

**Enhancing the Role of Georgian Migrants at Home (ERGEM) Project**

# **Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey**

**Transnational realities and ties with Georgia**



Ministry of the Interior





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Transnational realities and ties with Georgia

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# Executive Summary

The objective of this study was to assess different and specific needs of Georgian migrant and diaspora\* communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey, as well as these communities' interest and potential to engage in transnational development activities for the benefit of the country of current residence and Georgia. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods has been applied to shed light on the characteristics of the heterogeneous Georgian diaspora.

The study has confirmed that the profile of the Georgian diaspora in these three countries differs. Therefore, this needs to be taken into account when formulating policy responses.

- Migration to Germany is mostly well organised and regular. Georgian citizens migrate there largely for educational purposes, with many young professionals arriving through formal study and employment programmes (e.g. au pair programmes).
- Most migrants in Greece are predominantly female and engage in domestic work. It is a destination for older and less educated migrants (compared to migrants in Germany) who often find themselves in an irregular status and find it difficult to adapt to the country and are, therefore, often socially excluded.
- Turkey is a convenient location for temporary labour migration, as Georgian migrants benefit from a visa-free regime there. Similar to Greece, it is a destination for female domestic migrant workers (housekeepers, caretakers, nannies, etc.), but it is also attractive for migrants seeking seasonal work on tea and hazelnut plantations, in factories, etc. and physical labour in construction, privately-owned workshops, etc.

In all three countries, ties between Georgian migrants, diaspora individuals and Georgia are strong, as shown by the general lack of interest in obtaining the citizenship of the country of residence, the wish to return home and the frequency of home visits. These ties are reinforced by diaspora organisations, which create bridges between Georgia and the residence country and promote the Georgian culture and language. The large majority of Georgian migrants, in particular those who have children in Georgia, send remittances, which are mainly used for investments in farm equipment, health and education. Survey respondents are generally willing to invest in private sector activities and development activities in Georgia. The educational level among Georgian migrants is relatively high. Survey respondents consider the experience and skills they gained during their period abroad as useful for Georgia. This suggests that involving Georgian migrants and diaspora members in development activities, especially activities involving the transfer of their knowledge and skills, would greatly benefit Georgia and its society. However, brain waste seems to be a common issue among Georgian migrants in the three countries, as most considers themselves to be working below their level of qualification.

In response to having identified a certain lack of trust between the migrants, diaspora individuals and organisations, Georgian state institutions and representations abroad, the study makes several recommendations for improving relations, supporting Georgian migrants during their stay abroad and increasing their potential as development actors:

- a) Improve information collection and analysis for the design of better policies to protect Georgian migrant and diaspora communities abroad through enhanced coordination capacities of the State Diaspora Office, assessments of Georgian migrants' and diaspora individuals' needs, better contacts with state institutions in the main destination countries, establishing clear reporting lines on information exchange between involved Georgian state organisations and better cooperation between consular representations abroad and the MFA Consular Department in Tbilisi.
- b) Enhance the provision of better services and information for Georgian migrant and diaspora communities abroad, in particular in the areas of employment abroad and recognition of qualifications, return and reintegration, and support active diaspora organisations.
- c) Unleash the development potential of migrant and diaspora organisations through targeted support and

\*The term 'diaspora' is used throughout the study for the sake of convenience. It comprises all Georgian migrant communities, including the Georgian historical diaspora, temporary and circular migrants, emigrants, expatriates, and Georgians who took on another citizenship and who were naturalised in their country of destination.

funding for diaspora organisations; establish contact and communication with cities and local authorities in areas where Georgian migrants and diaspora communities reside to find common solutions on how to better support diaspora organisations; promote cooperation between civil society organisations and local authorities in Georgia; facilitate a regular dialogue between Georgian diaspora organisations, the Diaspora Office and the Georgian representations abroad; and support Georgian diaspora business start-ups.

The study was carried out within the 'Enhancing the Role of Georgian Migrants at Home (ERGEM)' project funded by the European Union's Thematic Programme for Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum and by Turkey. The project is being implemented under the leadership of the Danish Refugee Council in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and a consortium of project partners and associated partners which includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Ministry of the Interior of Poland, the Public Service Development Agency (Ministry of Justice of Georgia), the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia.

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# List of Acronyms

CIM	Center for International Migration
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EMN	European Migration Network
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Center
ERGEM	Enhancing the Role of Georgian Migrants at Home
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Georgia
GEL	Georgian Lari (currency)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GR	Greece
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
MIA	Ministry of Interior of Georgia
MPC	Migration Policy Centre
MRA	Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PHDS	People's Harmonious Development Society
PSDA	Public Service Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia
SCMI	Secretariat of the State Commission for Migration Issues
TAV	TAV Airports Holding
TIG	Target Initiative for Georgia (EU-Funded)
TR	Turkey
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees

# Foreword



The '**Enhancing the Role of the Georgian Emigrants at Home (ERGEM)**' project has completed its inception phase and its outcomes can lead us to new development efforts. The project's objective – to strengthen the connection between our compatriots residing abroad and their homeland – has been addressed in the most comprehensive manner. Indeed, one of the best means of achieving the above-mentioned objective is to first determine our compatriots' needs, interests and viewpoints in terms of Georgia's social and economic development. Bearing this in mind, the **ERGEM** team visited and got acquainted with the Georgian diaspora members in three target countries:

Turkey, Germany and Greece. It is particularly noteworthy that the team did such an admirable job in collecting comprehensive data, eliciting sincere answers to the survey questions and gathering useful information for conducting a high quality analysis. As a result of their research, we now have a fuller picture of the Georgian diaspora residing in the three target countries, including their main features (such as size, duration of stay, set of skills, etc.), their means of communication and all factors that would encourage them to contribute to the development of Georgia.

The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues has recently developed a strategic document that addresses the diversity of the Georgian diaspora. Indeed, this is what the **ERGEM** team observed in the three countries: the characteristic features, needs and interests of our compatriots vary largely. Georgian emigrants' profiles sometimes look even contrastive in terms of the background, history and reasons for migrating to different parts of the world. These differences show how necessary it is to implement individually designed initiatives and programmes for Georgian communities abroad. We hope that in addition to assisting us in achieving our goals, the **ERGEM** project can serve as a supportive initiative to similar projects focused on improving our compatriots' engagement in Georgia.

I thank the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (**ICMPD**) and the other partners for undertaking such an important endeavour, and wholeheartedly wish the project team continued success in achieving its objectives.

**Konstantine Surguladze**  
**The State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues**



Approximately one million Georgians are estimated to have emigrated in the last two decades. The individual reasons for their emigration and for choosing certain destination countries and occupations vary significantly, giving the Georgian diaspora a varied and distinct character. For these migrants that left their home country, whether for a short or a long period of time, recently or many years ago, their ties with Georgia remain strong.

This study sheds light on the differing migration patterns of Georgian migrants and their unique characteristics, experiences, concerns and aspirations. Jointly developed by Georgian institutions involved in migration management and ICMPD, this study reflects the challenges presented by migratory movements to not only Georgian, but many other migration management systems around the globe. In today's world, it is increasingly acknowledged that migration is influenced by economics, demographics, politics, and human, social and cultural development in sending and receiving countries. Within this growing multi-disciplinary field, studies such as this are important to designing approaches to migration management that are safe, holistic and durable.

The study was carried out as one of the main activities of the EU-funded 'Enhancing the Role of Georgian Emigrants at Home (ERGEM)' project implemented jointly by the Danish Refugee Council and ICMPD. The ERGEM project seeks to strengthen ties between the Georgian diaspora and Georgian state institutions as a mean to capitalise on the potential development benefits of migration. Within this framework, objectives include analysing the potential of diaspora actors to contribute to the development of Georgia, improving diaspora outreach and engagement policies by State actors, and improving services and the provision of information to migrants and diaspora members abroad.

Georgia already has the necessary institutional and legislative frameworks for developing an effective diaspora policy, and as such, this project does not aim to reinvent such frameworks. Instead, the project seeks to strengthen the existing diaspora policy through developing a comprehensive analysis of the current situation and experiences of Georgian migrants in their countries of residence. In the process of compiling this report, close partnerships have been developed with the Georgian Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues, the Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as diaspora organisations in countries of residence assessed in this study: Germany, Greece and Turkey. These partnerships are key to assuring the sustainability of this action and building cooperation for the benefit of Georgia and its' diaspora communities into the future.

I am confident that this study will be of use for Georgia in developing its diaspora strategy and strengthening existing approaches for engaging meaningfully with Georgian migrants and diaspora members. Last but not least, I would like to genuinely thank the project team and the project partners, in particular those who contributed to this publication, for their excellent cooperation, their efforts and their dedicated work.

**Martijn Pluim**  
Director, Eastern Dimension, ICMPD

# Section I. Study on Georgian Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey

## 1. Introduction

Migration issues are top priorities for the Republic of Georgia, and are discussed as often as politics or economics in all areas of social and political life. Although Georgia is gradually becoming an immigration country, emigration remains an important factor in all areas of development in Georgia. However, it is difficult to estimate how many people migrate from Georgia; different experts provide different estimations which vary significantly. For instance, the Migration Policy Centre (MPC) estimates that in 2012 up to 770,000 Georgians were residing abroad.<sup>1</sup> Further, the migration profile of the MPC refers to the Georgian consular registration system, according to which about 400,000 Georgians were registered abroad in 2012.<sup>2</sup> Some authors more or less confirm these estimations and state that the number of Georgians abroad amounts to 350,000–500,000 people.<sup>3</sup> Others consider that the number may also lie above 1,000,000 people.<sup>4</sup> In other words, between 8% and 20% of the Georgian population are abroad. Hence, the current emigration rate in combination with a low immigration rate<sup>5</sup> has an impact on the development of Georgia and its society.

Georgia is primarily a country of origin for migrant flows, which are directed mainly towards the USA, Greece, Germany, Turkey, Austria, Russia, and a number of other EU Member States, such as France and Spain<sup>6</sup>. Since 2008 a smaller number of Georgian migrants have moved towards Russia and a higher number has chosen Turkey, instead. Now research results also show that European countries, in particular Greece, receive more Georgian migrants.<sup>7</sup> Georgia has experienced several migration waves. During the Soviet period, ethnic Georgians largely remained in Georgia, with more than 95% living in the former Georgian Soviet Republic. Since gaining independence in 1991, Georgia has been seriously affected by out-migration. The population dropped by approximately 20% between the population census in 1989 and the last one in 2002. This can partially be explained by the decline in fertility but is mainly due to emigration.<sup>8</sup>

This massive out-migration has had significant negative effects on the country's development in the form of brain drain or brain waste (as many migrants report being underemployed abroad). Moreover, the global financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath has had a negative impact on migrants abroad, squeezing their incomes and leading many to consider returning home. However, given the broader economic situation in Georgia, the reintegration of returning migrants continues to be a challenge.

Remittances from Georgian migrants have boosted the country's GDP (between 2011 to 2013, the share of remittances of the GDP fluctuated between 8% and 9%).<sup>9</sup> One of the goals of the 2008–12 government programme "Georgia Without Poverty" is a positive net migration flow, while also maximising the benefits of migration and remittances.

The main motivation for migration has been Georgia's economy, which was hit hard by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the country's agricultural sector was the most severe in all of the former Soviet Union. In 2004, GDP stood at 45% of its 1989 level.<sup>10</sup> In 2011, Georgia's official employment rate was 55.4% and its unemployment rate was 15.1%, while the International Labour Organisation suggests that a more

<sup>1</sup> (MPC Migration Policy Center 2013)

<sup>2</sup> (MPC Migration Policy Center 2013)

<sup>3</sup> (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013)

<sup>4</sup> (IOM 2008); (World Bank 2011); (Caucasus Research Resource Centre 2007)

<sup>5</sup> *Note: Stock of immigrants as percentage of population: 4.0%*; (World Bank 2011)

<sup>6</sup> (IOM 2008)

<sup>7</sup> (CARIM-East: Regional migration report: South Caucasus 2013)

<sup>8</sup> (ETF 2012)

<sup>9</sup> (BMP Building Migration Partnerships 2011), (GEOSTAT 2014), (National Bank of Georgia 2013)

<sup>10</sup> (The Economist 2010)

realistic estimate of the unemployment rate is 30% to 35%.<sup>11</sup>

Georgia is currently at a very important juncture in its management of migration. In late 2010, the Georgian government appointed a State Commission on Migration, bringing together all public agencies with relevant competences. Although the Commission has made progress in a number of different areas so far, relations with Georgian migrants and the diaspora have so far received less attention. It should be mentioned that since December 2012, international organisations and NGOs can also participate in the Commission's sessions.

According to the Law of Georgia on compatriots/expatriates residing abroad and diaspora organisations a compatriot/expatriate residing abroad is "a citizen of Georgia, who resides in other state for a long period of time, or a citizen of other state, who is of Georgian descent and/or whose native language belongs to the Georgian-Caucasian language group". A diaspora organisation is defined in the same law as "a community established pursuant to the laws of the state of residence, for the purpose of popularization of Georgian culture, national language and traditions, initiation of communication between the diasporas, cooperation with Georgia in cultural, scientific and technical, and other fields". And finally diaspora is referred to as an "integrity of the compatriots/ expatriates residing abroad".<sup>12</sup> In the framework on this case study on the Georgian diaspora, the term diaspora comprises all Georgian migrants and migrant communities abroad, including the Georgian historical diaspora, temporary and circular migrants, emigrants, expatriates, Georgians who have given up their Georgian citizenship and who naturalised in their country of destination and Georgian students studying abroad.

While migration is also frequently addressed by many researchers and projects, the potential impacts of migration on the development of Georgia have not yet been fully explored or supported by state authorities neither at the political nor at the technical level. This study seeks to at least partially fill this knowledge gap by examining the (potential) contributions of the Georgian diaspora. It assesses the situation and needs of Georgian migrants in their countries of residence and analyses the willingness of and possibilities for migrants to contribute to Georgia's development. The study concludes with recommendations on how the ties between Georgian institutions and the Georgian diaspora can be strengthened. The assumption is that Georgian institutions need enhanced knowledge of Georgian diaspora communities in order to better engage them and to develop evidence-based policies.

This case study is one of the outputs of the EU-funded project 'Enhancing the Role of Georgian Emigrants at Home (ERGEM)', implemented by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Ministry of the Interior of Poland, the Public Service Development Agency (Ministry of Justice of Georgia), the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues, and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia.

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<sup>11</sup> (ETF 2012)

<sup>12</sup> Law of Georgia on Compatriots/Expatriates Residing Abroad and Diaspora Organizations; Available in English (Law of Georgia n.d., Law of Georgia n.d.)

## 2. Methodological Approach

### 2.1. Research questions

The objective of the case study was to analyse the different and specific needs of Georgian emigrant and diaspora communities in Germany, Greece and Turkey. The research results aim to reflect the realities of Georgian diaspora members residing in these countries and provide recommendations for the Georgian government regarding possible steps and strategies to address emigrants' needs in order to protect their rights and interests abroad, and by extension, increase their commitment to, and participation in, development in Georgia. Therefore, the following research questions are addressed:

#### 1. What are the main features of the Georgian diaspora in Germany, Greece and Turkey?

- Population
- Duration of the stay abroad (temporary, circular or permanent)
- Status (regular-irregular, work, family reunification, study, business, etc.)
- Inventory of skills
- Social profile: gender, age and family status
- Nationalisation perspectives/willingness
- Chain/network migration

#### 2. What are the ties between the Georgian diaspora and Georgia? How does the Georgian diaspora maintain these ties? Are Georgian migrants interested in maintaining these ties?

- Family members in Georgia; family members in the country of destination
- Ways of communication
- Ways of exchanging news about events and the situation in Georgia
- Activeness in diaspora organisations/migrant communities
- Communication between diaspora organisations and Georgian state institutions: reality and needs
- Diaspora organisations'/migrant communities' expectations of communication with their homeland

#### 3. Is the Georgian diaspora interested, able and willing to contribute to development in Georgia? Which factors hinder or promote these contributions?

- Understanding of diaspora engagement and its importance
- Willingness and interest to return/invest/contribute
- Factors that would facilitate migrants' contributions and/or return

#### 4. How do Georgian state institutions cooperate with the diaspora and migrants abroad?

- Migrants' protection mechanisms
- Ways of communication and regular provision of information
- Exchange of information in Georgia and strategies for improvement

### 2.2. Research design

The methodology for the research on the Georgian migrant population, their profile and needs is listed below.

- (1) **Desk research:** (a) a literature review of recent publications on Georgian migrants abroad and related topics; (b) a comprehensive review of literature (reports, publications, media sources, etc.) on the migration situation in Germany, Greece and Turkey; and c) compilation and analysis of statistical data from various sources
- (2) **Mapping of and interviews with stakeholders in Georgia and abroad:** (a) representatives of Georgian institutions working in the field of migration in Georgia: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues, and Georgian institutions abroad; (b) consular representatives of Georgia in Germany, Greece and Turkey, as well as civil society

representatives in Georgia and abroad; and (c) diaspora organisations and migrant communities abroad

- (3) **Survey of Georgian migrants in Germany, Greece and Turkey:** questionnaires distributed in Germany, Greece and Turkey (Berlin, Athens and Istanbul) from October to December 2013; three additional forms filled in at the Tbilisi international airport and Tbilisi international bus station
- (4) **Semi-structured interviews in Georgia with family members of Georgian migrants:** for additional information on the situation of Georgian migrants
- (5) **Focus group discussions:** with relevant stakeholders abroad, such as diaspora associations
- (6) **Observations** at main meeting points of the Georgian diaspora in Berlin, Athens and Istanbul

In total, nine **semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of Georgian state institutions** involved in migration management in the country. These interviews allowed the research team to learn more about the opinions, attitudes, needs and wishes of these stakeholders in regard to knowledge about Georgian diaspora and migrants, including their needs and their potential to be involved in development in Georgia, and what support is needed to get them involved. Officials of different ranks from the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia (MRA); the Office of the State Minister on Diaspora Issues (Diaspora Office); the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); the General Consulate of Georgia to Istanbul, Turkey; the Public Service Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice (PSDA); the Ministry of Interior (MIA), namely the Reforms and Development Agency; the Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI); and consular representatives in Germany, Greece and Turkey were interviewed. In addition, the EU-funded Targeted Initiative for Georgia (TIG) project<sup>13</sup> was included in order to clarify issues related to the reintegration programme administered by the MRA.

Eight semi-structured **interviews with diaspora organisations** were conducted: one in Turkey (plus one diaspora individual who is active in an organisation), three in Germany and four in Greece. The purpose of the interviews was to learn more about the opinions, attitudes, needs and wishes of these stakeholders with regard to diaspora members' and migrants' involvement in the development of Georgia and what kind of support is needed to involve them more. Topics that were covered in the interviews were general information on the organisation and its activities, relations with Georgian institutions/organisations, ties between Georgians abroad and Georgia, support to the development of Georgia and the transfer of skills/knowledge.

In total, 134 **questionnaires** were completed, 29 by Georgians residing in Germany, 44 in Greece and 61 in Turkey. The questionnaire was made up of five sections, covering: (1) general information about the migrant (gender, country of destination, education level, family status, etc.), (2) information about their departure and their stay abroad, (3) their ties to Georgia, (4) data on their willingness to support the development of Georgia and (5) information about remittances (see the questionnaire template used in the annex).

Different entry points were used to gain access to survey respondents:

- In Germany, mostly respondents who were actively involved in diaspora organisations, members of diaspora organisations or visitors of the Georgian prayer service were interviewed.
- In Turkey, respondents were approached and interviewed at the international bus terminal or at the monthly Georgian service at the Greek Orthodox Church Saint Mary of Blachernae.
- In Greece, respondents were approached at popular meeting points for Georgians in Athens. Members/participants of Georgian diaspora organisations were also approached.

The country distribution can be found in the table below. It shows that the majority of questionnaires received came from Georgian diaspora members and migrants residing in Turkey.

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<sup>13</sup> Officially ended in December 2013

**Table 1: Number of Questionnaires from Georgian Diasporas**

	Numbers	Percentage
Germany	29	21.6%
Greece	44	32.8%
Turkey	61	45.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Overall, six **interviews with family members of migrants residing/working in the three target countries** (two interviews per country) were conducted. The family member abroad was either the mother, father, sibling, aunt or husband of the interviewed person. In one case, both parents of the interviewed person were abroad. The information received was summarised and analysed according to the topics indicated above with special emphasis on the needs and wishes of migrants and their families. The migrants of the interviewed family members had left Georgia either in the mid-1990s or more recently in 2004, 2007 or 2013.

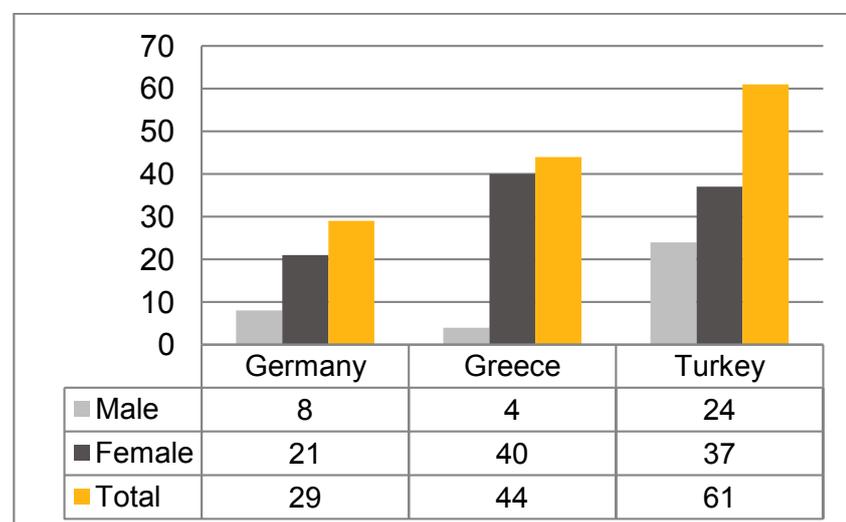
Three **focus group discussions** were organised as half-day events, each with approximately ten Georgian diaspora organisation representatives. Participants came from Berlin and Bielefeld in Germany, from Athens and Thessaloniki in Greece and from Istanbul in Turkey. Both the historical diaspora and recent migrants were present at the focus group discussion in Istanbul. The topics of discussion included the collection and analysis of information on diaspora and migrant communities, the needs of these communities in the researched countries and the potential of the diaspora to support the development of Georgia. The participants, particularly those in Germany and Greece, highly appreciated the facilitated discussion. They viewed it as extremely useful and beneficial, as it brought together active migrants from different cities to exchange information and as such facilitated stronger cooperation.

**Observations** were conducted at main meeting points of the Georgian diaspora in Berlin, Athens and Istanbul. In Berlin, observations took place at the Georgian prayer service and Sunday schools of two Georgian diaspora organisations. In Athens, observations took place during the visit to two Georgian diaspora organisations and in the districts close to the Omonia Square where most Georgian migrants gather. In Istanbul, observations were carried out at the international bus terminal at the Emniyet Garaji Station and at the Greek Orthodox Church Saint Mary of Blachernae, which hosts a monthly Georgian Orthodox service.

### 2.3. Profile of the survey respondents

The country and gender distribution can be found in the table below. As seen in the table, two-thirds of the people who filled out the questionnaire were female. This not only confirms the phenomenon of female migration from Georgia, but also suggests that female migrants are more active in social diaspora organisations and therefore were, easier to contact.

**Figure 1: Country and Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents**



Almost half of the survey respondents (48%) indicated that they are married, while 28% answered that they are single. A little less than half of the respondents (47%) possess either a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree and 28% have completed secondary school.

Survey respondents were between the age of 19 and 70 with a mean age of 33 (median age of 39.5). The polled migrants were born in 34 different cities and towns in Georgia, with Kutaisi and Tbilisi being the most common cities. 15% and 25% of respondents originate from these two cities, respectively. Before leaving Georgia for Germany, Greece or Turkey, almost half of the respondents (43%) lived in Tbilisi and 17% in Kutaisi.

**Figure 2: Map of Georgia**



Source: Map from Tikatours<sup>14</sup>

## 2.4. Limitations

The methodological approach applied to the collection of data was both quantitative and qualitative. This allowed the research team to generate information on the profile, needs and interests of Georgian diaspora members and migrants residing in Germany, Greece and Turkey. However, some limitations should be acknowledged.

Firstly, as the research team interviewed only Georgian diaspora members and migrant communities in the main cities of the three countries. In addition, diaspora associations and prayer services were used as entry points in all countries. Furthermore, Georgian diaspora members and migrants were approached at the international bus stop in Istanbul and at popular meeting points, such as restaurants and the premises of Georgian diaspora organisations in Athens. Hence, it cannot be ensured that the case studies display the full spectrum of the life realities of Georgian migrants in those countries.

Secondly, the number of survey respondents, as well as their educational background and gender, differs in each residence country, which may have affected the results of the comparative analysis. However, the aim of this research was not to collect representative statistical data but rather to gain insight into the situation of Georgian diaspora members and migrant communities. In order to contextualise and confirm or compare the research findings, extensive desk research was undertaken.

<sup>14</sup> Tika Tours 2014, Tika Tours 2014

## 3. The Georgian Diaspora Policy

### 3.1. Governmental institutions involved in the development and implementation of the Georgian policy towards its diaspora and migrants abroad

The **Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues (Diaspora Office)**, which was established in 2008 as one of the key institutions involved in the maintenance and strengthening of contacts with Georgians abroad, is responsible for the development of state strategies on diaspora as well as for the implementation of the state diaspora policy. This institution also coordinates the collection and analysis of information on Georgians abroad. Consular Department of the MFA identifies and develops aspects of consular policy, carries out coordination, monitoring and strategic planning for consular officials abroad and provides legal technical support these officials require to fulfill their consular duties. Additionally, the Consular Department and Georgian representations are institutions which are responsible for consular protection of Georgian citizens abroad. Diplomatic Representation and Consular posts deal with different consular tasks, visa issuance, issuance of necessary documentations for Georgian citizens like passports or return document to Georgia, consular registration of Georgian citizens abroad, submission of application related to citizenship issues, take part in the readmission process in their field of competence, provide help and safe return to the victims of trafficking and other types of assistance. The **Public Service Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia (PSDA)** is responsible for the issuance of temporary and permanent resident permits; the registration of foreigners; the issuance of resident certificates; the issuance of travel documents for stateless persons and refugees residing in Georgia; consideration of citizenship cases and issuance of appropriate conclusions; definition of the status of stateless persons; the issuance of emigration permits; the provision of birth, marriage and death registrations; consideration of deportation of foreigners from the territory of Georgia; the issuance of visas for foreign citizens residing legally on the territory of Georgia; establishment of a register of Georgian citizens and foreigners residing in Georgia; postponement of the stay of foreigners in Georgia; the issuance of documents (residence permits, passports, ID cards, travel documents, visas), civil registration and registration of place of residence, the management of databases, etc. Moreover, the special unit, the Secretariat of the State Commission for Migration Issues (SCMI), is operating at the Agency since 2012. The SCMI is designed to ensure an effective coordination of migration-related developments in Georgia and of the competences falling under various bodies. The SCMI was set up on 13 October 2010. Its analytical and administrative support is provided by the Secretariat created and supported by the EU and hosted by the PSDA of the Ministry of Justice.

The main aims of the Secretariat are to support and coordinate the activities of the SCMI as well as execute tasks defined in the Migration Strategy. The main functions of the Secretariat include cooperating with agencies and organisations involved in migration management projects and migration management in general; monitoring the Action Plan for the Migration Strategy and providing the Commission with relevant information; drafting amendments to the Migration Strategy; defining activities to be implemented within each thematic area of migration and submitting relevant Action Plans to the Commission; and informing the Commission of current projects in the field of migration. Furthermore, the Secretariat generates ideas for 'Calls for Projects' in the migration field and submits them to the Commission; drafts information material on the Commission's activities; ensures media relations and manages its website; drafts reports on its activities; participates in conferences and meetings; and follows the Commission's instructions. In addition, the Secretariat provides support in solving logistical issues related to the Commission's meetings and logistical support to conferences and other events organised within the framework of the SCMI.

The **Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia (MRA)** implements state policies on refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, repatriates, victims of natural disasters and other migrants in terms of their social/legal protection and accommodation, and has the responsibility to conduct overall migration management.<sup>15</sup> The tasks related to the provision of assistance to Georgian migrants who have returned (voluntarily or forcibly) make this ministry a valuable partner of the project in regards to diaspora and migrant communities' issues. The **Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia**, through its police department, is responsible for the protection of Georgian borders, border crossing by Georgian and foreign citizens, and forced repatriation of Georgian migrants from abroad. The **Targeted Initiative for Georgia (TIG)** project, in close cooperation with the MRA, supports the reintegration of returning Georgian migrants and the implementation of the EU-Georgia Readmission Agreement. The project goal is in line with those of the EU-

<sup>15</sup> (MRA Georgia 2013)

Georgia Mobility Partnership by promoting legal migration and preventing irregular migration. It also focuses on the implementation of the Migration Strategy of Georgia and its Action Plan (approved in June 2013) through the TIG mobility centres and reintegration networks and by providing individual assistance to returnees.

### 3.2. Collection of information on Georgian migrants abroad

The lack of reliable data on migration from the country is a challenge faced by many countries around the world and Georgia is not an exception. Often, national censuses do not provide exact data on out-migration. Consular registration is organised on a voluntary basis and, therefore, does not cover all citizens residing abroad. In such cases, information on diaspora and migrant communities should be gathered from supplementary sources and analysed by the central diaspora authority. Such sources could be data from destination countries (national census, data from registers on residence permits and long-term visas, statistical and operational data on irregular migration, etc.) or various studies and research carried out by international organisations, civil society organisations or research institutions. An analysis of diaspora activities may provide valuable information on the diaspora's social profile, skills, interests, needs and potential to engage in the country's development.

Interviews with stakeholders highlighted that there is a common understanding of the importance of gathering and analysing information on Georgian migrants abroad to further develop state diaspora policy and carry out targeted activities. At the moment, the following instruments supporting the collection of information are in place in Georgia:

- **The consular registration database of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (at the moment located at the PSDA) encompasses all registered Georgians abroad.** Georgian citizens residing abroad can register in the database personally (at the consular representations of Georgians abroad), via regular mail or even online. However, information received from the MFA shows that only a very small part of the Georgian population has registered with differences in the three researched countries: While **2,518 persons are registered in Germany and 996 in Turkey, 17,711 persons are registered in Greece**. It is clear that consular registration is most successful in Greece, and this could be explained by the active involvement of the Georgian embassy in Greece in the lives of, as confirmed during the observation in Athens. Information on the importance of consular registration should be disseminated among Georgian migrants and potential Georgian migrants to inform them of the benefits of being registered (e.g. assistance in specific situations, assistance with necessary documentation, consular protection, etc.).
- **The MIA border crossing database** provides information on the overall number of border crossings, which can only give a very preliminary picture of persons who actually migrated from Georgia and did not just leave for a short business trip or private visit. Therefore, this information can be used only as an additional source.
- The Office of the State Minister for Diaspora Issues **monitors the activities of the Georgian diaspora organisations abroad** (publications on the official website, Facebook posts and information received from interviews). However, there is no joint register of these activities that would allow for an in-depth analysis of diaspora activities, although such an analysis would give the Georgian institutions the knowledge necessary to identify diaspora members' interests and needs, and their potential to support development in Georgia.
- **Various reports drafted and published by Georgian NGOs, research institutions and international organisations** provide numbers on Georgian migrants, both in general and on specific countries. Further, some surveys exist that have estimated the gender and age composition of Georgian migrants as well as their social profile. An analysis of these reports and estimations could provide Georgian institutions with baseline estimations of Georgian migrants, which could make the implementation of diaspora-oriented activities more efficient.
- **Information on Georgian returnees** is collected by several institutions, namely the MIA, the MRA and the TIG project. Properly analysed, this data could provide insight into Georgian migrants' profiles and their reintegration needs. However, at the moment, only the overall number of forced returnees and persons who applied for reintegration assistance is available.

During the interviews, Georgian institutions also discussed their priorities for gathering specific information on

Georgian migrants abroad. As mentioned above, the interviews confirmed the common understanding among Georgian institutions that gathering information on migrants' profiles and skills, mapping their location in the specific countries, determining the size of the diaspora, and analysing diaspora needs provide an opportunity to create an evidence-based government diaspora policy. Such a policy would be a more efficient instrument in utilising migration to further development in Georgia. In particular, Georgian institutions highlighted their need for collecting the following information or improve current information gathering:

- A more efficient consular registration of Georgian migrants would facilitate communication and ensure better services for Georgians abroad. The Diaspora Office plans to establish a Global Diaspora Network in the form of an online information exchange platform. This platform would provide an internet-based registration of Georgian migrants. The aim is also to attract migrants by providing them with specific services, such as the issuing of ID documents, notarial certifying documents, translation services, legal assistance and employment support. The pilot version of the Global Diaspora Network was at the time of writing foreseen to be ready by mid-2014.
- A clearer profile and exact figures on Georgians abroad are needed. The profile should include information on the age and sex of Georgian migrants; their skills; their profession; their migratory status; their place of residence; their reasons for migration; amounts and channels of remittances; and their willingness to support the development of Georgia. Moreover, information should be collected that provides insight on how to best cooperate with the destination countries to best support and facilitate diaspora engagement and better protect Georgians abroad, as well as insight on the specific needs of returnees.
- Another important issue that should be taken into consideration are those Georgian migrants who do not reside in central areas (i.e. capitals of the country) where they could easily receive support by Georgian diaspora organisations.

### 3.3. Methods and tools for communication with Georgians abroad

The main channels of communication the **Diaspora Office** uses to reach Georgians abroad are social networks, emails, direct contact with Georgian diaspora organisations, e.g. during official visits, NGOs in Georgia and abroad, as well as private channels. Assistance is provided to diaspora organisations in the form of distributing books, learning/teaching materials, national costumes and other items for cultural events. Other forms of assistance are provided in the form of consultations provided by phone, email or in person. In general, the Diaspora Office is in contact with diaspora organisations and supports them in organising cultural events. It also organises business tours for diaspora business persons. However, it should be noted that these contacts and the provision of assistance has mainly been done on an ad hoc basis. The Diaspora Office homepage and Facebook page do not feature a calendar with upcoming events, nor do they provide a complete and updated list of weekend schools in operation. In addition, the needs of diaspora organisations, which should differ from country to country and from organisation to organisation, have not yet been fully analysed nor shared with other relevant actors such as the MFA and consular representations. As already mentioned, one major goal of the Diaspora Office is to consolidate Georgians abroad through a Global Diaspora Network to provide more comprehensive and regularly updated data on Georgian communities, weekend schools and diaspora organisations, events and activities planned by Georgians abroad. At the time of writing, the pilot phase of the network was planned to be launched in the near future. The Network has the potential to significantly improve the work and communication with diaspora organisations and compatriots residing abroad, provide information on return possibilities and return support, provide information on investment and job opportunities, function as an information and service portal, and offer a number of online services. The communication channels of the **Consular Department of the MFA** are usually the Reception of the Consular Department (working days from 10:00 till 13:00), along with emails and the hot line, i.e. the MFA receives emails and calls from Georgian migrants in need of assistance or consultations and administers accordingly, provides consultations to the family members of the migrants or helps to the returned



#### **Illustrative quotation (state institution interview, (SI01):**

*„Only the Diaspora Office should have information on migrants abroad, not us. I don't think they have enough information on it, if migrants don't come to the Diaspora Office, they have no information. Migrants might be scared to approach the state institutions. And the Diaspora Office is not very strong abroad. They do not have all the information”.*

migrants in arranging their documents issued abroad. Information in the form of leaflets, printed and distributed with the help of international organisations and projects, is provided at the consulates and at border crossing points.<sup>16</sup> However, the Consular Department does not analyse its communication with Georgian migrants, such as the areas where they need assistance or the frequency of assistance and/or consultation requests. During the interview, it was noted that consular representations abroad spend quite some time addressing such requests, but no detailed information is available. For instance, the consular representation in Istanbul reported that Georgian migrants approach the consulate on a daily basis. In addition to this, the problem is that the majority of Georgians in Turkey actually do not register with the consulate and thus do not receive the assistance they would be eligible for. Conversely, the Georgian Consulate in Germany collects the exact numbers on Georgians who possess a student visa, Georgians who have received German citizenship and Georgians applying for asylum, as well as Georgian detainees, deaths and suicide cases. All of this data is shared by the German authorities with the MFA in Tbilisi. Additionally, the Georgian Consulate in Germany issues quarterly reports to the Consular Department of the MFA and posts all information about upcoming events online.

Both the **MRA** and the **MIA** do not maintain contact with Georgian migrants abroad since it is not a part of their area of work. The ministries only deal with Georgian migrants in the framework of return and reintegration, which in the past took place with the assistance of the TIG.

With regard to migration to Germany, each Georgian migrant receives a text message with the hotline number and address of the Georgian Consulate in Germany. Once the migrant is in the country, the Georgian Embassy in Germany provides him/her with information on the risks of trafficking in human beings and offers au pairs help with their problems. The Georgian Consulate in Athens also offers a hotline for migrants who seek assistance. But there are still a large number of migrants who prefer personal contact and who refrain from using the internet or the phone for their questions.

### 3.4. Inter-institutional coordination on diaspora issues

All interviewed institutions mentioned the value of cooperating within the **SCMI**. For example, all communication by the MRA regarding migration issues is being carried out through the SCMI. The Diaspora Office also collaborates with the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Ministry of Education and Science and Georgian consulates abroad. The MFA cooperates with the Diaspora Office as well as with the SCMI. The MRA points out its good contacts with the Consular Department of the MFA in Tbilisi and with consulates abroad to promote the migrant counselling centres in four regions in Georgia. But it was also mentioned that the consular offices are understaffed. Therefore, there might be difficulties in keeping up with all requests for assistance coming from Georgian migrants.

Despite the good contacts between all involved institutions and bi-annual meetings within the framework of SCMI, cooperation and information exchange is mainly implemented on an ad hoc basis, i.e. institutions approach each other when they need information in order to carry out a certain task. The interviewed institution representatives emphasised that more contacts and more intensive cooperation with other state agencies on migration issues would be beneficial. Currently, there are no clear reporting lines on the exchange of information between the involved organisations, in particular between the MFA (Consular Department and consular representations abroad) and the Diaspora Office. For instance, the Diaspora Office does not periodically receive information on persons registered in the MFA database, nor an analysis of the requests for assistance from the MFA and representations. As already mentioned, the Diaspora Office should carry out its own analysis of the information provided by the MFA and diaspora organisations abroad. Such an analysis would enable them to estimate and assess the current needs of Georgian migrants. Furthermore, representations abroad should periodically inform the Diaspora Office about diaspora events organised abroad.

In the case of the Georgian Consulate in Germany, there is good cooperation with German authorities, since they prefer to communicate directly with the consulate instead of with the Georgian MFA. Furthermore, the consulate cooperates with the German MIA, MFA and immigration authorities (Ausländerbehörde) and all relevant Georgian state institutions. There is also active communication between the Georgian consulate in Germany and German institutions regarding diaspora organisations. According to the Georgian Consulate in Athens, general information on Georgian migrants in Greece does exist; there is just a lack of information on details about their employment, etc.

<sup>16</sup> Note: e.g. leaflet with addresses and contacts of diplomatic and consular representations abroad, addresses and contacts of diaspora organisations, and information on the risks of illegal employment, labour exploitation and trafficking.

There is no exchange of information on returned and/or reintegrated migrants between the MRA and MIA and other relevant institutions who might benefit from this information. At most, only the overall number of persons is communicated. Relevant Georgian institutions (the MRA and MIA) should implement an analysis of the profile of returned/reintegrated migrants and periodically share this information within the SCMI. This would provide an opportunity to coordinate irregular migration prevention and reintegration activities and make their implementation more effective.



**Illustrative quotation (PSDA interview, (SI06):**

*“In general, I think it is agriculture [...]. It is a crucial sector in Georgia, and there is a lack of knowledge, for instance how to make different things out of one product. [...] we do not really know how to sell our products in terms of marketing. We also make churchkhela out of grapes, but do not really know how to sell it, what kind of packaging to make.”*

### 3.5. Development needs in Georgia and potential for diaspora engagement

The representative of the **SCMI Secretariat** stated that according to the assessment of the SCMI members, the main sectors with development needs in Georgia are the tourism, education and health sectors, especially the latter, as qualified nurses are much needed. In general, highly qualified staff is needed in many sectors. In this regard, bilateral labour migration schemes which would make it easier for foreigners to enter and work in Georgia could be beneficial.

