

# Russian Business Lobby Calls for Training Skilled Workers in India to Combat Labor Shortage

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Andrei Komarov **Roscongress**

A board member of Russia's leading business lobby on Thursday called on the country to open vocational training centers in allied countries like India to address its worsening labor shortage.

Andrei Komarov, a board member of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, [proposed](#) training foreign workers specifically for the Russian job market at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

Komarov called India a “natural partner” for the initiative, citing its experience in workforce training and friendly political ties with Moscow.

“India already trains specialists for other countries, and it’s absolutely friendly toward us,” Komarov, who was placed under United States sanctions in 2024, said.

Education Minister Sergei Kravtsov voiced support for the proposal. He claimed that countries across the former Soviet Union, as well as in Africa and Latin America, had expressed strong interest in Russia's vocational education system and its [Professionalism](#) federal project.

**Related article:** [Russian Firms Lure South Asian Migrants Amid Historic Labor Shortage](#)

Around 4 million students are currently enrolled in Russian vocational colleges, including more than 32,000 international students from 82 countries, according to Kravtsov.

Anti-migrant sentiment is widespread in Russia, particularly against laborers from Central Asia, who fill crucial roles in sectors like construction and agriculture.

The call to develop foreign-trained labor pipelines comes as Russia's domestic workforce continues to shrink, a trend accelerated by demographic decline and the exodus of skilled professionals following the invasion of Ukraine and ensuing Western sanctions.

Earlier this year, the Samolyot construction firm launched a pilot program to employ Indian nationals on Moscow building sites. Company executives [praised](#) Indian workers as reliable and more affordable than Central Asian workers, noting that their employment contracts prevent them from switching jobs.

Still, the program "hasn't been a super successful case," Samolyot COO Alexei Akindinov admitted, noting that many workers from India do not speak Russian.

X5 Group, one of Russia's largest food retailers and the operator of the Pyaterochka and Perekrestok grocery chains, has [started](#) hiring Indian workers for its distribution centers.

The company's president, Yekaterina Lobacheva, acknowledged that the project is still in a trial phase due to "basic language and cultural differences."

More than 4,000 Indian citizens [applied](#) for jobs in St. Petersburg last year alone. Indian workers have also been [spotted](#) at factories in the Kaliningrad region and in technical [roles](#) for the e-commerce giant Ozon, which employs them in warehousing and software [development](#).

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