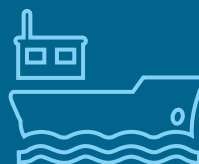


**State Commission on  
Migration Issues**



# **Migration Profile of Georgia**



**Tbilisi  
2021**

2021 Migration Profile was prepared in the framework of the State Commission on Migration Issues, with the support of EU-funded projects: “Ensuring the Effective Coordination in Implementation of the long-term Tasks set by the EU-Georgia Visa Liberalization Action Plan” and “Sustaining Migration Management in Georgia” (ENIGMMA 2).

The contents of this publication in no way reflect the views of the European Union or International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

# Contents



## ☰ Acronyms and Abbreviations<sup>1</sup>

	Internally Displaced Persons, Eco-Migrants and Livelihood Agency
	IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return Programme
	IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme
	Border Crossing Point
	An infectious disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus
	European Migration Network (EC)
	EU-funded project - "Sustaining Migration Management in Georgia"
	European Union
	A European initiative providing researchers with access to continued research career in Europe
	European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation
	Statistical Office of the European Union
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
	Gross Domestic Product
	National Statistics Office of Georgia
	International Center for Migration Policy Development
	Internally Displaced Person
	International Organization for Migration
	Legal Entity of Public Law

1 On the SCMI website can also be found: The Glossary on Migration and the Glossary of Migration Related Acronyms, [http://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article\\_id=129&clang=1](http://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=129&clang=1) (accessed: 18.10.2021).



	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
	Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia
	Medium Migration Profile
	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
	Migration Strategy
	National Agency of Public Registry
	National Bank of Georgia
	Policy and Management Consulting Group
	Public Service Development Agency
	State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia
	Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia
	Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Trafficking
<b>THB</b>	Trafficking in Human Beings
	Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
	Unified Migration Data Analytical System
	United Nations
	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
	United Nations Development Programme
	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
	United States of America

## General Information on Georgia



Map No. 3780 Rev. 6 UNITED NATIONS  
September 2015

Department of Field Support  
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

### Key Facts

Area	69,700 km <sup>2</sup>
Bordering Countries	Armenia Azerbaijan Turkey Russia
National Currency	Georgian Lari (GEL)
GDP (at current prices, billion USD)	15.8 (2020)
GDP per capita (at current prices)	4,255.7 USD (2020)

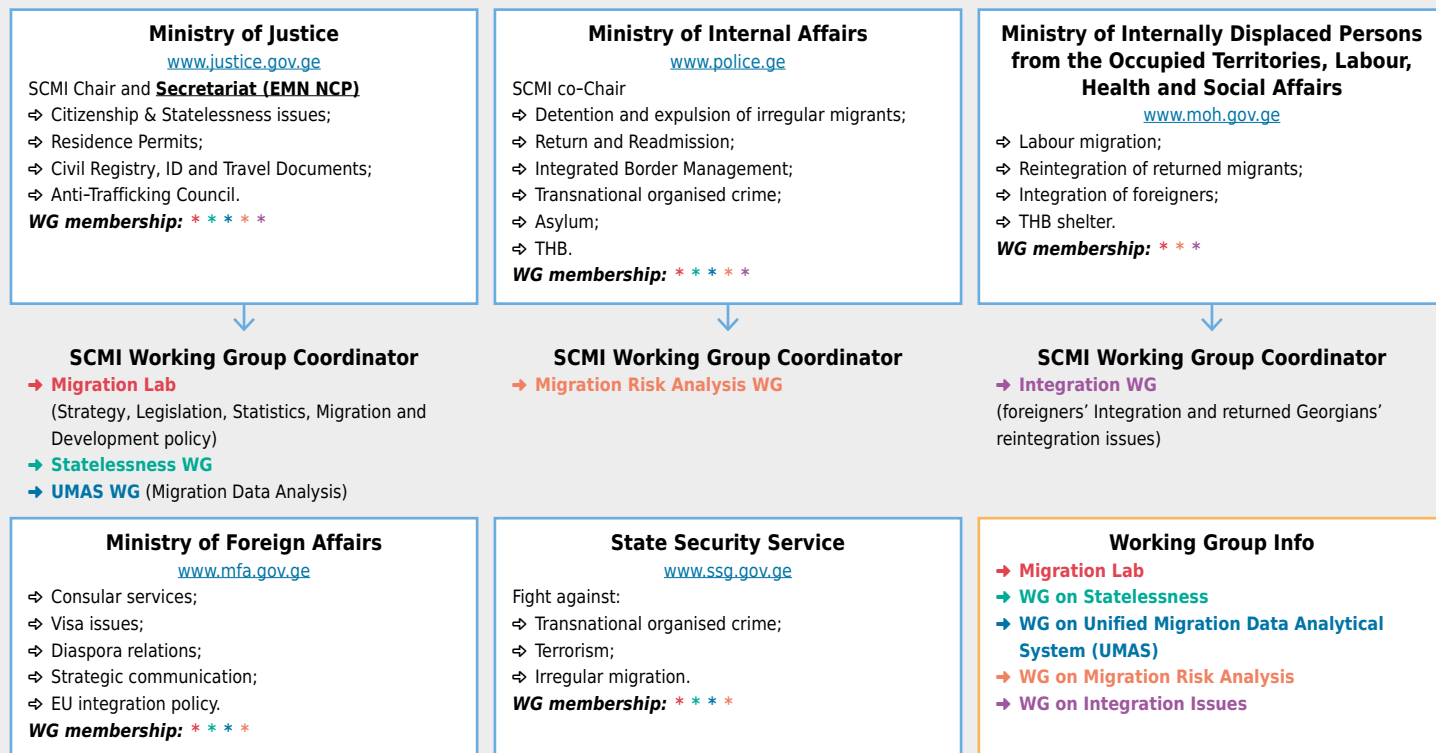
Population	3,728,573 (As of 1 January, 2021)
Ethnic composition (According to the 2014 General Population Census)	Georgians - 86.8%
	Azerbaijani - 6.3%
	Armenians - 4.5%
	Russians - 0.7%
	Other - 1.7%
Capital	Tbilisi
Population of Capital	1,202,731 (As of January 1, 2021)
Official Languages	Georgian, Abkhaz (in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia)
Natural Increase Rate (per thousand population)	- 1,1 (2020)
President	Salome Zourabichvili
Prime Minister	Irakli Garibashvili
Speaker of the Parliament	Shalva Papuashvili

## STATE COMMISSION ON MIGRATION ISSUES

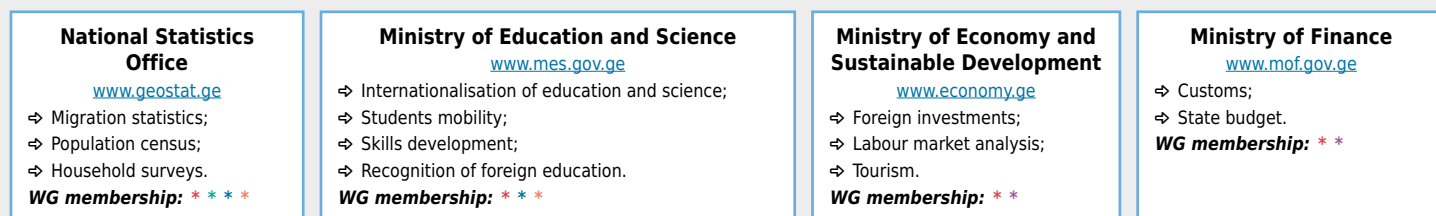
[www.migration.commission.ge](http://www.migration.commission.ge)

The **State Commission on Migration Issues** (SCMI/Commission) is the government's advisory body, which consists of three incorporated sets of organizations closely cooperating with the fourth external set (see below). The decisions within the Commission are made at a ministerial/deputy ministerial level, while preparatory work is run on medium (Dep. Director / Head of Unit) level. The medium level representatives work is based on shared responsibilities and concentrated within 5 thematic working groups (WG). SCMI's analytical, advisory and administrative support is provided by its **Secretariat**, which at the same time is the **EMN's NCP**.

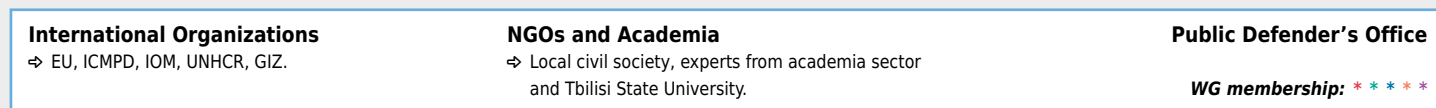
### SET 1 ----- MAIN LINE ----- SCMI MEMBER AGENCIES (MA)



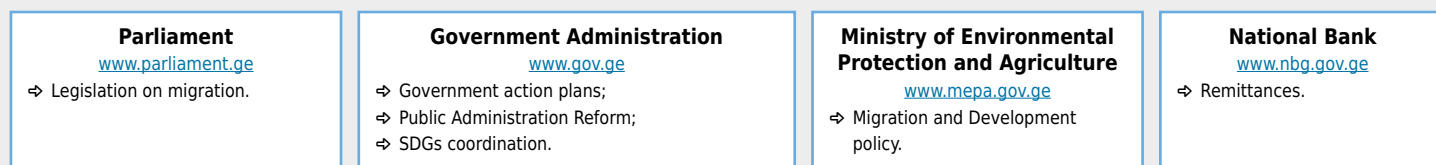
### SET 2 ----- SUPPORT LINE ----- SCMI MAS



### SET 3 ----- CONSULTANTS -----



### SET 4 ----- EXTERNAL PARTNERS -----



#### ACRONYMS

<b>EMN</b>	European Migration Network
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GIZ</b>	German Agency for International Cooperation
<b>ICMPD</b>	International Centre for Migration Policy Development

<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>UMAS</b>	Unified Migration Data Analytical System
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WG</b>	Working Group

## Introduction

Georgia's Migration Profile 2021 is the fourth Medium Migration Profile (MMP / Profile) developed by the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia (SCMI) that builds on the previous experience in elaborating migration profiles. Unlike the profiles for previous years,<sup>2</sup> this document has changed much in terms of both its structure and content, and is partially based on the model used by European Migration Network (EMN) member states for their Annual Reports on Migration and Asylum.<sup>3</sup> The document contains 10 major thematic directions similar to EMN Reports, while in parallel adds with the thematic sections having relevance to Georgia specifically.

By way of compiling and analysing official data and statistics, the MMP aims primarily at delivering to various audiences, in an easy-to-understand language, updated information on major migration trends and thus supporting the work of researchers and academia representatives interested in the field. It is also intended to benefit evidence-based migration policy planning and its implementation.

The MMP 2021 provides international and internal migration statistics for the period of 2016–2020 in more detail. In resemblance to its predecessor, the document presents entire data visualizations in order to ease its understanding by a diversity of readers and at the same time leaves a room for analysis and interpretation. At the same time, the MMP's narrative part has expanded to become more thorough: it describes key measures undertaken in the field of country's migration policy in 2019–2021 (as of July) at legislative, policy and practice levels; furthermore, along with discussing general migration management issues, the narrative part covers 10 thematic directions displayed in its section on statistics. That part of the Profile provides important information to the reader to be able accurately interpret the data presented in the document. The MMP's summary part allows the readership in shortest possible time to get an insight into the country's major migration trends without exploring a plethora of data in detail.

Like the Profiles for the previous years, this document relies on the official data of Georgia's National Statistics Office (Geostat), the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and the United Nations' (UN) agencies as well as administrative data of Georgian and foreign state authorities and some individual research findings.

In developing this MMP, the SCMI leveraged the experience and recommendations of international organizations, local civil society and members of academia involved in migration management and having sound knowledge of the area. We hope to further improve the process of Profile elaboration in order to make the document a more credible reference source for all interested in academic research, education, and those involved in policy development or management issues.

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2 [https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article\\_id=117&clang=1](https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=117&clang=1) (accessed: 15.10.2021).



3 [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/annual-reports-migration-and-asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/annual-reports-migration-and-asylum_en) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

The MMP is a complex document, which comprises a considerable volume of statistical information collected / processed by various state entities and international organizations that is accompanied by relevant analysis.

**The structure of the document is deliberately built on interrelated chapters allowing the reader to follow a continuum and construct a general picture. Hence, when reading a separate chapter of the Profile it is necessary to reflect on the previous and/or the following chapter and make comprehensive conclusions.**

**Furthermore, starting from 2015, the so-called Medium and Brief Migration Profiles have been designed in the way that enables the reader to trace the linkage between them and make a proper comparative analysis by years.**

It is also noteworthy that working on the document is a labour-intensive process and its updating requires certain time resources. **Therefore, when making reference to the Profile, the reader should take note of the sources used in the document and the dates they were viewed.** This is necessary due to the following:

-  **a)** The data is collected and essentially, **describes the situation of years 2016-2020;** respectively, those should not be identified with the present status quo;
-  **b)** Certain data and sources used in the Profile are the subject to frequent update, hence, they might display different / updated information when viewed later.

**Accordingly, referring to the specific data given in the Migration Profiles separately / in an isolated manner might lead to wrong conclusion.**

Finally, despite the last years' well-acclaimed practice of visualizations of Profiles aimed at simplifying the delivery of information and its comprehension, the reader should apply the same principle when referring to the document s/he uses while treating the narrative text based Profiles, i.e. **in conjunction with the previous and/or the following chapter and constructing a whole picture.**

This approach will enable the reader to make the best use of the information s/he needs and based on that, come to the accurate conclusions.

## ☰ Major Migratory Trends

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and subsequent travel restrictions seriously affected international mobility and migration flows. This situation was significantly reflected in 2020's migratory trends.

### ☑ LEGAL EMIGRATION

- » After hitting the highest figure in 2019 for the last five years, the number of individuals emigrating from Georgia seriously diminished in 2020. As a result, the net migration turned out positive for the first time in the last 26 years.
- » In 2017-2019, the number of visits by Georgian citizens to EU/Schengen States was increasing. In 2020, this rate went sharply down.
- » Countries that Georgian citizens visited most frequently in 2017-2020 were Germany, Italy, Greece, Poland and France.
- » Since the visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States came into effect, number of refusals for Georgian citizens' intending to enter these countries rose considerably. The highest number of rejections at the border was recorded in 2019, which was 5.5 times higher than the relevant number in 2016.
- » In 2016-2019, number of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in EU/Schengen States kept increasing. Compared with 2016, the number rose by 25% in 2019.
- » More than a half of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in EU/Schengen States (57%) reside in Greece, Italy and Germany. They obtained these permits primarily on the grounds of family reunification and labour (remunerated) activity.
- » In 2020, the number of non-immigrant admissions of Georgian citizens to the USA reduced. Alongside this figure, the rate of legal emigration to the USA, which has been more or less steady in 2016-2019, also went down. The majority of permanent residence permits to Georgian citizens were issued on the grounds of being immediate relative of a US citizen or due to winning in the Diversity Visa Lottery ("Green Card") program.
- » In 2017-2020, number of temporary residence permits issued by Russia to Georgian citizens went down. A particular drop in this number was recorded in 2020 when it was reduced by almost 52% compared to 2019.
- » Number of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in Russia hit the lowest mark in 2020 for the last five years.
- » The number of Georgian citizens acquiring Russian citizenship was stable in 2016-2019, while in 2020 it increased by 42% compared to 2019.



## LEGAL IMMIGRATION

- » Number of Georgian visas issued to foreign citizens kept rising every year since 2016 hitting the highest figure in 2019.
- » The increased number of Georgian visas issued in 2016-2019 dropped since 2020. Most frequently issued visas were C category (short-term) and D category (immigration) visas.
- » By 31 December 2020, 42,987 foreign citizens held valid Georgian residence cards – less than the previous year by 10,000.
- » An overwhelming majority of residence permits issued to foreign citizens have been temporary permits for study and work purposes.
- » A majority of foreigners staying in Georgia for employment purposes work in small enterprises in Adjara. Transport/warehousing and process manufacturing are the most frequent sectors they are employed in.
- » A majority of foreign students are enrolled in one-stage medical programs in Georgia. Citizens of India and Azerbaijan make the largest number of these students.
- » In 2020, issuance of all types of residence permits reduced except for permanent residence permits. The latter type of permits mostly issued to citizens of Georgia's neighbouring countries and Ukraine.



## RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

- » The number of return orders issued by EU/Schengen States to Georgian citizens and the number of Georgian citizens returned following an order to leave both increased in 2016-2019. In 2020, these figures diminished.
- » Countries that issued most return orders to Georgian citizens were France, Germany and Greece.
- » Number of Georgian citizens returning from EU/Schengen States reduced by 29% in 2020 compared with 2019.
- » In 2016-2020, 10,712 Georgian citizens returned to Georgia under the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) program of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A majority of these citizens came back from Germany, Greece, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands.
- » In the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (February – July 2020), about 25,198 Georgian citizens were able to return to their home country from various foreign countries with the Georgian Government's assistance.
- » In 2019-2020, the number of readmission applications from EU/Schengen States diminished. In 2016-2020, biggest numbers of readmission applications were received from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland.
- » Georgia continues to be a leading country among third countries having high rate of positive decisions on readmission applications from EU/Schengen States. An aggregate rate of all applications granted during five years is 98%.



