

2015

State  
Commission on  
Migration Issues

# 2015 MIGRATION PROFILE OF GEORGIA

*Tbilisi, Georgia.*

## **Acknowledgments**

The development of the Migration Profile 2015 could not be possible without participation and assistance from all the members of the State Commission on Migration Issues,<sup>1</sup> who not only provided the major share of the data presented in the current document, but also contributed valuable recommendations on how to better interpret the data in order to present the most comprehensive picture of migratory processes in the country.

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And finally, the State Commission on Migration Issues would rely on experience and recommendations of international organizations, local civil society and academia representatives involved in migration management related activities, to further improve the Migration Profile (MP) development process and ensure that the document serves as a reliable resource for all stakeholders involved in the field of migration, be it academic research, teaching, policy development or management.

*State Commission on Migration Issues*

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the State Commission on Migration Issues: Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), State Security Service (SSSG), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees (MRA), Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoH), Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues (OSMDI), Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Office of the State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration (OSMEAI), Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD), Ministry of Finance (MoF), National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat), Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2015 Migration Profile of Georgia (MP 2015) was developed by the State Commission on Migration Issues with the support of ICMPD ENIGMMA<sup>2</sup> Project. It covers a five year period (2010-2014) and provides the most recent data collected by all relevant Georgian state organizations involved in migration related policy development, management or data collection. At the same time, in order to present a comprehensive picture of migratory processes to and from Georgia, MP utilized results of social research organizations (both local and international) as well as data collected by the World Bank, UN DESA, Eurostat and other EU or UN agencies, or other relevant organizations.

Migration Profile 2015 presents relevant data and analysis to all interested parties to create a comprehensive picture of an important period in development of migratory processes to and from Georgia – a transition from a solely transit and emigration country to a country of immigration. Migration to and from Georgia is also becoming more diversified in terms of countries of origin and destination, and type of emigration or immigration. Georgia is also continuously improving its international protection mechanisms and sets policies to accommodate needs of both immigrants and return migrants, to ensure their successful integration and reintegration. At the same time, the profile identifies policy areas and data collection gaps that need to become a topic for further research and analysis.

Out of major findings and recommendations presented in the last part of the Profile, following bear crucial importance to contribute to improved evidence based policy making:

- Results of 2014 National Census data to be available in Spring 2016, will provide information on population dynamics, and possibility to evaluate the pace of emigration, immigration and return migration in the country during the last 12 years;
- Improved migration data collection opportunities (for example, launching of Unified Migration Analytical System [UMAS] in 2016) will enable regular migration data collection and analysis to identify trends and serve as a basis for migration risk analysis and prevention;
- Impact of immigration and emigration on various fields of social, cultural and economic life of the country is becoming more visible, and requires more thorough investigation both from a policy development and academic perspective;
- With a sizable number of Georgian population residing abroad, further development of diaspora engagement environment as well as facilitation of sustainable return migration projects are required.

During the development of Georgia's Migration Profile 2015, existing MP formats developed by IOM, Prague Process (Extended MP and MP Light) and European University Institute's Migration Policy Centre, served as a useful resource that helped to shape the final structure of the document. Approach used during the development of Georgia's Migration Profile 2015 paid more attention to providing explanations to identified trends, rather than presenting raw data. Migration Profile Guidelines, elaborated by the SCMI Secretariat provide a further background on development of a medium format MP that is flexible enough to take into account prevailing migratory contexts of the countries, and hence, serve as reliable resource to support both the evidence based policy making and academic research and teaching.

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<sup>2</sup> Enhancing the Georgia's Migration Management.

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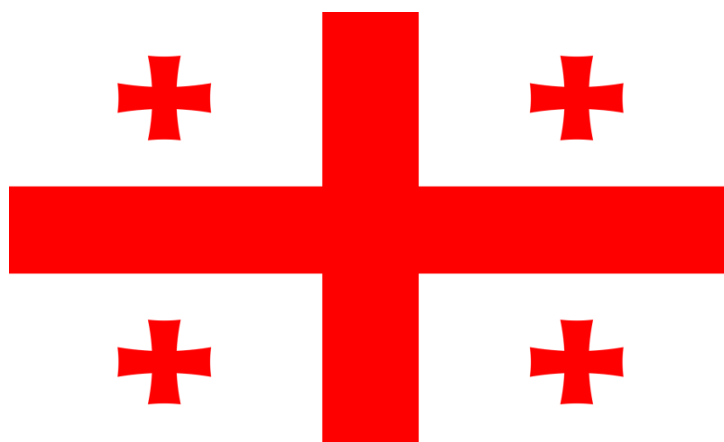
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## List of Acronyms

<b>AA</b>	Association Agreement
<b>COI</b>	Country of Origin Information
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CRRC</b>	Caucasus Research Resource Centres
<b>DAAD</b>	German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst)
<b>DCFTA</b>	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>ENIGMMA</b>	Enhancing Georgia's Migration Management (project funded by the European Union under the Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation Programme and implemented by ICMPPD)
<b>ERASMUS</b>	European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport
<b>ETF</b>	European Training Foundation
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU MS</b>	European Union Member States
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
<b>FRAN</b>	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
<b>FRONTEX</b>	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEL</b>	Georgian Lari (currency)
<b>GINI</b>	Coefficient, Measurement of Income Distribution
<b>GoG</b>	Government of Georgia
<b>GeoStat</b>	National Statistics Office of Georgia
<b>HDI</b>	UNDP Human Development Index
<b>IBM</b>	Integrated Border Management
<b>ICMPD</b>	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
<b>ID</b>	Identification Card
<b>IDFI</b>	Institute for Development of Freedom of Information
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IHS</b>	Integrated Household Survey
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISSET</b>	International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University
<b>LEPL</b>	Legal Entity of Public Law
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
<b>MIA</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
<b>MoJ</b>	Ministry of Justice of Georgia
<b>MRDI</b>	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
<b>MRA</b>	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia
<b>MoESD</b>	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
<b>MoES</b>	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance of Georgia
<b>MPC</b>	Migration Policy Centre
<b>NAPR</b>	National Agency of Public Registry (MoJ)
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

<b>NBG</b>	National Bank of Georgia
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OSMDI</b>	Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues
<b>OSMEAI</b>	Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration
<b>PSDA</b>	Public Service Development Agency (MoJ)
<b>SCMI</b>	State Commission on Migration Issues
<b>SSSG</b>	State Security Service of Georgia
<b>TACIS</b>	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>TEMPUS</b>	European Union's programme which supports the modernization of higher education in the EU's surrounding area (2007-2013)
<b>TIG</b>	Targeted Initiative for Georgia
<b>UMAS</b>	Unified Migration Analytical System
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN DESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VLAP</b>	Visa Liberalisation Action Plan

## GENERAL COUNTRY INFORMATION<sup>3</sup>



Georgia: Key Facts	
Area	69,700 sq. km
Land borders	1,814 km
Bordering countries	Armenia (219 km)
	Azerbaijan (428 km)
	Turkey (273 km)
	Russia (894 km)
Coastline	310 km
GDP per capita at current prices	3,676.2 USD (as of 2014)
Population	3,729,500 (as of Jan. 2015) <sup>4</sup>
Ethnic composition (2002 census data)	Georgian - 83.8%
	Azerbaijani - 6.5%
	Armenian - 5.7%
	Russian - 1.5%
	Other - 2.5%
Capital	Tbilisi
Population of the capital	1,118,300 (as of Jan. 2015)
Official languages	Georgian, Abkhaz (in the Autonomous republic of Abkhazia)
Natural increase rate	3.1% (as of Jan. 2014) <sup>5</sup>
Urban population	57.4% (as of Jan. 2015)
President	Giorgi Margvelashvili
Prime Minister	Irakli Garibashvili

<sup>3</sup> General country information: Guidebook on Legal Immigration, SCMI 2015.  
([http://migration.commission.ge/files/immigration\\_eng.pdf](http://migration.commission.ge/files/immigration_eng.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=152&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=152&lang=eng)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=152&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=152&lang=eng)



## PART A: MIGRATORY TRENDS

### A1. Background

It is difficult to single out the sole factor contributing to emigration and/or immigration from/to Georgia. Rather, these factors are complex, and range from economic to societal, from political to personal. There were periods in Georgia's recent history when emigration was mainly caused by political instability and security threats (the most recent – in 2008, as an aftermath of 2008 Russia-Georgian war). Since then, country has achieved relative political stability, and other factors, such as economic and societal, became more prominent in shaping migratory processes to and from Georgia.

Compared to the countries, that mainly attracted and is attracting Georgian migrants, Georgian economy could provide relatively limited employment opportunities, remuneration, social benefits or the quality of life. In order to overcome this situation, notable economic reforms were implemented in Georgia, which addressed stipulation of attractive business environment in order to enhance foreign direct investment inflow, create new jobs, stimulate entrepreneurial activities in various fields of economy and increase the welfare of citizens. The positive results of implemented reforms and initiatives in Georgia are reflected in various international rankings (e.g. "Doing Business 2015" placed Georgia on 15<sup>th</sup> among 189 countries).<sup>6</sup>

By public spending on healthcare, Georgia ranks fairly well in the world. In 2012 and 2013, the shares of the health expenditures in the GDP were 8.2% and 9.4% respectively.<sup>7</sup> A universal healthcare program has been introduced in 2014 as a part of the health insurance reform. The program has increased the access to the healthcare for the disadvantaged groups of the population.

Quality of public secondary education in Georgia needs further improvement - Georgian secondary school students generally receive below the average scores during the international tests (for example, PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study).<sup>8</sup> However, the quality of tertiary education seems to be improving – for instance, the ranking of the leading Georgian university - Tbilisi State University – went up significantly from 2,006<sup>th</sup> (in 2013) place among the world universities to 830 in 2014, and from 713<sup>th</sup> to 349 place among European universities.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, Georgian higher education institutions have started to attract a relatively high number of education immigrants. Level of internationalization of the educational system has a tendency to grow. The share of international students enrolled at Georgian higher educational institutions is steadily increasing and in 2014 constituted 7.6% of the total student pool, up from 1.6% in 2010 (MoES).

According to UNDP Human Development Index (HDI),<sup>10</sup> calculated based on assessment of three key dimensions: life expectancy, mean years of schooling and gross national income per capita,<sup>11</sup> in 2013 Georgia ranked 79<sup>th</sup> among 187 countries. With its score, Georgia falls into the group of countries with the high HDI (with mean HDI score of 0.735), although lags behind the group showing very high human development (with mean HDI score of 0.890).

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.doingbusiness.org/~media/GIAWB/Doing%20Business/Documents/Annual-Reports/English/DB15-Full-Report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Geostat.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/content/schools-problems-3/24944574.html>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.webometrics.info/en/Ranking\\_Europe?page=3](http://www.webometrics.info/en/Ranking_Europe?page=3)

<sup>10</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-2-human-development-index-trends-1980-2013>

<sup>11</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

At the same time, poverty remains one of the challenges in the country. Although percentage of population living below the relative poverty line and percentage of population living in extreme poverty, as well as poverty headcount ratio based on the absolute poverty decreased during this period, “reduction in poverty mostly resulted from declines in food prices in 2012 and increases in social transfers, such as social assistance allowances and old-age pensions, and remittance inflows”.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of income and consumption, “During 2003–2009, the top 20% of the population saw their income and consumption increase by more than 26%, while the bottom 20% saw theirs increase by only 10%. For the bottom 20% of the population, much of the gain occurred during 2007–2008 due to the introduction of higher public pensions and a targeted social assistance program”.<sup>13</sup> The GINI coefficient by total consumption expenditures has remained relatively stable between 2006 and 2014, fluctuating around 0.40, with an only slightly higher maximum in 2010 (0.43).

The character of the emigration from Georgia is mainly a labour one.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, better opportunities related to education, as well as family reunification factors also contribute to emigration from Georgia. Not less important among the factors contributing to emigration, are already established migration networks that may to a great extent facilitate further emigration of Georgian nationals.

Factors contributing to immigration are related to a relative easiness of doing business in Georgia, and existence of entrepreneurial niches that are often occupied by immigrants.<sup>15</sup> Besides, educational opportunities - relatively low tuition fees and living expenses related to living and studying in Georgia, quality of education, recognition of Georgian diplomas abroad, as well as political stability and security - also attract educational migrants. However, taking into consideration a relative novelty of immigration *per se* for the country, its impact on demographic structure of Georgian population and on its economic development needs to be studied further thoroughly.

Hence, in case of both emigration and immigration, the major driving forces are related to the factors, such as quality of life, quality of education and healthcare, poverty and economic inequality, scarcity of well-paid jobs, rather than factors related to security and political stability.

## A2. Emigration

Dissolution of the Soviet Union marks the point after which Georgia gradually started to become part of a global migratory system. During the last two decades, the character, amplitude and directions of the emigration from Georgia changed significantly, and today stocks and flows of Georgian migrants could be found residing in and directed to a variety of countries. However, analysing migratory trends from Georgia is complicated due to shortage of quality statistical data

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<sup>12</sup>Asian Development Bank. Country Partnership Strategy: Georgia, 2014–2018 POVERTY ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)  
<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-geo-2014-2018-pa.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>Asian Development Bank. Country Partnership Strategy: Georgia, 2014–2018 POVERTY ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)  
<http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-geo-2014-2018-pa.pdf>

<sup>14</sup>European Training Foundation Migration and Skills in Georgia, 2012,  
[http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/226927FBAE4DA4E2C1257B4D0043A93E/\\$file/Migration&skills\\_Georgia.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/226927FBAE4DA4E2C1257B4D0043A93E/$file/Migration&skills_Georgia.pdf)  
Labadze Lasha and Tukhashvili Mirian, Costs and Benefits of Labour Mobility between the EU and the Eastern Partnership Partner Countries Country report: Georgia, 2013  
<http://www.iza.org/files/ENPIgeorgia.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Character of economic activity of immigrants is discussed in [Part B2](#) of present profile.

and varying data collection methodologies. Hence, a high degree of cautiousness is needed when using and comparing time-series and longitudinal data.

### *Overview of Emigration*

GeoStat provides annual statistics of migrant flows to and from the country (see Table 1). Major countries of origin (using citizenship as a proxy) of both immigrants and emigrants remain Georgia's neighbouring countries - the Russian Federation (RF), Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine, while migratory groups from other countries remain quite small in size.

**Table 1:** Emigrants and Immigrants by citizenship and gender, 2014

Citizenship	2014					
	Emigrant			Immigrant		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Georgia	69,855	40,221	29,634	49,706	29,047	20,659
Russian Federation	5,424	3,065	2,359	9,692	5,224	4,468
Turkey	2,395	1,785	610	4,672	3,617	1,055
Armenia	2,821	1,684	1,137	3,856	2,313	1,543
Azerbaijan	1,254	697	557	2,163	1,175	988
Ukraine	762	419	343	1,552	757	795
Iraq	333	261	72	1,777	1,491	286
USA	690	436	254	883	537	346
Greece	371	211	160	997	545	452
Iran	392	284	108	825	575	250
Other countries	4,338	2,748	1,590	5,923	3,586	2,337
Missing	69	47	22	115	71	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,704</b>	<b>51,858</b>	<b>36,846</b>	<b>82,161</b>	<b>48,938</b>	<b>33,223</b>

*Source: GeoStat*

GeoStat's net migration data has been fluctuating quite considerably during the last 10 years.<sup>16</sup> Presumably, partially these fluctuations were caused by varying data collection methodologies utilized by GeoStat during these years<sup>17</sup> and partially, by changing migratory patterns.

GeoStat does not collect information on the country of destination for emigrants, hence, it is difficult to say to which directions Georgian emigrants are headed. However, based on existing survey data and evidence of already established Diaspora and migrant networks, presumably, major destination directions for Georgian emigrants could be the former CIS, Northern American and EU countries. To address the issue the SCMI has launched work on a Unified Migration Analytical System that will strongly improve the data collection and its proper analysis.

### *Overview of Emigrants*

Overview of the stocks of the Georgian migrants abroad is based on the various sources of migrant stock data and estimates (see Table 2). According to all presented sources, the major share of individuals born in Georgia resides in Russia. Quite large numbers of Georgian citizens, or individuals, born in Georgia, can be also found in Ukraine, Greece, and Armenia. In cases of other countries, presumably, part of the emigrant stocks is composed of individuals from ethnic minority groups, who left Georgia as a result of break-up of the Soviet Union. In cases of other destination countries, for example, Spain, Germany, and USA – presumably, major shares of

<sup>16</sup> ICMPD 2015, The State of Migration in Georgia, [http://www.enigmma.ge/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ENIGMMA-State-of-Migration\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://www.enigmma.ge/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ENIGMMA-State-of-Migration_DRAFT.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> ICMPD 2015.

emigrant stocks are composed of either labour, or educational emigrants, or emigrants who left Georgia for family reunification purposes.

**Table 2:** Georgian emigrants by selected country of residence, 1990-2013

		UN DESA <sup>1)</sup>		UN DESA <sup>1)</sup>		UN DESA <sup>1)</sup>		UN DESA <sup>1)</sup>		World Bank <sup>2)</sup>		MPC <sup>3)</sup>
	Type of data	1990	Type of data	2000	Type of data	2010	Type of data	2013	Type of data	2010	Type of data	2012
Russian Federation	B	656,888	B	625,298	B	441,793	B	436,005	n/a	644,390	B (2002)	628,973
Ukraine	B	76,612	B	72,826	B	68,386	B	67,875	n/a	72,410	C (2001)	6,446
Greece	C	23,963	C	21,283	C	36,628	C	37,912	n/a	41,817	B (2006)	13,254
Armenia	B R	1,603	B R	67,525	B R	36,329	B R	37,277	n/a	75,792	-	-
Uzbekistan	B	31,462	B	25,154	B	23,288	B	23,175	n/a	-	-	-
Cyprus	B	3,802	B	6,950	B	13,388	B	17,994	n/a	13,497	-	-
USA	B	7,691	B	11,346	B	14,386	B	14,907	n/a	25,310	B (2011)	14,270
Germany	B	1,410	B	10,482	B	13,255	B	13,406	n/a	18,164	C (2012)	17,163
Spain	B	104	B	523	B	10,168	B	10,621	n/a	10,702	B (2012)	10,501
Turkey	B R	5,868	B R	6,443	B R	8,740	B R	9,512	n/a	7,295	C (2011)	1,740
Israel	B R	25,921	B R	21,123	B R	9,328	B R	9,479	n/a	26,032	B (2005)	44,462
“Other South” <sup>4)</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	98,123	-	-
<b>EU 28</b>		<b>39,695</b>		<b>50,566</b>		<b>100,313</b>		<b>108,728</b>		<b>95,992</b>		-
<b>World</b>		<b>890,120</b>		<b>913,777</b>		<b>734,065</b>		<b>738,733</b>		<b>1,058,300</b>		<b>767,489</b>

Type of data: foreign-born population (B), foreign citizens (C), UNHCR refugees (R), not available (n/a)

**Sources:** UN DESA 2013, World Bank 2010, Migration Policy Centre 2013, own calculations.

1) UN DESA, 2013. Including occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Estimates refer to 1 July of the reference year, namely 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2013;

2) World Bank, 2010. Data based on the 2008 revision of UN DESA's data on International Migrant Stock and Ratha and Shaw (2007). Latest available data as of October 1, 2010. No indication whether occupied Georgian regions Abkhazia or Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia are included;

3) Migration Policy Centre, 2013, based on national data. No data given for Armenia, Uzbekistan and Cyprus. No indication whether occupied Georgian regions Abkhazia or Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia are included;

4) Ratha and Shaw distribute “unidentified” migrants, i.e. those of which the country of origin or destination is unknown, between countries. This produces estimates for Georgian emigrants in unspecified countries, in this case, e.g. if someone does not or cannot provide information on his/her country of birth or citizenship.

## ***Regular emigration***

### *Visa applications*

In 2014, compared to 2010, the refusal rate for total uniform *Schengen* visas (including multiple entry uniform visas) for Georgian citizens travelling to *Schengen states* decreased and constituted 12.7%.<sup>18</sup> The share of refusals for multiple entry uniform visas constitutes about a third of all refusals. At the same time, the refusal rates of the EU member states varies significantly ranging from the highest 20.7% and 19.8% in cases of Netherlands and Lithuania respectively, to the lowest 4.5% and 5.6% in cases of Poland and Germany respectively (see Table 3). Overall, in 2014, *Schengen* state consulates, located in Georgia, issued slightly more than 80,000 visas, the majority being single entry visas. Germany, Italy and Netherlands consulates issued the biggest number of

<sup>18</sup> European Commission; Migration and Home Affairs;

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm)

visas compared to other *Schengen* state consulates, with Italy leading in issuing multiple entry uniform visas.

**Table 3:** Types of visas and issuance rates by *Schengen* state consulates, located in Georgia, 2014

<i>Schengen</i> state consulate	Uniform visas applied for	Total uniform visas issued (including Multiple Entry Visas)	Multiple entry uniform visas (Multiple Entry Visas) issued	Total Long Term Visas issued	Uniform visas not issued	Not issued rate for uniform visas	Share of Multiple Entry Visas among visas not issued
Czech Republic	7,832	6,709	605	0	1,123	14.3%	9.0%
Estonia	1,651	1,535	588	0	104	6.3%	38.3%
France	7,661	6,710	1,836	9	942	12.3%	27.4%
Germany	16,739	15,795	3,143	1	943	5.6%	19.9%
Greece	10,048	8,672	600		1,376	13.7%	6.9%
Italy	14,906	12,886	9,338	2	2,018	13.5%	72.5%
Latvia	4,127	3,871	962	1	255	6.2%	24.9%
Lithuania	4,741	3,726	1,471		941	19.8%	39.5%
Netherlands	17,888	13,924	5,615	1	3,708	20.7%	40.3%
Poland	3,890	3,715	1,393	0	175	4.5%	37.5%
Switzerland	3,643	3,424	704	2	217	6.0%	20.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,126</b>	<b>80,967</b>	<b>26,255</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11,802</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>32.4%</b>

Source: EC

### Residence Permits

Stocks of educational and highly skilled emigrants, emigrants leaving for family reunification purposes tend to be more regularized than labour emigrants, especially those employed in domestic and care work. According to Eurostat data on immigrants based on the country of birth or citizenship, in 2014 there were 45,974 Georgian citizens residing in the EU countries. At the same time, Eurostat does not provide data for several countries,<sup>19</sup> including UK where presence of Georgians might be visible as well; hence, we estimate number of Georgian citizens in the EU countries to be higher than estimated.

