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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15804/rop2021209>

BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN UKRAINE AND EU MEMBER STATES ON LABOR MIGRATION: CURRENT STATUS AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Key words: labor migration, European Union, bilateral agreements, EU member states, employment of foreigners.

ABSTRACT: The article reveals the issues of modern bilateral legal regulation of labor migration between Ukraine and EU member states. Bilateral cooperation can be considered the most effective, because it takes into account the actual problems between the participants and is focused on specific subjects. The existing agreements are analyzed, their common and distinctive features are singled out, and the advantages and disadvantages of such agreements are revealed. The author substantiates the conclusion in the article that the Association Agreement does not grant Ukrainian citizens the right to free employment on the territory of EU member states and to free movement within the EU for this purpose. Nothing in the Association Agreement can be interpreted as such that acts as a basis for free employment of Ukrainian citizens.

The author has analyzed the agreements that are currently in force with the member states of the European Union, and based on this analysis, he derived the author's classification, which divides the agreements according to their key characteristics. According to the criterion, author distinguished four types of agreements: cooperation agreements (Belgium); migration flow management agreements (Spain); agreements on mutual employment of citizens and labor activity (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic); temporary migration agreements (Portugal). The shortcomings of the relevant agreements and ways to improve the future content of such agreements have been identified.

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The author established interrelation between the agreements concluded in the same period and also allocated the questions which should be fixed in the future bilateral agreements. The article argues that international treaties governing the protection of the rights of migrant workers and employment regulate the basic procedural issues of employment of foreigners in their territory, the requirements for them, as well as the rights he is granted if such requirements are met.

The author also identifies ways to develop bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and EU member states, paying special attention to the following areas: development of the international legal framework with the member states of the Union; institutional cooperation; implementation of international and European norms and standards.

INTRODUCTION

The European vector of Ukrainian development is one of the main directions of its foreign policy and also determines the necessity of certain changes in bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and EU member states. Today, one of the most pressing issues in the relevant area of activity is the labor migration regulation. As of 2019, there were approximately six million Ukrainians working abroad (More than 6 million Ukrainians can already work abroad, 2019). EU member states such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, Germany, Portugal are particularly popular for employment. Such figures serve as an alert signal about the growing number of Ukrainian migrants abroad, which requires the state to improve international cooperation with European countries in order to protect its citizens who work there. The author takes into account the growing cooperation between Ukraine and the EU, in particular the signing of the Association Agreement, and considers it appropriate to pay attention to the settlement of the issue of labor migration in the Agreement provisions. Today it actually is a fundamental legal act governing relations between Ukraine and the EU and regulates a considerable range of issues. At the same time, it does not act as a *permit* for the free employment of Ukrainian citizens in the EU. The Association Agreement does not grant Ukrainian citizens the

right to free employment on the EU member states territory and free movement within in the EU for this purpose. None of the provisions of the Association Agreement can be interpreted as a basis for the free employment of Ukrainian citizens.

At the same time, it provides certain issues related to labor migration. Thus, according to Article 16, there is a need for joint management of migration flows. In particular, special attention is paid to the issue of cooperation between the EU and Ukraine in the exchange of views on the illegal employment of migrants. In addition, there are specific provisions for the protection of the migrant workers' rights. In accordance with the article 17: *According to the laws, conditions and procedures which apply in the Member State and in the EU, the treatment of Ukrainian workers who are lawfully employed on the Member State territory should be free from any discrimination based on nationality. This applies to working conditions, remuneration or dismissal as compared to nationals of that Member State* (European Parliament, 2014). That is, if Ukrainian migrant workers comply with EU requirements, the Association Agreement is a guarantee of their labor rights and the granting of national treatment, along with secondary acts of EU law.