- » A total number of deported Georgian citizens reduced by 49% in 2020 compared with 2016.
- » Despite the diminished number of Georgian citizens that returned to Georgia in 2020, an increase is seen in the number of both applications for enrolling at State reintegration programs and beneficiaries that actually received reintegration assistance compared with the previous year. Among the State reintegration programs, social assistance and support for social/income generating projects were most in-demand.
- » Within IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program, 3,986 different types of reintegration assistance were provided in 2016-2020 benefiting 3,395 returnees. A majority of migrants that benefited from the AVRR program were returnees from Greece, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands.



## MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- » Compared with 2016, the volume of migrant remittances increased by about 64% in 2020, which makes the highest figure in the last 20 years. In 2018-2020, the aggregate amount of remittances exceeded foreign direct investments made in the same period.
- » The largest share of all remittances continued to fall on those from Russia in 2016-2020. Nevertheless, share of remittances from Russia among total remittances channelling to Georgia have been reducing year by year.
- » The share of remittances from the EU/Schengen States has been increasing since 2017 each year hitting the highest figure of 42% in 2020.
- » One-third (1/3) of all remittances (almost 640 million USD) originated from EU/Schengen States and wired to Georgia in 2020 were received from Italy, Greece, Germany and Spain.
- » The growing number of business entities founded by foreigners in 2016-2018 began to wane in 2019. 63% of these enterprises are based in the capital city.
- » Before 2019, numbers of foreign citizens registering ownership right to real estate in Georgia was growing. The figure reduced twice in 2020 though.
- » Amount of income tax paid by foreign citizens in Georgia increased in 2016-2019 but diminished in 2020. Although not being as much as the income tax, property tax paid by foreign citizens also kept increasing until 2019. As for tax on land property paid by foreigners (agricultural and non-agricultural land plots), the trend has been varying from year to year with both upturns and downturns.



## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

- >> Number of asylum seekers in Georgia hit the highest figure for the last 5 years in 2019. In 2020, it diminished by 30% compared with the previous year.
- >> The number of countries of origin of asylum seekers in Georgia has also been going up in the recent years.
- >> During the last five years, it was seen a rise in the share of negative decisions on asylum claims in the total number of asylum decisions issued each year. The trend relates primarily to increased numbers of unfounded applications for international protection.
- >> In 2016-2019, there has been a growing trend of Georgian citizens claiming asylum in EU/Schengen States. The highest number of such asylum requests was recorded in 2019. In contrast, in 2020, this number dropped sharply, becoming almost equal to the figure in 2016.
- >> In 2016-2020, France and Germany were the countries in which Georgian citizens applied for asylum most often. The figure varies by countries. In some countries, the number of asylum applications began to wane even before the outbreak of the pandemic; examples are Luxembourg (75%), Switzerland (31%), Austria (28.5%), Italy (16.3%), Sweden (16%) and Germany (6.9%).
- >> In 2016-2020, an overwhelming majority (95%) of Georgian citizens' claims for asylum in EU/Schengen States were considered unfounded resulting in negative decisions. Worth noting also is that the recognition rate has been within the range of 5% in the recent years.
- >> In the period between 2016 and 2021, 12 more EU/Schengen States gave Georgia the status of a safe country of origin. By 2021, in total 17 EU/Schengen States considered Georgia a safe country of origin.



## INTEGRATION

- >> The number of residence permits issued on the ground of family reunification reduced since 2018.
- >> Number of foreign pupils enrolled in general educational institutions (elementary schools) has been going down hitting the lowest benchmark in 2020. Sixty percent (60%) of foreign pupils who entered schools in 2016-2020 were citizens of Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan and Ukraine.
- >> In 2017-2020, there was a significant drop in the number of foreign citizens wanting to acquire vocational education in Georgia. Compared with 2017, the figure halved in 2020. Similar to immigrants, the number of beneficiaries of international protection who have enrolled in vocational educational institutions in 2016-2020 remains low too.
- >> Number of foreign citizens receiving social assistance from the state remained stable in 2016-2019. The figure went up in 2020 - something to be attributed to the increase in assistance under various types of state programs in connection to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

- >> Violations of visa regime by foreigners in Georgia grew in 2016-2019 but diminished significantly in 2020. The figure reduced by 30% compared with 2016 and by 61% compared with 2019.
- >> There was an increase in the number of expulsion decisions against foreigners in 2016-2019 as well as the execution rate of these decisions. Like other migratory processes, both figures went down in 2020.
- >> Based on expulsion decisions, in 2016-2020, 91% of foreigners departed from Georgia voluntarily.
- >> 36% of foreigners expelled from Georgia in 2016-2020 were citizens of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran.



## BORDER MANAGEMENT

- >> Number of foreign citizens crossing the Georgian state border kept increasing through 2016-2019. Compared with 2016, this figure increased by 42% in 2019.
- >> Border crossings by both Georgian and foreign citizens dropped about five times in 2020.
- >> In 2016-2020, by passenger flow, the busiest border crossing points (BCP) were the vehicle crossing points at the border with neighbouring countries (Sarpi/Turkey, Red Bridge/Azerbaijan, Sadakhlo/Armenia, Kazbegi/Russia) and the Tbilisi International Airport.
- >> The number of foreigners not allowed to enter Georgia in 2019 increased 5 times compared to 2016. Despite the increasing number of entry refusals, an annual refusal rate expressed in percentage in the total number of foreigners willing to enter the country is quite low.



## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

- >> Criminal prosecution figures for the crime of trafficking in human beings (THB) were increasing in 2016-2019. The highest number of criminal prosecutions launched was recorded in 2019.
- >> 56 victims or statutory victims of THB were identified in 2016-2020, a majority of whom were citizens of Georgia and Uzbekistan. 93% of trafficking victims (statutory victims) identified were women and 64% were minors.
- >> The most widespread form of THB has been sexual exploitation. Since 2017 cases of labour exploitation has also been detected.



## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

- >> The rate of granting Georgian citizenship has been diminishing year by year slowly but steadily.
- >> In 2016-2020, 62% of applications for granting Georgian citizenship were positive and only 38% were denied.

- » In a majority of cases, the Georgian citizenship was granted to either former Georgian citizens or persons who were originating from Georgia (nationals of Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, Israel, USA and Greece).
- » The statistics of recognized stateless persons in Georgia did not change much in 2016-2020.



## INTERNAL MIGRATION

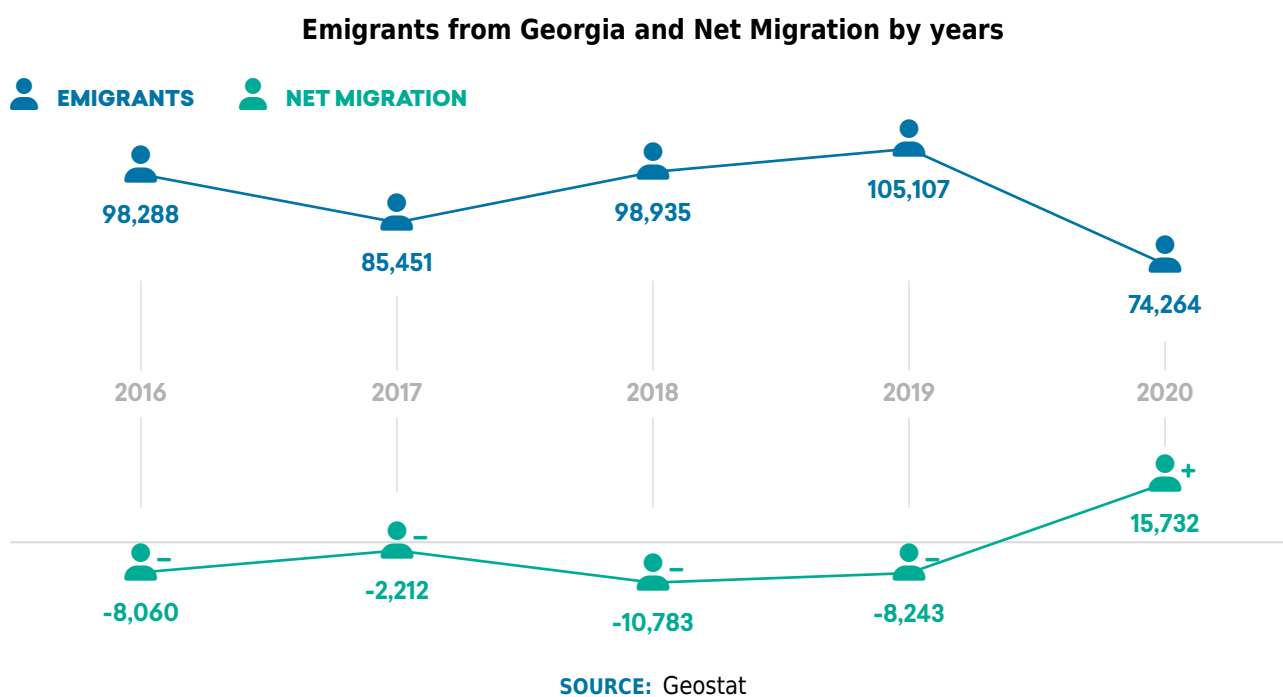
- » 90% of internally displaced persons (IDPs) registered in Georgia in 2016-2020 were from occupied Abkhazia and they outnumber IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region by almost ten times.
- » IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region now reside mostly in Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions that are adjacent to the Tskhinvali region. IDPs from occupied Abkhazia are settled in Tbilisi and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region.
- » In 2020, a majority of IDPs from occupied Abkhazia (59%) were living in private apartments. Most IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region (72%) live in compact settlements.
- » The number of ecomigrant families has been decreasing since 2017. As for their resettlement, the figure has been changing and it hit the highest value (84%) in 2018.
- » By 2020, 39% of registered ecomigrants were from Adjara. By the latest data, Adjara is leading as a place for ecomigrants resettlement.
- » Through 2016-2020, the share of urban population in the total number of country's population was increasing every year. Conversely, the number of residents in rural areas has been decreasing. Accordingly, in the last five years, the share of urban population increased from 58.02% to 59.42%, and the share of rural population decreased by 1.4%.

## Situation Analysis

In Georgia, as in any other country in the world, the root causes of emigration and immigration are complex and linked with both - economic, social and political changes, as well as individual decisions of people. There was a period in Georgia's recent history when emigration was caused primarily by unstable situation and security related issues in the country (e.g. civil war, armed conflicts). However, later emigration flows were mainly influenced by economic and social factors. Other factors contributing to emigration were the emigrant networks abroad and better opportunities of receiving education in developed countries.<sup>4</sup>

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and subsequent travel restrictions largely affected decrease of international mobility and migration flows.<sup>5</sup> This global situation was significantly reflected in Georgia's migratory trends as well.

According to Geostat, in 2019, the number of emigrants (see the definition below)<sup>6</sup> from Georgia was 105,107; whereas, in 2020, the number decreased by 30% and consisted 74,264. As a result, the net migration turned out positive for the first time in the last 26 years<sup>7</sup> (15,732).<sup>8</sup>



4 Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021-2030, [https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms\\_2021-2030\\_eng\\_08.02.21.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms_2021-2030_eng_08.02.21.pdf), (accessed: 15.10.2021).

5 International Migration 2020 Highlights. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020). [https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa\\_pd\\_2020\\_international\\_migration\\_highlights.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2020_international_migration_highlights.pdf) (accessed: 15.10.2021).

6 Detailed methodological definitions of 'emigrant' and 'immigrant' is presented here: [https://www.geostat.ge/media/38540/0902\\_210521\\_EN.PDF](https://www.geostat.ge/media/38540/0902_210521_EN.PDF) (accessed: 15.10.2021).

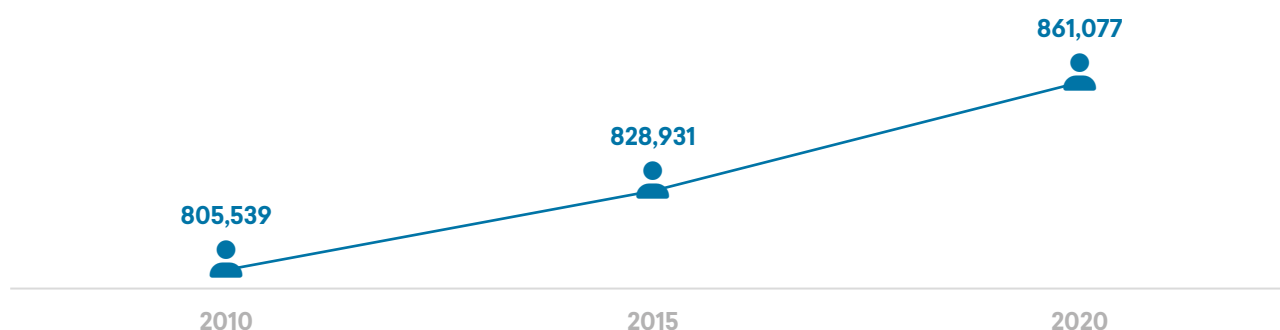
7 Geostat web-page provides [Corresponding data](#) since 1994 (accessed: 15.10.2021).

8 <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/322/migration> (accessed: 15.10.2021).

According to Geostat, in 2020 the unemployment rate in Georgia increased by 0.9 percentage points, compared with 2019, amounting to 18.5%. At the same time, in 2020, the labour force (economically active population) accounted for 50.5% of the working age population (15 years and older). Compared to the previous year, labour force participation rate (economic activity rate) reduced by 1.3 percentage points while employment rate reduced by 1.5 percentage points. The labour force participation rate (economic activity rate) decreased by 0.3 percentage points in urban settlements while in rural settlements the rate decreased by 2.6 percentage points. The employment rate declined in both urban and rural settlements by 1.3 and 1.8 percentage points respectively.<sup>9</sup>

A general, but still incomplete picture of total number of Georgian emigrants residing abroad (Migrant Stock) is given by the estimates of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) that are calculated/evaluated based on the foreign-born population category.<sup>10</sup> According to the UN estimates, the number of migrants born in Georgia and residing abroad increased to 861,077<sup>11</sup>.

### Migrants born in Georgia and residing abroad by years



SOURCE: UN DESA

Increased emigration goes hand in hand with increased volume of annual remittances from abroad, which hit the highest volume in the last 21 years<sup>12</sup>, amounting to \$1,9 billion in 2020. According to the various studies, these remittances form an important source of livelihood for many migrant families<sup>13</sup> while in parallel contribute to the development of human capital (the remittances are mostly used to cover healthcare and education costs).<sup>14</sup>

9 The data is calculated according to the new standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians. The introduction of the new standard provides for the new definition of the self-employed. In particular, according to the new standard, persons working at own family households, who are not market-oriented and produce agricultural products mainly for their own consumption are no longer considered self-employed. Indicators of the Labour Force (Employment and Unemployment) 2020. Geostat <https://cutt.ly/r139mhD> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

10 Detailed description of the methodology is available here: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa\\_pd\\_2020\\_international\\_migrant\\_stock\\_documentation.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2020_international_migrant_stock_documentation.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

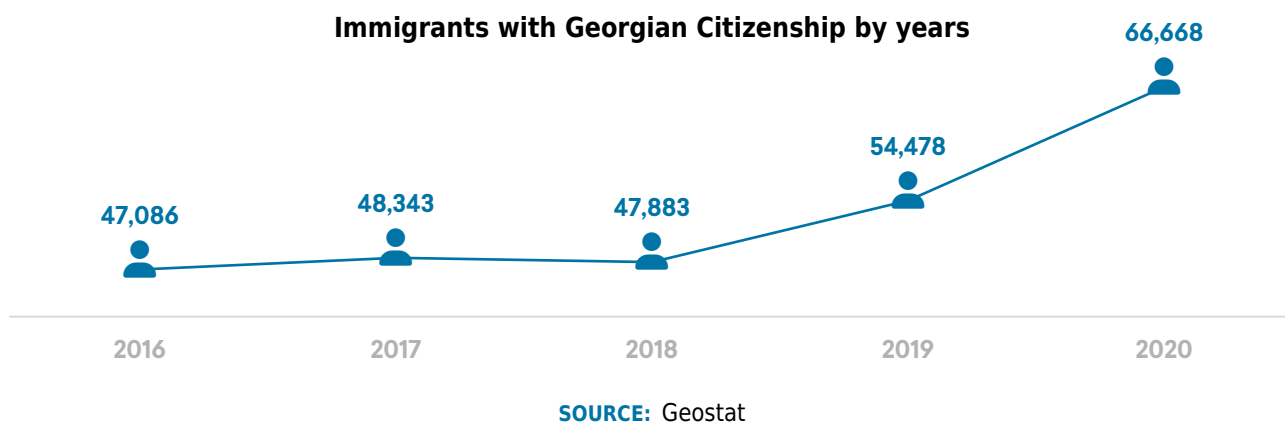
11 International Migrant Stock 2020: Destination and origin; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa\\_pd\\_2020\\_ims\\_stock\\_by\\_sex\\_destination\\_and\\_origin.xlsx](https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2020_ims_stock_by_sex_destination_and_origin.xlsx) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