An official from the **PSDA** stated that the agricultural sector would benefit most from returned migrants who have acquired new skills in this area. Generally

speaking, knowledge and expertise is lacking in the agricultural sector in Georgia as concerns, for example, production, marketing and packaging. According to representatives of the **TIG**, returned migrants could work in the hospitality/tourism sector. This is echoed by the Diaspora Office, which points out that a lot of Georgian migrants had worked in the service sector abroad and thus could be best employed in the service sector (such as in hospitality and tourism) in Georgia.

The **MFA** does not provide information on development needs in Georgia to Georgian migrants abroad. But as is argued by the Georgian Consulate in Germany, it is problematic to promote returning to Georgia if adequate conditions and support is not offered for returnees, or at least clear information on where they could apply for state assistance. The MFA also believes that the tourism sector could benefit from qualified people and that successful Georgian business people from abroad should consider expanding their businesses to Georgia in order to grow and at the same time contribute to Georgia’s economic development. Remittances might also be used to invest in communities, such as in schools and kindergartens.

Regarding remittances, there seems to be a lack of knowledge on the amount sent to Georgia, as well as on their distribution and use. The National Bank of Georgia has some data, but only on official transfers. The Consular Representation in Istanbul mentioned that people use informal channels for money (and goods) transfers, such as sending money back home through friends and relatives or giving it to bus drivers for a small fee. These practices were also observed by the research team at the Istanbul Emniyet Garaji bus station as well as in Athens.

Since there is no systematic collection and exchange of information on development needs to engage diaspora, information on successful reintegration cases, if properly analysed, could help guide future actions. An inventory of diaspora members’ skills and expertise could also facilitate the matching of certain development sector needs with possible migrant input.

The assessment of the diaspora and migrant communities’ needs and potential to engage in the development of Georgia, according to the **PSDA**, is the responsibility of the Diaspora Office. The PSDA assists migrants with passport-related issues and other documentation issues and on inquiring citizenship. In this regard, it closely cooperates with the MFA on residence permits and citizenship issues since the consulates provide the same services abroad as the PSDA does in its regional units. The representative of the PSDA deems important to include diaspora organisations in the development processes in Georgia and use the skills and experience of returned migrants more efficiently. The following suggestions were provided on how to engage diaspora in the development of Georgia:

- stronger inclusion of the diaspora in development processes and in activities in Georgia by using the

experience and the know-how of diaspora members for activities in Georgia

- better communication between diaspora organisations within a city or region in the country of destination



#### Good practice example:

*The MRA carries out organises consultations with potential migrants at the regional consultations centres. At least twice a year, a more general activity is planned as, for example, such as a lecture at the university, during which MRA officials explain the risks of irregular migration and inform the audience about legal migration and employment possibilities abroad.*

- establishment of better contacts of the diaspora with respective state agencies

- awareness raising for diaspora organisations by the ERGEM project on available projects and activities in Georgia where diaspora organisations could participate.

In addition, the PSDA could raise awareness through its public service halls on how remittances could be used to finance and invest in businesses. Also, here, cooperation with diaspora organisations could be established.

The **Diaspora Office** and the **MRA** mentioned that a potential assessment of and general cooperation with the diaspora would be more efficient if the efforts of diaspora organisations were more consolidated. Lack of

coordination and consolidation might be a result of lack of insufficient human and/or financial resources. There is also sometimes internal competition; different, or even competing, interests and approaches. The Diaspora Office also indicated that there is a lack of systematic and periodical cooperation and communication between diaspora organisations and state institutions.

### 3.6. Pre-departure initiatives and assistance provided to returnees

With regard to pre-departure initiatives, the **MRA** implements irregular migration prevention measures via the regional mobility centres in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Gori and Zugdidi (transferred from the IOM-implemented project and under the responsibility of the MRA as of 2010). According to the information provided by the representatives of the MRA, personal contacts with potential migrants, such as lectures at universities and consultations at regional centres, are more efficient than broad information campaigns. The MRA does not collect

information on which countries are most attractive for potential migrants and what skills potential migrants have; therefore, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that potential migrants who come for consultations are mainly young people who are looking for study or employment opportunities abroad.

The **MFA** provides pre-departure information through leaflets informing people about the risks of irregular migration and human trafficking. Information on potential migrants is not being systematically collected and analysed.

With regard to returnees, the representatives of the **TIG**, in cooperation with the **MRA**, used to provide returning Georgian migrants with services at their mobility centres in five regions in Georgia, i.e. consultations and seminars on legal migration, the risks of irregular migration and other relevant migration topics. The mobility centres are now under the joint responsibility of IOM and the MRA in the framework of the European Union's Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation ("More for more") Programme.<sup>17</sup>

According to the representative of the MRA, about half of all returnees want to leave Georgia again. In order to address this one would first have to understand why this is so. Thus far, there has been no systematic analysis of reintegration programmes, or of the socio-economic profile of returned migrants and motivation to re-emigrate.



#### Illustrative quotation (State institution interview, (SI07):

*"These organisations should communicate with each other and have this feeling of unity and consolidate our [Diaspora Office's] activities – sharing of information, knowledge and experience. [...] The main idea is that the diaspora organisations should be more active, the better mobilised they are, the better is the cooperation between them, the state and international organisations."*

<sup>17</sup> For more information, please refer to the IOM project website: [www.informedmigration.ge](http://www.informedmigration.ge).

## 4. The Profile of the Georgian Diaspora in Germany, Greece and Turkey

### 4.1. Introduction

Germany, Greece and Turkey have distinctive characteristics as destination and residence countries for Georgian migrants. This is a result of their historical relations with Georgia and the patterns of migration. Turkey's migration history with Georgia can be traced back to Georgian-Turkish relations in the Middle Ages and the conquests of Ottoman Empire, which resulted in large settlements of Turks on Georgian territories and their later re-settlement in Central Asia. Close historical ties and the geographic proximity of Turkey and Georgia have shaped migratory movements since that time and the abolition of visa requirements for Georgians has increased the popularity of Turkey as a destination country for Georgians.

Although a small historical Georgian diaspora population also can be found in Greece and Germany, both countries are relatively new immigration countries for Georgian migrants, with significant migration flows starting in the 1990s. The majority of migrants from Georgia to Greece at that time constituted Georgian citizens of Greek origin, often referred to as Greek repatriates or 'Pontic Greeks'. This laid the basis for the later increase of migration from Georgia to Greece due to mixed marriages, close contacts with migrated persons back in Georgia and a significant community of Georgians in Greece.<sup>18</sup> The geographic proximity, a well-developed transportation infrastructure and comparatively low migration costs, due to live-in domestic work, also facilitate migration to Greece.<sup>19</sup>

Georgia has close connections to Germany that date back nearly 200 years to the emigration of southern German (Swabian) farmers to Georgia. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Germany was the first country to recognise Georgia's independence, to establish diplomatic relations and open an embassy in Tbilisi, which it did in 1992.<sup>20</sup> Today, German is taught as a first or second foreign language in many Georgian schools and approximately 11.5% of all Georgian students learn German.<sup>21</sup> As a result, about 2,500 Georgians are currently studying at German universities or participating in au pair programmes.

### 4.2. Size of the Georgian diaspora population in the three residence countries

Although experts provide different estimations on migration from Georgia in general (see introduction), they usually agree that about 60% of all migration flows are directed towards the CIS countries, in particular to Russia. When migration flows and stocks are assessed with regard to the remittances transferred, then the USA, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Turkey are mentioned as the most attractive destination countries. Although Germany also accommodates a significant number of Georgian migrants, the amount of remittances is not very high which can be attributed to the majority being students or au pairs. Taking into account the migration estimations above, destination countries outside the CIS region could host between 120,000 and 400,000 migrants. It should be noted that these numbers do not reflect the so-called historical diaspora, which is significant, particularly in Turkey, and they do not include Georgians who were naturalised in the destination countries.

Germany, Greece and Turkey are homes to a historical Georgian diaspora and, recently, to labour migrants. As regards the former, it is estimated that about 2.5 million ethnic Georgians reside in Turkey.<sup>22</sup> Below are estimations on the stocks of Georgians in the researched countries, based on various sources.

<sup>18</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010)

<sup>19</sup> (Marouf 2013)

<sup>20</sup> (Federal Foreign Office of Germany 2013)

<sup>21</sup> (Embassy of Germany in Tbilisi 2013)

<sup>22</sup> (Caucasus Research Resource Centre 2007)

**Table 2: Number of Georgian Migrants in Germany, Greece and Turkey**

	Statistical offices, 2011	Research data	Consular registration data, provided by the Georgian MFA
Germany	13,835 <sup>1</sup>	25,000–35,000 <sup>2</sup>	2,518
Greece	16,523 <sup>3</sup>	70,000 <sup>4</sup>	17,711
Turkey	1,979 <sup>5</sup>	18,000–25,000 <sup>6</sup>	996

<sup>1</sup> (Federal Foreign Office of Germany 2013)

<sup>2</sup> Note: Self-estimated amount based on data from (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013), general estimations on Georgian migrants and share of migrants in Germany (12–13%).

<sup>3</sup> (EUROSTAT 2012)

<sup>4</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 11

<sup>5</sup> (Statistical Office of Turkey 2011)

<sup>6</sup> Note: Self-estimated amount based on data from (Caucasus Research Resource Centre 2007), general estimations on Georgian migrants and share of migrants in Turkey (7%).

The table above shows that data on Georgian migrants in the destination countries differs significantly depending on the source. This could be explained by the high number of irregular migrants residing or working abroad (in particular in Greece), the high level of naturalisation of Georgian citizens (e.g. in Germany), and finally, Georgian migrants not registering at the consulate in the destination country.

### 4.3. Socio-demographic profile

According to the information provided by the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the proportion of male migrants (58%) among the total number of migrants from Georgia is higher than the percentage of female migrants (42%).<sup>23</sup> However, the main destinations for Georgian male and female migrants differ. According to various surveys, women represent 50.8% of Georgian migrants in countries outside the CIS but only 36% within the CIS, probably because male and female migrants are employed in different sectors and different countries provide different sector opportunities.<sup>24</sup> Georgian migrants are likely to be younger than the general population<sup>25</sup>; 44% of migrants are under the age of 30.<sup>26</sup> The mean age in Georgia is 37 according to the 2005 UNDP data.

In all three countries, the majority of Georgian migrants are women. In Germany, women constitute 64.2% of the total number, in Greece 69%, and in Turkey approximately 54%.<sup>27</sup> According to the official statistical data presented above, the biggest group of legally residing Georgian migrants in Germany is made up of migrants between the ages of 25 and 35 (41%). In Greece, the biggest group of legally residing Georgian migrants is made up of migrants between the ages of 35 and 49 (35 %). No official or public information is available on the age distribution in Turkey.

The level of education of Georgian migrants residing in the three countries is relatively high. In general, migrants from post-Soviet states are distinguished by a high level of education.<sup>28</sup> Desk research suggests that seven to eight of ten migrants from Georgia have a higher education, and at least half of Georgian migrants hold a university degree. Thus, the average level of education of Georgian migrants is almost twice as high as that of the Georgian population in general.<sup>29</sup>

The level of education is the highest among survey respondents in Germany, as 78% have either a Bachelor's degree (30%) or a Master's degree (48%). The level of education among survey respondents in Greece can be described as at a medium level. 64% have completed secondary school (29%) or professional school (vocational/career school) (35%), while 33% have either a Bachelor's degree (18%) or a Master's degree (15%). Other research findings estimate that the majority of Georgians in Greece are highly qualified individuals

<sup>23</sup> (GeoStat 2012)

<sup>24</sup> (Ferry 2013)

<sup>25</sup> (GeoStat 2012)

<sup>26</sup> (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013)

<sup>27</sup> (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2013)

<sup>28</sup> (Mansoor and Quillin 2007)

<sup>29</sup> (Badurashvili and Nadareishvili 2012)

(teachers and medical personnel).<sup>30</sup> Desk research further shows that those with low and medium levels of education tend to migrate mostly to Turkey.<sup>31</sup> However, this was not confirmed by the survey, as the level of education among the survey respondents in Turkey is significantly higher. 56% of the survey respondents have completed secondary school (39%) or vocational/career school (17%), while 40% have either a Bachelor's degree (23%) or a Master's degree (17%).

The survey results also show that the last occupation the Georgian migrants had in Georgia before migrating differs significantly from country to country. In Greece, teachers and medical personnel form the largest group, while in Germany students and teachers were the two biggest clusters of past occupations. In all three countries, teachers formed the largest group of past occupations. In total, 22% of the survey respondents had worked as teachers before migrating. In Turkey, however, the last professions vary considerably and cannot be clustered in a systematic manner.

#### 4.4. Types of migration

The types of migration and reasons for leaving Georgia differ in the three destination countries. Georgian migration to Germany is mainly for educational purposes. Data from 2007 indicates that one quarter of the Georgian migration stock in Germany is made up of educational migrants.<sup>32</sup> The survey results confirm this finding, as 79% of the surveyed migrants stated that they left Georgia to study in Germany, followed by only 14% leaving for family reasons.

One of the most important reasons for choosing Greece as the country of destination is the presence of a developed social network of Georgians. Other reasons for Georgian migration to Greece are the demand for workforce in the informal labour market (where migrants can work without a legal contract or work permit), Greece's comparably close location to Georgia, and the cultural/historical similarities between both countries.<sup>33</sup> The survey results confirm the desk research findings, as 56% left Georgia to be with family members who live abroad and 29% to find a new job in Greece. The specific situation of ethnic Greeks living in Georgia is worth mentioning. They were granted Greek citizenship by the Greek government following the social unrest in the 1990s in Georgia.

In Turkey, almost half of the survey respondents stated that the prospect for a new job (34% left to find a new job, while 15% already had an offer) was their main reason for departure. 37% left to be with family members who live abroad. Temporary migration and seasonal<sup>34</sup> migration (migration for seasonal work) are important migration patterns, particularly since the visa-free regime permits Georgians to spend three months in Turkey, although this is technically supposed to be for touristic, and not labour, purposes.

Based on the desk research and the survey, the following conclusions to be made on the social profile of migrants in the three destination countries:

**Figure 3: Social Profile of Migrants in the Three Destination Countries**

Country	Social profile
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Georgian migration to Germany is dominated by young and unmarried individuals (at least at the beginning of the migration process).</li> <li>▪ The majority of Georgian migrants in Germany are female – 64.2%.</li> <li>▪ Georgians in Germany are concentrated in bigger cities due to the availability of higher education, jobs and Georgian networks.</li> <li>▪ Germany attracts Georgian migrants mainly for academic and career development purposes and au pair work.</li> <li>▪ Immigration to Germany from Georgia can be described as primarily 'regular'. The majority of migrants claim to have residence and work permits.</li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 12

<sup>31</sup> (ETF 2012)

<sup>32</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

<sup>33</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 13; (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013) PG 28; (Triandafyllidou and Kokkali 2010) PG 14

<sup>34</sup> (Cigerci Ulukan and Ulukan 2010)

Country	Social profile
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The level of education is very high; 78% of the survey respondents have a tertiary education.</li> </ul>
<b>Greece</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Georgian migrants in Greece cover the entire spectrum of residence statuses, with significant numbers of repatriates to whom Greek citizenship was granted, residence permit holders, asylum seekers and persons with an irregular status.</li> <li>▪ Social networks and long historical ties between the two countries facilitate migration to Greece.</li> <li>▪ Pontic Greeks from Georgia usually reside close to the Turkish border, while the largest group of migrants lives in big cities, such as Athens and Thessaloniki.</li> <li>▪ The majority of Georgian migrants are female (69%) and work in the domestic sector takes place.</li> <li>▪ The largest age group of Georgian migrants is those between the ages of 35 and 49.</li> <li>▪ Georgians in Greece have a medium to high level of education, with one third having completed tertiary education.</li> <li>▪ Working below the level of qualification is a widespread phenomenon; 70% of the survey participants consider themselves to fall into this category.</li> <li>▪ A large proportion of Georgian migrants reside in Greece without a work or residence permit, which limits their access to services such as health care.</li> <li>▪ A little more than half of the survey participants wish to obtain Greek citizenship.</li> </ul>
<b>Turkey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A significant share of the Georgian historical diaspora resides in Turkey.</li> <li>▪ Newer waves of Georgian migration to Turkey can be characterised as temporary labour migration, mostly seasonal.</li> <li>▪ Female migrants go to Turkey because of the unfavourable labour market conditions in Georgia and the increasing demand for domestic labour in Turkey.</li> <li>▪ The Georgian diaspora in Turkey is quite scattered; large migrant settlements are in the regions bordering Georgia and in big cities.</li> <li>▪ Most cross-border movements from Georgia to Turkey are at the Sarpi border crossing point.</li> <li>▪ Desk research findings suggest that Georgian migrants employed in Turkey have a low to medium level of education, which was not confirmed in the survey, as the respondents have quite a high level of education. This might be due to the fact that the survey was carried out in Istanbul and did not cover remote and agricultural areas in Turkey.</li> <li>▪ More than half of the survey respondents do not have a work permit (51%) and work for the duration of their visa-free stay (three months). This might contribute to the fact that Georgians migrants can be found in difficult and low-paying jobs, mainly in the domestic sector.</li> <li>▪ A majority of Georgian migrants (66%) consider themselves to be working below their qualifications.</li> <li>▪ Only one third of the Georgian migrants wish to obtain Turkish citizenship despite their temporary status. This may be related to integration and adaptation problems in Turkey.</li> </ul>

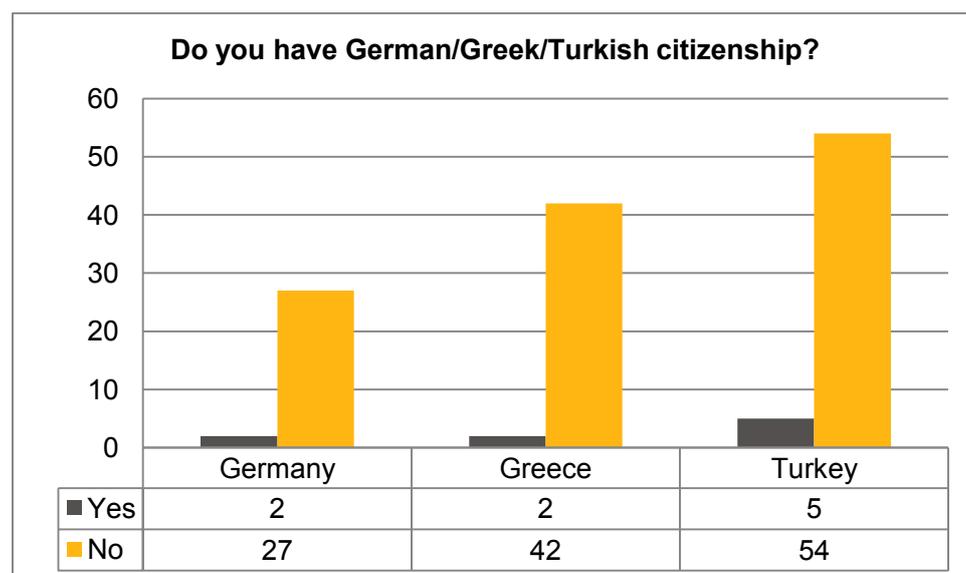
#### 4.5. Situation of Georgian migrants

In line with the different causes, motives and types for migration stated above, Georgian migrants residing in Germany, Greece and Turkey face very different situations and realities. In addition, differences within the group of Georgian migrants in these three countries have to be acknowledged.

Among the survey respondents in the three countries, a very small percentage possesses the citizenship of the country they reside in (7% in Germany, 5% in Greece and 8% in Turkey). The wish to acquire the citizenship of the residence country among survey respondents differs considerably in the three countries. More than half of the surveyed Georgian migrants in Greece desire to receive Greek citizenship (54%). However, only 24%

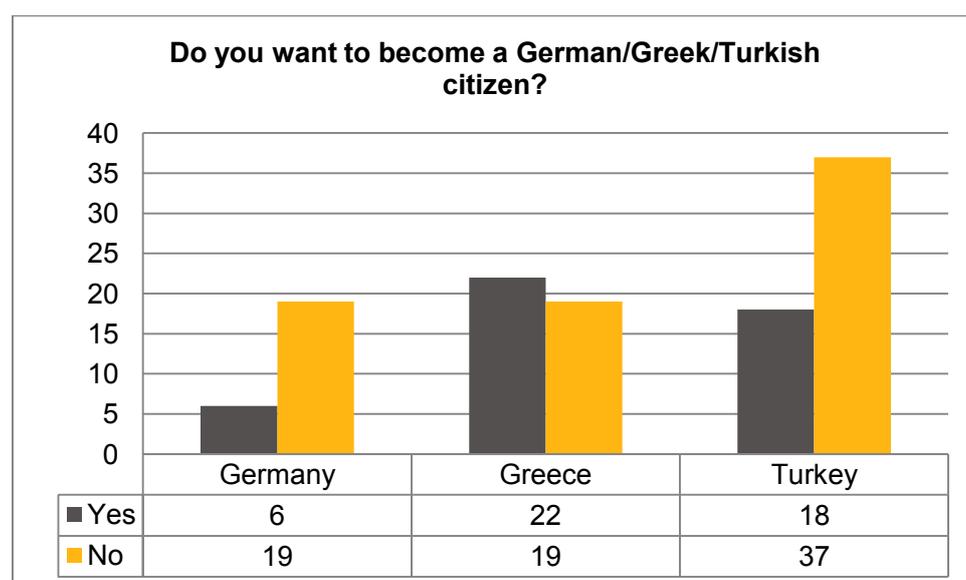
and 33% of the respondents in Germany and Turkey, respectively, wish to have the citizenship of the country of residence.

Figure 4: Georgian Migrants Possessing Citizenship in Germany, Greece and Turkey



Source: Field data, 2013

Figure 5: Georgian Migrants' Aspiration to Obtain Citizenship in Germany, Greece and Turkey



Source: Field data, 2013

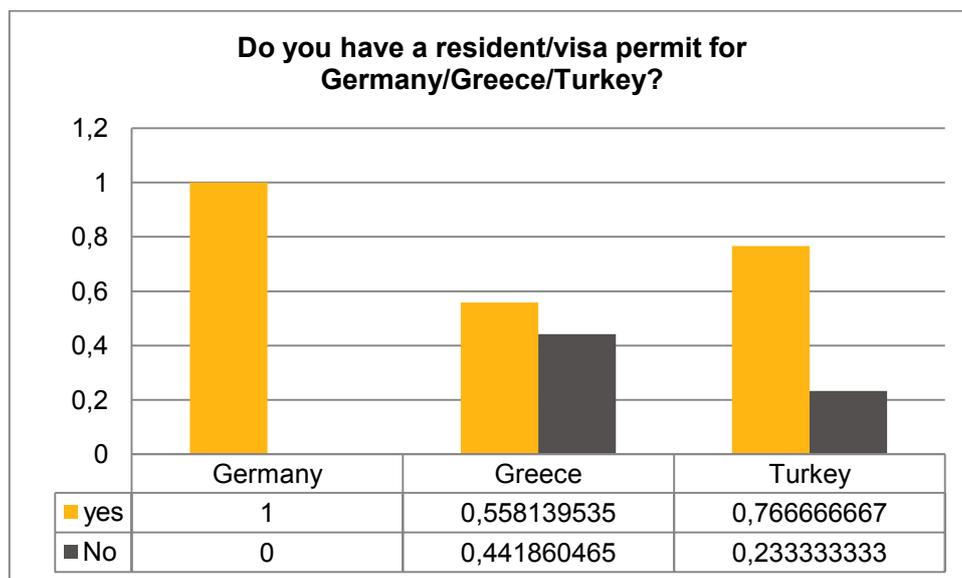
All survey respondents in Germany indicated having a residence/visa permit. In contrast, in Greece almost half (44%) and in Turkey almost one quarter of the respondents (23%) do not have a residence permit or visa. This finding is in line with other research findings that confirm that migration from Georgia to Germany is primarily 'regular' as compared to migration to other countries, such as Turkey. However, this result does not reveal which type of residence permit Georgians in Germany have, i.e. a long-term or a short-term residence permit.

An irregular status seems to be one of the main problems Georgian migrants in Greece face. In addition, the specific situation of ethnic Greeks who had previously lived in Georgia and then migrated to Greece and to whom Greek citizenship was granted also has to be taken into account. Hence, these two groups face different challenges and require different forms of protection in regards to their rights.

In Turkey, a high share of the surveyed Georgian migrants possesses a residence permit or visa. This might be related to the visa-free regime, which is used by migrants to arrive in Turkey and engage in regular circular and

seasonal work there. On the other hand, the large historical diaspora, which has recently made headlines when the former president granted citizenship to more than 1,000 members of the Georgian historical diaspora,<sup>35</sup> is a well-integrated group living in Turkey for more than a decade.

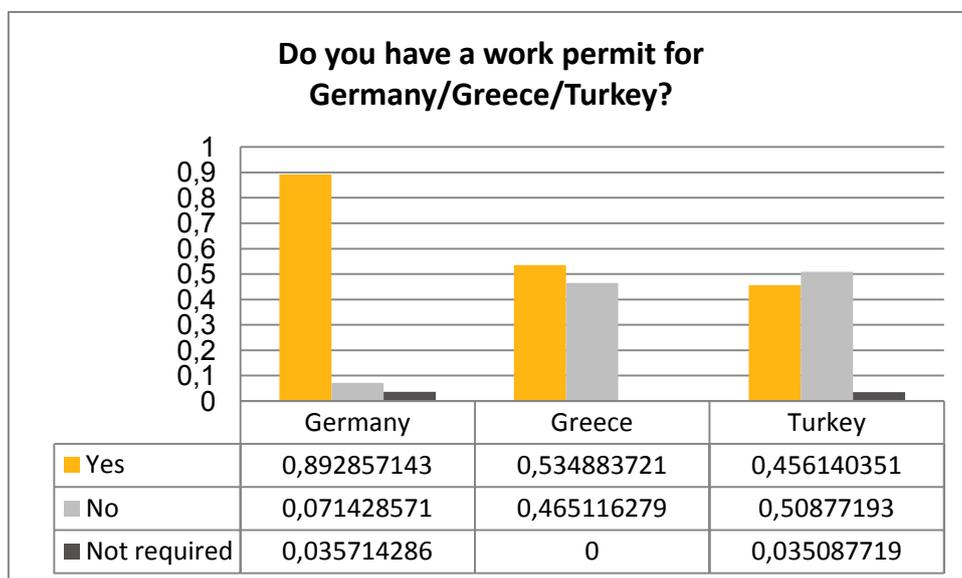
Figure 6: Survey Results regarding Residence/Visa in the Three Destination Countries



Source: Field data, 2013

Most surveyed Georgian migrants in Germany possess a work permit (89%), while in Greece a slight majority (56%) indicated to have one and in Turkey only 46% stated to have one.

Figure 7: Survey Results regarding Work Permit in the Three Destination Countries



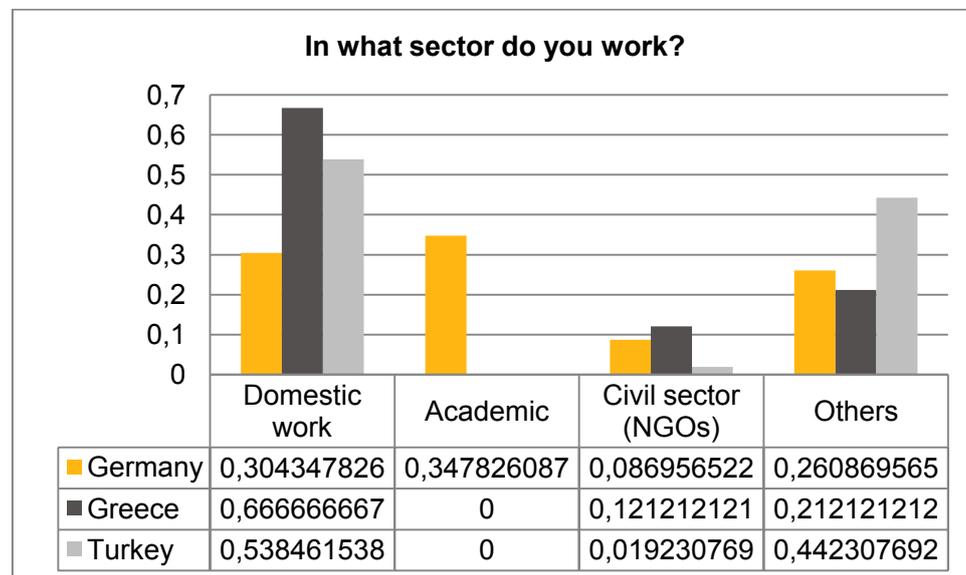
Source: Field data, 2013

The three main sectors of employment among the surveyed Georgian migrants are the domestic work sector, the academic sector and the civil sector. The majority of migrants in Greece (67%) and Turkey (54%) work in the domestic sector as au pairs, nannies or nurses in a private household. Only in Germany is the academic sector an important field of employment, which is a result of student migration from Georgia. Given the high level of education of the survey respondents (78% in Germany, 33% in Greece and 40% in Turkey completed tertiary education), it is not surprising that 66% of all interviewed persons consider themselves as working below their qualifications.

<sup>35</sup> (Democracy and Freedom Watch 2013)

As mentioned above, both Greece and Germany host mainly female migrants from Georgia, which is explained by the predominance of domestic work available in Greece and by study and au pair programmes (which are mainly taken up by women) in Germany. Research findings underline that female Georgian migrants are in high demand in Greece as housemaids, caregivers, janitors and servers in the secondary labour market.<sup>36</sup> In Turkey, according to a study, a considerable number of Georgian migrants are mainly employed in the agriculture, construction and domestic service sectors.<sup>37</sup> This was not confirmed by the survey results, as construction and agriculture were not mentioned as sectors of employment, although this may be due to the survey being conducted only in Istanbul and not in rural areas.

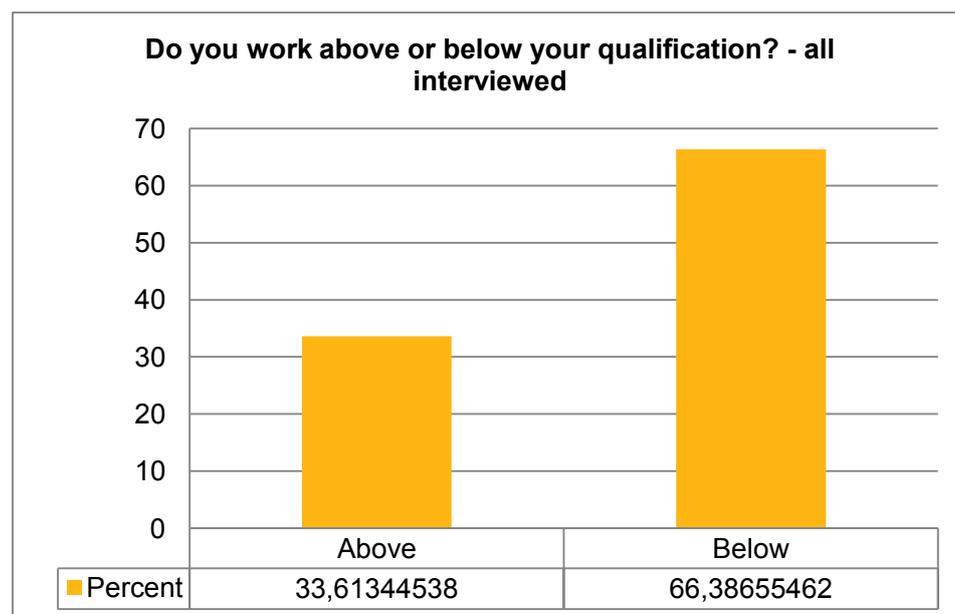
Figure 8: Survey Results regarding Work Sector



Source: Field data, 2013

This result shows that 'brain waste' is a significant characteristic of Georgian migration to Greece and Turkey, and to a lesser extent, Germany. It was also identified in other studies as an important issue.<sup>38</sup>

Figure 9: Survey Results regarding Professional Qualifications



Source: Field data, 2013

<sup>36</sup> (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013)

<sup>37</sup> (Cigerci Ulukan and Ulukan 2010)

<sup>38</sup> (Badurashvili and Nadareishvili 2012)

In all three countries, the majority of survey respondents stated that work is their main source of income. In Germany, a significant share also depends on state support (12%) and scholarships (12%). Also in Greece and Turkey, scholarships are an important source of income (8% in both countries). Very few (3% in Turkey and none in Greece) receive state support in Greece and Turkey, which is most likely related to their insecure or temporary residence status.

Interestingly, 14% of the survey respondents in Turkey and 10% in Greece receive support from their family. None of the survey respondents in Germany receive support from their family in Georgia. These so-called reverse remittances are still an under-researched area in literature on the migration and development nexus.

The different socio-demographic and socio-economic profiles of the Georgian migrants residing in Germany, Greece and Turkey also mean that the situation they face is very different, and thus require different approaches and support. During interviews with family members of Georgian migrants residing in Germany, Greece and Turkey, some very specific issues that Georgian migrants face were mentioned.

In Germany, Georgian migrants have experienced difficulties with the health insurance provided by Georgia-based insurance companies, as it seems to not be valid for receiving medical services. Another problem that was mentioned was that although there are a lot of au pair programmes for Georgians, there appears to be insufficient information on au pairs' rights.

As stated above, the main problem that Georgian migrants seem to face in Greece is irregularity (residing in Greece without a residence and/or work permit) and the precarious health problems that go along with it. Without a legal status, migrants cannot easily receive health care, which leads to increased and untreated health problems. There also seems to be lack of information and support in regard to the registration of newborns by parents who are residing in Greece without valid papers. It should also be noted that the Georgian Embassy in Greece is concerned about the irregular status of Georgian migrants and is in constant communication with state institutions and municipalities in order to support possible, even if only small-scale, regularisation programmes, (e.g. the current 6-month pilot programme that seeks to regularise domestic workers who provide care to disabled Greek citizens).

In the case of Turkey, it should be noted that a distinction should be made between two different Georgian diasporas: the historical diaspora and new labour migrants, who obviously face different challenges and have different needs. Family members of Georgian migrants underlined the hard living and working conditions in Turkey, as well as the cultural differences between Turkey and Georgia, which make it difficult to integrate in the society.

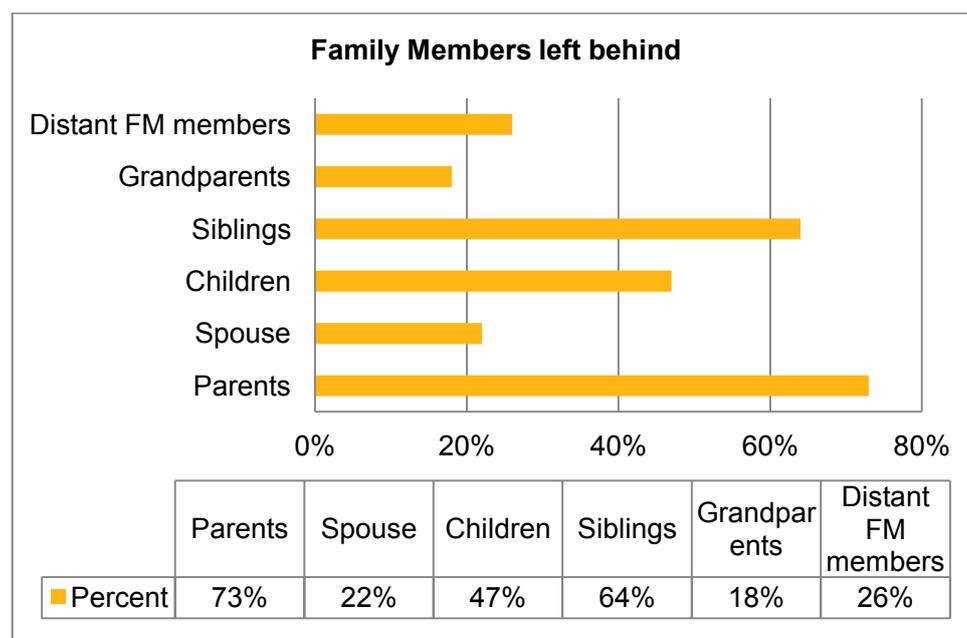
## **4.6. Transnational activities of Georgians living abroad**

### *4.6.1. Ties with Georgia*

Almost all survey respondents (91%) have a valid Georgian passport. There are only very small differences between the three countries (93% in Germany and Greece, and 89% in Turkey, which could be explained by having obtained the citizenship of the country of residence). A recent initiative of the Georgian government to provide citizenship to Turks with Georgian roots has received much interest from Georgian migrants. It was perceived by one interviewed diaspora organisation representative as an important step by the Georgian government to strengthen ties with its diaspora.

Over 90% of the surveyed Georgian migrants have close family members in Georgia, with very small variations in the three countries. Most of them have siblings (94% in Germany, 86% in Greece and 58% in Turkey) and parents in Georgia (92 % in Germany, 68 % in Greece and 67 % in Turkey). Moreover, 20% of the surveyed Georgian migrants residing in Greece and 36% of those residing in Turkey indicated that their spouses live in Georgia. Only 6% of the survey respondents in Germany left their children behind. This figure is significantly higher among survey respondents in Greece and Turkey: 51% among those surveyed in Greece and 70% in Turkey have children living in Georgia. This mirrors the results concerning the residence and work status in the sense that those with an insecure, and in some cases, temporary, status cannot take their close family members with them. It also reflects the age distribution in the residence country, as Georgian migrants in Germany tend to be younger than those in Turkey and Greece.

Figure 10: Survey Results regarding the Family Members Left Behind by Georgian Migrants



Source: Field data, 2013

In terms of the frequency of visits to Georgia, the results reflect a lot of factors that play a role for each country. In the case of Turkey, for example, 46% of the polled migrants go back home every three months, which supports the notion of the use of the three-month visa-free period. It is also evident that Georgian migrants in Turkey stay more closely connected to Georgia, as the main centre of their life remains there and they leave only temporarily, albeit on a continuous basis. Most migrants in Germany and Greece visit Georgia once a year, which can be explained by the fact that they are further away from Georgia and, thus, have longer travel distances and higher travel costs.

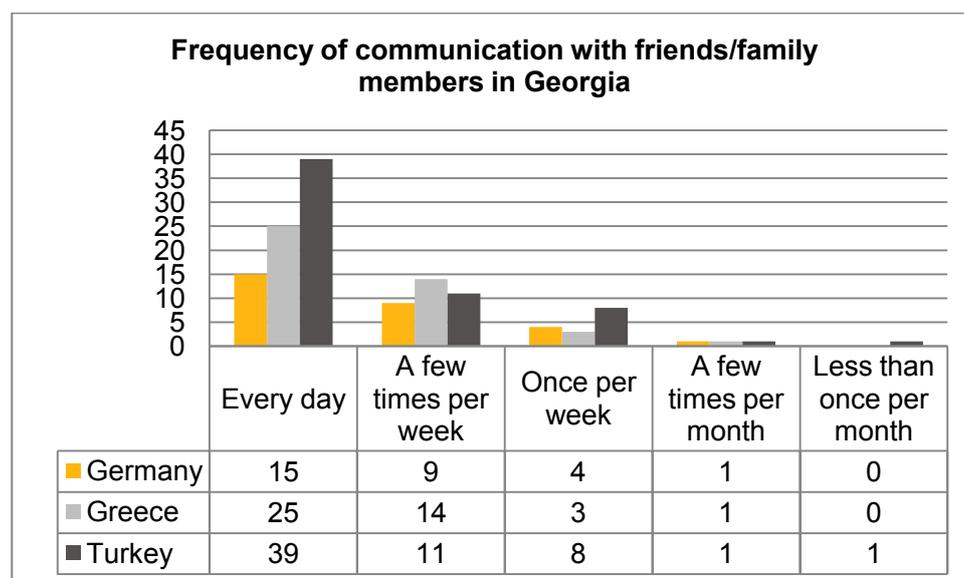
Table 3: Frequency of Home Visits by Georgian Migrants

			Country of survey			Total
			Germany	Greece	Turkey	
How often do you visit Georgia?	Every 3 months	Number	0	0	27	27
		%	0,0%	0,0%	45,8%	29,7%
	Every half year	Number	1	1	22	24
		%	4,0%	14,3%	37,3%	26,4%
	Once per year	Number	10	3	5	18
		%	40,0%	42,9%	8,5%	19,8%
	Every 1 to 2 years	Number	7	1	3	11
		%	28,0%	14,3%	5,1%	12,1%
	Every 2 to 5 years	Number	7	2	2	11
		%	28,0%	28,6%	3,4%	12,1%
	Total	Number	25	7	59	91
		%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Source: Field data, 2013

Georgian migrants and diaspora members communicate with friends and family members in Georgia on a frequent basis, the majority of them every day. The main communication channels are the phone (86%), Skype (59%) and social networks (56%, e.g. Facebook, Odnoklassniki; multiple answers were possible). In addition, the interviewed migrants follow the situation in Georgia closely (82%), mainly through the internet (by far the most important communication channel), TV and calls with family and friends.

