# Households' transactions with the rest of the world: the case of Russia

Lydia Troshina and Natalia Kupriyanova<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

The effect of the household sector's activities on economic growth has been increasingly the subject of research in recent years.

This paper provides a general review of the Bank of Russia's practices of compiling statistical data on household sector transactions with non-residents. It also deals with some aspects of the theory of sectorising the balance of payments, particularly compiling the household sector balance of payments, and represents the result of an attempt to calculate it. Although the overall result cannot meet the users' needs and must be seriously improved, in some areas statistics on household sector cross-border transactions is quite satisfactory. The paper considers the Russian model of statistical accounting for cross-border remittances, mentioned in as the most accurate measure of the economic role played by households in transactions with non-residents. A new indicator, *personal remittances*, has been calculated according to the latest methodology recommended by international organisations and allowing for Russian conditions.

In addition, the report describes the practice of collecting statistical data on cross-border remittances by all individuals staying in Russia, both residents and non-residents. Although not dealt with specifically in international standards, this information has been highly praised by users, as it has provided them with some clues to understanding the current trends in the area of cross-border money transfers.

# Household sector balance of payments compilation options

If one sets the task of compiling a balance of payments for each sector of the domestic economy as a comprehensive description of its transactions with the rest of the world and for this purpose sectorises the country's balance of payments, the following problems will arise: (i) according to the accepted practices, foreign trade in goods and services in the current account is not sectorised; (ii) financial transactions and income from these transactions and current and capital transfers are sectorised only partly; (iii) sectorisation in the balance of payments is more aggregated than in the system of national accounts and the other sectors aggregate applies to several SNA sectors; (iv) there is no generally accepted methodology of sectorising the balance of payments transactions.

Therefore, the result of our attempt to compile the household sector balance of payments on the basis of data used in compiling the country's balance of payments has been inconclusive.

Bank of Russia.

Table 1
Households' transactions with non-residents in 2005
Bn \$

| ltem  | Balance of payments of resident households <sup>1</sup> | Cross-border<br>transactions<br>of resident<br>households <sup>2</sup> |
|---|---|--|
| Current account   |   |  |
| Trade balance   | -0,5  | -0,7   |
| Export  | 0,0   | 0,2  |
| Individual sale of personal goods (cars, antiques, etc) | 0,0   | 0,1  |
| Shuttle trade   | 0,0   | 0,2  |
| Merchandise produced by households                      |   | 0,0  |
| Import  | -0,5  | -1,0   |
| Catalogue trade   | -0,02   | -0,5   |
| Shuttle trade   | -0,5  | -0,5   |
| Other merchandise consumed by households                |   | 0,0  |
| Services balance  | -19,1   | -9,4   |
| Export  | 0,1   | 0,1  |
| Royalties and license fees                              | 0,02  | 0,02   |
| Other business services                                 | 0,1   | 0,1  |
| Other services rendered by households                   |   |  |
| Import  | -19,2   | -9,5   |
| Transportation  | -1,0  | -0,01  |
| Travel  | -17,8   | -9,4   |
| Construction services                                   |   | -0,01  |
| Insurance services                                      |   | -0,03  |
| Other business services                                 |   | -0,02  |
| Personal, cultural, and recreational services           | -0,4  | -0,01  |
| Other services received by households                   |   | 0,0  |
| Income balance  | 2,2   | 2,2  |
| Compensation of employees, receivable                   | 1,7   | 1,7  |
| Investment income                                       | 0,4   | 0,4  |
| Receivable  | 0,4   | 0,4  |
| Payable   | 0,0   | 0,0  |

Table 1 (cont)

