation of Crimea, elections, or the adoption of amendments to the Russian Constitution and the nullification of Vladimir Putin's presidential terms. Levada Centre polls show that there are more opponents of Putin than his supporters among those considering moving. Opposition-minded citizens of Russia are under pressure in many ways and this

4 IMF official website. (ENG) https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/RUS

5 IMF Official web-site, World Economic Outlook Database. (ENG) https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2020/April/download-entire-database

6 Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier, Human development and the Anthropocene. UNDP. 2020. (ENG) http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2020.pdf

7 Levada Center, Press release „Russian savings in the fall of 2020" dated November 23, 2020. (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2020/11/23/sberezheniya-rossiyan-osenyu-2020-goda/

is not always due to the threat of personal political persecution or the initiation of a criminal case. Rather, it is about the positioning of Russia on the international field, about the adopted regulations (the law on foreign agents, on undesirable organizations, restriction of the right to a single picket, and other forms of protest, in the future - the law on educational activities, on the work of the media and bloggers' activities and so on), government regulation of business, education, public activities, high-profile political cases, investigations of corruption, as well as other evident and hidden indicators of a deep political crisis. Political factors or their echoes appear in public opinion polls, even in the state research institute VTSIOM, in forums and in many groups where possible departure scenarios are discussed. Even those people who do not experience political pressure, do not participate in the political life of the country, are not involved in activism, a work of civil society and NGOs, and do not go to rallies and the like, still talk about political censorship, the narrowing of the space of independent media and commercial media, laws that do not work "for law-abiding citizens" and "do not protect anyone", the absence of a fair trial and lawlessness and other related problems. In part, these sentiments are confirmed by the ratings of trust in political institutions in Russia.[8] Most social and political institutions do not inspire confidence among Russians: Russian banks, trade unions, political parties, both chambers of parliament, courts and prosecutors, local authorities, the media, and the police. In essence, all the principal public institutions are leading polls in terms of distrust.

In discussing how the recent political situation affects public desire to emigrate, the study carried out by the Levada Centre in 2019 is of use.[9] The

8 The leading positions in the rating of trust in 2020 were taken by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, the president, and the FSB. Based on materials from the Levada Center's press release „Trust in Political Institutions" dated September 21, 2020. (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2020/09/21/doverie-institutam/

9 Levada Center, Press release „Emigration Sentiments" of November 26, 2019. The survey was conducted in the fall of 2019 (a representative sample of 1,601 people, 18 years old and older, 137 settlements of Russia). (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2019/11/26/emigratsionnye-nastroeniya-4/

share of those who would like to move abroad for permanent residence is still not large (8% "would definitely like to move", 13% "would rather move"). Among these people, the share of Putin supporters is lower; more than half of them believe that "things in the country are going in the wrong direction" (36% among those who thought about moving). Among the feelings that these people have lately, they often cite confusion and shame. These people are ready to participate in public and political life: 39% among those who thought about leaving, against 23% of those who did not think about it and 33 % who go to rallies in contrast to 17% who don't.

The lack of security is another factor that makes Russia an unattractive country to live in. For example, the safety index proposed by experts from the University of Sydney places Russia in 154th place in 2018.[10] This index is a comprehensive expression of the security of life in a particular country. Security is assessed by 20 different empirical indicators (relations with neighbouring countries, the level of repression, the number of military conflicts and those killed in them, the level of violence and especially violent crimes, the number of murders, the number of prisoners, the availability of weapons, etc.). In 2007, the index was calculated for the first time, and Russia took 118th place out of 121. In 2018, the list of countries was expanded and Russia took 131st place amongst the top ten most dangerous countries in the world alongside the Central African Republic, Pakistan, Israel, Chad, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, and Iraq. Until today Russia is still "officially" included in this list of dangerous countries. It is noteworthy that the researchers not only calculated how dangerous different countries are but also tried to associate the level of danger with other factors. Thus, they concluded that the level of security directly depends on the level of transparency of political institutions versus corruption (i.e. the higher corruption is, the more dangerous a society is) and is also related to

10 The index is calculated for 163 countries. (ENG) https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/

the level of accessibility of school education and basic income per capita.[11]

Among other squeezing factors, they name various things that can be called the general comfort of life, for example, road rage or rubbish on the streets and outside the city, and even the climate.

The combination of push factors works differently for different occupational groups. E. Lee wrote about this in his work more than 50 years ago and the situation has not changed much today. Push factors generally affect the most vulnerable categories of the population who have less means to endure them. However, retaining factors are also significant for the same groups and not all of those who are dissatisfied with their income can actually leave. Suppose the economic crisis and the lack of career prospects became the main reason for the emigration of IT specialists. In that case, people employed in industries where this crisis can be called permanent (medical and scientific workers, media workers, representatives of the academy and research centres, and others) cited economic reasons rather as "the final straw" that pushed them to make the final decision to leave.

1.2. Pull-factors: Why Germany?

Germany is one of the most attractive countries for those planning to change their permanent residence. Among the main reasons why immigration to Germany attracts Russians are the wide range of emigration channels available. These channels include not only work contracts and immigration via a family reunification visa but also educational programs (including free tuition in German universities in English) and the Blue Card program. Since Germany is a part of the Dublin Agreement, the refugee status is also available as an option (detailed description of this scenario can be found in paragraph 2.2.1. Refugees and Asylum Seekers).

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11 First Global Peace Index ranks 121 Countries. (ENG) https://web.archive.org/web/20090802190822/http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=%2Fwww%2Fstory%2F05-30-2007%2F0004598231&EDATE=

Secondly, many immigrants from the former Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan) live in Germany, thus many Russian-speaking (new political) immigrants are included in certain social networks via friends or relatives who moved to Germany recently or several years ago. See section A.1. General characteristics for more on pioneer migration and why moving to a country with developed social networks or diasporas is easier. At the same time, the research made by the Atlantic Council does not confirm that the presence of social networks of Russian-speaking people and the Russian diaspora abroad play a crucial role in deciding whether to emigrate from Russia (see page 4 | Portrait of a New Political Immigrantof this report).

Definitely, those who move to Germany are more motivated to learn the German language than those who choose to live in the Netherlands or Portugal opt to learn the local language.

One of the reasons for this attractiveness is the high standard of living in the country: income level, health care, education, social guarantees, and other indicators. Germany has a low unemployment rate (about 75.6% of the working age population are employed[12]), high average gross annual salaries (about €21,187 per year[13]) and the average monthly salary (2020: about €3,975 before taxes[14]). Germany is undoubtedly one of the strongest economies in Europe and is among the ten countries with the highest GDP per capita (2019: over 54,000 USD).

In addition, for many years, Germany has been among the leaders in the Human Development Index, which comprehensively assesses standard of living, life expectancy, literacy, and accessibility of education. In emigrant

12 OECD Official Website. (ENG) https://data.oecd.org/emp/employment-rate.htm

13 Official website of state statistics of Germany (ENG or GER). https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Labour/Earnings/Earnings-Earnings-Differences/_node.html

14 Official website of state statistics of Germany (ENG or GER) https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Labour/Earnings/Earnings-Earnings-Differences/current-economic-activity.html;jsessionid=53722C2130DB3F1B48A075143E6F56DE.live731

forums and discussions, it is emphasised that Germany is attractive from the point of view of safety for life: clean water, low rate of crime, high levels of obedience to rules and laws. For example, Germany was among the ten safest countries in 2019 in terms of road traffic deaths (3.9 deaths per 100,000 people).[15]

The German political system is also notable for its stability and is characterized as a full-fledged democracy. The Democracy Index is calculated based on the sum of indicators describing the electoral system, the independence of government authorities and institutions, and susceptibility to foreign influence. In general, the index uses subjective expert assessments and, for example, does not include economic indicators. Germany ranked 13th in 2020.[16]

The attractiveness of Western European countries in general and Germany, in particular, is associated with changes in public attitudes in Russia. Monitoring by the Levada Centre records a trend towards improving the attitude of Russians towards the US and the EU in 2015-2019.[17] Experts emphasise that the topic of an "external enemy" against which to unite was often exploited by the Kremlin in the past two decades but has ceased to be perceived as such by the citizens of Russia.[18]

For a long time, the conventional "West" has found a contradictory place in the Russian worldview. On the one hand, many potential emigrants have had the mentality that "it is better there". Life abroad is seen as part of a more fabulous dream of well-being, security, high salaries, and quality medicine. On the other hand, both due to historical processes and due to

15 In Russia, this number is 17 deaths per 100,000 people.

16 The Economist, Democracy Index 2020: In sickness and in health? (ENG) https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/

17 Levada Center, Press release „Attitudes towards countries" of September 10, 2019, provides survey data in 2018-2019. (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2019/09/10/otnoshenie-k-stranam-4/

18 „The West is Getting Closer", Levada Center press publications, February 18, 2020. (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2020/02/18/zapad-stanovitsya-blizhe/

the work of the ideological machine, the "West" for a long time was constructed either as something alien or hostile. A fairly old poll by the Levada Centre showed that 86% of Russians do not speak foreign languages, 71% have never been on vacation abroad. The share of those who distanced themselves from Western identity gradually increased and in 2015 reached 53%. The Russians admitted that they perceived the "Western way of life" (whatever that means) negatively. 44% of those surveyed in 2015 said that they were not attracted to anything in life and work in the West (everything was cited among the options: from a clean environment to the political system). Polls showed that those who have been abroad at least once are more loyal or at least curious about the "West" and "Western."[19]

1.3. Migration motivation structure

The structure of motivation for choosing to emigrate is complex and consists of many layers, so it is almost always difficult to assess for what specific reasons people decide to leave. The most understandable reasons are a direct threat to life and health, the threat of imprisonment, and are still not all too common for most Russians. Often, in the absence of a real threat, political and economic factors become the basis of motivation and they are complexly intertwined with each other. It is not easy to rely on data from quantitative studies to determine the underlying motives for migration since their methodology usually involves multiple-choice questions. So, the respondents do not indicate what reason they could name as the main one.

For example, in the Atlantic Council report, describing the sixth wave of migration, called "Putin's exodus," researchers cite "new economic and

19 Levada Center, Press release „The West: Perceptions and Aspirations to Emigrate" from October 13, 2015. The survey was conducted in 2015 among 800 people (18 years and older, 134 settlements of the Russian Federation, a representative all-Russian sample). (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2015/10/13/zapad-vospriyatie-i-stremlenie-emigrirovat/

career opportunities, family reunification" and "growing corruption and a deteriorating political climate" as the main reasons for leaving.[20] Among the participants in their research, 40% named the general political atmosphere as the reason for leaving Russia, 33% the lack of political rights and freedoms, 32% the general economic situation and the lack of economic prospects, 29% persecution and violations of human rights, 26% professional reasons, 24% education / diploma abroad. Other reasons to emigrate include marriage, family reunification, and religious persecution. "Political reasons" are more typical for those who left after 2012. The answers during the focus groups in the same study are contradictory: on the one hand, most participants noted that they do not expect positive economic changes in Russia and are rather pessimistic about the future. On the other hand, they stressed that the standard of living in Russia "is still higher than 15 years ago", and the main reason for their dissatisfaction with economic indicators is not related. This notion of motivation does not correlate with the fact that according to statistics such as German data on Russians moving to Germany, family reasons (reunification with a spouse, children, or other family members) become the main reasons for issuing a permit. Of course, one can assume that every potentially political emigrant already has family in the EU, but this hypothesis does not seem viable.

In the same study, the authors emphasise that career and educational motives fade into the background, giving way to concerns about the political and economic situation in the country. The authors mention the growing politicisation of emigrants and that for them, personal career considerations are beginning to take on less importance than the "atmosphere" in which they lived in Russia. Perhaps this is true, but we can only speculate how large this group is, and secondly, we cannot support this assumption with other data. The number of Russians who receive student visas in Germany has not changed significantly in recent years.

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20 Atlantic Council Report „Putin's Exodus: A New Brain Drain," John Herbst, Sergei Erofeev, 2019. https://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/putinskiy-iskhod/putinskiy-iskhod.pdf

A study by the Levada Centre suggests a slightly different set of main reasons for leaving: better living conditions abroad (42%), the unstable economic situation in Russia (41%), the desire to provide children with a decent and reliable future (28%), Protection from the arbitrariness of the authorities and officials (17%), the possibility of obtaining better quality medical services abroad (14%), the lack of opportunities for professional growth in Russia (10%), crime, terrorism and the threat to life in Russia (9%), family circumstances (7%) and the feeling that the majority of others do not share their values (4%).[21]

2 | THE PHENOMENA OF "NEW POLITICAL IMMIGRATION" FROM RUSSIA TO GERMANY

2.1. «New» Emigration from Russia

One of the goals of this report was to find an understanding to what extent the current migration from Russia to Germany can be called "new". Where do we need to start counting this new wave? Moreover, what characteristics of migration, quantitative or qualitative, certainly demonstrate this novelty?