Figure 11: Frequency of Communication with Family/Friends in Georgia



Source: Field data, 2013

The Georgian language and culture is perceived as a very important 'bridge' to Georgia; therefore, diaspora associations teach children the Georgian language and Georgian history and culture. The interviewed diaspora representatives stated that support from Georgian institutions would be needed, particularly to teach Georgian abroad. A specific problem that was raised by the interviewed migrants in Greece, which is also very important for strengthening ties with Georgia, is that that Georgian Sunday schools in Greece are not registered as an official Sunday school, and thus are not eligible for direct support from the Diaspora Office.

The interviewed representatives from diaspora organisations organise events in Germany, Greece and Turkey on important days for Georgia, such as the Georgian Independence Day, and promote Georgian artists. This also shows that the diaspora organisations actively promote Georgian culture in the destination countries and make it accessible for Georgians, natives and other nationalities. In addition, exchanges between the destination country and Georgia at the academic and political levels are sought and promoted. Interviewed diaspora organisations also stressed that ties with Georgia are as important as being included in the host society and this is why they are actively empowering young Georgians or persons with Georgian roots through educational activities.

A majority of interviewed Georgian migrants are not aware of the Georgian government's initiatives that target Georgians abroad (68%). In Germany, the majority of surveyed Georgian migrants (67%) are not in contact with Georgian representations abroad. The same applies to the surveyed migrants in Turkey (53%). In Greece, the picture looks different, as 78% said they were in contact with the Georgian Consulate in Athens. In Germany, the need for official documents was stated as the main reason for contacting the consulate. In Greece, the main reasons were the need for official documents and advice/counselling. In Turkey, assistance with visa issues and the need for advice/counselling were stated as the main reasons.

Interviewed diaspora representatives mentioned that there is active communication between the diaspora organisations and the Georgian consulates. However, cooperation with state institutions in Georgia would still need to be enhanced. Also, non-financial support would be appreciated by the organisations.

#### 4.6.2. Georgian diaspora organisations

Desk research findings show that over 200 Georgian diaspora organisations are operating abroad today. In the course of research conducted for this study, as many as 56 organisations were identified only in Germany, Greece and Turkey, which suggests that the actual number of diaspora organisations worldwide might be higher than the quoted 200. The majority of them are actively involved in the public and political life of the residence country and are often, at the same time, actively engaged in promoting the Georgian culture and language.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> (Chelidze, Readmission, Return and Reintegration in Georgia 2013)

When asked about their membership in a Georgian diaspora organisation, only 26 people replied that they were members. This is quite low considering that a lot of the questionnaires were collected with the help of diaspora organisations, often at their own premises and with people using the services of these organisations.<sup>40</sup> Although the majority of people are not members of any diaspora organisation, it became evident that some of them still enjoy their services and would like to see them improved and expanded. This also could be explained by the semi-official status of diaspora organisations, which does not provide a clear membership structure.

According to the majority of polled migrants, the most important tasks of diaspora organisations include supporting the education of Georgian children (47%), facilitating Georgian migrants' contribution to development in Georgia (33%), supporting Georgian ties with Georgia (34%), supporting Georgians in organising their life in the destination country (32%) and providing information to Georgian migrants about the situation in Georgia (22%). To a certain extent, all of these tasks are tackled by the diaspora organisations or by the respective consulates and embassies. Interviewed family members of Georgian migrants also stressed that diaspora organisations should be more actively engaged in creating return possibilities for migrants by informing them about job opportunities in Georgia. They also would like the organisations to support their integration and protect their rights in the host country. Some diaspora organisations are also in contact with family members in Georgia and some family members actively approach diaspora organisations in the residence country if they cannot reach their family members abroad. Also, empowerment through the education of young Georgians was mentioned as an important task for diaspora organisations.

A clear categorisation of the interviewed diaspora organisations is difficult to make. Although one could classify them as cultural or social associations, this categorisation would leave out important elements of their work. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to describe their main areas of engagement and main roles:

- **Creating bridges between Georgia and the residence country:** All interviewed diaspora organisation representatives highlighted their role in strengthening ties between the country of origin and the country of residence. For example, they organise exchange programmes and summer schools in Georgia for children with different nationalities, including Georgians. They also promote tourism in Georgia and raise awareness on the Georgian culture in the host society through TV programmes.
- **Promoting the Georgian culture and language:** Almost all studied diaspora organisations conduct projects to promote and maintain the Georgian culture and language among Georgian migrants and those having Georgian roots, with a particular focus on children. For that purpose, language classes are organised, Georgian artists are invited from Georgia, and dancing and other cultural groups are active.
- **Support and empower Georgians and people with Georgian roots in the residence country:** The social aspect is a very important area of work among the studied diaspora organisations. They offer counselling/advice and help Georgians in difficult situations. This includes support for those who cannot afford medical treatment, have problems with their residence status or documents, and visiting Georgians in detention centres and prisons.
- **Support the Georgian population in Georgia:** Diaspora organisations supported the Georgian population in Georgia through humanitarian assistance during the time of civil unrest in 2008. However, supporting the developments in Georgia was not mentioned as a priority by the studied diaspora organisations.

All interviewed diaspora organisation representatives stated that diaspora organisations are in close contact with each other and share information on activities, Georgia or the situation of Georgians in the destination countries. United through their common objective to promote the Georgian culture and language, the diaspora organisations seem to be well connected. However, the interviewed diaspora organisation representatives underlined that coordination and cooperation is still very weak. In Greece, some diaspora organisations support the idea of establishing an umbrella organisation of Georgian diaspora organisations that would facilitate communication with the Diaspora Office. So far they have not succeeded in establishing such an umbrella organisation due to the diverging interests of the diaspora organisations.

All interviewed diaspora organisations receive financial and non-financial support, e.g. provision of venues for meetings, from local institutions in destination countries.

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<sup>40</sup> See Appendix Table 7

It was highlighted by the interviewed diaspora representatives that cooperation between the diaspora associations and Georgian government institutions has improved since the State Diaspora Office was established. Some of the interviewed diaspora organisations also receive non-financial support from the Georgian institutions and from Georgian local authorities related to specific projects. As funding is one of the main problems diaspora organisations face, it was also mentioned that the Georgian government could provide diaspora organisations with information on funding opportunities if it is not able to fund the organisations' activities itself.

In addition, problems regarding the establishment and registration of associations in residence countries were mentioned. In Germany, in order to register an association, it is required that 50% of the members of a registered association have German citizenship, or if the majority of members have non-EU citizenship, the association is registered as an 'association of foreigners' and is subject to simplified dissolution regulations.<sup>41</sup> According to an interviewed organisation, to be registered as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Greece, it is required that the organisation has at least 21 members, which makes it difficult for Georgian migrants to found an organisation composed of Georgians. As a consequence, most organisations' membership is composed of Georgians and Greeks.

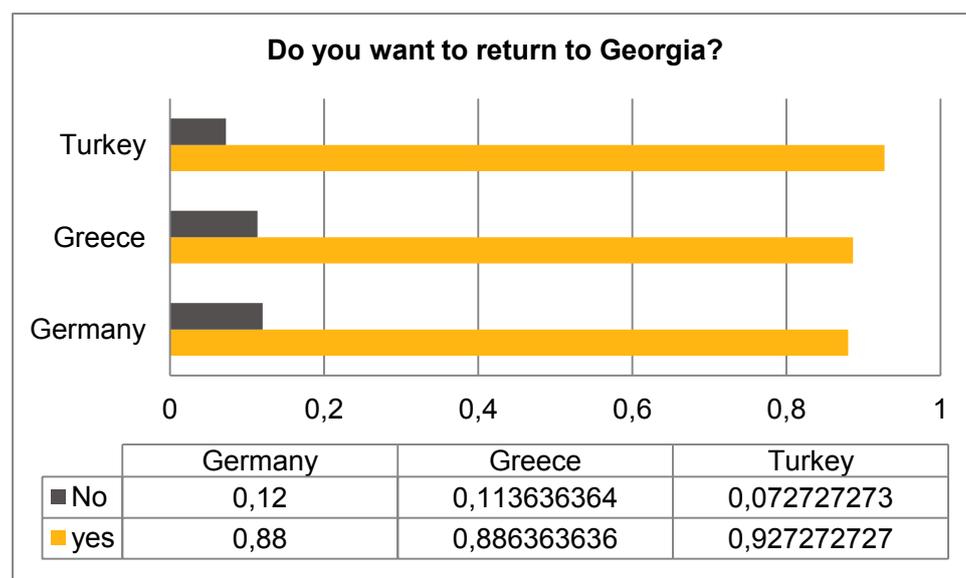
#### 4.6.3. Potential of the Georgian diaspora to contribute to development in Georgia

##### 4.6.3.1. Return

Since 2003, 2,035 Georgians have returned to Georgia within the framework of the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme, implemented by IOM. The programme covers 21 countries, including Greece and Turkey<sup>42</sup>. In 2012, 4,851 Georgians were forcibly returned, including 3,086 from Turkey, 168 from Greece and 135 from Germany.<sup>43</sup> Around 85% of Georgian migrants who had resided in Germany left this country between the years 2000 and 2011; in 2011 alone, 1,606 returned to Georgia in 2011.<sup>44</sup>

More than 90% of the survey participants want to return to Georgia at a certain point, making it clear that they did not migrate permanently.<sup>45</sup> The main reasons were because of family (being closer to parents, children, etc. and homesickness) and a feeling of belonging to and in Georgia. The share of survey participants who want to return home is similar in all three residence countries, which shows that the situation and status of migrants in the residence country does not seem to have a strong impact on the wish to return home.

Figure 12: Georgian Migrants and Their Wish to Return to Georgia



Source: Field data, 2013

<sup>41</sup> (Dejure - Auslaendervereine 2014)

<sup>42</sup> (IOM Reintegration Assistance 2014)

<sup>43</sup> (Chelidze, Readmission, Return and Reintegration in Georgia 2013)

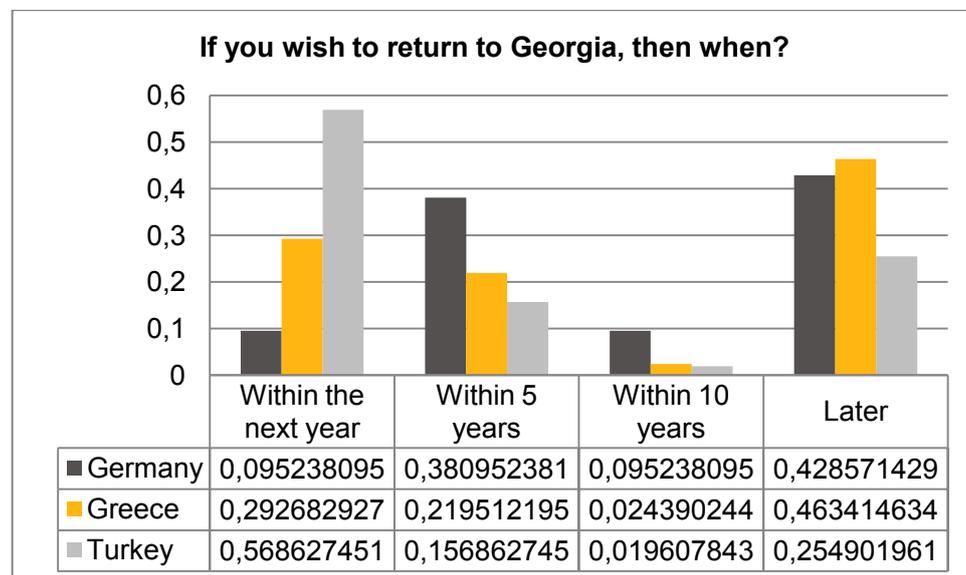
<sup>44</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix Table 8

Only a few factors were mentioned that would prevent Georgian migrants from returning home. Survey respondents enumerated family reasons and other social factors, economic factors and the risk of unemployment in Georgia as the main obstacles to returning. Political instability was also mentioned as a major hindering factor. The lack of jobs and fear of unemployment were clearly stated the most.

The time frame in which the polled migrants are considering returning to Georgia varies. The majority of Georgian migrants in Turkey wish to return within the next year (57%), while the majority in Germany and Greece wish to return to Georgia in the next five years or later.

**Figure 13: Survey Results for the Timing of Georgian Migrants Returning Home**



Source: Field data, 2013

Interviewed diaspora organisations mentioned that more support should be offered to returnees. Diaspora organisations could cooperate with state institutions to better prepare future returnees prior to their return. One interviewed diaspora organisation provides non-financial support to returnees, such as advice and contact details of persons who can support the reintegration process.

#### 4.6.3.2. Remittances

Since the 2000s, the number of remittances has been constantly rising. In general, migration from many post-Soviet countries can be characterised as a survival strategy due to a lack of employment opportunities there. Remittances also play a significant role in Georgia, as they directly influence the economy (national reserves) and deliver additional income to ca. 9% of its population. Data from September 2011 shows that remittances sent to Georgia amounted to \$812.6 million, almost 20% more than in 2010. According to the National Bank of Georgia, remittances constitute 6% of the country's GDP.<sup>46</sup> Alternative data on remittances could be considered, such as data on electronic payment transfers, according to which ten major remittance-sending countries account for approximately 90% of all monetary transfers to Georgia.<sup>47</sup>

Nationally representative social surveys conducted in Georgia show that residents of Tbilisi are most likely and rural residents least likely to receive remittances. According to estimates for 2010, a typical household received monthly remittances of 265 GEL (\$149). These transfers mostly took place via formal money transfer systems. In rural areas,<sup>48</sup> the use of informal channels appeared to be higher, accounting for nearly one third of transactions.

Remittances have several development effects at the national and local level. Estimates suggest that without remittances, private consumption would decrease by approximately 25% and the GDP would decrease by approximately 13%. The receipt of remittances is positively linked to households' propensity to save.

<sup>46</sup> (EPRC December 2011)

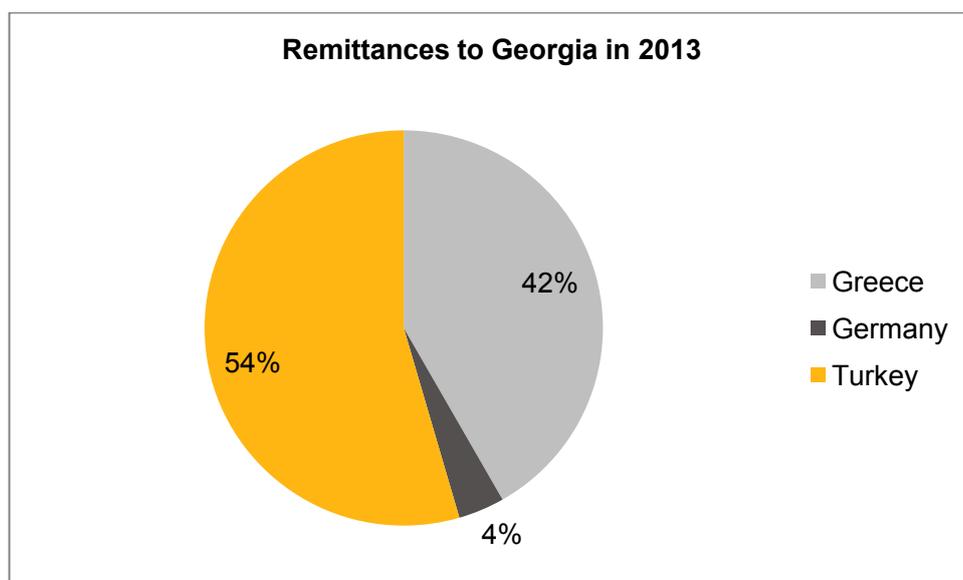
<sup>47</sup> (Gogushvili 2013)

<sup>48</sup> (Gogushvili 2013)

Nevertheless, there is no significant correlation between the receipt of remittances and investments, although some evidence suggests that investments in real estate are positively related to the receipt of remittances. Desk research findings suggest that in households in rural parts of Georgia, remittances contribute to small-scale business activities, but only to a very limited extent. In Tbilisi, it might even reduce employment chances, although, remittances might also provide the necessary resources to search for a better job. Very positive results were shown in the area of education and health: a quarter of remittance recipient households used remittances for education and one fifth for health/life insurance purposes. At the same time, remittances may contribute to inequality, as middle-income households benefit disproportionately from remittances. Furthermore, remittances might function as a social safety net for those who might, without remittances, depend on the state social welfare system but who are not among the poorest of the overall population.<sup>49</sup>

According to the National Bank of Georgia, Georgian migrants in all three destination countries are constantly remitting to Georgia. In 2013, the largest share of remittances was sent from Turkey – \$259 million (€189 million), followed by Greece – \$198 million (€144 million) and Germany – \$17.8 million (€13 million)<sup>50</sup>.

**Figure 14: Remittances to Georgia from Greece, Germany and Turkey in 2013**



Source: Own figure, based on data from the National Bank of Georgia

Among the respondents of the survey, 50% claim to send money to Georgia on a regular basis and 34% from time to time. The differences between the three residence countries are quite significant. In Germany, 46% stated that they do not remit money, while in Turkey and Greece more than half of the survey respondents said that they remit money on a regular basis.

**Table 4: Georgian Migrants Sending Funds to Georgia**

	Germany	Greece	Turkey	Total
Yes, regularly	12%	55%	67%	50%
Yes, from time to time	42%	38%	25%	34%
No	46%	7%	8%	16%

Source: Field data, 2013

This finding confirms available research that postulates that migrants are more likely to remit back home if they leave their children behind and hence have more frequent contacts with the recipient household.<sup>51</sup> In Germany, only 6% of the survey respondents stated that they have children in Georgia (see previous section).

The money is sent through various channels. Survey respondents in Germany and Turkey prefer to send money

<sup>49</sup> (Gogushvili 2013)

<sup>50</sup> (National Bank of Georgia 2013)

<sup>51</sup> (Gogushvili 2013)

via friends and family. Only 20% of the respondents in Germany and 28% in Turkey send money via bank transfers, while in Greece, 90% of the survey respondents stated that they usually send remittances via bank transfer. These figures might also reflect where the majority of family members left behind live, i.e. in rural or urban areas, which have different levels of development in terms of banking infrastructure.

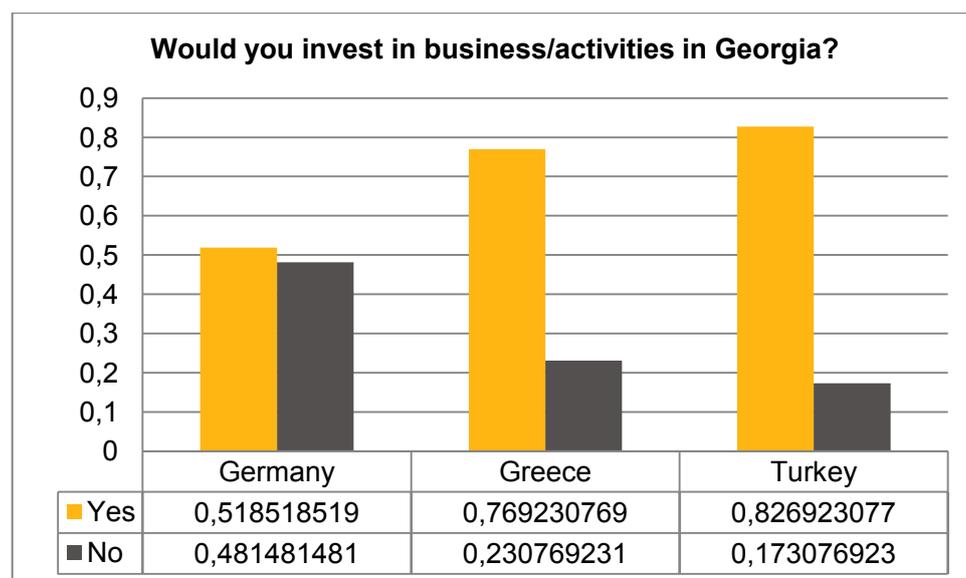
According to the surveyed migrants, the money is mostly used for investments in land, farm equipment, education and health. Only 1% stated that the money is used for private consumption. In addition, interviews with family members suggested that remittances are used for everyday expenses, such as rent, electricity and food, as well as for loan payments.

#### 4.6.3.3. Investments

A study conducted by the GIZ in 2014 shows that there is a potential for the Georgian diaspora to be more involved in investments in Georgia due to the high level of commitment to Georgia. Hindering factors that have been identified include government interference in private businesses, the lack of competition and equal opportunities in the market, poorly functioning courts and legal system, and the lack of an independent dispute settlement body. In addition, the lack of support offered to start up a business and the lack of information on investment opportunities in Georgia were also presented as hindering factors. However, diaspora representatives are actively promoting investment opportunities in Georgia among members of their business networks in their countries of residence, which attracts foreign direct investment (FDI) in Georgia. The survey respondents are mainly interested in the following sectors: energy, hotels and restaurants, transport and communication, the financial sector, manufacturing, mining and agriculture. The authors of the study consider the energy, infrastructure and hotel sectors as the most relevant areas for future investments. The study also found that even if Georgian diaspora members lack the financial resources to undertake large-scale projects themselves, they can at least be involved as facilitators to channel investments and business proposals.<sup>52</sup>

Among survey respondents, 9% have private investments in Georgia, although there are differences among the three studied countries. While 10% and 13% of the survey respondents in Greece and Turkey, respectively, have investments in Georgia, none of the survey respondents in Germany said they have investments in Georgia. Most respondents (74%) would be willing to invest in businesses or other activities in Georgia. But again, the number is lower in Germany (52%) than in Greece and Turkey where a large majority would be willing to invest (77% and 83%, respectively). The main areas for investment are agriculture, manufacturing and tourism.

Figure 15: Survey Results regarding Business Investment in Georgia



Source: Field data, 2013

Survey respondents agreed that economic growth, political stability and legal security could facilitate private investments. One interviewed diaspora association in Germany demonstrated great interest in promoting

<sup>52</sup> (GIZ 2014)

investment in Georgia by organising a business forum in the country, and considers investment in the energy sector as highly important. Another organisation deems agriculture as the most relevant area for investments. A diaspora organisation in Greece suggested organising a business start-up course in Georgia, taught by invited Georgian experts, to prepare migrants who want to return to Georgia.

#### 4.6.3.4. Development contributions

The large majority of survey respondents (83%) would be willing to contribute to development activities in Georgia. Contrary to the survey results on the willingness to invest, no large differences between the three countries were identified. Activities in the area of human rights were mentioned the most, followed by support to churches/religious institutions and infrastructure.

The interviewed diaspora organisations have supported development in Georgia, e.g. through supporting schools and humanitarian assistance during the time of civil war and unrest. One interviewed organisation in Germany also works on improving relations between Georgians and Russians residing in Germany, which may contribute to a better understanding between the two nations and their societies in the long term.

#### 4.6.3.5 . Skills transfer

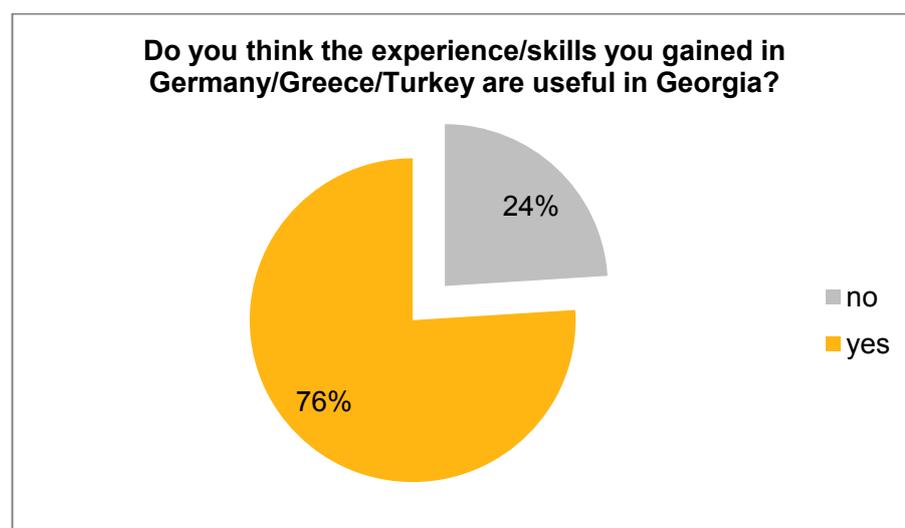
The large majority of survey respondents (76%) consider the experience/skills gained in the three destination countries useful for Georgia. Moreover, over 71% of the survey respondents think that it would be relatively easy to apply and use those skills gained in Georgia. However, there are major differences among the three countries. While 96% of the respondents in Germany consider their gained experience to be useful, only 73% in Greece and 68% in Turkey deem it useful. This possibly relates to their status in the destination country and the sectors in which they work.

**Table 5: Experience/Skills Gained Abroad and Their Usefulness in Georgia**

		Germany	Greece	Turkey
Do you think the experience/skills you gained in TR/GR/DE are useful for Georgia?	Yes	96%	73%	68%
	No	4%	27%	33%

Source: Field data, 2013

**Figure 16: Overall Response to Usefulness of Experience/Skills Gained Abroad in Georgia**



Source: Field data, 2013

The interviewed diaspora organisations also see great potential for the use of skills and knowledge gained by migrants abroad. They believe Georgia should capitalise more on this potential, e.g. through providing

graduates who studied abroad the opportunity to gain practical work experience in Georgia. According to a research study, a network of Georgian MBA graduates has emerged and is apparently used as a tool for recruiting highly qualified professionals into different industries in Georgia.<sup>53</sup> In addition, diaspora organisations see the need for more and better reintegration programmes in Georgia that would also benefit remote areas of Georgia.

#### 4.6.3.6. Migrants' expectations of Georgian government institutions

Regarding their expectations of Georgian government/institutions, Georgian migrants would like to be informed about employment possibilities in Georgia (81%), about possibilities to return to Georgia (50%) and about changes in the social protection situation in Georgia (44%). Some migrants also mentioned that informing Georgians migrants about the investment climate in Georgia (27%) and legal migration possibilities and a legal stay abroad in the destination country (22%) also are important.

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<sup>53</sup> (Caucasus Research Resource Centre 2007)

## 5. Conclusions

In all three countries, there is a strong sense of belonging and being connected to Georgia among Georgian migrants. Only a minority wishes to obtain the citizenship of the country of residence. Also, the great interest of the Georgian diaspora in the recent initiative of the Georgian government to offer citizenship to Turks with Georgian roots shows the close ties between Georgia and its diaspora and migrant communities. In addition, the surveyed Georgian migrants and diaspora members in all three countries have a strong wish to return home, and to maintain and promote the Georgian language and culture in the country of residence. The frequency of home visits by Georgians (the majority of respondents in Germany and Greece visit Georgia at least every one or two years, and the majority of respondents in Turkey visit Georgia every three or six months) also indicates strong links with Georgia.

Remittances are mainly used for investments in farm equipment, health and education and less so for consumption purposes, which is a strong indicator of the development potential of remittances in Georgia, in general, and the recipient families, in particular. Unsurprisingly, more remittances are sent by those Georgian migrants who left their children behind. Hence, survey participants residing in Germany who migrated for the purpose of education remit less frequently and regularly compared to the 'average Georgian migrant' in Greece or Turkey.

Although very few survey participants have private investments in Georgia themselves, the large majority would nevertheless be willing to invest in Georgia, which is a very positive starting point for involving migrants and the diaspora in business activities in Georgia and supporting already existing initiatives. Furthermore, the survey participants would be willing to support development activities in Georgia, especially in the field of human rights.

The level of education among Georgian migrants, including survey respondents, is relatively high and is estimated to be twice as high as that of the Georgian population in general. In addition, the large majority of survey respondents consider the experience and skills they gained during their stay abroad to be useful for Georgia. This suggests that involving Georgian migrants and diaspora members in development activities involving the transfer of their knowledge and skills would greatly benefit Georgia and its society.

Diaspora organisations have several important roles and are considered important by the interviewed family members, Georgian migrants and diaspora members. Besides creating bridges between Georgia and the residence country through exchange programmes, some of their activities also include organising summer schools and promoting tourism. They also promote the Georgian culture and language, which contributes to maintaining ties with Georgia and supports and empowers Georgians or people with Georgian roots. Although the activities among Georgian diaspora organisations seem to be closely linked to the integration of Georgian migrants, their role in connecting both the origin and residence country and enabling mutual understanding should not be underestimated.

In addition to the potential of Georgian migrant and diaspora communities for the development of Georgia, their needs and problems in terms of their human development and vulnerable situation in the residence country are also important. In Greece and Turkey, a large share of the survey respondents – half and one quarter, respectively – do not have a residence permit, which puts them in a vulnerable situation. In addition, around half of the respondents in these two countries do not possess a work permit, contributing to insecure working conditions. Health problems are an issue in Greece and Germany, mainly stemming from problems with the Georgian travel health insurance in the case of Germany and the irregular status of many migrants in the case of Greece. These differences (also the differences within the diaspora communities) need to be taken into account when addressing the needs of Georgian migrant and diaspora communities in the three countries and formulating effective policy responses.

Brain waste seems to be a common problem among Georgian migrants in the three countries, as a large majority of migrants consider themselves to be working below their qualifications, which means that they cannot make use of their skills and, at the same time, do not have the possibility to develop further professionally. Along with these findings, one of the results of the survey further showed that some migrants receive support from their families in Georgia, an indication of the so-called 'reverse remittances' phenomenon. This topic has received very little attention in the available literature on the migration and development nexus.

It is especially important to look at the integration of migrants/diaspora communities and the specific situation they face in their residence country, as research suggests that there is a reinforcing link between integration

and diaspora/migrant engagement in both the origin and residence country. Integration enables individuals to obtain the necessary resources to be actively engaged in the origin country and support other migrants in the residence country.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, in order to support migrant and diaspora engagement in Georgia, as well as to promote Georgia, its language and culture, coherent and holistic policies need to be taken into account, including integration and engagement in the destination countries, namely Germany, Greece and Turkey.

The administrative structure in Georgia, as well as the political situation and other factors that influence the formation of social movements, including diaspora associations and migrant communities (the so-called 'political opportunity structure'<sup>55</sup>), strongly influences the ties between Georgian migrants, diaspora communities and the Georgian state. Authorities, such as the Diaspora Office, recognise the positive role of Georgian migrants and diaspora communities abroad and aim to actively involve them. Although less than half of the survey participants are not in contact with the Georgian consulates, the interviewed diaspora organisations are in regular contact with the consulates. Some diaspora organisations also receive in-kind support from Georgian central and local government institutions. One organisation also mentioned close cooperation with civil society organisations in Georgia. On the other hand, survey respondents argued that they do not rely on cooperating with Georgian government institutions because of discouraging past experiences, mostly related to a lack of communication. In addition, too little information provided by Georgian government institutions on their activities targeting Georgian migrant and diaspora communities constrains diaspora engagement and trust building.

In addition to the challenging communication and cooperation with Georgian government institutions, diaspora organisations experience coordination and communication challenges among themselves as well. Although the creation of a Georgian diaspora umbrella organisation in the respective residence country was suggested by diaspora organisation representatives, it became apparent to the research team that they have diverging interests. Hence, a loose network which allows for diaspora organisations to remain independent and ensures better coordination and communication might accommodate the diverging interests in a more effective way. The establishment of the *Georgian Diaspora Global Network* already meets this need for better cooperation and coordination at the global level.

The *political opportunity structure* in the three residence countries also has facilitating and limiting characteristics for Georgian diaspora organisations. The interviewed diaspora organisations receive financial and non-financial support from local authorities, which is considered as an important and encouraging signal. However, the formal requirements and regulations that are applied when registering an association prevent a more active formation of diaspora and migrant associations. In Germany, half of the members of associations must have German citizenship and in Greece the number of required members limits diaspora engagement.

These conclusions show that there are several ways in which Georgian migrant and diaspora communities could contribute to development in Georgia and which factors limit these developmental contributions. This study also shows that a holistic approach is needed that facilitates migrants' and diaspora's integration and engagement in the residence country and supports their engagement in the origin country as well as their promotion of Georgia, its language and culture. Based on these conclusions, the following section provides recommendations for promoting the development potential of Georgian migrant and diaspora communities and for limiting the barriers of engagement, as well as for improving the situation of Georgian migrant and diaspora communities in the residence country.

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<sup>54</sup> (Ragab, McGregor and Siegel 2013)

<sup>55</sup> *Political opportunity structures can be defined as "consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements"* (Tarrow, 1996 quoted in (Giugni 2009))

## 6. Outlook and Recommendations

In order to promote the development potential of Georgian migrant and diaspora communities, and limit the barriers of engagement in Georgia, as well as improve the situation of Georgian migrant and diaspora communities in the destination countries, the following recommendations are provided.

### ***Improving the collection and analysis of information to design better policies to protect Georgian migrant and diaspora communities abroad:***

- The Diaspora Office, as the coordinating body for the implementation of state diaspora policy, should create an inventory of recent reports, estimations, projects and surveys on Georgian migrants. This inventory would provide the necessary baseline for analysing Georgian migration as well as the basis for further state diaspora policy development and the design of effective measures and activities. It is obvious that diaspora engagement activities should vary depending on the country of destination, the social profile of the diaspora in the country and their development potential.
- Georgian migrants' and diaspora members' needs should be assessed and analysed by the Diaspora Office in close cooperation with the MFA and Georgian representations abroad, also on a regular basis. This would allow the SCMI and its members – ministries and other state institutions – to develop and adapt measures for an adequate protection of Georgian citizens as well as pre-departure, return and reintegration activities. To that end, regular (i.e. quarterly) provision of information on migrants daily approaching the consulate and on their needs/requests by the consular representations to the MFA Consular Department in Tbilisi would facilitate the assessment and analysis of such information.
- Official contacts with state institutions in the main destination countries, as well as official statistical information from the destination countries, are very valuable sources for projections and estimations of Georgian migrants and diaspora members abroad. The Diaspora Office and/or Georgian representations in the destination countries should continually monitor and exchange such information. These institutions should also initiate contact with central migration authorities in the main destination countries of Georgian migrants in order to receive and exchange such information.
- Clear reporting lines for the exchange of information should be established between all involved organisations, in particular between the MFA and the Diaspora Office. The MFA should periodically (monthly or quarterly) inform the Diaspora Office about the actual number of Georgians registered abroad as well as support provided to Georgians abroad through consular representatives (e.g. how many persons approached the consulates, what needs/problems they have, how the situation was solved). Georgian representations abroad also organise and/or participate in diaspora events; this information should also be shared with Diaspora Office. The Diaspora Office should analyse the information provided by the MFA and diaspora organisations abroad and periodically publish diaspora information booklets online (Georgian diaspora reports) and share them with all involved institutions. Such booklets should contain estimations of Georgians in different destination countries, their needs, their organised activities (including regular activities such as weekend school, etc.) and any contacts the MFA and or the Diaspora Office had with Georgians abroad during the reporting period. The booklet should also list the status quo of the international projects implemented by the Diaspora Office.
- An analysis of the data on returnees (forcibly or voluntarily) may provide additional information on the scope of irregular migration from Georgia, on the challenges and problems that Georgian migrants face abroad, and finally, on the social profile of Georgian migrants. This information should be provided by the MIA and MRA to the Diaspora Office on a regular basis.

### ***Enhance the provision of services and information for Georgian migrant and diaspora communities abroad:***

- The Ministry of Labour could initiate an analysis of employment offers abroad in local Georgian newspapers, at bus stations, at organisations providing foreign language course, etc., in order to check the legality of such offers. This would help combat labour exploitation and would also serve as a supplementary tool in reducing brain waste. This function could be included in the job description of soon to be established labour inspectorates to prevent labour exploitation of Georgian citizens.
- The issue of migrants working below their qualifications should be tackled at a higher political level

through agreements with residence countries and pre-departure training, and to work towards a better recognition of the qualifications and credentials of Georgian migrants.

- Since the lack of jobs was the most commonly stated reason for why survey participants do not want to return home, organising job fairs may be one way to link up companies in Georgia who are interested in employing Georgian returnees with such potential returnees. Here, it would also be useful to create and support paid student exchange and internship programmes that allow Georgian students who have acquired their academic degree abroad to go back to Georgia and gain valuable work experience.
- Better cooperation between diaspora organisations in the residence countries and the Georgian government and Georgian civil society organisations should be supported, as this would also facilitate the return of Georgians and their reintegration. To this end, the MRA should establish and maintain close ties with diaspora organisations via the Diaspora Office in order to inform Georgians residing abroad about their return possibilities, return and reintegration support provided in Georgia through mobility centres, etc. The Diaspora Office could create an outreach initiative for diaspora and migrant organisations abroad by setting up a process to receive updates from them every month or every two months, which then could be consolidated on the Diaspora Office's website.
- For diaspora organisations which do not coordinate their activities between each other, the Diaspora Office could function as the main coordinating body and gather all necessary information on developments and activities, such as the provision of Georgian language lessons, the establishment of local radio stations for Georgians and the publishing of Georgian newspapers.
- The diaspora and cultural centres offering language classes and cultural activities could be supported through the provision of curricula and teaching materials for teaching Georgian abroad. In order to strengthen the ties of Georgian children to their homeland, summer and winter camps in Georgia (during school holidays) should be supported.

### ***Unleash the development potential of migrant and diaspora organisations***

- Although this study only portrays a snapshot of the various activities of Georgian diaspora organisations and their roles, it nonetheless shows the importance of providing services to Georgians and people with Georgian roots, and of building bridges between Georgia and the destination country. All of these areas of engagement are important and should be supported and acknowledged by Georgian government institutions and Georgian representations abroad.
- It is recommended that Georgian government institutions provide funding for diaspora organisations and/or facilitate access to funding opportunities. The study has shown that active diaspora members, migrants and associations lack the financial means to expand or maintain their services. In addition to the provision of funding, information on funding opportunities, e.g. through Georgian representations abroad or via direct communication between diaspora organisations and the Diaspora Office, would be appreciated by diaspora representatives.
- Georgian state institutions or representations abroad should also proactively communicate with city and local authorities in areas where Georgian migrants and diaspora communities reside and find common solutions on how to better support diaspora organisations.
- Civil society organisations and local authorities in Georgia should be encouraged to cooperate with diaspora organisations. As the example of the joint efforts of a diaspora organisation and civil society organisations to provide Georgian books abroad shows, this form of cooperation has much potential.<sup>56</sup>
- A regular dialogue between Georgian diaspora organisations, the Diaspora Office and Georgian representations abroad should be established. In parallel, efforts should be made to enhance coordination, communication and cooperation among diaspora organisations, e.g. through the establishment of informal networks in residence countries.
- Based on the areas of engagement of Georgian diaspora organisations, scenarios and opportunities for concrete cooperation with diaspora organisations should be developed. These might relate to the

<sup>56</sup> See section 8.3.2. Organisations of the Georgian Diaspora (in Greece)

transfer of skills and knowledge, investments in business and development projects, in particular in the area of human rights, etc.

- With regard to the promotion of investment, some concrete recommendations were made during the field visits. This area could be supported by organising a business forum in the destination country, as well as by organising business start-up courses in Georgia for diaspora members, taught by invited Georgian experts, to prepare migrants for a possible return to Georgia.
- The Diaspora office should lead and maintain inter-agency cooperation in order to strengthen and support the development potential of migrant and diaspora organisations. This cooperation should not only refer to the institutions which are part of the SCMI, including the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, but also to the local administrations in the regions of Georgia.

## Section II: Country Chapters

### 7. The Georgian Diaspora in Germany

#### 7.1. Introduction

Georgia has close connections to Germany which date back nearly 200 years to the migration of southern German (Swabian) farmers to Georgia. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Germany was the first country to recognise Georgia's independence, to establish diplomatic relations, and to open an embassy in Tbilisi, which it did in 1992.<sup>57</sup> This could also be a reason why German is taught as a first or second foreign language in many Georgian schools and why approximately 11.5% of all Georgian students learn German.<sup>58</sup> This may also be one of the reasons why about 2,500 Georgians are currently studying at German universities. The German Academic Exchange Service, for example, offers scholarships on a yearly basis for Georgian students to pursue higher education in Germany and has built strong links to Georgia. In addition, there are organised *au pair* programmes, which offer young people the opportunity to live with a German family for a year, to take care of their household and children and to learn the German language. Thus, structured programmes are major incentives for young Georgians to choose Germany as a destination country.