Households' transactions with non-residents in 2005

Bn \$

| ltem                                       | Balance of<br>payments of<br>resident<br>households <sup>1</sup> | Cross-border<br>transactions<br>of resident<br>households <sup>2</sup> |
|--|--|--|
| Current transfers                          | -2,2   | -2,2   |
| Workers' remittances                       | -2,2   | -2,2   |
| Receivable                                 | 0,8  | 0,8  |
| Payable                                    | -3,1   | -3,1   |
| Other transfers                            | 0,01   | 0,01   |
| Receivable                                 | 1,0  | 1,0  |
| Payable                                    | -1,0   | -1,0   |
| Other transfers                            | -0,8   | -0,8   |
| Taxes                                      | -0,2   | -0,2   |
| Financial account                          |  |  |
| Direct investment                          | -2,4   | -2,4   |
| Abroad - purchase of real estate           | -2,4   | -2,4   |
| In reporting economy - sale of real estate |  | 0,02   |
| Portfolio investment                       | -0,05  | 1,6  |
| Assets                                     | -0,05  | -0,05  |
| Liabilities                                |  | 1,7  |
| Other investment                           | 1,1  | 1,1  |
| Assets                                     | 0,9  | 0,9  |
| Loans                                      | -0,1   | -0,1   |
| Currency and deposits                      | 1,0  | 1,0  |
| Foreign currency in cash                   | 1,0  | 1,0  |
| Deposits                                   |  |  |
| Liabilities                                | 0,1  | 0,1  |
| Loans                                      | 0,1  | 0,1  |

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For compilation the following principles are applied: for goods and services - producer/consumer principle, for income and current transfers - ultimate beneficiary/payer principle, for financial assets/liabilities - debtor/creditor principle. A lot of data are missing, mainly for goods and services account. <sup>2</sup> Compilation is based on transactor principle.

Source: Bank of Russia.

The least difficult part of the job was the capital and financial account compilation. As regards the household sector capital transfers, only the migrants' transfers are accounted for in Russia. However, the new balance of payments manual being drafted by the IMF will not consider migrants' transfers as transactions. As they will be shown in the other changes in financial assets and liabilities account, they are not analysed in this paper. In the balance of payments financial account household sector transactions are a part of other sectors transactions and they are more difficult to account for statistically than, say, non-financial corporation because households don't provide the reporting in the literal sense of the word. However, the ITRS, macroeconomic models and the surveys of households make it possible to estimate their transactions with non-residents for inclusion in the balance of payments.

Transactions with foreign assets predominate in household sector financial transactions. This particularly applies to the use of such a simple instrument as cash foreign currency. It is the balance of household sector transactions with foreign cash that is included in the balance of payments. People regard foreign exchange as both a means of payment and a store of value. It was especially so during the years when the ruble was rapidly depreciating against the major world currencies. Foreign cash is used to pay for the services related to travel and in small-scale "shuttle" trade, including the import of cars and other luxury goods by order. Migrants and short-time workers take their savings in freely convertible currencies with them when they move to another country. Individuals also actively conduct conversion and deposit transactions with the banking sector and make remittances. Three quarters of all foreign currency transactions in 2005 were conducted in US dollars, the rest in euros; the share of other currencies was negligible. In the past three years there has been a rise in household sector interest in cash euros on the market where the US dollar used to rule supreme before. Even now the dollar accounts for 97% of the foreign currency savings Russians keep "under the mattresses."

Table 2

Resident households' transactions in foreign cash

Bn \$

|  | 2001 | 2002 | 2003  | 2004      | 2005 |
|--|------|------|-------|-----------|------|
| Total households' transactions in foreign cash | -9,1 | -3,3 | -11,4 | -4,8      | -1,0 |
| Transaction with banks                         |      |      |       |           |      |
| Currency conversion                            | -2,9 | 5,4  | -2,0  | 5,5       | 8,4  |
| Withdrawn from/Placed to accounts              | 2,4  | 3,9  | 1,7   | 8,7       | 15,2 |
| Received/Paid as remittances                   | -5,4 | 1,5  | -3,8  | -3,2      | -5,3 |
| Transactions with non-residents                |      |      |       |           | -1,4 |
| Related to travel                              | -6,2 | -8,7 | -9,3  | _<br>10,3 | -9,4 |
| Related to shuttle trade, including cars       | -5,1 | -7,6 | -8,0  | -9,5      | -8,8 |
| Exports by emigrants                           | -1,0 | -1,3 | -1,5  | -0,8      | -0,7 |
| Imports by immigrants                          | -0,3 | -0,2 | -0,2  | -0,2      | -0,2 |
| Imports by short-term workers                  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,1   | 0,2       | 0,3  |

<sup>&</sup>quot;+" means increase of cash with households, "-" means decrease of cash.