There are several reasons for such poor regulation of labor-migration issues in the Association Agreement. Firstly, the issue of the relevant sphere is the competence of the member states. Accordingly, the EU cannot regulate it unambiguously in the Association Agreement, because the decision to employ third-country nationals is made and regulated by each member state individually. Secondly, the absence of a relevant issue in the Association Agreement is an attempt to protect national labor markets from a large migrant workers flow, because migration is already a serious challenge for the EU in the context of protecting the rights of its own citizens and defending national security. Therefore, the absence of provisions regarding the employment of Ukrainian citizens is also aimed at protecting the EU from foreign migration.

In view of all the above, it can be emphasized that the signing of bilateral agreements between Ukraine and EU member states should be an effective and efficient way to address the issue of foreign workers employment at the Ukraine-EU level. However, Ukraine does not pay enough

attention to the preparation and adoption of such agreements, which makes this topic relevant and practically necessary for Ukrainian society.

It should be noted that some aspects of the issue were considered by such Ukrainian researchers: O. Abrashka, N. Bezrukova, O. Vyshniakov, O. Darmoris, A. Dmytriiev, Y. Zvonar. A. Kuzminskyi, Iu. Kuzminskyi, O. Kupets, N. Mushak, M. Pitulych, O. Polishuk, I. Sadova, V. Svichkar, L. Falalieieva, V. Formaniuk etc.

Despite the papers of the mentioned experts, the topic of bilateral cooperation on labor migration between Ukraine and the EU member states is not enough covered and requires detailed research, especially taking into account the constant changes that take place in the international relations.

CURRENT STATUS OF BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN UKRAINE AND THE EU IN THE FIELD OF LABOR MIGRATION

Bilateral cooperation is the most effective, because it takes the actual issues between the parties and is focused on specific actors, unlike multilateral cooperation, which tries to take into account the interests of many participants, but is less focused on narrow issues. At the current stage of development of bilateral relations between Ukraine and EU member states the issue of labor migration and its separate aspects is settled with such countries: Belgium, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and the Czech Republic. There was also an Agreement between Ukraine and Slovakia, but it was terminated in 2008 based on the Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine No. 72/14–612/1–3449 of 2007 (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2007). The author also mentions a number of social security agreements concluded with Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Portugal and some other EU member states. Now the government is working on bilateral agreements on labor migration regulation with Bulgaria and Ireland. In 2018, Ukraine and Germany signed a social security agreement. In general, Ukraine has concluded bilateral agreements to regulate labor migration and employment of citizens with seven EU member states.

In fact, this number of agreements is low given the fact that there are twenty-seven countries in the EU. N. Shvets notes that the passivity in ensuring the protection of the migrant workers' rights and the low number of relevant bilateral agreements make migrant workers unprotected from a legal side (Shvets, 2018). Bilateral legal regulation with twenty member states on labor migration issues is absent or not developed properly. It may create problems in various aspects of protection of labor rights of Ukrainian workers abroad.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

However, the issue is relevant not only to the availability, but also to the content of the relevant agreements. Most of them are quite similar in both content and structure. Therefore, some politicians have expressed the idea that some of the agreements should be regarded as models for further cooperation. For example, the Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine (April 14, 2016 – August 29, 2019) A. Reva noted that the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Employment and Cooperation in the Field of Labor Migration from 2018 is a model for cooperation in the labor migration field with EU countries (Reva, 2018). However, the author considers that in order to understand whether the agreement can really serve as a model for the further development of bilateral cooperation, it is necessary to consider the existing agreements.

Although there are a small number of documents, it is possible to classify them according to different characteristics. We propose to classify them according to the focus of the norms on the protection of the migrant workers' rights and the subject matter of the agreement. According to the first criterion, existing international instruments can be divided into two categories. The first category includes agreements which protect migrant workers originating from both states (i.e. Ukrainian migrants in the territory of the other Party and workers of citizens of the other Party in Ukraine). It includes almost all the bilateral agreements Ukraine has concluded with EU member states on the employment of foreign work-

ers (Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Spain, Belgium). The second category includes only such agreements that protect the rights of workers who originate from only one state. The agreement with Portugal is an example of such a document. Its provisions relate only the rights of Ukrainian workers on the territory of Portugal and do not regulate the issues of migrant workers who are natives of Portugal in Ukraine. Now this category includes only one instrument, but we assume that the expansion of cooperation on the issue of labor migration and the conclusion of bilateral agreements will supplement the relevant category with new ones.