12 Web-page of National Bank of Georgia provides corresponding data since 1999 (accessed: 15.10.2021).

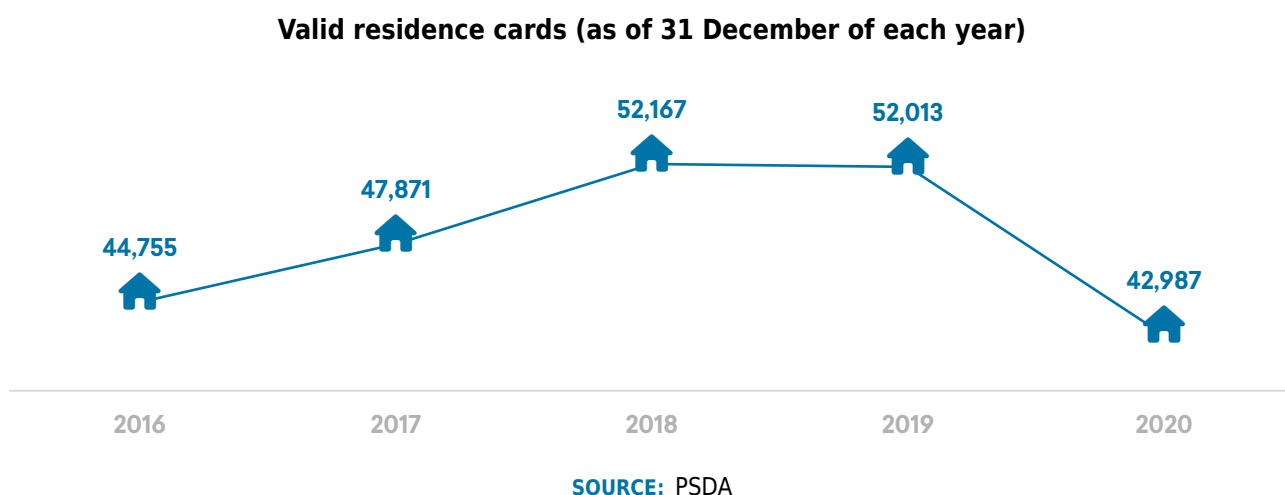
13 "Brief Migration Profile – Remittances"; SCMI, 2016 <https://migration.commission.ge/files/eng.pdf>, (accessed: 18.10.2021).

14 The study commissioned by SCMI Secretariat in 2019. Calculated based on 449 surveyed households.

Besides to the rise of emigration, there is an increasing tendency in the number of returning Georgian citizens, where, along with forced, the voluntary returns are also present. One of the indicators of this process is the data provided by Geostat, where 66,668 Georgian citizens are recorded in 2020 in the immigrants' category, which is the highest number in the last five years. This may be caused by COVID-19 and process of return of the Georgian citizens during the global pandemic assisted by the Government of Georgia.



Considering attractive educational environment for foreign students, the ease of doing business and increased international mobility, immigration has also surged in recent years. As of 31 December 2019, there were more than 52,000 valid residence cards (mainly temporary) issued to foreign citizens in Georgia. This figure decreased by 18% in 2020, which may be caused majorly by global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent international mobility restrictions.



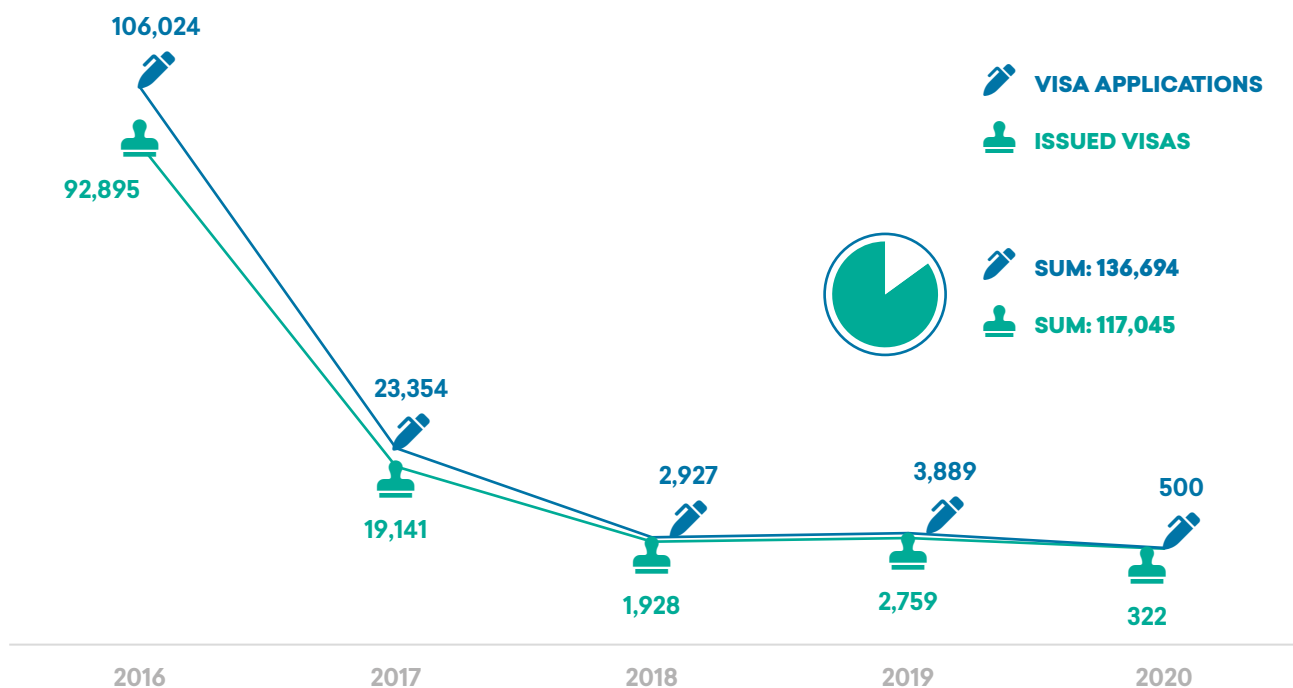
### LEGAL MIGRATION

#### Legal Emigration

##### Legal emigration to the EU

After the introduction of visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States (28.03.2017), the rate of Schengen visa requests from Georgian citizens has decreased considerably.

#### Applications and issued Schengen visas (including multiple-entry visas) by years



SOURCE: European Commission<sup>15</sup> (data accessed: 14.05.2021)

Since visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States came into force, in 2017-2019, the number of visits of Georgian citizens to EU/Schengen States had been increasing<sup>16</sup>. Compared with 2019, the number of visits dropped sharply (73%) in 2020, which refers to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions and decreased international mobility.

<sup>15</sup> Visa Statistics: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/visa-policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/visa-policy_en) (accessed: 14.05.2021).






























<sup>16</sup> The calculation has been made based on persons who have traveled by air via direct/transit flight to EU/Schengen States or who have finished their flight from EU/Schengen State returning to Georgia.



Tendencies differ by countries: in some countries (i.e.: Germany, Hungary, Cyprus) the number of visits diminished even before the COVID-19 outbreak (since 2019).

Countries that Georgian citizens visited most frequently in 2017-2020 were Germany, Italy, Greece, Poland and France.

#### Georgian citizens' visits to EU/Schengen States by year<sup>17</sup> and destination countries

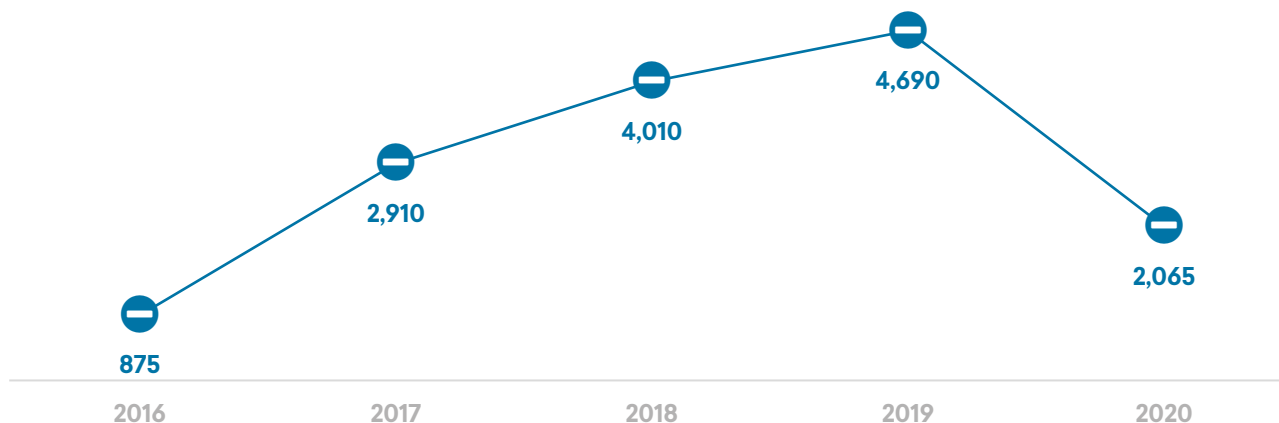
	✈ 2017	✈ 2018	✈ 2019	✈ 2020	✈ SUM
 Germany	57,137	87,063	86,250	22,854	253,304
 Italy	27,927	57,039	64,296	20,162	169,424
 Greece	29,775	44,096	49,290	9,327	132,488
 Poland	15,982	29,801	45,247	20,101	111,131
 France	10,007	31,901	37,732	10,821	90,461
 Spain	11,574	31,980	33,942	6,303	83,799
 Austria	5,567	13,034	26,627	5,152	50,380
 Hungary	9,445	15,584	14,542	2,436	42,007
 Czech Republic	3,558	12,450	17,715	3,394	37,117
 The Netherlands	5,634	9,118	13,215	5,616	33,583
 Cyprus	7,627	11,567	11,160	1,838	32,192
 Belgium	2,267	6,273	10,240	3,150	21,930
 Lithuania	4,477	6,444	6,729	1,453	19,103
 Latvia	3,565	5,999	5,895	1,725	17,184
 Switzerland	1,664	4,222	6,502	1,168	13,556
 Bulgaria	1,424	2,942	2,794	1,936	9,096
 Sweden	1,518	2,975	3,000	819	8,312
 Romania	739	3,755	2,463	410	7,367
 Denmark	565	1,350	3,564	464	5,943
 Estonia	720	1,502	2,436	1,044	5,702
 Portugal	862	2,025	2,027	341	5,255
 Malta	423	815	1,782	195	3,215
 Croatia	285	841	792	80	1,998
 Norway	255	616	629	96	1,596
 Finland	236	687	667	196	1,786
 Slovenia	129	305	280	44	758
 Luxembourg	128	360	392	101	981
 Slovakia	97	591	93	80	861
 Iceland	68	117	132	53	370
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>203,655</b>	<b>385,452</b>	<b>450,433</b>	<b>121,359</b>	<b>1,160,899</b>

SOURCE: MIA

17 The statistics have been calculated since the introduction of visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States - 28.03.2017.

Since the visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States came into effect, number of refusals for Georgian citizens' intending to enter these countries rose considerably. The highest number (4,690) of entry refusals was recorded in 2019, which was 5.5 times higher than the relevant figure in 2016.

#### Refusals of entry to EU/Schengen States for Georgian citizens by years



SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 03.09.2021)































As for the number of entry refusals registered in 2016-2020, leading countries are Germany, Greece, France, and Poland. These are the top destination countries for Georgian visitors since the introduction of visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States. It should be noted that number of entry refusals for Georgian citizens at the Bulgarian border increased considerably in 2019-2020.

Prior to 2017, the majority of Georgian citizens were refused of entry to EU/Schengen States mainly on land borders. However, since the introduction of visa-free travel, the picture has changed and refusals of entry at the air borders account for 70-80% of the total number.

Before 2017, the most common reason for refusal of entry was absence of valid visa or residence permit. Whereas since the introduction of visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States the picture changed in this regard as well and the most common ground for refusal is a failure to justify the purpose and conditions of the intended stay and alert been issued for the purposes of not allowing to enter.

In 2016-2019, number of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in EU/Schengen States kept increasing. Compared with 2016, the number rose by 25% in 2019. Georgian citizens have obtained these permits primarily on the grounds of family reunification and labour (remunerated) activity.

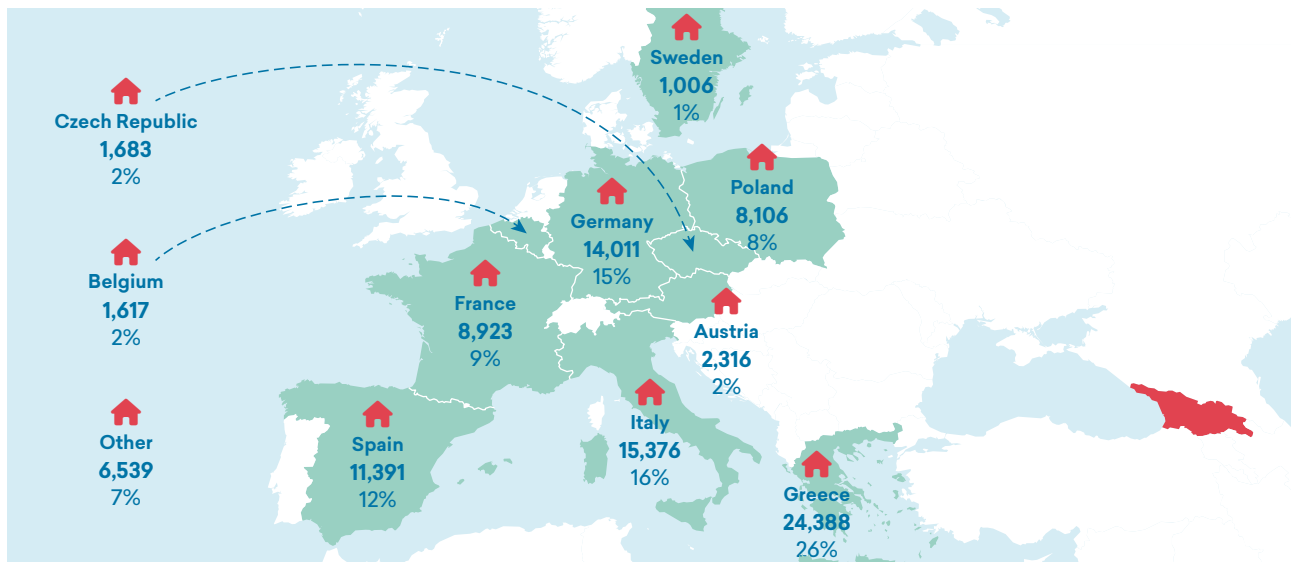
## Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in EU/Schengen States, by year and reason (as of 31 December of each year)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	SUM
 Family Reunification	 26,828	 27,428	 28,212	 27,399	 109,867
 Labour (remunerated) activity	 18,504	 18,252	 22,182	 28,202	 87,140
 Education	 4,872	 4,949	 4,883	 4,541	 19,245
 International Protection	 2,973	 3,058	 3,123	 3,830	 12,984
 Other	 22,201	 25,264	 28,589	 30,525	 106,579
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75,378</b>	<b>78,951</b>	<b>86,989</b>	<b>94,497</b>	<b>335,815</b>

SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 05.08.2021)

More than a half (57%) of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in EU/Schengen States reside in Greece, Italy and Germany. The majority of Georgian citizens holding residence permits issued on the ground of labour (remunerated) activity reside in Italy and Poland, while holders of residence permits for the purpose of family reunification live in Greece and Germany. As for the educational reasons – the majority of Georgian citizens reside in Germany.

## Percentage distribution of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in EU/Schengen States



























SOURCE: Eurostat<sup>18</sup> (data extracted: 05.08.2021)

18 Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU (January 2020), Eurostat no longer records UK data, while by the end of 2019 the data included UK statistics as well.

The number of first-time residence permits issued to Georgian citizens in EU/Schengen States has also been increasing. The growth in this trend is due to increased number of residence permits issued for the purpose of labour (remunerated) activity, which almost doubled in 2019, compared to 2018. Besides, it is to mention that in 2019, there was a decrease in the number of residence permits issued for education (18%) and family reunification (8%) purposes.
