Source: Bank of Russia.

Real estate in other countries is another foreign asset that has always interested the household sector. The purchases by resident households of homes and apartments abroad and expenses involved in the maintenance of housing bought earlier are considered as direct investment in the economy of the rest of the world. These assets are evaluated on the basis of the assumption that the share of expenditures on the purchase of housing inside the country and abroad in aggregate household sector current expenditures is stable while the economic situation remains stable. For the first time this share was determined on the basis of one-time matched data on the number of foreign-based housing units owned by Russian nationals as of the beginning of 2001 and the Russian Statistical Office data on annual household sector investment in housing construction in Russia.

In addition, households buy small amounts of securities issued by non-residents (portfolio investment), extend loans and keep deposits in foreign banks. These deposits are not accounted for in the balance of payments because there is no data on the further use of funds transferred by private individuals to their bank accounts abroad. It is assumed that these funds are spent entirely on real estate and foreign securities transactions and the import of services.

Household sector foreign liabilities are confined to loans. Admittedly, although the borrower is a private individual rather than an unincorporated entrepreneur, it is not clear whether it is appropriate to classify lending transactions involving private individuals as household sector transactions rather than the transactions of quasi-corporations.

Special mention should be made of the question of classifying transactions with real estate sold by residents to non-residents (bought by residents from non-residents). When real estate owned by a resident household becomes the property of a non-resident, it is assumed that a notional corporation is established and it is treated as a part of a resident non-financial corporation sector. The ensuing conflict of this real estate sector attribution (household or non-financial corporation sector) is settled by reclassification shown in the other changes in financial assets and liabilities account. But what happens first, the change of ownership or reclassification? In other words, what sector of the reporting economy passes the asset to a non-resident when it is obvious that it is the household sector that gets the money (or other compensation)? It appears that the household sector internal asset is first reclassified as a non-financial corporation asset and only then the transaction is recorded as Direct investment in reporting economy/equity, which is an impossible entry for the household sector. As a result, the balance of payments transaction is recorded as a non-financial corporation transaction rather than a household transaction.

We have spoken so far about the classification of transactions with foreign assets and liabilities by sector according to the debtor-creditor principle rather than the transactor principle. Under the transactor principle, changes in the claims and liabilities are allocated to the sector of the resident party participating in the transaction, but not to the sector of the debtor or creditor. Under the transactor principle, as applied to transactions of the households, these household transactions also include transactions with resident securities issued by other sectors of the economy but resold to non-residents by the households that play the role of intermediaries between the resident debtor and non-resident creditor. From this point of view, the sale of resident housing to non-residents, which raised so many questions in the case of the classification under the debtor-creditor principle, can be unquestionably classified as a household sector transaction.

The problem of sectorising current transactions, especially their main part, exports/imports of goods and services, has not yet been dealt with in Russia and international experience, if there is any, is not known to us. We have confronted the following difficulties, some of which we have failed to overcome.

Firstly, the fundamental question of what theoretical principle should form the basis of the classification, the transactor principle or the real economic value producer/consumer principle, remains open. The possible principles are set out here by analogy with the financial transaction classification principles described in BPM5.

In respect to exports/imports of goods, the question is put like this: should we classify as household sector transactions only the goods to which the ownership title passes directly from a household to a non-resident (or vice versa), according to the transactor principle, or, according to the final consumer principle, in the case of imports, all goods intended for domestic consumption by households, including those bought from non-residents by, say, foreign trade companies?

The first approach is possible in principle. As for the second, it can only be discussed theoretically, because a vast amount of goods imported may be consumed by various sectors of the domestic economy. In the first case, the same standards are used for the export and import classification by sector, in the second, different standards are used, which means asymmetries.