By subject matter, the relevant agreements can be divided into four categories:

- 1) cooperation agreements (Belgium)
- 2) agreements on management of migration flows (Spain)
- 3) agreements on mutual employment of citizens and labor activities (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic);
- 4) agreements on temporary migration (Portugal).

Social security agreements also can be classified as a separate category (Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic).

First of all, we are interested to review the cooperation agreements, where Belgium is an interesting example, because the instrument of cooperation between Ukraine and the mentioned state is the Declaration Between the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of Ukraine and the Federal Ministry of Employment and Labor of the Kingdom of Belgium on Cooperation in the Field of Labor from 2002. In the Declaration, the parties agreed to promote cooperation in the field of labor through the exchange of experience, information, and documentation. According to Article 1 of the Declaration: *The parties agree that cooperation will extend to labor issues: labor contracts, safety and health, industrial collective relations, employment and unemployment, support for gender policies, labor inspection, etc.* The parties also provide for periodic meetings (once every two years) to resolve topical issues in the labor sector (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2002). In general it can be noted that the Declaration establishes relations on labor issues between the states, but does not prop-

erly regulate the employment of citizens or certain guarantees of their labor rights.

Turning to the second category of agreements, consider the Agreement between Ukraine and Spain on Regulation of Labor Migration Flows between the Two Countries from 2009, which applies to workers who are citizens of one of the parties and have the appropriate permission to work on the territory of the other Party with a previously signed employment contract with employers of this party, namely permanent and seasonal workers, as well as interns. In addition, the agreement contains a specific list of categories of persons to whom its provisions do not apply, in particular: refugees, artists, sailors, employees of diplomatic and consular institutions, priests, religious leaders, as well as persons studying or performing advanced training, research or retraining (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2009). The relevant provision is important for understanding the scope of persons covered by the agreement. In addition, such provisions are similar to the international legal regulation of labor migration, established at the universal level (United Nations, 1990 p.) and regional level (International Organization for Migration, 1977 p.), which also establishes a strict list of persons to whom the provisions of the agreement apply and those to whom they do not concern.

The agreement also regulates the rights and social guarantees of employees. The provisions of Art. 6 are important: *Employees shall enjoy the rights and benefits granted by the law of the receiving state, and without any form of discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, beliefs, trade union affiliation, origin or social status* (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2009). Consequently, it can be argued that the agreement protects the rights of workers of each party in the territory of the other party, including granting legal workers the same rights as their workers, as well as enshrining their equality.

In general, the Agreement between Ukraine and Spain on the Regulation of Labor Migration Flows between the Two Countries is a well-formulated and quite detailed document, which combines many features that are absent in similar agreements with other states. It regulates the rights and working conditions of various categories of workers, provides institutional provision of the provisions of the agreement etc.

On this basis, it can be confirmed that the relevant agreement is the deepest and detailed in content among other agreements with a similar subject of regulation. The author of the article can explain this by the fact that among all the agreements under consideration, the treaty with Spain was one of the last to be signed, attests to the fact that in developing its provisions the parties have considered the most current tendencies and circumstances, and has made the provisions of the agreement detailed and s cover a wide range of issues and to some extent overlap with international law on the protection of the rights of foreign workers.

The third category includes agreements concluded with Lithuania (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1995), Latvia (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2018), Poland (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1994) and the Czech Republic (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1996). The agreements with the three states (Latvia, Poland, and the Czech Republic) are quite similar in structure and provisions. It is stipulated that the provisions of the acts shall apply to persons permanently residing in the territory of their states and working for an employer in the territory of another state on the basis of an employment contract. Among the common features are: establishing the procedure for obtaining a work permit; peculiarities of concluding an employment contract; a number of employee rights, in particular the right to social insurance, pension security, transfer of funds to the country of origin, benefits and compensation in connection with illness, injury at work and death of the employee. Among the distinguishing features is that the Latvian agreement provides the age of a foreign worker cannot be less than 18 years old. The agreement with Poland specifies that the duration of employment of workers referred to in paragraph 1 of article 1 cannot exceed 12 months. In certain cases, this period may be extended up to 18 months at the request of the employer and with the consent of this employee.