Researchers identify from 4 to 6 waves of the Russian emigration. J. Zayonchkovskaya calls the whole migration after 1990 the "4th wave".[22] This point of view is shared by many methodologically conservative and politically neutral researchers of emigration such as M.S. Savoskul, P.M. Polyan, and others. They emphasise that Soviet emigration is divided into three waves (there are two flows: forced migration connected to World War I /

21 Levada Center, 2013 survey „Dreams of emigration". (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2013/06/06/mechty-ob-emigratsii/

22 Zayonchkovskaya Zh.A. Emigration to the far abroad. The World of Russia: Sociology, Ethnology. 2003. T. 12. No. 12. S. 144-150. (RUS)

Russian Revolution / Civil War, and World War II, as well as the third flow initiated by the economy). Savoskul tries to distinguish several stages at the end of the third and within the fourth wave:

- 1983-1989: formation of prerequisites for emigration and its future flows; approx. 90 thousand emigrants
- 1990-1999: peak of emigration in the post-Soviet period of around one million emigrants
- 2000-2005: emigration levelling off, 312 thousand emigrants
- 2006-2011: decrease in the scale of emigration, 80 thousand emigrants
- 2012-2014: consolidation of new trends, 105 thousand emigrants[23]

Savoskul says that the potential of ethnic emigration to Germany and Israel has been exhausted and therefore we can talk about other "forms" of emigration related to business, education, and other goals.

The Atlantic Council's research identifies six waves of migration:

- 1881-1914, the first Jewish emigration (about 1.9 million emigrants, the main reasons are political, religious, and ethnic oppression),
- 1918-1922, the exodus of white émigrés (from 1.4 to 2.9 million, political reasons),
- 1941-1945, World War II (from 0.5 to 0.8 million emigrants, political reasons),
- 1970-1980, Soviet Jewish emigration (0.3 million emigrants, the main reason being ethnocultural deprivation),
- 1989-1999, perestroika and early post-Soviet emigration (2.5 million, economic reasons: economic collapse, lack of economic prospects),

23 Savoskul M.S. Emigration from Russia to non-CIS countries in the late XX - early XXI century. Bulletin of Moscow University. Series 5. Geography. 2016. No. 2. P.44–53. (RUS)

- 2000-current time, Putin's exodus (from 1.6 to 2 million, political reasons: corruption, worsening political climate, and economic reasons: new career and economic opportunities and also family reunification).[24]

Of both of these divisions above, one is quite "blind" concerning some political analysis, while the other is utterly biased in this sense and thus do not evoke either confidence or great affection. According to the first group of authors, political reasons (repression or the fear of religious and ethnic oppression) were completely absent. At least, such factors and such an interpretation of migration periods are not discussed in scientific publications. In a joint report by Russian and American researchers, the economic component appears only in the 1990s, together with perestroika, and retains some significance after 2000.

A study conducted in 2018 by Florinskaya and Karachurina shows that 2014 was the most significant year for Russia in terms of emigration sentiments (both for political and economic reasons) and, accordingly, for 2015 and 2016, emigration itself has started to happen. This is also confirmed by the Rosstat statistics on the emigration of Russian citizens to non-CIS countries in the current decade, as well as data from the main host countries over these years (a significant increase in emigration was observed precisely after 2014, in 2015-2016).[25]

Answering the questions about what is considered a new migration, many experts distinguish between the "new" and the "newest" waves of political emigration from Russia. According to Alexey Kozlov, the Bolotnaya Square

24 Atlantic Council Report „Putin's Exodus: A New Brain Drain," John Herbst, Sergei Erofeev, 2019. https://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/putinskiy-iskhod/putinskiy-iskhod.pdf

25 Florinskaya Y. F., Karachurina L.B. A new wave of intellectual emigration from Russia: motives, channels, and mechanisms. Monitoring of public opinion: Economic and social changes. 2018. 6. P. 183-200. https://doi.org/10.14515/monitoring.2018.6.09

case became the countdown of the "newest" political migration (2012)[26]. The political persecution in the Bolotnaya Square case cannot be called massive (about 600 people were detained on the day of the rally, about 30 sentences in criminal cases, 30 people received international protection), but it clearly showed how the authorities work against the opposition and made it clear to many activists that government can do with them "as they please".

In 2012-2013, not only economically independent people began to leave, but also people with average incomes. The main reasons, according to experts, were political events in Russia. The annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine became the benchmarks and impetus for the emigration of many Russians. This opinion is confirmed by statistical data. After all, since 2012, the base of repressive legislation in Russia has constantly been growing within the framework of the so-called conservative turn and "tightening the screws". The new laws give grounds to persecute more citizens and more organizations and reduce the space for freedom for certain types of activities, mainly public, educational, scientific, or connected to human rights. The laws on "foreign agents'', "undesirable organizations'', and since the spring of 2021 on "enlightening activities" call into question the possibility of carrying out specific activities. The tightening of rally and protest legislation and regulations on the work of the media show the boundaries of the manifestation of public discontent and protest, which are increasingly narrowing. More prosecution or potential political persecution increases the number of actual and potential emigrants. In the media and social networks, the discussion persists about whether the Russian repressions should be considered massive or still merely "pinpoint" or whether current repression resembles that of the year 1937. Even though we do not see huge numbers of criminal cases for political reasons (for example, in the lists of political prisoners according to Memorial Human

26 Alexey Kozlov's interview „Political emigration from Russia. Germany", House of Free Russia, 2017. (RUS) https://freerussiahouse.org/2017/10/10/politicheskaja-jemigracija-iz-rossii-germanija/

Rights Centre or Amnesty International), we cannot talk about targeted persecution. There are entire social groups (on ethnic or religious grounds, such as the Crimean Tatars or Jehovah's Witnesses), there are repressions against professional groups (independent journalists, researchers, educators, human rights defenders, environmentalists, among others), there are repressions against specific organizations (Crimean Tatar Mejlis, Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), the news aggregator Meduza, foreign NGOs and foreign agents, human rights organisations and others), and there are precise legal mechanisms for this persecution. These mechanisms are constantly being "improved" and supplemented with new articles: one can turn to the practice of applying the law on extremism or in the near future to the implementation of the law on "enlightening activities" among others.

2.2. "Political" Emigration

This section will answer the non-trivial question of what kind of emigration can still be considered political and why.

Information about Russians who move to Germany can be structured as follows. Several categories of emigrants can be distinguished with the "political" component of the decision to emigrate.

The following sections describe each of the groups listed in the table, paying attention to those resources and those motives that are most common in these groups.

2.2.1. Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Researchers of Russian emigration to Germany traditionally distinguish four groups of political migrant refugees: refugees from the North Caucasus; LGBT refugees, refugees for religious reasons and in connection with

Table 1. Categories of migrants by the parameter "political" factors, motives, and channels

	Refugees	Political emigrants	"Atmospheric" emigrants	Non-political emigrants
Who	North Caucasus, LGBT people, Jehovah's Witnesses, civic activists, and other groups experiencing actual political prosecution in criminal cases	(Mostly) Activists and those under threat of persecution, criminal prosecution, plus people whose colleagues, relatives, or friends experienced persecution or legal threats	Different people experiencing dissatisfaction or tension and other negative emotions associated with the political situation in the country	Different people for whom migration is associated with an array of economic and other reasons (education, work, and life abroad; family ties, ethnic roots, etc.)
Motives	Threat to life and freedom	Threats to freedom or potential political persecution, the threat of a criminal case	Difficulty or discomfort to be in Russia due to values, views, profession, or occupation	Various (search for a better life, economic stability, obtaining a European diploma, family reunification, etc.)
Channels	Political: refugee status (Asyl), political asylum (Flüchtling) or international protection (subsidiär Schutzberechtigte)	Various, but rarely political asylum (humanitarian visa, student visa, work visa, freelance visa, etc.)	Miscellaneous (student visa, work visa, freelance visa, language study visa, family reunification visa, business visa, etc.)	Miscellaneous (education, job search visa, work visa, family reunification visa, and others)
Resources	Minimum	Rather average	Medium or high	Different, but rather medium or high
Factors	Political (political persecution, personal persecution, threats to life and health, threat of loss of freedom) and related to security	Mainly political	Political and economic	Economic, cultural, professional, and other personal

beliefs and values, and those people against whom politically motivated criminal cases have been brought.

Germany grants refugee status based on the Constitution and assumes that

people who are personally and politically persecuted by the state in their country are entitled to this status. Harassment is political when it concerns specific characteristics: political opinion, nationality, “race”, religion, or belonging to a particular social group.

Any migration presupposes some lowering of social status: this is associated not only with the need to obtain a legal residence permit and constantly confirm the right to it, but also with the need to integrate into the host society. Difficulties can be associated with language and the development of informal (and formal) rules, finding housing, work, insurance, medical and other assistance. Migrants face many social problems, even in countries where the rate of migrant phobia and xenophobia is relatively low. In the case of refugees, this situation is aggravated by the fact that legal refugee status gives very few rights (for example, does not give the right to work and receive education), requires a long wait time to process an application (up to several years) and therefore is associated with high uncertainty and an impossibility to plan and predict one’s future.

Obtaining refugee status in Germany for Russians is associated with another problem. According to the Dublin Convention, people who entered Germany through third countries (Finland, Poland, or any other EU country) or entered with visas issued by other countries are not eligible for refugee status in Germany. When applying for refugee status, they will be redirected and expelled to the country responsible for the issued visa and/or the first country in the EU through which they entered Germany. This means that applying for refugee status requires additional resources (availability of a German visa and money for a direct plane ticket to Germany).

Therefore, most people, who have all the rights and evidence to obtain refugee status, turn to this opportunity as a last resort. For example, the organization that helps LGBT refugees in Germany, Quarteera, recommends thinking about other channels of emigration: getting a degree, job contract, if the diploma is recognized in Germany, family reunification visas if the partner is already in the country, volunteering, or other programs.

Statistics on requests for refugee status in the EU are available on the Eurostat website. The following data are provided from 2009 on and the table below only indicates people with the Russian citizenship.[27]

Table 2. Asylum requests in the EU, Germany and refusals in Germany by year

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU	20,110	18,595	18,325	24,290	41,470	19,820	22,235	27,605	17,000	16,050	15,450	8,220
G	1,190	1,410	1,880	3,415	15,475	5,510	6,200	12,230	6,225	5,215	4,460	2,730
Refusals G[28]	80	100	105	120	990	1 055	465	1,280	1,685	460	160	170

According to the Ministry of Migration and Refugees, in March 2021 Germany had the lowest number of applications for refugee status in the last five years.[29] Russia is as of recently no longer in the top 10 countries whose citizens submit the most significant number of applications for refugee or political asylum status (in 2016, Russia was still on this list).

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27 Asylum and first-time asylum applicants by citizenship, age, and sex - annual aggregated data (rounded). The request is formed for the EU countries in general and Germany in particular; only for Russian citizens who have applied for asylum/refugee status are taken into account. Search query to form a new table „migr_asyappctza." (ENG) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do

28 Asylum applications withdrawn by citizenship, age and sex - annual aggregated data (rounded). The table is generated by the change „MIGR_ASYWITHA" for Russian citizens only. (ENG) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYWITHA__custom_851547/default/table?lang=en

29 Aktuelle Zahlen. Ausgabe: März 2021. BUNDESAMT FÜR MIGRATION UND FLÜCHTLINGE. (GER) https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Statistik/AsylinZahlen/aktuelle-zahlen-maerz-2021.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4

2.2.1.1. Refugees from North Caucasus Republics

According to experts, most requests for asylum are made by immigrants from the republics of the North Caucasus. It is difficult to assess how many of these requests are explicitly due to political reasons and political persecution. In most cases, such requests have a positive outcome (for the applicant): if at the level of the migration service these applicants have their cases refused, they can go to court, where their cases are more often won, and the deliberation of the case ends at least with a ban on deportation. The first problem with refugees from the North Caucasus republics is related to the fact that they are not statistically distinguished from the category of asylum requests and thus it is rather difficult to estimate their number: they are included in the general category of "citizens of Russia who have applied for asylum".

The second problem associated with working with this category is that in order to help and support these people here (providing information, legal protection, advice, etc.), the non-profit organizations involved in this process do not have sufficient information about these people and sufficient expertise in the North Caucasus. In one of the interviews, the expert emphasised that their NGOs do not work with people from the North Caucasus republics except for those cases when they receive a direct request from human rights defenders from Russia. This choice is due to the need to verify the cases: the attempt to verify the case in Chechnya, for example, can lead to consequences for the applicant and for the organisation that is trying to carry out this verification.