#### First-time residence permits issued to Georgian citizens in the EU/Schengen States by year and reason

		2016	2017	2018	2019	SUM
	Labour (remunerated) activity	 1,889	 2,598	 6,862	 12,398	 23,747
	Family Reunification	 3,125	 3,076	 3,149	 2,894	 12,244
	Education	 1,835	 1,746	 1,769	 1,457	 6,807
	Other	 2,414	 3,027	 4,163	 5,647	 15,251
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9,263</b>	<b>10,447</b>	<b>15,943</b>	<b>22,396</b>	<b>58,049</b>

SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 05.08.2021)

In 2016-2019, the highest number of first-time residence permits for Georgian citizens in EU / Schengen States were issued in Poland, Greece and Germany. At the same time, it is to note that in 2019 the rate of first-time residence permits issued to Georgian citizens increased significantly in Poland (79%) and Czech Republic (166%) compared to 2018. This tendency is mainly increased due to the residence permits issued for labour (remunerated) activities. First-time residence permits for education purposes were issued to the citizens of Georgia mainly in Germany and Czech Republic, while the majority of first-time residence permits for family reunification were issued in Germany, Italy and Greece.

#### Percentage distribution of first-time residence permits issued to Georgian citizens in the EU/Schengen States by year and country

		 2016	 2017	 2018	 2019	 SUM	%
	Poland	1,111	1,663	5,186	9,283	17,243	30%
	Greece	1,408	1,707	2,460	3,052	8,627	15%
	Germany	1,471	1,631	2,078	2,633	7,813	13%
	Italy	807	1,039	1,428	1,286	4,560	8%
	France	1,189	1,087	1,072	1,204	4,552	8%
	Spain	692	663	751	827	2,933	5%
	Czech Republic	379	228	474	1,262	2,343	4%
	United Kingdom	525	543	392	-	1,460	2%
	Austria	355	298	324	311	1,288	2%
	Sweden	166	329	303	293	1,091	2%
	Other	1,160	1,259	1,475	2,245	6,139	11%

SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 05.08.2021)

## Legal Emigration to the USA

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), more than 46,000 non-immigrant admissions<sup>19</sup> were granted to the citizens of Georgia in 2016-2020. The highest number (13,272) of temporary visits was recorded in 2019, whereas the number hit the lowest mark (5,617) in 2017. As a result of COVID-19 pandemic, the number of visits dropped significantly in 2020 (lower by 55% compared with 2019), almost equalling the number recorded in 2017.

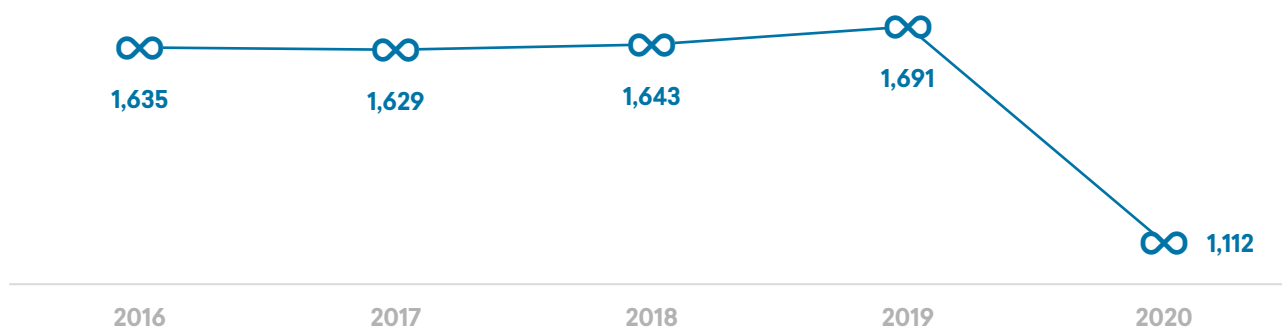
### Non-immigrant admissions in the USA granted to Georgian citizens by years<sup>20</sup>



SOURCE: US Department of Homeland Security (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

Between 2016-2019, the rate of permanent residence permits granted to Georgian citizens in the USA has been relatively stable on an annual basis (compared to 2016 it increased only by 3,5% in 2019). The rate decreased in 2020 by 34%.

### Georgian citizens granted lawful permanent residence permits in the USA by years









SOURCE: US Department of Homeland Security (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

In 2016-2019, the majority of permanent residence permits to Georgian citizens were issued on the grounds of being immediate relative (51%) of a US citizen or due to winning the Diversity Visa Lottery ("Green Card") program (32%).

19 Non-immigrant admissions are granted for temporary visits to the United States, with purposes of temporary visits for tourism or business, academic or vocational study, temporary employment, and so on. [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2019/nonimmigrant\\_2019.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2019/nonimmigrant_2019.pdf) (accessed: 02.08.2021).

20 Data is given based on the Fiscal Year of the USA, covering the data from October 1 to September 30 of each year.

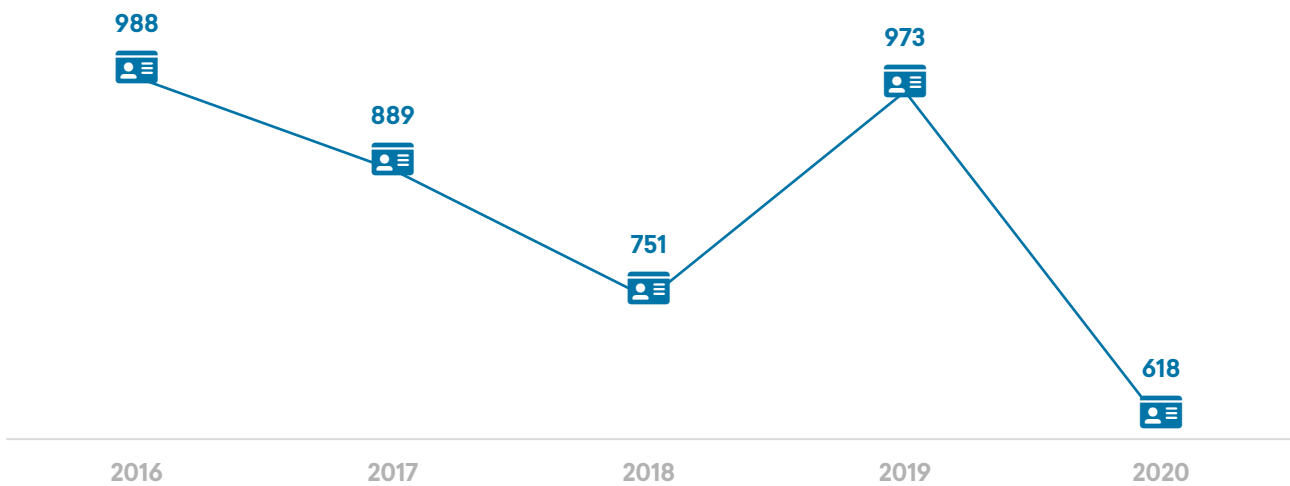
## Georgian citizens granted lawful permanent residence permits in the USA by year and reason

		2016	2017	2018	2019
	Immediate Relatives of US Citizens	∞ 900	∞ 824	∞ 761	∞ 852
	Family Reunification	∞ 142	∞ 132	∞ 154	∞ 135
	Employment	∞ 82	∞ 89	∞ 107	∞ 80
	Diversity Visa Lottery ("Green Card")	∞ 445	∞ 534	∞ 564	∞ 595
	Refugee and Asylum Seeker Status	∞ 64	∞ 48	∞ 57	∞ 25
	Other	∞ 2	∞ 2	∞ 0	∞ 4

**SOURCE:** US Department of Homeland Security (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

In 2016-2020, 4,219 Georgian citizens were granted US citizenship through naturalization. The rate is fluctuating through years. The number hit the highest mark in 2019 while the lowest rate was recorded in 2020.

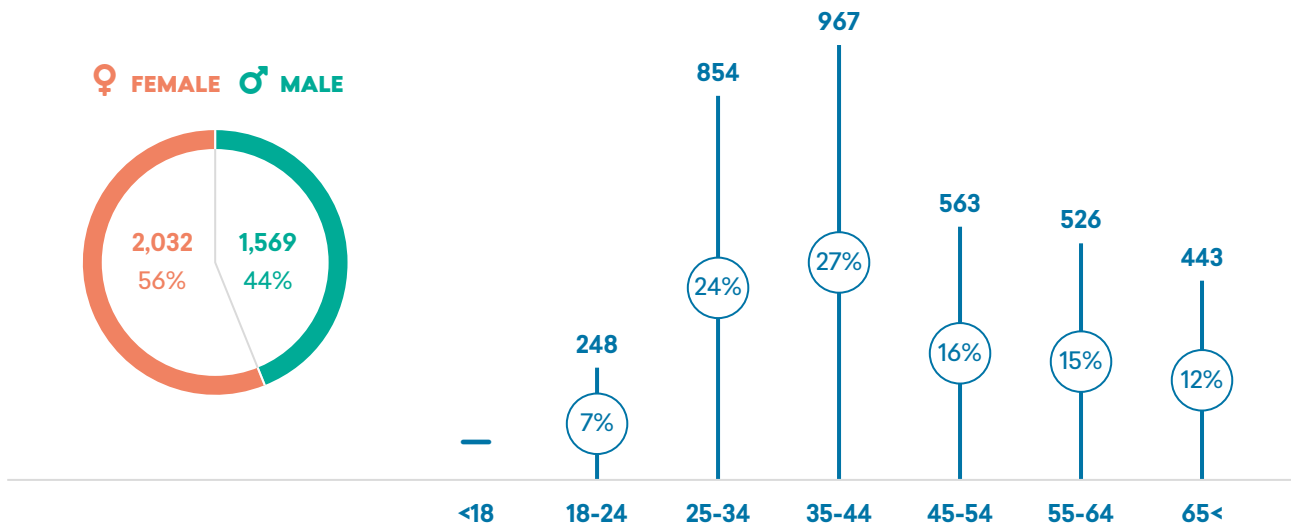
## Georgian citizens granted US citizenship through naturalization by fiscal years



**SOURCE:** US Department of Homeland Security (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

The majority (56%) of Georgian citizens who received US citizenship in 2016-2019 are female, while persons of age 35-44 dominating (27%) in the age groups.

## Georgian citizens granted US citizenship in 2016-2019 by gender and age

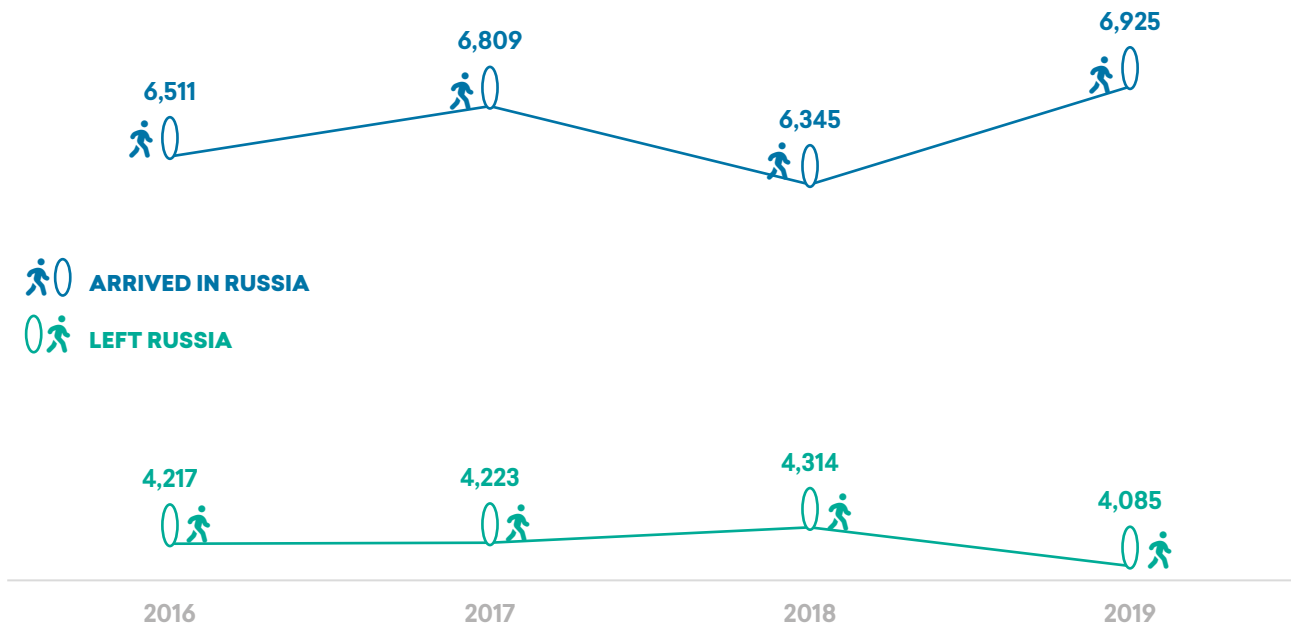


**SOURCE:** US Department of Homeland Security (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

## Legal Emigration to Russia

The number of Georgian citizens emigrating to Russia is stable (both decrease and increase are present throughout the years). The number of citizens of Georgia who left Russia was increasing in 2016-2018. The rate declined in 2019. Consequently, net migration of Georgian citizens to Russia has surged in 2019.

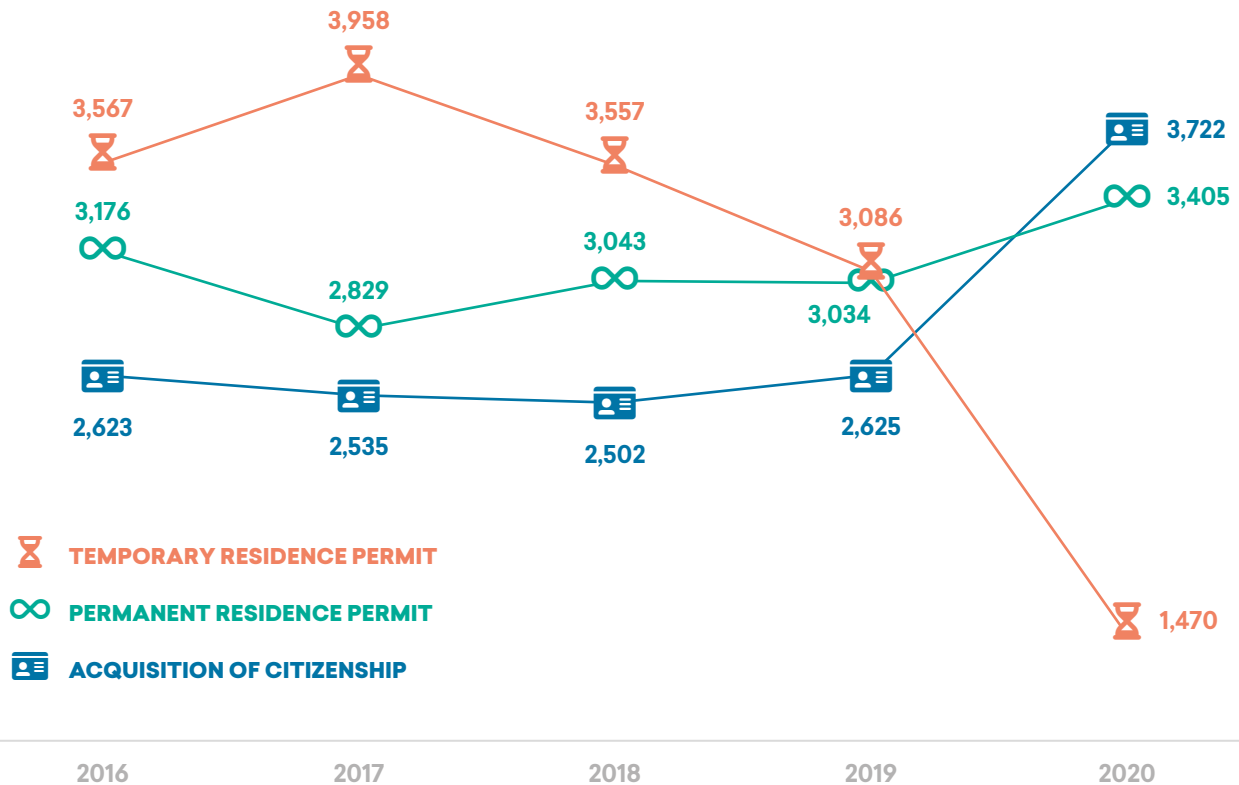
## Dynamics of Georgian citizens' migration to Russia



**SOURCE:** Federal State Statistics Service of Russia (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

The rate of permanent residence permits obtained by citizens of Georgia was stable between 2016-2020. In 2017-2020, number of temporary residence permits issued by Russia to Georgian citizens decreased. Major fall was recorded in 2020 when rate reduced by almost 52% compared to 2019.