The similarity of the three agreements can be explained by the fact that it was concluded during the same period (1994–1996). The disadvantage of these instruments is that neither guarantee foreign workers equality with their nationals, nor do enshrine a number of important rights.

According to the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Employ-

ment and Cooperation in the Field of Labor Migration from 2018, we note that the parties cooperate in the areas of ensuring the rights and interests related to employment and working conditions of workers of the Parties, providing the fight against illegal work, as well as in other areas related to labor migration. In general, some of its provisions are similar to the agreements concluded with Latvia, Poland and the Czech Republic. However, in addition, it also contains provisions relating to seconded workers, regulating their rights. In addition, it contains provisions on the cooperation procedure and the protection of personal data (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2018).

We refer the Agreement between Ukraine and the Portuguese Republic on Temporary Migration of Ukrainian Citizens to Work in the Portuguese Republic to the fourth type. In contrast to all previous agreements reviewed, this Agreement, according to Article 1, applies to Ukrainian nationals who enter Portugal temporarily for limited periods of time for the purpose of carrying out professional activities as workers for hire. The agreement establishes the procedure for concluding labor contracts and the hiring process. It also establishes the conditions for entry and residence of Ukrainian workers on the territory of Portugal.

A provision that enshrines equal treatment of citizens of Ukraine and non-discrimination is important. Thus, according to Article 7, citizens of Ukraine who migrate to the Portuguese Republic are subject to the same conditions of remuneration and labor that as Portuguese citizens. They will also benefit from the same rights and protections as citizens of the Portuguese Republic (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2003). At the same time, although an important non-discrimination clause is included, the rights of national workers are not detailed, which may present certain difficulties in protecting their rights and interests.

Such agreements also contain references to the person's place of employment. The law of the country of employment determines the form of employment contract, the permissible age of recruitment, the scope of rights and obligations of the parties, social security, the arrival of family members, entry and departure from the state, etc. (Vistak, 2014). International agreements governing the protection of the migrant workers' rights and employment regulate the main procedural issues of foreigner employ-

ment, the requirements for them, as well as the rights granted to them. It is the appropriate aspects that are similar in all agreements and in general should be present in all future ones as well.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF UKRAINIAN MIGRANT WORKERS

We should also pay an attention to bilateral social security agreements. Despite the fact that such agreements do not contain separate regulations on the employment of foreigners, it set out important issues regarding the labor guarantees of foreign workers. Let's proceed with a more detailed analysis of the Agreement between Ukraine and the Republic of Bulgaria on Social Security of 2001. The agreement covers the following issues: pension, temporary disability benefits, assistance to families with children, unemployment and death issues, etc. Other important provision is about equal rights for nationals of a state party to the agreement with nationals of another state party. In accordance with article 5 of the agreement, pensions and benefits granted in accordance with the legislation of one state party shall not be subject to reduction, suspension or termination of payments and the award of pensions and benefits to which a person is entitled under the legislation of the state party may not be denied. The agreement also stipulates that employed persons are subject to the legislation of the state party in whose territory they are engaged in employment, regardless of their place of residence. Each provision of the agreement regulates a separate type of social assistance or securement (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2001). Hence, the agreement regulates the relations on certain issues of social security between the parties, but still its provisions are not sufficiently expanded. In our opinion, it would be more appropriate to provide a wider range of social guarantees.