2.2.1.2. LGBT-refugees

Example of a statement: "Good morning. I apologise in advance if I offend anyone by my presence. I am an LGBT (trans). I am 40. After some event, my relatives found out about this. For them, it is a shame, and they threaten

me that '(I will) either disappear or we will kill (you)'. I want to apply for asylum in Germany." (Male, Anonymous statement on a forum, 2019)

Among LGBT refugees, experts distinguish at least two categories: LGBT activists who are persecuted because of their actions and LGBT people who are not activists but rather decided to emigrate because of the law "on promoting homosexuality" and/or cases of child adoption. Germany differentiates these cases seldomly meaning that non-activists often receive subsidiary protection or "small shelter." While non-activists belong to the LGBT group, which is persecuted in Russia, few illegal actions are carried out directly against specific applicants. Can these people be considered refugees? Yes. Do they need protection? Yes. However, not all LGBT people applying for asylum in Germany face political persecution back in Russia and therefore many experts do not consider this group (non-activists) to be political emigrants. The choice to emigrate relates to the politics of Russia, which has adopted a homophobic law and supports homophobic sentiments in the country. Nevertheless, the activities of these people prior to their departure were not necessarily political.

Experts also talk about several waves of LGBT refugees from Russia: the first in 2012-2013 was mainly associated with the adoption of the "gay propaganda law" and other parliamentary homophobic initiatives that led to an increase in homophobia and social tension. The second wave is associated with direct persecution by the FSB, police, homophobic activists in 2014-2015. After 2015, mostly non-activists began to leave Russia in seeing fewer prospects for themselves and their families and realized the danger of life in Russia.

LGBT persons have the right to apply for refugee status but each case is considered individually, and the mere presence and proof of a LGBT sexual/gender orientation does not guarantee a positive solution.

2.2.1.3. Refugees due to persecution related to their religion and beliefs

Example of a statement: "Good afternoon, my family belongs to Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia, we are oppressed for our faith, (there was one search in the Kingdom Hall, literature is not allowed through customs, our website was blocked on the territory of the Russian Federation, many of the believers were arrested, in our and other cities, even though the Supreme Court for Human Rights allowed our activities and preaching and has overthrown decisions of Russian courts) but we were not personally detained or arrested, can we claim refugee status for religious persecution?" (Female, Anonymous statement on a forum, 2016)

Since the Jehovah's Witnesses were classified as an extremist organization in Russia in 2017, the persecution of those who belong to this religious community and carry out religious practices has begun. About 170 thousand Jehovah's Witnesses in total live in Russia with about 50 criminal cases being initiated against individuals, according to the NGO OVD-Info.[30] There are no statistics on how many people from this category left Russia and how many specifically have received refugee status or other visas. An anonymous informant via OVD-Info, who lives in the United States and helps other Witnesses to leave Russia, claims that 20 thousand people left Russia after the organization was banned.[31] In the case of emigration driven by religious persecution, some factors facilitate this process: for example, Jehovah's Witnesses have large communities and support networks in many countries worldwide. They help each other settle in a new place and adapt to social and cultural conditions of life in a new country. At the same time, people who leave the country are connected with real persecution or

30 Not everyone is guaranteed: how Jehovah's Witnesses are persecuted. OVD-Info, 2018. (RUS) https://ovdinfo.org/articles/2018/08/23/ne-kazhdomu-garantiruetsya-kak-presleduyut-svideteley-iegovy

31 „A Sense of Surrealism": Jehovah's Witnesses on Living Under Prohibition. OVD-Info, 2018. (RUS) https://ovdinfo.org/articles/2018/10/08/est-kakoe-chuvstvo-syurrealizma-svideteli-iegovy-o-tom-kak-zhivut-v-usloviyah

harassment, experiencing pressure at their places of work, in connection with publications in the media, and so on, and face significant difficulties in obtaining visas and other documents. In order to apply for refugee status, they, like other categories of emigrants, need to be outside the Russian Federation.

Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses are not the only example of persecution based on religious beliefs in Russia but it seems that this is the most vivid and illustrative example of how the state machine prohibits another community or another type of activity, encouraging people who were part of such a community or engaged in such activities to emigrate.

2.2.1.4. Political emigrants (according to the type of the chosen legal emigration channel)

Alexey Kozlov calls this group purely political emigrants, since a) they were subjected to real persecution by the state, faced a threat to their life and/or freedom b) for political reasons, that is, in connection with active social and political activities, which they carried out in Russia. For this category, the motives and factors of emigration coincide with the legal channels that these people have chosen to obtain status in the host country. This means that this is the small percentage of people who applied for political asylum and received (or have a pending status for) international protection.

If we interpret the concept of "political" emigration more broadly, then both the group of refugees from the North Caucasus and LGBT refugees can be classified as political migrants. This means that we understand the situation in Chechnya or the persecution of LGBT people in Russia as a consequence of the work of the political regime, the structure of the political system, and repressive legislation. Russia cultivates repression and political persecution against specific citizens, individuals, and activists, against specific groups of people (LGBT, religious groups, etc.), against specific organizations (Open Russia, FBK, undesirable organizations, and foreign

agents), against specific activities (independent journalism, independent research, etc.), and this becomes a reason that many people opt to leave the country.

What becomes a reason for these people to leave (or at least to take actions preparing for departure) is usually a search in their home with the confiscation of equipment and information carriers (or a search in the apartments of their family members - parents, partners, or other close relatives); pre-investigation check and inquiries at the place of work; involvement in a criminal or administrative case as witnesses; life threats (calls, letters, messages on social networks with threats).

In most cases, these people do not want anything from the German state, except for a document that allows them to stay in the EU legally or at least outside the Russian Federation: experts emphasize that this group has enough information as well as professional and social resources to arrange their life on the territory of the host state.

All four types of political refugees have relatively low resources for a successful emigration project. First of all, these people are often limited in time and the decision to leave must be made urgently without the opportunity to prepare and think about possible scenarios. Often these people have a high level of education and possess a profession that will allow them to integrate into the host society easily. However, this characteristic does not fit the description of the majority of representatives of this group: for example, refugees from Chechnya can be people with very different levels of education and very different professional trajectories. Often, they do not know any languages besides Russian and the decision to emigrate is not the result of long preparation and planning of their life trajectory but rather a forced measure.

Experts strongly recommend applying for political asylum and refugee status as the last option. For example, Quarteera writes about this option on its website: “Before applying for asylum in Germany, find out if other ways

of immigration are possible for you: if you have a higher or specialized education recognized in Germany, it is possible (and under what conditions) to get a job".[32] This recommendation is relevant due to the complexity of the process, living conditions while waiting for a decision, and uncertainty and non-guarantee of a positive outcome of considering the application. Experts confirm this point of view in their interviews.

In German law, there is a type of political asylum associated with humanitarian reasons, but, according to experts, it is rarely used. All refugees are processed according to the same procedure and are subject to the exact requirements (which means, that they are subject to the same rules). The process of obtaining refugee status "knocks a person out" from the type of activity they were engaged in (at least in a legal form). This leads not only to apathy and depression but also to professional degradation. In this regard, researchers express the opinion that the ultimate goal of the Putin regime (to prohibit activities, terminate specific civil initiatives, and so on) in the case of political refugees is successfully implemented.

On the one hand, these people leave the country because of persecution and not being allowed to work in Russia. On the other hand, they end up applying for political asylum and cannot continue the same activities for which they were persecuted. In addition, people who have moved to Germany for political reasons have a high risk of becoming unclaimed in the labour market in Germany due to their narrow professional specialization. Perhaps creating unique programs for political emigrants from Russia would allow them to continue their work to form expertise about Russian society, politics, democratic values, and ideals could be a good idea. However, the design of such programs remains a delicate political and diplomatic issue.

32 Quarteera, Russian-speaking LGBT people in Germany, official website. (RUS) http://www.quarteera.de/asyl-russian

2.2.2. Political emigrants (by type of motives and factors of emigration)

Example of a statement: "I did not have much time before [to become] a political prisoner, I was already 'on the pencil [came near to it] of Comrade Major', but I didn't really want to go to the ITK [forced-labour camp], so I was actively involved in the migration process." (Male, Telegram-channel on emigration, 2021)

This category includes predominantly people against whom there is real political pressure (criminal prosecution, police violence, threats, etc.), but for various reasons, they opt for other channels of emigration from Russia than requesting asylum in Germany. The biographies of these people allow them to use the "political" emigration channel. However, they see too many restrictions in this way (restrictions on work, inability to receive education, continuing active political and social activities, restrictions on movement and choice of residence, and others). As described above, refugee status and/or waiting for it seriously affect the applicants' current day-to-day and limit their planning horizon, given that an application take years to process. As it follows from interviews with experts, many political emigrants choose other scenarios of legalisation in Germany (mainly work or job search, education and/or study of the German language, research, as well as other activities such as internships, grants, volunteer projects, etc.).

Moreover, this category includes those people against whom there are no real criminal cases or political prosecution in other forms, but they fear that for one reason or another, this may start happening soon. For example, something similar happened with their friends, colleagues, relatives, or representatives of similar professions and organisations. This category includes employees of international organisations and foundations, foreign media, representatives of foreign agent organisations, human rights defenders, journalists, environmentalists, employees of universities and research institutes, activists, and others. These people often feel the oppressive atmosphere within Russian society and feel the threat of a ban

on their profession or the activities they conduct. For them, this threat is real: it may be associated with work in the human rights sector, regular trials against fellow foreign agents, detentions and repeated detentions at rallies and single pickets, the emergence of interest from the Ministry of Justice, the prosecutor's office and the FSB in those organizations in which they work or do business with. The threat of political persecution for them is also possible because they understand that virtually anything can be chosen as methods of persecution including fabricated criminal cases connected with economic activity, planted drugs, or prosecution under the article on extremism. There may be no objective basis for initiating such cases: it is enough to be "on the pencil", that is, to get into the attention of the authorities of the Russian Federation.

Both of these groups have a relatively large number of symbolic and social resources and are characterized by a high level of education, often some knowledge of foreign languages (at least English). These people are often active in Russia, known beyond Russia, and are included in extensive international networks. This inclusiveness works both for them and against them: the more international they are, the higher the chance that they will have to leave Russia; simultaneously, it is this professional and personal cosmopolitanism that gives them a better chance of successfully realizing themselves abroad.

It is rather difficult to estimate this group's size because there are no statistical mechanisms to check the political component in their decision to relocate. They do not fall into the category of "refugees" because they deliberately avoid this legal status or do not have a sufficiently strong reason to obtain it. They can use any of the legal channels of relocation available in Germany, depending on their well-being, level of education and demand for a profession abroad, and involvement in international networks.

Describing the modern emigration from Russia, sociologists and in particular, Levada Centre researcher Stepan Goncharov express the opinion that these flows are for the most part not associated with political factors.

Oppositionists and activists mainly become political emigrants - this is a narrow stratum of people and most of them have already left. Goncharov insists that perceptions of the West and perceptions of the way of life in the West continue to play a significant role in migration sentiment in particular the perceptions of access to social and economic benefits.[33] However, if we understand the political motives of emigration more broadly - as increased pressure, a consequence of the degradation of political, social, democratic institutions, the persecution of certain professions, organizations, a ban on certain activities, etc., then we can see the next group of emigrants: "atmospheric".

The main difficulty with political emigration is the discrepancy between the motives for leaving and the legal channels of migration. People who are forced to leave the country and would have to apply for refugee status do not apply in the end due to the complexity of the process, restrictions it imposes, and uncertainty associated with it. Many political emigrants use all other scenarios to leave Russia and legally stay in Germany.

German immigration law is generally quite complex. Many political emigrants who moved out of Russia with a residence permit for educational reasons and other visas faced many bureaucratic troubles. For example, some visas cannot be changed because of transformation of a life scenario, changing the legal reasons of staying and formal status (a language study visa cannot be converted into a study or work visa: it requires leaving the country and a new application for a new visa) and other problems. These and other bureaucratic confusions complicate the integration process and make it impossible to maintain the primary type of employment before leaving Russia.