Germany is a relatively new immigration country, especially if compared to the USA, Canada and Australia. But in regards to Georgian migration, it ranks fourth in the distribution of labour migration flows of Georgians, right after the Russian Federation, the US and Greece, with 13% of Georgian migrants leaving Georgia for labour purposes in Germany. In general, Germany is one of the major labour migration destination countries for Georgian migrants.<sup>59</sup> Observations suggest that the more highly skilled migrants prefer to leave for the US and Germany, whereas Russia and Greece mainly attract more unskilled labour.

#### 7.2. Profile of the Georgian diaspora in Germany

##### 7.2.1. Size and location of the Georgian diaspora population in Germany

Data from the German Statistics Bureau indicates that 13,835 Georgians legally resided in Germany at the end of 2011. This is the official number of all documented migrants, and the real number, which would include irregular and undocumented migrants, is higher than that. Up to 7% of all Georgian migrants reside in Germany.<sup>60</sup>

In 2011, 525 people applied for asylum in Germany. This reflects a decrease in comparison with the previous two years, from 640 in 2008 and 750 in 2010.<sup>61</sup> Between 2000 and 2011, 8,334 Georgian citizens applied for asylum in Germany. Consequently, 1–2% of all asylum applications in Germany were submitted by Georgians. The recognition rate of these asylum applications was between 0.8% and 1.3%. These numbers indicate that most of these persons<sup>62</sup> returned to Georgia.

Georgians in Germany are mainly concentrated in big cities, such as Berlin, Hamburg, Munich and Stuttgart, as well as in the North Rhine–Westphalia region. These places are usually chosen due to the availability of higher education, a greater number of job opportunities and existing Georgian networks.

##### 7.2.2. Socio-demographic profile

<sup>57</sup> (Federal Foreign Office of Germany 2013)

<sup>58</sup> (Embassy of Germany in Tbilisi 2013)

<sup>59</sup> (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013) PG 26–27

<sup>60</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013) PG 87

<sup>61</sup> (EUROSTAT 2013)

<sup>62</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

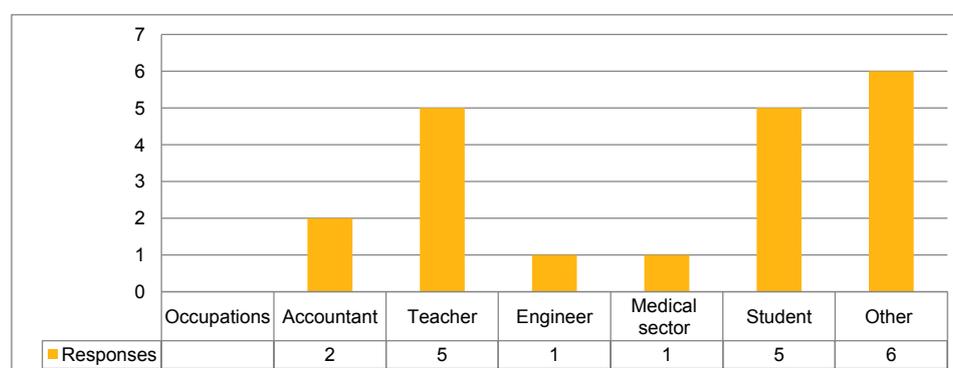
72% of the Georgian population in Germany (9,971 out of 13,835 persons) is between the ages of 20 and 45, with 22% men and 49% women. 47% of the Georgians in Germany are single and 39% are married.<sup>63</sup> The Return and Reintegration Report of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) highlights that Georgian migrants to Germany tend to be significantly younger than Georgian migrants to other destinations.<sup>64</sup> The majority of Georgian migrants in Germany are female, with women constituting 64.2% of the total number (8,930 women, as compared to 4,905 men (35.5%)).<sup>65</sup> This feminisation of migration is often explained by the fact that Germany is more attractive for young students and for people seeking domestic work, which attracts more women. In addition, the au pair programmes offered also mainly attract young female migrants. In contrast, Russia predominantly attracts male migrants due to the high demand for physical labour, such as for construction work.<sup>66</sup> According to the German Statistics Bureau, Georgian migrants represent the following age groups according to gender:<sup>67</sup>

**Table 6: Age Groups Represented by Georgian Migrants According to Gender (Germany)**

Age group, years	Number of legally residing male Georgians	%	Number of legally residing female Georgians	%
Younger than 5	241	1.74	214	1.54
5–10	227	1.64	245	1.77
10–15	189	1.37	206	1.49
15–20	271	1.96	273	1.97
20–25	571	4.13	1,368	9.89
25–35	1,650	11.93	4,032	29.14
35–45	936	6.77	1,414	10.22
45–55	463	3.35	574	4.15
55–65	217	1.57	353	2.55
65–75	108	0.78	154	1.11
75–85	27	0.19	76	0.55
85–95	4	0.03	20	0.14
95 and older	1		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4905</b>	<b>35.46</b>	<b>8930</b>	<b>64.52</b>

The most recent data shows that the number of Georgians enrolled in tertiary education in Germany is ca. 2,700 (in 2011).<sup>68</sup> Among survey respondents, the level of education is very high, as 78% indicated to have either a Bachelor's degree (30%) or a Master's degree (48%). This was also confirmed by the last professions the survey respondents had in Georgia before moving to Germany, which were mainly in the academic or highly qualified segment.

**Figure 17: Last Professions in Georgia (Germany)**



<sup>63</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

<sup>64</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

<sup>65</sup> (DESTATIS 2013)

<sup>66</sup> (Badurashvili and Nadareishvili 2012)

<sup>67</sup> (DESTATIS 2013)

<sup>68</sup> (DAAD German Academic Exchange Service 2014)

Source: Field data, 2013

\*Others: Lawyer (3), geographer (1), economist (1), architect (1)

The survey results show that the polled Georgian migrants have a high level of education, higher than the education level of the average Georgian population. In general, Georgians already have a relatively high educational background, as shown by the data from Georgia's National Statistics Office: 401,000 people were in higher education programmes throughout the years 2008–2012.

### 7.2.3. Types of migration, causes and motives

Research supports the impression that Georgian migration to Germany has a mainly educational character. Data from 2007 indicates that a quarter of the Georgian migration stock in Germany is made up of educational migrants.<sup>69</sup> According to the survey results, 79% of the polled migrants stated that they left Georgia in order to study in Germany, followed by only 14% leaving for family reasons.

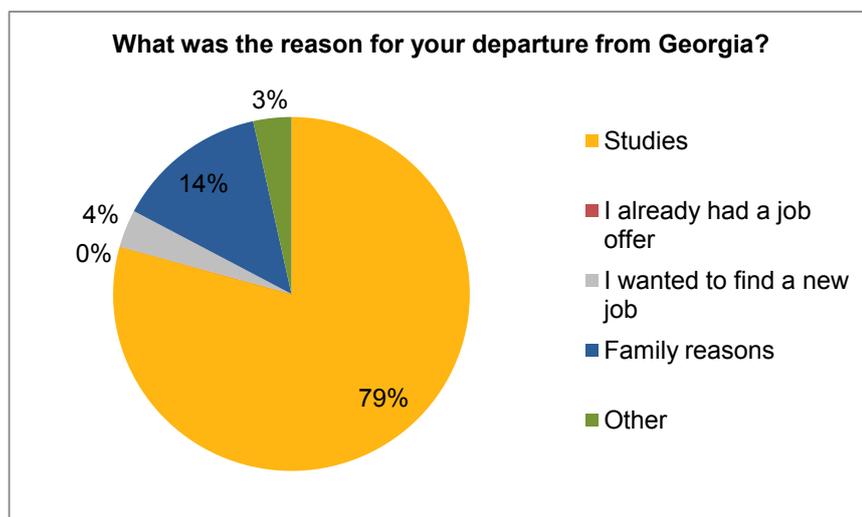
The statement of the **wife of a Georgian migrant** living in Germany supports this survey finding:

*“The main reason was study, and then it turned into academic work. He always knew he wanted to go to Germany because there is a strong law school and it would be good for his professional development. Well, at first it was not decided that he would leave for a long time but it happened like this.” (FM-DE-05)*

Others left due to the difficult economic and political conditions in Georgia in the mid-1990s:

*“My father mainly left because of economic conditions in the family and also because of the general unrest in the country. Because my father's mom has Greek roots and he knew he had a chance to settle in Europe, so he took this decision in favour of our family and mainly because of the economic hardships. He always knew that he wanted to go to Germany. I was 10 years old when all this was happening, so I don't really remember. I know that I was crying to see my father leaving, but I didn't understand what was going on.” (FM-DE-04)*

Figure 18: The Reason for Departure from Georgia (Germany)



Source: Field data, 2013

Research findings also indicate that migration from Georgia to Germany can be described as primarily 'regular' as compared to migration to other countries, e.g. Turkey, since it is very difficult to arrive in Germany without any valid documents.<sup>70</sup> The survey results also confirm this finding, as all of the polled migrants residing in Germany claim to have a

<sup>69</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

<sup>70</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

residence permit or a visa. However, this result does not reveal which type of residence permit, i.e. short- or long-term residence permit, Georgians in Germany have.

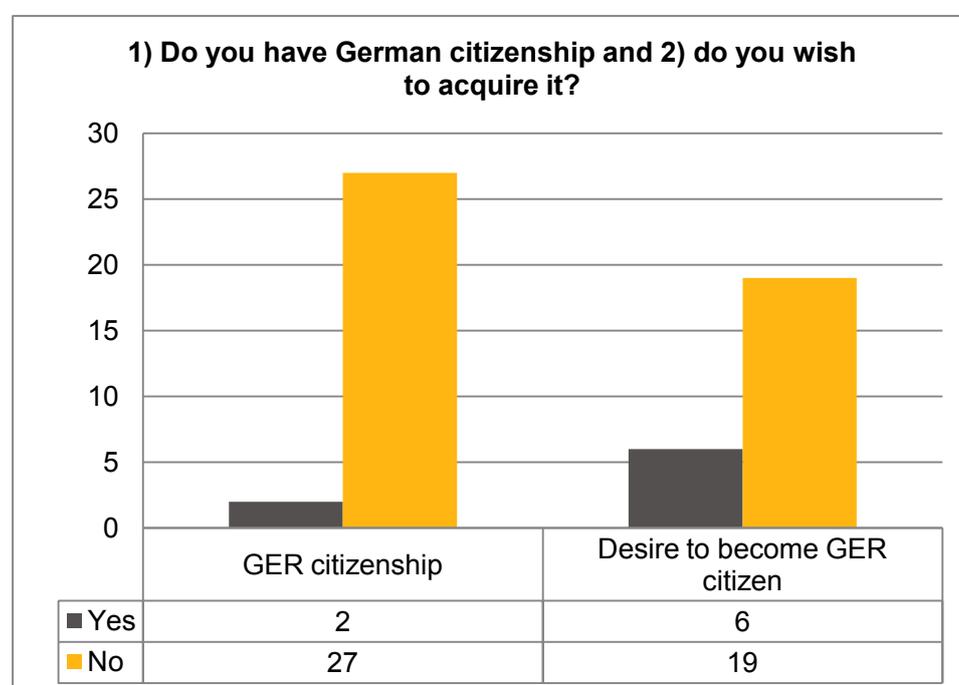
#### 7.2.4. Situation of Georgian migrants in Germany

Since 2002, 2,173 Georgians in Germany have been naturalised. Over the years, and in particular since 2002, the number of naturalisations per year has increased, from 107 naturalisations of Georgians in 2002 to 388 in 2011.<sup>71</sup>

Among the survey respondents, only two have German citizenship and six out of the total number of respondents wish to receive German citizenship in the future. The large majority of survey respondents (82%) indicated that Germany was their desired country of destination.

As stated above, all polled migrants possess either a residence permit or a visa, although long-term residencies issued to Georgian citizens in Germany have been quite low each year, with only 19 permits being issued in 2011. However, this number grew in comparison to only 2 and 7 permits being issued in 2008 and 2009, respectively.<sup>72</sup> Most survey respondents have a work permit (89%), which might be a reason why German citizenship is not a priority for Georgian migrants.

Figure 19: Acquiring German Citizenship



Source: Field data, 2013

Nevertheless, the Georgian migrants whose family members were interviewed are described as having a positive experience and being well integrated in the host country:

*“A positive side is that they feel good, they have integrated into that society, have their work there and live calm lives and of course are sending me money, which is the best part.” (FM-DE-04) “But I know it would be very difficult for him to come back, he is well integrated in that society already and Georgian mentality is hard for him to understand. Also the social, political and economic issues here are unacceptable for him, so I don’t know what he will do.” (FM-DE-05)*

Almost 90% of the respondents work in Germany. Among those, seven work in the domestic sector, five in the academic field and two for non-governmental institutions. Out of all the respondents who answered the question

<sup>71</sup> (EUROSTAT 2013)

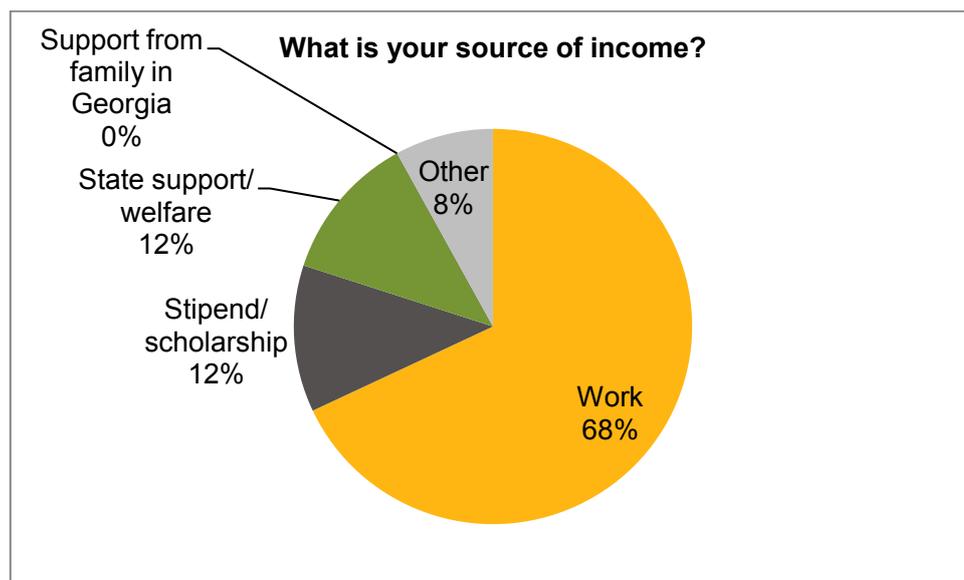
<sup>72</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

concerning the level of their work in Germany, 60% stated that they work below their level of qualification in Germany, while 40% think that they work above their qualifications.

Although there are a number of au pair programmes for Georgians, there appears to be insufficient information on au pairs' rights. To address this problem, the Embassy of Germany in Georgia provides a list of requirements a person should satisfy when applying for au pair visas.<sup>73</sup> The original version of the signed employment contract is also requested by the embassy, which, to some extent, can be considered as protecting migrants' rights, as often Georgian migrants move abroad on the basis of a verbal agreement with the future employer.

68% of the survey respondents state that work is their main source of income, while 12% depend on state support and 12% on a scholarship. None of the survey respondents receives support from their family in Georgia.

Figure 20: Sources of Income for Georgian Migrants (Germany)



Source: Field data, 2013

Some Georgian migrants have experienced difficulties in Germany with the health insurance provided by Georgia-based insurance companies, as it seems to not be valid for receiving medical services in Germany. This problem should be addressed on a higher level, e.g. by the Georgian Ministry of Interior, authorities that certify insurance companies and the Ministry of Labour, Social and Health Affairs:

*"[...] [A] very big problem is the travel insurance issued in Georgia that does not work here [...]. For example, I contacted Aldagi insurance company and they forwarded me to some company in Moscow where they never pick up the phone. I was not told the name or address of that company in Russia. There are a lot of cases like this and this happened also in the case of that man with tuberculosis. I know that this kind of insurance does not work in the EU. In the end, Berlin had to cover the hospital expenses. This is a serious issue!"*  
(DO-DE-02)

This issue was also confirmed by two interviewed diaspora organisation representatives. Problems with the health insurance and uncertainty regarding the German legislation are the main issues for which their respective diaspora organisations are contacted. (DO-DE-02/03) Also issues related to au pairs are very common:

*"Mainly people with health problems approach us the most. Also people who have no information about German legislation in regards to migrants, they call us and ask everything. The students also have some problems with paying bills or any problems and ask us to help. Also if anybody is detained, they contact me often."* (DO-DE-02)

<sup>73</sup> (The Embassy of Germany in Tbilisi 2013)



### **Key information on the profile of the Georgian diaspora in Germany**

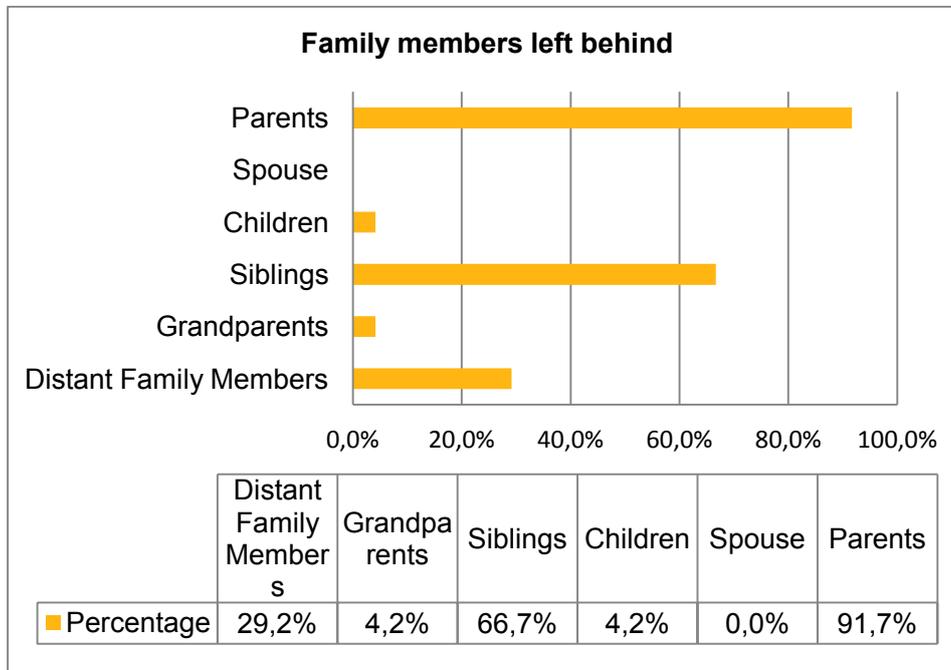
- Georgian migration to Germany is primarily young and thus mainly unmarried (at least at the beginning of the migration process).
- The majority of Georgian migrants in Germany is female – 64.2% of the total number.
- Georgians in Germany are concentrated mainly in big cities due to the availability of higher education, a greater number of jobs and Georgian networks.
- Germany attracts Georgian migrants mainly for academic and career development purposes, as well as for domestic work (mainly au pair work).
- Migration to Germany from Georgia can be described as primarily 'regular'. Most migrants have residence and work permits in Germany.
- The level of education is very high among survey respondents; 78% have a tertiary education.
- One the challenges faced by Georgian migrants in Germany is the health insurance provided by Georgian insurance companies, as it is not accepted in Germany for receiving medical services.
- In addition, information on au pairs' rights is lacking.

## 7.3. Transnational activities of Georgians residing in Germany

### 7.3.1. Ties between the Georgians residing in Germany and Georgia

Most survey respondents (93%) have a valid Georgian passport and most of them still have family members in Georgia (90%), mainly parents, siblings and distant relatives, which means that the 'core family' does not live across two countries.

Figure 21: Family Members Left Behind by Georgian Migrants (Germany)



Source: Field data, 2013

Among the surveyed Georgian migrants, 40% visit Georgia once a year, 28% every one to two years and the same portion (28%) visits Georgia every two to five years, with family visits being the main reason for going back to Georgia:

*“Yes, they come quite often, three times per year. Since I moved here, they come more often and before that they used to come to Georgia once every year. [...] We keep in touch all the time, it is Skype or phone. We can speak by phone per day probably three times. And I also visit them, mostly once per year. Before this, when I was a student I had more time so used to visit them more often.”* (Family member, FM-DE-04)

Georgian migrants and diaspora members communicate with friends and family members in Georgia on a frequent basis, with three quarters of the respondents communicating with them at least once per week. The main communication channels are the phone (83%), Skype (76%) and social networks (59%; multiple answers were possible). Here, it can be noted that the migrants seem to have enough financial means and time to talk to their relative/wife in Georgia multiple times a day:

*“Yes, he comes every six months. [...] We speak by Skype and phone all the time, for instance several times a day every day.”* (Family member: FM-DE-05)

In addition, the surveyed migrants follow the situation in Georgia closely (88%), mainly through the internet, calls with family and friends and meetings with other Georgians.

The interviewed representatives from diaspora organisations organise events in Germany on important days for Georgia, such as the Georgian Independence Day or the Day of Tbilisi. Another association organises summer camps in Georgia for children with different nationalities, including those with Georgian roots. This also shows that the diaspora organisations actively promote the Georgian culture in Germany and make it accessible for Georgians, Germans and other nationalities residing in Germany:

*“We organise “Tbilisoba” every year, except this year because I was out of the country and also we usually celebrate Georgia’s Independence Day. We sometimes hold poetic evenings, also there is an Abkhaz woman here and we are sometimes cooking Georgian and Abkhazian dishes. About 50 people attend our events usually and they are mainly foreigners.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-01)

*“We cooperate with some tourist companies in Georgia. We are also planning some Georgian Culture Days in Berlin where Georgia shall be presented in the light of best tourism destination, and we are doing this in partnership with this tourism company in Georgia.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

In addition to promoting Georgian culture, one diaspora association is also a contact point for family members in Georgia of those who reside in Germany:

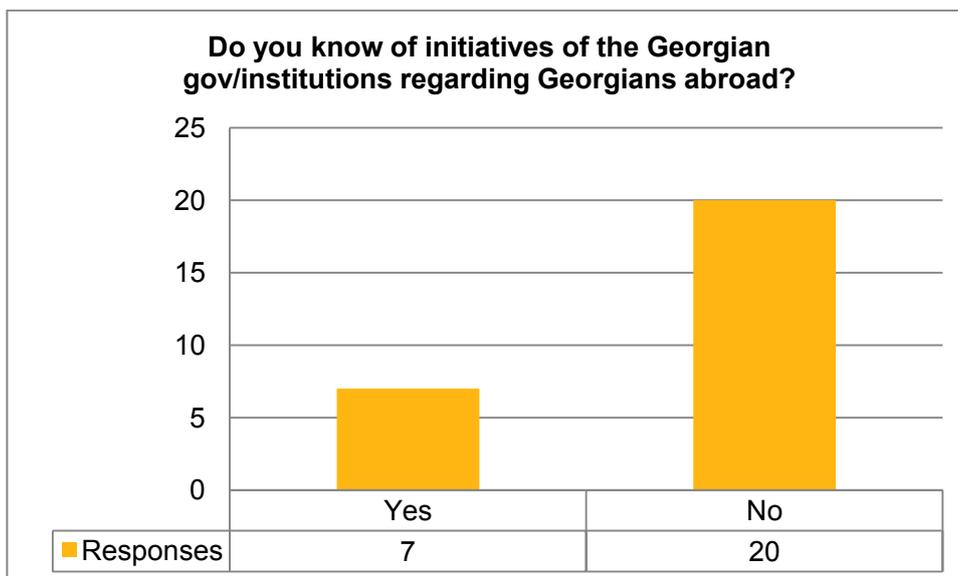
*“We keep in touch with migrant families, we do communicate with most parents of Georgian students that are here. Parents often call us if they cannot reach their children and we can always get them in touch, because I know all Georgian students here by face.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

Another diaspora organisation actively promotes exchanges between Georgia and Germany at political and academic levels. To that aim, the organisation initiated exchange programmes involving Brandenburg and the Adjara region and the universities of Batumi and Potsdam (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-03).

However, the majority of surveyed Georgian migrants are not aware of the initiatives of Georgian government institutions targeting Georgians abroad (74%) and are not in contact with the Georgian consulate in Germany (67%). They generally only contact the Georgian consulate if they need official documents. One family member of a Georgian migrant abroad stated that the migrant is regularly in touch with the consulate:

*“Yes my husband is in touch with them quite often. He was an observer during the elections last time and he likes to be in touch with the Consulate. [...] I don’t think any direct support is offered, but I think whenever or if my husband has any issues with documents or anything else, he can rely on Consulate’s support.”* (Family member: FM-DE-05)

**Figure 22: Knowledge of Georgian Government Institution Initiatives for Georgians Living Abroad (Germany)**



Source: Field data, 2013

Interviewed diaspora representatives mentioned that there is active communication between the diaspora organisations and the Georgian consulate. However, cooperation with state institutions in Georgia still needs to be enhanced. Also, non-financial support would be appreciated by the organisations. The issuance of a newspaper with information for, and drafted in cooperation with, the diaspora, as well as a curriculum for teaching the Georgian language, would be a welcomed.

*“But we have good intellectual base, we would very much need a good quality curriculum for kindergarten children to teach them Georgian language. Also we had a newspaper where we would write about diaspora news and much more and would be nice to have it being issued again.” (Diaspora organisation, DO-DE-01)*

*“[...] we of course have issues. We need good books and also good curriculum, for instance, I am looking for material for pre-school children, for those who were born here and we need a special curriculum that would be designed for these children. We cannot make it here, this should be development in Georgia.” (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-01)*

Another diaspora association stated that it receives regular non-financial support from the Diaspora Ministry and the Ministry of Culture (see below) and is also in close contact with the Georgian consulate in order to solve the document problems of Georgians. (DO-DE-02)



### **Key information on the ties between Georgians residing in Germany and Georgia**

- Almost all survey respondents have family members at home, mainly parents, siblings and distant family members.
- Georgian migrants and diaspora members communicate with friends and family members in Georgia on a frequent basis, mainly over the phone, Skype and social networks.
- Georgian migrants closely follow the situation in Georgia, mainly through the internet, calls with family and friends and meetings with other Georgians.
- Diaspora organisations arrange events on important days for Georgia, promote the Georgian culture in Germany and connect both Germany and Georgia through various initiatives.
- The majority of survey respondents are neither aware of the initiatives of Georgian government institutions targeting Georgians abroad nor in contact with the Georgian consulate in Germany.
- Diaspora organisations that promote the Georgian language and culture in Germany need a curriculum to facilitate teaching the Georgian language.

### **7.3.2. Organisations of the Georgian diaspora in Germany**

Germany has a broad network of Georgian diaspora organisations involved in intercultural exchange, organising cultural events and Sunday schools, providing general, political or legal information on Georgia, offering Georgian or German language courses, etc. Most of these organisations also serve the purpose of connecting Georgian migrants with each other for information and cultural exchange (see a list of mapped diaspora organisations in the annex as well as examples of diaspora organisation activities).

The first Georgian organisation in Germany, the Georgischer Verein in Deutschland e.V., was established in Munich in 1945. It was the only organisation in Germany that dealt with the issue of Georgian migration. Over the past several years, it has slightly changed its profile from political to cultural activities, now concentrating more on cultural and scientific work and acting as a meeting hub of Georgians in Germany.<sup>74</sup>

Among the surveyed migrants, 43% indicated that they are a member of a Georgian organisation in Germany. Surveyed respondents also said that the provision of support to Georgians in their everyday life is the most important task of Georgian organisations. As a reason for not being involved in a Georgian organisation, the

<sup>74</sup> (Georgischer Verein in Deutschland e.V. 2014)

lack of knowledge about organisations in the region where they live and a lack of interest were stated.

The interviewed family members of Georgians residing in Germany see the need for diaspora organisations abroad in order to preserve their Georgian identity through organising various cultural activities, offering Georgian language classes and communicating with other Georgians:

*“Their main activities should be cultural I think and also Sunday schools for Georgian children would be very good to have. If there was this kind of school back then, my sister would definitely speak fluent Georgian now. I speak Georgian, but my sister’s Georgian is very poor. So Georgian language classes would be good and I think these diaspora organisations should be linking people to each other, introducing newly arrived people to others.”* (Family member: FM-DE-04)

It was also outlined that diaspora organisations should support social activism and engage as many migrants as possible in election activities:

*“I think they should organise events and support cultural activities, also link Georgians with each other and also encourage social engagement of Georgians for instance to take part in the elections.”* (Family member: FM-DE-05)

The analysed Georgian diaspora associations are all active in the areas of education and culture and provide counselling/advice services. It was underlined that the organisations are not involved in political discussions. One problem mentioned by the interviewed diaspora organisation representatives was that according to German legislation, it is required that 50% of the members of a registered association have German citizenship. (DO-DE-02) Or, if the majority has non-EU citizenship, the association is registered as an ‘association of foreigners’ and is subject to other regulations than a ‘normal’ association.<sup>75</sup>

The interviewed organisations in Germany are in close contact with each other and share information on activities, the situation in Georgia and the situation of Georgians in Germany:

*“Mostly we try to be in touch with everyone. We ask each other and discuss some issues. We jointly gathered a lot of people in Berlin to support Georgia in 2008.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

Diaspora organisations receive non-financial support from German institutions, e.g. provision of venues for meetings. One interviewed diaspora representative mentioned a case in which the organisation was approached by German institutions to provide sensitive information in exchange for a service offered:

*“They were asking for information in return and I know what this “information” means so it was not worth it.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-01)

Another diaspora representative assessed the support from local authorities in Germany in a more positive way and underlined the encouraging effect of this mainly in-kind support:

*“We cooperate with local authorities and we have access to the event venues, we just have to make a request one month prior to the event and get it for free. We sometimes apply for funding for social projects and these grants are enough for organisation to function.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

One interviewed diaspora representative stated that they do not receive any support from Georgian institutions, although one of them was asked to summarise their main needs in a letter and had hosted delegations of Georgian state institution representatives:

*“From Georgia, they asked me to write a letter for three times about our needs and what would be the needed amount for our activities but nothing. On contrary, sometimes our expenses were higher, there would come 3-4 people from ministries and we had to meet them and then see them of and take them to places. So I was against of these kind of visits to say the truth.”* [...] *They (officials from the previous government) wanted to see our diaspora in Paris and other places and I used to take them there. And I spent all the money on these visits and*

<sup>75</sup> (Dejure – Auslaendervereine 2014)

*when I addressed them with request to support my newspaper, I received nothing.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-01)

Another diaspora organisation had a similar experience and is frustrated about the requests for information from Georgian state institutions without receiving information in return (DO-DE-03). However, it was also mentioned the one of the diaspora associations receives regular, though non-financial, support from the Diaspora Office and also from the Ministry of Culture.

*“Last year we had young artists brought from here to Georgia and Diaspora Office helped to get a free venue. We mainly communicate with Diaspora Office, we write them once a week and they always reply. [...] We have received books from Diaspora Office and Ministry of Culture, these books are also available on Diaspora Office web-site and are quite good to teach Georgian language to the children who grow up here.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

Also, the support from local authorities in Georgia for specific projects was mentioned (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-03).



### **Key information on Georgian diaspora organisations in Germany**

- There is a broad network of Georgian diaspora organisations in Germany involved in intercultural exchange, organising cultural events and Sunday schools, providing general, political or legal information on Georgia, offering Georgian or German language courses, building academic ties between Georgia and Germany, etc.
- Georgian diaspora organisations have been in Germany since 1945.
- They promote Georgian culture and history, create meeting places for Georgian people residing in Germany and support Georgian migrants in their everyday life.
- The organisations receive non-financial support from German local authorities.
- The support from Georgian government institutions differs depending on the organisation.
- The interviewed diaspora organisations have all been contacted by the Diaspora Office in the past; however, not all have received the support they need.

### **7.3.3. Potential of the Georgian diaspora residing in Germany to contribute to development in Georgia**

#### **7.3.3.1. Return**

A study conducted by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees highlights that migration to Germany can, to a certain degree, be described as temporary, as it is primarily for educational reasons. In addition, as mentioned before, a large majority of Georgian asylum application are rejected, which contributes to a high amount of return migration. Around 85% of Georgian migrants left Germany between the years 2000 and 2011.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>76</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

Table 7: Migration between Georgia and Germany

Year	Incoming	Outgoing	Balance
2000	2,848	2,145	+703
2001	3,805	2,250	+1,555
2002	4,317	2,690	+1,627
2003	3,948	3,069	+879
2004	3,329	3,305	+24
2005	2,745	2,524	+221
2006	2,099	2,376	-227
2007	1,615	1,909	-294
2008	1,693	2,015	-322
2009	2,239	2,026	+213
2010	2,377	2,147	+230
2011	2,262	1,606	+656

Source: Baraulina and Kreienbring 2013<sup>77</sup>

Of the total polled Georgian migrants residing in Germany, 88% wish to return to Georgia, which confirms that they did not intend to migrate permanently. The main reasons stated were the family (being closer to parents and children) and a feeling of belonging to Georgia. *“I am Georgian and I love my country and relatives”* was one of the explanations often made when completing the questionnaire.

Only a few factors were mentioned that would prevent Georgian migrants from returning home. Four survey respondents listed family reasons and the risk of unemployment in Georgia as the main obstacles to returning to Georgia. One interviewed family member expressed the general desire of her family members to go back to Georgia, but also the factors that prevent them from returning to Georgia:

*“All of my family would like to return, but I have no idea when. My father is very homesick, but until they are healthy and capable of work, they will stay in Germany. Mother is also homesick. They don’t wait for anything to change in Georgia, but of course if they had opportunity to start some business in Georgia they would come sooner, but there is no opportunity yet. I would not advise them to come back, of course I miss them, but. I thought it would be different to come back but it is a lot more different in reality than I imagined. My parents are very active people, they are active in their work and also in their personal lives, are spending their time travelling and going out and I think they would not be able to do that much in Georgia, here is a different lifestyle, people their age do not go out that much no picnics or other activities. My mother wants to come and take care of her grandchild, which is soon expected to be delivered but I think she should not lock herself up in Georgia while she still can work.”* (Family member: FM-DE-04)

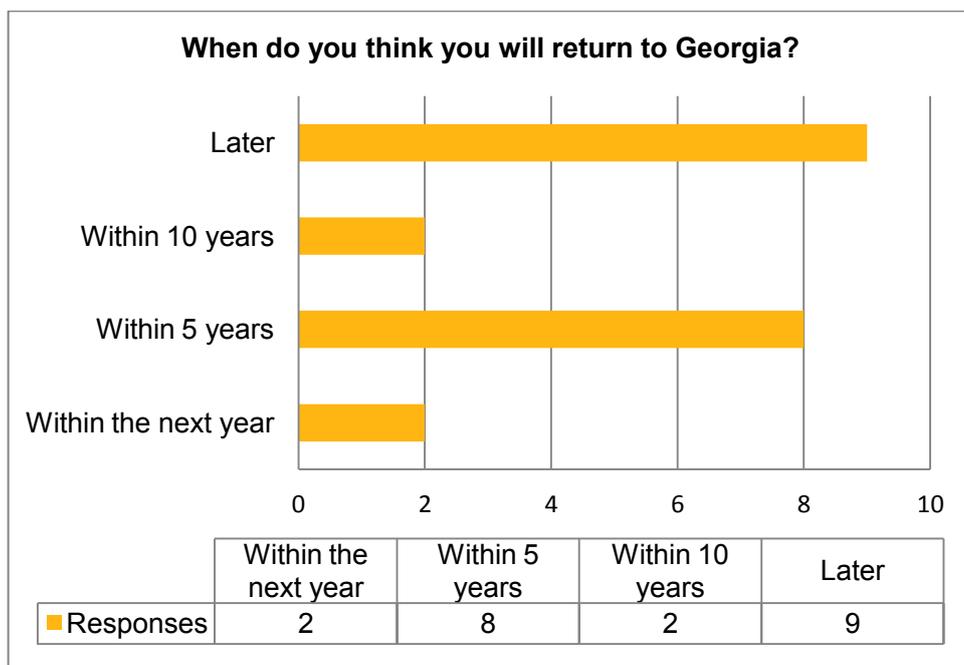
Another family member mentioned the factors hindering the return of her husband to Georgia, namely social factors in Georgia.

*“No I don’t think he would like to return. The only motivation for him to do this would be us, his family. But I know it would be very difficult for him to come back, he is well integrated in that society already and Georgian mentality is hard for him to understand. Also the social, political and economic issues here are unacceptable for him, so I don’t know what he will do. Of course I would like him to return but I know that he doesn’t feel good here, mainly because of many social factors.”* (Family member: FM-DE-05)

The polled migrants consider returning to Georgia within a rather long time frame; over 90% of the respondents wish to return to Georgia within the next five years or later.

<sup>77</sup> (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013)

Figure 23: When Will the Migrants Return to Georgia (Germany)



Source: Field data, 2013

A returning migrant, who has decided to move back to Georgia at the age of 27 and who is the only close family member residing in Georgia, as her parents and sister work and live in Germany, shares her story:

*“Mother, father and sister are abroad, they live in Nürnberg, Germany. My father was born in Kazakhstan and mother and sister were born in Georgia. We all lived in Georgia, Chiatura small town. [...] I was also living there and it is only three years since I have returned to Georgia. I used to live in Nürnberg with my other family members and before that, I also lived in Thessaloniki, Greece. First my father left to Germany, after a year he had to come back and take us with him to Germany. Because of the documents, my mother, sister and I had to live in Greece for one year and my father was in Germany because he already had work there. So, after a year when my mother got the documents in Greece we all moved to Germany. My sister and I both finished high school in Germany, she is younger than me, 26 years old. [...] Well, when I was 27 I lost my job and at that time there was a chance for me to start working in Georgia and I decided to try, to come back and work here, so I took this risk and came back. I don't plan to leave Georgia at the moment.” (Family member: FM-DE-04)*

One interviewed diaspora organisation representative mentioned that more support should be offered to returnees. Diaspora organisations could cooperate in this regard with state institutions to better prepare future returnees prior to their return (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-01).

*“Yes we have a lot of lawyers who could contribute to Georgia. We know lots of such people, yes we could contact them. There were some people who wanted to return, they went back but could not find any good job and came back to Germany soon. So would be nice to more actively include these people in Georgian reality, maybe organise internships at Ministries and etc. [...] I think a lot of people would return if there were appropriate conditions to do that.” (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-01)*

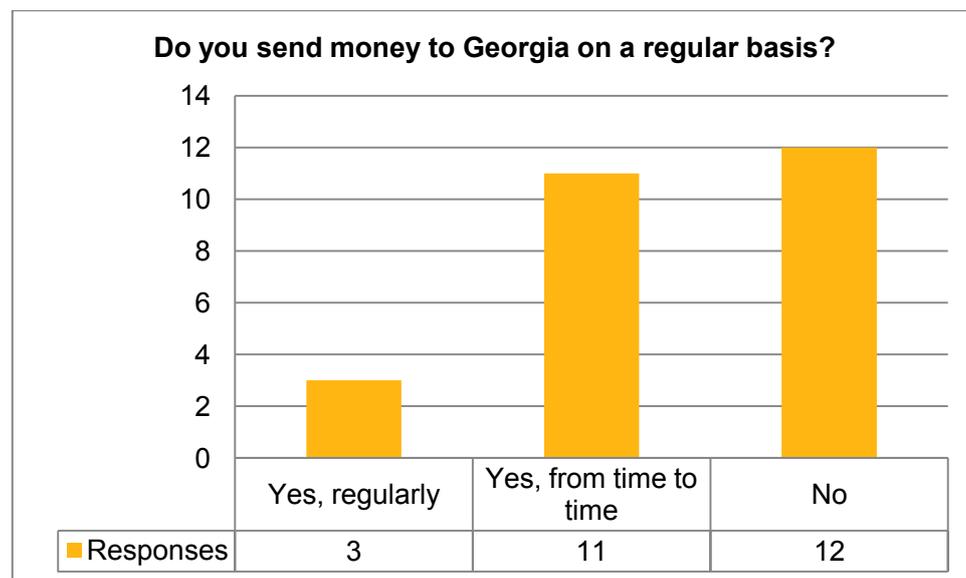
### 7.3.3.2 Remittances

Official statistics available from Georgia's National Bank indicate that \$17.8 million (€13 million) was transferred from Germany to Georgia in 2013. The remitted amount from Germany to Georgia is smaller compared to Greece or Turkey, which again emphasises the large number of Georgian students in Germany who are less likely to send money back home while studying.