As studies suggest, Georgian nationals migrating to the OECD countries tend to be more qualified than those, migrating to former USSR countries.<sup>20</sup>

As the Table 4 below demonstrates, compared to 2010, in 2013 number of all types of residence permits issued to Georgian nationals by the EU MS slightly increased. More visible increase is in the category of permits issued based on family reasons - almost 38%, followed by increase in permits issued for the purpose of subsidiary protection - 34%.

<sup>19</sup> Data for Cyprus and Greece is presented based on national statistical office estimations.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration\\_profiles/Georgia.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Georgia.pdf) p.2.

**Table 4:** Residence permits of Georgian citizens in the EU-28

Year	Education Reasons	Family Reasons	Remunerated Activity	Refugee Status	Subsidiary Protection	Other	Total
2010	3,687	17,114	17,511	1,741	462	12,576	53,091
2011	3,445	19,248	19,131	1,727	440	13,438	57,429
2012	3,967	21,013	17,847	1,856	420	14,950	60,053
2013	4,146	23,949	19,098	1,894	621	16,327	66,035
2014	3,844	15,723	15,892	2,022	629	11,163	49,273 <sup>21</sup>

*Source: Eurostat, All Valid Permits by Reason*

### Russia

According to all existing estimates and statistical data (see Table 2 above) Russia continues to host the biggest number of emigrants from Georgia based on foreign born category. However, according to the Federal Migration Service of Russia, by November 10, 2015, there were 43,762 emigrants from Georgia<sup>22</sup> residing in Russia – 26,371 males and 17,391 females.<sup>23</sup> Most emigrants from Georgia are of active working age between 18 and 49 years old. Compared to emigrants from other CIS countries present in Russia, number of emigrants from Georgia in Russia is rather low.<sup>24</sup> Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service data indicate that in 1997-2014, 201,046 Georgian citizens migrated to Russia, while 29,137 left Russia during the same period.<sup>25</sup> These figures fit the higher estimates of Georgian emigrants in Russia (see Table 2 above), pointing to large numbers of naturalisations.

Number of emigrants from Georgia migrating to Russia before 2000, when Russia introduced visa regime for Georgian citizens, was quite stable and fluctuated around 20,000-25,000 individuals per year (see Graph 1). Starting from 2001 however, number of emigrants from Georgia to Russia decreased by half, reaching its lowest number in 2004 (4,886). Number of emigrants moved up again in 2007 and 2008, and by 2014 showed a tendency to stabilize at around 10,000 emigrants per year.

<sup>21</sup> 2014 data are not complete. As of October 2015, no data for 2014 for Greece, Hungary, Netherland, and Austria was uploaded on Eurostat.

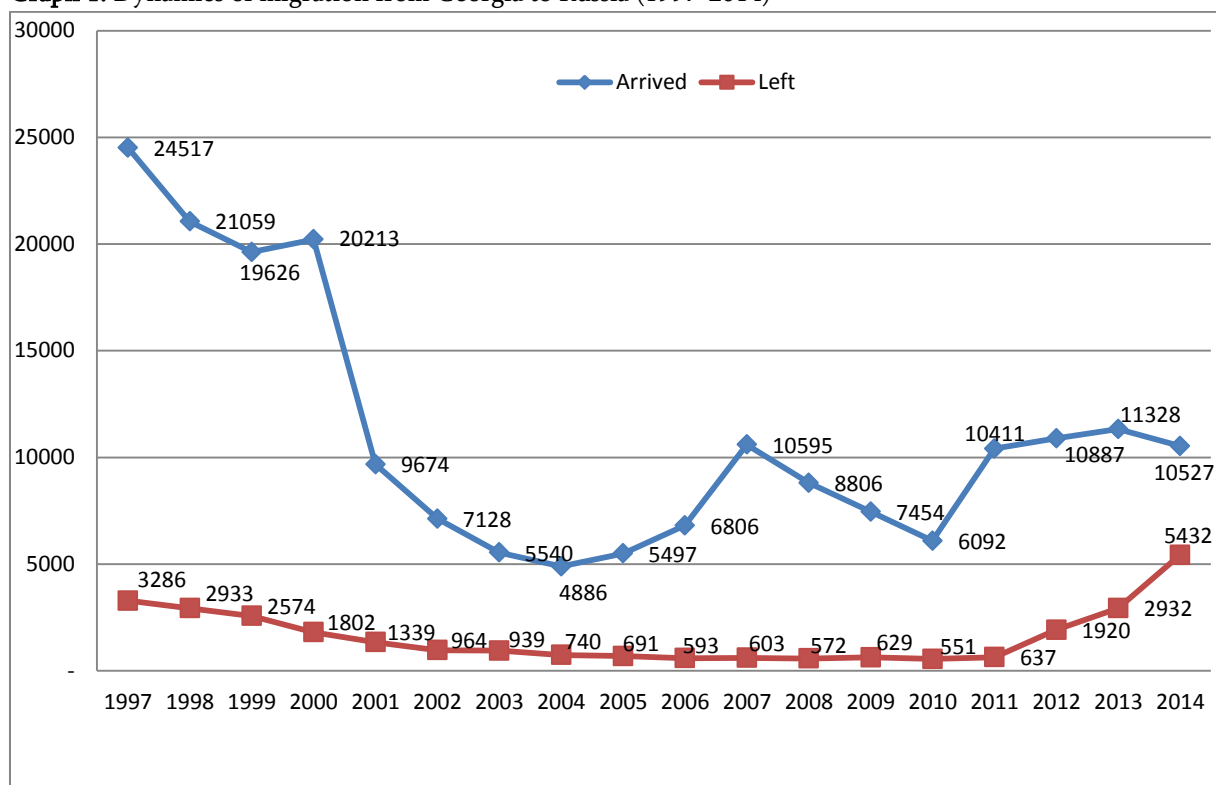
<sup>22</sup> These and further data in this section includes numbers of emigrants from the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/data/details/54891/>

<sup>24</sup> For example, there were more Azerbaijani (554,364) and Armenian (535,135) citizens in Russia by August, 6, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/#](http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/#)

**Graph 1:** Dynamics of migration from Georgia to Russia (1997-2014)<sup>26</sup>



*Source: Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service*

### USA

According to the US Homeland Security data, starting from 2003<sup>27</sup> to 2013, 15,560 Georgian nationals obtained legal permanent residence status in the US.<sup>28 29</sup> In 2013, out of 1,368 Georgian nationals, 734 obtained<sup>30</sup> legal residence permits as immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (819 cases out of 1,341 in 2012) and 354 Georgian nationals – under the Diversity program (270 cases out of 1,341 in 2012). At the same time, between 2001 and 2015, 8,161 Georgian nationals won in the US Green Card Diversity lottery.<sup>31</sup> Presumably, not all of them eventually settled in the US, although we could assume that the majority of the winners did obtain their legal residence status. Based on these data, a minimum of 15,000 Georgian citizens might be legally present in the US by now. Number of undocumented Georgian citizens residing in the US is difficult to estimate. That the number of Georgian nationals in the US is relatively sizeable is partially supported by the fact that there are 23<sup>32</sup> Georgian Diaspora organizations in the US serving their needs.

### ***International protection***

According to the UNHCR, there were 7,791 asylum seekers from Georgia in open asylum procedures in other countries at the end of 2014. As the table below suggests, number of Georgian citizens applying for asylum has a tendency to fluctuate quite significantly yearly. The lowest

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/#](http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/#)

<sup>27</sup> In the statistics of the US Homeland Security prior to 2000, Georgian nationals were aggregated either as nationals of Russian Empire (1820-1920), or USSR (1920-1990), or Russia (1991-1999). See: 2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. Office of Immigration Statistics. Homeland Security. 2013, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2013-lawful-permanent-residents>

<sup>29</sup> 2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. Office of Immigration Statistics. Homeland Security. 2013, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2013-lawful-permanent-residents>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.green-card.com/green-card-lottery/winners-and-statistics/distribution-of-winners-2011-dv-2011/>

<sup>32</sup> Diaspora organization data provided by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues. For more details, see section [Diaspora Engagement](#) of present profile.

number of asylum applications was made in 2006 (5,382), while the biggest number of application was lodged in 2009 (15,735), coincidentally, a year after the 2008 Russian-Georgian war. Rejection rate on the applications lodged by asylum seekers from Georgia vary (see Table 5 below).

**Table 5:** Number of pending applications (Start and End of Year), applications during the year and rejections

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 <sup>33</sup>
<b>Start of Year</b>	3,022	3,501	3,079	3,892	4,123	5,375	8,349	7,214	2,958	4,238	11,394
<b>Applied during the year</b>	11,716	9,311	5,382	5,513	9,225	15,735	10,195	8,504	14,094	12,592	12,377
<b>Positive decisions (total)</b>	1,056	1,513	653	663	871	2,252	849	606	516	556	675
<b>Rejections</b>	6,852	5,886	3,749	3,763	5,902	8,182	6,151	4,930	6,779	6,896	7,641
<b>Otherwise closed</b>	3,721	4,087	2,040	1,454	1,305	4,969	2,701	3,620	5,296	4,811	5,132
<b>Total decisions</b>	11,607	11,486	6,442	5,880	8,078	15,403	9,701	9,155	12,591	12,263	13,448
<b>Recognition rate<sup>34</sup></b>	13%	20%	15%	15%	13%	22%	12%	11%	7%	7%	8%
<b>Rejection rate<sup>35</sup></b>	87%	80%	85%	85%	87%	78%	88%	89%	93%	93%	92%
<b>End of Year</b>	2,791	3,011	4,386	4,066	5,086	4,759	7,195	2,953	4,583	11,571	7,791

Source: UNHCR, 2014

In 2014 most asylum seeker applications were lodged in the following EU countries: Germany (3,180), France (2,849), Greece (1,264), Sweden (1,123) and Poland (709). During the last five years, France, Germany and Poland have been the most popular destinations for Georgian asylum seekers, with Sweden emerging as the most recent destination country for asylum seekers.

**Table 6:** Georgian Asylum Seekers' Applications, Top Countries (Applied during the year)

Persons applied during year (all countries)	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
France	3,686	2,467	1,097	555	463	542	1,790	1,737	3,995	4,069	2,849
Greece	323	1,897	428	1,559	2,241	2,170	1,360	1,121	893	990	1,264
Poland	56	78	64	51	59	4,213	1,082	1,735	3,577	1,210	709
Germany	974	614	313	231	298	638	751	527	1,430	2,486	3,180
Russian Fed.	24	27	138	586	2,684	3,580	1,353	626	450	330	216
Switzerland	731	397	287	199	481	638	642	281	715	745	466
Sweden	403	183	134	143	291	520	456	412	748	830	1,123
Austria	1,731	0	0	400	511	975	370	261	300	257	417
Belgium	326	294	267	160	222	327	396	418	497	378	543
Cyprus	785	990	681	546	275	241	110	37	19	6	6
Netherlands	73	213	156	66	64	412	611	233	252	238	333
Slovakia	989	258	209	134	119	98	63	62	61	34	14
<b>Total (All Countries)</b>	<b>11,716</b>	<b>9,311</b>	<b>5,382</b>	<b>5,513</b>	<b>9,225</b>	<b>15,735</b>	<b>10,195</b>	<b>8,504</b>	<b>14,094</b>	<b>12,592</b>	<b>12,145</b>

Source: UNHCR, 2014

According to Eurostat, in the EU member states number of asylum applications of Georgian citizens also has a tendency to decrease – from 10,830 in 2012, to 9,115 in 2013 and to 8,555 in

<sup>33</sup> Pending data for 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Recognition rate = positive decisions divided by total of positive and rejections, excluding otherwise closed cases.

<sup>35</sup> Rejection rate = rejections divided by total of positive and rejections, excluding otherwise closed.



2014. At the same time, statistical data for 2014 shows that Georgia has been removed from the list of top 15 countries of origin of asylum applicants in the EU-28.<sup>36</sup>

According to UNHCR Population Statistic Database, over the course of the last eleven years, total number of recognized refugees from Georgia (including refugee-like situations)<sup>37</sup> has been fluctuating between 6,626 (2004) and 15,020 (2009). Number of recognized refugees declined by about 30% in 2010 and continued to decrease in following years, mainly due to the decline in the number of recognized refugees in Russia, Germany and the USA.

The largest group of Georgian refugees in 2014 was residing in France, followed by Austria, the Russian Federation, the USA, Canada, Germany and Greece. There have been several quite visible changes in the refugee statistics that need further research to arrive to balanced conclusions. For example, change in the number of recognized refugees in Russia in 2009-2011, or declining number of refugees in Germany starting from 2012 or in the US from 2009 on.

**Table 7:** Georgian refugees abroad, Top Countries

Country of Residence	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
France	998	1,516	1,668	1,786	1,889	2,105	2,153	2,249	2,391	2,571	2,714
Austria	153	226	291	377	532	654	730	774	819	788	788
Russian Federation	238	119	120	205	670	2,329	2,478	1,900	1,404	762	537
USA	791	817	1,289	1,093	1,111	1,091	928	802	693	608	496
Canada	245	290	297	471	486	501	495	506	504	485	474
Germany	2,639	2,664	1,173	1,385	1,509	1,943	2,034	2,105	2,202	333	343
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	31	84	264
Sweden	77	96	106	139	148	165	173	177	170	158	161
Italy	41	41	41	55	65	89	84	89	90	109	130
Netherlands	713	693	467	366	282	216	173	146	117	111	89
Other countries	731	839	888	5,933	5,906	5,927	1,392	1,351	840	769	702
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,626</b>	<b>7,301</b>	<b>6,340</b>	<b>11,810</b>	<b>12,598</b>	<b>15,020</b>	<b>10,640</b>	<b>10,112</b>	<b>9,261</b>	<b>6,778</b>	<b>6,698</b>

*Source: UNHCR, 2014*

Considering the overall stable number of refugees, asylum seekers and asylum applicants together, the following major observation can be made: sudden surges in the numbers of asylum applications from Georgia may be attributed to the socio-political instability within the country, in 2008 Russian-Georgian War, when the total number of Georgian asylum seekers reached its all-time peak in 2009, a year after the conflict. In 2008 and 2009 the number of Georgian asylum seekers and recognized refugees in Russia has also increased significantly presumably due to the outflow of population from the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

<sup>36</sup>[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551332/EPRS\\_BRI\(2015\)551332\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551332/EPRS_BRI(2015)551332_EN.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Persons recognized as refugees under the 1951 UN Convention/1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention, in accordance with the UNHCR Statute, persons granted a complementary form of protection and those granted temporary protection. It also includes persons in a refugee-like situation for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained. In the absence of Government figures, UNHCR has estimated the refugee population in many industrialized countries based on 10 years of individual asylum-seeker recognition.

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e48d2e6#>

## *Irregular migration by Georgian emigrants*

### EU

#### Illegal border crossings and refusals of entry

As 2015 FRONTEX “Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis” states, “As far as illegal border-crossings between BCPs are concerned, detections of Georgian nationals clearly decreased. EU Member States/Schengen Associated Countries reported 171 detections in 2014 as opposed to 235 in 2013. The total for all common and regional borders reveals an even more pronounced drop, i.e. from 686 to 376”.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 8:** Illegal border-crossing between BCPs.<sup>39</sup> Detections<sup>40</sup> reported by EB-RAN countries and neighbouring EU Member States, top ten nationalities

	2012	2013	2014	Share of total	% change on previous year
<b>Purpose of Illegal Border-Crossing</b>					
Irregular migration	366	1 565	1 868	50	19
Other	30	1 898	1 332	36	-30
Smuggling	24	584	396	11	-32
Not specified	4 879	661	125	3.4	-81
<b>Top Ten Nationalities</b>					
Ukraine	1 475	1 318	990	27	-25
Moldova	937	691	446	12	-35
Georgia	645	686	376	10	-45
Afghanistan	328	263	356	9.6	35
Vietnam	193	209	345	9.3	65
Russian Federation	510	498	334	9.0	-33
Syria	37	114	188	5.1	65
Not specified	86	193	102	2.7	-47
Belarus	198	163	100	2.7	-39
Iraq	7	3	38	1	1 167
Others	883	570	446	12	-22
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 299</b>	<b>4 708</b>	<b>3 721</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-21</b>

*Source: FRONTEX 2015 Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis, p. 40*

Based on FRONTEX data, in 2014 there was almost 40% decrease of refusals. The major reasons for refusing entry to the EU member states in the fourth quarter of 2014 are absence of valid visa or residence permit (1,986 cases, Category C) and absence of appropriate documents justifying the purpose and conditions of stay (88 cases, Category E).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/EB\\_ARA\\_2015.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/EB_ARA_2015.pdf), p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Between BCPs (Border Crossing Points) denotes 'Green Border', the external land borders outside BCP areas. [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/docs/pdf/customs\\_bgs\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/docs/pdf/customs_bgs_final_en.pdf) p.15.

<sup>40</sup> Detections at the common land borders on entry only. See: FRONTEX 2015 Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis, p. 44.

<sup>41</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Fran\\_Q4\\_2014.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Fran_Q4_2014.pdf), p. 16

**Table 9:** Refusals of entry (reported by EB-RAN countries and neighbouring EU Member States by border type and top nationalities<sup>42</sup>).

	2012	2013	2014	Share of total	% change on previous year
<b>Border Type</b>					
Land	62 463	77 100	<b>77 278</b>	89	0.2
Air	2 690	4 485	<b>5 952</b>	6.8	33
Sea	3 184	3 344	<b>3 877</b>	4.5	16
<b>Top Ten Nationalities</b>					
Russian Federation	9 226	22 977	<b>24 408</b>	28	6.2
Ukraine	19 182	19 685	<b>21 770</b>	25	11
Moldova	3 608	3 659	<b>6 763</b>	7.8	85
Georgia	9 640	9 643	<b>5 784</b>	6.6	-40
Belarus	4 972	4 450	<b>5 255</b>	6	18
Lithuania	5 259	5 372	<b>4 110</b>	4.7	-23
Uzbekistan	1 169	2 375	<b>3 056</b>	3.5	29
Armenia	1 217	1 901	<b>1 776</b>	2	-6.6
Tajikistan	1 889	1 588	<b>1 773</b>	2	12
Azerbaijan	482	770	<b>1 356</b>	1.6	76
Others	11 693	12 509	<b>11 056</b>	13	-12
<b>Total</b>	<b>68 337</b>	<b>84 929</b>	<b>87 107</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2.6</b>

*Source: FRONTEX 2015 Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis, p. 42*

Most Georgian citizens are refused entry on the land borders. In 2014, according to FRONTEX, land border refusals accounted for 3,716 cases (73%) of all refusals for Georgian nationals.<sup>43</sup>

To address this challenge, Georgian authorities have already strengthened their efforts in terms of conducting regular information campaigns. Information campaign on legal migration to EU, asylum related issues and consequences of illegal migration, is underway. The concept of the information campaign, launched in early 2013 (“Legal Migration - Best Choice” – 2013-2015), is mainly concentrated on positive aspects of legal migration and highlights negative consequences of illegal migration. The action carried out by respective ministries of SCMI is based on lessons learned from the experience of post-VLAP processes in Balkan states and Moldova. In terms of this campaign, for example, the MRA, in cooperation with the IOM, conducts information campaigns targeting the population of Georgia on the threats of illegal migration. 85 informational meetings were held from 10.02.2014 to 20.09.2015 attended by 3,374 persons. State operated Community Centres and Public Service Halls are involved in the information campaign serving as focal points for information dissemination and public meetings.

#### Apprehensions of Georgian emigrants due to irregular stay

According to data of detection of illegally present nationals in the EU member states since 2010 number of Georgian nationals detected annually in the EU member states fluctuated between 4,285 and 5,335. However, FRONTEX total border detections data reported by EB-RAN<sup>44</sup> countries and neighbouring EU Member States indicate that Georgian nationals’ detections is almost 50% less than in the previous year, down from 4,938 in 2013 to 2,465 in 2014.

<sup>42</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/EB\\_ARA\\_2015.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/EB_ARA_2015.pdf), p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Fran\\_Q4\\_2014.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Fran_Q4_2014.pdf), p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> Eastern Borders Risk Analysis Network (EB-RAN — Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova) and the Russian Federation.