33 Moving to permanent residence: is the West losing its attractiveness for Russians? Deutsche Welle. 2018. (RUS) https://is.gd/8w6LX2

2.2.3. “Atmospheric” emigrants

Example of a statement: “Anyway, in this vast country I happened to see endless catastrophic hopelessness, in which it was impossible to be and from the realization of which it became worse every day.” (Male, Telegram-channel about emigration, 2021)

Alexey Kozlov singles out another category of emigrants who cannot be called political either by the channels they choose to move or because they have an actual or potential threat of political persecution in Russia. It is as if “nothing is happening” with these people. They may not be involved in any forms of activism, are not associated with organizations that are subject to political pressure, and may not be interested in politics at all. Kozlov calls this category “representatives of the middle class” in Russia, who did not have time or were unable to accumulate enough social and political capital to become an active agent in the political arena in the country. These people are not directly persecuted and, in most cases, do not expect to be persecuted in general. Their decision to emigrate is associated, first of all, with the deterioration of the situation in Russia, the reduction of political and civil freedoms, the narrowing of the space for expressing political discontent, the inability to participate in the country’s political life or play in a competitive and protected market. They experience disappointment and apathy in connection with the political situation and do not see professional and financial prospects, so they would like to change their country of residence to a more comfortable, predictable, and secure one. They may also be disappointed with the conservation of Russia and its distance from the West and Western values - democratic institutions, real elections, freedom of speech and expression, etc. At the same time, atmospheric emigrants are not necessarily directly involved in social and political activities in Russia. This group is characterized by the presence of more resources than other groups: usually, they are in-demand and highly qualified professionals, people who have managed to accumulate a certain amount of capital in order to invest in real estate or open a business;

they speak one or more foreign languages, often have experience of living outside of Russia, and so on. For them, emigration is a conscious choice in favour of a better life. Often, for atmospheric migrants, political and economic factors and motives are closely intertwined and economic ones can prevail over political ones. They are characterized by the understanding that shortly there will be no significant changes for the better (neither in the economic nor in the political sense) in Russia so they choose to live their lives outside their homeland.

It is difficult to draw a line between those political emigrants against whom personally there is no persecution and atmospheric motivations to migrate. Experts emphasise that the decision to leave for political reasons is complicated. Different people need different "last drops" and final arguments in order to leave: for some, police searches and a criminal case are not enough. For some, it is enough to learn that another law restricting a specific type of activity or declaring another organization to be extremist passed in parliament. Some people tend to overlook changes in the political environment and ignore the narrowing of social space, while others prefer to carry a valid passport with "open" visas in their pockets and be ready to leave at any time. Defining the category of "atmospheric" migrants, we can say that they see fewer "empirical factors" of persecution and pressure in their social circle. Rather they experience negative emotions: dissatisfaction, apathy, and an acute feeling of a lack of prospects. Political emigrants without real political persecution are more immersed in the socio-political agenda, are more active in the public field, in the sphere of civic initiatives, actively support the media and human rights defenders, and therefore are more immersed in a "repressive" reality than atmospheric ones.

2.2.4. Non-political emigrants

The analysis of social networks shows that not all people who plan to leave Russia do so for political reasons. There is a category of people even

more distant from politics and activism than the so-called "atmospheric migrants". Emigration is primarily associated for these people with professional or financial prospects. Their motives are getting an education abroad, looking for work in foreign companies, working in a competitive, developing, and predictable market. They choose various types of visas and legal statuses as emigration channels: student visa, work visa, highly qualified specialist visa planning to find a job in Germany, freelance visa, and others. Non-political emigrants are a classic example of the implementation of the "brain drain" from Russia. First of all, we are talking about highly qualified professionals whose choice to change country is deliberate and associated with long-term planning. Among non-political emigrants, professionals are not the only category. Russians leave "in search of a better life" both through family channels (due to German roots) and in order to marry a foreign citizen ("out of love" or sham marriages) and thus stay in the country. According to statistics from German departments, the proportion of Russians who receive permission to stay in Germany for family reasons is very high.

A wide range of ages also characterizes this category: students after bachelor's degree who decided to continue their education in European master's degrees, young professionals, and successful professionals who decided to change their field or enter the international market. Pull factors come to the fore: the standard of living, the level of development of healthcare, the availability of education, social guarantees, safety, the environment and ecology, and others.

The article by Ryazantsev and Lukyanov, published in 2016, provides data on economic emigration from Russia: in most cases, labour migrants from Russia are migrants, 35% are between the ages of 16 and 29, 21% are 30-39 years old, and about 26 % are 40-49 years old. According to the authors, the most demanded abroad are people with a secondary specialized (vocational) education (this is about 40-50% of Russians who left on labour contracts). Russians with higher education are in demand on the international

market, but their number among those leaving is no more than 1/3. A list of specialties in demand is also given: shipping and fishing (about 50% of the labour migration flow), "technical spheres and the field of art and culture" (about 25% of labour migrants from Russia). About 65% of Russian labour migrants keep their profession abroad. The authors mention that temporary labour migration tends to turn into a permanent one. Describing the "traditional" channels of young people, the authors for some reason classify educational and educational migration as specific channels, naming, among the main channels, family reunification, marriage, and work. Speaking about educational migration, the authors cite UNESCO statistics, according to which the number of Russian students abroad increased in 2000-2010 (in 2013, there were twice as many students from Russia in the world as in 2000). The study shows that students more often than other categories of migrants have an orientation toward permanent immigration: 90% of Russian students studying in undergraduate or master's programs in the United States would like to obtain the status of a permanent resident of the United States and 60% of them "are ready to give up Russian citizenship, if necessary". "In the conclusion of the text, the authors conclude that emigration, especially emigration of young people and women, leads to significant demographic losses and is "a negative phenomenon that undermines the demographic and socioeconomic security of the country".[34]

The division into "political" and "non-political" emigration based on its motives brings us back to talking about the factors and motives of departure. The factors of departure in many cases or rather in nearly all cases that do not involve direct threats to life and freedom are intertwined most bizarrely. That is why we are sceptical about the report of the colleagues from the Atlantic Council, for whom any "brain drain" is political emigration. The brain drain in its classic form is always associated with the depar-

34 Ryazantsev S.V., Lukyanets A.S. Emigration of Youth from Russia: Forms, Trends, and Consequences. Bulletin of the Tajik State University of Law, Business and Politics. Social Science Series. 1 (66), 2016. C, 59-72. (RUS)

ture of highly qualified specialists in demand on the international market. They leave to learn new skills, improve their living standards, and broaden their career horizons. Political emigration is not primarily associated with economic reasons. Among those who leave Russia, there are indeed many who are dissatisfied with Putin, the Russian government, and the dynamics in Russian politics and society. However, we know this only from the data obtained from a survey of 400 people in four large cities. The study of the political views, values, as well as biographies and trajectories of Russian emigrants deserves more attention and deeper analysis.

2.3. "Immigration" or Emigration?

The concept of "immigration" implies a permanent or long-term change of the host country. In common parlance, immigration has always been associated with a one-way ticket: immigrated meant "dropped out", left forever. The modern world, globalised, technological, constantly changing, and unpredictable changes our understanding of how a migratory biography and the specific fate of a person can be built. Those who choose to leave may change their minds and return if the pressures in their country of origin diminish. Those who immigrated and would like to stay can also change their mind: emigration is always the sum of gains and losses and, if ultimately this balance does not add up, many immigrant candidates prefer to return to their homeland.

According to statistics, it is still impossible to judge how many Russians have left for Germany recently and would like to stay.[35] These are small numbers and they do not cover all those Russians who for various reasons returned to their homeland, but they show that even obtaining refugee status does not guarantee that a person has decided to stay in Germany.

35 Voluntary return, official information from the website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2021. (ENG) https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/Statistik/FreiwilligeRueckkehr/freiwilligerueckkehr-node.html

The reasons for returning to the country of origin are also discussed in the report "Migration between Russia and the EU." The study participants cited the reasons for their return as lack of documents for legal stay, family responsibilities and circumstances, improvement of the situation in Russia, refusal to obtain a residence permit or refusal to apply for refugee status, language barrier and communication problems in a new country, better prospects in Russia, or ethnic conflict in a new country.[36] At the same time, when asked how long they plan to stay in the EU, many of them answered "as long as possible" or even "forever".

It is not easy to obtain information on whether the emigrants are planning to return. The main conclusion that can be drawn after analysing the available research on emigration is that these people are not going to "wait it out", but that they are going to stay.

Florinskaya tried to assess the persistence of migration: she cites survey data according to which most people do not plan to return to Russia after some time. First of all, these people are not satisfied with the situation in the labour market, the inability to apply their knowledge and skills, and develop and build a successful career. On the other hand, the political situation in Russia also does not allow them to make specific plans to return. Florinskaya emphasises that in 2011-2012 there were many international projects conducted in Russia (mainly in Moscow), which facilitated such mobility of highly qualified specialists. However, many branches of Western companies are closing their branches or reducing staff, so people move under contracts within firms.[37]

Speaking about the unpredictability of the modern world and complex migration scenarios, Antoshchuk describes in detail in his article what the

36 Migration between Russian and the European Union: Policy implications from a small-scale study of irregular migrants. Moscow, 2010. (ENG). https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migration_bw_russia_european_union_en.pdf

37 Expert: "Educated and young people are leaving Russia more and more often", an interview with Yulia Florinskaya for Deutsche Welle, 2019. (RUS) https://is.gd/5xFtk1

emigration of programmers from Russia to the UK looks like. His idea is that many of these people emigrated in two stages: first, temporarily (for a short contract, internship, or study), the purpose of which was "reconnaissance," and then permanently.[38] At the same time, Irina emphasises that different types of resources are essential for temporary and permanent migration: at the stage of temporary migration, institutions play a crucial role (the opportunity to get a contract, an invitation to a team or a company, a grant, financial support, and support at the bureaucratic level). For permanent migration, personal qualities and social networks become necessary; therefore, for those who have chosen or are planning to choose immigration to another country, it makes sense to invest more efforts to integrate into professional, diasporic, and other types of networks.

In an attempt to understand whether Russians are leaving forever or "waiting out" an acute economic or political crisis in other countries, we turned to many sources on this topic but did not find any reasonable opinion on this matter. The authors Ushakov and Malakha, based on a study of one specific research institute, concluded that due to the deep crisis of Russian science, many scientists do emigrate to Western countries, but most have temporary labour contracts. The authors see the massive departure of scientific personnel as a threat to the development of science in Russia and the entire country.[39]

According to the Atlantic Council report, 82% of the participants in their study do not plan to return to Russia, even if the political or economic situation changes.

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38 Antoshchuk I.A. Analysis of the mechanism of migration of Russian-speaking computer scientists to the UK. Monitoring of public opinion: Economic and Social Change. 2017. 1. P. 140-155. (RUS) https://monitoringjournal.ru/index.php/monitoring/article/view/361/349

39 Ushkalov I.G., Malakha I.A. „Brain drain" as a global phenomenon and its features in Russia. Socis: Sociological Research. 2000. No. 3. (RUS) http://ecsocman.hse.ru/data/860/013/1220/015.OUSHKALOV.pdf

3 | The Case of Belarus: Why we can't compare

In connection with the political crisis in Belarus, which was followed by massive political persecution of activists, journalists, researchers, a new stage of the departure of Belarusians to EU countries has begun. Considering the elections in August 2020 and the subsequent protests stopped in the most brutal way possible. Belarus is going through a genuine political crisis and human tragedy. Several demonstrators have been killed, more than 30,000 people have been detained, and criminal cases have been opened against at least 900 people. More than 150 people remain in prisons and pre-trial detention centres. More than 1,100 cases of violence against detainees in police stations and isolation wards are known. About 14,000 Belarusian citizens have been forced to leave the country.[40]

One of the first countries to express its readiness to host political refugees has been Lithuania, which has deep historical ties with Belarus. The Lithuanian Migration Department has published data on the number of Belarusian citizens who arrived after August 10, 2020. During this time, 5,739 people moved to Lithuania (11 refusals). 89 people asked for political asylum. Many received humanitarian visas for a period from six months to a year. It is difficult to determine an exact number of visas granted, but in December 2020, the figure of 768 people was announced).

Germany has also been an attractive country for Belarusians, but the German Foreign Ministry and the German Interior Ministry agreed on a quota of 50 people who can obtain refugee status. Each case will be considered according to the official procedure, and the decision on whether a particular Belarusian is eligible for political asylum will be made individually depending on the evidence presented. Politicians, for example, representatives of the Green Party, criticize the position of the EU and Germany and call for more active action and support for the citizens of Belarus: for

40 Dr. Jörg Forbrig "Belarus Needs Help: Germany and Europe lack solidarity and strategy for a democratic Belarus", 2021. (ENG) https://www.boell.de/en/2021/01/08/belarus-needs-help-germany-and-europe-lack-solidarity-and-strategy-democratic-belarus

example, according to Jörg Forbrig, Europe has shown neither sufficient solidarity with the Belarusian opposition nor sufficient toughness towards the Lukashenka regime[41].

Official German statistics show that the number of requests for refugee status from Belarusians in Germany has always been higher than 50 per year. Due to the repressions, this situation is likely to change towards an increase rather than a decrease in applications.