A little more than half of the polled migrants send money to family members in Georgia, either on a regular

basis (12%) or from time to time (42%). The amount ranges mostly between €500 and €1,000 per year. Here it should be noted that only 9 out of 29 survey respondents answered this question. The main reasons for this are a lack of trust, fear/scepticism that the information might be shared with third parties and generally the sensitive character of questions related to finances.

Figure 24: Sending Funds to Georgia (on a regular basis) from Germany



Source: Field data, 2013

The preferred transfer options for remittances are bank transfer facilitators and sending money via friends and relatives. Only 20% of the respondents send money via direct bank transfers. The money is mostly used for investments in agriculture and farm equipment (60%) and for education and health purposes (60% and 70%, respectively; multiple answers were possible).

The family members of the migrants residing in Germany are also recipients of remittances. Here, either informal (sending money through an acquaintance) or formal (bank transfers) channels are used. Most of the remittances received by interviewed family members are spent on daily expenses and house renovations:

*“They send money all the time. It could be about 60,000USD (44,000EUR) last year, because we had to renovate the apartment we are lending and besides this, since I moved to Georgia they are sending me about 10,000USD (7,000EUR) per year. They are usually giving this money to a good acquaintance, there are brothers who have this small scale business, one brother receives the money in Germany and another one gives the same amount here in Tbilisi. My father knows them well so he trusts them. This money usually is spent in everyday expenses, except when we had to renovate the house.”* (Family member: FM-DE-04)

*“He sends the money sometimes, it depends. When he sends it, it is by bank transfer and I don’t really need him to send money because I have his credit card where his salary goes from his lectures. So this was our solution to this money issues. All this money is used for everyday life, food, bills, etc. And it is not invested anywhere, the sum is usually not that high.”* (Family member: FM-DE-05)

### 7.3.3.3. Investments

None of the polled migrants indicated having private investments in Georgia, although more than half are willing to invest in business activities in Georgia. The main areas for potential investments are manufacturing (46%), tourism (31%) and agriculture (25%; multiple answers were possible). Survey respondents agreed that economic growth, political stability and legal security could facilitate private investments.

One interviewed diaspora association representative showed great interest in promoting investments in Georgia and organising a business forum in Georgia, and also mentioned other ideas, e.g. in the area of energy (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02). Another organisation member assessed agriculture as the most relevant

area for investments (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-03).

#### 7.3.3.4. Development activities

The polled migrants have a strong intention to invest in development projects (77%). They are most interested in projects on human rights (47%), churches and religious institutions (41%) and infrastructure (29%; multiple answers were possible).

Two of the interviewed diaspora organisations support development in Georgia and assist Georgian society (Diaspora organisations: DO-DE-01, 02):

*“We do have a school in Georgia and we support it as much as we can. We don’t have that much capacity to support developments in Georgia.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-01)

*“We jointly gathered a lot of people in Berlin to support Georgia in 2008.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

The same organisation also works on strengthening relations between Georgians and Russians residing in Germany, which may contribute to a better understanding among the two nations and its societies in Georgia in the long term:

*“Once per month we do organise Georgian-Russian poetic evenings for instance, there are some Russian youngsters here who were support Georgia during 2008 war.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

#### 7.3.3.5. Qualifications and knowledge transfer

3 out of 29 survey respondents stated that the main reason for returning to Georgia would be to work in Georgia and to make use of the gained knowledge and education: “[I] would like to go back to my homeland after getting higher education abroad” and “[I] would like to use education gained in Germany”.

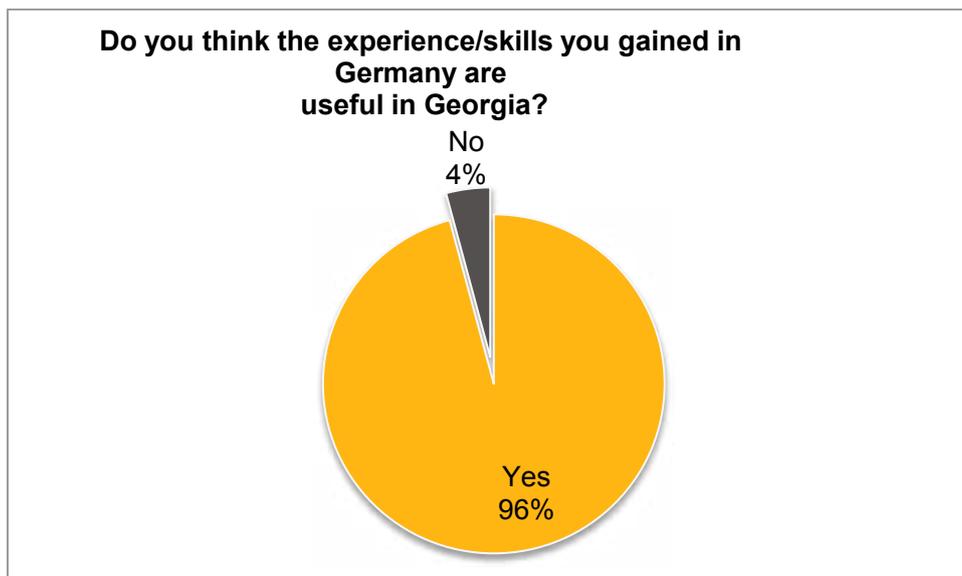
The Returning Experts Programme, implemented by the Centre for International Migration in (CIM) in Germany, offers support for the professional integration of university graduates and experienced experts from Georgia, who have completed their training in Germany and are interested in returning to Georgia. The programme includes salary top-ups for returned Georgians who find employment in Georgia. The project contributed salary additions for only 12–13 returnees between 1996 and 2007; between 2007 and 2013, 150 returnees found jobs in Georgia and were supported. In addition, small and medium enterprise training sessions are provided for interested returnees.<sup>78</sup>

Almost all respondents stated that the experience they gained in Germany allowed them to develop professionally and, to a lesser extent, personally. Confirming this finding, 96% consider their experience and skills gained in Germany useful for Georgia and more than 70% think that it would be easy to apply those skills in Georgia. Similarly, one interviewed diaspora organisation representative is convinced that the skills and knowledge Georgians gain during their stay in Germany would be useful for the development of Georgia. However, this representative believes that these skills are difficult to apply in Georgia and that it would be important for young graduates to have the opportunity to gain practical experience in Georgia:

*“I think these skills that Georgian migrants gain here, would be very useful for Georgia. Whoever they addressed in Georgia, I mean Institutions, their doors were closed for these young people. [...] I think it is necessary that Diaspora Office organises some kind of internships in Georgian Institutions and I am sure that these students who are here, will gladly take this internships even without any payment. Of course they gain high quality education here in Germany, but I think you should also have a practical experience to become a good professional.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-DE-02)

<sup>78</sup> (Centre for International Migration and Development 2014)

Figure 25: Usefulness of Experience/Skills in Georgia That Were Gained in Germany

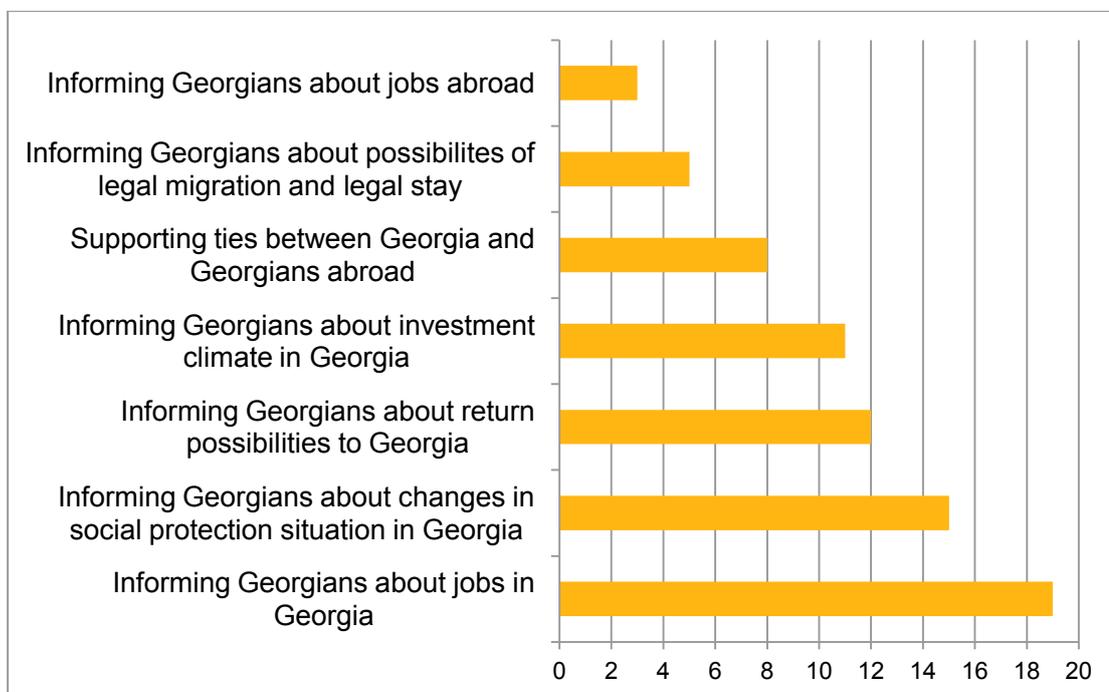


Source: Field data, 2013

### 7.3.3.6. Expectations for Georgian government institutions

Georgian migrants residing in Germany would like to be informed about employment opportunities in Georgia (70%), improvements in the social protection situation in Georgia (62%), return possibilities (50%) and investment opportunities in Georgia (45%). This was also confirmed during the focus group discussions and interviews with representatives from diaspora organisations, who expressed their need to receive more information on the employment situation in Georgia and current developments in legislation, culture, etc., preferably all on one single website/document and on a regular basis.

Figure 26: Migrants' Expectations of Georgian Government Institutions (Germany)



Source: Field data, 2013

Diaspora organisations would find it helpful to have a curriculum available on teaching Georgian. In addition, a newspaper for diaspora organisations and with information on diaspora activities was suggested. Also, better opportunities should be offered to those who graduated in Germany and would like to return to Georgia, as

well as internships in relevant institutions. All interviewed diaspora organisations also stated that more frequent communication would be helpful.



### **Key information on (potential) contributions of the Georgian diaspora residing in Germany to the development of Georgia**

- A large majority (88%) aim to return to Georgia, most of them within a long time frame.
- Hindering factors are mainly the lack of jobs and social and political factors in Georgia.
- A little more than half of the survey participants send money to their families. The money is mainly used for investments in agriculture and farm equipment and for education and health purposes.
- Around half of the survey participants would be willing to invest in Georgia and agree that economic growth, political stability and legal security could facilitate private investments.
- The main mentioned areas for investment are manufacturing, tourism and agriculture.
- Survey participants are also willing to invest in development projects in Georgia, mainly in the area of human rights. Diaspora organisations already support social projects in Georgia.
- Skills and experience gained abroad are considered as a potential contribution to Georgia's development.

## 8. The Georgian Diaspora in Greece

### 8.1 Introduction

The first migration flows from Georgia to Greece already occurred at the beginning of the 1990s. The majority of migrants from Georgia at that time were Georgian citizens of Greek origin, often referred to as Greek repatriates or 'Pontic Greeks'. This migration wave also laid the basis for a later wave of migration from Georgia to Greece due to mixed marriages, close contacts with migrated persons back in Georgia and a significant community of Georgians in Greece.<sup>79</sup> The number of Pontic Greeks repatriated from Georgia constituted the absolute majority among the persons who returned back to their historical country of origin after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and were given Greek citizenship on the basis of being of Greek origin. There were 80,000 such migrants by the year 2000.<sup>80</sup>

During the so-called second wave, between 1996 and 2004, the numbers decreased and migration was driven mainly by economic motives.<sup>81</sup> In 2002, around 14% to 16% of all migrants from Georgia moved to Greece.<sup>82</sup> As for the current phase, migration flows to Greece remain high despite the improvement in Georgia's economy and political situation.

### 8.2. Profile of the Georgian diaspora

#### 8.2.1. Size and location of the Georgian diaspora population

A Labour Force Survey implemented in Greece at the end of 2009 determined that 33,870 Georgian citizens were residing in Greece.<sup>83</sup> According to Eurostat, in 2008 some 15,715 Georgian citizens held residence permits in Greece (out of this number, 8,546 on a work basis). In 2011, this figure increased to 16,523 (6,651 on a work basis)<sup>84</sup>. However, the number of Georgians residing in Greece on different grounds and legal statuses, including irregular migrants, differs according to various reports. Other experts suggest that there could be up to 150,000 Georgians in Greece,<sup>85</sup> whilst others suggest that up to 400,000 people (100,000 of them originally of Greek origin) represent the Georgian diaspora in Greece currently.<sup>86</sup> Still, experts also project that migration to Greece will remain unchanged in the coming years, with only a small decrease due to the economic crisis in Greece, and that it will remain one of the most attractive destinations for Georgian migrants.<sup>87</sup>

The largest group of Georgian migrants live in big cities, such as Athens and Thessaloniki. This was the tendency from the second wave onwards of migration and also reflects current migratory flows. Pontic Greeks from Georgia usually reside close to the Turkish border.<sup>88</sup>

#### 8.2.2. Socio-demographic profile

Both official statistics and surveys suggest that the majority of Georgian migrants in Greece are women. The Eurostat database shows that 69% out of the 16,523 Georgian migrants legally residing in Greece in 2011 were women (11,445 persons).<sup>89</sup> A report written by the Georgian NGO People's Harmonious Development Society (PHDS) also shows that 70% to 80% of Georgian migrants in Greece (including irregular migrants) were women.<sup>90</sup> Experts underline that Georgian female migrants are in high demand in Greece as housemaids,

<sup>79</sup> (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2013)

<sup>80</sup> (Triandafyllidou and Kokkali 2010)

<sup>81</sup> (Marouf 2013)

<sup>82</sup> (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013)

<sup>83</sup> (Triandafyllidou and Kokkali 2010)

<sup>84</sup> (EUROSTAT 2013)

<sup>85</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 10

<sup>86</sup> (GIZ 2013) PG 47

<sup>87</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 34

<sup>88</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 12

<sup>89</sup> (EUROSTAT 2013)

<sup>90</sup> (People's Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 11

caregivers, janitors and servers in the secondary labour market.<sup>91</sup>

According to official Eurostat statistics, Georgian migrants represented the following age groups in 2011:

**Table 8: Georgian Migrants Represented by Age Group (Greece)**

Age group, years	Number of legally residing migrants	%	%
Younger than 20	2,210	13.4	13.4
20–24	730	4.4	20.3
25–29	1,090	6.6	
30–34	1,539	9.3	
35–39	1,881	11.4	35.2
40–44	1,955	11.8	
45–49	1,982	12	
50–54	2,129	12.9	31.1
55–59	1,773	10.7	
60–4	1,234	7.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,523</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

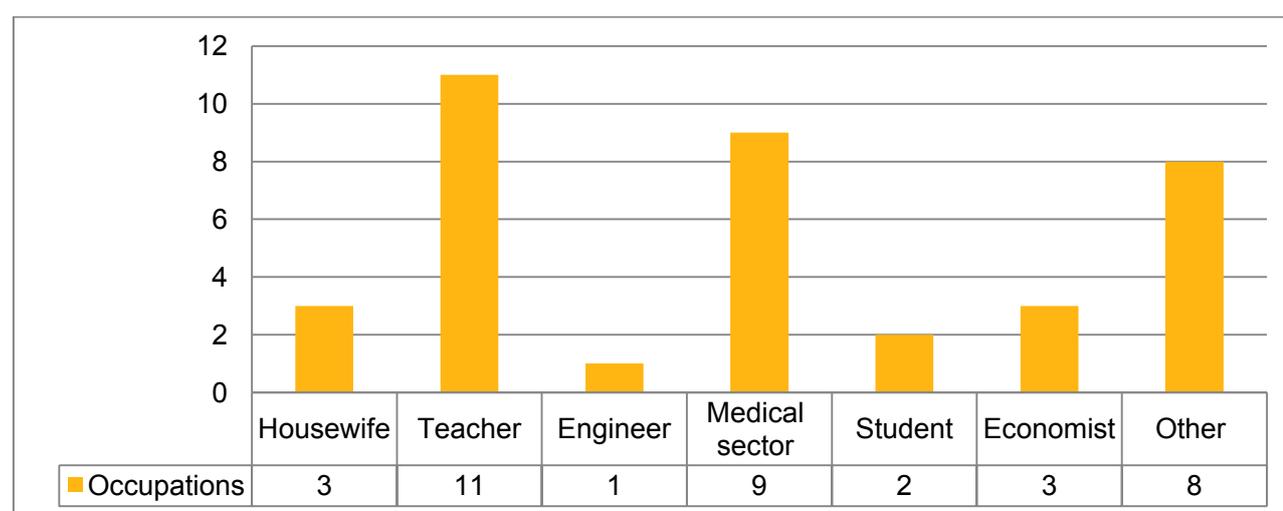
Source: EUROSTAT 2013<sup>92</sup>

The data above shows that the biggest group of legally residing Georgian migrants in Greece were those between the ages of 35 and 49. Over 35% of all legally residing migrants belonged to this age group.

Although it is difficult to assess the data on irregularly residing Georgians in Greece, experts estimate that the majority of Georgians in Greece are highly qualified individuals (teachers and medical personnel).<sup>93</sup> This was confirmed by the level of education among survey respondents, which can be described as at least at a medium level. 64% have completed secondary school (29%) or vocational school (35%), while 33% have either a Bachelor’s degree (18%) or a Master’s degree (15%).

The following graph shows the last professions that the surveyed Georgian migrants had before moving to Greece:

**Figure 27: Last Professions in Georgia (Greece)**



Source: Field data, 2013

<sup>91</sup> (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013) PG 28

<sup>92</sup> (EUROSTAT 2013)

<sup>93</sup> (People’s Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 12

\*Other: administrator (1), education specialist (1), cultural manager (1), linguist (1), no work experience (1), social work (1), civil work (1), technician (1)

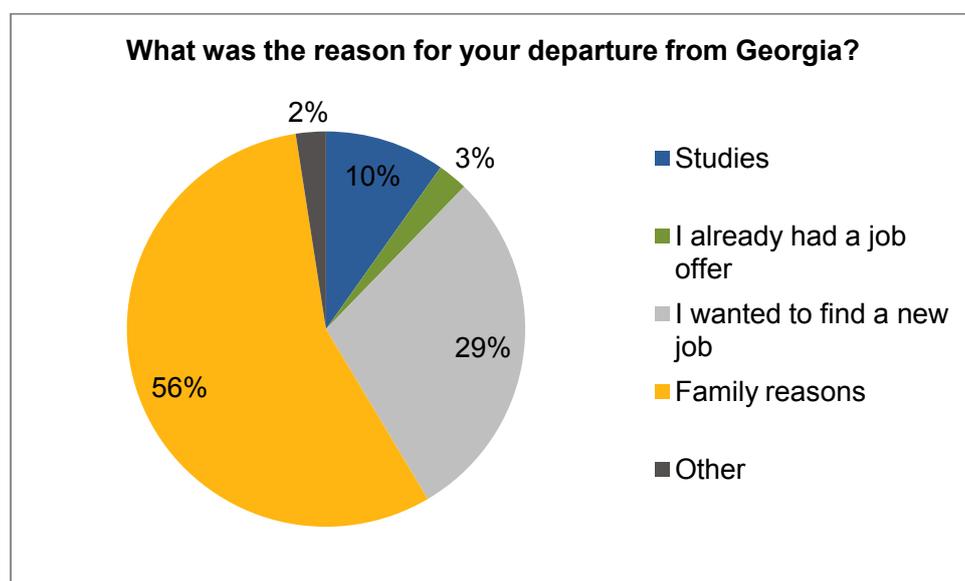
### 8.2.3. Types of migration, causes and motives

Georgian migrants in Greece cover the entire spectrum of residence statuses of third country nationals, with significant numbers of repatriates, residence permit holders and asylum seekers (895 applications in 2012 and 1,120 in 2011)<sup>94</sup> as well as persons of irregular status.<sup>95</sup> One of the most important reasons for choosing Greece as the country of destination is the presence of a developed social network of Georgians in Greece. Experts indicate that other reasons for Georgian migration to Greece are the demand for workers in the secondary labour market (where migrants can work without a legal contract or work permit), Greece’s comparably close location to Georgia, and the cultural and historical similarities between both countries.<sup>96</sup> In addition, it offers ‘live-in domestic work’, which minimises the expenses of migrant women and allows them to save more money for their families in Georgia.<sup>97</sup>

The survey results confirmed the research findings, as 56% left Georgia for family reasons and 29% to find a new job in Greece. Interviews with two family members confirm the relevance of economic factors for the migration decision:

*“My mother was a high-school teacher in Rustavi, she was teaching German language and her monthly income was 40 GEL back then. [...] I don’t remember exactly, but afterwards I think I was in favour of my mom’s departure for some time, because she used to send me so many toys.”* (Family member: FM-GR-03) *“To improve our financial conditions, this is why she left. She took this huge risk, she had hair dressing saloon here and was working there but it was not enough to support all the family. She knew that she wanted to go to Greece.”* (Family member: FM-GR-06)

Figure 28: Reason for Departure from Georgia (Greece)



Source: Field data, 2013

Interviews with two women whose mothers migrated to Greece in 1995 (leaving a 7-year old child behind) and 2004 (leaving a 15-year old child behind) show that existing networks facilitated the emigration. Neither of them left Georgia alone and had some relatives or acquaintances in Greece. One mother followed her sister to Greece, while the other left Georgia with her friend. This network migration made them feel safer leaving for Greece:

<sup>94</sup> (EMN 2012)

<sup>95</sup> (Marouf of 2013)

<sup>96</sup> (People’s Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 13; (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013) PG 28; (Triandafyllidou and Kokkali 2010) PG 14

<sup>97</sup> (Marouf of 2013)

*“One of our relatives lives in Greece and yes, they knew they would go to Greece because this relative would help them to adapt to the new situation.” (Family member: FM-GR-03)*

*“She left with her friend, they are the same age. They had some acquaintances there and relatives so we knew they would take care of them if anything happened. My father’s relatives are living in Greece and they sent my mother an invitation and her friend knew some other people there too.” (Family member: FM-GR-06)*

Almost half (44%) of the polled Georgian migrants did not have a residence permit or a visa. An irregular status seems to be one of the main problems Georgian migrants in Greece face (see section below). Other sources show that after a decline of irregular stay with the implementation of the first regularisation programmes from 1998 onwards, irregular and/or temporary stay in Greece has increased due to a decline in the issuance of valid residence permits for the purpose of employment and an absence of general regularisation programmes (the last general regularisation programme took place in 2007).<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, Georgians are among the top five nationalities in Greece offered first residence permits (698 in 2012).<sup>99</sup>

**Table 9: Visa Applications of Georgians to Enter Greece**

Year	Applications	Positive	Rejections (%)	National
2005	5,455	4,072	1,007 (20%)	376
2006	5,744	4,781	856 (15%)	107
2007	7,661	6,597	898 (12%)	166
2008	8,203	6,419	1,571 (20%)	213
2009	6,676	3,810	2,697 (41%)	169
2010	6,253	4,339	1,755 (29%)	159
2011	6,568	5,071	1,375 (21%)	122
2012	5,581	4,348	1,167 (21%)	66

Source: Greek embassy in Tbilisi, cited in Marouf of 2013<sup>100</sup>

In contrast to the problem of irregular stay, one interviewed family member of a Georgian residing in Greece mentioned the specific situation of ethnic Greeks living in Georgia to whom Greek citizenship was granted by the Greek government during social unrest in the 1990s in Georgia.

*“My father was already a Greek citizen when he left from Georgia, because of his mother. His mother was 100% Greek and when there was a great unrest in Georgia in 90s, Greece announced open entry for ethnic Greeks and was granting them Greek citizenship, so my father decided to go. So back then there was no embassy of Greece in Georgia, so my father went to Greek Embassy in Moscow and got his citizenship in one month. So, he had no problems with documents ever since. The citizenship was automatically granted to us, the children as well and my mother had to work on the documents and this is why we had to live in Greece for at least one year in order for her to get the citizenship.” (Family member: FM-DE-04)*

#### 8.2.4. Situation of Georgian migrants in Greece

Georgian migrants often work in Greece below their qualifications: household work for women and construction or seasonal agricultural work for men.<sup>101</sup>

Irregular status is one of the major problems for Georgian migrants in Greece, which can lead to a violation of their human and labour rights, such as exploitation (limited number of days off, excessive and often unpaid overtime, discriminatory wages, bad working conditions, etc.). However, due to their irregular status and a lack of information, few migrants apply for assistance. It can also be assumed that Georgian migrants in Greece could be in danger of human trafficking, even if potential victims do not consider themselves to be in a trafficking

<sup>98</sup> (Marouf of 2013)

<sup>99</sup> (EMN 2012)

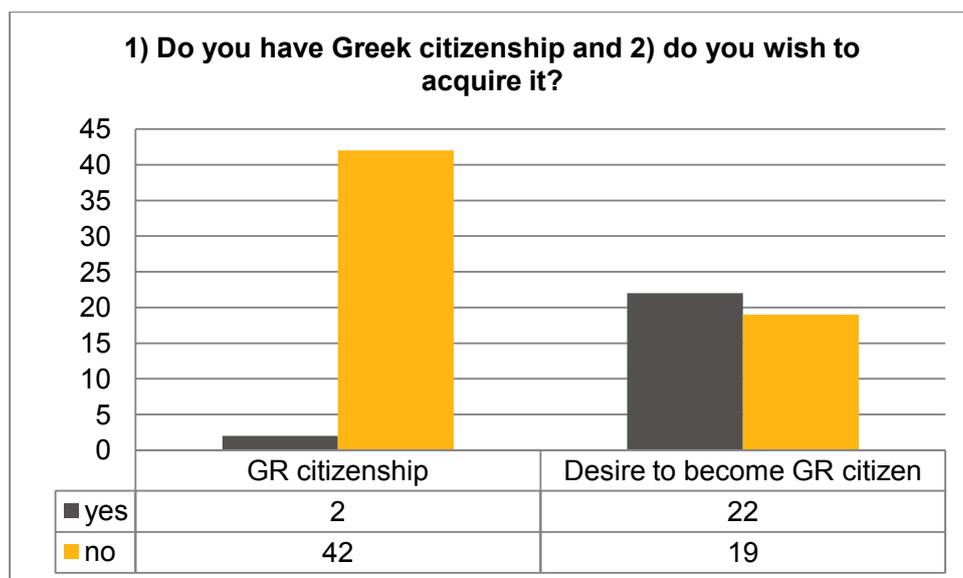
<sup>100</sup> (Marouf of 2013) PG 18

<sup>101</sup> (People’s Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 12

situation. For example, some migrants working in households have their passports taken away by their employers and are later threatened that they will not receive their documents back if they complain or try to leave.<sup>102</sup> Also, Georgian migrants in many cases know under what conditions they will live and work in Greece; they agree to work under these conditions, and therefore see no reason to complain later. Furthermore, the US Department of State 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report also indicates that women from Georgia may be subject to sex trafficking in Greece.<sup>103</sup>

Among survey respondents, only two indicated to have Greek citizenship (5%), although more than 50% wish to acquire Greek citizenship, which might be related to the strong and long-lasting ties and the migration movements between the Greek and Georgian societies. This is also mirrored by the fact that a little more than half of the polled migrants stated that Greece was their desired country of destination.

Figure 29: Georgian Migrants Possessing and Aspiring to Receive Greek Citizenship



Source: Field data, 2013

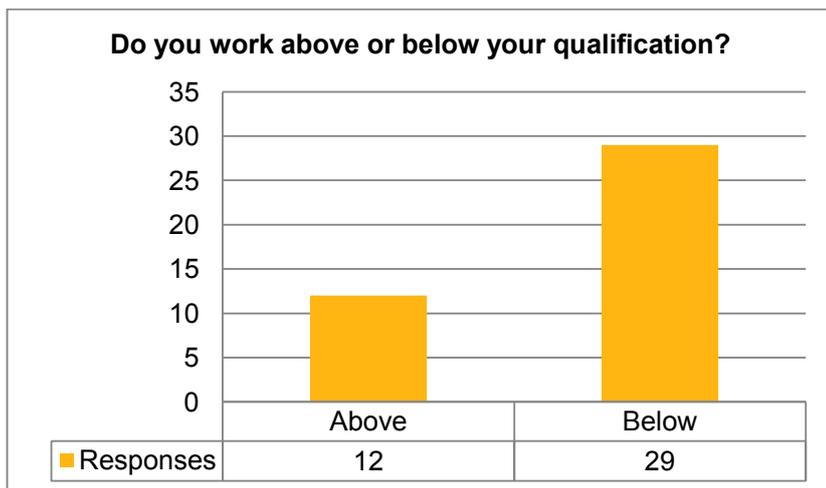
Almost half of the survey respondents do not have a work permit (47%), which might be another reason why many Georgians living in Greece want to acquire Greek citizenship. Moreover, 76% of the survey respondents stated that they work in Greece. Among those, the majority (66%) work in the domestic sector. Work conditions in the domestic sector are described as very hard:

*“I think probably the salary is the only advantage because she would not get that much in Georgia and that’s it. She cannot even go out, because she has to take care of this lady all the time, there is no weekend for her. She only can go out on Thursdays during several hours and that’s it. [...] she is nervous all the time and her health went bad because of all this stress, so. She of course misses us a lot and cannot stand being apart from us.”* (Family member: FM-GR-06)

<sup>102</sup> (People’s Harmonious Development Society and TASO Foundation 2010) PG 21

<sup>103</sup> (US Department of State 2013)

Figure 30: Working Above/Below Qualifications (Greece)

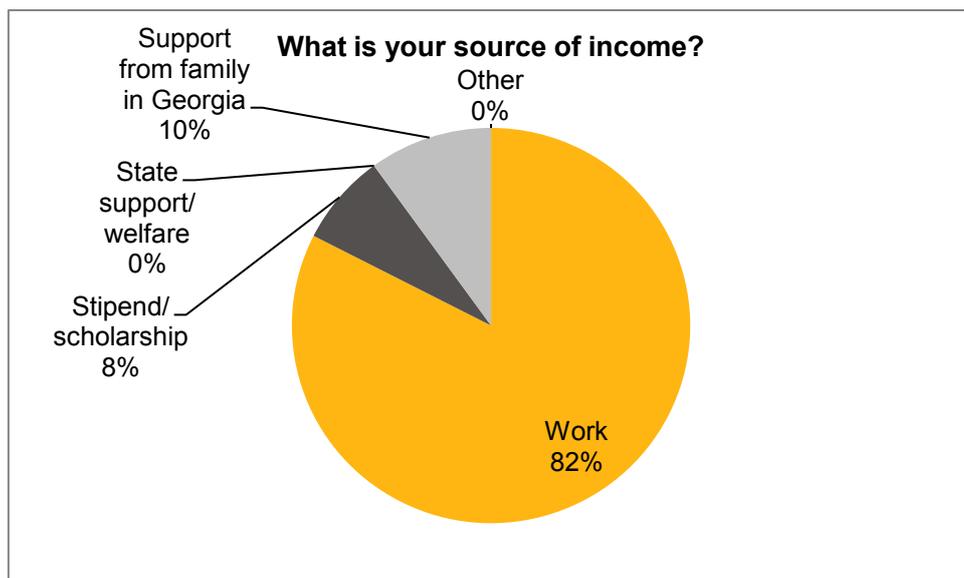


Source: Field data, 2013

The results of the survey indicate a high level of brain waste. 70% of survey participants consider themselves to be working below their level of qualification.

Most survey respondents (82%) stated that work is their main source of income, while 10% receive support from their family and 8% depend on a scholarship. None of the respondents receive state support, which may be due to their insecure residence status and the recent economic situation in Greece.

Figure 31: Source of Income (Greece)



Source: Field data, 2013

The main problem that Georgian migrants seem to face in Greece is irregularity (residing in Greece without a residence and/or work permit) and the precarious health problems that go along with it. Third country nationals who irregularly reside in Greece do not have access to any health services. Exceptions are only made for emergencies. This does not apply for minors, as they can be admitted to hospitals without legal documents.<sup>104</sup>

Some Georgian migrants have the so-called 'pink card', issued by the Greek Aliens Police Directorate, which identifies them as asylum seekers with the right to remain in the country, seek employment and receive minimal assistance and limited access to services while their application is processed and considered.<sup>105</sup> Some Georgian migrants possess a forged pink card, often without knowing it, which they received in exchange

<sup>104</sup> (European Migration Network 2013)

<sup>105</sup> (UNHCR 2012)

for a considerable amount of money from middlemen in order to access services, especially health services.<sup>106</sup>

There also seems to be a lack of information and support provided regarding the registration of newborns by parents who reside in Greece without valid papers. The interviewed diaspora organisations support Georgians in need through advice/counselling services and also by communicating with local and central government officials. One diaspora organisation also issues membership cards, which help undocumented Georgians in Greece when they are in uncomfortable situations (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-02). Diaspora organisations also try to raise the necessary funds when medical treatment is needed, but in some cases Greek medical facilities also offer free treatment. (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04)

The mother of one interviewed family member has been living and working in Greece without legal documents for 10 years, even though this makes it difficult for her to visit family in Georgia. Her desire to return to Georgia in the near future is described as one major reason for her not to seek a legal status in Greece.

*“She (mother) is working there now; she has no work permit as I know and neither the residence permit. She looks after an elderly lady, she was doing this job since she moved there of course it is not the same lady, I think it i her third job there. [...] at first she got this residence permit, but then she decided not to take it anymore because she is thinking of returning all the time, she wants to come back soon and it also costs a lot of money to make this permit, so now she has no documents there.”* (Family member: FM-GR-06)



### **Key information on the profile of the Georgian diaspora in Greece**

- Georgian migrants in Greece cover the entire spectrum of residence statuses, with significant numbers of ethnic repatriates to whom Greek citizenship was granted, residence permit holders, asylum seekers and persons with an irregular status.
- Social networks and long historical ties between the two countries facilitate migration to Greece.
- Pontic Greeks from Georgia usually reside close to the Turkish border, while most migrants live in big cities, such as Athens and Thessaloniki.
- There is mainly female migration (69%) for employment in the domestic sector.
- The largest age group is those between the ages 35 and 49.
- There is a medium to high level of education among survey respondents, with one third having completed tertiary education.
- Working below qualifications is a widespread phenomenon; 70% of the survey participants consider themselves to be working below their level of qualification.
- A large proportion of Georgian migrants reside in Greece without legal work and/or residence permits, which limits their access to services such as health care.
- A little more than half of the survey participants wish to receive Greek citizenship.

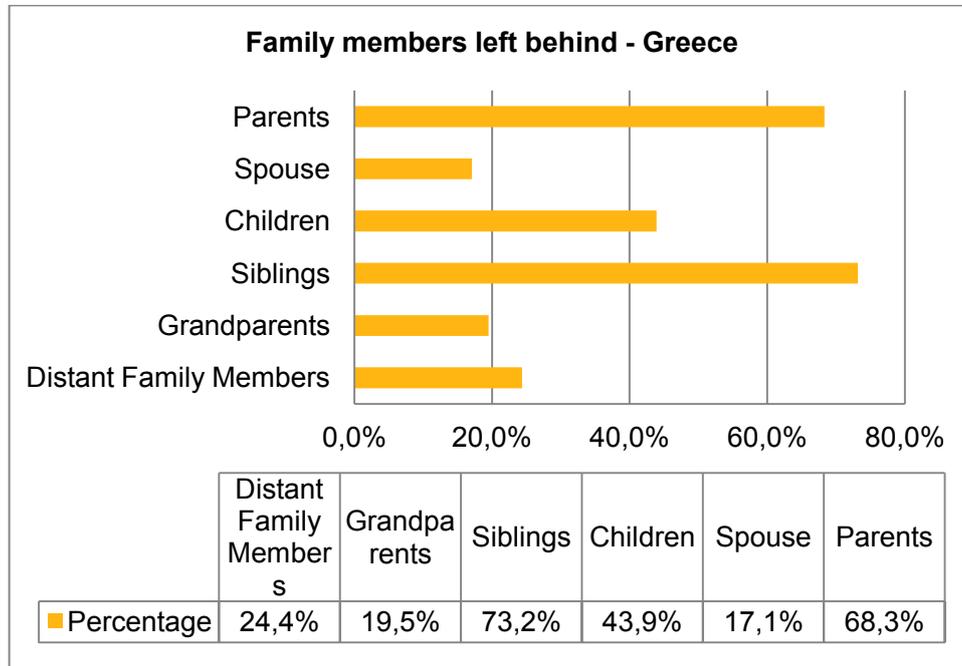
<sup>106</sup> (Maroufop 2013)

### 8.3. Transnational activities of Georgians residing in Greece

#### 8.3.1. Ties between Georgians residing in Greece and Georgia

Almost all survey respondents (93%) have a valid Georgian passport and family members in Georgia. Family members left behind are mainly siblings and parents, but over 40% also have children in Georgia.

Figure 32: Family Members Left Behind (Greece)



Source: Field data, 2013

Less than half of the polled Georgian migrants have visited Georgia since they came to Greece. Out of the polled migrants, 39% visit Georgia once per year, 30% every two to five years and 17% every half year, with meeting family being the main reason for visiting Georgia. The frequency of visiting family members in Georgia varies according to the migrant’s status in the host country. If a migrant does not have a valid residence permit in Greece, it becomes more difficult to leave the country and to re-enter it again, thus making it more difficult to visit the family in Georgia.

