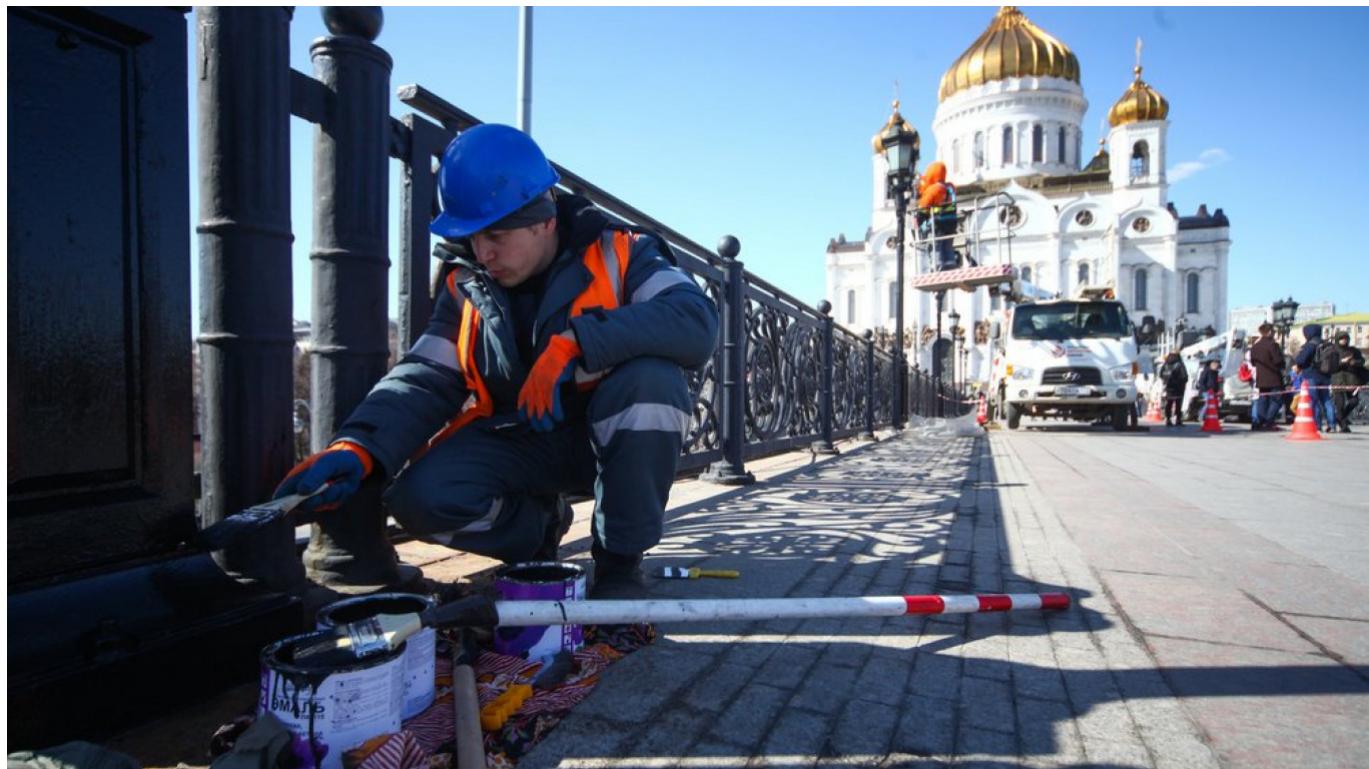


Russia's Migrant Numbers Hit Record Low in 2018

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Russia's migrant numbers have declined by the highest amount in the post-Soviet period last year as the country grapples with its own population crisis, the *Vedomosti* business daily reported on Monday.

For the first time in a decade, migration has been unable to cancel out Russia's population decline. Faced with the need for up to 300,000 additional people to reach net-zero growth every year, the Kremlin [reportedly](#) plans to attract up to 10 million Russian-speaking migrants by 2025.

Related article: [Kremlin Seeks Russian-Speaking Migrants to Offset Population Decline](#)

A total of 124,900 foreigners arrived in Russia last year, according to research from the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) institute of social analysis and forecast [cited](#) by *Vedomosti*.

While arrivals declined by 4 percent between 2017 and 2018, departures skyrocketed by 16.9 percent, the institute said. Ukraine and Uzbekistan, formerly Russia's largest migrant-donor countries, accounted for the biggest declines.

The April-June, July-September and October-December arrival figures were almost half of those recorded in the respective periods of 2017.

Migration could grow in 2019 but will still miss the 200,000 mark, said Nikita Mkrtchyan, a researcher at RANEPA's social analysis and forecast institute.

Ukrainian, Moldovan and Georgian migrants are increasingly migrating further West instead of Russia, *Vedomosti* quoted RANEPA's joint research with the Moscow Higher School of Economics as saying.

The budding economies of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, also former migrant-donor countries, are now competing with Russia for Central Asian migrants.

Russia could recruit from Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and the Middle East — but has little experience with mass migration from countries with “such a large ethnocultural gap,” according to the joint research cited by *Vedomosti*.

RANEPA counts migrants whose temporary registration slips have expired, instead of those who have physically left Russia, as “departed.”

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