The same applies to international trade in services: the first approach is possible, whereas the second is not, for the reasons stated above (the accounting methods used today cannot tell us for which sector communication services, for example, have been imported). At the same time, only the final consumer principle fits in the definition of services as outputs that are realised by the activities of producers at the demand of the consumers. Under the final consumer principle, travel services, for example, will mostly be allocated to the household sector (with the exception of, perhaps, the part of expenses that cover the accommodation of corporation employees on business trips). Under the transactor principle, payments for the tours transferred to non-residents by tourist companies and other payments by intermediaries should be treated as non-financial corporation travel service imports rather than the country's households travel service imports.

These arguments are not at all exhaustive as far as the methodology of foreign trade sectorisation is concerned, but they pinpoint the problem and show that the transactor principle is the only possible solution.

As for separating resident household transactions from the transactions of all sectors of the economy accounted for in the balance of income and current transfers of the balance of payments, there are also two possible principles known from the previous analysis of the financial transactions and foreign trade in goods and services: the transactor principle and the ultimate beneficiary/payer principle. Humanitarian aid received from non-residents by the general government sector and reallocated to households may serve as an example of the different classifications by sector under these two different principles. However, in respect to the income and current transfers account, these classifications are closer than in respect to the other current account components and this makes it possible to compile this part of the household sector balance of payments according to both principles.

The abovementioned methodological and information problems in separating foreign trade transactions of the household sector from the transactions of all sectors with non-residents have become so obvious that the need to upgrade statistics in this field has been recognised at the highest level. Specifically, the G8 Summit, held in 2004, set the task of improving statistics on remittances.

# Compilation of a new aggregated indicator of personal remittances

In response, international statistical forums such as the Balance of Payments Committee, the United Nations Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Natural Persons and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts put forward the proposal to change the effective balance

of payments methodology in respect to accounting for current transfers and calculate the aggregated indicator of personal remittances as a memorandum item of the balance of payments.

The concept of personal remittances was introduced by the United Nations Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Natural Persons and includes all household-to-household transfers (current and capital) as well as net compensation of employees (net of taxes on income, social security contributions, travel and passenger transportation). At the same time, it was proposed to replace the balance of payments component of workers' remittances with a new component of personal transfers that covers all current household-to-household transfers.

The experimental calculation of the aggregate of personal remittances was made on the basis of Russia's balance of payments time series.

Table 3

Comparison of available data on remittances

Bn \$

|   | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| A. BOP data (BPM5)  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Income - compensation of employees  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Receivable  | 0,6  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 1,2  | 1,7  |
| Payable   | -0,5 | -0,5 | -1,0 | -1,8 | -3,6 |
| Current transfers - other sectors   |      |      |      |      |      |
| Workers' remittances  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Receivable  | 0,4  | 0,2  | 0,3  | 1,1  | 0,8  |
| Payable   | -0,4 | -0,8 | -1,3 | -2,7 | -3,1 |
| Other transfers   |      |      |      |      |      |
| Receivable  | 0,1  | 0,5  | 0,9  | 1,2  | 2,0  |
| Payable   | -0,8 | -1,0 | -1,3 | -1,3 | -2,1 |
| Capital transfers - other transfers - other                               |      |      |      |      |      |
| Receivable  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  |
| Payable   | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  |
| Total receivable (BPM5)   | 1,1  | 1,4  | 2,0  | 3,5  | 4,5  |
| Total payable (BPM5)  | -1,7 | -2,3 | -3,6 | -5,8 | -8,7 |
| B. Personal remittances, receivable and payable (new methodology)         |      |      |      |      |      |
| Personal remittances, receivable  | 0,7  | 0,6  | 0,8  | 1,6  | 2,6  |
| Net compensation of employees   | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,5  | 0,5  | 0,7  |
| Compensation of employees   | 0,6  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 1,2  | 1,7  |
| less  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Taxes on income   | -0,1 | -0,1 | -0,1 | -0,1 | -0,2 |
| Import of travel services   | -0,2 | -0,2 | -0,2 | -0,6 | -0,8 |
| Personal transfers  | 0,4  | 0,2  | 0,3  | 1,1  | 1,8  |
| Workers' remittances  | 0,4  | 0,2  | 0,3  | 1,1  | 0,8  |
| Other household-to-household transfers*                                   | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 1,0  |
| Other transfers   | 0,1  | 0,5  | 0,9  | 1,2  | 2,0  |
| less  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Humanitarian aid, contributions to different organizations, pensions, etc | 0,1  | 0,5  | 0,9  | 1,2  | 0,9  |
| Capital transfers   | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  |