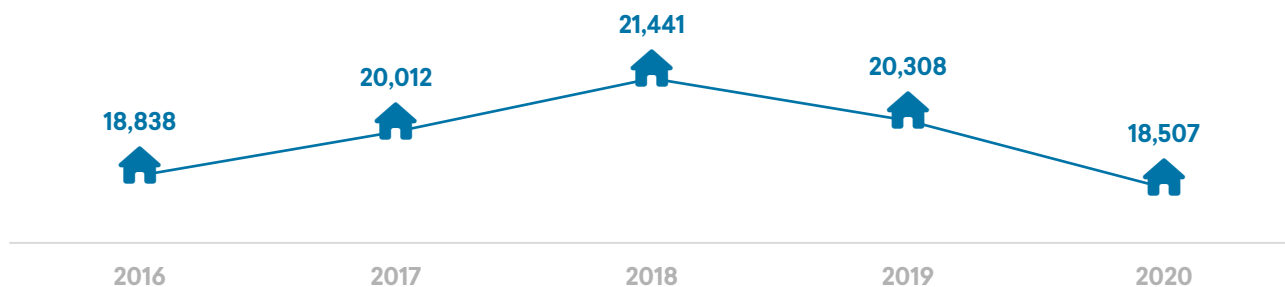
### Georgian citizens granted residence permits and citizenship in Russia by years



SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

Number of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in Russia was increasing in 2016-2018. This rate as well as the rate of issued temporary residence permits has been decreasing since 2019 and hit the lowest number in 2020.

### Total number of Georgian citizens holding valid residence permits in Russia by years (as of 31 December of each year)



SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia (data accessed: 12.08.2021)

































## Legal Immigration

### Georgian Visas

Number of Georgian visas issued to foreign citizens kept increasing every year since 2016 hitting the highest number in 2019. The number of issued Georgian visas dropped in 2020, which may be due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent travel restrictions and limited international mobility.

#### Visas issued to foreign citizens by category and year

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
<b>A</b>	 404	 377	 411	 395	 376	 1,963
<b>B</b>	 109	 113	 152	 187	 91	 652
<b>C</b>	 26,343	 27,819	 31,932	 45,576	 6,977	 138,647
<b>D</b>	 1,747	 2,535	 2,185	 2,106	 503	 9,076
<b>T</b>	 23	 13	 29	 14	 7	 86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,626</b>	<b>30,857</b>	<b>34,709</b>	<b>48,278</b>	<b>7,954</b>	<b>150,424</b>

SOURCE: MFA; MIA<sup>21</sup>

C category (short-term) visas account for about 90% of visas issued to foreign citizens in 2016-2020. Most frequently C category visas were issued to citizens of China and India.

#### C category visas issued to foreign citizens by year and citizenship

	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020
India	10,406	China	12,136	China	21,009	China	30,811	China	3,635
China	8,274	India	9,451	India	4,993	India	8,161	India	1,660
Egypt	2,992	Egypt	2,957	Egypt	1,468	Egypt	2,017	Philippines	504
Iran	1,434	Philippines	846	Philippines	1,006	Philippines	1,597	Egypt	452
Philippines	590	Indonesia	433	Indonesia	504	Indonesia	577	Macedonia	192
Other	2,575	Other	1,933	Other	2,883	Other	2,373	Other	520
TOTAL	26,271	TOTAL	27,756	TOTAL	31,863	TOTAL	45,536	TOTAL	6,963

SOURCE: MFA

In 2016-2019, the number of D category (immigration) visas issued to foreigners remained stable, hitting the lowest mark in 2020, like in case of other visa categories, which can be attributed to COVID-19 pandemic.

21 In case of MIA, calculated data covers visas issued at BCPs.

In 2016–2020 most frequently D category visas were issued to citizens of India.

#### D category visas issued to foreigners by year and citizenship

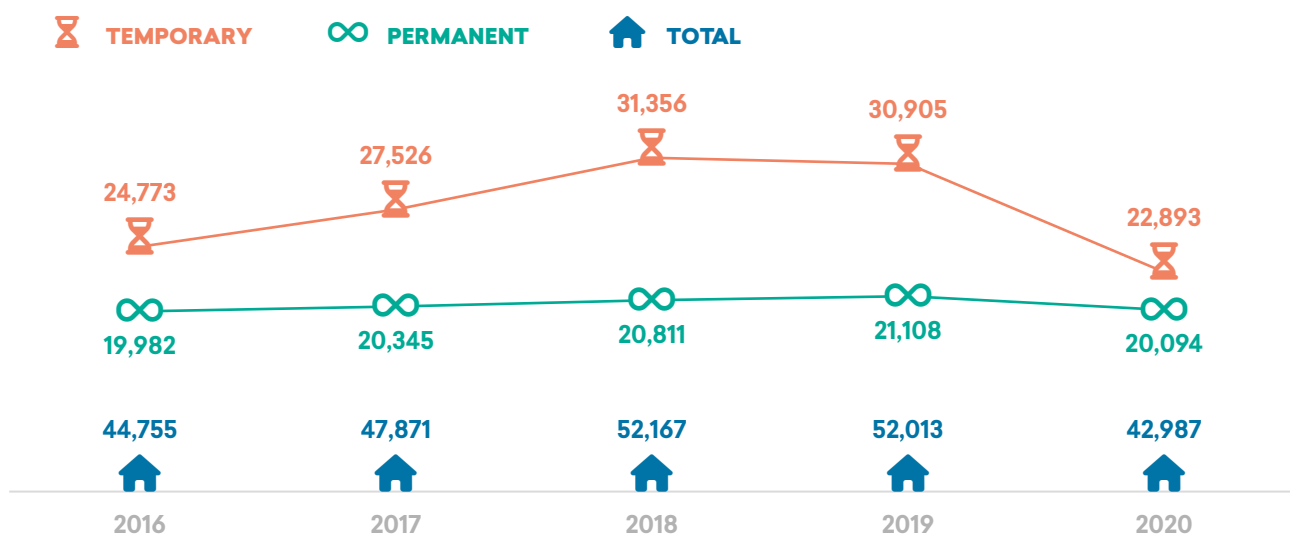
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020
India	1,343	India	2,253	India	1,893	India	1,251	India	310
China	172	Bangladesh	79	Nigeria	86	China	295	Nigeria	52
Nigeria	53	Nepal	37	Sri-Lanka	49	Iran	225	Egypt	50
Nepal	33	Egypt	30	Egypt	42	Nigeria	109	Sri-Lanka	28
Egypt	32	China	26	China	39	Egypt	91	Iran	21
Other	114	Other	110	Other	76	Other	132	Other	42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,747</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,535</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,185</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,103</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>503</b>

SOURCE MFA

#### Residence Permits

As of 31 December 2020, 42,987 foreign citizens held valid Georgian residence cards – a number that is 10,000 less than the one for the previous year, which may be caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent travel restrictions and decreased international mobility. In 2016–2019, the number of valid residence card holders was increasing, mainly on account of temporary residence cards. 2020 is an exception in this regard, as the number of valid temporary residence cards decreased by 8,000 compared with the previous year; as for the permanent residence cards, the rate is stable over the years.

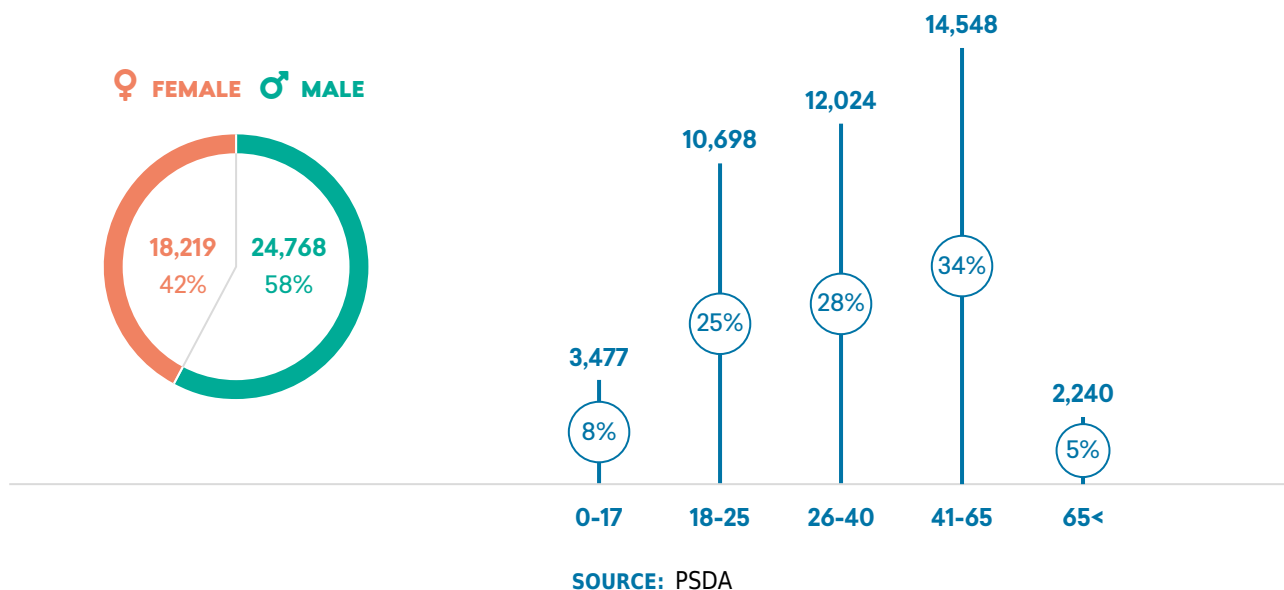
#### Valid residence cards by year and type (as of 31 December each year)



SOURCE: PSDA

58% of valid residence card holders in 2020 are male, 34% fall under 41-65 age group.

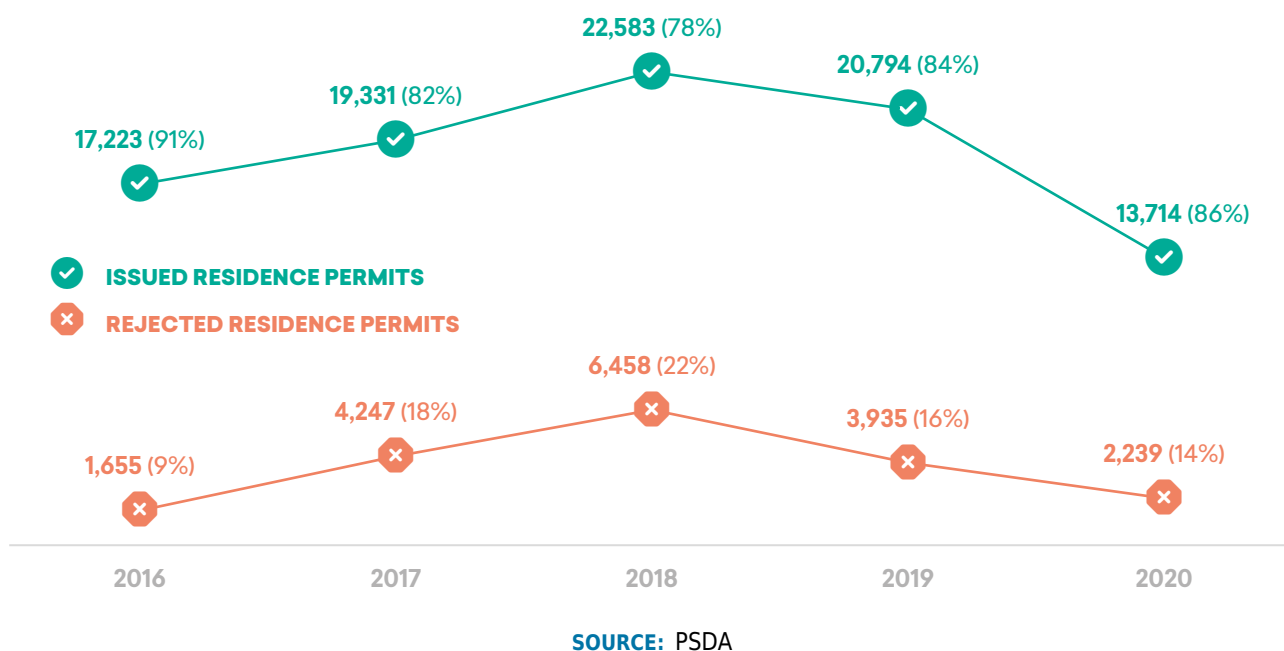
### Quantitative and percentage distribution of valid residence cards in 2020 by gender and age



In the past five years, the number of residence permits issued on different grounds amounted the highest number in 2018.
























































In 2016-2018, both the number and proportion of refusals on granting residence permits have increased. Along with the declining trend in issuance of residence permits since 2019, the number of negative decisions is also diminishing.

### Quantity and percentage of residence permits issued or rejected by year



The majority of residence permits issued to foreign citizens in 2016-2020 have been temporary permits for study and work purposes. Trends differ by residence categories granted over the years. In terms of work residence permits, increasing trend is present in 2016-2017, which sharply declines in 2018 hitting the lowest number in 2020. The number of short-term permits and the ones for study and investment purposes has seen a major increase in 2018-2019. In 2020, issuance of all types of residence permits reduced except for permanent residence permits due to COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Residence permits issued by reason and year

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
 Work	 9,666	 9,765	 7,175	 4,052	 3,284	 33,942
 Study	 2,901	 4,137	 6,051	 6,032	 4,143	 23,264
 Short-term residence Permit	 309	 977	 5,346	 6,597	 2,070	 15,299
 Family Reunification	 1,694	 2,190	 1,877	 1,742	 1,449	 8,952
 Permanent Residence Permit	 1,611	 1,537	 1,444	 1,502	 2,330	 8,424
 Special Residence Permit	 587	 415	 457	 605	 328	 2,392
 Former Georgian Citizen	 360	 222	 119	 96	 67	 864
 Investment	 95	 88	 114	 168	 43	 508
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,223</b>	<b>19,331</b>	<b>22,583</b>	<b>20,794</b>	<b>13,714</b>	<b>93,645</b>

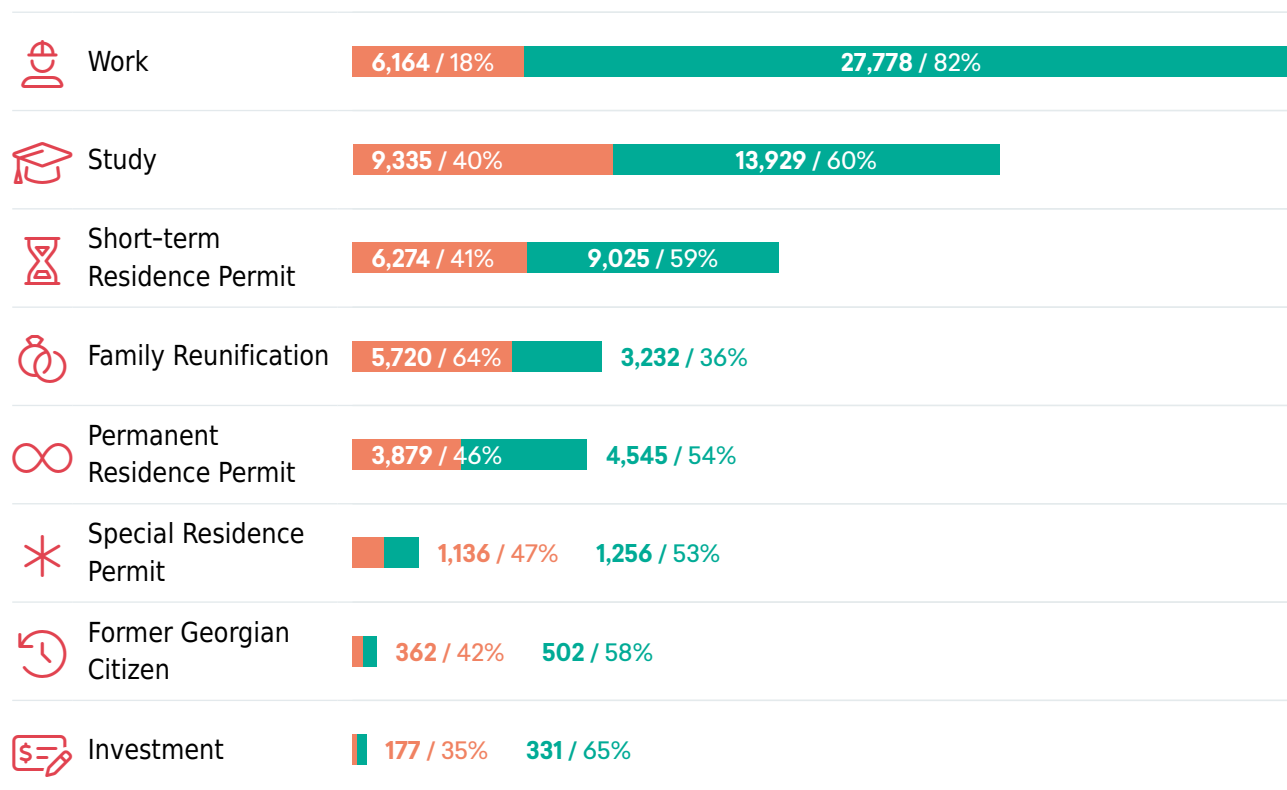
SOURCE: PSDA

Permanent residence permits are mostly issued to citizens of Georgia's neighbouring countries and Ukraine. Temporary residence permits for work purposes are granted primarily to citizens of China, Iran and Turkey, as for permits for study purposes, the majority (64%) is issued to Indian citizens.