For a more detailed understanding, we should better consider the Agreement between Ukraine and the Republic of Estonia in the Field of Social Security dated 2010. The types of social security to which the agreement applies are listed in the initial articles. At the same time, the peculi-

arities of the national legislation of Ukraine and Estonia are taken into account when determining the list of types of social assistance. The agreement also defines the range of entities to which its provisions apply. At the same time, the norms aimed at preventing the payment of simultaneous benefits, pensions, or other compensation are prescribed (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2010).

A separate section (second) of the agreement contains specific provisions on guarantees, pensions and benefits. The provisions on the following types of issues are explained: pensions; insurance experience; compensation for damage resulting from an accident related to the performance of work duties, an occupational disease or death from these causes; unemployment assistance and reimbursement; family assistance; funeral assistance. In addition to the list of relevant issues, each article contains detailed explanations of the payment procedure and the cases in which the payment is made (The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2010).

Among other things, the agreement regulates procedural issues, in particular the procedure for applying for assistance, pension or reimbursement, as well as the specifics of the medical examination of a potential recipient of a pension or other reimbursement. In addition, the procedure for payment of pensions and other social compensations is regulated directly. Therefore, we can constitute that the Agreement between Ukraine and the Republic of Estonia in the Field of Social Security properly regulates the features and nuances that may arise in resolving social issues and not only contains legal requirements, but also regulates procedural issues. The relevant agreement can serve as a qualitative model for concluding similar agreements with EU Member States in the future.

In summary, it can be noted that the relevant categories of agreements provide for the following types of social benefits: old-age pensions; disability pensions; pensions for years of service; pensions in case of loss of a breadwinner; pensions and compensation for damage caused to the employee as a result of an occupational injury, occupational disease, and in the event of his death for these reasons; temporary disability payments (illness) for pregnancy and childbirth; assistance to families with children; unemployment compensations; funeral allowances; pensions for widows (widowers) and pensions for orphans; compensation for damage in case

of occupational injury and disease, etc. The relevant types of social benefits may differ depending on the agreement.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, having analyzed the agreements signed by Ukraine with EU member states on labor migration, we can constitute that bilateral regulation of labor migration is not at a high level nowadays. This is evidenced by the small number of agreements concluded to date and their significant shortcomings, including the lack of a specific list of rights of foreign workers and mechanisms for their protection.

Hence, there is a need to conclude bilateral agreements with other EU member states. As the EU provides and even encourages the development of bilateral cooperation, it would be appropriate for Ukraine to use such opportunities to develop appropriate cooperation in order to ensure decent working conditions, human rights standards, social guarantees, etc., for its citizens employed abroad. In addition, the development of relevant cooperation will not only become an additional mechanism for the protection of domestic workers, but will also be a boost to the new level of relations between Ukraine and the European Union. First of all, the development of bilateral cooperation should be especially developed with those countries with the largest number of Ukrainians and those with which Ukraine shares a common border, including Italy, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia (the agreement with which was denounced), and further cover all Member States.

Future agreements on employment for foreigners should regulate the procedure for obtaining a work permit, specify the list of labor and social rights of foreign workers and establish provisions on their equality with the citizens of the host country and non-discrimination. Such agreements should provide mechanisms to protect the rights of foreign workers and should also pay due attention to the family members of the foreign worker, in accordance with international law. Moreover, a special place should be occupied by the settlement of the issue of illegal labor migration. Thus, by settling the relevant issue at the bilateral level with EU member states,

Ukrainian citizens employed abroad will be able to effectively protect their rights, and the permitting procedure, if specifically provided for by bilateral legal regulation, will become simpler and clearer for ordinary people.

As a result, the prospects for cooperation between Ukraine and the EU on labor migration are within strengthening and expanding bilateral cooperation with EU member states. Such cooperation should focus on several main areas, which can be divided into the following:

- 1) development of the legal framework for bilateral cooperation with EU member states. These include the conclusion of bilateral agreements on the regulation of labor migration and social issues and all those issues that should be in the provisions of international agreements;
- 2) institutional cooperation. It should be aimed at exchanging information, providing assistance, legal and migration advice, improving statistics and encouraging domestic migrant workers to return to Ukraine.

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