Table 3 (cont)

# Comparison of available data on remittances

Bn \$

|   | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Personal remittances, payable   | -0,6 | -1,0 | -2,0 | -4,1 | -6,8 |
| Net compensation of employees   | -0,2 | -0,3 | -0,7 | -1,4 | -3,0 |
| Compensation of employees   | -0,5 | -0,5 | -1,0 | -1,8 | -3,6 |
| less  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Taxes on income   | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,1  | 0,2  |
| Export of travel services   | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,5  |
| Personal transfers  | -0,4 | -0,8 | -1,3 | -2,7 | -3,9 |
| Workers' remittances  | -0,4 | -0,8 | -1,3 | -2,7 | -3,1 |
| Other household-to-household transfers <sup>1</sup>                   | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | -0,8 |
| Other transfers   | -0,8 | -1,0 | -1,3 | -1,3 | -2,1 |
| less  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Humanitarian aid, contribution to different organizations, etc        | -0,8 | -1,0 | -1,3 | -1,3 | -1,2 |
| Capital Transfers   | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  | 0,0  |
| C. Remittances without qui pro qua via banks and in cash <sup>1</sup> |      |      |      |      |      |
| Payed   |      |      |      |      | 7,5  |
| by residents via banks  |      |      |      |      | 3,1  |
| by non-residents staying in Russia via banks (estimate)               |      |      |      |      | 2,5  |
| by non-residents staying in Russia in cash (estimate)                 |      |      |      |      | 1,9  |
| Received  |      |      |      |      | 2,7  |
| by residents via banks  |      |      |      |      | 2,2  |
| by residents in cash (estimate)                                       |      |      |      |      | 0,1  |
| by non-residents staying in Russia via banks (estimate)               |      |      |      |      | 0,4  |
| D. Deviation of different data  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Receivable remittances  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Total (BPM5)  | 1,1  | 1,4  | 2,0  | 3,5  | 4,5  |
| Personal remittances (new methodology)                                | 0,7  | 0,6  | 0,8  | 1,6  | 2,6  |
| Remittances without qui pro qua via banks and in cash                 |      |      |      |      | 2,7  |
| Payable remittances   |      |      |      |      |      |

#### Table 3 (cont)

#### Comparison of available data on remittances

Bn \$

|   | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total (BPM5)  | -1,7 | -2,3 | -3,6 | -5,8 | -8,7 |
| Personal remittances (new methodology)                | -0,6 | -1,0 | -2,0 | -4,1 | -6,8 |
| Remittances without qui pro qua via banks and in cash |      |      |      |      | -7,5 |

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Some data for 2001-2004 are not available due to lack of reporting.

Source: Bank of Russia.

The compilation of the new component was not difficult as far as Net compensation of employees was concerned, because statistical data on taxes paid by employees and travel exports and imports were collected on a regular basis. As for expenditures of the short-time workers in the host country, such as passengers' transportation related to short-term employment, this item seems to be important for the cross-border workers who regularly (daily or weekly) bear these expenses. In our case when a worker stays abroad (a foreigner stays in Russia) for three to six months on average, the separate accounting for the expenses involved in transportation across the border is not so important, the more so since apparently only one-way transportation payment (back home) is to be deducted from gross compensation of employees.

However, the evaluation of Other household-to-household transfers posed the problem of determining the non-resident's sector. The data collected via banking statistics do not single out resident household sector transactions with non-resident households. This transfer was calculated by the residual method as the difference between total household sector transfers and the estimate of transactions unrelated to transfers between households of different countries.