In 2016-2020 the major part (65%) of residence permit holders are male.

## Quantitative and percentage distribution of foreigners, who were granted residence permits in 2016-2020 by gender and residence permit category

♀ FEMALE ♂ MALE











SOURCE: PSDA

In 2016-2020, the majority (89%) of residence permits holders fell under 18-65 age group. The largest portion (86%) of residence permits issued for study purposes were granted to persons aged 18-25, while over the half (52%) of work residence permits are issued to persons aged 26-40. 50% of residence permits issued for family reunification purposes were granted to minors<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Person aged under 18.

**Quantitative and percentage distribution of foreigners, who were granted residence permits in 2016-2020 by age and residence permit category**





























	0-17	18-25	26-40	41-65	65+
 Work	9 (0%)	3,971 (11%)	17,554 (52%)	12,135 (36%)	273 (1%)
 Study	1,541 (7%)	20,083 (86%)	1,589 (7%)	50 (0%)	1 (0%)
 Short-term Residence Permit	2,272 (15%)	875 (6%)	4,506 (29%)	7,104 (46%)	542 (4%)
 Family Reunification	4,446 (50%)	494 (5%)	2,343 (26%)	1,516 (17%)	153 (2%)
 Permanent Residence Permit	490 (6%)	894 (11%)	3,405 (40%)	3,265 (39%)	370 (4%)
 Special Residence Permit	215 (9%)	776 (32%)	873 (37%)	488 (20%)	40 (2%)
 Former Georgian Citizen	153 (18%)	62 (7%)	215 (25%)	376 (43%)	58 (7%)
 Investment	132 (26%)	12 (2%)	133 (26%)	218 (43%)	13 (3%)

SOURCE: PSDA

### Foreign Students

In 2016-2018, the number of foreign citizens enrolled in Georgian higher educational institutions has increased considerably, mainly due to admissions of foreign students to one-stage medical programmes. In 2019-2020, the number has slightly decreased.

**Foreign citizens enrolled in Georgian higher educational institutions by year and level of education**






















	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
 One-stage Medical	 1,873	 3,968	 3,710	 3,331	 3,256	 16,138
 Bachelor's	 1,073	 1,243	 1,281	 735	 791	 5,123
 Master's	 125	 172	 188	 164	 182	 831
 PhD	 31	 20	 5	 6	 9	 71
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,102</b>	<b>5,403</b>	<b>5,184</b>	<b>4,236</b>	<b>4,238</b>	<b>22,163</b>

SOURCE: MoES

**Note:** 2020 data is incomplete, as the higher educational institutions are obliged to enrol eligible high-school graduates/graduate student candidates and students (without requiring them to pass Unified National Entrance/General Graduate Examinations) within a one-year period, so that the person is admitted to the educational process and that achievement of learning outcomes is ensured, in accordance with the rules defined by the legislation. Consequently, the number of foreigners who acquired enrolment rights in 2020 is likely to change before the end of 2021.

In 2016-2020, more than half of the students enrolled at Bachelor's, Master's, PhD or one-stage medical programmes are citizens of India and Azerbaijan.

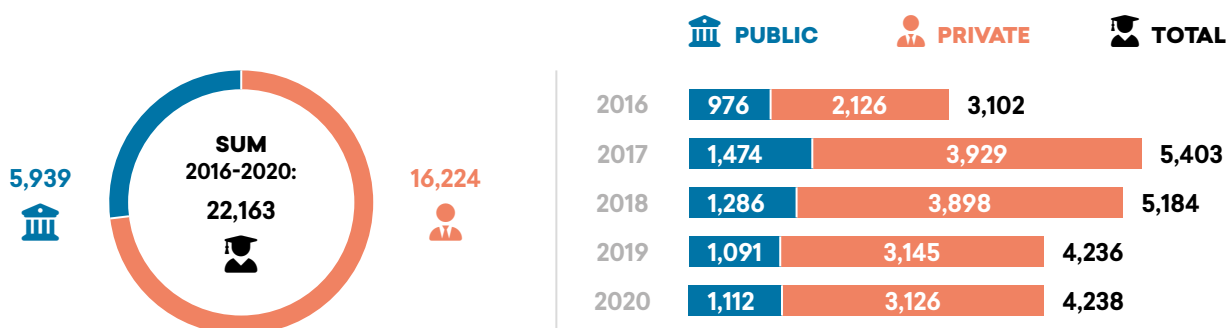
### Quantitative and percentage distribution of foreign students enrolled in higher educational institutions in 2016-2020 by citizenship

	India		8,997	41%	<div><div></div></div>
	Azerbaijan		2,937	13%	<div><div></div></div>
	Nigeria		1,173	5%	<div><div></div></div>
	Iran		1,103	5%	<div><div></div></div>
	Israel		1,010	5%	<div><div></div></div>
	Egypt		914	4%	<div><div></div></div>
	Russia		559	3%	<div><div></div></div>
	Syria		408	2%	<div><div></div></div>
	Turkey		378	2%	<div><div></div></div>
	United Kingdom		365	2%	<div><div></div></div>
	Other		4,319	19%	<div><div></div></div>

SOURCE: MoES

In the past five years, 73% of foreign students were enrolled in private educational institutions. Compared to 2016, in 2017 the number of foreign students enrolled in both private (87%) and public (49%) educational institutions increased significantly. Since 2017, the rate of enrolment in both types of institutions has slightly declined.

### Foreign students enrolled in Georgian higher educational institutions, by type of institution



SOURCE: MoES

In 2016-2020, the major part of study residence permits issued in Georgia were granted to the citizens of India, Iran and Nigeria.

### Quantitative and percentage distribution of study residence permits granted to foreign students by year and citizenship

2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
India	1,449 50%	India	2,556 62%	India	4,486 74%	India	4,068 67%	India	2,291 55%
Nigeria	409 14%	Iraq	327 8%	Iran	326 5%	Iran	607 10%	Iran	456 11%
Iraq	386 13%	Nigeria	253 6%	Nigeria	268 4%	Nigeria	321 5%	Nigeria	316 8%
Turkey	169 6%	Syria	162 4%	Egypt	158 3%	Egypt	215 4%	Egypt	213 5%
Sri-Lanka	156 5%	Iran	145 3%	Jordan	96 2%	Jordan	158 3%	Jordan	167 4%
Other	332 12%	Other	694 17%	Other	717 12%	Other	663 11%	Other	700 17%

SOURCE: PSDA

### Labour Immigrants

In 2016-2020, 33,942 work (temporary) residence permits were issued to foreign citizens.

### Quantitative and percentage distribution of work residence permits issued by year and citizenship

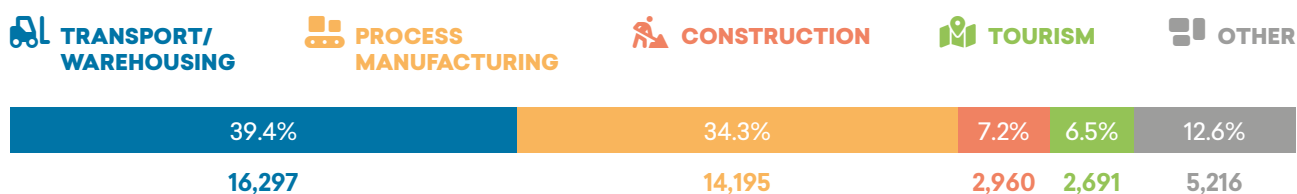
2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
India	2,669 28%	Iran	2,717 28%	Iran	2,449 34%	China	1,333 33%	China	1,274 39%
Turkey	1,950 20%	Turkey	1,756 18%	China	1,294 18%	Turkey	616 15%	Turkey	540 17%
China	1,551 16%	India	1,610 16%	Turkey	1,190 17%	Iran	521 13%	Ukraine	210 6%
Iran	1,027 11%	China	1,595 16%	India	403 6%	India	259 6%	Russia	203 6%
Ukraine	483 5%	Ukraine	278 3%	Russia	294 4%	Russia	241 6%	Iran	194 6%
Other	1,986 20%	Other	1,809 19%	Other	1,545 21%	Other	1,082 27%	Other	863 26%

SOURCE: PSDA



According to the 'Survey of Business Demand on Skills'<sup>23</sup>, conducted by the MoESD, in 2019 number of foreign citizens employed in Georgia had decreased by 12%, compared to the previous year amounting to 41,359 (5% of total employment). The survey shows that more than half (58%) of labour migrants worked in small enterprises. As for the regional distribution, 76% of them works in Adjara region, while only 17% is employed in Tbilisi. 5% of labour migrants are employed in other regions of the country. Transport/warehousing and process manufacturing are the major sectors of employment.

#### Percentage distribution of foreign citizens employed in Georgia by employment sectors



SOURCE: "Survey of Business Demand on Skills", 2020

According to the study, labour migrants are mainly employed in managerial positions. However, compared to the previous year, in 2019 the number of foreign citizens holding managerial positions decreased by 5,497 (16%).

23 MoESD, Survey of Business Demand on Skills, 2020, <http://www.lmis.gov.ge/Lmis/Lmis.Portal.Web/Handlers/GetFile.ashx?Type=Content&ID=cfaa802f-c54e-4607-9875-69abaa284777> (accessed: 01.07.2021).

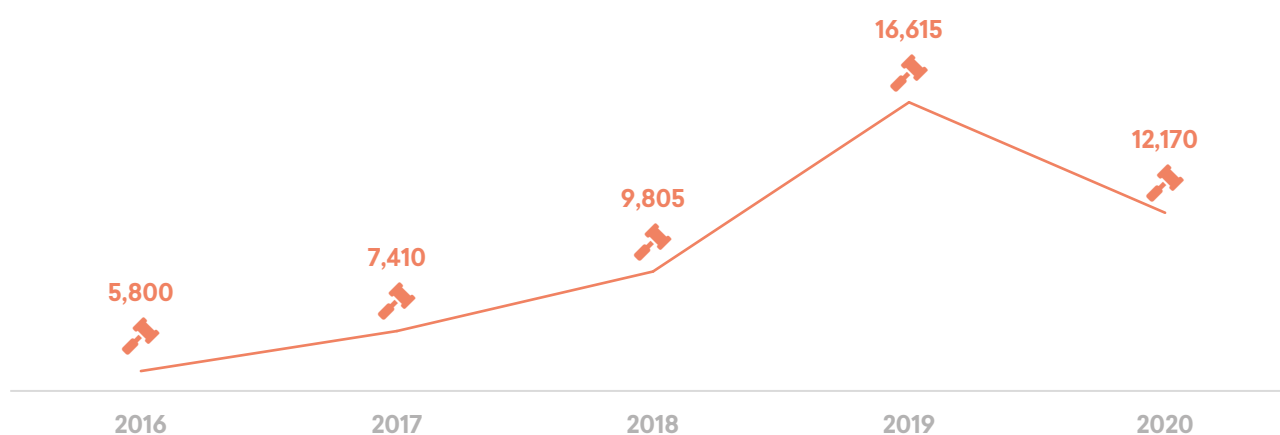
## RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

Statistical data on return and reintegration in Georgia is collected from several sources, although the data is often overlapping, fragmented and does not reflect a complete picture on return migration. The chapter reviews data from Eurostat, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA), Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MoH) and IOM. All of these sources register return cases of emigrants residing without the legal grounds abroad.

### Return Migration

In 2016-2020, a total of 51,800 Georgian citizens were ordered to leave the EU/Schengen States. During the first four years, the trend was growing and the number of return orders almost tripled by the end of 2019. The trend has seen a minor (27%) decrease in 2020, in comparison to that of 2019, still showing 24% growth compared with 2018. This may be attributed to COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on return policy and procedures in EU/Schengen States.<sup>24</sup>

**Georgian citizens ordered to leave the EU/Schengen States**













SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 13.07.2021)

Leading countries issuing return orders to Georgian citizens were France, Germany, Greece, Sweden and Poland. The rate of orders to leave issued by countries is mostly increasing (except for Germany and Belgium). Comparing to 2019, in 2020 the number of orders to leave issued to Georgian citizens diminished in all of the EU/Schengen States, with Cyprus being an exception, where this rate increased significantly in 2020. The high rate of return orders issued by Cyprus to Georgian citizens is likely to be due to increased number of Georgian asylum seekers in 2019 and Georgia being included in Safe Country of Origin list in 2020 (please see subchapter “Asylum requests by Georgian citizens in EU/Schengen States,” pp. 55-59).

24 EMN „Inform N5 – Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Voluntary and Forced Return Procedures and Return Policy Responses”; 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2021-01/00\\_eu\\_inform5\\_return\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2021-01/00_eu_inform5_return_en.pdf) (accessed: 14.07.2021).

### Orders to leave issued to Georgian citizens by top 10 EU/Schengen States











	👤 2016	👤 2017	👤 2018	👤 2019	👤 2020	👤 SUM
 France	1,255	1,280	2,015	7,195	4,565	16,310
 Germany	1,350	2,280	2,285	1,900	1,800	9,615
 Greece	830	840	925	1,260	1,245	5,100
 Sweden	395	745	900	1,200	515	3,755
 Poland	100	120	625	1,430	745	3,020
 Austria	245	235	535	625	355	1,995
 Italy	295	350	415	495	395	1,950
 Belgium	310	450	460	395	305	1,920
 The Netherlands	220	345	440	505	410	1,920
 Cyprus	30	80	125	150	770	1,155
Other	770	685	1,080	1,460	1,065	5,060
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>7,410</b>	<b>9,805</b>	<b>16,615</b>	<b>12,170</b>	<b>51,800</b>

SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 13.07.2021)

The number of Georgian citizens returned from EU/Schengen States following an order to leave has also increased in 2016-2019. The rate reached its peak in 2019 amounting to 8,990. Most of Georgian citizens returned from France and Germany in 2019. Major increase in the number of returned persons (compared to 2018) is observed in cases of France and Poland.

The number of returned Georgian citizens declined by 29% in 2020, compared to 2019, almost equalling the rate of 2018. France and Germany remain to be leading countries in this regard in 2020. Besides, it is to mention that the number of Georgian citizens returned from Cyprus increased by almost 6 times, compared to 2019.

















### Georgian citizens returned from EU/Schengen States by year and top 10 countries

	👤 2016	👤 2017	👤 2018	👤 2019	👤 2020	👤 SUM
 Germany	1,215	1,740	2,240	2,375	1,605	9,175
 France	240	340	600	1,525	1,020	3,725
 Greece	690	645	660	955	710	3,660
 Sweden	205	365	540	800	435	2,345
 Poland	55	90	445	1,145	365	2,100
 Austria	115	275	535	435	390	1,750
 Belgium	190	365	565	245	165	1,530
 The Netherlands	165	270	175	335	495	1,440
 Cyprus	35	65	110	85	480	775
 Spain	130	115	115	200	95	655
Other	365	565	650	890	605	3,075
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,405</b>	<b>4,835</b>	<b>6,635</b>	<b>8,990</b>	<b>6,365</b>	<b>30,230</b>

SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 13.07.2021)

In 2016-2020, 10,712 Georgian citizens returned to Georgia in the framework of IOM's AVR program<sup>25</sup>. A majority of these citizens returned from Germany, Greece, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands.

#### Georgian citizens returned under the AVR program by year and country of return

	 2016	 2017	 2018	 2019	 2020	 SUM
 Germany	810	1,103	1,072	1,063	522	4,570
 Greece	550	553	575	761	529	2,968
 Belgium	122	279	385	98	98	982
 Austria	77	190	295	190	51	803
 The Netherlands	75	49	46	130	78	378
 Switzerland	19	36	94	99	65	313
 Poland	9	2	92	140	33	276
 Finland	17	28	32	28	21	126
 Luxembourg	5	4	39	28	0	76
 Ireland	2	5	13	18	11	49
Other	16	17	39	43	56	171
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>2,266</b>	<b>2,682</b>	<b>2,598</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>10,712</b>

SOURCE: IOM

Over the half (58%) of the citizens of Georgia returned in 2016-2020 are male, while the majority (84%) of them are adults.



#### Assistance in return to Georgian citizens due to COVID-19 pandemic

Considering the situation with COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions imposed worldwide, repatriation of Georgian citizens strained in different foreign countries abroad and / or provide them with on-site assistance had become necessary.<sup>26</sup>

From 1 February 2020 to 28 July 2020, 25,198 Georgian citizens returned home via air, land and sea routes with state assistance.

#### Georgian citizens returned by means of transportation



SOURCE: MFA

<sup>25</sup> In the framework of this program the Georgian citizens are being returned who have either been denied an asylum abroad or have been residing without the legal grounds and wish to voluntarily return to their country of origin.