**Table 10:** Illegal stay. Detections reported by EB-RAN countries and neighbouring EU Member States, by place of detection and top ten nationalities.<sup>45</sup>

	2012	2013	2014	Share of total	% change on previous year
<b>Place of Detection</b>					
Land	24 176	23 952	23 673	75	-1.2
Air	14 013	16 083	6 433	20	-60
Inland	678	863	1 029	3.3	19
Sea	568	303	288	0.9	-5
Between BCPs	699	137	141	0.4	2.9
<b>Top Ten Nationalities</b>					
Ukraine	6 883	8 159	9 824	31	20
Russian Federation	7 051	6 887	6 140	19	-11
Georgia	4 187	4 938	2 465	7.8	-50
Moldova	2 139	1 707	2 137	6.8	25
Belarus	1 534	1 487	1 394	4.4	-6.3
Uzbekistan	2 889	2 879	957	3	-67
Azerbaijan	2 345	2 261	798	2.5	-65
Turkey	1 359	1 455	696	2.2	-52
Armenia	1 677	1 737	639	2	-63
China	700	913	613	1.9	-33
Others	9 370	8 916	5 901	19	-34
<b>Total</b>	<b>40 134</b>	<b>41 339</b>	<b>31 564</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-24</b>

*Source: FRONTEX 2015 Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis, p. 41*

Agreement between the European Union and Georgia on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorization entered into force on March 1, 2011 that aims to enhance cooperation between Georgia and the EU in fighting illegal migration. Under the Agreement, Georgia commits itself to receive all persons illegally residing on the EU territory, provided that their Georgian citizenship is proven. The Agreement has been effectively implemented by the competent Georgian agencies since its entry into force, which is confirmed by the statistics – as of October 1, 2015 on more than 90% of the readmission applications positive decisions have been made.

### A3. Immigration

#### *Overview of Immigration*

For a number of years Georgia had a comparatively liberal visa regime<sup>46</sup> when citizens of more than 100 countries could enter, reside, work and study in the country without the necessity to obtain either visa or residence permit. Due to this fact, immigrants from these countries did not require to get residence permits in order to stay, work, or study in Georgia. Hence, the residence permit statistics discussed below mainly provide information on the citizens of the countries that were not part of the relaxed immigration regime.

The new Aliens Law<sup>47</sup> entered in force on September 1, 2014, with the aim to regularize migration flows. In summer 2015 several amendments were enacted, the visa and residence requirements were further developed. The amendments were made after monitoring of the implementation of

<sup>45</sup> For illegal stay, detections at the common land borders on exit only are included. See: FRONTEX 2015 Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis, p. 44.

<sup>46</sup> [Law of Georgia on the legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons](#) (2005).

<sup>47</sup> [Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons](#) (2014).

the law on Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons, as well as on the basis of proposals from different international organizations and NGOs.

Immigrant flows to Georgia are quite diversified - immigrants come from a variety of countries and consist mainly from working age population. Data on issuance of temporary residence permit demonstrate that immigrants also tend to be engaged in various activities, be it education, business or work.<sup>48</sup>

### *Overview of Immigrants*

Data on immigrant stocks in Georgia is based on different methodologies and largely consists of estimations. The results of 2014 national population census will presumably present more reliable data on the migrant stocks. The ENIGMMA “State of Migration in Georgia” report presents estimates by UN DESA and World Bank. However, the UN DESA calculates the number of immigrants based on “foreign born” category, and arrives at a number of around 190,000 (UN DESA, 2013a). This category presumably includes a part of this population that might be of Georgian origin, but born in FSU countries during the Soviet Union period, or aftermath, that has eventually moved to Georgia, that may also possess Georgian citizenship. The World Bank (2011) estimated migrant stocks for Georgia at 167,000 in 2010.

To analyse immigration stocks, the major data is provided by PSDA. PSDA collects data on issuance of residence permits (both temporary and permanent), as well as citizenships.

PSDA data on residence permits, presented in the table below, include issuance of both temporary and permanent residence permits.

**Table 11:** Residence permits issued by PSDA, 2010-2014

	Work	Education	Family reunification	Investment residence permit <sup>49</sup>	Former Georgian citizen	Lived in Georgia for the last 6 years	Special residence permit <sup>50</sup>	Total
2010	2,903	1,059	940	-	1,850	2	-	6,754
2011	4,539	657	1029	-	1,168	2	-	7,395
2012	5,091	876	961	-	840	4	-	7,772
2013	3,921	554	931	-	620	4	-	6,030
2014	4,666	1,130	1,136	54	2,282	676	181	10,125
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,120</b>	<b>4,276</b>	<b>4,997</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6,760</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>38,076</b>

*Source: PSDA*

Hence, there total number of residence permits issued by PSDA for the last 5 years is more than 38,000. At the same time, this number does not reflect accurately the number of residence permit holders, since the same person might have applied and received the temporary permit every year.

There is a certain differentiation as to nationals of which countries apply to specific residence permits. For instance, Russian citizens obtained slightly more than one third of all residence permits issued in the family reunification category (1,654 out of 4,997), besides citizens of Russian Federation obtained 70% of all residence permits (4,791 out of 6,760) as former Georgian citizens.

<sup>48</sup> For more details, see section [Economic Impact of Immigration](#) of present profile.

<sup>49</sup> Investment residence permit was introduced by new Law on Aliens, and started to be granted from September 1, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Special residence permit was introduced by new Law on Aliens, and started to be granted from September 1, 2014.

In case of work residence permits issued in the last 5 years, 6,467 out of 21,120 (30%) were issued to Chinese nationals, while in case of permits issued for educational purposes, in almost 60% of cases (2,488 out of 4,276), permits were obtained by Indian students.

In 2010-2014, 8,189 refusals to grant residence permit (approximately 17% in comparison to the total number of applications) were issued by relevant authorities (see Table 12 below). It should be further noted that the right to appeal the decision on residence permit is guaranteed by the Georgian legislation.

**Table 12:** Total residence permits refusals, 2010-2014

Year	Number of issued residence permits	Number of residence permit refusals	Total number of applications
2010	6,754	588	7,342
2011	7,395	748	8,143
2012	7,772	1,773	9,545
2013	6,030	2,745	8,775
2014	10,125	2,335	12,460
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,076</b>	<b>8,189</b>	<b>46,265</b>

*Source: PSDA*

In 2010-2014 35,769 citizens of other countries acquired Georgian citizenship through naturalization<sup>51</sup> (see Table 13). It should be noted that most of them are former Georgian citizens who terminated their previous Georgian citizenship due to acquiring foreign citizenship. The highest number of citizenships was granted in 2013, while in 2014 there was almost a 50% decrease in the naturalization of foreign citizens. Total number of applications for dual citizenship amounted to 44,818 cases, and in case of 9,049 applications, negative decisions were taken.

**Table 13:** Citizenship through naturalization, 2010-2014

Year	Number of approved naturalization applications	Number of refused naturalization applications	Total number of applications
2010	5,904	1,301	7,205
2011	8,559	1,597	10,156
2012	7,113	1,373	8,486
2013	9,626	2,412	12,038
2014	4,567	2,366	6,933
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,769</b>	<b>9,049</b>	<b>44,818</b>

*Source: PSDA*

Out of 35,769 citizenships, the overwhelming majority of citizenships - 25,992 - were acquired by Russian citizens. Citizens of Turkey, Israel, Greece, USA, and Armenia are also among the top five countries whose citizens acquired Georgian citizenship through naturalization in 2010-2014 (see Table 14).

<sup>51</sup> In this case, naturalization denotes dual citizenship cases.

**Table 14:** Top countries of origin of naturalized Georgian citizens, 2010-2014

Country	Approved applications	% of total approved applications
Russia	25,992	73%
Turkey	3,033	8%
Israel	1,151	3%
Greece	1,143	3%
USA	1,097	3%
Armenia	670	2%
Other:	4,855	8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35,769</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: PSDA*

Besides acquiring Georgian citizenship through naturalization, Georgian citizenship provisions provide possibility to become a Georgian citizen through regular procedure of granting citizenship (single citizenship). In 2010-2014 under this category, 1,604 applications were lodged out of which 1,502 individuals became Georgian citizens. The majority of them are stateless persons (1,117) and Azerbaijani citizens (383). Rate of refusals in this category is considerably lower and constituted only 102 cases (6% of all applications lodged).

#### Educational immigrants

A relatively new group of immigrants to Georgia consists of educational immigrants, who mostly come to Georgia to obtain tertiary education. The number of foreign students enrolled annually at Georgian higher educational institutions has been increasing steadily for the last 10 years (see Table 15). Overall, more male foreign students are coming to get higher education in Georgia, although number of female students also has a tendency to increase. The majority of foreign students are 18-25 years old.

**Table 15:** Enrolment in Georgian tertiary institutions of immigrant students by year and gender, 2004-2014, numbers

	Male	Female	Total
2004	181	113	294
2005	108	68	176
2006	120	65	185
2007	189	131	320
2008	180	141	321
2009	202	173	375
2010	290	211	501
2011	653	333	986
2012	1,279	624	1,903
2013	1,480	597	2,077
2014	1,979	614	2,593
		<b>Total</b>	<b>9,905</b>

*Source: MoES*

The biggest increases in the number of enrolment were in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic years, when the number of foreign students enrolled at Georgian higher education institutions almost doubled. In 2014, despite the changes in the visa regulations introduced by the new Law on Aliens, enrolment still increased by almost 25% compared to 2013.

Georgian universities seem to be adjusting to existing demand from international students as more universities are introducing foreign language educational programs on different levels of education (see Table 16 below). Hence, by 2014, there were 160 educational programs taught in foreign languages at 25 Georgian universities.

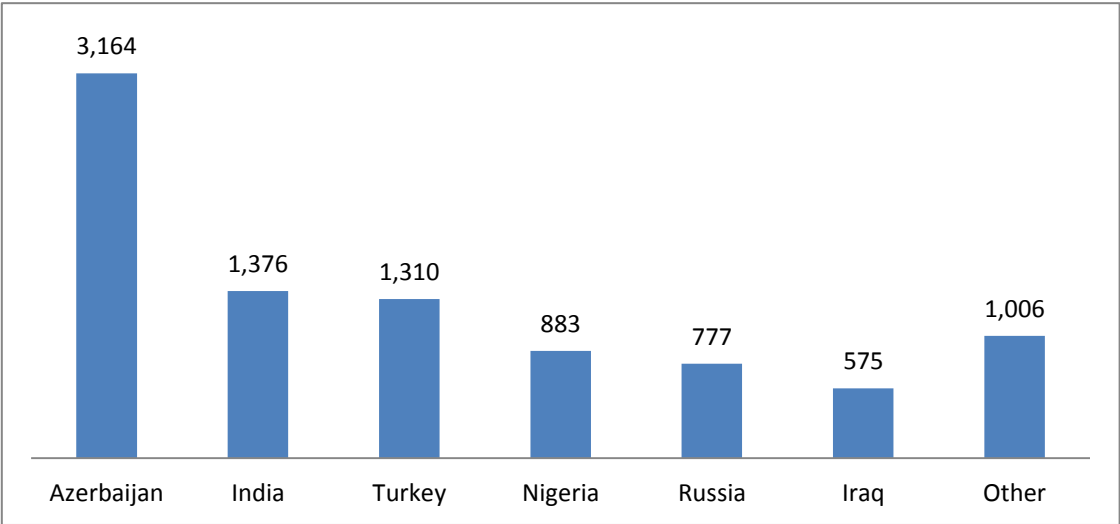
**Table 16:** Foreign language educational program statistics, 2011-2014

	Total number of foreign language educational programs	Number of foreign language BA programs	Number of foreign language MA programs	Number of foreign language PhD programs	Number of Universities offering foreign language educational programs
2011	22	17	5	-	5
2012	88	59	24	5	12
2013	123	82	30	11	18
2014	160	105	42	13	25

*Source: MoES*

In 2004-2014, educational immigrants from Azerbaijan enrolled at Georgian higher educational institutions, constituted the biggest group, followed by immigrant students from India, Turkey, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, and Iraq (see Graph 2).

**Graph 2:** Major countries of origin of immigrant students (2004-2014), aggregated numbers



*Source: MoES*

In the case of Azerbaijani educational immigrants, presumably, they partly consists of two major groups: 1) ethnic Georgians, who might be possessing Compatriot’s<sup>52</sup> statuses which enables them to enjoy full access to Georgian educational system on the one hand, and, 2) ethnic Azerbaijani students, who were unable to enrol at higher educational institutions in Azerbaijan, and choose Georgian higher education institutions due to their proximity, comparable educational costs and the possibility to study either in Russian or English, on the other hand. Part of students from Russian Federation presumably also consists from ethnic Georgians, and another part – of residents of north Caucasian republics (RF), who were specifically attracted to come to study in Georgia by several higher educational institutions. Immigrants from countries such as India, Iraq, Turkey or Nigeria “might have decided to come to study in Georgia due to the possibility to study in English, lower tuition fees, and for the recognition of qualifications and degrees awarded by

<sup>52</sup> More on Compatriot’s status [Diaspora Engagement](#) section of present profile.



Georgian higher educational institutions in their home countries”.<sup>53</sup> The major academic disciplines that the foreign students enrol at the Georgian higher education institutions are medicine, public healthcare, social sciences and humanities, and business related disciplines.

Number of foreign students enrolled in the secondary educational institutions also increases annually: from 1,147 in 2011-2012 academic year to 3,404 in 2014/2015 academic year. The majority of secondary school students hold Russian, Azerbaijani, Ukrainian, Armenian and US citizenships (MoES).

### Labour Immigrants

Labour market mobility in Georgia is regulated by the Law on Labour Migration<sup>54</sup> and other subordinate bylaws.<sup>55</sup> According to the law, foreigners legally residing in Georgia have an equal access to Georgia’s labour market as citizens of Georgia and local employers have unlimited access to the foreign labour force in the country.

Data provided by the Public Service Development Agency suggests that the majority among work residence permit holders is comprised of Chinese, Turkish and Iranian citizens. 21,120 work residence permits issued in the last 5 years, 6,467 (30%) were issued to Chinese nationals, 4,618 (22%) - to Turkish nationals, followed by Iranian (2,222) and Indian (2,156) nationals (10%-10% respectively).

**Table 17:** Top five countries of origin of work residence permit holders (first time permits and renewals)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
China	765	1,529	1,803	1,416	954	6,467
Turkey	736	977	806	736	1,363	4,618
Iran	91	786	822	312	211	2,222
India	585	483	396	328	364	2,156
Egypt	16	23	359	348	96	842

*Source: PSDA*

### Foreign entrepreneurs/investors

According to the data provided by NAPR, in 2010-2014 there were 23,398 cases when foreign nationals registered either agricultural, or non-agricultural land, or an apartment/house in Georgia as their ownership. Starting from 2011 and till 2013 there was a steady increase in agricultural land registration. However, in 2014, when the moratorium on land ownership for foreigners was introduced, the land registration cases dropped, but registrations of non-agricultural land slightly increased from 1,273 in 2013 to 1,651 in 2014. Registration of real estate in Georgia obviously remains one of major areas of investment for foreign nationals (see Table 18).

**Table 18:** Registration of immovable property by foreign nationals by type of property and year

	Immovable property				Total
	Agricultural land	Non-agricultural land	Apartment/House	Other	
2010	564	673	1,274		2,511
2011	938	738	1,335		3,008

<sup>53</sup> ICMPD 2015.

<sup>54</sup> The Law on Labour Migration (2015).

<sup>55</sup> The Resolution of the Government of Georgia N417 on “Employment by a Local Employer of A Labour Immigrant and Performance of Paid Labour Activities by such Immigrant.

2012	1,776	987	1,871	1	4,634
2013	2,146	1,273	2,808		6,227
2014	1,424	1,651	3,943		7,018
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,848</b>	<b>5,322</b>	<b>11,231</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23,398</b>

*Source: NAPR*

Among the foreign nationals investing in the immovable property in Georgia, citizens of former Soviet Union – Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russian Federation, and Ukraine stand out. Presumably, part of this group may consist of former Georgian citizens, who earlier migrated to these countries, and are willing to retain stronger links with Georgia through investing in the immovable property. The same may be true for a part of Greek and Israeli citizens.

**Table 19:** Registrations of immovable property in Georgia by foreign nationals by citizenship (2010-2014, top countries)

	Agricultural land	Non- agricultural land	Apartment/House	Total
Russian Federation	4,004	2,365	6,373	12,742
Azerbaijan	719	95	310	1,124
Ukraine	268	204	555	1,027
Armenia	426	250	299	975
Greece	438	130	344	921
Israel	54	331	497	882
USA	87	174	519	780
Germany	80	119	354	553
Iran	121	174	174	469
Iraq	36	326	83	445
Turkey	44	135	194	373

*Source: NAPR*

In 2010-2014, overall 26,706 foreigners started either entrepreneurial or non-entrepreneurial activities. The overwhelming majority of registrations, though (see Table 20), were comprised of Limited Liability Companies (LTD) and individual entrepreneurs. The highest numbers of LTDs were registered in 2012 and 2013, followed by an almost 50% decline in 2014.

**Table 20:** Registrations of foreign for-profit, non-profit enterprises, individual entrepreneurs, or branches of foreign companies, 2010-2014

	Entrepreneurial entities				Non-entrepreneurial entities		Total
	Individual Entrepreneurs	Ltd	Branch of a Foreign commercial legal entity	Joint Stock Company	Non-entrepreneurial legal entity	Branch of a foreign non-entrepreneurial legal entity	
2010	276	1,993	61	0	25	11	2,366
2011	338	3,602	99	2	0	9	4,050
2012	355	7,076	95	0	0	6	7,532
2013	429	7,713	101	0	0	9	8,252
2014	563	3,766	164	0	0	13	4,506
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,961</b>	<b>24,150</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>26,706</b>

*Source: NAPR*

As for the regional distribution, the majority of foreigners prefer to register their enterprises/receive status of an individual entrepreneur either in Tbilisi, or Adjara region, followed by Kvemo Kartli and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions. The least attractive zones are Free Industrial Zones and Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti regions.

The top countries whose nationals register both for-profit and non-profit enterprises, become individual entrepreneurs, or establish branches of foreign companies in Georgia are presented in the table below – Iran, Turkey and Egypt occupy the leading places in the list.

**Table 21:** Total number of registered enterprises (for-profit, non-profit and branches of foreign companies), top countries, 2010-2014.

Country	Total
Iran	6,373
Turkey	3,692
Egypt	3,149
India	2,286
Russian Federation	1,563
Azerbaijan	1,026
Ukraine	978
Iraq	889
Armenia	851
China	560
USA	474
Israel	398
Nigeria	180

*Source: NAPR*

The information provided by NAPR presents the number of registrations undertaken in this or that particular year. Economic impact of immigrant entrepreneurs in the Georgian economic development is an under-researched topic in Georgia, and the preliminary assessment of the role of immigration is discussed in the [Economic Impact of Immigration](#) section of present profile.

### ***International protection***

In accordance with the Law of Georgia on Refugee and Humanitarian Status, asylum seeker is defined as a person, who is requesting international protection in the country. Refugee status must be granted to a person who has a reasonable fear that s/he may become a victim of persecution on the basis of race, religion, faith, ethnicity, belonging to a certain social group or political views. Humanitarian status is granted to a person that was forced to leave the country of origin due to life-threatening conditions.

### ***Asylum Statistics***

Before 2010, number of asylum seekers to Georgia was quite small: from 2005 till 2010 overall number of applicants was not higher than 300 individuals,<sup>56</sup> the majority of them being citizens of Russia. Starting from 2010, however, number of asylum seekers in Georgia started to increase reaching 1,792 in 2014 (see Table 22). Overall, number of asylum seekers in Georgia has increased by more than 30 times in the last five years, reflecting geo-political development in the Georgia's

<sup>56</sup> According to IDFI, in 2005 there were 23 asylum seekers, in 2006 – 19, in 2007 – 21, in 2008 – 33, and in 2009 – 43.  
<https://idfi.ge/statistical-information-on-foreign-citizens-being-granted-residence-permit>

neighbourhood and the Middle East. Sudden increases in the number of asylum applications from Iraqi (in 2012) or Ukrainian (in 2014) citizens could be explained by instability emerged recently in these countries.

**Table 22:** Numbers of Asylum applications in Georgia by major countries of origin

Major countries of origin	Number of Applications				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Iraq	1	0	438	478	1,070
Ukraine	n/a	n/a	1	2	419
Syria	0	0	17	60	79
Egypt	0	0	26	79	41
Russian Federation	32	33	36	28	30
Iran	4	31	41	26	44
Other	17	15	40	44	109
<b>Total asylum seekers</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>1,792</b>

*Sources: MRA, ICMPD 2015*

Total number of persons granted refugee status in Georgia has fluctuated in the last six years; after starting granting humanitarian status from 2013, number of persons holding humanitarian status has been increasing as well (see Table 23).

**Table 23:** Numbers of People under International Protection resident in Georgia, by Type of the Status and number of refugees granted Georgian citizenship, 2010-2014

Year	Persons holding the Refugee Status	Persons holding the Humanitarian Status	Total	Number of Refugees Granted Georgian Citizenship
2010	687	0	687	195
2011	478	0	478	113
2012	345	0	345	106
2013	304	46	350	4
2014	297	145	442	27

*Source: MRA*

The decrease in the number of persons holding the refugee status can partly be explained by the corresponding increase in the number of refugees that were granted Georgian citizenship. Majority of them were Chechen refugees with Russian citizenship living in the Pankisi Gorge of Akhmeta District of Georgia.

**Table 24:** Refusals on Granting Refugee/Humanitarian Status and Refusals on Registration as an Asylum Seeker

Year	Total number of applications	Total number of refusals /Refusal rate <sup>57</sup> (% of total)	Refusal on Granting Refugee/Humanitarian Status / Refusal rate (% of total)	Refusal on Registration as an Asylum Seeker / Refusal rate (% of total)
2010	57	47 / 82%	47 / 82%	0
2011	79	36 / 46%	36 / 46%	0
2012	599	94 / 16%	48 / 8%	46 / 8%
2013	717	337 / 47%	254 / 35%	83 / 12%
2014	1,792	362 / 20%	228 / 13%	134 / 7%

<sup>57</sup> Refusal rate is calculated as a percent of total number of applications.