*“She (mother) came to Georgia only once, it was 5 years ago I think, it was summer and she came for one month. She had a visa back then and it was not a problem for her to come and go back. [...] I went to see her in May 2011 just for 6 days and used to sleep all the time and she would wake me up to spend more time together. [...] I know that her ID has expired and passport I think she should have it still. I know that she has no Greek passport and she would not like to become Greek citizen (Family member: FM-GR-06)*

Georgian migrants communicate with friends and family members in Georgia on a frequent basis, at least once per week. Almost 60% talk to friends and relatives every day. The main communication channels are the phone (89%), social networks (61%) and Skype (55%):

*“We do communicate with phone, Skype and Facebook. I contact them with cell phone but my grandparents usually talk to them over the landline. I talk to my mom twice a week approximately and I try to visit my Mom every year.” (Family member: FM-GR-03)*

In addition, 80% of the polled migrants follow the situation in Georgia closely, mainly via the internet (64%) and TV (49%) and, to a lesser extent, through phone calls with family members and meetings with other Georgians residing in Greece. The interviewed family members of Georgians residing in Greece also think that it is relatively easy to be informed about and to stay connected to Georgia, especially through Georgian

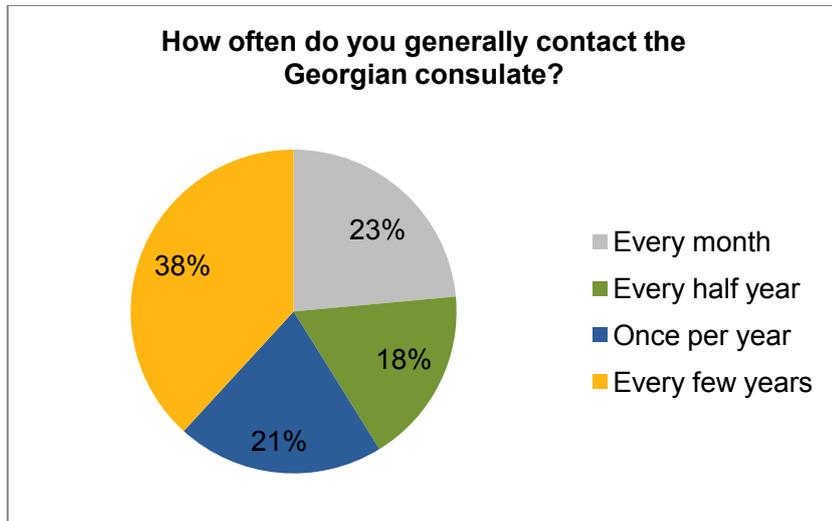
diaspora newspapers available in Greece<sup>107</sup>:

*“For example I know this Georgian Newspaper that usually publishes news about politics and culture in Georgia and this is good. I think Greece has not this problem of being disconnected from Georgia, for instance there is one street, a very big street in Athens and there are bigger streets in Thessaloniki, where you feel like you’re in Georgia, there are Georgian shops, restaurants, you can buy ‘churchkhela’ and everything you want that is Georgian. There are Georgian kindergartens and schools, I’ve heard. If there is a better coordination and for instance if the Consulate engages more in such issues and would promote this kind of activities, would be much better.” (Family member: FM-GR-03)*

Almost half of the surveyed Georgian migrants are aware of initiatives by Georgian government institutions targeting Georgians abroad (48%) and the majority of them are also in contact with the Georgian consulate (78%) every few years. One quarter of the surveyed migrants contact the Georgian consulate every month. The main reasons for contacting the Georgian consulate were to receive official documents and advice. One family member shared a rather negative experience with the Georgian Consulate in Greece, mainly because of the high level of bureaucracy and little support:

*“My mother contacted the Georgian Consulate in Greece, she had an old passport and wanted to get the new one and I would say that it was a rather unpleasant experience and this is one more thing where the government could intervene, that the Consulates treat Georgian citizens in a normal way. I know that it took very long time for my mother to make the first application; you’re going to the Consulate and saying that you need a new passport, then they give you this huge list of required documentation where they require the legalisations of their documents. If she hadn’t me here, in Georgia, it would have been impossible for her to get all the documents, because I was the one who helped with legalisation of her birth certificate and actually it is very expensive and I think should be faster to process these documents.” (Family member: FM-GR-03)*

Figure 33: Frequency of Contacting the Georgian Consulate (Greece)



Source: Field data, 2013

The Georgian language and culture is perceived as a very important bridge to Georgia. Therefore, diaspora associations teach children the Georgian language, as well as Georgian history and culture (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-01). In addition, important days during the year which are related to Georgia and Greece are celebrated, such as the Day of Independence of Georgia, the Day of Independence of Greece and New Year’s Day. The diaspora organisations also make the Georgian culture known in Greece through participation in events or by promoting Georgian artists:

*“We participated in the parade for the Day of Independence of Greece, where we were*

<sup>107</sup> Called Elada, Taoba, Georgian Newspaper, Journal ‘Emigrant Women’, see (GIZ 2013) PG 47

*representing Georgian society. It was an unprecedented fact.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-01)

*“It is our initiative in cooperation with other diaspora groups to organise a joint event for Independence Day of Greece that happening on 25 March, 2014. This is to show to Greece our gratitude for keeping us here.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-03)

*“They had an exhibition of their work. Under the aegis of the organisation we had a poetry evening of Georgian artist Niko Gomelauri. We were co-organisers of a concert of the Georgian musical group “Shini”. We focus on joint events where both Georgian and Greek sides participate.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04)

The interviewed diaspora organisations also stressed that ties with Georgia are equally important to being included in the Greek society:

*“Our aim is for Georgian youth to get profession, so that educated Georgian society is created in Greece. At the same time, I think youth should know Greek language and culture very well. I want us to raise bilingual persons, who belong to two cultures equally – Georgian and Greek.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-02)

Ties with Georgia are also maintained in the academic field. As an example, the Georgian Institute of Athens seeks to create and strengthen relations between Georgian and Greek academic institutions, recognising the common heritage of both societies (DO-GR-02). One interviewed diaspora organisation also stressed that communication takes place with family members in Georgia, for example, when Georgian migrants in Greece face social problems and need support from their family members in Georgia (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04). A problem that was raised by the interviewed migrants in Greece and that is very important for strengthening ties with Georgia is that one particular Georgian Sunday school in Greece is not registered as an official Sunday school, and thus is not eligible for direct support from the Diaspora Office. Additionally, if there is no certified Georgian school system in Greece, the children of returnees cannot go to school in Georgia after their return, which creates barriers to migrants' return.



### **Key information on the ties between Georgians residing in Greece and Georgia**

- The majority of surveyed migrants have family members in Georgia, mainly siblings, parents and children (40%).
- 93% of the respondents possess a valid Georgian passport.
- Less than half of the polled Georgian migrants have visited Georgia since they came to Greece, due to their insecure legal status in Greece.
- Georgian migrants in Greece try to communicate with family members left behind on a regular basis. Almost 60% talk to friends and relatives every day, mainly via the phone and, to a lesser extent, via social networks and Skype.
- Georgian migrants closely follow the situation in Georgia, mainly through the internet and television.
- A majority of surveyed migrants are aware of initiatives of Georgian government institutions targeting Georgians abroad, and communicate with the Georgian Consulate in Greece.
- The Georgian language and culture is perceived as a very important 'connector' to Georgia. Therefore, diaspora associations teach children the Georgian language, as well as Georgian history and culture.

### 8.3.2. Organisations of the Georgian diaspora

There is a broad network of Georgian diaspora organisations in Greece (a list of Georgian diaspora organisations in all three research countries can be found in the annex, as well as examples of diaspora organisation activities)<sup>108</sup> implementing several activities, including those that promote the Georgian culture and language and support Georgians and those with Georgian roots, particularly in the areas of education, employment and sports.

Furthermore, 55% of the surveyed migrants stated that they are members of a Georgian organisation in Greece. They are either active in the respective organisation (54% are a member of a diaspora organisation), follow the events/news of the organisation (32%) or have sporadic contact with the organisation (14%). The three most important tasks of diaspora organisations mentioned by the polled migrants are: a) to provide information about Georgia to Georgians residing in Greece, b) facilitate contributions to development in Georgia and c) support Georgians in Greece in organising their everyday life.

When asked about the main responsibilities of diaspora organisations, the family members of Georgians residing in Greece think that they should be more actively engaged in creating return possibilities for migrants by finding them jobs in the home country. They also think that these organisations should support migrants' integration in the host country and protect migrants' rights. This is especially important for those migrants who reside in the destination country without proper documents:

*"I think they should protect migrants' rights, my mother didn't have any problems yet, but they should help those without documents. If there is an emergency or something someone should get her back to Georgia."* (Family member: FM-GR-06)

One family member stated that it might be useful if the diaspora organisation has the family's contact information in case of emergencies:

*"Probably they just should know who we are and let us know something in case of emergency, that's it."* (Family member: FM-GR-06)

According to the interviewed diaspora organisations, the most important tasks of a diaspora organisation should be to maintain ties with Georgia and to empower young Georgians in Greece in different fields. For example, diaspora organisations could support Georgians who want to run for local government (migrants residing regularly in Greece can run for local government in Greece) and inform Georgians about this opportunity available to them. (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-01). Education also plays a key role in empowering young Georgians (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-02). Another interviewed diaspora organisation representative considers it important to exhibit and promote the Georgian culture in Greece and to promote the Georgian language (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-03).

*"I think education is what the diaspora needs the most, regardless of what the people will do in the future, return to Georgia or stay here."* (Diaspora organization: DO-GR-02)

Another family member mentioned that the Diaspora Office should coordinate the activities of the Georgian diaspora organisations and provide more funding and other support to diaspora organisations. The interviewed diaspora association representatives also highlighted that they do not receive support from the Georgian government (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-01; 03). One organisation suggested that the government provide diaspora organisations with information on funding opportunities if it is not able to offer them financial support itself. In terms of communication and cooperation with institutions in Georgia, the organisation representatives would like the Georgian government to show more interest in and better acknowledge the work they do.

*"I expect moral support from them. And more interest."* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-03)

Another organisation stated that a lack of support can be considered as an advantage, as it ensures the independence of the organisation. In order to fund the activities, the members pay a (low) membership fee per month.

<sup>108</sup> (GIZ 2013) PG 47

It was positively noted by diaspora organisations that communication has improved between the diaspora associations and Georgian government institutions since the Diaspora Office was established in 2008. One organisation mentioned that they receive regular updates from the Diaspora Office on their activities, such as the summer camps for Georgian children. However, in particular in the Greek context, the participation of Georgian children is often difficult due to the undocumented status of many Georgians in Greece (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04).

The diaspora organisations also cooperate with other government institutions. For example, one diaspora organisation closely cooperates with the Ministry of Justice in Georgia in order to receive information for counselling purposes (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04). Another interviewed diaspora organisation representative mentioned that they cooperate with the Georgian Consulate in Greece, and in addition, encourage Georgians to register at the consulate. Some organisations provide assistance to Georgians who want to register at the consulate free of charge (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04):

*“We encourage everyone to register at the Consulate, so that we know how many we are and what power we actually possess.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-02)

Another diaspora representative mentioned a very concrete example where the Georgian Consulate in Greece provided support:

*“Within a year she [a Georgian woman in need of psychiatric treatment] received good medical treatment. She began to talk, we would visit her every week and she would recognise us. The Georgian Consulate supported us financially to get a travel ticket for her and they gave her EUR 300 [to return to Georgia to join her family].”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04)

The Georgian diaspora associations in Greece have a history of cooperation and exchanging information. Elected organisations had aimed to establish a platform of Georgian diaspora organisations in Thessaloniki but did not succeed due to the diverging interests of the diaspora organisations (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-01). Another diaspora representative highlighted the lack of coordination as a problem and suggested establishing one joint diaspora association:

*“I noticed that there were too many Georgian organisations in Greece and they did not seem to cooperate with each other. Therefore I decided to create a certain group but without having it registered officially. (...) We still hope to have one joint diaspora organisation. If this happens our union will be abolished.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-03)

Similarly, another diaspora organisation representative in Athens mentioned the need for a platform where Georgian diaspora organisations could be united:

*“The most important is to have a single, joint union of all Georgian Diaspora organisations in Greece. This will unify our resources and the potential assistance emigrants might receive.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04)

Two interviewed diaspora organisation representatives think that cooperation with Georgian government institutions would be stronger if an umbrella organisation representing diaspora organisations were established and if official discussions were held on how the Georgian diaspora should be organised. This umbrella organisation, representing the different organisations, would, in their view, help prevent conflicts among the diaspora organisations (Diaspora organisations: DO-GR-01, 03).

Diaspora organisations are also connected with other migrant associations. As an example, one diaspora organisation is strongly involved in the Greek Forum of Migrants, composed of 42 member organisations (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-02). Another interviewed organisation closely cooperates with specialised institutions in Greece, e.g. the Red Cross and special centres for single mothers, economically vulnerable groups, victims of trafficking, etc., depending on the needs of the migrants. Furthermore, they mentioned that Greek non-governmental organisation (NGOs) also supported them in equipping their offices and classrooms (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04). Moreover, they receive financial and non-financial support from the local government in Greece (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-01; 03). This interviewed diaspora organisation feels encouraged and supported by the local government. One challenge that was mentioned was that to be registered as an NGO in Greece, it is required that the organisation has at least 21 members, which makes it difficult for Georgian migrants to establish an organisation composed of Georgians. As a consequence, most

organisations' membership base is composed of Georgians and Greeks:

*"We closely cooperate with the City Hall of Thessaloniki, where on behalf of the organisation, I am registered as a volunteer that gives me possibility to participate in various activities within Thessaloniki, including city cleaning, etc."* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-03)

In addition, stronger cooperation with Georgian NGOs would also be appreciated. For one diaspora organisation, good cooperation has already been established:

*"And of course I count on cooperation with more Georgian NGOs. Our success story was the delivery of Georgian books from Georgian NGO. The children were very happy."* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04)



### **Key information on the profile of the Georgian diaspora in Greece**

- Greece has many well-organised and active Georgian diaspora organisations working on cultural, historical, academic, archaeological, educational, recreational and counselling activities.
- Family members are well aware of the importance of diaspora organisations and are also in sporadic contact with them.
- General cooperation and exchange of information is taking place, but there is still room to strengthen general coordination. Diaspora organisations support the idea of creating a platform or joint association to promote coordination, communication and cooperation among diaspora organisations.
- Diaspora organisations closely cooperate with other migrant associations, Greek civil society organisations and civil society organisations in Georgia to better support Georgians in Greece.
- Support from local Greek authorities is perceived as important and encouraging.
- Diaspora organisations and interviewed family members expressed their wish for more interest, acknowledgement and support from the Georgian government.

### **8.3.3. Potential of the Georgian diaspora residing in Greece to contribute to development in Georgia**

#### **8.3.3.1. Return**

Currently, studies suggest that the number of people returning to Georgia exceeds the number of those migrating to Greece and that the number of people who would like to return to Georgia is increasing due to the economic crisis in Greece.<sup>109</sup> The results of the survey show that 80% of the polled Georgian migrants residing in Greece want to return to Georgia. This also demonstrates that they did not intend to migrate permanently. The main reasons stated were the family (being closer to parents and children) and a feeling of belonging to Georgia.

Some factors were mentioned which would prevent Georgian migrants from returning home. Nine of the survey

<sup>109</sup> (Marouf 2013)

respondents enumerated economic problems and the lack of resources and jobs in Georgia as the main obstacles to returning. Political instability was also mentioned as a major hindering factor:

*“My mother wouldn’t like to return to Georgia, but if she would change her mind one of the main reasons of her return would be financial stability here in Georgia. There have been a lot of good changes in Georgia. [...] For my mom, it is probably an advantage now that she can say that she integrated in Greece. She has a lot of Greek friends, she speaks fluent Greek, she loves Greece, its cuisine and culture. Therefore, she wouldn’t even think to come back to Georgia because she is scared that she wouldn’t be able to reintegrate into the Georgian society again because she thinks it’s still the 1990s in Georgia. She still thinks that Georgian society is closed and I agree that it is still closed.”* (Family member: FM-GR-03)

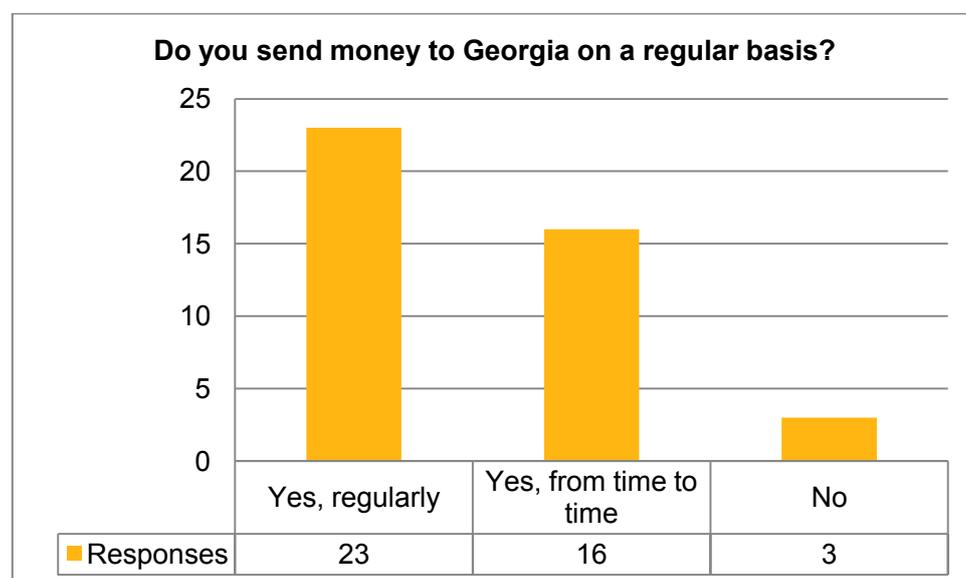
The polled migrants consider returning to Georgia within very different time frames. Almost 30% wish to return to Georgia in the next year and 22% within the next 5 years. 46% of the respondents wish to return to Georgia after the next 10 years.

One interviewed diaspora organisation member provides non-financial support to returnees, such as advice and contact details of persons who can support the reintegration process (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04).

### 8.3.3.2. Remittances

Among the three studied residence countries, Greece ranks second in terms of remittances being sent to Georgia, right after Turkey, with \$198 (€144) in 2013.<sup>110</sup> Almost all (93%) of the surveyed migrants send money to family members in Georgia, either on a regular basis (54%) or from time to time (38%). In addition, 44% remit more than €1,000 per year and 30% between €100 and €500 per year. The majority (63%) of the survey respondents earn €500 to €750 per month.

Figure 34: Sending Funds to Georgia (on a regular basis) (Greece)



Source: Field data, 2013

The remittances are usually sent via bank transfer (90% of the survey respondents) and less sent via bank transfer facilitators (13%) or post office services (5%). The money is mostly used for investments in agriculture and farm equipment and education (74%), food (48%), health (35%) and house construction/renovation/building (23%).

Both interviewed family members are recipients of remittances or were in the past, which amount to about €200 per month in both cases. In one case, more money was being sent to the grandparents for managing their business and for giving family members clothes and toys from abroad. The migrants had used both informal and formal channels for bank transfers. Now, both are using bank services. The remittances are mainly used

<sup>110</sup> (National Bank of Georgia 2013)

for education, furniture and food, as well as for paying off loans.

*“Now they don’t really send money to us, but for these years my mother has been sending 200 EUR per month only to me (2,400 EUR per year) and they used to send my grandparents the same amount. This was the minimum what they were sending. And they were also sending a lot of clothes and toys. In the very beginning my mother was sending the money by bus, there are special services for that, there as someone in the bus who would bring the money for a small tip. Then she was sending it via Western Union because the commissions were high in the bank. And then more services appeared as: Anelik, MoneyGram. Now she is sending the money, whenever she is sending, via the bank service, Liberty Bank in Georgia has this service named Intel Express. The money sent to us was spent on products of daily use, food and my education, mostly in my education. In the very beginning our family was very indebted and the largest amount of these remittances were paid to the creditors, but I don’t remember it well, but I know they had this debt and that was one of the main reasons why my aunt and mother left.”* (Family member: FM-GR-03)

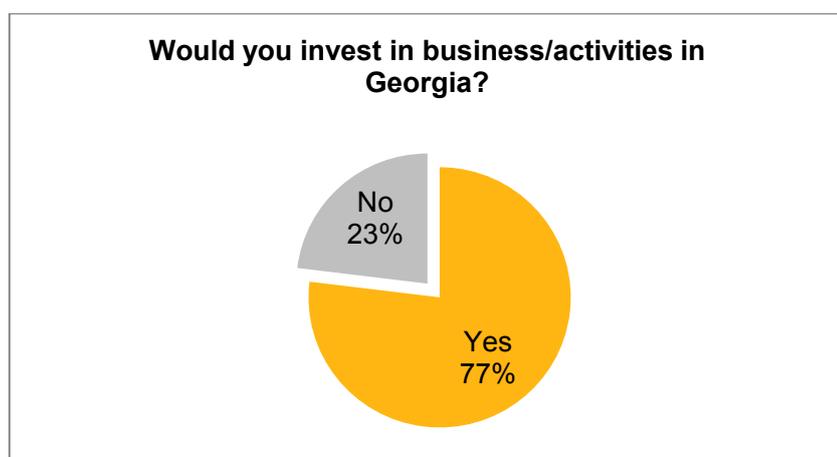
*“Yes she sends money all the time, and it depends how much is needed but on average she sends about 200EUR per month. Mostly she sends more if needed, the main income comes from the hair salon and she helps with studies, etc. She sends the money via Intelepress, it’s a bank service for sending money. She also gives it to drivers, but only to those who are recommended by her friends. This money is spent on our education, now she sends the money for furniture for our apartment. We have a bank loan and are also paying for it.”* (Family member: FM-GR-06)

### 8.3.3.3. Investments

There are no major foreign direct investments by Greeks in Georgia, although the Georgian investment climate is perceived as favourable for Greeks. Furthermore, Greeks who left Georgia in the 1990s still own land and property in the southern part of Georgia but are not active in investing.<sup>111</sup>

Out of the total polled migrants in Greece, 10% have private investments in Georgia and 77% would be willing to invest in business activities in Georgia. The main areas for potential investment are agriculture (33%), manufacturing (29%), tourism (29%) and services/supplies (21%; multiple answers were possible). One interviewed diaspora organisation also identified the wine sector as another area for potential investment in Georgia (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-04). Survey respondents agreed that economic growth (71%), legal security (48%) and political stability (32%) in Georgia would facilitate private investments.

Figure 35: Business Investment in Georgia (Greece)



Source: Field data, 2013

In regard to private investments, one family (among the interviewed family members) was able to open a business in Georgia with the help of the remitted money, which provides them with additional income:

<sup>111</sup>(GIZ 2013) PG 22

*“My mother and aunt, both have a business in Georgia. It is a small supermarket in Rustavi which they decided to open for my grandparents, so that they had their own source of income. I would say it is a small but sustainable investment. My grandparents and I manage this store. It was a very small shop at first, but then we expanded it and now it is quite a decent market.”*  
(Family member: FM-GR-03)

Others are saving or investing money in their small enterprises in Georgia and are waiting for their financial situation to improve before returning to Georgia:

*“She is thinking to come back this year, because our financial situation is a little improved. Whatever plans she has had, she accomplished them, so let’s see.[...] the hair salon has expanded, we added some more space to it and the income is bigger. Also, the main investments go into our home, renovations and also to my brother and me.”* (Family member: FM-GR-06)

#### 8.3.3.4. Development activities

The polled migrants have a strong intention to invest in development projects (83%). They are most interested in investing in projects on human rights (45%) and churches/religious institutions (27%). Projects dealing with institutions, infrastructure and policy were also mentioned (each 18%). One interviewed diaspora organisation mentioned that diaspora organisations also provided humanitarian assistance during the time of civil war and unrest in Georgia:

*“During the war we gathered EUR 11,000 from the diaspora and sent 3,000 tons of goods to Georgia.”* (Diaspora organisation: DO-GR-02)

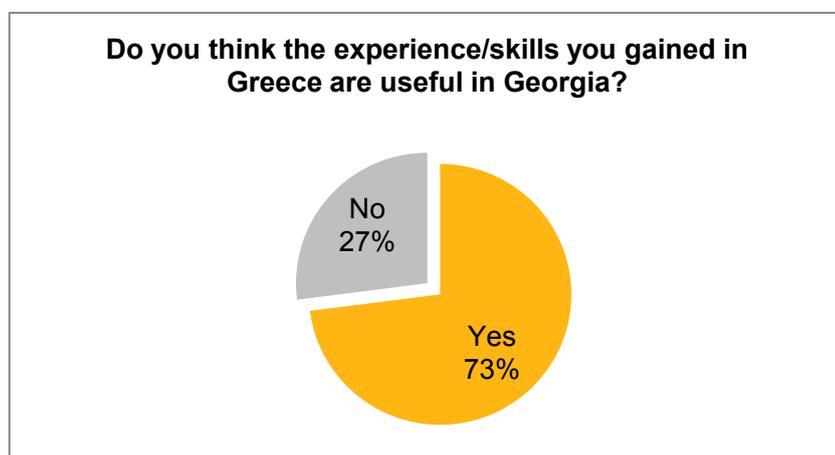
#### 8.3.3.5. Qualifications and knowledge transfer

Most survey respondents (73%) consider their experience and skills gained in Greece as useful for the development of Georgia and 77% think that it would be easy to apply those skills there. The interviewed diaspora organisation representative sees great potential for the transfer of skills and knowledge from Georgians residing in Greece, but so far there is no sign that the Georgian Diaspora Office is interested in capitalising on this potential:

*“There are lot of people in different fields with knowledge that can be used in Georgia, for example in the construction field, services, culinary, crafts, technology and other areas. People who have survived here become very strong.”* (DO-GR-01)

In addition, diaspora organisation representatives see the need for more and better reintegration programmes in Georgia that would also benefit remote areas of Georgia (DO-GR-02). The interviewed diaspora organisations are already active, albeit on a small scale, in assisting returnees.

Figure 36: Usefulness of Experience/Skills in Georgia That Were Gained in Greece

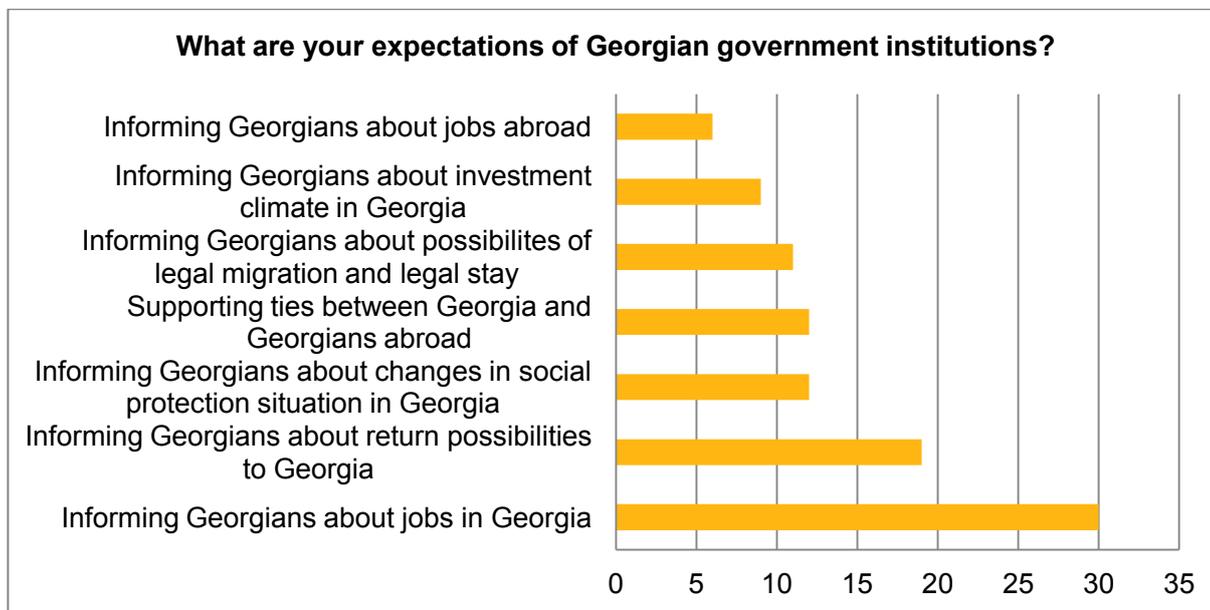


Source: Field data, 2013

### 8.3.3.6. Migrants' expectations of Georgian government institutions

Most surveyed Georgian migrants residing in Greece (75%) would like to be informed about job opportunities in Georgia, which also reflects their desire to return if the situation in Georgia and their personal circumstances allow it. Secondly, almost half of the surveyed migrants want to be informed about return possibilities to Georgia (48%), in addition to information about changes in the social protection situation in Georgia (30%) and about possibilities of legal migration and legal stay in the destination country (28%). Furthermore, 30% expect Georgian government institutions to support stronger ties between Georgia and Georgians abroad (multiple answers were possible).

Figure 37: Migrants' Expectations of Georgian Government Institutions (Greece)



Source: Field data, 2013

The interviewed diaspora organisation representatives have several expectations of Georgian government institutions, in particular, support in creating a diaspora umbrella organisation that would encompass the heads of all diaspora organisations and consolidate their needs and activities. They also urge Georgian government institutions to enhance the recognition of credentials and qualifications, such as formal degrees and certificates, driver's licenses, etc. The education of Georgian children living abroad could be enhanced through the involvement of academics, musicians, artists and writers from Georgia who could provide classes, seminars or summer camps. As also mentioned in the other researched countries, the provision of teaching materials and books for different target groups would be highly appreciated. And, finally, a simplified and easily accessible distribution of information on legislative changes, new regulations and requirements for Georgians abroad would be highly valued.



### **Key information on contributions of the Georgian diaspora residing in Greece to the development of Georgia**

- Most survey participants want to return to Georgia.
- Hindering factors are the lack of jobs in Georgia, economic instability and the fear of not being able to socially reintegrate.
- Almost all of the surveyed migrants send money to family members in Georgia, mostly via bank transfer, which is invested in agriculture and farm equipment and education, and is used for food, health care and house construction/renovation.
- Most migrant respondents have a strong willingness to invest in Georgia. The priority areas are agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and services/supplies.
- In addition, they have a strong intention to invest in development projects on human rights and churches/religious institutions.
- The large majority of survey respondents consider their experience and skills gained in Greece as useful for the development of Georgia.
- The survey respondents expect the government to better inform them about jobs in Georgia, to develop systems for a better recognition of qualifications and credentials gained in Greece, to support the teaching of Georgian in Greece and to support diaspora organisations.

## 9. The Georgian Diaspora in Turkey

### 9.1. Introduction

Historically, Turkey is home to a significant part of the Georgian diaspora. This can be traced back to Georgian–Turkish relations in the Middle Ages and the conquests of the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in large settlements of Turks on Georgian territories in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and their later resettlement to Central Asia. This resettlement is largely debated in Georgia. Some perceive the Muslim population deported from Georgia during the 1940s as being of Georgian origin, while others believe that they are of Turkish origin.

Close historic ties and the geographic proximity of Turkey and Georgia have been significant determinants of migratory movements between the two countries since then. Georgian migration to Turkey is characterised by three main waves, as delineated in a recent CRRC study on migration trends in Georgia. During the first wave from 1990 to 1995 (after the collapse of the Soviet Union), many ethnic Georgians emigrated for economic reasons, primarily to Russia and Turkey. This wave mainly consisted of highly-skilled migrants, particularly men of working age from the capital, Tbilisi. During the following two waves (1994–2004, a period of economic instability in Georgia, and 2004–today, a rebuilding and economic growth phase), the destination countries of migrants expanded to the US and Europe. As with the first wave, most migrants have been skilled workers.<sup>112</sup>

The most recent data suggests that Turkey is one of the top three destination countries for Georgian migrants. It became an even more attractive country for Georgians after the establishment of the visa-free regime with Turkey in 2006. A study conducted by the European Training Foundation (ETF) on migration and skills in Georgia concludes that Turkey, Russia and Greece are among the top three destination countries for migrants from Georgia.<sup>113</sup>

### 9.2. Profile of the Georgian diaspora

#### 9.2.1. Size and location of the Georgian diaspora population

It is estimated that about 2.5 million ethnic Georgians reside in Turkey, most of them belonging to the Georgian historical diaspora.<sup>114</sup> The frequency of entries and exits at Turkey's border indicates that Georgia was among the ten most arriving and departing countries in 2008.<sup>115</sup> The most recent publicly available data is from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey,<sup>116</sup> which shows that 1,404,882 Georgians entered Turkey in 2012 (which includes all types of migrants):

**Table 10: Means of Transport and Number of Georgians Arriving in Turkey**

Georgians arriving in Turkey and their means of transport in 2012	
Means of Transport	Number of Georgians
Air	51,992
Land	1,346,712
Train	3
Sea	6,175
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,404,882</b>

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey 2013

The largest cross-border movements from Georgia to Turkey are at the Sarp border crossing point, which lies at the crossroads of the two countries in south-western Georgia. A sharp rise in cross-border mobility is noticeable from 2003 on due to the improved trade, economic, political and cultural relations between the two countries. In

<sup>112</sup> (Caucasus Research Resource Centre 2007)

<sup>113</sup> (ETF 2012)

<sup>114</sup> (Caucasus Research Resource Centre 2007)

<sup>115</sup> (Cigerci Ulukan and Ulukan 2010)

<sup>116</sup> (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey 2013)

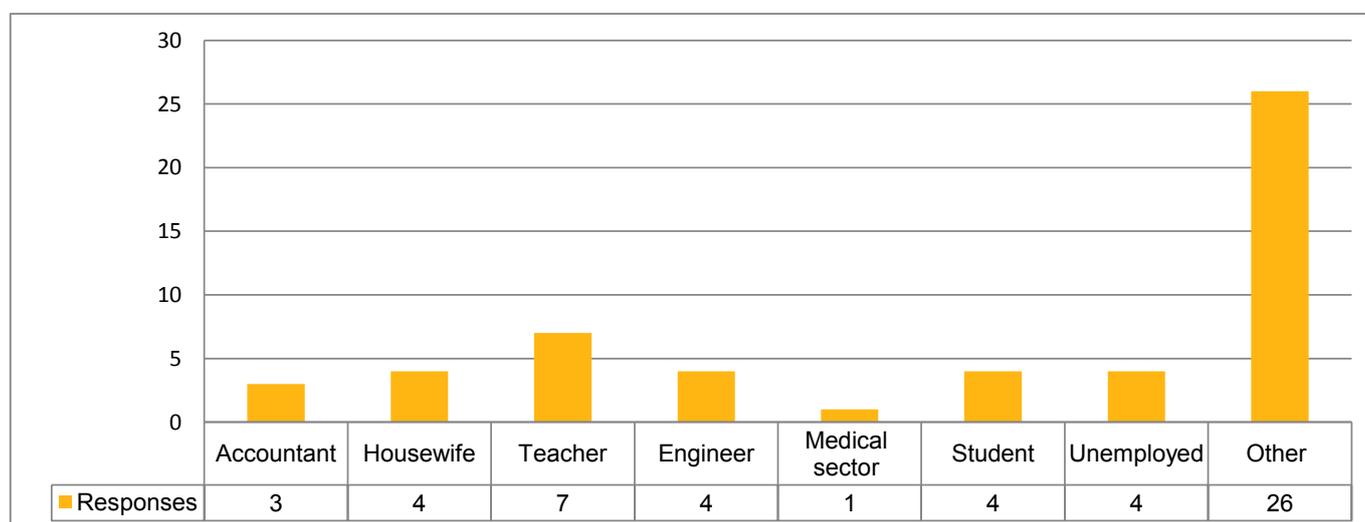
2007, Turkey became Georgia's biggest trading partner and one of the biggest investors in the country, leading to a free trade agreement between the two countries. The improved economic relations between Turkey and Georgia also led to an influx of Georgian labour in the Turkish informal economy. Georgian migrant settlements can be identified in Turkish regions bordering Georgia, such as the Artvin province, and in big cities, such as Ankara, Istanbul, Samsun and Izmir.<sup>117</sup>

### 9.2.2. Socio-demographic profile

The data available at the Turkish Statistical Institute indicates that the number of Georgian migrants in Turkey is 1,979, out of which 919 are male and 1,060 are female (the year was not indicated).<sup>118</sup> A study published by the European Training Foundation highlights that those with low and medium levels of education tend to migrate mostly to Turkey, whereas those with a better education migrate to the United States and Europe (Italy and Germany).<sup>119</sup> This was not confirmed by the survey results, as the level of education among the survey respondents is significantly higher. 56% of the survey respondents have completed secondary school (39%) or vocational school (17%), while 40% have either a Bachelor's degree (23%) or a Master's degree (17%). This might be due to the fact that the survey was carried out in Istanbul and did not cover remote and agricultural areas in Turkey.

The last professions the surveyed migrants had before migrating to Turkey show a very diverse picture. Professions can be clustered only to a very limited extent.

Figure 38: Last Profession in Georgia (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013

\**Other*: professions include dancer, athlete, farmer, journalist, road construction worker, security guard, grocery shop manager, technician, etc.

### 9.2.3. Types of migration, causes and motives

According to a study conducted by Turkish scholars, the profile of Georgian migrants can be characterised as mostly seasonal workers employed mainly in the agriculture, construction and domestic service sectors.<sup>120</sup> In particular, Georgians are employed on hazelnut and tea plantations as short-term seasonal workers. As interviews with employers revealed, Georgians usually engage in the most difficult and low-paying jobs because of their lack of work permits. Turkey (like Greece) is also a country where the demand for female-oriented jobs is high. Therefore, Georgian women find themselves mostly employed in domestic work: babysitting, housekeeping and serving.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>117</sup> (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey 2013); (International Labour Organization 2011)

<sup>118</sup> (Turkish Statistical Institute 2013)

<sup>119</sup> (ETF 2012)

<sup>120</sup> (Cigerci Ulukan and Ulukan 2010) PG 6

<sup>121</sup> (Tchaidze and Torosyan 2010)

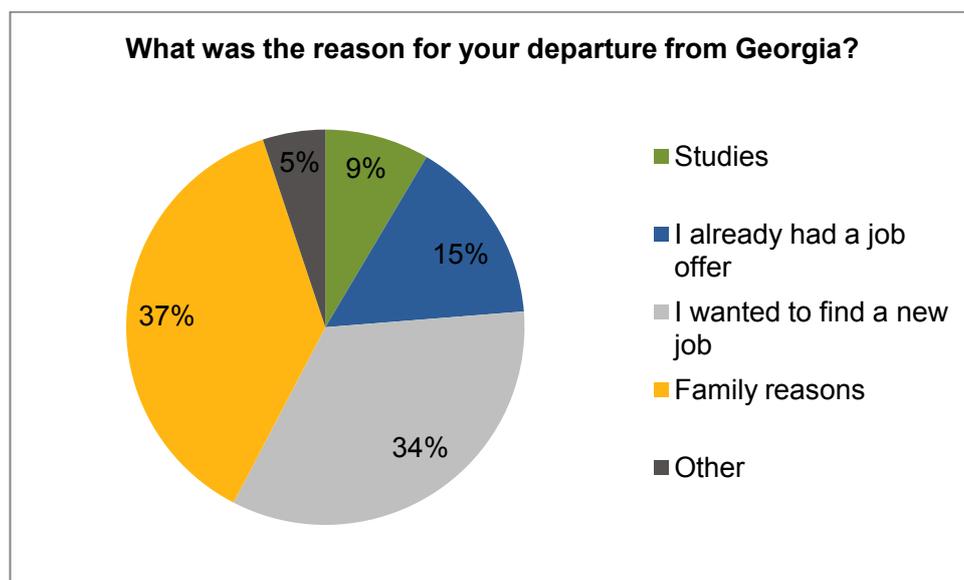
Many Georgians benefit from the visa-free regime between Turkey and Georgia, which was established in 2006 for work purposes, as was illustrated by the daughter of a Georgian labour migrant who went to Turkey in 2013. In addition to the visa-free regime, the proximity to Turkey also allows migrants who are financially not as well off as other migrants (who can afford to travel to farther destinations) to migrate to Turkey. Most survey participants (77%) possess a residence permit for Turkey:

*“Yes, she is working at a bakery now and is cleaning there and also is a waitress. She has a visa, you can stay in Turkey for three months without any problems, but after that you have to return to Georgia for some time and then you can go back again.” (FM-TR-02).*

Almost half of the survey respondents stated that the prospect for a new job (34% left to find a new job, while 15% already had an offer) was their main reason for departure. 37% left for family reasons. The statement of a family member of a migrant who went to Turkey exemplifies that the main reason for migration is to find employment:

*“Yes, my father is working. He still works for the man who gave him the job when he first arrived in Turkey. Actually, this man has his own company that makes all kinds of staircases, windows, gates and this kind of stuff. Usually they make these things for hotels, shops and multi-storey buildings. So he became a carpenter there. [...] He mainly left because he wouldn't find any kind of job here and the whole family was in strong financial crisis, of course we were in favour of his departure. My father knew that he wanted to go to Turkey because a lot of people were going there when he made up his mind. A lot of young men would go to Turkey mainly to help with the harvest (nuts) and there were some of our acquaintances as well, so he decided it would be better to leave.” (FM-TR-01).*

Figure 39: Reason for Departure from Georgia (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013

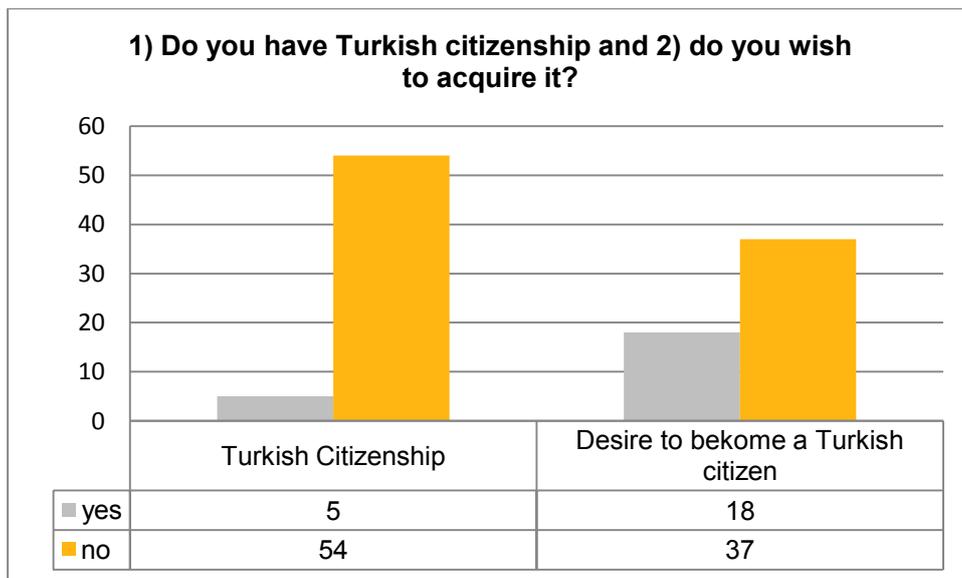
#### 9.2.4. Situation of Georgian migrants in Turkey

According to the most recent trends, the increased cross-border movement can be seen since 2006 through the Sarpi border crossing point of western Georgia bordering Turkey. A report by Turkish scholars suggests that migration from Georgia to Turkey can be mostly characterised as temporary labour migration<sup>122</sup> and that the share of Georgians applying for Turkish citizenship is mostly likely rather small. However, the results of the survey do not confirm the latter assumption. One third of the respondents would like to receive Turkish citizenship (see below), which indicates that these migrants wish to transform their temporary residence into a permanent one. Among the survey respondents, around 8% have Turkish citizenship and 33% wish to

<sup>122</sup> (Cigerci Ulukan and Ulukan 2010)

acquire Turkish citizenship. Only half (52%) of the polled migrants stated that Turkey was their desired country of destination.