<sup>26</sup> Government of Georgia, report: "Measures Implemented by the Government of Georgia against COVID-19", June 2020, [https://stopcov.ge/Content/files/COVID\\_RESPONSE\\_REPORT\\_ENG.pdf](https://stopcov.ge/Content/files/COVID_RESPONSE_REPORT_ENG.pdf), (accessed: 16.10.2020).

During this period, a total of 116 special charter flights from 35 countries were organized with state assistance. The first flight was carried out from China. Flights were also operated from Italy, Iran, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, the United Kingdom, Israel, the United States and others.

### Special charter flights from major countries carried out to return Georgian citizens



SOURCE: MFA

### Readmission

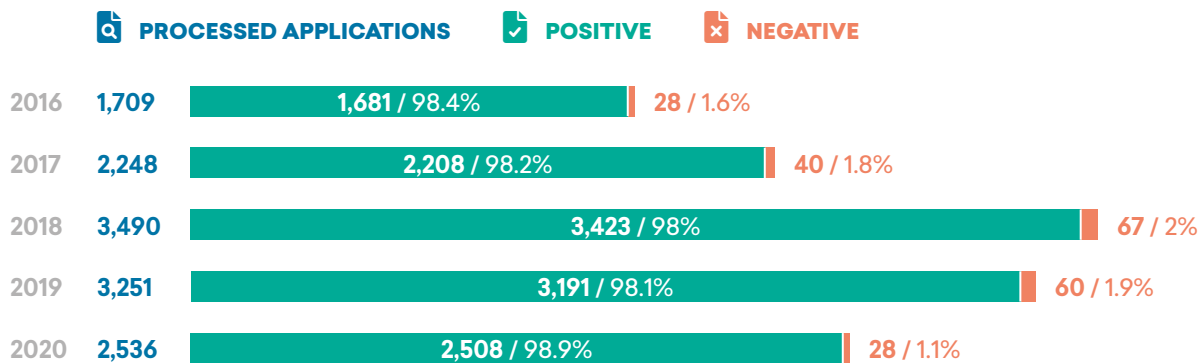
Forced return of Georgian citizens from EU/Schengen States is mainly carried out in the frame of readmission agreement<sup>27</sup>. A total of 13,234 readmission applications were processed in 2016-2020, with 13,011 (98%) positive decisions. In 2016-2018, the number of processed readmission applications was growing. The increased rate of readmission applications may, on the one hand, be related to the strengthening of bilateral cooperation with EU Member States in the framework of the readmission agreement, and on the other hand, to the introduction of visa-free regime for Georgian citizens to EU/Schengen States.<sup>28</sup>

In 2019-2020, the number of processed readmission applications had been decreasing, likely as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.

27 "The Agreement between the European Union and Georgia on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation" was concluded on 22 November 2010, and entered into force on 1 March 2011. Aside from EU, Georgia has concluded readmission agreements with Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, Iceland, Belarus, and Moldova.

28 Visa-free regime to EU/Schengen States was introduced on 28 March 2017.

## Decisions on processed applications within the framework of readmission agreement by status and year



















SOURCE: MIA

Georgia continues to be a leading country among third countries having high rate of positive decisions on readmission applications from EU/Schengen States in 2016-2020. An aggregate rate of all applications granted during five years is 98%.

In 2016-2020, biggest number of processed readmission applications were received from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland. The tendency annually differs in respect of different countries.

## Applications processed within the framework of readmission agreement by year and major countries<sup>29</sup>

	 2016	 2017	 2018	 2019	 2020	 SUM
 Germany	800	1,181	2,119	1,479	1,384	6,963
 France	171	186	346	649	487	1,839
 The Netherlands	73	180	263	256	117	889
 Austria	83	182	227	148	81	721
 Switzerland	78	83	126	129	101	517
 Greece	131	101	73	101	86	492
 Spain	96	66	63	81	37	343
 Sweden	87	82	65	43	30	307
 Belgium	65	61	35	60	45	266
 Italy	45	29	18	79	54	225
Other	80	97	155	226	114	675
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,709</b>	<b>2,248</b>	<b>3,490</b>	<b>3,251</b>	<b>2,536</b>	<b>13,234</b>

SOURCE: MIA

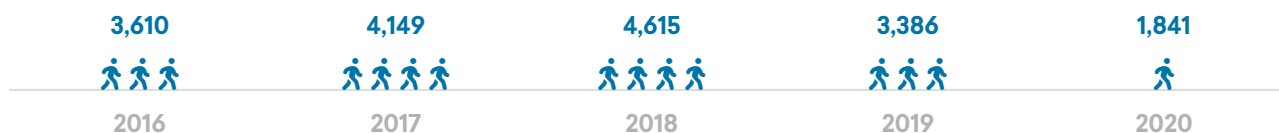
In 2016-2020, 79% of total (13,234) processed readmission applications from EU/Schengen States falls on adult persons. 80% of them are male.

<sup>29</sup> This information covers data from 27 EU/Schengen States, except of Iceland, Croatia, Malta and Slovenia. Due to "Brexit", the 2020 data do not cover UK statistics.

## Deportation

In 2016–2020, 17,601 citizens of Georgia were forcibly returned (deported) from different foreign countries. The rate of deportation peaked at 4,615 in 2018, whereas it fell to a low of 1,841 in 2020 (reduced by 60%). Compared with 2016, in 2020 total number of deported Georgian citizens reduced by 49%.

### Deportation of Georgian citizens by years



SOURCE: MIA

In 2016–2020, significantly large number of Georgian citizens were expelled from Turkey, Israel and Russia, while Germany and France lead among the EU/Schengen States. It is to mention that the number of Georgian citizens deported from Turkey declines over the years, hitting the lowest in 2020. Tendencies vary in Russia and Israel.

### Cases of deportation of Georgian citizens by major countries and years

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
	Turkey	2,206	1,870	1,789	483	62	6,410
	Israel	269	440	813	739	191	2,452
	Germany	315	458	532	557	505	2,367
	Russia	151	300	256	189	226	1,122
	France	80	167	272	278	144	941
	Sweden	90	128	102	177	188	685
	Greece	66	67	58	88	69	348
	Switzerland	43	83	84	106	67	383
	Austria	23	66	166	106	90	451
	Italy	39	82	83	107	38	349
	Other	328	488	460	556	261	2,093
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,610</b>	<b>4,149</b>	<b>4,615</b>	<b>3,386</b>	<b>1,841</b>	<b>17,601</b>

SOURCE: MIA

Out of the total number of deportees in 2016–2020, 73% are male and 98% are adults.

## Deported Georgian citizens by gender and age groups in 2016-2020



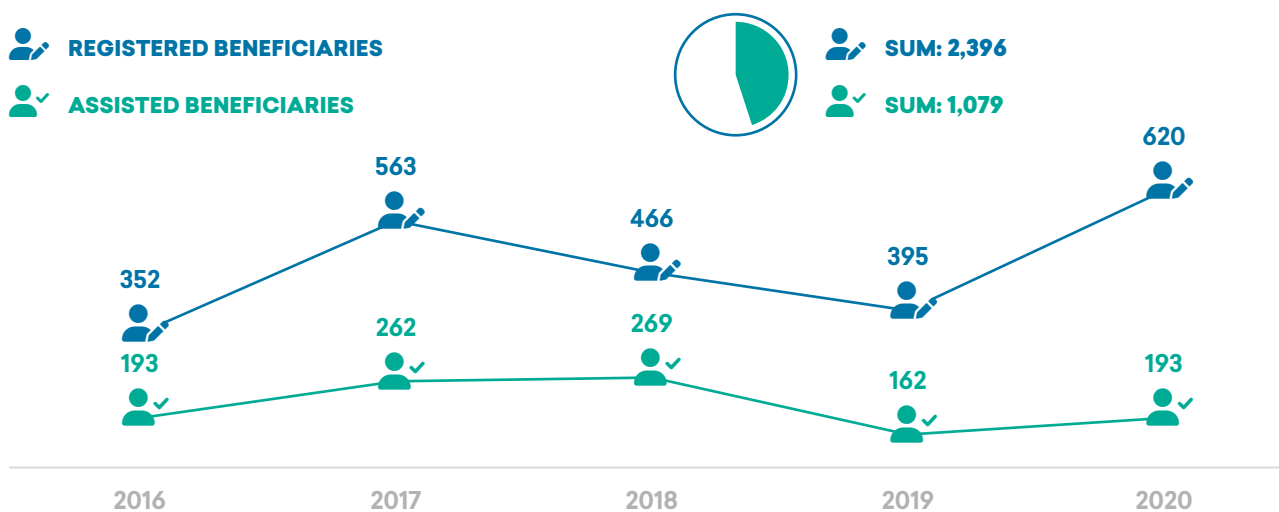
SOURCE: MIA

## Reintegration

Reintegration assistance is provided to returned migrants through state programmes as well as with financial support of different international organizations.

In 2016-2020, 2,396 beneficiaries applied for State Programme<sup>30</sup> for Reintegration of Returned Migrants, where 1,079 (45%) were eligible. Most of the beneficiaries (620) were registered in 2020, while the rate of assistance provided was the highest (269) in 2018.

### Assistance provided through the State Programme for Reintegration by years



SOURCE: MoH























<sup>30</sup> The program targets Georgian citizens or stateless persons (having permanent residence permit in Georgia) who: 1. Have been residing without legal grounds abroad for more than one year, or have applied for or were granted asylum abroad; 2. Registered to be included into the State Program for Reintegration of Returned Migrants within one year since returning to Georgia.



Among the reintegration programmes carried out in 2016–2020, support for social/income generating projects was most in-demand, while the least demanded package was a combined project – income generating projects with temporary accommodation.

Due to the epidemic situation, a new component was added to the reintegration programme in 2020, envisaging the procurement of computer equipment for returned migrant school pupils to facilitate distance-learning process.

#### Reintegration assistance provided to returned migrants by year and type of assistance

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
 Medical assistance	 31	 47	 49	 18	 24	 169
 Temporary accommodation	 1	 10	 18	 12	 0	 41
 Social/income-generating projects	 95	 180	 145	 104	 117	 641
 Legal assistance <sup>31</sup>	 7	 -	 -	 -	 -	 7
 Professional Development	 34	 8	 2	 5	 33	 82
 Medical assistance and income-generating projects	 13	 14	 53	 12	 0	 92
 Income-generating projects and professional development/employment	 10	 3	 2	 9	 0	 24
 Income-generating projects and temporary accommodation	 2	 0	 0	 2	 0	 4
 Purchase of computer equipment for distance learning	 -	 -	 -	 -	 19	 19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>1,079</b>

SOURCE: MoH

Within IOM's AVRR<sup>32</sup> program, a total of 3,986 (different types of) reintegration assistance were provided in 2016–2020 benefiting 3,395 returnees (including 2,523 families).

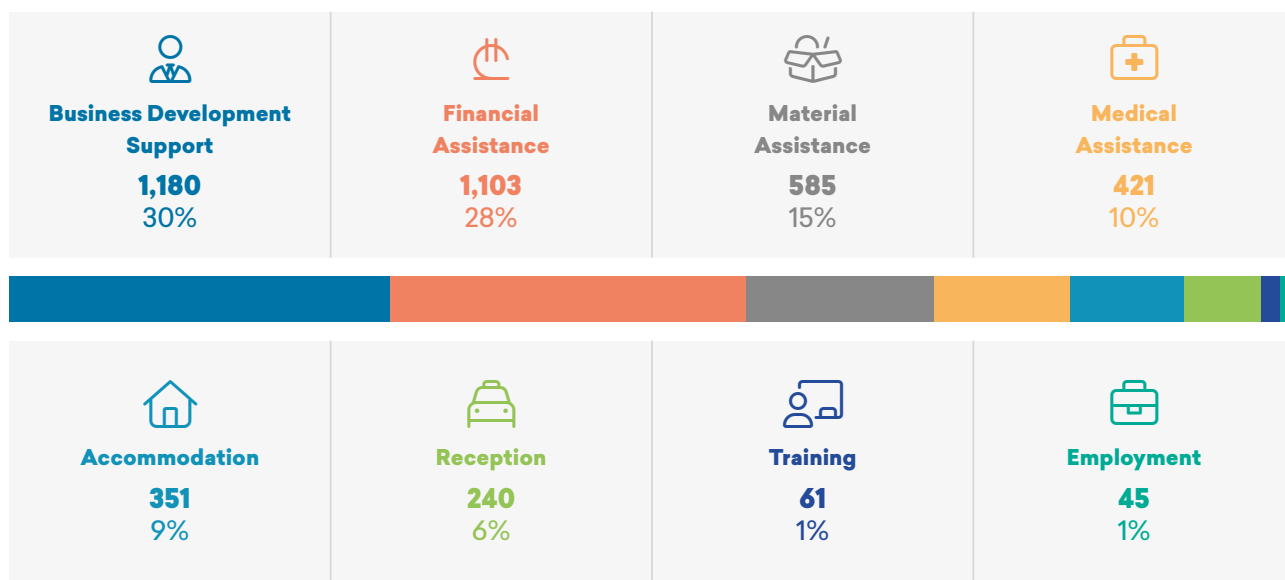
31 Legal assistance was part of the 2016 reintegration program only.

32 The program is intended to assist the citizens of Georgia who have been residing without the legal grounds abroad or have been denied asylum in EU Member States.

A majority of migrants who benefited from the AVRR program were returnees from Greece, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands<sup>33</sup>.

Migrants returning under this program have most often been provided business development support. Financial and material<sup>34</sup> assistance is also frequently provided. Employment support<sup>35</sup> is the least received type of support provided under the AVRR.

**Reintegration assistance provided to returned migrants in 2016-2020**  
(Number of assistance cases and percentage distribution by type of assistance)<sup>36</sup>



SOURCE: IOM (AVRR)

33 IOM.

34 Financial assistance involves granting certain amount of sum to migrants, whereas material assistance includes improvement of living conditions (i.e. rent/mortgage of living space) and purchase of relevant household items. Unlike financial assistance, material assistance does not involve sums granted to migrants.

35 In case of an employment program, migrants have to undergo appropriate training first. Thus, they prefer business development support, as they are able to earn income in a shorter period of time.

36 The sum of assistance cases by type exceeds the total amount of assistance provided, as one beneficiary may receive more than one type of assistance.
















## Remittances

Compared to 2016, the volume of migrant remittances increased by about 64% in 2020, which makes the highest figure in the last 20 years, amounting to 1,9 billion USD.

The largest share of all remittances continued to fall on those from Russia in 2016-2020. Nevertheless, share of remittances from Russia among total remittances channelling to Georgia have been reducing each year<sup>37</sup>, hitting the lowest figure – 19% in 2020 (compared with 34% of 2016). As for the EU/Schengen States, those to mention are: Italy, Greece, Germany and Spain, sending 1/3 (almost 640 million USD) of the total remittances in 2020.

In 2020, compared with 2019, the volume of remittances from Azerbaijan and Ukraine has doubled, while sharp increase was observed in case of Poland since 2018. The volume of remittances from the US and Canada have been growing steadily in 2016-2020. As for Israel, the growing trend of remittances was slightly reduced in 2020.