*Source: MRA*

The main reason why asylum seekers fail to receive refugee or humanitarian statuses is suspension of their application. In most cases of suspended applications, applicants failed to appear at the interview, or requested for the application to be suspended (see Table 25).

**Table 25:** Suspension of Applications by Reason

Year	Number of Suspended Applications	Reasons for Suspension			
		Suspended for Failure to Attend the Interview	Suspended upon Personal Request	Returned to the Country of Origin	UNHCR Resettlement Program
2010	4	3	1	0	0
2011	11	8	3	0	0
2012	47	13	34	0	0
2013	473	232	241	0	0
2014	387	209	172	1	5

*Source: MRA*

Number of asylum seekers in temporary accommodation centre is quite stable, and mainly consists of citizens of Middle Eastern countries (see Table 26).

**Table 26:** Number of Asylum Seekers in Temporary Accommodation Centre by country of origin

Country of Origin	2012	2013	2014
Iraq	50	52	31
Egypt	2	17	7
Iran	11	2	2
Russia	3	7	4
Syria	1	1	9
Other	25	13	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>76</b>

*Source: MRA*

As noted above, the ongoing conflicts in Georgia's neighbourhood have resulted in the influx of asylum seekers in the region, also affecting asylum system of Georgia. And although Georgia does have an institutionalised asylum system in place, next steps are made in order to enhance its capacities to work with increased number of asylum seekers and refine integration mechanisms of persons granted international protection. In order to tackle existing challenges, recently, Georgia has implemented a number of measures to achieve EU standards of asylum application processing policy. Several amendments have been made to the relevant legislative acts for improving the decision making process on asylum applications.

The July 29, 2015 amendment to MRA Decree #100 "On the Procedures for Granting Refugee or Humanitarian Status" introduced Article 7 that deals with the effective management of the accumulated backlog of cases of asylum seekers. From January till September 2015 significant efforts were made to manage the accumulated backlog of asylum cases, and number of accumulated cases decreased from 1,174 to 209.

In case of massive influx of the asylum seekers, above mentioned decree also regulates the granting of refugee or humanitarian status by the Prima Facie principle.

### ***Immigrants in irregular state***

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs data, from 2010 to 2014 there were 13,572 cases of illegal presence of foreign nationals on Georgian soil detected. Illegal presence in this case refers to immigrants, who overstayed the duration of their legal stay in the country and does not refer to the number of immigrants who illegally entered Georgia. As Table 27 below shows, more cases were identified in 2014, almost a 40% increase compared to 2013 data.

**Table 27:** Number of foreigners illegally present in Georgia by year

Year	Numbers
2010	2,674
2011	2,675
2012	2,112
2013	2,541
2014	3,570
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,572</b>

*Source: MIA*

Among this group of foreigners, citizens of Russian Federation stand out, constituting slightly more than 60% of all cases. List of top five countries of origin of illegally present foreigners (see Table 28 below) constitutes almost 90% of all cases.

**Table 28:** Top 5 countries of origin of foreigners illegally present in Georgia (aggregated data for 2010-2014)

Country of origin	Numbers
Russia	8,272
Iran	1,041
China	979
Turkey	975
India	668
Other	1,637
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,572</b>

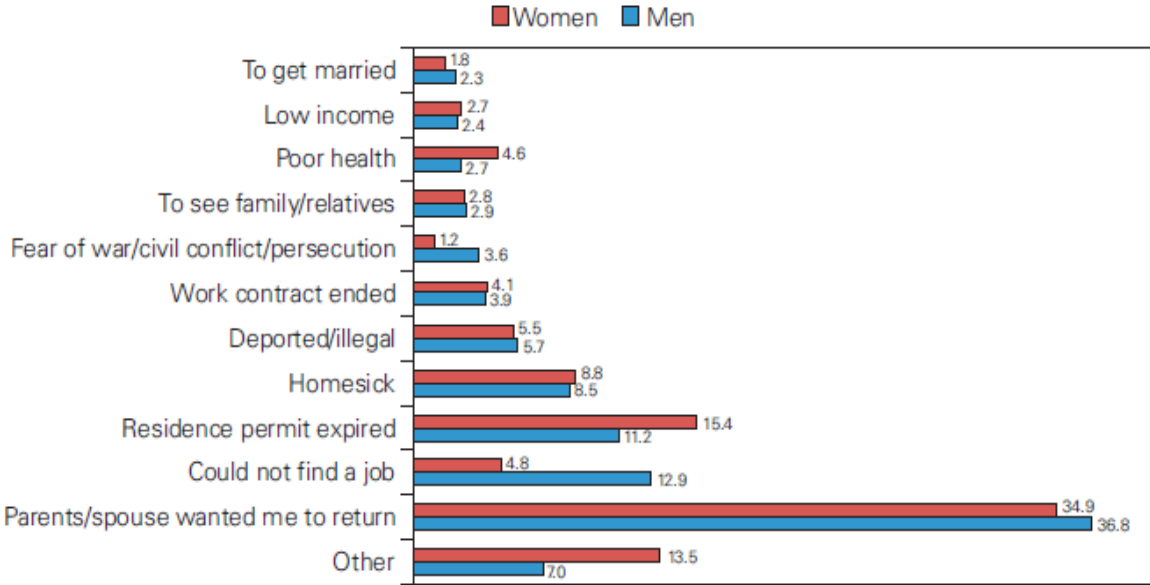
*Source: MIA*

### **A4. Return migration**

Statistical data on return migration to Georgia is systematically collected by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia.

When it comes to reasons why Georgian nationals return, a number of studies suggests a variety of factors – both economic and emotional, that contributes to their return. The European Training Foundation (ETF) study focusing on return migration indicates that the major reasons for return are connected with familial obligations, with only up to 6% stating that the major reason for return was deportation (Graph 3).

**Graph 3:** Main reasons to return to Georgia

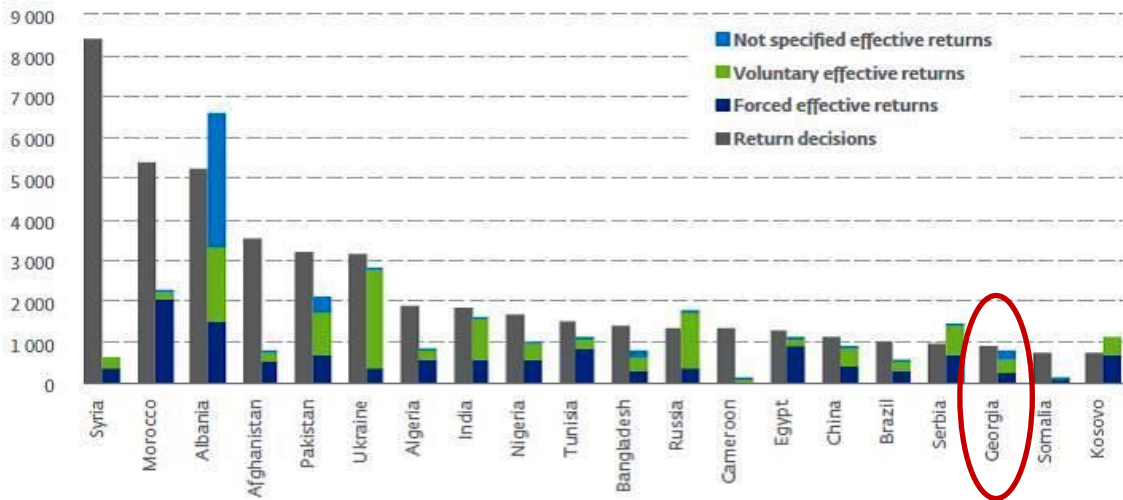


Note: Missing values account for 1%.

Source: ETF, 2013

FRONTEX’s FRAN data also suggest that the majority of returnees return voluntarily rather than being expelled from the countries of destination (Graph 4).

**Graph 4:** Return decisions vs. effective returns (and their breakdown), top nationalities, third quarter, 2014



Source: FRONTEX, 2014

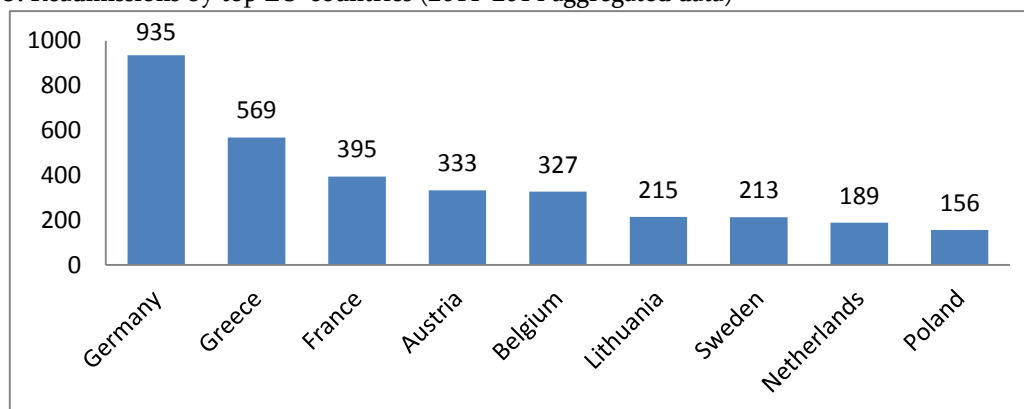
Assisted voluntary return program implemented by the International Organization for Migration has been operating in Georgia since 2003. Since then the program assisted 4,632 Georgian nationals to return. The countries from where the majority of returnees came back are: Greece (1,832), Poland (694), Switzerland (442), Belgium (319), and Latvia (263). In 2010-2014 this program supported 3,100 persons to return to Georgia.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> IOM data.

### Readmission

EU-Georgia readmission agreement effective since March, 2011, provides effective mechanisms for returning Georgian nationals as well as the third country nationals illegally present in the EU member states, to Georgia. In the period between March 1, 2011 and December 31, 2014, Georgia accepted 4,031 readmission applications, out of them 3,739 requests to accept the person was approved and only 292 - rejected. From the entry into force of the readmission agreement till September 2015 - total of 2,900 persons returned to Georgia. The majority of readmission cases come from Germany, Greece, France, Austria, and Belgium (Graph 5).

**Graph 5:** Readmissions by top EU-countries (2011-2014 aggregated data)



*Source: MIA*

An active cooperation is on-going with the EU member states with the purpose of concluding implementing protocols to the European Union and Georgia agreement on the readmission of persons residing without authorization. Implementing Protocols with Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Republic of Lithuania, Benelux States and Hungary have been signed and are in force. The draft implementing protocols are ready for the signature with Slovak Republic, Czech Republic and Poland. The draft texts of the implementing protocols have been exchanged and are at the different stages of negotiations with Portugal, Germany, Greece and Spain. Georgia has elaborated draft model text of Implementing Protocol, which has been submitted to the countries with most readmission applications with the request to launch negotiations – France, Italy, Cyprus and Sweden.

With an aim of concluding readmission agreements with main countries of origin and/or transit Georgia elaborated draft model of Readmission Agreement which was sent to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Israel, Sri Lanka and Pakistan through diplomatic channels with the request of initiating negotiations.

Georgia already signed readmission agreements with EU, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Ukraine (together with its implementing protocol) and Moldova.

In order to increase the efficiency of the implementation of EU-Georgia Readmission Agreement a web based portal for the uploading and procession readmission requests has been developed by January 2014. Readmission Case Management Electronic System provides a secure environment for covering the full readmission process, starting from the uploading of requests for readmission by EU MS, followed by the Georgian authorities ultimately the communication of the actual transfer data of the person to be readmitted. As of December 2014 the readmission requests were uploaded by 6 EU countries (Poland, Germany, Greece, Austria, Romania and Bulgaria).



## A5. Internal Migration

In the past several decades internal migration in Georgia was mainly caused by armed conflicts, natural disasters, and socio-economic factors. Hence, the major stocks of internal migrants consist of persons, displaced as a result of conflict in occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia, and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, (Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)), persons, affected by environmental hazards (ecological migrants (Ecomigrants)), and rural-urban-rural migrants, migrating with the aim to improve their socio-economic conditions.

### *Internally Displaced Persons*

Stock of IDPs currently residing in Georgia are comprised of two major groups: first wave of IDPs that was displaced in 1990-1993 as a result of conflict in occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia; and second wave of IDPs, displaced as a result of 2008 Russia-Georgia war. According to MRA's latest registration data, in 2014 the number of all registered IDPs was around 260,000<sup>59</sup> (see Tables 29 and 30 below) and constitutes about 7% of the total population. As for the gender distribution among IDP population, there are slightly more females than males (53% vs. 47%) among IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Abkhazia while in case of IDPs from Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia there is almost equal number of males and females. In case of age composition of IDPs, in both cases, the bigger groups are constituted by young (less than 18 years old), and middle-aged IDPs (41-65 years old). In both cases, an average IDP household consists of three members.

**Table 29:** IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Abkhazia by gender and age distribution

Year	Number of IDPs (thousands)	Number of IDP households (thousands)	Gender		Age distribution				
			Female	Male	<18	18-25	26-40	41-65	65<
2010	226,218	76,088	123,166	103,052	57,018	23,870	46,914	70,250	28,166
2011	230,439	76,357	125,094	105,345	58,817	23,490	47,943	71,813	28,376
2012	235,119	76,489	127,252	107,867	61,401	22,976	49,064	73,281	28,397
2013	238,037	77,297	128,916	109,121	62,865	22,516	49,561	74,077	29,018
2014	227,733	74,461	122,942	104,791	62,644	21,091	46,053	70,021	27,924

*Source: MRA*

**Table 30:** IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia by gender and age distribution

Year	Number of IDP (thousands)	Number of IDP households (thousands)	Gender		Age distribution				
			Female	Male	<18	18-25	26-40	41-65	65<
2010	31,022	10,445	15,954	15,068	8,521	3,589	6,537	8,678	3,697
2011	32,168	10,566	16,525	15,643	8,947	3,646	6,751	9,037	3,787
2012	33,488	10,737	17,143	16,345	9,416	3,659	7,091	9,384	3,938
2013	34,923	11,205	17,839	17,084	9,773	3,729	7,371	9,861	4,189
2014	34,920	11,272	17,808	17,112	9,906	3,635	7,314	9,853	4,212

*Source: MRA*

As of 2014, 56% of IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Abkhazia still continued to live in collective housing centres, while 44% resided in private housing facilities. In case of IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia more IDPs - 62% - lived in compact

<sup>59</sup> See also ICMPD 2015.

settlements, and 38% - in private housing. As the tables below demonstrate, the numbers of the registered IDPs slightly fluctuate due to some of them deciding to stop their IDP statuses, or being late with the registration procedures, or being unable to renew the status due to emigration.

When it comes to regional distribution, in case of IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Abkhazia the majority of them are concentrated in either Tbilisi, or Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, a region, adjacent to occupied Georgian region of Abkhazia. In case of IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia the major groups are concentrated in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, where the official state resettlement program has been implemented, and Shida Kartli region, again, a region adjacent to occupied Georgian region of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

**Table 31:** IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Abkhazia by region of resettlement, 2010-2014

	Region of resettlement										
	Tbilisi	Adjara	Guria	Imereti	Kakheti	Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti	Samegrelo, Zemo Svaneti	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Kvemo Kartli	Shida Kartli
2010	91,505	4,691	584	26,798	1,160	1,020	960	87,131	2,178	8,263	1,928
2011	93,063	4,763	524	26,676	1,200	1,034	935	89,438	2,198	8,655	1,953
2012	95,081	6,602	534	25,786	1,250	1,044	945	90,458	2,228	9,180	2,011
2013	98,920	6,694	505	25,855	1,245	908	914	89,581	2,252	9,114	2,049
2014	94,721	6,466	488	25,037	1,181	859	839	85,075	2,167	8,923	1,977

*Source: MRA*

**Table 32:** IDPs from occupied Georgian region of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia by region of resettlement, 2010-2014

	Region of resettlement										
	Tbilisi	Adjara	Guria	Imereti	Kakheti	Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti	Samegrelo, Zemo Svaneti	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Kvemo Kartli	Shida Kartli
2010	4,727	11	4	110	241	8,945	2	12	141	3,092	13,737
2011	4,900	13	3	118	288	9,397	1	15	140	3,265	14,028
2012	5,053	36	3	123	303	9,861	1	22	143	3,451	14,492
2013	5,674	36	5	125	302	10,219	1	22	145	3,633	14,761
2014	5,790	35	6	119	300	10,091	2	22	145	3,673	14,737

*Source: MRA*

### ***Ecological Migrants***

The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia had been resettling the families suffered from natural disasters to the residential houses bought by the Ministry in different municipalities across the country. Since June 1, 2014, Department of Ecomigrants has been operational at the Ministry, with the main function to organize the process of resettlement of families (ecomigrants) suffered from natural disasters and being subject to resettlement.

During the last years, the Ministry has provided housing to 1,186 families suffered from natural disasters at 122 settlements in the municipalities across Georgia. Houses are purchased for the

affected families through budgetary funds as well as donor financing. In 2010-2014 1,643,900.8 GEL was mobilised for these purposes and 86 residential houses were bought.

**Table 33:** Funds allocated for ecomigrants' alternative housing, 2010-2014

Year	Total funding (GEL, thousands)	State Budget (GEL, thousands)	Other funding sources (GEL, thousands)	Total number of purchased housing
2010	0	0	0	0
2011	85,900	0	85,900	5
2012	231,400	0	231,400	12
2013	647,800	647,800	0	33
2014	678,800	601,300	77,500	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,643,900</b>	<b>1,249,100</b>	<b>394,800</b>	<b>86</b>

*Source: MRA*

Special software for the unified online system on ecomigrants is being created at the Ministry, as part of the EU-funded project “Technical assistance to the MRA’s capacity building”. By using this software, the Ministry will form a database based on the information retrieved from the municipalities, which will help to enhance the quality of statistical data and fulfil the objectives set by the Ministry.

### ***Rural-Urban-Rural Migration***

By January 1, 2015, the estimated size of the population of Georgia was 3,729,500 persons.<sup>60</sup> This is a decrease in 642,000 persons compared to 2002 census data as estimated by GeoStat.<sup>61</sup> The size of the rural population decreased as well, while urban population slightly increased. However, while in case of urban population presumably, the decline is mainly conditioned by out-migration rather than by urban-rural migration, in case of rural population it is difficult to say which share of almost half a million rural residents moved within the country, or emigrated abroad.

According to GeoStat’s estimations, share of urban population increased by 5%.<sup>62</sup> However, in cases of Tbilisi (increase of 5.2%) and Batumi (increase of 26.3%), the increases in the population numbers were mainly caused by the expansions of the city boundaries, while in case of Rustavi the population increased by 7.3%, with no expansion of the city borders.<sup>63</sup>

Georgian regions, mostly affected by the decrease in population are Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti (decrease of 37.4%), and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (decrease of 29%) regions. Both of these regions are considered to be either partly, or mainly high-mountainous, and these data may also indicate the trend leading to depopulation of mountainous areas. Autonomous Republic of Adjara was the region least affected by the decrease of population presumably due to relatively high fertility rate. However, even in this case, the decrease of 10.6% has been identified.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> [http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=152&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=152&lang=eng) This estimation is based on 2014 preliminary census data.

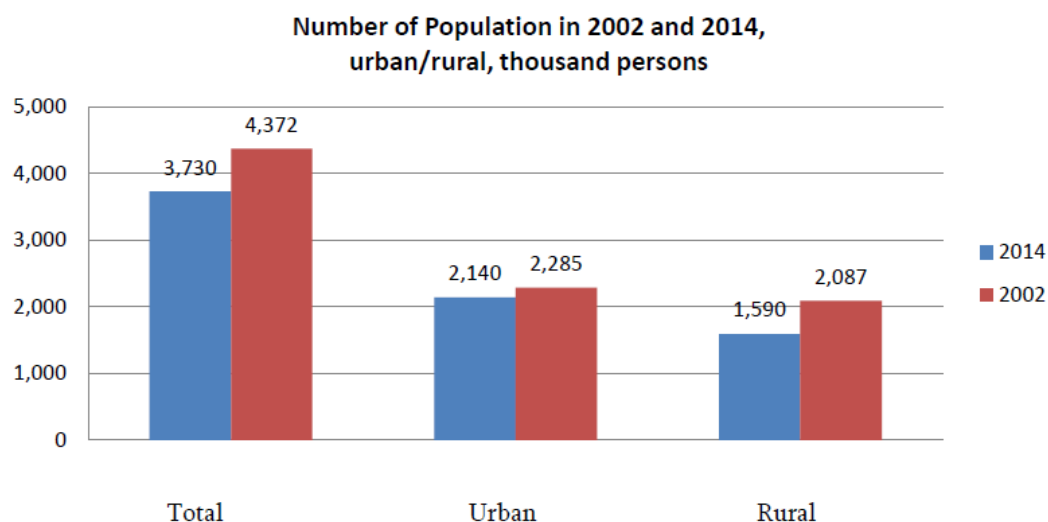
<sup>61</sup> The basis for calculation of population size as of January 1, 2015 is the preliminary results of 2014 national census, while the size of the population as of January 1, 2014 was 2002 national census result added annual natural increase.

<sup>62</sup> [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_PHC/Georgia/GEO-2015-05-04.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/Georgia/GEO-2015-05-04.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_PHC/Georgia/GEO-2015-05-04.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/Georgia/GEO-2015-05-04.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_PHC/Georgia/GEO-2015-05-04.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/Georgia/GEO-2015-05-04.pdf)

**Graph 6:** Urban-Rural population of Georgia<sup>65</sup>



*Source: GeoStat*

Data on internal migration is also collected by GeoStat's quarterly Integrated Household Survey (IHS). According to 2013 IHS, "Mobility is highest within the same region, varying between 61 and 86 percent of those who had migrated<sup>66</sup>. 14 to 36 percent of those who migrated<sup>67</sup> had moved from one region to another; and only 1 percent of all respondents had migrated from abroad"<sup>68</sup> (see Table 34). At the same time, 45% of respondents had never migrated, and among the 55% of those, who did, the majority - 83% migrated more than 5 years ago, and only 17% of those who migrated changed their place of residence within the 5 years preceding to the survey. 2014 IHS presents a quite similar picture (see Table 35) and presumably, the rural-urban-rural migratory trends have an established character.