Table 3. Refugees from Belarus (applications) in the EU and in Germany, by year42

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU	960	945	910	1,405	1,285	945	775	955	835	1,095	1,095	1,135	1,295
Ger	60	75	60	95	95	110	125	295	295	365	240	345	165

Although experts say that the quota of 50 political asylums is not enough, they do not consider Germany the most attractive country for refugees from Belarus. One of the reasons is the relative ease of crossing the Belarusian-Lithuanian border (one must fly to Germany on a direct flight from Minsk and the likelihood of being detained right at the airport has grown significantly for a wide range of people).

At the same time, at the end of March, Germany published a plan to support the Belarusian civil society, that is, part of the country's population that suffered (and suffers) from the repression the most.[43] The plan included several new projects and programs in addition to existing ones, for example, support for students, doctoral students, and researchers through

41 Dr. Jörg Forbrig "Belarus Needs Help: Germany and Europe lack solidarity and strategy for a democratic Belarus", 2021. (ENG) https://www.boell.de/en/2021/01/08/belarus-needs-help-germany-and-europe-lack-solidarity-and-strategy-democratic-belarus

43 The official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany. "Against repression and violence: An action plan for civil society in Belarus". 2021. (GER) https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/-/2441832

the Philip Schwartz-Initiative and new scholarship programs; promotion of independent media (within the framework of the Eastern Partnership program and others); treatment of torture victims and "easier access to Germany for victims of political persecution". The "easy way" was designated as the issuance of visas and permits to stay in Germany. This plan assumes to use up to 21 million euros but does not indicate in detail what specific visas and in what specific simplified way will be issued to Belarusians.

Experts call the style of emigration from Belarus after August 2020 "spontaneous relocation": spontaneity means the absence of a plan to leave the country and a sharp change in the security regime for specific individuals. Often the decision to emigrate was made swiftly because, in certain circles of activism, journalism, research, there were cases of direct threats to life, detention, other forms of political pressure, and persecution. There were "signals" that this could happen to an increasing number of political scientists, analysts, experts whose activity could be attributed or were attributed to the opposition. Experts mention cases where people in Belarus have gone on vacation and could not return to the country because they understood (or were informed) that criminal cases were being opened against them and their chances of staying free after returning were rapidly decreasing.

In the absence of a robust political will and developed mechanisms to help people affected by the regime, all possible forms of cooperation are developing, based on solidarity and those civic networks that have been formed in Belarus and the Belarusian diaspora in Europe for many years. Experts note that many problems of modern displaced people are solved at the expense of the diaspora, which has mechanisms such as finding connections and social contacts, raising funds and financial assistance, disseminating information about contracts, housing, grant programs, scholarships, and so on. Not all Belarusians, who are rapidly leaving because of threats, political persecution, or torture are involved in these networks and informed about these private initiatives.

It is difficult to compare the cases of Russia and the cases of Belarus: this requires at least a deep analysis of emigration from Belarus until August 2020. Perhaps the Belarusians used the same migration channels and the exact departure strategies as the Russians. At the same time, the number of Belarusian citizens who have received permits to stay in Germany is significantly lower than the number of similar visas for Russian citizens.

Table 4. Permit to stay in the EU and Germany by years (for citizens of Belarus), by year44

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU	9,030	9,674	14,455	28,593	76,793	80,478	82,040	35,533	51,855	63,694	70,097
Ger	711	680	603	999	1,001	948	1,050	1,045	1,050	1,457	1,216

The case of Belarus shows, first of all, the operation of legal mechanisms of emigration in a critical situation. People who faced the need to leave the country immediately faced several difficulties that a) do not have quick solution mechanisms and b) require the political will of state leaders in the European Union. That is why successful emigration - often “escape” from the country - was greatly influenced by the strength of civil society and social networks of those who left earlier, involvement in international processes, and the ability to use international human rights, research, educational, journalistic and other such programs and initiatives.

For those Russians who see themselves as future political emigrants, the Belarusian crisis shows the problems and crises they will face in the event of a sharp deterioration in the situation in Russia. On the one hand, these processes still concern a small circle of people (which, at the same time, is gradually expanding in recent years and especially months). On the other hand, this crisis once again demonstrates a complex attitude towards political emigration in Europe and the absence of well-developed legal and

social institutions that solve the problem of the departure of people facing political persecution quickly and adequately that arise in their lives. One of the essential phenomena that experts on political processes in Belarus refer to was the change in the mechanisms of emigration. So, one of them was the "evacuation" of the employees of international companies to other countries such as Turkey, Ukraine, and Poland.

It is necessary to look at emigration from Belarus from several perspectives. Firstly, it is necessary to examine the mechanisms of assistance to political emigrants and victims of the regime at the international level. Secondly, it makes sense to refer to the experience of private civic initiatives, foundations, NGOs, and other organizations that have taken responsibility for helping and supporting people who need to leave Belarus.

4 | Portrait of a New Political Immigrant

Since we cannot roughly calculate the number of political emigrants from Russia, it is difficult to talk about this group's demographic, social, and professional characteristics. The statistics allow us to estimate the gender or average age of immigrants to Germany but not distinguish the category of immigration "for political reasons". We also know little about the education or professional background of these people. Therefore, the main chance to understand something about the characteristics of political immigrants in Germany is to turn to experts or reports based on qualitative research and small projects.

The Project, a Russian independent investigative media outlet, analysing Rosstat data claims that people of working age are more likely to emigrate. Most people who leave Russia are in the age group of 30-34 years (in 2017, there were more than 9,000 such people, but one should not forget that this indicator is insensitive to citizenship). When trying to "cleanse" the data, The Project concludes that it is mainly 25-34 years old who are leaving. Usually, these are people who do not have a family and have never married.

While in previous years mainly residents of the two major Russian metropolises - Moscow and St. Petersburg emigrated (in 2001 their share was 26%), various regions of Russia are increasingly involved in migration processes in the most recent years (in 2017, the share of Moscow and St. Petersburg total number of departures decreased to 11%).[45]

Citing data from Rosstat, The Project also says that the proportion of people with higher education among those who leave is increasing. Demographer Yulia Florinskaya believes that at least 40% of Russians have higher education among the emigrants who leave every year.[46] The number of people leaving with a scientific degree is also growing (there were 234 such people in 2012 and in 2017 already 430). However, again, this data only provides information about those who have withdrawn from registration in Russia.

Another study that can be consulted to gain insight into Russian emigrants is a joint project by the Atlantic Council and Levada Centre on the brain drain, published in the winter of 2019. The study involved 400 people from 4 large "expatriate agglomerations", including Berlin, London, San Francisco, and New York. A survey was conducted in each of the cities (autumn-winter 2017), followed by a series of focus groups (winter 2017-2018). Basically, the participants got into the project through the snowball method, when researchers approached acquaintances, colleagues, and so on to find suitable candidates or direct invitations on the Internet (via politically neutral, household Facebook groups). The project's main objective was to describe the "brain drain" in 2000 and study the "Putin exodus".

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45 Project "Another Russian World": A study on how many Russians are leaving the country. Sofia Savina, 2019. (RUS) https://www.proekt.media/research/statistika-emigration/?utm_source=tlgrm&utm_medium=chnl&utm_campaign=migr

46 Florinskaya Y. F., Karachurina L.B. A new wave of intellectual emigration from Russia: motives, channels, and mechanisms. Monitoring of public opinion: Economic and social changes. 2018. 6. P. 183-200. https://doi.org/10.14515/monitoring.2018.6.09

Among the survey respondents, most people identified as ethnically Russian (71%) and the most represented age groups were 25-34 years (44%) and 35-44 years (36%). The survey data generally confirm that young people are leaving, usually individually or couples without children or with one child (67% of those who took part in the study are married or in a civil union). These are people from big cities. Based on the answer to the question about ethnicity, the researchers conclude that the "Putin exodus" is more "Russian" in structure than other waves of migration. We are not sure if there is enough data to prove this. The researchers emphasise that the new emigrants "do not seek to create large stable ethnic communities'' and that the new diaspora is characterised by a "Russian civic identity".[47] This new diaspora is characterized by a high level of education (45% had some form of higher education before moving, and 36% had a graduate degree) in social sciences (41%), humanities (23%), natural sciences (20%), applied disciplines (19%), or in the field of art (9%).[48] Most of these people noted (58%) that before leaving, they earned "decently" good salaries; that is, they covered their basic expenses, which technically makes it possible to speak of these people as representatives of the middle class.

The participants of the study chose legal immigration channels, among which the main ones were study or participation in student exchanges (25%), work permit, blue card or business immigration (25%), family reunification visa (17%), and refugee status (16%).

Analysing the motivation to leave, researchers insist that attractive and economic factors (professional plans, educational trajectories, and career chances) are giving way to political push factors. This, in their opinion, is the difference between the new wave and those who left in the 1990s: "Russians' concern with sociocultural problems (the degradation of the

47 Atlantic Council Report „Putin's Exodus: A New Brain Drain," John Herbst, Sergei Erofeev, 2019. https://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/putinskiy-iskhod/putinskiy-iskhod.pdf

48 Answering this question, respondents could choose several answer options, so the sum of percentages is more than 100.

education system, the ineffectiveness of legal institutions, domestic violence, homophobia, and others) often leads to an increase in their political consciousness". Politicisation is intensifying against the backdrop of aggression against Ukraine, the murder of Putin opponent Boris Nemtsov, Putin's re-election in 2012, and other developments in Russian domestic and foreign policy.

The study gives us a basic idea of what professions emigrants from Russia were employed in before moving: most of them were students (17%), managers of primary and middle management (16%), employed in IT and programming (10%), in arts and culture (6%), science and research (5%), analytics and finance (5%), law (5%) and journalism (4%). The respondents noted that professional skills and knowledge of languages allow them to adapt relatively quickly to new contexts, to get acquainted with the cultural and political life of the host countries. Despite this, changes are taking place in the lives of these people. After relocation, many of them temporarily do not work or are on parental leave (14%) or took up entrepreneurship (5%), while the share of self-employed among them increased from 1% to emigration to more than 3% after it.

These people are involved in the social and economic life of the host countries and actively use social networks and read the media (52% "closely follow the political life of the new country"). They use the Internet as the main channel of communication with the outside/new world, exchange messages with family and friends, colleagues in the new country (60%) and in Russia (58%), less often television (28%). Only 12% of respondents watch Russian television, which researchers suggest explaining the low susceptibility to Kremlin propaganda compared to other waves of emigrants. Popular news resources for new emigrants are Meduza (56%), TV Dozhd (34%), and Echo Moscow radio station (32%).

Judging by the fact that those who have left, continue to actively discuss Russian news (with colleagues and friends, family members living in Russia, during their trips to their homeland), they remain included in the Rus-

sian agenda and are keenly interested in what is happening in the country. The researchers note that those who left Russia before 2000 are, on the whole, less interested in what is happening in Russia. Therefore, here we can emphasize the difference between the new emigration from the previous waves. What is the reason for this interest in Russian news and agenda? It is difficult to assess. Perhaps this is a confirmation of the existing intention to return to the country if the economic and/or political situation there changes. Perhaps this is simply an attempt to maintain ties with the country of origin.

The self-description of the new diaspora of Russian-speaking Russians, which the researchers received during focus groups in all four cities, is interesting. Firstly, emigrants describe themselves as more educated and therefore more purposeful and readier to integrate into the host country. Secondly, they speak of themselves as a younger wave, which has more flexibility and resources to accept the rules and cultural codes of the new country. Thirdly, they postulate a greater connection "with the present" than other waves of migrants. When talking about those who emigrated in the 1990s, the new emigrants describe them as "stuck in the past". Many of them noted the high competition within the Russian-speaking environment and the unwillingness to maintain contact with other Russians abroad. In order to unite and experience solidarity, these people use not so much their citizenship or ethnicity as their real everyday needs or interests. Many of them describe their desire to distance themselves from "Russianness" to get rid of trauma, limitation, and control. Others say that the search for connections outside the Russian diaspora makes it possible to better integrate and settle in a new place. Both of them emphasize that they are close to Western cultural and political values. It is difficult to say what exactly is meant by Western values, but the report is about supporting entrepreneurship, government regulation, LGBT rights, and upholding political freedoms.

The researchers identified two groups of respondents: those who left Russia before 2012 (43%) and after (57%) and many of the analytical conclusions were made precisely in connection with the time of departure. The poll shows that the new emigrants are critical of Putin's leadership (65% are firmly convinced that Putin's leadership cares mainly about their own interests and 65% believe that life in Russia has become worse since Putin's return to the presidency) they oppose Putin's vertical of power (69%) and against control over the media (91%). Focus group participants sometimes referred to Putin as a "thief" or "international criminal". The new emigrants are generally concerned about how Russia and its leadership are perceived in social and political circles in the West (too positively). Many of them approve of Western sanctions against Russia and expressed the opinion that the reaction to the Kremlin's actions in Ukraine from the Western countries was insufficient. Some of them are ready to support ("take part in any activity in support") non-systemic opposition (24% will take part very likely, and another 28% probably), but are not ready to support Putin's leadership (82% - absolutely unlikely, 10% - unlikely).