The disseminated statistical data on remittances are compared with the actual transfers through banks and the estimated value of informal cash transfers that bypass banks. Remittances without qui pro qua via Banks and in Cash included both data on the actual bank transactions and estimates. The estimates concerned the adjustment of the value of non-resident transfers for the purpose of singling out gratuitous transfers and determining the value of cash carried by private individuals. As a result, we have determined the value of gratuitous cross-border remittances (bank transfers and cash) received by private individuals (separately by residents and non-residents) staying in Russia and the value of transfers (bank payments and cash) made by the same persons from Russia to other countries.

The comparison of the different principles of presenting data on household-to-household remittances in 2005 shows that personal remittances (new methodology) are considerably smaller than remittances (BPM5). Personal remittances received are smaller by 43% and personal remittances paid are smaller by 21%. These discrepancies are due to the fact that Other transfers included in remittances (BMP5) are not disaggregated into the remittances of the household sector and other sectors. In addition, Personal Remittances (new methodology) include Compensation of Employees (COE) net of taxes and travel.

As for the Russian remittances data collection system, it takes into account all operations conducted by private individuals through banks. By analysing these flows, we can judge about the extent of the involvement of households in banking sector operations and the level of their financial literacy. This allows us to determine the interrelationship between the donor

countries and recipient countries. The total turnover of transactions conducted by private individuals is \$23.9 billion, while the transfer turnover accounts for 34% of this amount.

The comparison of Personal Remittances (new methodology) and Remittances without qui pro qua via Banks and in Cash shows that the latter exceed the former, especially in respect to the remittances paid. This discrepancy is due to the miscoding of transactions for the purpose of evading taxes and customs duties and to capital flight. Private individuals formally declare their remittances as transfers, whereas in reality they are earnings from exports or payments for imports. Chinese residents engaged in cross-border "shuttle" trade, for instance, frequently use the banking sector to transfer to their relatives their earnings from the sale of goods and a single transaction of this kind may exceed \$1 million. Consequently, it is necessary to disaggregate and exclude these transactions from total household sector transfers, because they do not fit in the definition of a transfer.

## Russia's remittances data collection system

Data are collected through special bank reporting, which was introduced in 2004 and covers all Russian banks. The Russian data collection system is not based on the ITRS principle because the huge amount of transactions conducted by private individuals could create problems for banks in processing data. The advantage of the system is that there is no threshold and even the smallest transfers can be accounted for. Since banks report not only the value but also the number of transfers in the form, it is possible to calculate the average value of a transfer made through each reporting bank.

The remittances included in the form are split into incoming and outgoing and resident and non-resident. Resident remittances are disaggregated by purpose into six major types of private individual transactions:

- payment for goods;
- payment for services;
- grants, donations, amends, scholarships,
- pensions, alimony, legacy and gifts;
- compensation of employees;
- real estate purchase/sale;
- other transactions.

Non-resident transactions are not disaggregated by type, because banks cannot receive detailed information about the purpose of their remittances from their non-resident customers.

Since 2006 data have been disaggregated into sender country data and beneficiary country data for the purpose of registering remittances and determining the principal partner countries.

In addition, the Bank of Russia conducts surveys of the money transfer market participants (banks, money transfer operators (MTO), and post offices) with the objective of determining additional transfer characteristics, such as singling out short-term workers' transactions (non-resident workers staying in Russia for less than one year). Other relevant information is also collected (commission charged, remittance delivery times, the number of offices) that allows the Bank of Russia to monitor the development of the cross-border transfer market as a whole. Special attention is paid to the MTO. Statistical data are collected on each MTO and in aggregated format they are put on the Bank of Russia website as an additional statistical indicator.

In the analysis of Russia's money transfer market the problem of sender/receiver residence is of secondary importance. Transfers made by both residents and non-residents (temporarily staying in Russia) are taken into account, with the emphasis laid on the amount of money transferred. Gratuitous remittances are singled out. These data have many users.