**Table 34:** Internal Migration in 2013

Migrated ...	Respon- dents	Within same region		From other region		From abroad	
		Respon- dents	row %	Respon- dents	row %	Respon- dents	row %
Less than 1 year ago	1,361	1,084	79.6	226	16.6	51	3.7
1 to 3 years ago	1,565	1,142	73.0	391	25.0	32	2.0
3 to 5 years ago	855	518	60.6	308	36.0	29	3.4
More than 5 years ago	18,235	15,587	85.5	2,471	13.6	177	1.0
Never migrated	17,910	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,926</b>						

*Source: Integrated Household Survey, GeoStat, 2013; own calculations*

<sup>65</sup> [http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=152&lang=eng](http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=152&lang=eng)

<sup>66</sup> Percent is calculated from the number of respondents, who migrated in a given period of time preceding the survey.

<sup>67</sup> Percent is calculated from the number of respondents, who migrated in a given period of time preceding the survey.

<sup>68</sup> ENIGMMA report, p.62.

**Table 35:** Internal Migration in 2014

	Respon- dents	Within same region		From other region		From abroad	
		Respon- dents	row %	Respon- dents	row %	Respon- dents	row %
Less than 1 year ago	1,362	1,080	79.3	234	17.2	48	3.5
1 to 3 years ago	1,331	1,055	79.3	246	18.5	30	2.3
3 to 5 years ago	731	533	72.9	180	24.6	18	2.5
More than 5 years ago	18,294	15,576	85.1	2,559	14.0	159	0.9
Never migrated	17,809	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,527</b>						

*Source: Integrated Household Survey, GeoStat, 2014; own calculations*

**Table 36:** Internal migration, 2013-2014

	Total number of respondents	Never migrated	% of Total	Migrated within the same region	% of Total	Migrated from other regions	% of Total	Migrated from abroad	% of Total
2013	39,926	17,910	44.9	18,331	45.9	3,396	8.5	289	0.7
2014	39,527	17,809	45.1	18,244	46.2	3,219	8.4	255	0.6

*Source: Integrated Household Survey, GeoStat, 2014; own calculations*

As mentioned above, the Public Service Development Agency is the main administrative body responsible for registering residency information of Georgian nationals and legal residents. As the PSDA population registration data reveal, the main trend is towards urbanization, and to be more precise, towards “Tbilisization”. In 2010-2014 51,332 residents changed their registration addresses and registered anew in Tbilisi. The bigger groups among these individuals consisted of either other urban residents (24,829), or rural residents (24,377), who moved to Tbilisi and changed their registration addresses accordingly. To compare, in the same period, number of other rural to urban migrants constituted 39,403 individuals, hence, the total number of individuals who changed their registration addresses to urban areas constituted 90,735.

At the same time, movements from urban to rural areas have been quite sizable as well: in 2010-2014 64,809 individuals changed their registration addresses. However, as noted above, taking into consideration the difficulty in accounting actual residence places of individuals, presumably, the volume of internal migration might be bigger. To improve population registration data, PSDA prepares grounds for the study of best international practice, which will serve as a basis of a targeted project.

## A6. Trafficking in Human Beings

Georgia serves as a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in human beings (THB). The US Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) places Georgia in the tier 2 of countries which do not fully comply with the minimum standards set by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, but are making significant efforts to achieve compliance with those standards.<sup>69</sup> According to 2015 US State Department TIP Report, Georgia has made progress in all

<sup>69</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report 2014; Available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/226846.pdf>, see also, Trafficking in Persons Report 2015; available at <http://www.state.gov/D4086E97-D7A2-4962-BD40-08A2326107BF/FinalDownload/DownloadId-06390CF999285A483E1052C4B754CBDA/D4086E97-D7A2-4962-BD40-08A2326107BF/documents/organization/245365.pdf>;

According to the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report, countries are ranked against four tiers (1 being the highest ranking and tier 3 being lowest) and the placement is based on the extent of government response to fighting trafficking. It

four directions to meet the requirements of well implemented preventive and protective measures, increased number of identified THB cases and enhanced cooperation with partner states, local and international NGOs. Additionally, the report highlights the positive results of intensive effort of Georgian authorities, for example, establishment of Labour Inspectorate Institute under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs.<sup>70</sup>

For the last several years state institutions have actively employed legal and institutional measures to effectively address the problem of human trafficking. One of the milestone developments to this end was the criminalisation of trafficking in human beings in 2003. Article 143<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code of Georgia defines human trafficking as recruitment, transportation, transferring, and harbouring or receiving persons, by means of threat, use of force, deception or any other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>71</sup> Provisions criminalizing trafficking in human beings were introduced in the Criminal Code, (Articles 143<sup>1</sup> and 143<sup>2</sup>) criminalizing the trafficking of adults and children, respectively. Furthermore, Article 143<sup>3</sup> of the Criminal Code of Georgia explicitly criminalizes the use of service of THB victims. In order to secure the testimony during the criminal proceeding and encourage the users of service of THB victims, who are considered to be one of the essential sources to report the crime, to cooperate with the law enforcement agencies, the recent amendment<sup>72</sup> was introduced to Criminal Code of Georgia.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, Georgia has ratified the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) and Council of Europe's Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings.<sup>74</sup>

To increase the efforts in fight against human trafficking, the Parliament of Georgia also adopted the Law on Combating Human Trafficking in 2006.<sup>75</sup> This led to the establishment of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking (ATIP Fund) and the Inter-Agency Council on the Fight against THB.<sup>76</sup>

ATIP Fund is operated under the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs and is responsible for two shelters for victims as well as their adequate legal protection, medical and psychological assistance, rehabilitation, reintegration and compensation.<sup>77</sup> A hotline is functioning at the State Fund. The Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings gathers representatives of relevant state institutions, Parliament, local and international NGOs and public Defender's Office, coordinates their activities and is chaired by the Minister of Justice of Georgia. Every two years, the Interagency Council develops and adopts the National Action Plan on the

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specifically involves assessment of government efforts to comply with the minimum standards set by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

<sup>70</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report 2015; available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/245365.pdf>

<sup>71</sup> Human Trafficking Section. Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Available at <http://police.ge/en/projects/you-are-not-for-sale>

<sup>72</sup> Article 143<sup>3</sup> of the Criminal Code of Georgia was amended on July 24, 2015. The amendment was enacted on August 4, 2015.

<sup>73</sup> The amendment aims to relieve from criminal liability a person who has received the service of THB victim and makes a voluntarily confession under Article 143(3) (Use of Service of THB Victim) and cooperates with the investigation in advance before the investigation is launched (provided that there are no elements of another crime in place).

<sup>74</sup> Human Trafficking Section. Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Available at <http://police.ge/en/projects/you-are-not-for-sale>

<sup>75</sup> Human Trafficking Section. Ministry of Justice of Georgia. Available at <http://www.justice.gov.ge/Ministry/Department/344>

<sup>76</sup> Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Georgia. Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Available at [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/docs/Reports/GRETA\\_2011\\_24\\_FGR\\_GEO\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/docs/Reports/GRETA_2011_24_FGR_GEO_en.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> Second Progress Report on the implementation by Georgia of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20141029\\_second\\_progress\\_report\\_for\\_georgia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/docs/20141029_second_progress_report_for_georgia_en.pdf)  
For further information on the Fund's activities visit: <http://www.atipfund.gov.ge/>

Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings, which covers a range of issues, including prevention of THB, protection of victims/statutory victims, prosecution of perpetrators and better coordination of international and national stakeholders.

Within the field of their competence data on THB is collected by several state agencies: National Statistics Office of Georgia, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and ATIP Fund. Ministry of Justice as the main policy-shaper and lead agency in fight against human trafficking collects information from the law enforcement agencies and the State Fund and updates the trafficking database on a regular basis. The Secretariat of Interagency Council aggregates all trafficking related data collected from relevant state institutions in an integrated database, which includes following indicators: investigations, prosecutions, cases sent to the court and convictions of THB cases; type, source and destination of exploitation; age, sex and nationality of victims/statutory victims and perpetrators; number of legal requests and cases of extradition within the framework of mutual legal assistance on criminal matters, services provided for the victims/statutory victims of THB.

During the last five years, number of investigation of THB cases fluctuated between 10 (2012) and 13 (2014) cases per year. Table 37 below presents the data on investigations, prosecutions of THB cases, and number of convictions.

**Table 37:** Human Trafficking Crimes Statistics:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Investigations	11	11	10	11	13 <sup>78</sup>
Prosecuted persons	4	4	1	5	5 <sup>79</sup>
Cases sent to court	0	4 <sup>80</sup>	1	4	4
Convictions	0	4 <sup>81</sup>	1	2	6 <sup>82</sup>

*Source: MoJ, Secretariat of Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*

Over the last five years, there were 13 traffickers convicted for trafficking of minors and/or adults; slightly more than half (7 out of 13) were citizens of Georgia, followed by citizens of Uzbekistan and Turkey with 3 convictions each, and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Israel with one conviction each. Importantly, the majority of convicted traffickers are females aged between 30–69.

According to Global Slavery Index 2014 the Government of Georgia is placed among those authorities that are taking the most actions to end modern slavery.<sup>83</sup> Georgia takes 9<sup>th</sup> place among Netherlands, Sweden, United States, Australia, Switzerland, Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom and Austria.

When it comes to the regional level according to the same source Georgia is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in terms of strong anti-trafficking governmental responses. Only Georgia criminalized all three forms of modern slavery in the region.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> In one case investigation was launched for both trafficking of minor and adult.

<sup>79</sup> One person was prosecuted for both trafficking of minor and adult.

<sup>80</sup> 2 cases were on both trafficking of minor and adult.

<sup>81</sup> 2 persons were convicted for both trafficking of minor and adult.

<sup>82</sup> In this case 6 persons were convicted in four different cases, since they include both adult and minor THB crimes.

<sup>83</sup> [https://d3mj66ag90b5fy.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Global\\_Slavery\\_Index\\_2014\\_final\\_lowres.pdf](https://d3mj66ag90b5fy.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Global_Slavery_Index_2014_final_lowres.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> [https://d3mj66ag90b5fy.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Global\\_Slavery\\_Index\\_2014\\_final\\_lowres.pdf](https://d3mj66ag90b5fy.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Global_Slavery_Index_2014_final_lowres.pdf)

Table 38 indicates that once a victim has been identified, state institutions provide adequate remedies in the form of shelter accommodation and compensation as well as psychological, medical and legal assistance.

**Table 38:** Government Services to Victims and Statutory Victims of Human Trafficking

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Shelter Accommodation	8	6	7	5	5
Psychological Assistance	8	6	7	5	5
Medical Assistance	8	5	6	3	5
Legal Assistance	18	6	7	32	9
Compensation	2	6	6	21	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>

*Source: ATIP Fund<sup>85</sup>*

Following trends can be observed in relation to THB:

- Georgian nationals more often become subject to labour and to a lesser extent sexual exploitation abroad;
- In case of Georgian citizens, more cases of labour exploitation are detected in Turkey, to a lesser extent - in Cyprus and Iraq (predominantly of males);
- Absolute majority of victims of human trafficking are over 18, however the cases of human trafficking against minors whether sexual or labour exploitation were also identified by Georgian law enforcements.

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<sup>85</sup> The numbers provided State Fund refers to the **number of services** provided to the victims/statutory victims of human trafficking, it does not precisely indicated to the numbers of the victims/statutory victims.



## PART B. IMPACT OF MIGRATION

### B1. Demographic Dimension

According to GeoStat's estimations, based on 2014 Census data, as of January 1, 2015, there was a decrease of about 600,000 individuals compared to 2002 census data (see Table 39).<sup>86</sup> If in 2002 the decline in the size of the population could be partially explained by omission of population of occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and out-migration, larger share of the remaining population change was caused by the emigration of ethnic minorities due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, most of them Russians and Armenians.<sup>87</sup> To explain decrease of population in 2014 requires a re-examination of existing demographic data, since during the last decades, according to official statistics, Georgia experienced a positive natural growth and net migration was not high either. Although presumably the decline in the Georgian population is mainly caused by out-migration, before the GeoStat presents the complete results of the 2014 census data, this issue remains a subject for speculations.

**Table 39:** Population of Georgia

Year	Male	Female	Total
1989	2,563,040	2,838,801	5,400.841
2002	2,061.753	2,309.782	4,371.535
2014 <sup>88</sup>	1,778.500	1,951.000	3,729.500

*Source: GeoStat*

As Table below shows, the Georgian population is becoming demographically aged, with a population over 65 constituting 14% of the total population. Aging of the population, as well as decrease in the size of working age population could be yet another negative effect of the emigration, since the average age of out-migrants fluctuates around 34 (GeoStat).<sup>89</sup>

**Table 40:** Georgian population by age and gender by January 1, 2015

Age groups	Male	Female	Total
0-4	132,900	123,900	256,800
5-19	326,200	292,200	618,400
20-44	685,200	692,600	1,377.800
45-64	437,700	519,700	957,400
65+	196,500	322,600	519,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,778.500</b>	<b>1,951.000</b>	<b>3,729.500</b>

*Source: GeoStat*

Since the 2014 census demographic data have not yet been disaggregated by ethnic groups it is difficult to say whether the ethnic composition of the Georgian population changed during the inter-census period,<sup>90</sup> and what has been the impact of migratory processes on ethnic groups residing in Georgia.

<sup>86</sup> National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat): [http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=152&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=152&lang=eng)

<sup>87</sup> Number of Russian population decreased from 341,200 in 1989 to 67,700 in 2002, and number of Armenian population decreased from 437,200 to 248,900 respectively. GeoStat data.

<sup>88</sup> Preliminary data as of January, 1, 2015.

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=173&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=173&lang=eng)

<sup>90</sup> According to the previous national census of 2002, population of Georgia consisted of the following ethnic groups: Georgian (83.8%), Azerbaijani (6.5%), Armenian (5.7%), Russian (1.5%) and other ethnic groups (2.5%).

Due to both internal and international migration the share of rural and urban population has been changing (see Table 41). As discussed above (see [Rural-Urban-Rural Migration](#) section of present profile), the decrease in the size of population in absolute terms has affected both urban and rural areas of Georgia.

**Table 41:** Urban and rural population, population change from 1989 to 2015<sup>91</sup>

Population	1989	2002	2015	1989	2002	2015
	Persons	Persons	Persons	%	%	%
Urban	2,991.352	2,284,796	2,140.400	55.4	52.3	57.4
Rural	2,409.489	2,086,739	1,590.000	44.6	47.7	42.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,400.841</b>	<b>4,371.535</b>	<b>3,730.000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: GeoStat*

There could be several impacts of both internal and international migration on the demographic situation in Georgia:

- Aging of the population as a result of international migration;
- Decrease in the size of female population as a result of international migration;
- Decrease in the size of rural population, threatening depopulation of certain areas due to internal and international migration.

## B2. Economic Dimension

### Remittances

#### Inflows

Amount of remittances transferred by Georgian emigrants back home through the formal money transfer organizations has been almost steadily increasing in the past 15 years.<sup>92</sup> The exceptional years, when the increase in the amount of remittances slowed down, were 2009, following the 2007-2008 world financial crisis and 2014, as a result of the decline of remittances from Russian Federation (see Graphs 7 and 8).

The volume of remittances has been increasing both in absolute terms and in relation to Georgia's GDP, which has increased more than fivefold in the period between 2001 and 2014 and reached 16.5 billion US dollars in 2014. Despite the relatively big volume of remittances transferred to Georgia each year, country's economy is not over dependent on these transfers. According to the GeoStat and National Bank of Georgia data, in 2014 with GDP of 16,507,8 million USD<sup>93</sup> at current prices and remittances amounting to 1,440.8 million USD,<sup>94</sup> share of remittances constitute 8.7% of GDP.

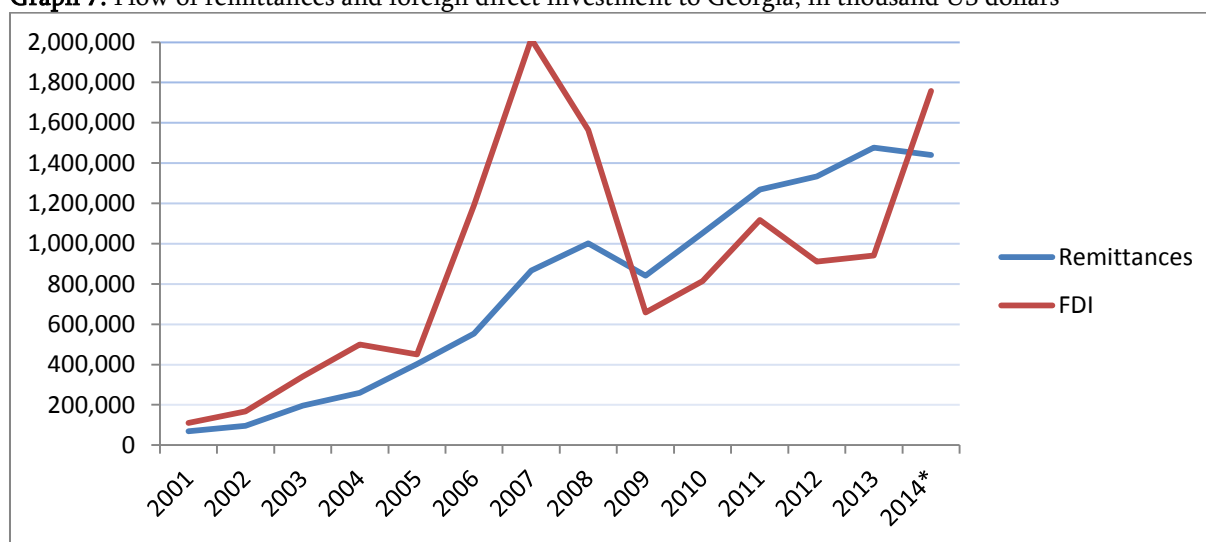
<sup>91</sup> GeoStat data. 2014 data refer to 2014 preliminary Census results. For more detailed discussion of 2014 preliminary Census data please see: [http://www.geostat.ge/cms/site\\_images/files/georgian/population/agceris%20cinascari%20shedegebi\\_30.04.2015.pdf](http://www.geostat.ge/cms/site_images/files/georgian/population/agceris%20cinascari%20shedegebi_30.04.2015.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> Remittances reported by the NBG reflect money transfers to and from Georgia through electronic wire systems (Western Union, Money Gram, Anelik, Unistream, etc.). The data is gathered from the monthly statistical reports of the commercial banks, including branches of non-resident banks in Georgia) and microfinance institutions in Georgia. See methodological notes of the External Sector Statistics of the NBG. Hence, the amount reported by the NBG does not include the transfers made via informal means nor workers' wages or other transfers made on Georgian bank accounts.

<sup>93</sup> [http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=119&lang=eng](http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=119&lang=eng)

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.nbg.gov.ge/index.php?m=304>

**Graph 7:** Flow of remittances and foreign direct investment to Georgia, in thousand US dollars



\*2014 Foreign Direct Investment is an estimate based on preliminary data

*Source: National Bank of Georgia, National Statistics Office of Georgia*

From 2009 until 2014, annual inflow of remittances has been exceeding the annual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country. In 2013 amount of FDI was 941.9 million US dollars, while the remittances transferred through the formal channels were at 1,477 million US dollars. This trend, however, has reversed in 2014. In 2014, FDI to Georgia amounted to 1,758.4 million USD (86.7 % annual growth), while the remittances transferred to Georgia comprised 1,440.8 million US dollars.

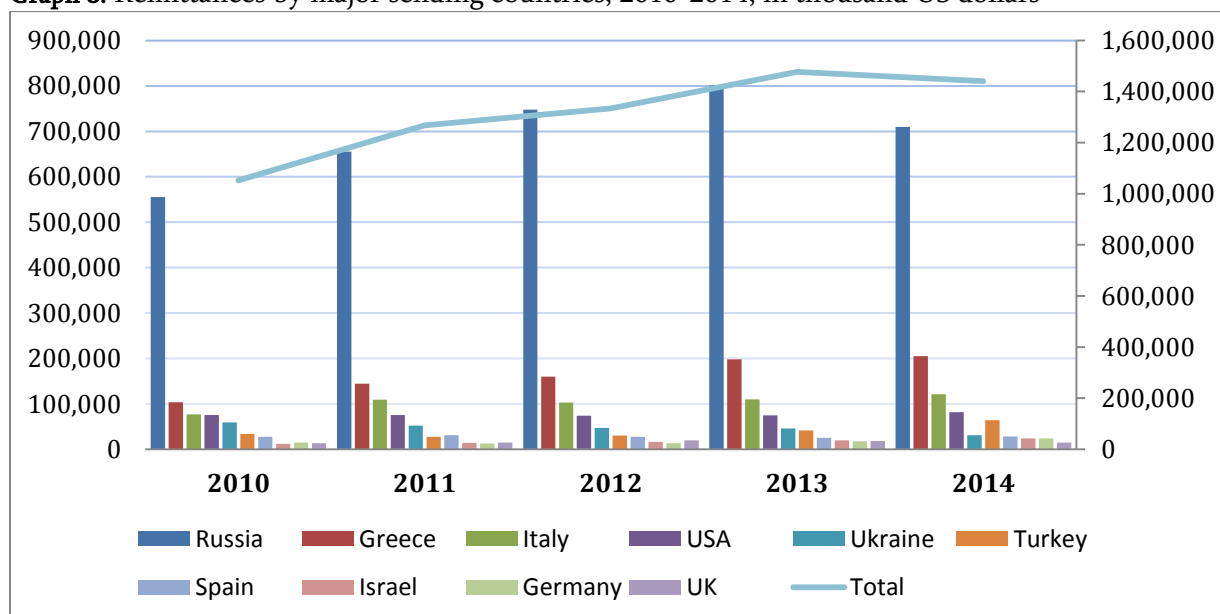
One of the reasons explaining the steep rise of remittances from 2002 to 2006 was an increased access to formal money transfer channels and improved banking infrastructure in the country, and specifically, in the rural areas.<sup>95</sup>

The biggest volumes of the transfers are from the countries where the presence of Georgian diaspora and emigrants is more visible – Russia, Greece, Italy, the USA, Ukraine, and Turkey (see Graph 8). Although Russia still dominates the list of major remittance sending countries, compared to 2013, the volume of transfers from Russia shrank by almost 100 million US dollars in 2014. Remittance reported in January-April 2015 confirms the declining trend.<sup>96</sup> Interestingly, remittances from Greece have been steadily growing in the past 5 years, despite the crisis, although this might change in 2015. Remittances from Italy also demonstrate a rather stable, slightly increasing trend during the last 5 years.