Figure 40: Aspiration to Obtain Turkish Citizenship

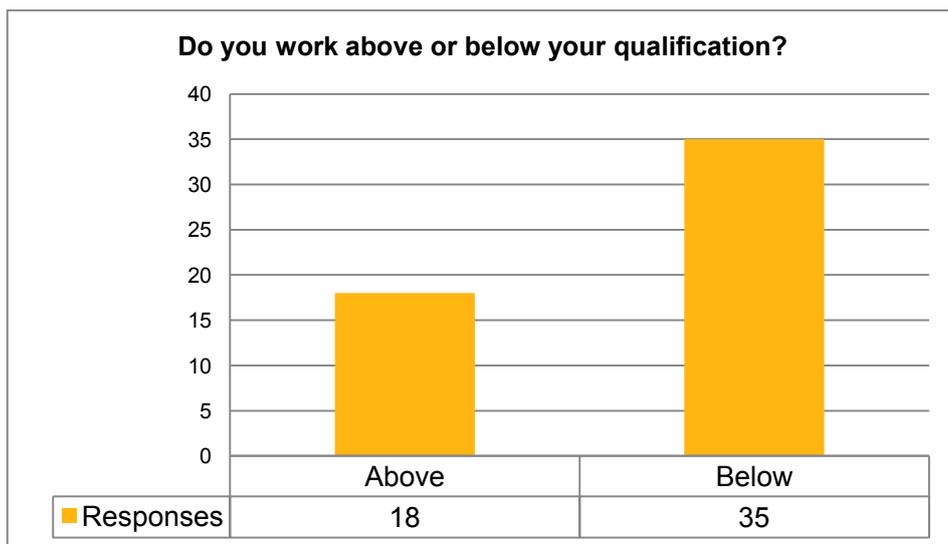


Source: Field data, 2013

More than half of the survey respondents do not have a work permit (51%) and benefit from the visa agreement between Georgia and Turkey. The fact that 88% of the polled migrants work in Turkey indicates that the remaining respondents work in Turkey without a valid work permit. Among those 88%, more than half work in the domestic sector as nannies or housekeepers. The majority of respondents (66%) consider themselves to be working below their level of qualification. An interview with a family member confirms this finding:

*“My mother has a high-school education and that’s the only kind of job she could find which is quite decent, I think. And our family got the lowest scores on the poverty scale and we are listed as a socially unprotected group, so we really needed someone to get an income.” (FM-TR-02)*

Figure 41: Working Above/Below Qualifications (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013

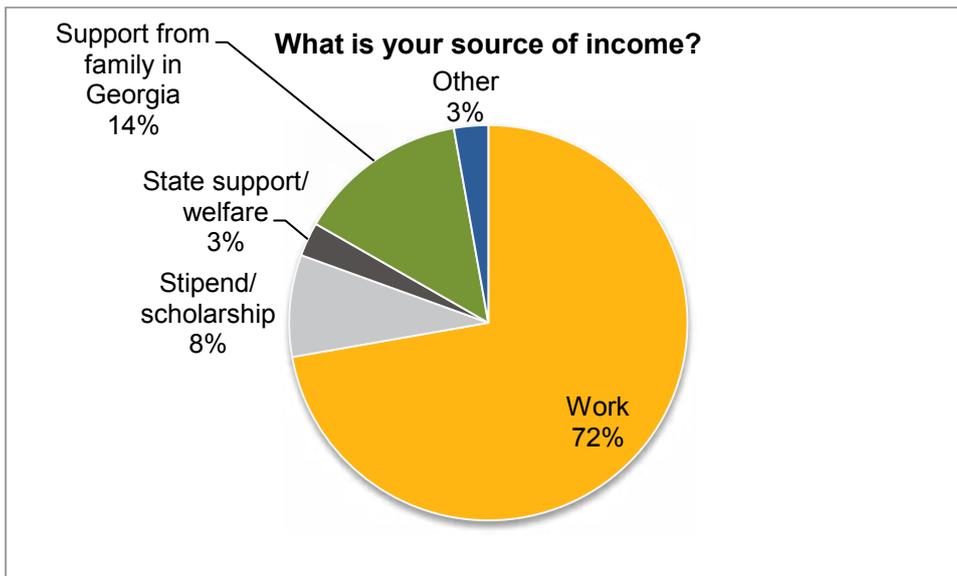
The interviewed Georgian diaspora organisation indicated that they are approached by around 1,000 Georgian migrants per year. These mainly newly arrived migrants are in need of advice when they are underpaid and when they need a lawyer. Many of them also need information about the labour code and on how to get a work permit and renew their visa. The association also reported that there is a need for translation and interpretation

services for Georgians in detention (DO-TR-01).

Research findings published by European training foundations show that Georgian migrants in Turkey tend to work alarmingly long hours, on average 65 hours per week. Female migrants were likely to work longer hours than males.<sup>123</sup>

Most survey participants (72%) stated that work is their main source of income, but 14% also receive support from their family in Georgia. The official data available from the National Bank of Georgia shows that \$98,000 (€71,000) were transferred from Georgia to Turkey in 2013, which is about three times less than the remitted amount from Turkey to Georgia for the same year. However, it is still a significant number.<sup>124</sup>

Figure 42: Source of Income (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013

Interviews with family members show that the migration experience is seen more as a decision that was put on them through external (economic) circumstances than as an opportunity. The interviewed family members in Georgia stated that their family members abroad do not aim to integrate in Turkey. This can be seen in the case of one migrant who returns to Georgia on a three-month basis due to her lack of a residence and work permit:

*"I really doubt she would ever want to get Turkish citizenship, because she hates being there. This is because of quite hard conditions at work and long working hours. [...] I don't see any advantage of her being there except she is sending us money and she left because we had to survive somehow. She misses us very much. When we speak to her she cries all the time, she would never leave if she found some job here. Whatever she earns there, she sends it to us."* (FM-TR-02)

*"My father has a Georgian passport, of course. His boss actually was suggesting my father to take his family with him to Turkey and get the citizenship, he was saying he could help. But my father does not want this."* (FM-TR-01)

One family member mentioned the lack of employment opportunities for young women and the cultural differences between the two countries as reasons not to follow her father to Turkey. The issue of cultural and religious differences was also mentioned multiple times in the survey:

*"[...] and I don't think I could find any kind of job that would be acceptable for a young woman. I don't know, maybe it is more appropriate for the 45 years old woman to go there, because working is really hard there; it is a better place for men to go working in Turkey. And it is a Muslim country, so I think it would be difficult for me to live there. And also I don't speak Turkish, that's*

<sup>123</sup> (ETF 2012)

<sup>124</sup> (National Bank of Georgia 2013)

*also one of the reasons why I wouldn't like to go and wouldn't really like to study Turkish.” (FM-TR-01)*

As a general note, a distinction should be made between two different Georgian diasporas: the historical diaspora and the new labour migrants. These two groups obviously face different challenges and have different needs.



### **Key information on the profile of the Georgian diaspora in Turkey**

- Most survey participants want to return to Georgia.
- A significant share of the Georgian historical diaspora resides in Turkey.
- Newer waves of Georgian migration to Turkey can be characterised as temporary labour migration, mostly seasonal.
- More female migrants tend to migrate to Turkey, due to the unfavourable labour market conditions in Georgia and the increasing demand for domestic workers in Turkey.
- The Georgian diaspora in Turkey is quite scattered; however, the largest migrant settlements are in the regions bordering Georgia and in big cities.
- The largest cross-border movements from Georgia to Turkey are at the Sarpi border crossing point.
- Desk research findings suggest that Georgian migrants employed in Turkey have a low to medium level of education, which was not confirmed by the survey, as most respondents have quite a high level of qualification. This might be due to the fact that the survey was carried out in Istanbul and did not cover remote and agricultural areas in Turkey.
- More than half of the survey respondents do not have a work permit (51%) and work for the duration of their visa (three months). This may be why many Georgians migrants can be found in difficult and low-paying jobs, especially domestic services.
- A majority of respondents (66%) consider themselves to be working below their qualifications.
- Only one third of the respondents wish to receive Turkish citizenship, even though many of the respondents only have a temporary status, which might be related to integration and adaptation problems in Turkey.

### 9.3. Transnational activities of Georgians residing in Turkey

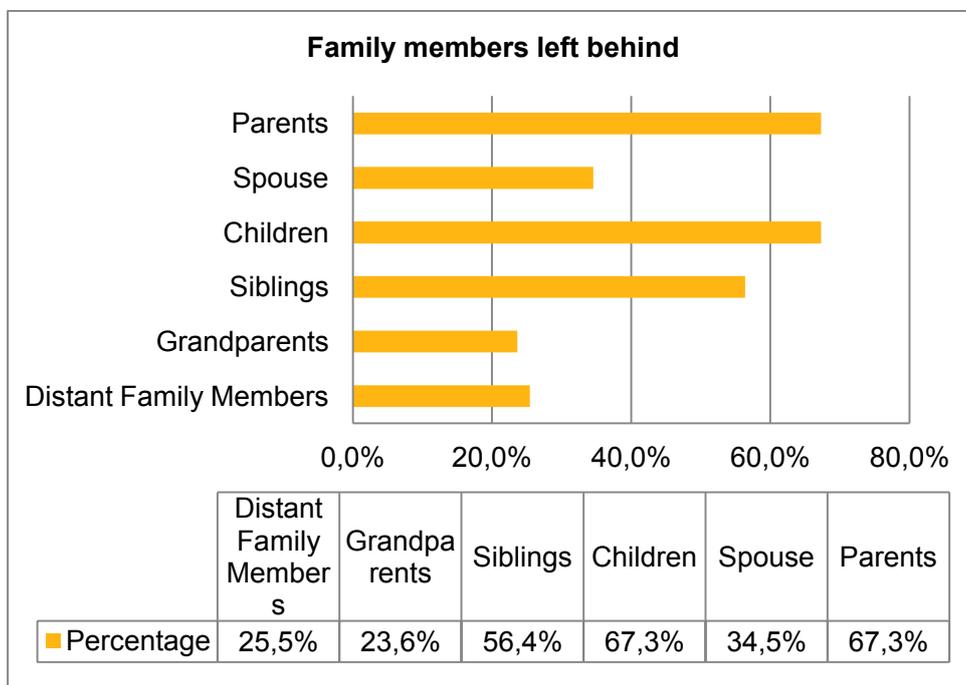
#### 9.3.1. Ties between Georgians residing in Turkey and Georgia

As mentioned above, Georgian–Turkish migration movements have existed for a long time. Nevertheless, many Turks with Georgian roots have maintained their ties with Georgia and a sense of belonging. This is reflected by the fact that their villages are mainly called “Georgian villages”.

*“Armenians who converted to Islam were no longer called Greeks and Armenians. However, Georgians who became Muslims were still called Georgians - “Gurji” and Abkhazians too. I don’t know why it was so, so we have always known that we are Georgians and we have always been called Georgians here.” (DO-TR-02)*

Most surveyed Georgian migrants residing in Turkey have a valid Georgian passport (89%) and family members in Georgia (93%). Many left their children and parents (70%) and spouses (36%) behind as well as siblings and grandparents.

Figure 43: Family Members Left Behind (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013

The recent initiative of the Georgian government to provide citizenship to Turks with Georgian roots was of great interest to Georgian migrants.<sup>125</sup> One interview partner perceives this step taken by the Georgian government as important for strengthening ties with Georgia, as many people residing in Turkey would otherwise not have considered themselves as having Georgian roots:

*“It’s interesting that a lot of people here in Turkey want Georgian citizenship and some have even received it. It’s interesting because I would never have thought that so many people wanted to receive citizenship and so many people would say ‘yes, I have Georgian roots’. [...] So, it was this push that people needed to say I am Georgian.” (DO-TR-02)*

Over 90% of the polled migrants have visited Georgia since they came to Turkey; most of them visit Georgia at least every half year (45% even every three months), with family visits being the main reason. A smaller portion also visits Georgia for business (12%) and health reasons (8%).

Georgian migrants in Turkey communicate with those left behind on a regular basis (83% at least a few

<sup>125</sup> (Democracy and Freedom Watch 2013)

times a week) via phone, the internet and social media. As the survey showed, the most popular sources of communication used by migrants are the phone (86%), social media (52%), e.g. Facebook, Odnoklassniki, etc., and Skype (53%).

Face-to-face communication also plays a major role in keeping Georgians connected to Georgia. There are many acquaintances that people find in Turkey, they discuss problems together and tell their families about their life in Turkey, and their experience of finding a job and settling in the city. These networks facilitate the spread of information back home about migration opportunities and living conditions in Turkey, which leads to more people deciding to try their fortune by following their acquaintance's path of moving abroad for temporary or long-term employment. The observations at the international bus stations both in Tbilisi and Istanbul showed that the majority of people who depart to Turkey already have connections in the country of destination. These connections, some of them very loose, are enough for potential migrants to decide to leave Georgia.<sup>126</sup>

#### **Impressions from the observation in Istanbul:**

It is a bus station in Aksaray, Istanbul, small cafe Niko at the bus terminal from which buses and trucks are leaving from Istanbul to Georgia and vice versa. Suddenly, the TV gets louder – everybody is listening to the 6 o'clock evening news from Tbilisi. The cafe is almost full, where Georgian food is served exclusively and basically, the only Georgian people here are mostly migrants, visitors, bus drivers. Outside of the cafe, one can hear Georgian language everywhere; one can forget that it is not Georgia, but Istanbul. Every day, two buses come from and leave for Tbilisi from this bus station. Every time, the buses are full, they bring Georgians to Istanbul: sometimes for a shorter time, sometimes – for years.

Another place where you can meet Georgians – mainly on Sundays – is a small Greek Orthodox church in the Eastern part of the city. Unlike at the bus station, it is very calm here. Contrary to the bus station, the absolute majority of Georgians here are women. It is not just a place to pray, it is also a club – when women come out from the church, their faces are brighter, and they talk to each other, exchange news, smile and laugh.

The large majority of respondents (80%) follow the situation in Georgia, mainly via the internet (63%), TV (61%) and phone calls with family and friends (20%; multiple answers were possible).

The large majority of surveyed Georgian migrants in Turkey (77%) are not aware of the initiatives by Georgian governmental institutions targeting Georgians abroad. Georgian migrants mainly contact the Georgian Consulate in Turkey for help with visa issues and for advice. One interviewed family member of a Georgian residing in Turkey shared a positive example of a migrant receiving support from the Georgian Consulate in Turkey. The consulate assisted the migrant with his documents:

*“My father contacted the Georgian Consulate in Turkey when he needed to extend his visa, after this new rule about 90 day stay came into force. So they helped him at the Consulate, they told him what kind of documentation he needed and that the Turkish police was responsible for that and so they told him what to do and where to go next.” (FM-TR-01)*

The representative of an interviewed diaspora association stated that they have relations with the Diaspora Office, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and the Ministry of Education and Science in Georgia, but would like to receive more support. For example, Georgian language teachers and Georgian books would facilitate the work of the organisation (DO-TR-01). The interviewed diaspora organisation mentioned that the Diaspora Office used to organise diaspora conferences that brought together diaspora representatives residing in different destination countries to meet and share their experiences, needs and problems, which is considered important (DO-TR-01). The organisation underlined the need to have close relations with the Georgian Consulate in Turkey for the purpose of exchanging information.

The diaspora organisations in Istanbul consider learning the Georgian language as crucial for strengthening the links between Georgians in Turkey and Georgia. The organisations direct all their efforts towards organising Georgian language classes for youngsters and adults. The teachers of the Georgian language are from the historical diaspora who learned Georgian on their own and are volunteering to spread their knowledge. Educational books about Georgian literature, grammar and history are not available for the diaspora members.

<sup>126</sup> Observation during the fact-finding mission to Istanbul on 2–5 November 2013

As shown by Mr Fahrettin Ciloglu (Parna-Beka Chilashvili)<sup>127</sup>, a Turkish writer with Georgian roots, who began his writing career by translating Georgian literature into Turkish:

*“It should be something inside you, you want to learn, find out... I always wanted to learn the language we sometimes spoke at home...I wanted to know literary Georgian”. “Every state wants their language to be taught in other countries, to publish their literature... I don’t think Georgia has any such plans either short or long-term and when the state develops such a plan and they need an ally in these countries, I will be there, so will others and we will definitely cooperate.” (DO-TR-02)*

Hence, the provision of professional Georgian language classes, school or at least a full-time teacher at diaspora organisations is one of the main needs of the Georgian diaspora in Istanbul.

Besides the Georgian language, Georgian culture is also an important ‘connector’. The Georgian Culture House – Chveneburi actively works on airing Georgian TV shows on a Turkish channel and has broadcasted already 13 series of Georgian folklore, music and dances on Turkish TV. It was also observed that radio is no longer the preferred medium for informing Georgians in Turkey about Georgia, since Facebook is so widely used (DO-TR-01). However, Georgian cultural acts, such as the Sukhishvili Georgian National Ballet, are not yet as well known in Turkey as they are in Germany, for example. This example also shows the important role diaspora associations play in promoting Georgia and Georgian culture abroad (DO-TR-01). Culture/art is not only a ‘tool’ to connect persons with Georgian roots with their country of origin, but is also a tool to (re)connect the Georgian population living in Georgia with those with Georgian roots living abroad:

*“Maybe I’m writing such stories so that the population in Georgia learns about this. Many people look at our living here sort of more superficially, you know they went changed their religion and settled down there. It shouldn’t be so and I want to show people the depth that exists in our history.” (DO-TR-02)*

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<sup>127</sup> Mr Fahrettin Çiloğlu is a Turkish writer of Georgian origin, whose family emigrated from Georgia in the late nineteenth century. In Georgia, the author is known by his Georgian name – Parna-Beka Chilashvili. Being a successful journalist and author in Turkey, Çiloğlu has also translated fiction and non-fiction works from Georgian to Turkish. He was the editor of the bilingual Turkish-Georgian journal *Pirosmani*, which was published in Istanbul between 2007 and 2010. The author also published a number of poems and stories in Georgia, among them his poems in Georgian and short stories translated from Turkish into Georgian under the title *Border Thoughts* and a collection of stories *While It Is Snowing*. Çiloğlu’s body of work includes stories of Georgian history and as well as of Georgian people in Turkey.



### Key information on the ties between Georgians residing in Turkey and Georgia

- Most survey participants want to return to Georgia.
- There are different Georgian diaspora communities: historical diaspora and circular labour migrants.
- Long-term Georgian migrants maintain ties with Georgia.
- There is growing interest among the historical diaspora to enhance their ties to Georgia, e.g. through language classes, celebrating its culture and trips to Georgia.
- The large majority of survey respondents left their children behind, most likely due to the temporary stay in Turkey.
- Most survey participants have visited Georgia since they came to Turkey and frequently visit Georgia, mainly for family, health and business reasons.
- Most surveyed Georgian migrants in Turkey (77%) are not aware of the initiatives of Georgian governmental institutions targeting Georgians abroad.
- The Georgian language and culture plays an important role in maintaining ties with Georgia.

#### 9.3.2. Organisations of the Georgian diaspora

In Turkey, the available information on Georgian diaspora organisation suggests that activities are mainly directed towards cultural activities and language teaching. They also publish Georgian magazines (a list of mapped diaspora organisations can be found in the annex, as well as examples of diaspora organisation activities).<sup>128</sup>

Among the survey respondents, 15% are members of a diaspora organisation, either on an active basis or by following the activities of the respective organisation closely. The most important tasks of a diaspora organisation, according to survey respondents, are to support Georgians in organising their life and inform Georgians abroad about the situation in Georgia. In addition to the survey results, the interviewed family members of Georgians in Turkey suggest that Georgian diaspora organisations should have the following tasks: linking Georgians abroad with each other and strengthening their communication with each other, organising cultural events and providing Georgians with jobs to or informing them about job opportunities in Georgia.

*“I think the most important task of such organisation should be linking Georgians abroad and strengthening their communication with each other. I also think that the organisation of some cultural events would be very important for those Georgians who live in Turkey because they are homesick all the time and getting closer to their homeland would make their lives easier there.”*  
(FM-TR-01)

*“Would be nice if that organisation found a job for her (mother) in Georgia.”* (FM-TR-02)

Engaging in a Georgian diaspora association and having contacts with other Georgian migrants in Turkey are perceived as being important for maintaining strong ties with Georgia.

<sup>128</sup> For example, *Machakhela and Chveneburi*, see (GIZ 2013)

*“Migrants are examples of Georgian language, culture and history of Georgia for us, they are our sisters and brothers.” (DO-TR-01)*

Georgian diaspora organisations in Turkey seem to be well connected through their common objective to promote Georgian culture and organise joint events (DO-TR-01). One of the interviewed organisations also stated that they receive non-financial support from the Turkish municipality, such as the provision of buses and venue locations when they organise large events. Georgian state institutions also provide in-kind support. Apart from these non-financial forms of assistance, the associations do not receive any support. One interviewed diaspora organisation finances itself through language class fees and concert and event tickets (DO-TR-01).

Returning migrants can be an important bridge between a diaspora organisation in a residence country and Georgia as stated by one interviewed Georgian diaspora association representative (DO-TR-01).



### **Key information on Georgian diaspora organisations in Turkey**

- Most survey participants want to return to Georgia.
- The activities of Georgian diaspora organisations are mainly directed towards cultural activities and language teaching. Also, Georgian magazines are published by diaspora organisations.
- Diaspora organisations also aim to make the Georgian culture better known in Turkey, for example, through radio and TV shows.
- Georgian diaspora organisations in Turkey seem to be well connected through their common objective to promote the Georgian culture and organise joint events.
- Non-financial support, such as the provision of buses for transportation or venue locations, is provided by the Turkish municipality.
- Georgian state institutions also provide in-kind support but more support is desired, especially teaching materials for teaching the Georgian language.

### **9.3.3. Potential of the Georgian diaspora residing in Turkey to contribute to development in Georgia**

#### **9.3.3.1. Return**

The results of the survey demonstrate that 93% of the surveyed Georgian migrants in Turkey want to return to Georgia, underlining that they did not intend to migrate permanently. The main reasons stated were being closer to the family (*“of course I prefer to live in Georgia with my family”*) and emotional ties with Georgia (*“Georgia is my homeland”*). The lack of jobs was mentioned as the most important reason not to return and was confirmed during the interviews with family members.

*“She wants to find job in Georgia more than anything as soon as she finds it, she will not go anywhere again. But the thing is that all the jobs she can get here are very low-paid, so she cannot take those jobs.” (FM-TR-02)*

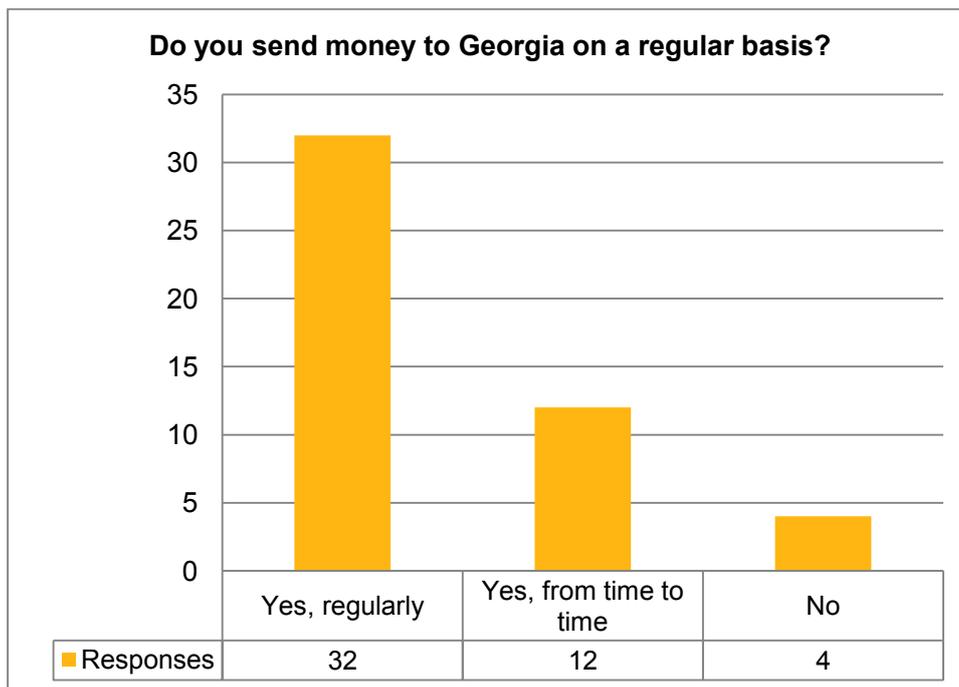
Similar to Greece, the polled migrants consider returning to Georgia within very different time frames: 57% would like to return within the next year, 16% within 5 years and 25% after the next 10 years.

### 9.3.3.2. Remittances

Data published by the National Bank of Georgia reveals that \$258 million (€188 million) was transferred to Georgia from Turkey in 2013.<sup>129</sup> The indicated sum sent back home via bank transfers is rather significant. In addition, bearing in mind the use of unofficial means to transfer money, it can be assumed that the overall amount of remittances exceeds the official figure above. A study published by the European Training Foundation highlights that Georgian migrants are able to substantially help family members even though their salaries are low, as Turkey has relatively low living costs. According to their research findings, Georgian migrants in Turkey send 59% of their monthly incomes.<sup>130</sup>

92% of the surveyed migrants send money to family members in Georgia, either on a regular basis (67%) or from time to time (25%). 43% remit between €100 and €500 per year and 38% more than €1,000 per year. The majority of survey respondents (58%) earn less than €500 per month.

Figure 44: Sending Funds to Georgia (on a regular basis) (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013

Money is to a large extent sent via family and friends (72%; multiple answers were possible) and to a lesser extent by bank transfer (28%), personal carriage to Georgia (12%) and bank transfer facilitators (9%). The money is mostly used for investment in farm equipment (80%) and for education (68%), health care (60%) and food (30%; multiple answers were possible).

Both interviewed family members of Georgian migrants in Turkey receive money on a monthly basis. The amount varies between \$200 (ca. €150) and GEL 150 (ca. €75). One migrant uses informal channels of money transfer by sending the remittances through a bus driver to Georgia where the money is spent on everyday expenses, such as rent, electricity, gas, water and food.

*“My father usually brings the money with him. If there is an urgent case and we need the money very soon, he sends it with the bus. He gives it to the driver or someone on the bus and we meet the bus here. Usually it is USD 200 or USD 150 per month or twice per month. And this money is usually spent on electricity, gas, water and rent.” (FM-TR-01)*

*“My mom had to pay for the apartment rent which we haven’t paid for many months and we had to pay that first, the rest what is left from besides the rent is hardly enough for food and communal bills. She sends us GEL 150 per month excluding rent. For health this money would*

<sup>129</sup> (National Bank of Georgia 2013)

<sup>130</sup> (ETF 2012)

*never be enough, but thank God we have social insurance and it helps in urgent cases.” (FM-TR-02)*

### 9.3.3.3. Investments

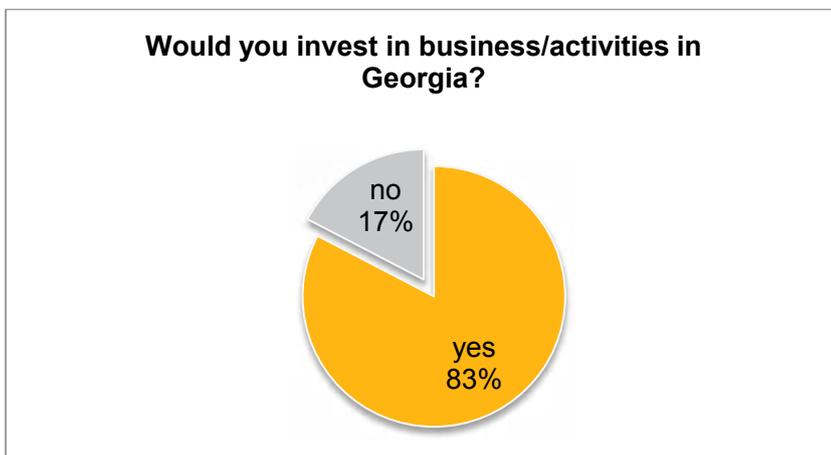
Desk research findings on investments by Turkey in Georgia reveal that a large part of Turkish investment in Georgia was mostly directed towards textile factories with Turkish owners located in the Adjara region of Georgia. These inflows of investments might be tied to the historical Georgian diaspora residing in Turkey. Diaspora organisations are also actively promoting the good Georgian investment climate among their business networks, which has resulted in attracting sufficient amounts of FDI to Georgia. The following examples can be cited: Turkish investment in Georgian airports (TAV) and Turkish and Russian investment in the energy sector.<sup>131</sup> Also, a Turkish–Georgian olive company (“Geolive”) has purchased land in East Georgia and planted about 400 hectares of olive fields.<sup>132</sup> Thus, the active engagement of Georgian historical diaspora in Turkey plays an important role in securing FDI flows from Turkey. Also, the interviewed diaspora association contributes to development in Georgia, mainly through the provision of information to Georgian businessmen in Turkey who want to invest in Georgia (DO-TR-01).

Furthermore, 13% of the polled migrants have private investments in Georgia and 83% would be willing to invest in business activities in Georgia. The three main areas for potential investments are agriculture (50%), tourism (27%) and manufacturing (24%; multiple answers were possible). Respondents agreed that economic growth (67%), legal security (43%) and political stability (40%) would facilitate investment (multiple answers were possible).

One interviewed family member stated that the father who lives in Turkey plans to open a supermarket in Georgia upon his return:

*“Of course he wants to come back to Georgia. He plans to return in 3 or 4 years. We plan to buy an apartment in Tbilisi by mortgage and as soon as he has enough savings, he will come back. And I really want him to come back. [...] my father would like to invest, why not? I think he would open a small supermarket.” (FM-TR-01)*

Figure 45: Business Investment in Georgia (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013

### 9.3.3.4. Development activities

The polled migrants have a strong intention to invest in development projects (86%). They are most interested in projects in that support churches/religious institutions (41%), human rights (35%) and infrastructure (18%).

*“Many things I like [in Georgia], sometimes you get angry because you want it to be better,*

<sup>131</sup> (GIZ 2013) PG 22

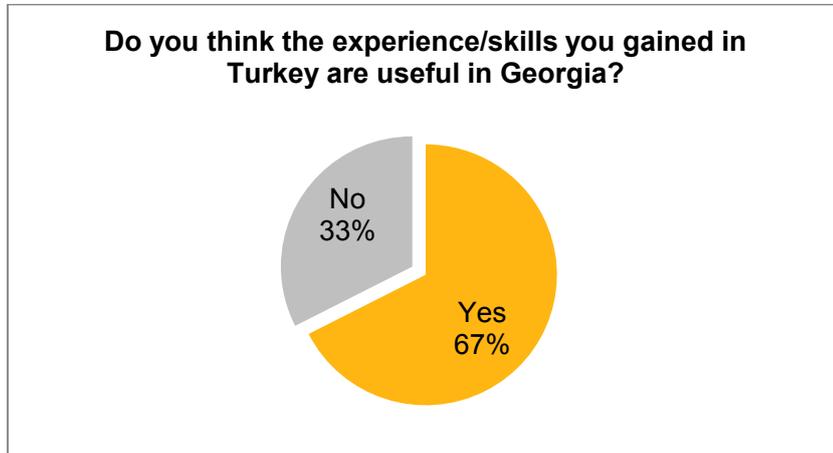
<sup>132</sup> (The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues 2014)

villages and roads to be more developed and so I'm full of interesting emotions.” (TR-DO2).

#### 9.3.3.5. Qualifications and knowledge transfer

The majority (68%) of survey respondents consider their experience and skills gained in Turkey as useful for the development of Georgia and 64% think that it would be easy to apply those skills in Georgia.

Figure 46: Usefulness of Experience/Skills in Georgia That Were Gained in Turkey



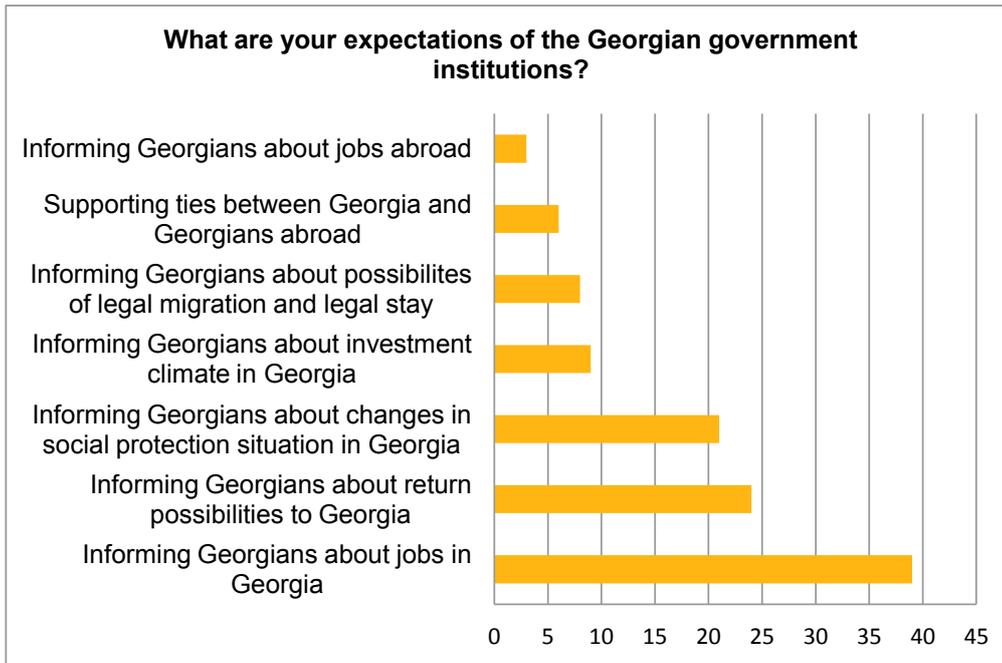
Source: Field data, 2013

#### 9.3.3.6. Migrants' expectations of Georgian government institutions

Most Georgian migrants residing in Turkey (87%) would like to be informed about jobs in Georgia. 53% would like to be informed about return possibilities and 47% about changes in the social protection situation in Georgia. Informing Georgians migrants about the investment climate in Georgia (20%), about possibilities of legal migration and stay (18%), about supporting ties between Georgia and Georgians abroad (13%) and about jobs abroad (7%) are considered less relevant by the survey respondents.

In the case of Turkey, a distinction has to be made between the historical diaspora and the new labour migrants, who obviously face different challenges and have different needs. The historical diaspora, for example, mainly require classes in the Georgian language in order to stay connected to their roots, as well as information about investment opportunities. In general, communication with the Diaspora Office and the Georgian Consulate in Turkey needs to be improved. Many migrants do not know that they can seek help from the consulate, even without having a residence permit. Here, similar to Germany, it is suggested to either appoint a representative of the Diaspora Office to the Georgian Consulate in Istanbul or to create a council consisting of representatives of diaspora organisations.

Figure 47: Migrants' Expectations of Georgian Government Institutions (Turkey)



Source: Field data, 2013



### Key information on the contributions of the Georgian diaspora residing in Turkey to development in Georgia

- Most survey participants want to return to Georgia.
- Most survey respondents plan to return to Georgia, more than half of them even during the next year.
- Almost all survey participants transfer money to their family members in Georgia, which is largely sent via family and friends.
- Research suggests that the Georgian historical diaspora in Turkey is an important factor in securing FDIs in Georgia from Turkey.
- In addition, over 80% of the survey respondents would be willing to invest in Georgia; 13% of the survey participants already have private investments in Georgia.
- Survey participants have a strong intention to invest in development projects in Georgia, mainly in the area of human rights.
- The majority of respondents consider their experience gained in Georgia as useful for the development of Georgia.

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## 11. Annex

### 11.1. Diaspora organisations<sup>133</sup>

Name	City
<b>Turkey</b>	
Georgian Culture House; Chveneburi newspaper	Istanbul
Centre of Georgian Culture	Istanbul
The Turkish–Georgian Foundation for Education and Culture	Istanbul
The Society of Friendship with Georgia	Istanbul
The Georgian Culture Society	Orhangazi, Bursa Province
Caucasian Culture Society	Golcuk, Kocaeli, Marmara Region
Batumi Society in Bursa	Bursa Province
Caucasian Folk and Culture Society in Inegol	Inegol, Bursa Province
Iznik Batumi Society	Iznik, Bursa Province
House of Georgian Arts	Istanbul
<b>Greece</b>	
Georgian Women Association	Athens
King Vakhtang VI Athens Weekend School	Athens
Georgian Institute of Athens	Athens
The Centre of Georgian Culture and Education ‘Caucasus’	Athens
Academy of Georgian Arts, Association ‘New Georgia’ Thessaloniki, Greece	Thessaloniki
Association of Georgian immigrants in Greece	Crete, Athens
Hellenic – Georgian Student and Youth Association	Athens
Georgian Community in Argolis ‘Georgia’	Nafplio, Argolis
The Association of Women in Greece ‘Golden Fleece’; Elada and Taoba Newspapers	Athens
Thessaloniki-Georgian Diaspora	Thessaloniki
Evia-Athens Community ‘My Georgia’	Athens
Georgian Emigrant Counselling Centre	Athens
Community ‘Iveria’	Thessaloniki
<b>Germany</b>	
Berliner Georgische Gesellschaft e.V.	Mahlow, Oranienburg
Brandenburgisch-Georgische Gesellschaft e.V.	Potsdam, Germany
Georgisches Haus in Berlin e.V.	Berlin
Georgisch – Deutsches Forum e.V.	Berlin
Georgischer Verein in Deutschland e.V.	München (Munich)
Inko-Georgisches Kulturzentrum e.V., Nürnberg	Nürnberg
Deutsch – Kaukasische Gesellschaft „Lile“ e.V., Hamburg	Hamburg
Georgisches Kulturforum e.V. Frankfurt	Frankfurt
Bielefeld German-Georgian Society	Bielefeld
Georgian – orthodox church in Düsseldorf	Düsseldorf
Kolkhi – Georgian-German Culture Society	Witten
Georgisch-Deutscher Kulturverein	Regensburg e. V.

<sup>133</sup>[1] The list includes those organisations which are active and which have been contacted during the desk research.

## 11.2. Examples of diaspora organisations' activities

### Germany:

#### **Bielefeld German-Georgian Society**

This association was established in 2003. It founded its Sunday school in the same year. The association has around 100 members and is financed by voluntary contributions from a broad network of around 400-500 people. The aim of the organisation is to promote the Georgian culture, language and traditions in Germany. It also assists Georgians facing difficult situations, such as persons who are being held in a detention centre.

#### **Georgisches Haus in Berlin e.V.**

The organisation is registered in Berlin and consists of 15 members. The members have both German and Georgian citizenship. The main objective of the organisation is to promote Georgian culture in Germany and also to promote German culture in Georgia. In addition, the association assists Georgians in Germany who are in need. The association also organises international summer camps in Georgia for children with different nationalities including children with Georgian roots.

#### **Brandenburgisch-Georgische Gesellschaft e.V.**

The association was established in 1994 and registered as a registered association (e.V.) in 1996 and is located in Potsdam. The association has both German and Georgian members, 22 in total. The involvement of German citizens as members was explained by rising interest towards Georgia in the 1990s, especially in terms of tourism, thus German citizens have joined this Georgian diaspora organisation in order to explore the Georgian culture. The organisation provides advice and counselling services to Georgians residing in Germany, organises events and promotes exchange programmes between Georgia and Germany. Since the rise of the internet as the main information source, the organisation gradually shifted their focus to promoting Georgian culture and built academic ties between the two countries. One exchange programme involves the parliament of Brandenburg and Adjara's council (see [www.georgien.tk](http://www.georgien.tk)), another one fosters exchange between the university of Potsdam and the university in Batumi and their students. In addition, the association organises events, e.g. exhibitions or presentations of scientific studies.