### Some aspects of personal cross-border transaction statistics in Russia

Remittances from Russia exceed by far remittances to Russia. The negative balance, which has expanded during the past five years, testifies to the increased role of employment in Russia for countries with a smaller economic potential.

The economic, geopolitical and demographic situation in Russia has turned this country into a magnet for migrant workers from the former Soviet republics. Only a part of all migrants coming to Russia every year arrive for permanent residence. In the past eight years the number of such migrants has steadily declined, because most of them are ethnic Russians returning to Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union. The other migrants arriving in Russia are foreign workers. Unlike the migrants who arrive for permanent residence, the number of migrant foreign workers has been steadily growing in recent years. In the past three years alone the number of migrant workers coming to Russia has more than doubled.

The effect of migration trends on growth in the amount of remittances may be judged by the example of four countries that are the principal labour donors and, consequently, the main recipients of money transfers from Russia. These countries account for 51% of the total amount of remittances from Russia in 2005 and 40% of total migrant workers.

| Table 4                      |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|                              | Growth of number of entries of foreign workers, 2005/2004, % | Growth of remittances via<br>money transfer systems,<br>2005/2004, % |  |  |  |
| Ukraine                      | 163  | 150  |  |  |  |
| Uzbekistan                   | 228  | 214  |  |  |  |
| Tajikistan                   | 245  | 222  |  |  |  |
| Moldova                      | 154  | 210  |  |  |  |
| Total for selected countries | 185  | 188  |  |  |  |

Source: Bank of Russia.

Statistics show that both ratios increase almost at the same rate in the group as a whole and in each country in particular. Moldova stands out among these countries, as growth in transfers to that country far surpasses growth in the number of migrant workers from it, a process that may be attributable to the intensification of market operators' activity in this direction. Migration and transfer trends coincidence indicates that the amount of remittances depends on growth in migrant workers.

Growth in the number of migrants and their earnings required the establishment of the channels for the transfer of their money to their home countries and considerably facilitated the development of the money transfer system. Russia's territory size is another contributing factor. A migrant who works in Russia's Extreme North may have only formal channels to transfer his money through.

There are formal and informal channels for cross-border transactions between private individuals. The formal channels are the post offices, banks and money transfer operators;

the alternative ways are taking money out of the country by private individuals themselves and using informal systems.

The overwhelming majority of cross-border remittances registered in Russia are made via banks. MTOs make all cross-border remittances through the banking system.

Historically, unofficial remittances from Russia have been the principal means used by working migrants to transfer money to their families abroad. Most of the unofficial remittances are made in the following ways:

- foreign currency cash is exported/imported either by migrants or by their trustees (eg, wages of several migrants are imported to the country by one migrant who is returning home);
- foreign currency is transferred through transport workers, such as bus drivers or conductors.

The reasons for using unofficial remittances by working migrants are the following:

- the presence of the documents essential for official remittances (most of the migrants are staying in the country illegally);
- discredit upon banking services due to ignorance of banking procedures;
- difficulty in dealing with bank operators due to the poor knowledge of Russian and low literacy level of migrants.

Besides, the commission taken by the most wide spread and well known systems is very high (in contrast to Russian systems that are at the initial stage of development) what also induces unofficial remittances.

#### Conclusion

The result of our attempt to compile the household sector balance of payments on the Russian balance of payments' data has been inconclusive. The main problem is sectoring current transactions, especially their main part, exports/imports of goods and services. Practically only the transactor principle should be used, because a vast amount of goods imported may be consumed by various sectors of domestic economy. But this principle doesn't fit in the definition of services where the final consumer principle is more applicable. It is possible to compile income balance and current account balance according to both the transactor and the ultimate beneficiary/payer principle.

The experimental compilation of personal remittances was successfully made on the basis of Russia's balance of payments time series. It turned out that personal remittances are considerably smaller than remittances (BPM5) and remittances without qui pro qua via banks and in cash, because of excluding transactions, which doesn't fit in the definition of a household-to-household transfer.