<sup>95</sup> Zurabishvili, 2012, Dynamics of Remittances in Georgia, CARIM-East Research Report  
[http://www.carim-east.eu/media/exno/Explanatory%20Notes\\_2012-32.pdf](http://www.carim-east.eu/media/exno/Explanatory%20Notes_2012-32.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> National Bank of Georgia, Statistical data, money transfers by countries.  
<https://www.nbg.gov.ge/index.php?m=304&lng=eng>

**Graph 8:** Remittances by major sending countries, 2010-2014, in thousand US dollars



*Source: NBG*

### Outflow

The annual volume of remittances transferred from Georgia has been growing almost steadily but insignificantly during the past decade. The annual volume went up from 46.4 million US dollars in 2004 to 178 million US dollars in 2014. In the past 5 years, the major increase was recorded in 2013, when the total amount of outwards transfers went up by 43% from 108 million in 2012 to 155 million US dollars in the following year (see Table 42).

During the last five years, the top receivers of remittances transferred from Georgia were countries with major presence of Georgian emigrant and diaspora groups, such as Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey. Besides Greece, Germany and France stand out among the EU countries, each receiving from 2 to 3 million US dollars a year. As anticipated, in parallel with the increase of the number of Nigerian immigrants in the country, remittances to Nigeria also demonstrate a tendency to grow, reaching its high in 2013 (see Table 42).

**Table 42:** Outflow of remittances by major receiving countries, in thousand US dollars

Country of Destination	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Russia</b>	32,243	32,464	35,528	51,219	72,808
<b>Ukraine</b>	17,022	19,494	19,016	22,278	19,124
<b>Greece</b>	15,406	11,287	10,446	17,036	18,576
<b>Turkey</b>	4,274	3,609	3,630	4,311	5,355
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	2,157	2,252	2,968	5,193	7,482
<b>Italy</b>	5,274	3,323	2,619	3,937	3,748
<b>Armenia</b>	1,577	2,050	2,880	4,255	5,854
<b>Germany</b>	1,845	2,476	3,026	3,587	3,829
<b>France</b>	1,198	2,336	1,804	2,724	2,567
<b>Nigeria</b>	76	213	1,248	5,526	3,509
<b>Total</b>	<b>103,345</b>	<b>100,255</b>	<b>108,191</b>	<b>155,199</b>	<b>178,169</b>

*Source: NBG*

### Impact of remittances

Based on already existing data and research, major impacts of remittances in Georgia are visible in following areas: poverty alleviation, stabilizing inflow of foreign currency, stimulating local consumption, and increasing population's education and healthcare expenditures.

According to the CRRC 2013 Caucasus Barometer, in the period of the fieldwork on average 11% of Georgia's population was receiving money from relatives living abroad.<sup>97</sup> There did not appear to be a major difference in gender or the settlement type of recipients. Young and relatively better educated persons in urban areas are more common beneficiaries of remittances, than the elderly,<sup>98</sup> considered to be the most vulnerable social group in the country.<sup>99</sup> Multiple studies have also shown that the major part of remittances is spent on basic consumption needs. The smaller share of remittances is spent on healthcare related and educational expenses, as well as on real estate investments.<sup>100</sup>

The findings of these studies suggest that, on the one hand, remittances alleviate poverty in the recipient families, decrease the poverty rate in the regions with the high share of remittance receiving households,<sup>101</sup> and on average, improve the quality of life in the country. On the other hand, remittances do not seem to be directed to the "poorest of the poor" and hence, might be aggravating income inequality in the country.<sup>102</sup> Another downside of the nature of remittances is their short-term effect. As a major share of remittances received by households is spent on daily consumption needs, its effect on the quality of life of the household is immediate, but unsustainable. If and when the person abroad loses his/her job or stops remitting money for any other reason, the recipient household may return to the pre-emigration economic conditions pretty quickly.<sup>103</sup> As existing studies suggest, investment of remittances in so called productive activities in Georgia is rather low.<sup>104</sup> On the one hand this could be conditioned by the overall limited proficiency of business related skills among both return migrants and members of remittance recipient households, and on the other hand, limited investment opportunities in the migrant sending communities.<sup>105</sup>

On a macroeconomic level, impact of remittances is mainly confined with being one of the major sources of foreign currency, more so in the countries with the significant trade deficit.<sup>106</sup> Importance of remittances as a regular source of foreign currency in the country has been vividly stressed in 2014. Compared to 2013, the transfers from Russia and Ukraine in 2014 shrank by 12% and 32% respectively. Coupled with the downward trend of foreign trade, particularly, exports to

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<sup>97</sup> CRRC, Caucasus Barometer 2013.

<http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2013ge/INCSOUAB-by-SETTYPE/>

<sup>98</sup> Gugushvili, Alex, 2013. The Development and the Side Effects of Remittances in the CIS Countries and Georgia; CARIM-East Research Report 2013/29.

<sup>99</sup> GeoStat, Household allowance recipient by categories.

[http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=200&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=200&lang=eng)

<sup>100</sup> EBRD, 2007, Georgia National Public Opinion Survey on Remittances.

<http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/sector/etc/surge.pdf>

Zurabishvili 2012, Zurabishvili and Zurabishvili, 2013, Gugushvili 2013.

<sup>101</sup> According to EBRD 2007 study, such regions are Samtskhe-Javakheti, Samegrelo, Zemo Svaneti, Imereti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, and Guria.

<sup>102</sup> See also: Gugushvili, 2013, Badurashvili and Nadareishvili, 2012, Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe. Final Country Report, Georgia. Gesellschaft für Versicherungswissenschaft und -gestaltung e.V.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid (Gugushvili 2013).

<sup>104</sup> EBRD, 2007, Zurabishvili and Zurabishvili, 2013, Gugushvili, 2013, Badurashvili and Nadareishvili, 2012.

<sup>105</sup> IOM, 2009, Tianeti Household Census 2008 and Tianeti Emigrants to Greece 2008,

<http://iom.ge/1/tianeti-household-census-2008-tianeti-emigrants-greece-2008-march-october-2009>.

<sup>106</sup> According to [GeoStat](#), trade deficit of Georgia was 5,733 million US dollars in 2014.

Russia and Ukraine, this had a considerable impact on the floating exchange rate of GEL, depreciating it by up to 30% in the period between November 2014 – March 2015.

One of the most prominent positive effects of remittances is keeping local consumption levels up, contribution to the growth of the retail, real estate, and construction sectors. Through increasing human capital and health of remittance recipient households, remittances have a potential to significantly contribute to the sustainability of Georgia’s economic growth. Well educated and healthier work force and population in general, are essential factors for the economic growth.

Impact of remittances on the migrant sending communities might also lead to creation of a culture of dependency, when members of the remittance receiving households are more reluctant to take on the less attractive and/or low-paid jobs and would allow themselves to stay unemployed for longer periods, while searching for a better job option. Hence, remittances could contribute to a higher level of labour market nonparticipation of remittance receiving household members. However, studies suggest that in Georgia there is no statistically significant difference in the employment rate of remittance receiving and non-remittance receiving household members.<sup>107</sup>

### ***Economic impact of immigration***

During 2010-2014, foreign nationals were issued on average 4,200 work residence permits a year. Overall, slightly more than 21,000 work residence permits were granted in the past 5 years, among them 76% (16,084) were first time applications, and 24% (5,036) requested the extension of the residency. Interestingly, 83% of the work residence permits were granted to men. Such a gender misbalance could be explained by higher demand for specific gendered jobs, such as construction. For instance, anecdotal evidence suggests that most of the Chinese and Turkish labour immigrants – where men constitute 79% and 96% respectively – are employed at the large construction and infrastructure projects executed by Chinese and Turkish contractor firms. In case of other top nationalities applying for work residence permits, similar gender distribution pattern is observed (see Table 43).

**Table 43:** Work residence permits issued in 2010-2014 by top 5 countries of citizenship

Citizenship	Women	Share of Women	Men	Share of Men	Total
China	1,348	21%	5,119	79%	6,467
Turkey	204	4%	4,414	96%	4,618
Iran	351	16%	1,871	84%	2,222
India	164	8%	1,992	92%	2,156
Egypt	88	10%	754	90%	842

*Source: PSDA*

However, the number of work residence permits depict only minor part of the whole labour immigration in Georgia, because for a number of years Georgia had a comparatively liberal visa policy<sup>108</sup> when citizens of more than 100 countries could enter, reside and work in the country without the necessity to obtain immigration visa or residence permit (till September 1, 2014). Hence, the actual volume of foreign labour force as well as the sectors of their employment is hard to estimate from the official data and requires specific research to measure both numbers and impact of labour immigration on local labour market. Labour market study conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs in 2015 is expected to shed more light on the

<sup>107</sup> Tchaidze and Torosyan, 2010. Development on the Move: Measuring and Optimising Migration’s Economic and Social Impacts in Georgia. CRR/ISET

<sup>108</sup> [Law of Georgia on the legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons](#) (2005).

existing situation and the impact of immigration on the labour market after the findings of the study are available.<sup>109</sup>

Immigrants in Georgia not only perform both high and low qualified jobs, but create jobs themselves. Databases of National Agency of Public Registry, Revenue Service, and National Statistics Office of Georgia, provide data on numbers of for profit enterprises established by foreign nationals,<sup>110</sup> as well as information on the amount of taxes these companies pay.

There were 26,633 individual entrepreneurs, Ltd, and branches of foreign legal entities, registered by NAPR in 2010-2014. However, not all of them are active: some of them de-register; others remain in the registry database, but may not be producing any output. As of June 1, 2015, GeoStat accounted for 14,954 legal entities that were registered by foreign nationals and 3,911 that were co-founded by foreigners. The share of companies founded or co-founded by foreign citizens was only 3.2% of all companies registered in the country.<sup>111</sup>

The number of active organizations established by foreign citizens can be also estimated by the number of legal entities paying taxes in Georgia. This number almost doubled from 2,343 in 2010 to 4,366 in 2014. However, it is significantly lower than the numbers of registered entities provided either by GeoStat, or NAPR. Accumulated taxes<sup>112</sup> paid by these organizations have been steadily growing both in absolute terms and as the share of the total revenues of the state budget. The later went up from 7.6% in 2010 to 10.8% in 2014.<sup>113</sup>

Revenues paid suggest that some of the top sectors where foreign nationals invest money in Georgia are retail and bulk trade, including trade in automobiles, food production and agriculture, hotels and restaurants, construction and real estate, transportation, financial and insurance services.<sup>114</sup>

**Table 44:** Taxes paid by legal entities established/co-established by foreign nationals, 2010-2014, in thousand GEL

Type of Ownership/Legal Status	Entity	Taxes paid	Entity	Taxes paid	Entity	Taxes paid	Entity	Taxes paid	Entity	Taxes paid
	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
Partnership	17	60.36	15	118.3	16	175.5	19	858.8	21	1,383.8
Non-profit organization	89	1,783.6	76	2,960.5	75	3,512.9	69	3,308.9	67	3,727.4
Joint Stock Company	13	878.5	13	972.6	11	804.1	10	1,043.6	9	1,307.1
Foreign Enterprises, Foreign Organization	10	710.9	11	173.9	9	118.3	12	308.4	18	1,617.0
Branch of /Permanent Representative of Foreign Company	398	222,450.6	458	249,195.2	493	313,112.6	507	282,427.9	530	353,455.5
Limited Company	1,808	314,096.2	1,957	384,621.6	2,361	467,333.5	3,380	546,358.9	3,716	628,465.2
Other	8	670.3	9	928.3	5	765.5	7	675.3	5	737.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,343</b>	<b>540,650.6</b>	<b>2,539</b>	<b>638,970.4</b>	<b>2,970</b>	<b>785,822.3</b>	<b>4,004</b>	<b>834,981.9</b>	<b>4,366</b>	<b>990,693.5</b>

*Source: MoF, Revenue Service of Georgia*

<sup>109</sup> The results of the study should become available in 2016.

<sup>110</sup> For more information on type and number of entities registered by foreign citizens, see [Overview of immigrants](#) section of present profile.

<sup>111</sup> GeoStat [http://geostat.ge/?action=page&p\\_id=235&lang=geo](http://geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=235&lang=geo)

<sup>112</sup> These amounts include all 15 types of taxes, as well as fines imposed on the companies.

<sup>113</sup> Ministry of Finance of Georgia, state budget revenues - <http://mof.gov.ge/4560>

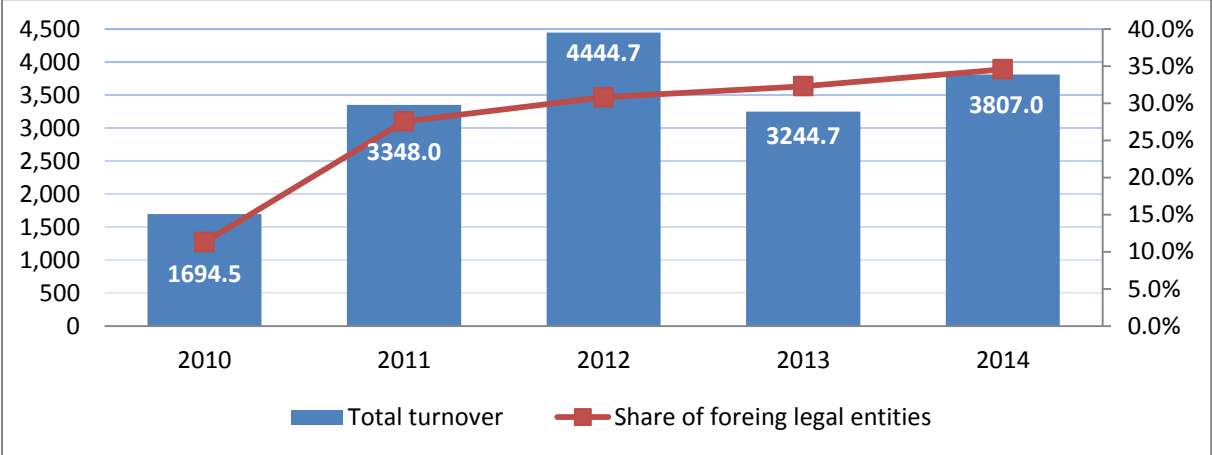
<sup>114</sup> Revenue Service, MoF.

Presumably, not all foreign nationals who establish business in Georgia stay in the country as long-term immigrants, but may be operating their businesses from long-distance. At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that a significant share of this group does reside where the actual operations of their companies take place. In the past 5 years, foreign nationals have registered 11,231 houses or apartments as their property; 6,848 cases of registration of an agricultural land and 5,322 cases of non-agricultural land were recorded by the public registry of Georgia. Most acquisitions/registrations were made by the nationals of Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Armenia, and by other nationalities topping the list of immigrants in Georgia.<sup>115</sup>

Although the available data does not allow for bolder speculations on the impact of these investments on labour market, the overall positive effect on the industry and construction sectors of the economy can be observed in the declarations filed by the companies to the National Statistics Office of Georgia.<sup>116</sup> The share of foreign entities in total turnover of construction sector in the past 5 years is shown in the Graph 9 below.

Compared to the turnovers in the preceding years, total annual turnover in the construction sector in 2011-2012 almost doubled in construction sector<sup>117</sup> and foreign-owned entities had contributed their share to this growth. The sector has contracted by 1.2 billion GEL in 2013, with the modest recovery in 2014. The share of foreign companies in the total turnover more than tripled in the past 5 years, up from 11% in 2010 to 34.5% in 2014 (see Graph 9).

**Graph 9:** Share of foreign legal entities in total turnover in construction sector by years, in million GEL



Source: GeoStat

***Diaspora engagement***

According to the estimates of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues there are more than 300 Georgian diaspora organizations abroad.<sup>118</sup> The Office does not consider this list as being exhaustive, but the list is to a certain extent up to date and contains only active diaspora organizations which maintain regular contact with the Diaspora Office. Therefore, although incomplete, it still provides certain indications to in which countries Georgian emigrant

<sup>115</sup> For more information on type of property registered by foreign citizens in Georgia, [Overview of immigrants](#) section of present profile.

<sup>116</sup> National Statistics Office of Georgia [http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=284&lang=eng](http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=284&lang=eng)

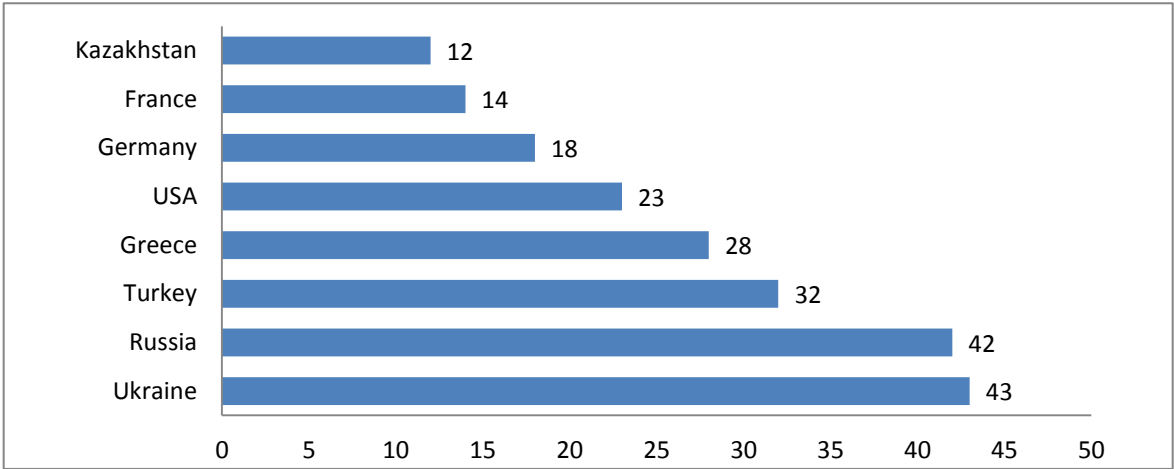
<sup>117</sup> GeoStat [http://geostat.ge/?action=page&p\\_id=466&lang=geo](http://geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=466&lang=geo)

<sup>118</sup> The term ‘diaspora’ as used by the Diaspora Office combines members of all Georgian migrant communities abroad, including historical diaspora members, temporary short-term emigrants, long-term emigrants, expatriates, and Georgians who are already naturalized in their countries of destination.



communities are more self-organized, and which diaspora communities tend to be more active and/or willing to cooperate with the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues. However, higher numbers of diaspora groups could also be indicative of the fragmentation of the Georgian communities in the given countries.

**Graph 10:** Number of Georgian diaspora organizations abroad



*Source: OSMDI*

For instance, 43 Diaspora organizations are registered in Ukraine, whereas in Russia, with much bigger Georgian community, only 42 organizations have been identified by the Diaspora Office (see Graph 10). For the most part, these are community and/or faith-based associations aiming at preserving Georgian language and culture among Georgian communities abroad. Some of the more established organizations provide few scholarships for Georgian students or make various donations either to local communities in the countries of their residence or in Georgia. In the times of crisis, such as the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and the June 2015 Tbilisi flooding, a number of such associations donated food and/or funds to the affected communities.<sup>119</sup>

How sizable is the volume of investments of Georgian diaspora groups in the home country is not easily traceable. As some studies suggest, temporary migrants who manage to accumulate finances, invest in small retail business or services, such as for example beauty salons.<sup>120</sup> Such micro and small businesses become an important source of income for the households of the emigrant or returnee, however, since, the majority of emigrants lack resources to accumulate significant financial capital, these businesses rarely transform into a larger-scale enterprises of the national importance. At the same time, there are a number of widely-known cases of diaspora investments in agriculture and food sector. A Georgian-Turkish GeoLive,<sup>121</sup> founded in 2009, has planted the fields of olive trees in four regions of Georgia and plans on becoming one of the major olive supplier to Georgian as well as international markets. Similarly, a poultry broiler Biu-Biu<sup>122</sup> and its sister company, Pomono-fruit, were established by a Georgian Russian diaspora representative in 2011-2013. The case study prepared by the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University (ISET) argues that this investment is not just a successful business, but a game-changer on local food market.<sup>123</sup> It is believed that there are many more examples of successful diaspora

<sup>119</sup> Diaspora Office, ICMPD (2015) Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece, and Turkey.

<sup>120</sup> ICMPD (2015), Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece, and Turkey.