### Greece:

#### **Georgian Sports and Cultural Association – 'Georgia'**

The association was founded in 2003 with the aim to encourage Georgian children and youth to practice Georgian sport and culture. The organisation which is registered as an NGO has around 60 members and reaches out to a network of 300 to 500 people. The members have Greek or Georgian roots. The association has a Georgian dancing group and teaches Georgian language and history to children in the small school of the organisation. In addition, important days during the year which are related to Georgia and Greece are celebrated, such as the Day of Independence of Georgia, Day of Independence of Greece and New Years. The association also supports Georgians in Greece when they are in need, for example when they have problems with the health insurance or other issues.

### **Georgian Institute of Athens**

The institute was founded in 1999 by the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and diaspora representatives in Greece and conducts scientific research. The research focuses on Hellenistic, archaeological and historic developments and manages a library. The Georgian Institute of Athens is the first Georgian academic and cultural institution abroad. Being recognised as a Foreign Archaeological Institute, the institute conducts research on all aspects of scientific and cultural exchange between Greece and Georgia. It works on strengthening the relations between Georgian and Greek academic institutions against the background of the common cultural heritage between Greece and Georgia.

### **Georgian Counselling Centre in Athens**

The Counselling Centre aims to support Georgian migrants living in Greece and provides several services, such as translation, legal counselling or other services depending on the interest for affordable prices. In the period of 2010-2011, 6,000 applications/requests for documents, e.g. birth certificates, passports etc., were made through the centre in addition to general counselling and online assistance.

With the money received for the services, the Georgian-Greek Cultural Association (see text box below) is financed. Hence, both organisations work and belong together and work towards a common aim: to protect the interests of Georgians in Greece.

### **Georgian-Greek Cultural Association**

The non-profit organisation, founded in 2010, provides Georgian emigrants living in Greece with support in social, health, cultural and educational fields. Besides their core work of counselling and legal support, it also offers language classes in English and Georgian and dance classes. The organisation has nine founding and approximately 200 regular members. The organisation was very successful in making Georgian literature available to those interested in having a Georgian library. As a result of the campaign “at least one book” they received 347 books from Georgian publishing houses and have now around 1 000 books in their library.

## **Turkey:**

### **The Georgian Culture House – Chveneburi**

The association was founded in 2000 under a different name and promoted Georgian folk dances and culture. The association in its current shape exists since 3 years and has 60 active members with Georgian roots, mainly academics, artists, writers and businessmen. A board with seven members and a chair steers the work of association. One of the priorities of the association is to include the possibility to learn the Georgian language in Turkish schools. In cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Education they develop a curriculum and syllabus for the language course. The association also produces films about Georgian folklore to broadcast them in the Turkish national television and has also a radio programme. The dancing ensemble “Ertoba” unites Georgians, Circassians, Abkhaz, and Laz people and also Turkish-Georgians through learning Georgian dances. It also offers courses on teaching the Georgian language and trains Georgian emigrants to teach Georgian in Turkey and organises concerts, for example with the participation of the dancing group of Iberia Ozkan’s (House of Georgian Arts). The association has an important function in reaching out to and providing services to Georgian emigrants residing in Greece. Services include the provision of legal and social counseling, advise on residence and citizenship matters, interpretation for Georgians held in detention and a 24-hours phone line.

### 11.3. Questionnaire template

#### **Georgian Diaspora Survey Dear Respondent!**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. This questionnaire is part of the ERGEM project (Enhancing the Role of Georgian Emigrants at home), implemented by the Danish Refugee Council and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. By filling in and sending us this questionnaire you will contribute to the project results – for further development in Georgia. The questionnaire will take only 10 – 15 minutes, please, try to answer all questions. All information which you provide us is anonymous and will not be shared with third parties. Thank you!

**ERGEM project team**

Please fill out the questionnaire. For some questions you may give multiple answers/ click on multiple boxes. But please do not give more than 3 answers for one question. Please feel free to add any comments at the end of the questionnaire!

<b>1. General information</b>		
<b>In this part we will ask you some general information about yourself and your background.</b>		
1	Your age:	<input type="text"/>
2	Your gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
3	Present relationship status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
4	Education (please enter the highest):	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's/ Undergraduate degree <input type="checkbox"/> Professional school <input type="checkbox"/> Master degree <input type="checkbox"/> High School degree <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate degree (PhD)
5	If you have completed professional school or high school (university), what was the main subject of your study or your degree?	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences/ Humanities <input type="checkbox"/> Law <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine/ Health <input type="checkbox"/> Economics <input type="text"/>
6	What was your latest profession (occupation) in Georgia?	<input type="text"/>
7	Where were you born (country, city)?	<input type="text"/>
8	Where did you live in Georgia before you left for abroad?	<input type="text"/>
9a	Do you still have close family members in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 10
9b	If yes, please indicate who?	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse <input type="checkbox"/> Distant family members <input type="checkbox"/> Child (children) <input type="checkbox"/> Brother (s) or sister (s)

## 2. Information about your departure and stay abroad

**In this part we will ask questions about your departure from Georgia and your stay in Country X.**

10	When did you first come to Country X for a longer period of time?	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> Please specify the month and the year.		
11	What was the reason of your departure from Georgia? Please choose only the most important reason.	<input type="checkbox"/> Studies <input type="checkbox"/> I already had a job offer <input type="checkbox"/> I wanted to find a new job <input type="checkbox"/> Family reasons	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	
12	Was Country X your desired destination?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No, please specify: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	
13	Have you already had contacts in Country X before your departure?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please specify: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> No
14	What city do you live in now?	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
15a	With whom did you come to Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Alone → go to question 16	<input type="checkbox"/> With somebody else	
15b	Please specify with whom you came to Country X:	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
16	Do you have a resident permit/ visa to live in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
17a	Do you work now in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No, please go to question 18	
17b	How many hours per week do you work?	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
17c	In what sector are you employed/what is your occupation?	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
17d	Do you have a work permit for Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not required
17e	Do you work above or below your qualification?	<input type="checkbox"/> Above	<input type="checkbox"/> Below	
18	What is your average personal income in Country X per month?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 500 EUR <input type="checkbox"/> 500 – 750 EUR <input type="checkbox"/> 750 – 1000 EUR	<input type="checkbox"/> 1000 – 1500 EUR <input type="checkbox"/> 1500 – 2000 EUR <input type="checkbox"/> More than 2000 EUR	
19	What is your source of income in Country X? Please choose the most important one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Stipend/ scholarship <input type="checkbox"/> State support/ welfare <input type="checkbox"/> Support from family in Georgia	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	

20	Do you have a valid Georgian passport?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21a	Do you have x citizenship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes → go to question 22a	<input type="checkbox"/> No
21b	Do you want to become a x citizen?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
22a	Do you have close family members in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 23a
22b	How many and who of your close family members are with you in Country X?		
<b>3. Ties between the Georgians abroad and Georgia</b>			
<b>In this section we will focus our questions on ties with Georgia and role of Georgian organisations in Country X.</b>			
23a	Have you ever visited Georgia since you are in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 24
23b	How often do you visit Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 3 months <input type="checkbox"/> Every half year <input type="checkbox"/> Once per year	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 1 to 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> Every 2 to 5 years
23c	What are the main reasons for your visit to Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Family visit <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Health reasons <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism/ holidays	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: 
24	How do you mainly communicate with your family members/ friends in Georgia? Please choose the 2 most important means.	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Letters/ mail <input type="checkbox"/> Social networks (Facebook/ lamGeorgian/ Vkontakty, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Skype	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not communicate <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: 
25	How often do you communicate with your family members/ friends in Georgia on average?	<input type="checkbox"/> Every day <input type="checkbox"/> A few times per week <input type="checkbox"/> Once per week	<input type="checkbox"/> A few times per month <input type="checkbox"/> Once per month <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once per month
26a	Do you follow the political, cultural, economic, social, etc. situation in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → to to question 26c
26b	With what means do you follow the situation in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet <input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings with other Georgians <input type="checkbox"/> Calls with family/ friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: 

27a	Are you a member of any Georgian organisation(s) in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 27c
27b	How are you engaged in the Georgian Diaspora organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/> I am active in a Georgian organisation(s) <input type="checkbox"/> I just sometimes have contacts with a Georgian organisation(s) <input type="checkbox"/> I only follow the organisations' events and news, but do not actively participate	<input type="checkbox"/> Please specify the name of the organisation(s): <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
27c	Why are you not engaged in a Georgian Diaspora organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/> I am not interested in such activities <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know about any organisation in the region where I live <input type="checkbox"/> I do not think that it is important	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px; width: 100%;"></div>
28	To your point of view, what should be the most important tasks of Georgian organisation(s) in Country X?	Supporting Georgians to organize their life in Country X	Low <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> High
		Supporting Georgians ties with Georgia	Low <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> High
		Informing Georgian members about the situation in Georgia	Low <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> High
		Facilitating Georgian contribution to development in Georgia	Low <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> High
		Supporting Georgian children education (Georgian language, history, literature, etc.)	Low <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> High
		Other, please specify: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px; width: 100%;"></div>	
29a	Do you know of any initiatives of the Georgian government/ institutions with regard to the Georgians abroad?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 30
29b	Which initiatives of the Georgian government regarding Georgians abroad do you know about?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; width: 100%;"></div>	
30	Do you have any suggestions how communication and cooperation could be improved between Georgian organisations in Country X and institutions in Georgia?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>	

31a	Do you have any contact to the Georgian Consulate in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 32
31b	How often are you generally in contact with the Georgian Consulate in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Every month <input type="checkbox"/> Every half year	<input type="checkbox"/> Once per year <input type="checkbox"/> Every few years
31c	What are your reasons to contact the Georgian Consulate in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa issues <input type="checkbox"/> Need of official documents <input type="checkbox"/> Need to be consulted/ advised	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>
<b>4. Support to the developments in Georgia</b>			
<b>In this part of the questionnaire we will ask you about your willingness to return and/ or to invest into Georgian development.</b>			
32a	Do you want to return to Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 32c
32b	Why would you return to Georgia?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
32c	Why would you not return to Georgia?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
33	If you wish to return to Georgia, then - when?	<input type="checkbox"/> Within the next year <input type="checkbox"/> Within 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> Within 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Later <input type="checkbox"/> Never
34	What would be an obstacle in returning to Georgia?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
35	What changes in your personal life/your family life would facilitate your return to Georgia?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
36	What changes in Georgia could facilitate your possible return?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	
37a	Do you have any private investments in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 37a
37b	What private investments do you have in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Services <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Transport <input type="checkbox"/> Services/Supply	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>

38a	In case you would have enough money saved, would you be willing to invest in some business/ activities in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 38c
38b	Why are you willing to invest in business in Georgia?	<input type="text"/>	
38c	Why are you not willing to invest in business in Georgia?	<input type="text"/>	
39	If yes, in what sector would you be willing to invest?	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Financial services <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Services/Supply <input type="checkbox"/> Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <input type="text"/>
40a	Would you want to invest in Georgian development projects?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 41
40b	In what development projects would you want to invest in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutions <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Church/ religious institutions <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <input type="text"/>
41	What changes in Georgia could facilitate your possible investments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic growth in Georgia <input type="checkbox"/> Political security in Georgia <input type="checkbox"/> Legal security in Georgia <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <input type="text"/>	
42	What are your expectations from Georgian government/institutions? What kind of support is the most important for you? Please choose the 3 most important answers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Informing Georgians about job opportunities in Georgia <input type="checkbox"/> Informing Georgians about job opportunities abroad <input type="checkbox"/> Informing Georgians about possibilities of legal migration and legal stay abroad <input type="checkbox"/> Informing Georgians about investment climate in Georgia <input type="checkbox"/> Informing Georgians about return possibilities to Georgia <input type="checkbox"/> Informing Georgians about changes in social protection situation in Georgia <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting ties between Georgia and Georgians abroad (cultural events, business trips, summer camps for kids, Georgian schools in Country X, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <input type="text"/>	

5. Remittances			
43	Do you send money back home on a regular basis?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, regularly <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, from time to time	<input type="checkbox"/> No → go to question 48
44	How much do you send home per year?	<input type="checkbox"/> < 100 EUR <input type="checkbox"/> 100 – 500 EUR	<input type="checkbox"/> 500 – 1000 EUR <input type="checkbox"/> more than 1000 EUR
45	How do you usually send money back home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Bank transfer <input type="checkbox"/> Post office <input type="checkbox"/> Bank transfer facilitators (Western Union, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Via friends/ relatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Personally/ I take it with me <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please, specify: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
46	Who do you send money to?	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends
47	How is the money mostly spent? Please choose the 3 most important.	<input type="checkbox"/> Home/ house reconstruction/ building <input type="checkbox"/> Investment into land or farm equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer goods	<input type="checkbox"/> Business investment/ start-up, please specify: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
48	Which experience/ skills/ knowledge have you gained in Country X?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	
49a	Do you think the experiences/ skills/ knowledge you gained in Country X could be useful in Georgia?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
49b	Do you think it would easy for you to use in Georgia the experience/skills/knowledge you gained in Country X?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No, please specify: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>

Please feel free to provide us any comments you might have:

You can leave us your contact details if you would like to receive more information about the project and the outcome of the case study. This information will be treated confidentially.

Name:	<input type="text"/>
Contact Details:	
Full address:	<input type="text"/>
Email address:	<input type="text"/>
Phone number:	<input type="text"/>

## 11.4 Interview Templates

### Semi-structured interview with representatives of diaspora organisations/migrants associations guidelines

The aim of this document is to provide a guide for interviewers engaging with Georgian Diaspora organisations/migrants associations in the three destination countries (Germany, Greece and Turkey), such as chairpersons, active members, founders, etc.

#### Introduction for participant

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This interview is part of the research within the ERGEM project on Georgian emigrants in Germany, Greece and Turkey. The purpose of the interviews which will be conducted with Georgian Diaspora family members, representatives of the Georgian state institutions and Georgian Diaspora organisations is to learn more about the opinions, attitudes, needs and wishes of these stakeholders in regard with diaspora and migrants involvement into development in Georgia and what support is needed for this process.

The interviewee should understand that there is no right or wrong answers; the project implementation team is just interested in the participants experience and opinion. Anonymity is guaranteed. Individual answers will be used for general analysis. Personal data will not be published nor transmitted to third parties. ICMPD and DRC will have access to the interviews, but solely as part of the research. This interview will only be used for research purposes. It will take no more than 20-30 minutes to answer these questions.

#### Introduction for interviewer

---

The interviewer should start with brief information of the research on the Georgian Diaspora in Germany, Greece and Turkey in simple language by explaining the objectives and rationale of the research, who else will be interviewed and what the outcome of the research will be.

Project description: The interviewer may wish to explain the purpose of the research on the basis of the following project description:

The overall objective of the '**Enhancing the Role of the Georgian Emigrants at Home (ERGEM)**' project is to contribute to strengthened ties between Georgians abroad and Georgian institutions in order to increase Diaspora contributions to Georgia's economic development. With regard to the specific objectives, the activities within the project will directly address the contribution of the Georgian Diaspora and will aim at:

- Enhancing the institutional knowledge on Georgian emigrant and Diaspora communities, with a focus on their needs, interests, remittances and propensity to invest;
- Improvement of information, support and services by Georgian institutions to their emigrant and Diaspora communities abroad;
- Transfer of structured knowledge from Diaspora representatives to Georgian business actors and pilot support to returnees.

The activities of the project are implemented in three consecutive phases (Inception, Implementation and Closing) and under three complementary components: Collection and Analysis of Information (1), Services to Diaspora Abroad (2) and Services in Georgia (3).

The ERGEM project is implemented under the leadership of the DRC in cooperation with ICMPD by a consortium of project partners and associated partners which includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Public Service Development Agency, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, and the Ministry of the Interior of Poland. The project is funded by the European Union Thematic Programme and co-funded by DRC and project partners. The project implementation started on April 16, 2013; the project lasts 18 months.

**Note:** In the following, the interviewer should introduce each topic (indicated by a header) with a conversational question. This way it should be possible to solicit a narrative from the respondents. The issues indicate information that ideally should be covered – but it is not necessary to cover each and every detail. Sub-questions are those that can be used as follow-up, depending on the answer of the primary question. The respondent will usually cover some

of these points during the interview without being probed, but you may need to probe the respondent for some of the details. It is good to formulate any probes equally in conversational terms and to avoid suggesting answers to the respondents. Not all respondents equally understand what is going on at a particular point of their trajectory.

### Pre-interview information, to be filled in by the researcher

*Interviewer should fill in this section before the interview.*

Questionnaire number:

Location:

Is the interviewee a representative of Georgian Diaspora organisation/migrants association in:

- Germany
- Greece
- Turkey

## 1. General information

- 1.1 What organisation do you work for?
  - 1.1.1 How big is your organisation? How many members do you have?
  - 1.1.2 How is your organisation registered (church, association, etc.)?
  - 1.1.3 Are your members only Georgians?
  - 1.1.4 Do you also have non-Georgian members?
  - 1.1.5 When was your organisation established (year)?
  - 1.1.6 Where is your organisation located?
- 1.2 What is your position?
  - 1.2.1 What are your general tasks at your position?
- 1.3 To what extent are you dealing with Georgian migrants at your position?
- 1.4 What are the fields of interest/priorities that your organisation engages in?
- 1.5 Are you in contact/cooperation with any other Georgian organisations abroad?
  - 1.5.1 To what extent do you collaborate with each other?
  - 1.5.2 Are you a member of a diaspora organisations network or something similar?
- 1.6 What kind of events do you usually organise?
  - 1.6.1 How often do you organise events on average per year?
  - 1.6.2 How many people attend your events?
  - 1.6.3 Are all of the attendees Georgians?
- 1.7. How would you describe an average member of your organisation?
- 1.8. How often do Georgians/Georgian non-members approach your organisation?
  - 1.8.1 How many approach your organisation on average per year?
  - 1.8.2 What are their main issues/ questions/ problems?
- 1.9 Do you receive any support from local governments in the country of destination?

- 1.91 What kind of support do you receive?
- 1.10 How do you mainly finance your organisation/events?
  - 1.10.1 Do you receive financial support from Georgia?
  - 1.10.2 Do you receive financial support from the destination country?
- 1.11 Has your organisation experienced any difficulties/challenges in the destination countries?

## **2. Relations with Georgian institutions/organisations**

- 2.1 Do you cooperate with Georgian state institutions?
  - 2.1.1 How do you cooperate?
  - 2.1.2 How often do you cooperate?
  - 2.1.3 Which whom exactly do you cooperate?
  - 2.1.4 Do you organise any joint events?
- 2.2 What kind of cooperation/working relations would you like to have with Georgian state institutions?
  - 2.2.1 What kind of support would you like to receive?
  - 2.2.2 How could the current level of cooperation be improved?
  - 2.2.3 What are your expectations from Georgian government institutions? What kind of support is the most important for you?
- 2.3 Are you aware of any initiatives of the Georgian government regarding Georgians abroad?
  - 2.3.1 Can you name/describe the initiatives?
- 2.4 Do you cooperate with Georgian Consulates in the country where you operate?
  - 2.4.1 What is the extent of your cooperation? How often are you in touch on average per year?
  - 2.4.2 What are the main issues that you deal with when being in touch with the Consulates?
- 2.5 Can you suggest how communication and cooperation between Georgian organisations abroad and institutions in Georgia could be improved?
- 2.6 What assistance would you like to receive from Georgian institutions in order to implement you activities?
  - 2.6.1 Funding
  - 2.6.2 Training, e.g. in organisation and implementation of Saturday schools, fund-raising, etc.?
  - 2.6.3 Information support, e.g. employment possibilities in Georgia, return conditions to Georgia, changes in education and social security system in Georgia?
  - 2.6.4 Books, media, etc. delivery from Georgia?
  - 2.6.5 Event organisations?

## **3. Ties between Georgians abroad and Georgia**

- 3.1 Do you have ties/connections with Georgian diaspora/migrant organisations in Georgia?
- 3.1 Do you have ties/connections with Georgian diaspora/migrant organisations in Georgia?
  - 3.1.1 How does the cooperation with Georgian diaspora/migrant organisations in Georgia look like?

- 3.2 Are you in touch with returned Georgian migrants in Georgia?
  - 3.2.1 How often do you communicate with them on average per year?
  - 3.2.2 Do you provide any support to both of this group?\
- 3.3 Are you in touch with family members of Georgian migrants in Georgia?
  - 3.3.1 How often do you communicate on average per year?
  - 3.3.2 What are the main reasons for you being in touch?
  - 3.3.3 What are the main issues that you deal with?
- 3.4 To your point of view, what should be the most important tasks of a Georgian organisation abroad?

#### **4. Support to the development of Georgia**

- 4.1 Does your organisation support the development in Georgia?
  - 4.1.1 How does it support it?
  - 4.1.2 Do you have any projects/ activities in Georgia?
  - 4.1.3 Do you follow any priorities?
  - 4.1.4 What areas would your organisation like to support if you had the necessary resources for it?
- 4.2. To your point of view, should diaspora organisations be involved in development process in Georgia? What would be the ideal scenario of such involvement?

#### **5. Skills/knowledge transfer**

- 5.1. Do you think that the members of your organisation gain any knowledge/ skills in the destination country?
  - 5.1.1 Do you think that they can transfer those skills to Georgia?
  - 5.1.2 Would those skills be of use in Georgia?
- 5.2. How, to your point of view, diaspora organisations could contribute to the Georgians abroad skills inventory and its transfer back to Georgia?

## Semi-structured interview with family members of Georgian migrants guidelines

The aim of this document is to provide a guide for interviewers engaging with Georgian family members of migrants who have experienced any kind of migration within their own family to Germany, Greece or Turkey. With family members in this sense it is meant to include parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, meaning the immediate family.

The questions below should be seen as a flexible guideline, adapted based on relevance for the particular stakeholder being interviewed. In other words, the questions below are neither exhaustive nor limiting, and should be adapted to the particular experience of the interviewee. The guidelines can be adapted as appropriate and necessary in the interview situation and questions that are irrelevant in a particular context or in regard to particular groups of respondents can be left out. Simpler language and explanations can be used when needed, but certain responses should not be suggested.

Before starting the interview, the interviewer should briefly explain the aims of the research in simple language and explain the objectives and rationale of the ERGEM project, as well as who else will be interviewed. If necessary, the interviewer should also explain what is meant by “Diaspora” and other key terms. It is important to emphasise to the interviewee that he or she has been chosen as an expert due to their personal experiences and professional knowledge. The interviewer should also provide the interviewee with the proper consent form developed for the ERGEM project, to be signed by the interviewee.

### Introduction for participant

---

This interview is part of the research within the ERGEM project on Georgian emigrants in Germany, Greece and Turkey. The purpose of the interviews which will be conducted with Georgian Diaspora family members, representatives of the Georgian state institutions and Georgian Diaspora organisations is to learn more about the opinions, attitudes, needs and wishes of these stakeholders in regard with diaspora and migrants involvement into development in Georgia and what support is needed for this process.

The interviewee should understand that there is no right or wrong answers; the project implementation team is just interested in the participants experience and opinion. Anonymity is guaranteed. Individual answers will be used for general analysis. Personal data will not be published nor transmitted to third parties. ICMPD and DRC will have access to the interviews, but solely as part of the research. This interview will only be used for research purposes. It will take no more than 20-30 minutes to answer these questions.

### Introduction for interviewer

---

The interviewer should start with brief information of the research on the Georgian Diaspora in Germany, Greece and Turkey in simple language by explaining the objectives and rationale of the research, who else will be interviewed and what the outcome of the research will be.

Project description: The interviewer may wish to explain the purpose of the research on the basis of the following project description:

The overall objective of the **‘Enhancing the Role of the Georgian Emigrants at Home (ERGEM)’** project is to contribute to strengthened ties between Georgians abroad and Georgian institutions in order to increase Diaspora contributions to Georgia’s economic development. With regard to the specific objectives, the activities within the project will directly address the contribution of the Georgian Diaspora and will aim at:

- Enhancing the institutional knowledge on Georgian emigrant and Diaspora communities, with a focus on their needs, interests, remittances and propensity to invest;
- Improvement of information, support and services by Georgian institutions to their emigrant and Diaspora communities abroad;
- Transfer of structured knowledge from Diaspora representatives to Georgian business actors and pilot support to returnees.

The activities of the project are implemented in three consecutive phases (Inception, Implementation and Closing) and under three complementary components: Collection and Analysis of Information (1), Services to Diaspora Abroad (2) and Services in Georgia (3).

The ERGEM project is implemented under the leadership of the DRC in cooperation with ICMPD by a

consortium of project partners and associated partners which includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Public Service Development Agency, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, and the Ministry of the Interior of Poland. The project is funded by the European Union Thematic Programme and co-funded by DRC and project partners. The project implementation started on April 16, 2013; the project lasts 18 months.

**Note:** In the following, the interviewer should introduce each topic (indicated by a header) with a conversational question. This way it should be possible to solicit a narrative from the respondents. The issues indicate information that ideally should be covered – but it is not necessary to cover each and every detail. Sub-questions are those that can be used as follow-up, depending on the answer of the primary question. The respondent will usually cover some of these points during the interview without being probed, but you may need to probe the respondent for some of the details. It is good to formulate any probes equally in conversational terms and to avoid suggesting answers to the respondents. Not all respondents equally understand what is going on at a particular point of their trajectory.

### Pre-interview information, to be filled in by the researcher

*Interviewer should fill in this section before the interview.*

Interview number:

Location:

Is the interviewee a family member of a Georgian migrant in:

- Germany
- Greece
- Turkey

### 1. General information

*Here we will ask some general information about yourself and about your family members abroad.*

- 1.1 What is your age?
- 1.2 What is your gender?
- 1.3 Family members abroad:
  - 1.3.1 How many of your family members are abroad?
  - 1.3.2 Who of your family members is abroad?
  - 1.3.3 Are your children/parents abroad right now?
  - 1.3.4 Where were they born?
  - 1.3.5 From where in Georgia did they leave?
- 1.4 Have you ever considered to leave with your family members abroad?
- 1.5 What were your reasons for not leaving Georgia?
  - 1.5.1 Do you have any desires to leave Georgia in general?
  - 1.5.2 Are you planning on leaving Georgia? If yes, when?

*NB: Here it might be advisable to choose the main family member (e.g. child, parent, etc.) who left Georgia and to focus on this person in the following sections.*

## 2. Information about the departure and the stay abroad

*Here we will ask some questions on your family members departure from Georgia and their stay abroad. We would like to find out what the reasons were to leave, what they are doing abroad, how often you see/ are in touch with each other and your opinion on their departure and stay abroad.*

- 2.1 When did your closest family members first go abroad (mm/yyyy)?
- 2.2 What were the reasons for the departure of your family members?
  - 2.2.1 Was the country where they stay now the desired destination?
  - 2.2.2 Where you in favour of the departure of your family member?
  - 2.2.3 If yes, why?
  - 2.2.4 If no, why not?
- 2.3 Where do they live now abroad (city, village)?
- 2.4 With whom did they go abroad?
- 2.5 Are they working abroad now?
  - 2.5.1 Do they have a work permit?
  - 2.5.2 Do they have a residence permit/ visa?
  - 2.5.3 Do they work according to their qualification?
  - 2.5.4 What is their source of income?
  - 2.5.5 Do you support your family members abroad financially?
  - 2.5.6 What is their household income in Turkey on average per month?
- 2.6 Do they have a valid Georgian passport?
  - 2.6.1 Do they have a foreign passport? What nationality?
  - 2.6.2 Do they want to become a foreign citizen?
  - 2.6.3 Do they have close family members abroad (how many and who)?
- 2.7 What do you see as an advantage of your family member being abroad for them?
  - 2.7.1 What do you see as an advantage of your family members being abroad for you?
  - 2.7.2 What do you see as a disadvantage of your family member being abroad for them?
  - 2.7.3 What do you see as a disadvantage of your family member being abroad for you?

## 3. Ties between your family members abroad and Georgia

*Here we would like to ask about your ways of communicating with each other, your knowledge on Georgian organisations abroad, challenges that your family members might face abroad.*

### CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION

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- 3.1 Have your family members visited Georgia since they went abroad?
  - 3.1.1 How often do they visit Georgia on average?

- 3.1.2 What are the main reasons for the visit to Georgia?
- 3.2 How do you mainly communicate with family members and friends abroad?
  - 3.2.1 How often do you communicate with them on average per month?
  - 3.2.2 Do you visit them abroad? How often per year?
  - 3.2.3 Can you suggest how contacts and communication can be improved with your family member?

### **GEORGIAN ORGANISATIONS ABROAD**

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- 3.3 Do you know if your family member belongs to a Georgian organisation abroad?
  - 3.3.1 Which one?
  - 3.3.2 How are they engaged in it? What do they do?
  - 3.3.3 What should be the most important tasks of a Georgian organisation abroad in your opinion?
  - 3.3.4 Should the Georgian organisation abroad also be in touch with family members in Georgia? If yes, how and why?
  - 3.3.5 Have you heard of any initiatives of the Georgian government regarding Georgians abroad? Which ones?
  - 3.3.6 Can you suggest how communication and cooperation between Georgian organisations abroad and institutions in Georgia could be improved?
  - 3.3.7 What are the reasons for your family member not being a member of a Georgian organisation abroad?

### **GEORGIAN CONSULATE/EMBASSY**

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- 3.4 Do your family members have any contact to the Georgian Consulate abroad?
  - 3.4.1 How often are they on average in contact with the Georgian Consulate abroad?
  - 3.4.2 What are their reasons to contact the Georgian Consulate abroad?
  - 3.4.3 Do you know if the Georgian Consulate abroad offers any support to them? If yes, what kind of support is it?

### **CHALLENGES ABROAD**

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- 3.5. What problems and challenges do your family members have abroad?
  - 3.5.1 Who do your family members turn to in order to solve those problems?
  - 3.5.2 Have your family members ever asked you to search for some information in Georgia (e.g. to call to some institutions and ask about procedures, etc.)? What kind of assistance your family members needed in Georgia?

## **4. Ties between your family members abroad and Georgia**

*Here we will ask questions whether your family members want to return to Georgia, whether they have or are interested in private investments in Georgia and what their expectations are from Georgian government institutions in regard to receiving support.*

### **RETURN**

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- 4.1 Do your family members want to return to Georgia?
  - 4.1.1 Why would they return to Georgia?
  - 4.1.2 When would they return to Georgia?
  - 4.1.3 Why would they not return to Georgia?

- 4.1.4 What would be an obstacle in returning to Georgia?
- 4.1.5 What changes in Georgia could facilitate their return?
- 4.1.6 Do you want them to return to Georgia?
- 4.1.7 Would you advise them to return to Georgia?

## **PRIVATE INVESTMENTS**

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- 4.2 Do your family members have any private investments in Georgia?
  - 4.2.1 What private investments do they have?
  - 4.2.2 Are you involved in any of the private investments/ business of your family members?
    - 4.2.2.1 Did you start a business with any of those investments?
  - 4.2.3 Are your family members willing to invest in business in Georgia in future?
  - 4.2.4 Why would they invest in Georgia?
  - 4.2.5 In what sector would they invest?
  - 4.2.6 Would they want to invest in Georgian development projects? If yes, which kind?
  - 4.2.7 What changes in Georgia could facilitate their possible investments?
  - 4.2.8 Why would they not invest in Georgia?

## **EXECTIONS FROM GEORGIAN INSTITUTIONS**

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- 4.3 What are their expectations from Georgian government institutions?
  - 4.3.1 What kind of support is the most important for them?
  - 4.3.2 What kind of support is the most important for you?

## **5. Remittances**

*Here we want to know if, how much and how your family members remit to Georgia.*

## **REMITTANCES**

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- 5.1 Do your family members send money back home on a regular basis?
  - 5.1.1 How much do they send home on average per year?
  - 5.1.2 How do they usually send it home?
  - 5.1.3 Do they send the money to you?
  - 5.1.4 Who else do they send it to?
  - 5.1.6 How the money is usually spent? On what do you spend the money?
  - 5.1.7 Do you invest any of the money that you receive?

## **SKILLS**

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- 5.2. Which experience/skills/knowledge have your family members gained abroad?
  - 5.2.1 Do you think the experience/skills/knowledge that they have gained abroad could be useful in Georgia?

## Semi-structured interview with representatives of Georgian consular offices abroad and Georgian institutions dealing with diaspora/migration issues guidelines

The aim of this document is to provide a guide for interviewers engaging with the representatives of Georgian consular offices abroad and Georgian institutions working with diaspora/migration issues.

### Introduction for participant

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This interview is part of the research within the ERGEM project on Georgian emigrants in Germany, Greece and Turkey. The purpose of the interviews which will be conducted with Georgian Diaspora family members, representatives of the Georgian state institutions and Georgian Diaspora organisations is to learn more about the opinions, attitudes, needs and wishes of these stakeholders in regard with diaspora and migrants involvement into development in Georgia and what support is needed for this process.

The interviewee should understand that there is no right or wrong answers; the project implementation team is just interested in the participants experience and opinion. Anonymity is guaranteed. Individual answers will be used for general analysis. Personal data will not be published nor transmitted to third parties. ICMPD and DRC will have access to the interviews, but solely as part of the research. This interview will only be used for research purposes. It will take no more than 20-30 minutes to answer these questions.

### Introduction for interviewer

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The interviewer should start with brief information of the research on the Georgian Diaspora in Germany, Greece and Turkey in simple language by explaining the objectives and rationale of the research, who else will be interviewed and what the outcome of the research will be.

Project description: The interviewer may wish to explain the purpose of the research on the basis of the following project description:

The overall objective of the “**Enhancing the Role of the Georgian Emigrants at Home (ERGEM)**” project is to contribute to strengthened ties between Georgians abroad and Georgian institutions in order to increase Diaspora contributions to Georgia’s economic development. With regard to the specific objectives, the activities within the project will directly address the contribution of the Georgian Diaspora and will aim at:

- Enhancing the institutional knowledge on Georgian emigrant and Diaspora communities, with a focus on their needs, interests, remittances and propensity to invest;
- Improvement of information, support and services by Georgian institutions to their emigrant and Diaspora communities abroad;
- Transfer of structured knowledge from Diaspora representatives to Georgian business actors and pilot support to returnees.

The activities of the project are implemented in three consecutive phases (Inception, Implementation and Closing) and under three complementary components: Collection and Analysis of Information (1), Services to Diaspora Abroad (2) and Services in Georgia (3).

The ERGEM project is implemented under the leadership of the DRC in cooperation with ICMPD by a consortium of project partners and associated partners which includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Public Service Development Agency, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, and the Ministry of the Interior of Poland. The project is funded by the European Union Thematic Programme and co-funded by DRC and project partners. The project implementation started on April 16, 2013; the project lasts 18 months.

**Note:** In the following, the interviewer should introduce each topic (indicated by a header) with a conversational question. This way it should be possible to solicit a narrative from the respondents. The issues indicate information that ideally should be covered – but it is not necessary to cover each and every detail. Sub-questions are those that can be used as follow-up, depending on the answer of the primary question. The respondent will usually cover some of these points during the interview without being probed, but you may need to probe the respondent for some of the details. It is good to formulate any probes equally in conversational terms and to avoid suggesting answers to the respondents. Not all respondents equally understand what is going on at a particular point of their trajectory.

## Pre-interview information, to be filled in by the researcher

Interviewer should fill in this section before the interview.

Questionnaire number:

Location:

Is the interviewee a representative of:

- Georgian state institution working with diaspora/migration issues
- Is the interviewee a representative of Georgian consular offices in:
  - Germany
  - Greece
  - Turkey

## 1. General information

### GENERAL

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- 1.1 What institution do you work for?
- 1.2 What is your position?
- 1.3 What are your personal general tasks at your job especially in regards to Georgian migrants?
- 1.4 To what extent are you dealing with Georgian migrants at your job?
- 1.5 What are your institutions interest/ objective in regard to Georgian migrants?

## 2. Informational capacity and support

### INFORMATION

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- 2.1 What kind of information do you possess about Georgian migrants abroad?
  - 2.1.1 What information do you already have on Georgian migrants? (Destination, origin, profile, reasons, work, family, studies, push and pull factors, etc.)
  - 2.1.2 Do you systematically collect information on Georgians abroad?
- 2.2 What kind of information about Georgian migrants would be the most valuable for you to possess?
- 2.3 How do you collect information on Georgians abroad?
  - 2.3.1 How do you communicate with Georgians abroad?
  - 2.3.2 What channels of communication do you use?
- 2.4 What kind of information do you make available for potential migrants (*before they leave Georgia*)?
  - 2.4.1 How can this information be accessed by them?
- 2.5 What are your suggestions for improving communication and cooperation between your institution and Georgians abroad?

## **ASSISTANCE**

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- 2.6 Do you provide any assistance to Georgian migrants in the 3 destination countries?
  - 2.6.1 What kind of assistance do you provide?
- 2.7. What kind of assistance do you provide to migrants upon their return to Georgia (information, counselling, financial, etc.)?
  - 2.7.1 What are the main criteria for getting assistance?
  - 2.7.2 Do you operate an agency/ centre which they can approach?

## **3. Relations with other institutions/organisations**

### **STATE INSTITUTIONS**

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- 3.1 Do you cooperate with other state institutions on migration/diaspora issues?
  - 3.1.1 What institutions do you cooperate with?
  - 3.1.2 Is there any exchange of information/ knowledge/best practices between the institutions? Are you all aware what everybody is doing?
  - 3.1.3 (only for consular offices): what support from Georgian institutions in Georgia would you like to receive in order to improve your work with regard to Georgians abroad?
- 3.2 (only for institutions in Georgia): Do you cooperate with Georgian Consulates in the 3 destination countries?
  - 3.2.1 How often do you cooperate?
  - 3.2.2 How does this cooperation look like?
  - 3.2.3 Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

### **GEORGIAN ORGANISATIONS**

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- 3.3. How do you maintain ties between your institution and Georgians in the 3 destination countries?
  - 3.3.1 Are you in touch with Georgians abroad?
  - 3.3.2 How do you communicate with Georgians abroad?
- 3.4. How do you maintain ties between your institution and Georgian organisations in the 3 destination countries (in country where you operate, in case of consular office)?
  - 3.4.1 How do you communicate with Georgian organisations in the 3 destination countries?
  - 3.4.2 How often do you communicate with them on average per year?
  - 3.4.3 Which organisations are you in touch with?
  - 3.4.4 In your opinion, what should be the most important tasks of a Georgian organisation abroad?
  - 3.4.5 Can you suggest how communication and cooperation between Georgian organisations abroad and institutions in Georgia could be improved?
- 3.5. Why is it relevant for you to maintain ties with Georgians in the 3 destination countries (in country where you operate)?
  - 3.5.1 How can you strengthen your ties with Georgians abroad?
- 3.6. Do you participate at any missions to the 3 destination countries in order to meet Georgian migrants and Georgian organisations (in case of consular office – do you meet with migrants associations/diaspora organisations in country where you operate)?

- 3.6.1 How often do you go on mission/meet on average per year?
- 3.6.2 Who exactly do you visit/ meet with on such missions?
- 3.6.3 What are the purposes of such visits?
- 3.7 Do you follow the situation in the 3 destination countries (in country where you operate) in regards to migrants (legal acts, policy, attitude to migrants in general)?
  - 3.7.1 Do you follow up on any news that is relevant for Georgian migrants in the 3 destination countries?
  - 3.7.2 If you are not following the situation, what are the reasons for it?

#### **4. Support to the development of Georgia**

- 4.1 Please identify the field/sector where returned migrants could be employed in Georgia.
  - 4.1.1 Which fields/sectors would benefit the most out of employing returned migrants?
  - 4.1.2 Which fields/sectors are in need of labour?
  - 4.1.3 What kind of skills/ experiences/ knowledge do returned migrants have?
  - 4.1.4 Do you provide information on development needs in Georgia to migrants abroad? How?
- 4.2 Do you provide any support to Georgian migrants who want to invest in Georgia?
  - 4.2.1 What sector in Georgia would benefit from investments from Georgians?
  - 4.2.2 Do you communicate information on investment priorities/conditions to Georgians abroad?
  - 4.2.3 In an ideal world, how do you think this information could be communicated?

#### **5. Remittances**

- 5.1 Do you have any data on remittances sent from Georgians abroad back home?
  - 5.1.1 What are the reasons, in your opinion, for Georgians to remit?
  - 5.1.2 To your knowledge, who do they remit to?
  - 5.1.3 How much do they remit on average?
  - 5.1.4 How could remittances be best used in your opinion?

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