Speaking about the 2012 watershed, the authors of the report try to show that this date is not only chosen by them as a starting point, a way to categorize two groups within the emigration of 2017-2020 but also appears in the narratives of respondents who took part in focus groups. In the described study, two groups of respondents were identified: Cohort A, who moved to the West before 2012 (43% of the sample) and Cohort B, who left later (57% of the sample). The main reasons for both groups were political, but in Cohort B this indicator practically doubles. That is, after 2012, the politicisation of emigrants increased and reached its "historical maximum". The second group also has more people who have scientific degrees (mainly in social sciences and humanities); most of them left an economically stable and prosperous life in Russia. Those who left after 2012 are more interested in Russian politics (which once again confirms that they are more politicised than those who left before 2012, since the level of politicisation can be manifested, among other things, in interest in

the Russian political agenda) and are characterized by "right-liberal" views (while among Cohort A there are more people with socialist, monarchist, and nationalist views). In addition, among the representatives of Cohort B there are more people who are ready to anonymously or openly financially support the Russian opposition or take part in actions.

Those who took part in the study do not plan to return to Russia: 88% answered negatively to the question about returning. Either political or economic potential changes do not influence the decision to return. In order to check this, the authors of the report asked two questions: "Would you like to return to Russia if the economic conditions in the country improve and the political situation remains the same?" (82% - no, 5% - yes, 13% found it difficult to answer) and "Would you like to return to Russia if the political situation in the country improves, but the economic situation remains the same?" (70% - no, 13% - yes, 17% found it difficult to answer). These people, according to the results of the focus groups, believe that in 20-30 years the situation in Russia will change, and most of them (60%) are in favour of the "path of European civilization and the modern Western world" (only 2% - for a return to The Soviet Union and 23% for the "special" historical path). Most new immigrants do not believe that economic development and positive changes in this area are possible without profound political transformations. In their opinion, only the end of the Putin regime can help the country in order to begin developing "normally". Proceeding from the idea of "non-return", emigrants have a hard time understanding their role: on the one hand, they are afraid to dissolve in Western Europe; on the other, not at least to build strong Russian-speaking communities abroad; on the third, they often speak of themselves as "Russia in stock", showing their readiness to participate in the construction of "the beautiful Russia of the future". It is difficult to say how actively these people are involved in local social and political life in the countries and cities where they have moved: do they go to rallies? What are they protesting against? Do they know their municipal deputies or are they interested in German politics?

The social portrait of a modern or "newest" emigrant from Russia deserves closer attention and study. We know little about these people: we understand that they belong to very different economic classes, have moved for various reasons, and have chosen different legal channels for moving and different adaptation strategies. The most interesting are their sets of values and sets of ideas about Russia and Europe, particularly Germany if we are talking about those who have entrenched themselves in Germany. Striking are their plans, the degree of their participation in local German politics, and the safety or destruction of their connections with Russia. It is essential to understand how they see themselves, and what characteristics (language, citizenship and passport, place of birth, and others) allow them to build their identity. What makes them Russians in Germany? What distinguishes them from other Russians in Germany and Europe? Receiving and accumulating this information about those people who left Russia and stayed – or are trying to stay – in Germany, we will be able to better understand how they are involved in local political and social processes and to what extent it is fair to say that they are building "parallel society" in the country that accepts them.

CONCLUSIONS

All the materials that have been studied and that are in any way related to the study of emigration from Russia to Germany make it clear that there is catastrophically little data available about these people. We cannot say for sure how many people leave Russia (because the official statistics of the Russian Federation are not sensitive to the factor of citizenship, and all foreign citizens who are in Russia on work and student visas are included in the number of "dropped out"). We cannot draw conclusions on how many people enter Germany to stay for a long time. We have an idea of how many residence permits are issued annually to Russian citizens in Germany and other EU countries and we even understand what types of reasons are used to request these documents. However, these data show that a large proportion of Russians come to Germany on family reunification visas. In addition, German statistics are not accurate and complete (as evidenced by the extremely small numbers in terms of residence permits for highly qualified workers and researchers).

Unfortunately, future emigrants are not asked why they decided to come to Germany when crossing the border. We see that there are several channels of emigration, only one of which – asylum – can be called political in legal terms. Asylum can be obtained by people who have been subjected to unlawful persecution in their country. Nevertheless, even among refugees from Russia, there are several categories, and not for all people applying for refugee status. The political motivation for changing the country is the main one. We see this gap between political emigration in terms of legal statuses and political emigration in terms of reasons for leaving.

On the other hand, many people who have been subjected to political persecution do not plan to apply for refugee status and, for various reasons, choose other ways to stay in Germany. First of all, if their professional experience, qualifications, education, and knowledge of the language allow, they apply for visas related to the purposes of education, job search, and employment. It is also impossible to single out these people statistically.

Finally, there are those who seek asylum without political or other reasons or with no real experience of oppression. This category is not numerous, but we also know very little about it. Even those potential refugees who have been refused asylum have the right to appeal and can remain in Germany indefinitely.

Finally, there are difficulties in understanding the structure of the motivation of those who decide to emigrate. Often it is an intertwining of economic and political motives. As it was said above, the emigration project is a successful constellation of many factors. In this sense, the growth of political pressure, the narrowing of the space of freedom in Russia motivates many apolitical people to leave. However, how many there are, what their strategies and resources are, why some emigrants are politicised while others not, it is almost impossible to answer these questions in a current context. We can only offer some ideas about it and support them with the data from other research.

Many studies of the motives of emigration show that economic reasons were and remain the main push factors. Research generally confirms that push factors remain dominant over attractive factors. This means that until the situation in Russia - political, but primarily economic - improves, people will continue to leave the country. Unfortunately, it is challenging to study the constraining factors: how many people would like to leave but cannot - because they have no money, no knowledge, nor a suitable profession or diploma. This question remains the territory of large research centres like Levada, Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), or Russia Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM), which continue to publish data on "emigration sentiments". Emigration sentiments are subject to significant changes, and like any part of public opinion, have little to do with the practices and daily life choices of people. If today, according to VCIOM, 82% of Russians say they do not plan to leave, this does little to explain whether they are satisfied with life in the country and whether they will change their minds after the next economic or political crisis.

Information about migration in general and political emigrants, in particular, is scattered, contradictory, and insufficient to draw relevant and substantiated conclusions about trends in emigration processes or the social portrait of these people. Some researchers have attempted to profoundly characterise emigration from Russia, but their reports leave an ambivalent feeling. On the one hand, it is cause for celebration that someone is studying emigrants, describing their values, everyday life, attitudes towards politicians, and plans to return to Russia. On the other hand, methodological caveats and broad generalisations are not credible. The idea that most immigrants in the US, EU, or Germany are political is not statistically supported. Perhaps, to draw attention to the problems of political migrants, one should resort to some generalisation and exaggeration, but we would like to avoid such generalisations. Experts' opinions on the political component of migration from Russia also need to be critically questioned: often, these people themselves have become political emigrants and are involved in the work of relevant organizations and social circles. I consider myself a political émigré and I see other political émigrés everywhere - or at least people for whom the political developments in Russia have become a reason to contemplate leaving or not returning, or those who refuse to support the militaristic, anti-humanistic, imperialistic policies of the Kremlin.

The fact that we do not have detailed and plentiful data on political emigrants from Russia in Germany does not mean that this problem is not essential or that these people do not exist. What statistics do not see, civil society, journalism, and activism perfectly grasp. Today's political emigration is a collection of many different biographies, combinations of motives and reasons for leaving, a variety of resources or lack thereof, and networks of assistance to those who decide to leave. There are many organisations and programmes that support these people. For these organisations, political emigrants are visible, even if they are not recorded in any way by German or Russian statistics. It is essential to support such organisations and such

initiatives and deep research activities on their basis. Since emigration consultants, supporting NGOs, and volunteers have access to emigration experience, it is necessary to contact them directly to understand the extent to which this experience is politically motivated.

People who move to Germany and other EU countries for political reasons face the same problems as other migrants. Migration is always a temporary or long-term decline in social status. Migration is associated not just with the development of a new language, social and cultural norms and standards, understanding of the local bureaucracy, and the search of a new legal status in the destination country. Migration is always associated with a personal crisis, professional self-determination, and the search for a new self in the social network of a new community. Political activists moving from Russia often face the inability to continue their social activities abroad. They have a feeling that the political machine of their country of origin has won: if the state authorities exerted pressure to close the organisation, ban the profession, imprison, silence, and so on, but the citizen escaped, the likelihood that he will be able to continue his activities abroad is relatively low. Newly arrived migrants are forced to deal, first of all, with legal and domestic issues. In this sense, they often lack resources and information; organising life in a new place takes a long time. This time is not enough to continue to be an activist, citizen-in-exile, specialist in Russian human rights, civil, social, cultural, educational, political, or any other trip. None of the existing channels of emigration solves these issues. Most migrants, whom we call political in this text in different senses, still have a sufficient (or minimal) amount of resources to settle down. However, they still need informational support and, according to many experts, facilitate the rules for obtaining documents.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In this regard, the following ideas to change the situation around political emigration from Russia can be suggested:

1. it is necessary to support NGOs that assist (legal, financial, informational, and other) to those people who leave Russia for political reasons; often, German NGOs not only provide informational assistance and essential support but also employ immigrants, help them to continue the professional activity in which they were engaged before their forced departure;

2. it is necessary to develop information services and increase the efficiency of work of state institutions with refugees, political immigrants, and other categories of citizens arriving in Germany; they lack knowledge of their rights, the mechanisms of work of German legislation, and ideas about their prospects;

3. it is necessary to develop emergency legal mechanisms for working with political immigrants in the event of a political crisis (or on the eve of it), develop channels for the "export" of people who work in international, primarily German organizations, partner organizations, NGOs, in the field of protecting human rights; it is also necessary to work with advanced training programs for migration officials and changes in their perceptions of the political situation in Russia; according to some experts, it is necessary to start using the mechanism of granting political asylum for humanitarian reasons;

4. it is necessary to conduct a more thorough and in-depth study of political immigrants from Russia to Germany, to understand what are the demographic and social characteristics of these people, what are their life plans, values, political views, what are their ideas about life in Germany, to what extent and how they are embedded into German society;

5. it is necessary to involve representatives of the new political emigration from Russia in countering Kremlin propaganda in Europe, in the development and support of legal and civic initiatives about Russia and for Russians abroad.

6. it's crucial to create unique programs for political emigrants from Russia; such programs would allow them to continue their work to form expertise about Russian society and politics, democratic values, and ideas could be a good idea.

APPENDIX | GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRATION FROM RUSSIA AND STATISTICS

A.1. General characteristics

The study of migration, despite its history, poses complex tasks for researchers: many countries, Russia being no exception, keep very approximate statistics of citizens who leave the country. To assess the scale of emigration from Russia, it is required to involve data from several statistical departments, detailed analysis of information from departments of those countries to which Russians move or enter for a while (for training or a temporary employment contract), which does not give a complete picture. Trying to understand how many people have left Russia over the past few years, one can come across various estimates. Some authors speak of 50,000 people a year and emphasise the stability of this figure[49]; others estimate the flow of emigration to be up to 2 million people over the past 20 years[50] or 100-150 thousand people a year[51]. We will return to the statistics of this process in the following sections, but for now, we insist on the importance of defining the characteristics of migration.

Migration is difficult to describe, not only because reliable data on the exact number of migrated persons from Russia does not exist, but also because it is almost impossible to assess these people's plans. Temporary or cyclical migration is typical for most countries of the world: people constantly leave for several years to improve their education or change their profession, gain international work experience, learn a new language or obtain

49 The official website of the Russian Federal Statistical Agency (RUS). https://rosstat.gov.ru/

50 Atlantic Council Report „Putin's Exodus: A New Brain Drain," John Herbst, Sergei Erofeev, 2019 (RUS and ENG). https://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/putinskiy-iskhod/putinskiy-iskhod.pdf

51 Moving to permanent residence: is the West losing its attractiveness for Russians? Y. Florinskaya, interview for Deutsche Welle, 2018 (RUS). https://is.gd/8w6LX2

new skills, for family reasons, for a better life, or travel. It is usually difficult to quantify these flows, but it is not a priority for social scientists or administrative systems in different countries. On the one hand, temporary migration is reversible and does not significantly change the structure of the population. On the other hand, it brings more economic benefit than loss and is not a subject of such careful analysis. Cyclical migration turns out to be a significant contribution to the economies of most states, providing them with temporary hired labour, students, tourists, and other "useful" categories of residents. It is still possible to estimate the volume of cyclical migration from Russia by analysing the number of student, tourist, and work visas issued or referring to the border control data of specific states.