<sup>121</sup> GeoLive <http://geolive.ge/>

<sup>122</sup> Chirina Ltd. <http://bio-bio.ge/?page=home>

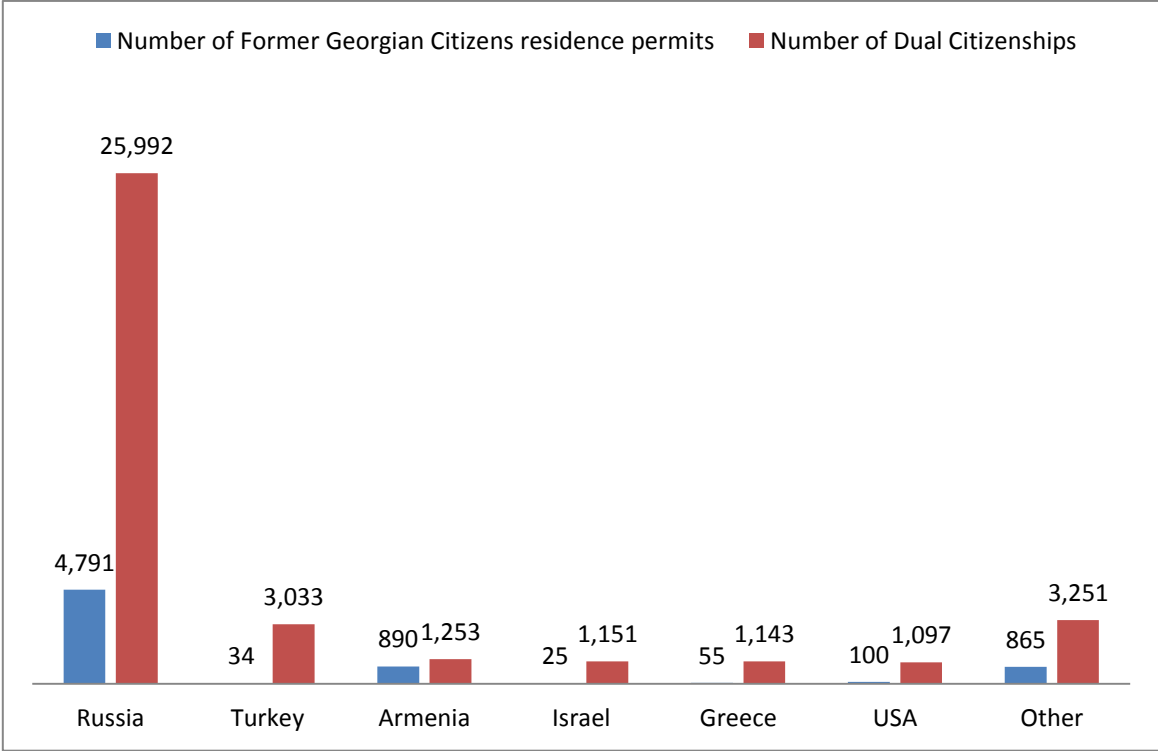
<sup>123</sup> USAID (2014), Georgian Agricultural Competitiveness Case Studies, prepared by the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University.

investments, however, the mechanisms of tracking these types of investments has yet to be developed by the relevant state agencies.

Another indicator of the engagement of the diaspora and emigrant groups in Georgia are the permanent residence permits issued to former Georgian citizens, Compatriot certificates, and Georgian citizenships granted as the second (dual) citizenship, which are commonly issued for former Georgian citizens. Overall, 6,760 permanent residence permits were issued for former Georgian nationals in the period between 2010 and 2014.

Up to 80% of permanent residence permits and dual citizenships were awarded to persons of working age, between 18 and 65 years. In both groups men constituted the majority. The former citizens, who receive an unrestricted permission to reside in Georgia, are not necessarily returning migrants, as they also maintain other citizenship, but it is a clear sign that this population preserves somewhat regular contact with the home country.

**Graph 11:** Permanent residence permits issued for former Georgian citizens and dual citizenship awarded in 2010-2014



*Source: PSDA*

In 2012-2014 the status of a compatriot was granted to 595 persons, among them – 277 citizens of Azerbaijan, 117 citizens of Iran, and 109 citizens of Russia. The compatriot status is granted to a citizen of Georgia residing abroad for a long period of time, or to a foreign citizen of Georgian descent and/or whose native language belongs to the Kartvelian language group. The compatriot status holders can participate in international sports tournaments on behalf of Georgia, can enter and stay in Georgia without the visa for up to 30 days, is eligible for the state funding for general and higher education in Georgia, can become a civil servant in Georgia and is eligible to participate in state programmes targeting the diaspora members.

### ***Skills development and knowledge networks***

A study conducted by the ISET and CRRC,<sup>124</sup> found that there are differences in education and skills acquired by Georgian emigrants based on their former area of residence (rural or urban). The emigrants from urban areas, more specifically from the capital, are more likely to develop skills, than emigrants from rural areas. There is also a difference in the type of skills emigrants obtain abroad – persons who emigrated from the capital area tend to acquire tertiary education and work-related skills, while emigrants from other urban and rural areas prioritize work-related skills. This tendency could be explained by the specific profiles and education backgrounds of emigrants, as well as potentially more opportunities for and better informed decisions by emigrants from urban areas, as compared to emigrants from rural settlements.<sup>125</sup> It is noteworthy that about 40% of the total households with return migrants reported improvements in their skills and/or education (139 out of 347 households with returned migrants surveyed).

**Table 45:** Skills obtained during emigration according to type of settlement

Education/Skills type	Rural area	Urban area (excluding Tbilisi)	Tbilisi
<b>Work-related skills</b>	10%	25%	25%
<b>Tertiary education</b>	1%	8%	27%
<b>Primary and secondary education</b>	2%	6%	4%

*Source: ISET/CRRC, 2010 as cited in ICMPD 2015*

In case of a sizable part of Georgian migrants, emigration causes de-qualification and has a negative effect on migrants' skill retention and development. In most cases they are unable to perform jobs according to their qualification due to irregular status. Migrants with high and intermediate education frequently work on jobs below their qualification, leading to de-qualification or to the change of the skill-set of the migrants (see Table 46).

**Table 46:** Type of work performed by level of education

Statement	High education	Intermediate education	Low education
<b>I worked below my education level</b>	69%	40%	13%
<b>My work and education level corresponded fully</b>	23%	54%	83%
<b>My work normally required more than the education level I had</b>	2%	1%	3%

*Source: ETF, 2013 as cited in ICMPD 2015*

Whereas de-qualification is clearly a negative phenomenon and adds-up on the brain waste, changing the skill-set may re-direct labour force to more demanded areas of the labour market and thus, ease the mismatch of labour force supply and demand, characteristic to Georgia's labour market. However, whether the re-direction of the labour force is actually taking place has yet to be studied and evidenced. Not all return migrants manage to put in practice skills developed during the time abroad and not all skills acquired abroad are demanded on Georgia's labour market. Even though most returning migrants consider their new skills valuable and relevant for Georgian market, many find it difficult to find desirable job and to re-integrate into Georgian market and society;<sup>126</sup> having said that, returned migrants who get employed back home, are

<sup>124</sup> Development on the move report, Global Development Network, ISET, CRRC.

<sup>125</sup> ICMPD 2015.

<sup>126</sup> Tukhashvili 2013, CARIM East.

usually paid higher salaries than non-migrants,<sup>127</sup> which might be an indication to brain gain and skills transfer.<sup>128</sup>

Immigration of skilled and highly-skilled foreign nationals is also an important channel of knowledge and innovation and can positively affect skills formation on local labour market. At this stage, there is no data available on the volume and scope of skilled immigration in Georgia to assess the potential areas of impact. As in the case of diaspora investments, there are only a few widely publicised cases of the know-how and skills introduced by immigrants.<sup>129</sup>

Internationalization of Georgian universities<sup>130</sup> as well as support of Georgian youth to acquire education and skills abroad is a declared policy priority of Georgian government. Georgian state has been funding young professionals and newly graduates to study abroad on tertiary level since 2007. 133 persons have been funded only in the past 2 years (see Table 47). Most scholarships cover MA level studies. Interestingly, the major fields of study selected by the students are social sciences, 37% of students funded by the government chose this field, followed by 14% in arts and humanities, 11% in sciences and law each. Only 11 out of 133 students went to study engineering and 3 persons chose to specialize in agriculture studies.

**Table 47:** Recipients of state scholarship to study abroad

Country/Region of Destination			Educational Level			
	2014	2015	BA	MA	PhD	Professional Training
<b>USA</b>	32	13	11	26	6	2
<b>Canada</b>		1				1
<b>Europe</b>	42	42	5	67	11	1
<b>Russia</b>	1		1			
<b>China</b>	2			2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>56</b>	17	95	17	4

*Source: International Education Centre*

Another state funded programme, implemented by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation has been supporting Georgian diaspora and emigrants to stay connected to and contribute to the development of Georgian academia. The Foundation funds the joint research projects of Georgian academics from local universities and research institutions in cooperation with Georgian emigrant academics from abroad. Out of 167 applications submitted since the start of the program in 2011, 57 research projects have been funded.

In addition to the state scholarships, there are and have been available other scholarship programs supporting higher education of Georgian citizens abroad. Some of these programmes are funded by the state administrations of foreign countries (for example, Edmund S. Muskie, Chevening, DAAD, scholarship of Dutch Government), while others are run in terms of EU Educational programs (TEMPUS, ERASMUS), and yet others are part of concrete exchange/scholarship programs administered by Georgian or foreign universities. Beneficiaries of these programs are often easily employed and demanded professionals in Georgia. Some of them have been and are

<sup>127</sup> ISET, CRRC 2010.

<sup>128</sup> ICMPD 2015.

<sup>129</sup> Such as immigration of farmers from South Africa (Boers) to Georgia's Kakheti region.

<sup>130</sup> The goal of Georgian government under the Bologna Process is to increase internationalization of Georgia's educational system up to 20%, including both student and academic personnel.

now serving on high positions in Georgian government, business and non-governmental sectors, contributing to creation of knowledge networks and brain gain.<sup>131</sup>

More than 9,000 foreign students have enrolled in Georgian universities in 2004-2014. Almost third of the students are from Azerbaijan, followed by Indian, Nigerian, Russian, Iraqi, and Turkish students. Whereas considerable part of Azerbaijani and Russian nationals could be former Georgian citizens or persons with Georgian origin taking advantage of the privileges granted to them by the Georgian state,<sup>132</sup> other nationalities are educational immigrants attracted by different aspects of Georgian educational system (for further information on educational immigrants in Georgia see the [Immigration](#) chapter of the present profile). The presence of the educational immigrants in Georgia has a potential to positively influence wide range of educational, economic, and societal issues. For instance, their presence can contribute to the improvement of the quality of education in the institutions where they are enrolled and/or where they are invited to get enrolled; increase of the income for the universities with foreign students; the access to foreign language programs and internationalized environment for Georgian students; and introducing members of Georgian society with different cultures, thus, increasing diversity and tolerance in the society. Further research is needed to assess whether foreign students in Georgia have had any of these effects.

Number of international faculty in Georgian universities as well as the share of Georgian faculty with international qualification and experience would be another indicator of the internationalization of Georgia's educational system. However, the aggregated numbers of such faculty at Georgian universities are not readily available.

### **B3. Social Dimension - Integration**

#### ***Reintegration of returning Georgian citizens***

Under the leadership of the IOM, Mobility Centres are functioning in four regions of Georgia - Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi and Telavi. The budget of the project for the mobility centre is 375,000 EUR (financed by the European Union, "More for More" program). This project will be completed by December 2016, up to when the Ministry will take over all the functions of the Mobility Centre and provide abovementioned assistance services.

To facilitate reintegration of returnees, the Mobility Centres provide assistance in return, reception assistance and transport, temporary accommodation, medical assistance (both counselling and service), vocational training (including counselling, funding and employment services), business support (including counselling, training, assistance in business plan development, and grants). Only in 2014, the mobility centres provided more than 2,000 consultations, with more than 600 returnees receiving targeted assistances (see Table 48). The majority of returnees who approached mobility centres in 2014 were from Greece, Germany, and Russia.

**Table 48:** Assistance provided by Mobility Centres to return migrants, 2014

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<sup>131</sup> For example, <https://www.irex.org/news-impact/search?project=81>

<sup>132</sup> Access to state funding for persons holding the Compatriot status is guaranteed.

Type of assistance	N
Consultation	2,213
Provision of first aid and basic medical support, including psycho-social rehabilitation	77
Temporary accommodation	82
Funding of professional training and re-trainings	88
Funding of micro business projects	219
Employment support	42
Self-employment support	92
Paid internship	10
Legal aid	3

*Source: MRA*

Additionally, in 2015 GoG allocated funding in the state budget amounting to 400,000 GEL to support reintegration of the returned Georgian migrants through awarding state grants to the Non-Governmental Organizations in Georgia within the program “The reintegration assistance to returned Georgian migrants”, administered by MRA. The grants support the reintegration process of the Georgian migrants in 14 thematic directions<sup>133</sup> as well as the strengthening of the non-governmental sector in the field of reintegration activities.

In 2014 most applications were submitted by the returning migrants from Greece, followed by Germany, Russia, Belgium and Ukraine (see Table 49).

**Table 49:** Returning citizens registered at the Mobility Centres, 2014

Former country of residence	Registered as returning citizen	Project Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Age Group			
					<25	26-40	41-65	65<
<b>Greece</b>	340	143	97	46	7	56	76	4
<b>Germany</b>	96	35	17	18	10	19	6	0
<b>Russia</b>	62	9	2	7	1	0	8	0
<b>Belgium</b>	48	16	6	10	2	8	4	2
<b>Ukraine</b>	37	14	7	7	2	5	6	1
<b>Cyprus</b>	35	15	7	8	2	5	8	0
<b>France</b>	32	11	3	8	1	6	3	1
<b>Italy</b>	25	5	4	1	0	1	4	0
<b>Spain</b>	20	8	4	4	0	1	6	1
<b>Netherlands</b>	20	9	3	6	2	7	0	0
<b>Other</b>	133	44	20	24	4	20	17	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>12</b>

*Source: MRA*

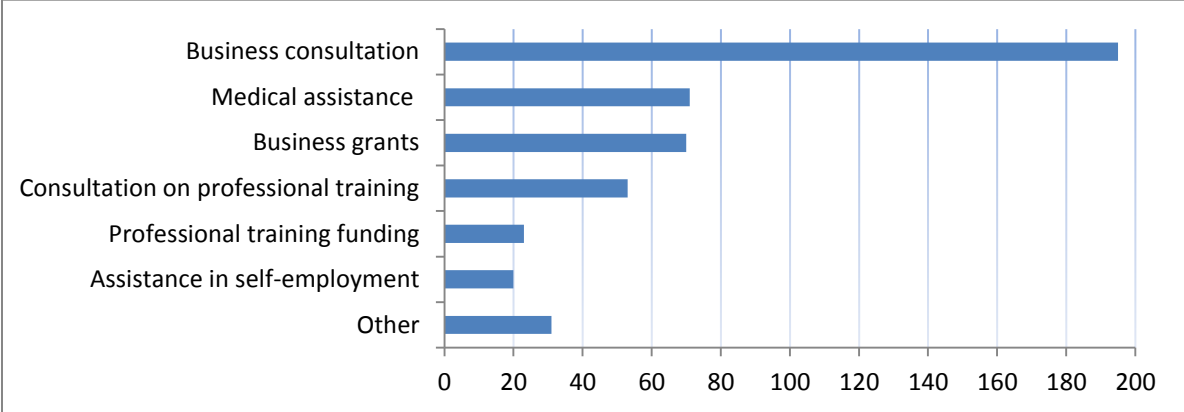
36% of the returning migrants, registered at the Centres as returning citizens, benefited from the services offered. The rest either failed to meet the requirements, or had received assistance from other programs. The biggest gap between registered returnees and beneficiaries is observed among

<sup>133</sup> Thematic directions include but are not limited to: funding of micro business projects presented by the beneficiaries; temporary accommodation; funding of professional and re-trainings for returnees as well as promotion of paid internships; provision of first aid and basic medicine, counting psychosocial rehabilitation, to the returnees; legal aid funding for Georgian returned migrants as well as financing public awareness programs, supporting raising public involvement and awareness on the migration related issues.

the returnees from Russia. While among the returnees from Greece, male beneficiaries significantly outnumber female beneficiaries. It seems that the financial crisis has hit men more than women emigrants. About 95% of beneficiaries are between 18 and 65, hence active labour force.

Consultants at the Mobility Centres offer a number of services, including general counselling, professional training, and support in job search, business start-up grants, medical assistance, including psycho social rehabilitation, temporary accommodation in emergency situations paid internship and legal aid. The most demanded services are consultations on starting and managing a business, healthcare services, and start-up grants (Graph 12).

**Graph 12:** Services of the Mobility Centres most used by the returning migrants, 2014



Source: MRA

**Integration of foreigners**

Georgia’s naturalization policy allows for granting the citizenship. Foreigners who have resided in Georgia for at least 5 consecutive years, as well foreigners, married to Georgian citizens who have resided in Georgia for at least 2 consecutive years can acquire Georgian citizenship under regular procedure; foreigners who have made an outstanding contribution to Georgia or who serve to the national interests of the country can be granted Georgian citizenship by way of exception (dual citizenship). Trends and characteristics of applying and granting Georgian citizenship in the past 5 years are discussed in further details in the [Immigration](#) and [Diaspora Engagement](#) chapters of the present Migration Profile. As shown in the above chapters, citizenship has been effectively used by long-term immigrants in Georgia as well as former Georgian citizens to integrate or maintain contact and formal relationship with Georgian state.

Immigrants, who have been granted permanent residency in Georgia, enjoy social and economic rights equal to those of Georgian citizens. In other words, they qualify for state pension, state funded health insurance package, and social benefits. A visible drop in the number of beneficiaries of the state health insurance program in 2014, shown in the Table 50, was caused by the termination of the State Health Insurance Program in September 2013. It was replaced by the Universal Health Insurance Package in 2014. 87 beneficiaries recorded in 2014 are persons who have actually received medical treatment covered by the program, compared to 528 persons reported in 2013, who represent the number of customers registered under the program, not necessarily benefiting from it.

**Table 50:** State assistance provided to foreign nationals residing in Georgia permanently, by type of assistance and gender distribution<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Note, that this does not denote number of persons; one person may be getting all these benefits.

Years	Pensions	Social benefits	Health insurance
2010	225	86	361
2011	174	92	330
2012	174	110	428
2013	142	103	528
2014	144	121	87

Years	Women	Men	Total
2010	386	160	546
2011	332	147	479
2012	338	150	488
2013	372	256	628
2014	174	114	288

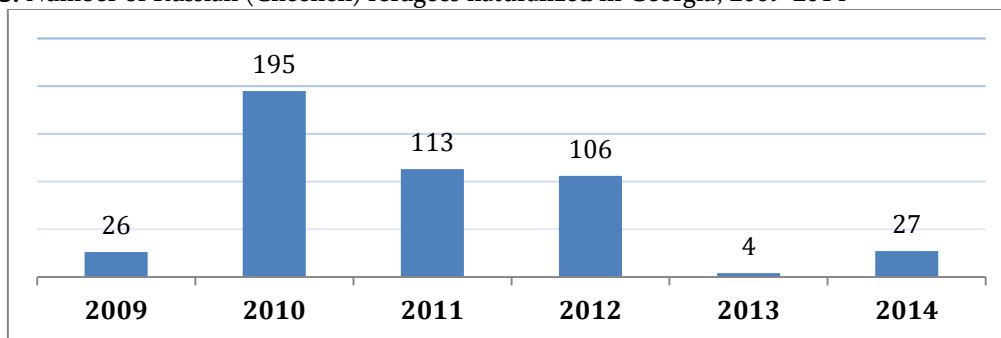
Source: MoH

It can be assumed, however, that in the majority of the cases, socio-economic assistance allocated to foreigners with permanent residency in Georgia are directed towards and used by former Georgian citizens – Georgian immigrants or returning emigrants and diaspora members who have acquired citizenship of other countries and have the right to reside in Georgia permanently as the former citizens (for further information on permanent residency awarded to former Georgian nationals see the [Diaspora engagement](#) and [Overview of immigration](#) sections of present profile).

### *Integration of persons granted protection*

One of the biggest groups of refugees in Georgia is of Chechen origin. The majority of them sought protection in Georgia in the late 1990s due to the second so called Russia-Chechnya war. Most of the Chechen refugees have settled in Kakheti region and managed to integrate in the local life over the years. In the past 5 years, 471 Chechen refugees (see Graph 13) were granted Georgian citizenship, among them 251 women and 220 men.

**Graph 13.** Number of Russian (Chechen) refugees naturalized in Georgia, 2009-2014



Source: MRA

Other persons with the refugee or humanitarian status have arrived relatively recently<sup>135</sup> and none of them have naturalized in Georgia yet. However, Georgia has been issuing refugee travel documents since 2009 to ease their international mobility. Refugee travel documents allow persons with a refugee status to leave and return to Georgia, and travel abroad to the countries other than of their citizenship, of their earlier permanent residence, or the countries where they or their family members are not considered safe. The majority of travel documents were issued to the refugees with Russian citizenship, followed by Iraqis (see Table 51).

**Table 51.** Travel Documents by Citizenship Granted to Refugees (upon request)

Citizenship	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Russia	4	17	11	20	-
Iraq	-	-	3	14	24
Turkey	-	1	-	-	1

<sup>135</sup> For further details on numbers and origin of humanitarian and refugee status holders in Georgia, please, refer to the Asylum in Georgia chapter of the present Migration Profile,



<b>Azerbaijan</b>	-	1	-	1	-
<b>Tajikistan</b>	-	-	1	-	-
<b>Syria</b>	-	-	-	1	-
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	-	-	-	1	-
<b>Jordan</b>	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26</b>

*Source: PSDA*

Holders of the refugee or humanitarian status in Georgia are also eligible for the state support programs (social assistance, and universal health package) described above. Persons granted international protection in Georgia can benefit from these programmes since 2013. 109 persons have taken advantage of these programmes in 2013-2014.

### ***Integration of Internal migrants***

To assist in resettlement and integration to the internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgian state provides social assistance package and private housing or accommodation in the “collective centres”. In the past 5 years, the efforts have been made to provide families with the private housing both with the support of Georgian state budget and other, non-state funds. 268 houses and apartments were purchased in 2010-2014, mostly outside of the capital. 10.5 million GEL were allocated for this purpose from the state budget, while 633,000 GEL were received from other sources.

By the end of 2014, the MRA database records included 74,461 families (227,733 persons) from occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and 11,272 families (34,920 persons) from the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (further information on the numbers and resettlement of IDPs can be found in the [Internal Migration](#) chapter of the present Migration Profile). It is noteworthy that a significant share of IDPs managed to integrate and acquire housing independently from the state support. What is the share of the individuals and families which managed to successfully overcome the socio-economic and integration challenges is not known and requires further study. The filter introduced on the social assistance, however, is the regular income of 1,250 GEL monthly, per person. Individuals who earn above this line are not eligible for the social assistance of 135 GEL a month.

Georgian state has been allocating funding for providing housing assistance to ecomigrants since 2004. According to the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, almost 7.2 million GEL have been allocated for this purpose in the last decade and 1,186 houses and apartments have been purchased. In 2010-2014 only, 1.6 million GEL were allocated from the state budget and 395,000 GEL were earmarked from other sources.

### ***Residents of occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia***

The Russian Federation started massive “passportisation” of the population residing in occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in the 2000s. All Russian passports given to the residents of the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia on the Georgian soil are considered as illegal and void by both Georgian legislation and international law.

In order to keep the residents from occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in touch with the Georgian state, status neutral travel and identification

documents were introduced in 2011. Travel document would allow residents behind the occupation line to travel internationally with other than Russian Federation’s or Georgian passports, while identification documents would let them travel to the rest of Georgia and receive state services. Both documents are issued by the Public Service Development Agency.

**Table 52.** Travel and identification documents (Status neutral documents) issued to the residents of the occupied Georgian regions in 2011-2014

Area of Residence	Travel documents	ID cards	Men	Women	Total
Abkhazia	32	267	129	170	299
Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia	1	13	6	8	14
<b>Total</b>	33	280	135	178	313

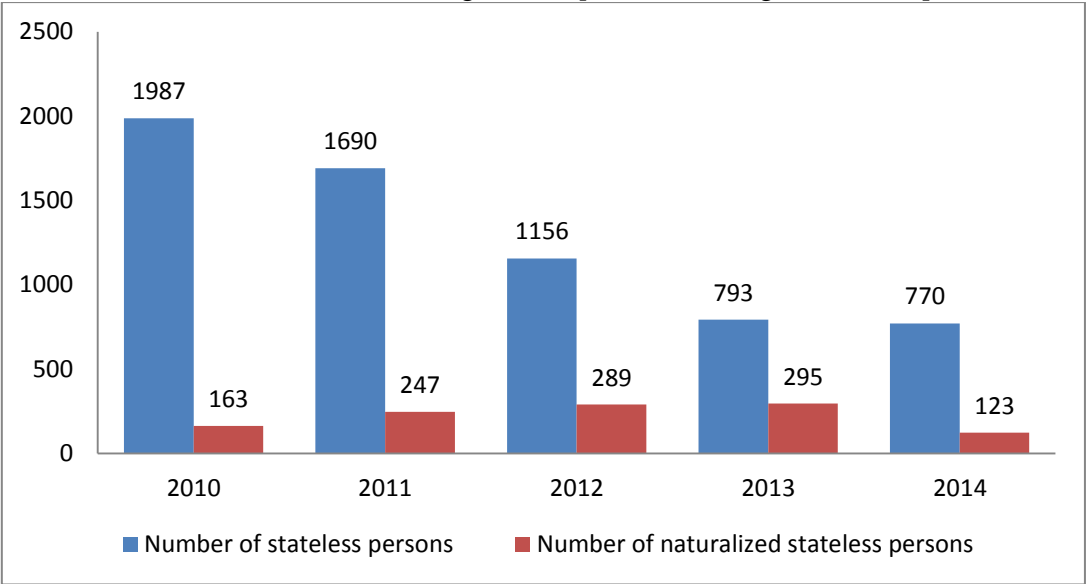
*Source: PSDA*

As shown in Table 52, both travel and identification documents are more popular among the residents of occupied Georgian region Abkhazia than residents of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. The demand for status neutral documents was the highest in 2012, almost equally distributed among gender and age groups.

Reduction of statelessness

A person is a stateless if s/he is not considered a citizen by any state. In Georgia, the status of a stateless person is determined by the Public Service Development Agency. In the past 5 years, Georgia has achieved a significant progress in identifying stateless persons and guiding them through the naturalization process to reduce statelessness. The total number of stateless persons went down from 1,987 in 2010 to 770 in 2014. In the same period, 1,117 stateless persons have received Georgian citizenship through the process of naturalization. Similarly to the citizens of Georgia, stateless individuals qualify for the relevant social assistance packages.

**Graph 14:** Number of Stateless Persons in Georgia and acquisition of Georgian citizenship, 2010-2014



*Source: PSDA*

## PART C. MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

### C1. Migration Policy Framework

In the past 5 years, notable progress was made in the development of Georgia's migration policy framework, aiming at building a coherent migration policy on national level. Particularly noteworthy progress has been made in the directions of strategic planning, migration management and administration, and migration data collection and analysis.

#### Strategic Planning

Development of a chain of key strategic documents was a step forward towards improving migration management and policy-making. The first Migration Strategy of Georgia and a respective Action Plan was developed for the years 2013-2015. The existing documents are being revised in 2015. New 2016-2020 Migration Strategy and Action plan are adopted in the end of 2015, covering the 5-year period and 2 years (respectively). Other relevant strategic documents adopted in the past few years are: 2014-2018 Strategy of the State Border Management of Georgia; the concept of the Migration Risk Analysis System was developed and approved in 2015, accompanied by the 2016-2017 Action Plan; 2015-2018 State Strategy for the Labour Market Development of the Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Protection; Strategy for the Development of the Professional Education in Georgia (2013-2020); Information and Communication Strategy of the Government of Georgia in the sphere of EU Integration (2014-2017); and the newly adopted Strategy for the Reform of the Political Planning System (2015-2017). The State Minister for Diaspora Issues is also developing a strategy for the diaspora engagement. The project of the strategy has been already shared with the relevant state, local, and international stakeholders.

#### Migration Management

Integrated Border Management (IBM) – the reform started as early as 2005, and as of 2014 significant progress has been achieved, both in terms of the infrastructure and development of human resources. An Integrated Border Management mechanism, which implies combination of customs data with the passport database, the state revenue service, and the patrol police databases, is already in place. A key task still ahead for Georgia's border management is the finalisation of border demarcation with Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Russian Federation.

#### Document security

Georgia has taken important steps towards improving document security and achieved rather quick progress in issuing biometric passports and ID cards in 2010. This progress has also contributed to improvements in border crossing management and fostering visa dialogue with EU. As of the end of December 2014, 796,494 ordinary biometric passports, 552 travel biometric passports (for stateless persons), and 99 travel biometric documents (for refugees) were issued by the Public Service Development Agency.

#### Asylum management

The revisions to the existing asylum policy were made in 2011-2012 to harmonise Georgian legislation with international conventions and emphasise protection and integration aspects of persons granted asylum. Significant progress was made in the areas of housing and the reception of asylum seekers. COI Unit was established under the MRA and a comprehensive electronic database of the asylum related data is being developed. Important procedural amendments were

made in 2015 in the existing law on refugees. Adoption of a new law on International Protection is expected in 2016.

#### *Management of inflow and movement of foreigners*

Georgia's visa and residence policies were reformed in 2014-2015. New visa categories (A, B, C, D, and T), similar to the *Schengen* visa code system, were introduced and became inter-linked with the type of visa issued prior. E-visa was also introduced in 2015. Foreigners can apply and receive Georgian visa online at the website launched by MFA.<sup>136</sup>

Establishment of the Migration Department under the MIA contributed to better management of inflows of foreigners, and monitor the change of status of foreigners.

#### *Return and readmission management*

Georgia and the EU signed the readmission agreement in 2010; it entered into force together with the Visa facilitation agreement on March 1, 2011. Implementation protocols defining readmission conditions, forms of transfer, and other details have to be formulated in a bilateral framework with the individual EU member states. Georgia has already concluded these protocol agreements with several states<sup>137</sup> and many more are still under development. Similar agreements are being developed with the non-EU states as well. Procedures regulating the expulsion of irregular migrants from Georgian territory have also been modified and adjusted to the EU standards. A temporary accommodation centre under the MIA's Migration Department was opened in Tbilisi in 2014.

#### *Migration Statistics*

One of the most technically challenging projects initiated in the past years is the development of the Unified Migration Analytical System – a centralised database which will combine major migration-related data in synchronised manner. The unified analytic database is meant to contribute to the development of a more evidence-based policy-making in the country and hence improve migration management. The system is expected to contribute greatly to the regular update of the Migration Profile and to the Migration Risk Analysis System. The adoption of the law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection (2011) and active monitoring of its implementation through the Office of the Personal Data Protection Inspector prepared the ground for allocating adequate attention to the subject matter in the design of the unified analytic database. The system will be fully developed by the end of 2016 and it will increase quality and reliability of migration statistics.

## **C2. Legislative Framework**

In the past 5 years, three major new laws were adopted in the field of migration management:

- A. The organic **law of Georgia on Georgian Citizenship** is effective since June 2014. The new law has simplified the determination of Georgian citizenship and modified the naturalization procedures. Furthermore, the law is in full compliance with the 1961 UN convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;
- B. The new **law on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons**, effective since September 2014, established new regulations for entering and staying in Georgia for foreign citizens,

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<sup>136</sup> <https://www.evisa.gov.ge/GeoVisa/>

<sup>137</sup> Implementing protocols were signed and ratified individually with Hungary, Bulgaria, Estonia, Austria, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg. Outside of the EU, Georgia has readmission agreements with Ukraine, Switzerland, and Norway. (The list of agreements has been retrieved from codex.ge)

introduced new visa and residence permit categories, and created the expulsion mechanism for persons with no legal basis to stay in Georgia. The shortcomings identified in the process of implementation were addressed in 2015, when several amendments were made to the law, easing some of the regulations related to visa and residence issuance;

- C. The **law of Georgia on Labour Migration**, effective since November 2015, largely regulates the norms of labour emigration of Georgian citizens abroad, particularly emigration through the intermediary organizations. Access to Georgia's labour market is unlimited for the aliens residing in Georgia on legal basis.

Other laws regulating various areas of international migration are:

- Law of Georgia on the Rules of Georgian Citizen's Entry into and Exit from Georgia (1993);
- Law of Georgia on Procedure for Registration of Citizens of Georgia and Foreigners Residing in Georgia, Issuance of Identity (Residence) Card and Passport of a Citizen of Georgia (1996);
- Law of Georgia on the State Border of Georgia (1998);
- Law of Georgia on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2006);
- Law of Georgia on Occupied Territories (2008);
- Law of Georgia on Refugee and Humanitarian Status (2011);
- Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection (2011);
- Law of Georgia on Compatriots Residing Abroad and Diaspora Organizations (2011).

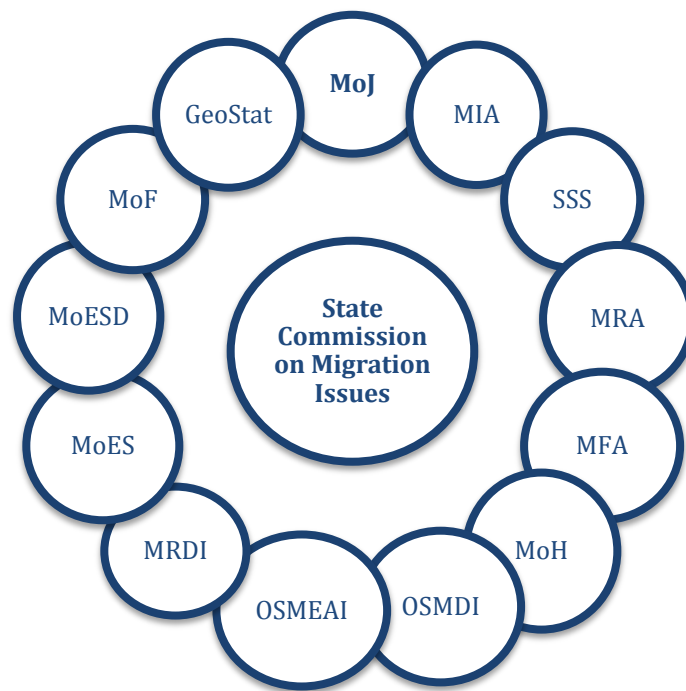
Strategic documents and agreements signed between Georgia and the EU provide important guidelines of how the migration field is and is planned to be regulated in Georgia. These documents are: Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), Association Agenda between the European Union and Georgia, and the Visa Liberalization Action Plan granted to Georgia by the EU.

### **C3. Institutional Framework**

The State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI) was established by the Government of Georgia in 2010 through the governmental decree #314. The aim of the SCMI, as stated in its statute, is to define an integrated policy of the government of Georgia in the sphere of migration and improve migration processes management (Article 1). It is expected to achieve this goal through improved coordination among relevant authorities, preparation of expert commentary and recommendation on ongoing migration issues, and the development of policy proposals on the most pressing subjects.

Later, in 2012, the SCMI Secretariat was formed with EU financial support. The function of the Secretariat is to support the Commission's regular operations and provide expertise on migration related issues. The Secretariat is hosted by the Public Service Development Agency under the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

**Figure 1:** Member agencies of the State Commission on Migration Issues



The SCMI brings together high-level representatives of 13 state agencies:

- Ministry of Justice (MoJ);
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA);
- State Security Service (SSSG);
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA);
- Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees (MRA);
- Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoH);
- Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues (OSMDI);
- Office of the State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration (OSMEAI);
- Ministry of Education and Science (MoES);
- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD);
- National Statistics Office (GeoStat);
- Ministry of Finance (MoF);
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI).

The chairman of the Commission is the Minister of Justice, and the co-chair is the deputy Minister of Interior.

12 additional members with the consultative status are representing seven international organisations and five national non-governmental organisations:

International organisations:

- Delegation of the European Union to Georgia (EUD);
- International Organization for Migration, and (IOM);
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);
- International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD);
- International Labour Organization (ILO);
- German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ);
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

*National non-governmental organisations:*

- Civil Development Agency (CiDA);
- Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA);
- Innovations and Reforms Centre (IRC);
- Migration Centre and (MC);
- UN Association of Georgia (UNAG).

The purpose of including consultative members is to provide additional expertise to the Commission and encourage regular inter- and intra-sector cooperation and exchange.

The Commission operates through subject-specific working groups. By 2015, there are six working groups working in the following directions:

- Migration Strategy;
- Migration Risk Analysis;
- Unified Migration Analytical System;
- Statelessness;
- Consolidation of Reintegration Activities;
- Monitoring the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons.

Depending on the needs in the given field, the working groups are responsible for either drafting a new legislation and harmonising it with international instruments, or coordinating inter-sectorial dialogue on specific issues such as reintegration programmes or analytical database.

## PART D. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### D1. Analysis of major findings

Inclusion in global migratory system is gradually transforming patterns of international and internal mobility in Georgia. From being emigration and transit country, Georgia is gradually becoming a country of destination as well, with more and more immigrants legally arriving for long term purposes. Georgian nationals respond to existing demand on the international labour markets and migrate to the countries which provide better employment opportunities, creating there a sizable diaspora presence. Still, the majority of emigrants from Georgia lack proper documentation in the destination countries that may endanger their social and economic rights. In order to adequately reflect existing challenges in the migration policy of the country, based on the analysis of the data presented above and recent migration management development, following major findings can be identified:

- According to GeoStat population estimates by January 1, 2015, population of Georgia decreased by more than 600,000 individuals from 2002 till 2014;
- Distribution of rural-urban population changes towards increasing the share of urban population;
- Number of asylum seekers to Georgia has been increasing during recent years from the countries affected by internal conflicts, reaching 1,800 applications in 2014; these increases are mainly due to higher numbers of asylum seekers from Iraq, Ukraine, and to a lesser extent Syria;
- Number of asylum seekers from Georgia has a tendency to decrease over the last several years;
- Remittances continue to serve as an important source of currency. Remittances are still affected by economic crises in the countries of destination of Georgian emigrants. However, they also have a tendency to rebound quite quickly and continue growth;
- Remittances play an important role in poverty alleviation. However, rather limited amount of remittances sent to Georgia is invested in productive activities. To achieve more sustainable impact it is crucial for relevant state agencies to elaborate specific programs to facilitate emigrants and their family members to channel remittances in businesses;
- A sizable number of immigrants is arriving to Georgia with entrepreneurial goals and they may serve as an important resource to contribute to improvement of Georgian economy;
- Increased inflow of immigrant students may contribute to improvement of the quality of education, and economic stability of Georgian higher educational institutions;
- Establishment of Temporary Accommodation Centre of MIA, which operates according to international standards, is a step forward in fighting irregular migration to Georgia;
- Relevant state agencies are undertaking important steps to promote legal migration opportunities (establishment of circular migration schemes, for example);
- EU-Georgia cooperation in the field of migration management and migration policy development continues and brings positive results. Several large-scale EU-funded projects are implemented in the country, legislation in major directions is harmonized with the EU standards, and reforms under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan are successfully undertaken;
- The State Commission on Migration Issues effectively shapes the development of migration policy and management in the country;



- To improve migration data collection and fact-based policy-making, several electronic databases have been either already operational (for instance, Face Recognition System by the PSDA, immigration irregular migrants identification electronic program created by MIA) or are being in the active developing stage (Unified Migration Analytical System planned to be operational in 2016).

## D2. Major Gaps and Recommendations

Major Gaps	Recommendations
<b>Migration Data Collection</b>	
<p><b>Improvement of migration statistics and analysis:</b> Availability of reliable national migration statistics remains a challenge in Georgia, leading scholars and policy-makers to rely on various types of estimations rather than on solid statistical data. More academic research in the field of migration is needed as well. Although results of the 2014 National Census are expected to elicit more reliable data on migratory flows and stocks, Census data will provide only a snapshot on the state of migration in Georgia. However, it is important to collect relevant data on a regular basis in order to analyse existing and forecast future migratory trends.</p>	<p>In order to undertake a comprehensive analysis of migration related data, it is important to lay foundation for a regular (longitudinal) practice of migration data collection and analysis. In this respect, it is recommended to establish a practice of regular socio-economic studies in the following areas (either through strengthening of GeoStat, or provision of research funding to independent research organizations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrant integration;</li> <li>• Return migrant reintegration;</li> <li>• Ecological migrant reintegration;</li> <li>• IDP reintegration;</li> <li>• Migration and development nexus;</li> <li>• Dynamics of Migrant flows;</li> <li>• Immigration and labour market development;</li> <li>• Migration and health;</li> <li>• Internal migration;</li> <li>• Children and elderly left behind.</li> </ul>
<b>Migration Governance</b>	
<p><b>Improvement of legal migration opportunities:</b> Despite a continuous effort of the relevant state institutions to fight against illegal migration, available data and estimations suggest that the part of Georgian emigrants are abroad in irregular state; their social and economic rights are not well-protected; they may become victims of trafficking and exploitation.</p>	<p>In order to contribute to increased legal migration opportunities it is recommended to: 1) continue support in developing of circular migration schemes; 2) develop social benefit schemes with the major countries of destination of Georgian migrants; 3) strengthen capacities to fight against irregular migration, and THB in particular.</p>
<b>Migration and Development</b>	
<p><b>Incorporation of migration and development nexus in country's development agenda:</b> The importance of the nexus between migration and development is already acknowledged in the 2016-2020 Migration Strategy of Georgia, but needs further streamlining. Taking into account the developmental potential (both economic and socio-</p>	<p>In order to fully capitalize on the potential of migration to facilitate socio-economic and cultural development, it is recommended to: 1) incorporate migration and development nexus in the economic development strategies both on a national and local levels, and 2) creation of enabling environment to facilitate successful skills, financial and human capital transfer of current migrants, return migrants and immigrants.</p>

cultural) of migration, maximizing its impact is critical.	
Migration related legislation	
<b>Support of ecological migrant integration in new settlement:</b> Taking into account existence of a sizable number of ecological migrants, the Georgian Government needs to meet their needs and create mechanisms of reintegration of ecomigrants.	In order to accommodate needs of ecomigrants and contribute to their successful reintegration in the places of resettlement, it is recommended to upgrade existed legislative document, which will define eco migrant reintegration regulations.

No major gaps have been identified in respect to existing institutional cooperation mechanisms. State Commission on Migration Issues and its Secretariat serve as major coordination point of all state and non-state agencies involved in migration policy development and implementation. Hence, it is recommended to continue support to ensure sustainability of the State Commission on Migration Issues and its Secretariat.

Georgian government is actively participating in international platforms and cooperation in the field of migration management. Harmonization of migration legislation with the EU standards is being undertaken, and work in this direction needs to be continuous. At the same time, it is recommended to explore potentials of inclusion in new relevant international schemes to improve migration policies and management in the country.