Immigration usually means changing the host country permanently and is more like buying a one-way ticket. Such an action requires a large set of resources of a different type, a balanced choice, and rational planning of life. However, it is difficult to keep track of such permanent migrants: practically no country in the world requires a "departure" document in order to obtain a residence permit. People who decide to move are not excluded from the registration list at their place of residence in Russia and continue to be "counted" as residents of the Russian Federation.

In addition to the cyclical/permanent nature of migration, its other important characteristics are channels, mechanisms, resources, and motives.[52] Often these concepts are being confused, so we consider it essential to pay attention to their definitions.

A.1.1. Channels

Traditionally, migration channels can be understood as legal means or scenarios that allow people to end up in the host country. Florinskaya and

52 Florinskaya Y. F., Karachurina L.B. A new wave of intellectual emigration from Russia: motives, channels, and mechanisms. Monitoring of public opinion: Economic and social changes. 2018 6. P. 183-200. (RUS) https://doi.org/10.14515/monitoring.2018.6.09

Karachurina call them “legal roads”.[53] Among the most common migration channels are political asylum and refugee status, work visa, family reunification, ethnic migration, student visa, among others. These statuses allow a person to remain in the territory of the new state legally. Whether illegal migration should be considered another channel or not can be left out in this text. In any case it is impossible to pretend that unlawful migration does not exist. For many people around the world, for various reasons, illegal migration remains the only available channel.

So, the migration channel is determined by the basis on which a particular person stays in a country. All legal migration channels available for use in Germany are listed in the Immigration Act. Among the main channels of migration, the law identifies:

1) a residence permit for the purpose of obtaining an education (mastering a profession, an applicant’s visa, language courses, student exchange programs, a visa to confirm qualifications obtained abroad, etc.), paragraphs 16-17b;
2) a residence permit for the purpose of carrying out economic activities (visa for highly skilled workers with qualifications, visa for highly skilled workers with a university degree, visa for research, short-stay visa for research mobility, temporary visa for researchers, blue card, visa for self-employed and freelancers, job search visa and others), paragraphs 18-21;
3) residence permits issued in connection with the operation of international law, for humanitarian or political reasons, paragraphs 22-26;
4) residence permit for family reasons (family reunification visa, child migration, and migration of other family members other than spouses and children), paragraph 27.

Refugee status, another legal channel of immigration, is regulated in Germany

53 Ibidem.

by a separate regulation (Asylum Act).[54] The law stipulates that there are three forms of refugee protection: a person can be recognized as eligible for asylum (Asylberechtigte/r), refugee status (Flüchtling/e), or as a recipient of subsidiary protection (subsidiär Schutzberechtigte/r). In addition, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) can impose a ban on deportation under certain conditions.

A.1.2. Mechanisms

Another essential characteristic of migration is the mechanism discussed in Irina Antoshchuk's article about Russian programmers in the UK. Antoshchuk uses network analysis to gain a deeper understanding of migration, which, in her opinion, cannot be reduced to individual choice and individual strategy. Therefore, it is important for her to specify two types of migration: migration of pioneers and migration of followers.[55] For the Russian-German migration history, this separation into two different migration mechanisms is relevant for ethnic migration processes in the past, illustrating several waves of naturalizing Germans from Russia, Kazakhstan, and other post-Soviet countries. A significant number of Russian-speaking people live in Germany; therefore, in the case of an analysis of the modern migration of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens of different countries to Germany, it is difficult to talk about migrants-pioneers. In addition, this division seems not that relevant for this report for another reason: Antoshchuk examines in detail the importance of existing social and professional ties between people for the success of emigration. This is especially important for the IT community in the UK. To assess the importance of these ties for Germany and Russian-speaking citizens who move here, it is necessary, at first, to conduct a separate study. On the other hand, the migration

54 Asylum Act (ENG and GER) https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_asylvfg/index.html

55 Antoshchuk I.A. Analysis of the mechanism of migration of Russian-speaking computer scientists to the UK. Monitoring of public opinion: Economic and Social Change. 2017. 1. P. 140-155. (RUS) https://monitoringjournal.ru/index.php/monitoring/article/view/361/349

mechanisms in Antoshchuk's research do not take into account migration in general and refer to the professional community in particular. In other words, it should be borne in mind that migration may be different for pioneers and followers but considered in a broader context than the author of the mentioned article.

A.1.3. Motives and Factors of Emigration

In addition to the mechanisms and channels of migration, there are also different motives for migration. Motives for migration are the sum of individual reasons that lead a person to decide to leave. For some categories, migration channels and their motives are the same (for example, this works for highly qualified specialists, research workers, and other migrants).

The motives for migration should not be confused with its factors. Traditionally, migration factors are divided into two subcategories: push-factors and pull-factors. In the sense of this theoretical division, each personal motive for migration is made up of the sum of circumstances or influence of social, economic, political, cultural, and other factors pushing out of one country and making another one more attractive for life. On the one hand, the motives for migration are very individual and more and more individualized every year, as the researchers emphasize. Emigration is becoming a lifestyle, a conscious choice of a different personal trajectory than that of "grow where you are planted".

On the other hand, according to studies, economic and socioeconomic factors (standard of living, income and pensions, access to education, medical care, quality of life in general) have had a predominantly strong influence on the formation of the motivation to emigrate for a long time. It is essential to understand to what extent today the reason to leave Russia is determined not only by economic factors and the general level of wellbeing but also by political factors. In addition, researchers highlight that in recent years push factors have prevailed over pull factors: this means that people

are moving not because of the attractiveness of life in some other country, but because of the inability to organise their lives the way they do like or seem acceptable in the country of origin. The factors and motives that drive Russians to move abroad are analysed in more detail in the following sections.

A.1.4. Resources

Finally, one of the characteristics of migration is the resources that a particular person or household has to have in order to move. Among the crucial resources, researchers highlight:

- economic (availability of funds, an employment contract, other forms of financial support in the form of scholarships, grants or direct financial assistance, the ability to rent or buy housing, invest in a business, and so on),
- social (connections and contacts, involvement in diaspora, professional or other support networks, contacts with organizations, including NGOs or charitable organizations that help to emigrate or integrate, and others),
- informational (access to up-to-date information about channels and methods of immigration, required documents, etc.),
- professional (education, proficiency in a profession and foreign languages, additional skills, patents for inventions or licenses for certain types of activities, etc.),
- legal (judicial reasons for obtaining a certain status in the selected country).

Florinskaya and Karachurina also allocate personal resources (experience, individual characteristics, etc.) as resources, which also affect the trajectory of a migrant in the host country.[56]

56 Florinskaya Y. F., Karachurina L.B. A new wave of intellectual emigration from Russia: motives, channels, and mechanisms. Monitoring of public opinion: Economic and social changes. 2018. 6. P. 183-200 (RUS). https://doi.org/10.14515/monitoring.2018.6.09

These (and possibly other) general characteristics of migration show how diverse this phenomenon is. Of course, social researchers consider migration as one of the mass processes: each individual choice to change the country somehow fits into one of the many patterns, the totality of which resembles the game of "bingo". Successful migration requires a satisfactory constellation of different characteristics of migration: first of all, the availability of many resources and getting into the "correct" migration channel. Even with the presence of high motivation to leave the country of origin and move to the country of choice, the existence in this country of an extensive network of professional or diaspora support may not always play a decisive role.

A.1.5. Emigration Sentiments

That is why another dimension of migration arises: the presence in the country of origin of many highly motivated people to leave for various reasons but do not have sufficient resources to make this life choice. It is impossible to count the number of such people, even according to the many existing indirect indicators. Since statistics do not work for this group of people, researchers use the term "emigration sentiment".[57] This term has no other empirical expression other than the question "Would you like to leave?" or "Are you going to leave the country soon?" As emphasised above, the desire to leave has little to do with successful emigration, so "emigration sentiment" rather speaks of the situation within the country than of the scale of real emigration.

Sharp and multiple changes and jumps characterise emigration sentiment, often associated with specific events (political: such as elections, voting on various issues, protests, the adoption of particular laws, etc., or economic:

57 A similar assessment can be given by analysing search queries in Google: According to Google Trends analytics, the frequency of the query „Emigration from Russia" has increased from 68 to 85 points in 10 years.

a crisis, rising oil prices, etc. other), so it is difficult to take this indicator "seriously".

Experts who talk about the growth of emigration sentiment and the number of potential emigrants usually refer to quote public opinion polls. In November 2019, the Levada Centre published survey data, according to which 53% of Russians aged 18 to 24 would like to "leave the country.[58]" This caused a lot of excitement on social media and in the press, as this figure for this age group is the highest in the last ten years. Experts and representatives of the Levada Centre say that the growth of emigration sentiments is characteristic not only of young Russians but also among the wealthy (28% want to emigrate) and respondents with higher education (26%). The study results show that 21% of the respondents among Russians of all ages would like to move abroad for permanent residence. This indicator changed many times and reached its maximum in 2013 at 22% but dropped in 2017 to 14-15%.

The same Levada Centre study shows that the number of citizens taking any steps to leave (gathering documents)[59] is relatively stable and accounts for about 1% of the number of respondents.[60] This once again shows how fleeting, on the one hand, are our ideas about those who want to leave,

58 The question was formulated as follows: "Would you like to move abroad for permanent residence?" Among the answers were "definitely yes", "rather yes", "rather no", "definitely no", and "find it difficult to answer"; only one answer was allowed. The study took place from September 26 - October 2, 2019 and was based on a representative all-Russian sample (city/village) of 1,601 people. The age of the respondents was 18 years and older. The survey was conducted in 137 settlements/50 constituent entities of Russia. (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2019/11/26/emigratsionnye-nastroeniya-4/

59 Among the steps, the researchers suggest „sometimes I think about it" (16%), „I am considering the possibility of leaving" (6%), „I made a firm decision to leave" (1%), and „I collect and draw up documents for leaving" (less than 1%); among those who „never thought about it" - 78%. It is difficult to assess to what extent „considering" the possibilities of leaving, on a permanent basis or „sometimes", can be considered as a real step towards emigration from Russia, but I will not criticise my colleagues here. (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/2019/11/26/emigratsionnye-nastroeniya-4/ .

60 According to Volkov's interview (RUS) (https://www.forbes.ru/obshchestvo/388461-vremya-uezzhat-pochemu-stolko-lyudey-hotyat-pokinut-rossiyu), according to other data – 7% (also RUS) (https://www.levada.ru/2019/11/26/emigratsionnye-nastroeniya-4/).

and, on the other hand, how much the desire/motivation to emigrate is weakly connected with actual migration flows. In an article published in 2011, Lev Gudkov, Boris Dubin, and Natalia Zorkaya analyse the structure of emigration sentiments, based on data from Levada Centre polls over several years and show that the number of people willing to leave for permanent residence in other countries did not change significantly ("I've never thought about it" – 79% in 1992, 78% in 2009, and 69% in 2011) as well as the number of people who take concrete steps to implement the emigration plan ("I collect documents for leaving" – 0% in 1992, about 1% in 2009, about 1% in 2011).[61]

VCIOM also annually publishes data on the Russian emigration sentiments. In 2020, the centre reported that 82% of Russians do not want to move abroad (their report was even titled "Dry bread at home is better than roast meat abroad".) According to their data, only 16% of the respondents thought about changing their country of residence (among respondents aged 18-24, this figure reaches 38%). For those who thought about moving, the main motives are a higher standard of living in foreign countries (50%), dissatisfaction with government policies (22%), legislation (17%), social security and stability (16%), and the level of medicine (11%). VCIOM also added that every second Russian "believes that emigration is a dishonest, unpatriotic act".[62]

It is important to emphasise this once again: emigration sentiments tell little about how many people leave the country annually or plan to do so in the near future. This indicator largely illustrates the level of dissatisfaction in the Russian external and internal politics. The higher it is, the more

61 Gudkov L., Dubin B., Zorkaya N. Departure from Russia as a social diagnosis and life perspective. Public Opinion Vestnik: Data. Analysis. Discussions. 4 (110). 2011. (RUS) https://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/vom4_0.pdf

62 WCIOM, Emigration sentiments - 2020: where he was born, there he came in handy. (RUS). https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/emigraczionnye-nastroeniya-2020-gde-rodilsya-tam-i-prigodilsya

Russians are disappointed in the reality around them, the less chance they see to change anything.

Why is it worth paying considerable attention to the basic characteristics of migration? Describing the channels, motives, factors, mechanisms, and resources of migration separately, we wanted to show that when we define migration as "political", we can fall into a terminological trap. Migration can be political, based on the channels (or legal forms) that people use to obtain official status when changing their country of residence (migration-type-A). Migration can be political if we talk about the motivation to change the country of residence (migration-type-B). If political migration-type-A is straightforward and relatively easy to determine by referring to the data of migration services, then with political migration-type-B, there are many difficulties.

The motivation for any action is a layer cake, a complex system of combinations of certain factors and inevitable consequences. It is challenging to assess the weight of the "political" factors and their influence on the decision to leave. In these attempts, we can only rely on data from qualitative research. Unfortunately, the motivation for moving and the primary factors that influenced such a decision are seldomly asked in embassies or at border crossings.

In this section, we described the main qualitative characteristics of migration and emigration, making it possible to understand how multidimensional this phenomenon is. We use these terms in this report. In the following sections, a discussion of the channels is provided concerning the mechanisms, motives, factors, and resources of migration affecting Russians moving to the EU and Germany. At this point, it makes sense to turn to official sources and see the quantitative characteristics of migration from Russia to Germany if they are available.

A.2. Migration flows from Russia to Germany: Statistics

The problems that appear while working with Russian official statistics, for which Rosstat is responsible, are known to Russian researchers both domestically and abroad. In 2019, a group of researchers named The Project conducted the most detailed research about the problems of accounting for migration.[63]

The first problem, which we have already spoken about in this text, is related to the fact that the majority of Russians who go abroad to work or study are not removed from the register in Russia and continue to be listed at the place of their registration. Reporting a dropout is optional, so only those Russians who plan to renounce Russian citizenship or obtain a second passport in another country often turn to it.

The second problem, which The Project writes in detail about, is that Russian migration statistics consider not only Russian citizens to be emigrants but also all foreign citizens who leave the country. This includes, for example, CIS citizens who came to work for a short time and then left Russia. Even if such migration is cyclical, each dropout is counted automatically (upon the expiration of the validity period of the migrant's documents).

In addition, The Project writes that the methodology for estimating emigration has changed several times in the last 10-15 years: labour migration began to be included in statistics in 2011, so the absolute figures differ significantly from year to year.

According to Rosstat, 377,000 people left Russia in 2017, including about 66,700 Russians. For the third term of Vladimir Putin's presidency, this number increased to more than 1.7 million people (including approximately 330,000 citizens of the Russian Federation). More details about these numbers are represented in this table:

63 The Project "Another Russian World": A study on how many Russians are leaving the country. Sofia Savina, 2019. (RUS) https://www.proekt.media/research/statistika-emigration/?utm_source=tlgrm&utm_medium=chnl&utm_campaign=migr

Table 5. International migration of the Russian Federation by years, the number of departures64.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Have left Russia and gone	~33,578	36,774	122,751	186,382	308,475	353,233	313,210	377,155	440,831
to the CIS	22,163*	22,568	95,572	147,853	257,324	298,828	256,480	321,018	381,918
to other countries	11,415**	14,206	27,179	38,529	51,151	54,405	56,730	56,137	58,913
to Germany	3,725	3,815	2,846	3,979	4,780	4,531	4,694	4,372	5,209

* People who have left Russia and have gone to the CIS countries, the Baltic states and Georgia.
** People who have left Russian and gone to foreign countries, with the exception of the CIS countries, the Baltic States and Georgia.

This data does not allow us to draw conclusions on how many people in this matter are citizens of the Russian Federation and the proportion of citizens of other countries leaving Russia (after the expiration of an employment contract, for example).

According to Yulia Florinskaya (RANEPA), the annual outflow of Russian citizens is between 100-120,000 people. 90% of them are not deregistered.[65]

Why the work of The Project is essential: they tried to calculate how much the Rosstat data is underestimated. To do this, they compared the data of Russian statistics with the registration of foreigners (including Russians) entering other countries. According to The Project's observations, the data on emigration from Russia is underestimated by at least six times.[66]

64 The official website of the Russian Federal Statistical Agency (RUS). https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/b19_107/Main.htm

65 Project "Another Russian World": A study on how many Russians are leaving the country. Sofia Savina, 2019. (RUS) https://www.proekt.media/research/statistika-emigration/?utm_source=tlgrm&utm_medium=chnl&utm_campaign=migr

66 Ibidem.

As of 2019, more than 21 million people (26% of the population) lived in Germany with personal migration experience or familial migration background. Migrants from Russia to Germany are about 7% of this number.

A more detailed study of these statistics provides the following results.67

Table 6. The number of residence permits issued by EU countries (and, in particular, Germany) in 2010-2019.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU	51,131	51,566	56,518	72,837	75,598	73,777	71,012	66,530	72,991	75,851
G	6,922	6,265	9,124	9,719	10,198	9,054	9,276	10,155	13,248	13,097

Every year, a significant number of Russians, many of whom are not taken into account by the statistics of the Russian Federation, receive permission to stay in the EU and Germany. According to Eurostat and German Federal Ministry for Migration, 13,097 Russians received residence permits in Germany in 2019 (of which 5,793 were for family reasons, 1,501 for education, 1,867 for connections with income-generating activities, and 3,936 for other reasons).[68]

In addition, we can refer to the data showing for how long the residence permits and different types of visas were issued.

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67 First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship (online data code: MIGR_RESFIRST), specified for only Russian citizens (ENG) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_RESFIRST__custom_851136/default/table?lang=en

68 First permits by reason, age, sex, and citizenship. The table is specified for reasons for obtaining a residence permit (the system only proposes a specification for the following reasons: “family reasons”, “education reasons”), income-generating activities (“remunerated activities reasons”), and others (“other”)) and only for Russian citizens. Statistics for earlier years are not available. (ENG) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_resfas&lang=en

Table 7. The number of permits issued to Russians to stay in Germany by duration and reasons, 2010-2019.

	Duration	Reasons				Total
		Family	Education	Economic	Other	
2019	3-5 months	221	93	58	1,247	1,619
	6-11 months	1,220	639	469	921	3,249
	12+ months	4,352	769	1,340	1,768	8,229
	Total this year	5,793	1,501	1,867	3,936	13,097
2018	3-5 months	42	84	45	245	416
	6-11 months	1,136	563	383	739	2,821
	12+ months	5,603	942	1,620	1,846	10,011
	Total this year	6,781	1,589	2,048	2,830	13,248
2017	3-5 months	41	84	45	176	346
	6-11 months	1,091	472	346	777	2,686
	12+ months	4,061	659	1,093	1,310	7123
	Total this year	5,193	1,215	1,484	2,263	10,155
2016	3-5 months	39	81	33	144	297
	6-11 months	1,079	521	363	406	2 379
	12+ months	4,339	555	956	750	6 600
	Total this year	5,457	1,157	1,362	1,300	9,276
2015	3-5 months	63	50	33	55	201
	6-11 months	1,361	226	148	132	1,867
	12+ months	5,861	328	475	233	6,986
	Total this year	7,285	604	656	509	9,054
2014	3-5 months	47	323	53	352	775
	6-11 months	1,227	1,032	442	449	3,150
	12+ months	2,876	881	732	784	6,273
	Total this year	5,150	2,236	1,227	1,585	10,198
2013	3-5 months	57	411	95	284	847
	6-11 months	1,319	1,004	641	384	3,348
	12+ months	3,578	666	668	612	5,524
	Total this year	4,954	2,081	1,404	1,280	9,719

2012	3-5 months	69	446	106	259	880
	6-11 months	1,270	887	758	377	3,292
	12+ months	3,165	644	483	660	4,952
	Total this year	4,504	1,977	1,347	1 296	9,124
2011	3-5 months	52	573	77	165	867
	6-11 months	981	584	673	258	2,496
	12+ months	1,812	317	249	524	2,902
	Total this year	2,845	1,474	999	947	6,265
2010	3-5 months	43	690	76	132	941
	6-11 months	1,036	678	783	238	2,735
	12+ months	2,054	356	195	641	3,246
	Total this year	3,133	1,724	1,054	1,011	6,922

Long-term visas and types of residence permits related to family reunification prevail. A more detailed analysis of the legal reasons for issuing a visa, for example, under the category of "family reunification", shows that only half of these visas concern families where one of the partners or the parent is an EU citizen. This means that Russians leave on educational, labour, and other permits with their families in half of the cases. It is difficult to judge how many of these "family" visas are political emigrants and whether every political emigrant from Russia has family in the EU. But, the type of legal channel is not necessarily related to the motive for changing the country.

Statistics show that since 2012 the average number of residence permits obtained by Russians in Germany has almost doubled. In addition, most residence permits are issued for a long period (more than six months).

Some data seems to be not that reliable in order to conclude the legal forms of presence for Russian citizens in Germany. For example, there is no data on seasonal workers. The number of highly qualified workers who come to Germany has never exceeded 22 per year (in 2019, it was 0 people) for education, research activity, etc.

We can try to estimate the number of Russians moving to Germany (on a temporary or permanent basis) using another indicator: the number of valid residence permits at the end of the year.

Table 8. The number of residence permits valid at the end of the year issued to Russian citizens in Germany by year.[69]

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
171,667	174,468	178,527	182,267	187,177	187,364	197,687	203,361	179,767

The given figure indicates that about 180,000 Russians who retain Russian citizenship remain in Germany annually. It is not possible to estimate at what point in time they arrived. We also cannot say for how long they will stay, whether that would be until the moment their current residence permits will expire or longer than that. That's why we don't have a basis for understanding their integration strategies in Germany and their ideas about their future in Europe.

In other words, all available statistical data does not allow us to accurately judge how many Russians are permanently in Germany and analyse the structure of this population for reasons and legal channels of immigration.

A.3. Other countries

It is difficult to assess which countries Russians emigrate to most often. This complexity is caused by discrepancies in the methodology for determining this indicator. If we talk about the countries with the largest Russian-speaking populations, these are Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Latvia, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, Moldova, Lithuania, Israel, and

69 All valid permits by reason, length of validity, and citizenship on 31 December of each year. The table is built only for Russian citizens and only those staying in Germany. Main variable is "MIGR_RESVALID". (ENG). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_RESVALID__custom_851798/default/table?lang=en

Germany. But obviously, the list of these countries is associated with historical developments: the collapse of the Soviet Union, mainly, or migration due to ethnic roots, and, to a lesser extent, with political emigration.

According to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) data cited above, the most popular destinations for leaving Russia are the CIS countries, China, North Korea, Germany, Vietnam, Turkey, and the United States (but, we need to emphasize, Rosstat data does not take citizenship into account). According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the most significant number of residents from Russia live in Canada, Greece, Poland, and the United States.[70]

Researchers from the Atlantic Council cited the United States, Canada, Germany, all EU countries, the Pacific, Turkey, the Baltic States, and Latin America as the most popular regions ("geographic target countries").[71]

To see which countries are the most attractive for Russians in the EU, we can refer to the official statistics on the issuance of residence permits (temporary residence permits). According to Eurostat, the following European countries issue the most significant number of residence permits to Russians.

Among European countries (except for those countries for which data is not available and the UK), Germany is obviously in the leading position.

70 Among the OECD countries. (ENG) https://stats.oecd.org/#

71 Atlantic Council Report „Putin's Exodus: A New Brain Drain," John Herbst, Sergei Erofeev, 2019. (ENG or RUS) https://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/putinskiy-iskhod/putinskiy-iskhod.pdf

Table 9. The number of residence permits issued to Russians in the EU*, 2012-2019.[72]

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2019
Germany	9,124	10,198	9,276	13,248	13,097
Netherlands	–	–	2,003	2,456	–
Czech Republic	5,211	6,040	8,772	–	–
Spain	5,037	5,691	5,442	–	–
Poland	2,059	3,633	4,045	–	–
Italy	4,639	3,795	2,981	–	–
Austria	2,956	2,622	2,774	–	–
Cyprus	–	1,206	2,337	–	–
Latvia	2,732	5,104	1,653	–	–
Sweden	1,876	1,651	1,533	–	–
Bulgaria	2,572	3,207	1,509	–	–
Hungary	764	1,501	1,160	–	–
Estonia	940	908	1,051	–	–
Belgium	1,319	1,148	1,046	–	–
Greece	1,095	1,378	1,009	–	–
Lithuania	944	2,368	971	–	–
Luxembourg	–	2,368	971	–	–
Denmark	556	523	484	–	–
Slovenia	3,488	685	472	–	–
Ireland	254	376	422	–	–
Portugal	403	461	381	–	–
Romania	145	134	220	–	–
Croatia	–	–	165	–	–

* no data available for Finland, Slovakia and Malta.

72 First permits by reason, age, sex, and citizenship. The table is built for Russian citizens who have received a permit to stay in one of the EU countries for the first time. The variable for updating the form is „migr_resfas". There are no statistics for all countries except Germany for 2019. There are no statistics for Germany from 2008 to 2019. (ENG) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_resfas&lang=en

www.initiative-quorum.org