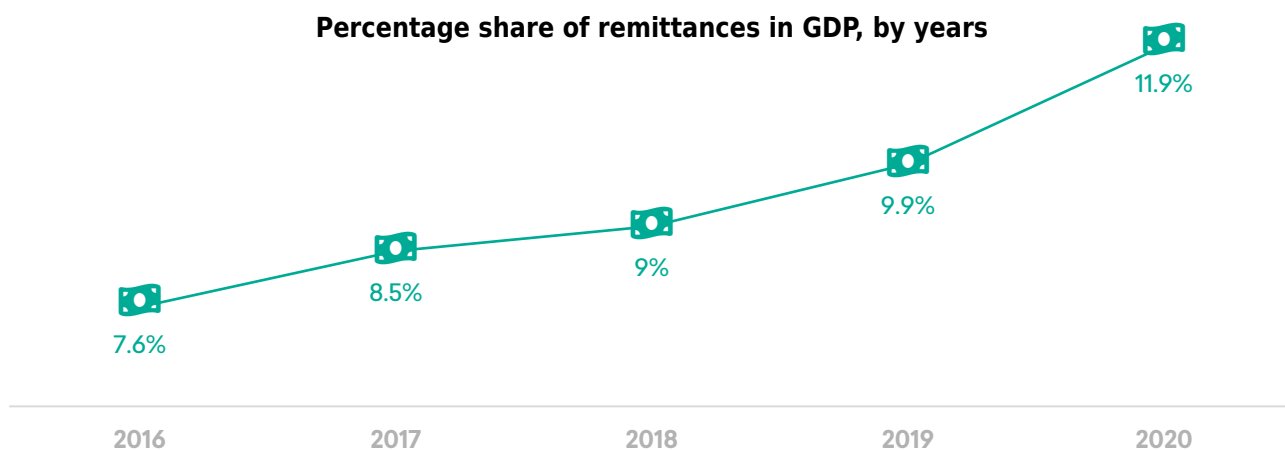
### Remittances transferred to Georgia by year and major countries (in thousands of USD)

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
	Russia	\$ 394,603	\$ 455,439	\$ 457,184	\$ 428,887	\$ 363,915	\$ 2,100,028
	Italy	\$ 123,022	\$ 148,708	\$ 192,887	\$ 239,173	\$ 297,615	\$ 1,001,405
	Greece	\$ 124,565	\$ 141,967	\$ 170,886	\$ 192,545	\$ 219,141	\$ 849,104
	USA	\$ 127,662	\$ 142,079	\$ 159,558	\$ 178,412	\$ 218,360	\$ 826,071
	Israel	\$ 60,733	\$ 119,155	\$ 151,426	\$ 162,548	\$ 156,807	\$ 650,669
	Turkey	\$ 87,072	\$ 109,606	\$ 105,881	\$ 94,846	\$ 106,737	\$ 504,142
	Germany	\$ 29,853	\$ 34,061	\$ 41,461	\$ 49,806	\$ 74,154	\$ 229,335
	Ukraine	\$ 21,043	\$ 26,506	\$ 28,788	\$ 42,921	\$ 87,534	\$ 206,792
	Spain	\$ 30,876	\$ 36,348	\$ 41,579	\$ 47,303	\$ 47,923	\$ 204,029
	Azerbaijan	\$ 14,756	\$ 15,682	\$ 20,450	\$ 22,169	\$ 53,883	\$ 126,940
	France	\$ 11,946	\$ 14,562	\$ 19,438	\$ 26,371	\$ 28,146	\$ 100,463
	Kazakhstan	\$ 11,839	\$ 13,708	\$ 16,098	\$ 26,631	\$ 19,660	\$ 87,936
	United Kingdom	\$ 17,382	\$ 15,926	\$ 16,059	\$ 16,890	\$ 18,749	\$ 85,006
	Poland	\$ 1,390	\$ 3,282	\$ 18,468	\$ 31,491	\$ 27,633	\$ 82,264
	Canada	\$ 9,253	\$ 10,942	\$ 13,132	\$ 14,212	\$ 17,869	\$ 65,408
	Other	\$ 87,389	\$ 99,282	\$ 126,368	\$ 159,111	\$ 147,859	\$ 620,009
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,153,384</b>	<b>1,387,253</b>	<b>1,579,663</b>	<b>1,733,316</b>	<b>1,885,985</b>	<b>7,739,601</b>

SOURCE: NBG

37 National Bank of Georgia, Annual Report, 2020, <https://cutt.ly/Yl8ss7L> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

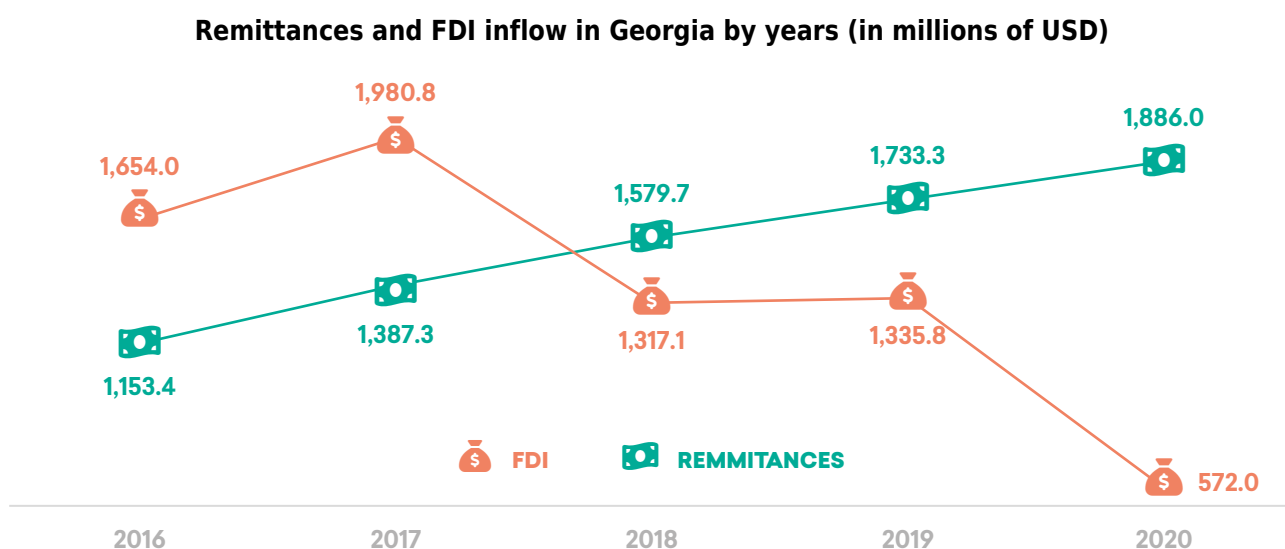
Since 2016, share of remittances in country's GDP has been increasing, reaching its peak in 2020.



SOURCE: NBG, Geostat

According to the report by Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG), in 2020 Georgia and Moldova became the top dependent countries on remittances inflows with comparison to other Eastern Partnership countries.<sup>38</sup>

The inflow of remittances to Georgia from abroad has been more stable than Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow. In 2016–2017, the amount of FDI exceeded the volume of remittances received annually. However, in 2018, the trend reversed, and remittances surpassed FDI by three times in 2020.



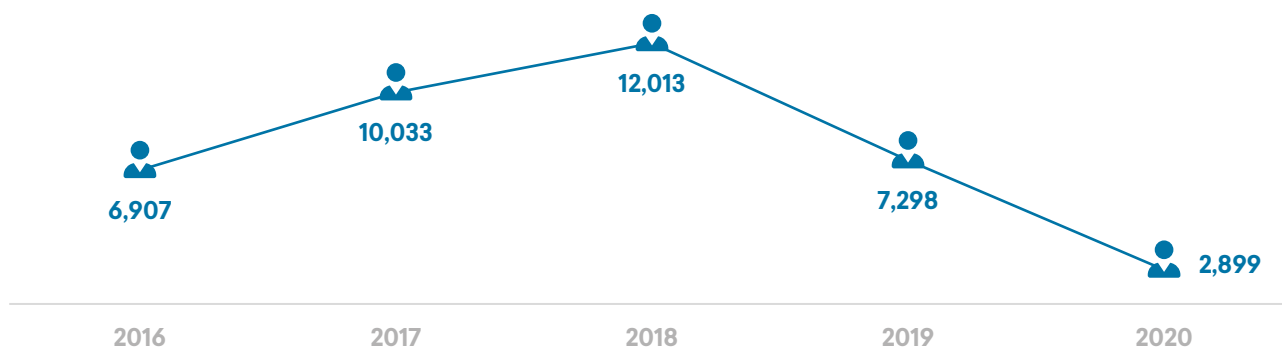
SOURCE: NBG, Geostat

38 PMCG Research: "Remittance inflows in Georgia during COVID-19 crisis, Economic Outlook and Indicators", Issue N127; 22.06.2021. [https://pmcg-i.com/publications\\_show/272/Issue-120:-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Remittance-Inflows-in-Georgia](https://pmcg-i.com/publications_show/272/Issue-120:-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Remittance-Inflows-in-Georgia) (accessed: 27.07.2021).

## Foreign Entrepreneurs

On account of ease of entrepreneurial activities and attractive investment environment, the number of business entities solely founded by foreign citizens has been growing steadily in recent years. The growing trend reversed and the existing rate decreased sharply in 2020, which may be attributed to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions.

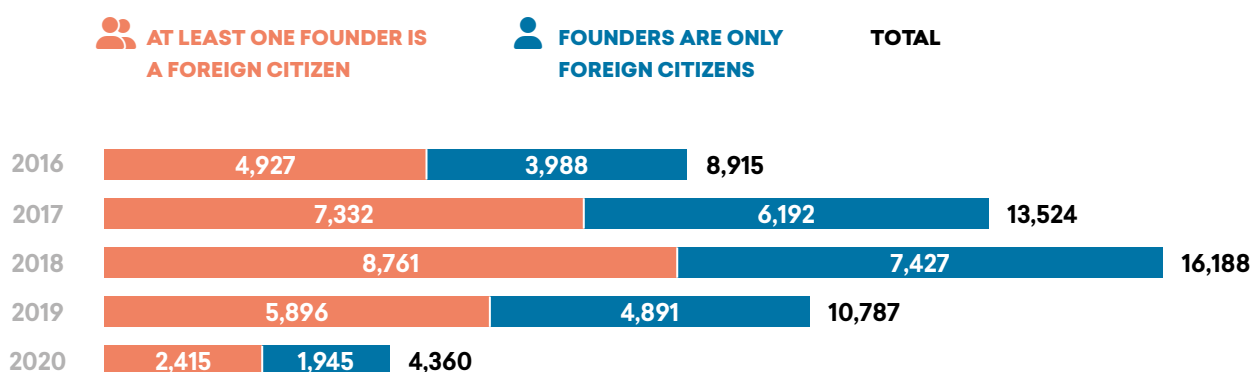
**Foreign founders of the business entities registered in Georgia**



SOURCE: NAPR

2020 has seen a decrease not only in number of business entities solely founded by foreign citizens, but also those entities that were founded jointly by foreigners and citizens of Georgia. The reason, in this case as well, is potentially COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions.

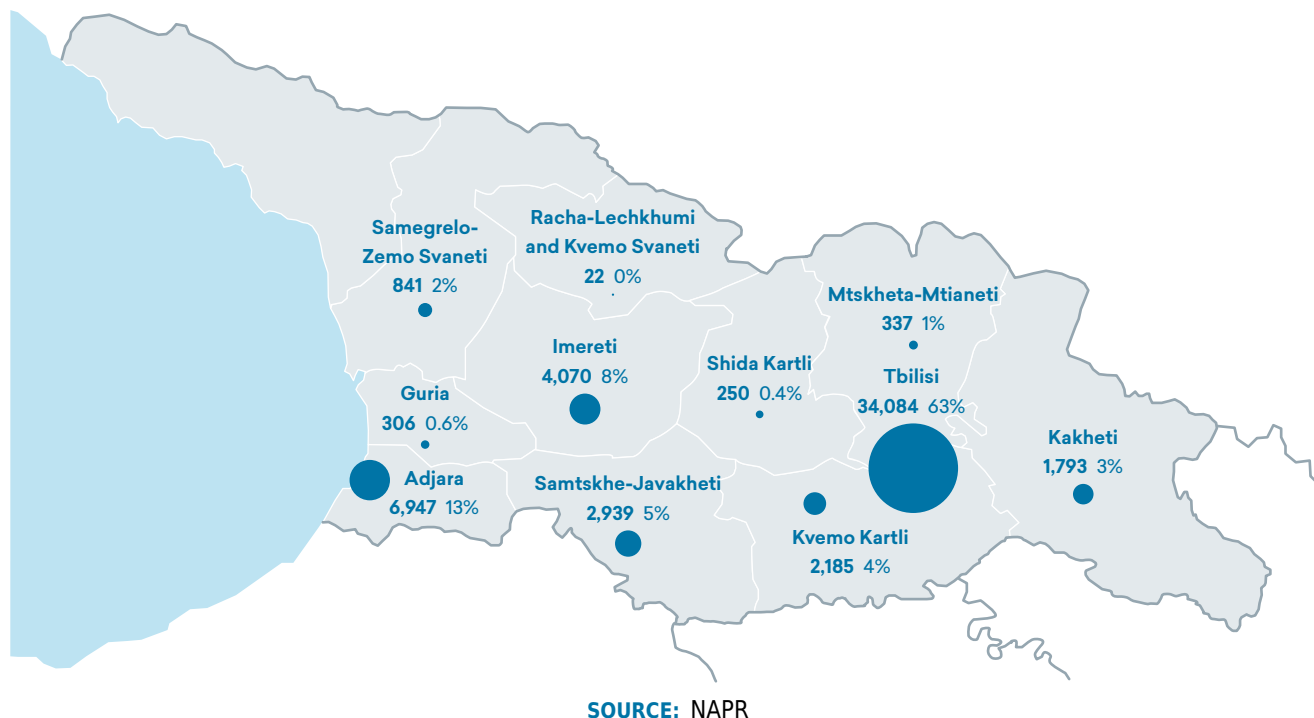
### **Business entities in Georgia, which (1) have at least one founder, who is foreign citizen and (2) have only foreign founders (individuals)**



SOURCE: NAPR

The majority (63%) of business entities founded in 2016-2020 by foreign citizen(s) are registered in the capital of Georgia.

























## Quantitative and percentage distribution of business entities in Georgia founded by foreign citizens<sup>39</sup> by regions of registration



## Real Estate

Before 2019, the number of registrations of ownership rights on real estate in Georgia by foreigners was increasing. The rate halved in 2020, mainly due to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions. Primarily, foreign citizens<sup>40</sup> register ownership of apartments.

## Cases of registration of the ownership right to real estate by foreign citizens by year and type of property

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
 Apartment	 3,658	 5,630	 11,037	 11,465	 4,134
 Agricultural Land	 4,565	 1,909	 246	 3,202	 2,646
 Non-agricultural Land	 990	 892	 1,330	 1,477	 1,063
 Linear	 0	 0	 2	 0	 5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,213</b>	<b>8,431</b>	<b>12,615</b>	<b>16,144</b>	<b>7,848</b>

SOURCE: NAPR




<sup>39</sup> Calculated based on business entities having only one or more foreign founder.

<sup>40</sup> From Azerbaijan, USA, Germany, Turkey, Israel, Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, etc.

## Economic Impact of Immigration

In 2016-2020, the amount of business sector turnover had been growing with significant contribution from the companies owned by foreign individuals/legal entities.




### Business sector turnover by year and form of ownership (in millions of GEL)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
 Private – local individuals and/or legal entities	₾ 41,550.9	₾ 45,731.2	₾ 54,371.6	₾ 71,973.4	₾ 76,161.4
 Private – foreign individuals and/or legal entities	₾ 20,370.0	₾ 23,605.5	₾ 29,755.9	₾ 34,210.3	₾ 35,485.5
 State	₾ 2,160.9	₾ 2,403.4	₾ 2,497.6	₾ 2,840.6	₾ 2,701.6

SOURCE: Geostat

In 2016-2019, the volume of income tax paid by foreign citizens has increased, slightly declining in 2020. Although not being as much as the income tax, property tax paid by foreign citizens also kept increasing until 2019. As for the tax on land property paid by foreigners (agricultural and non-agricultural land plots), the trend has been varying from year to year with both peaks (2017) and falls (2020).

### Income and property taxes paid by foreign individuals (including individual entrepreneurs) in thousands of GEL

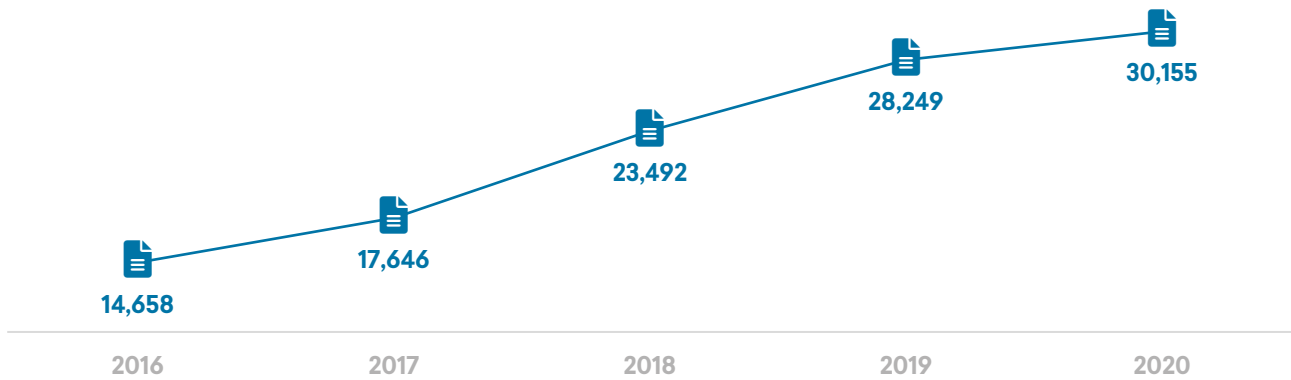
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
 Income Tax	₾ 6,547.8	₾ 6,513.1	₾ 7,196.6	₾ 7,699.6	₾ 6,165.4
 Property Tax on Land	₾ 393.9	₾ 2,938.2	₾ 1,151.1	₾ 2,181.5	₾ 933.9
 Property Tax	₾ 539.8	₾ 688.3	₾ 689.1	₾ 828.6	₾ 799.3

SOURCE: Revenue Service

The total number of business entities<sup>41</sup> registered as taxpayers, founded only by foreign citizens has been growing over the years.

41 The term "business entities" includes the following legal forms: 1. Legal entities of private law; 2. Non-profit (non-commercial) legal entity; 3. Partnership; 4. Foreign enterprise; 5. Foreign organization.

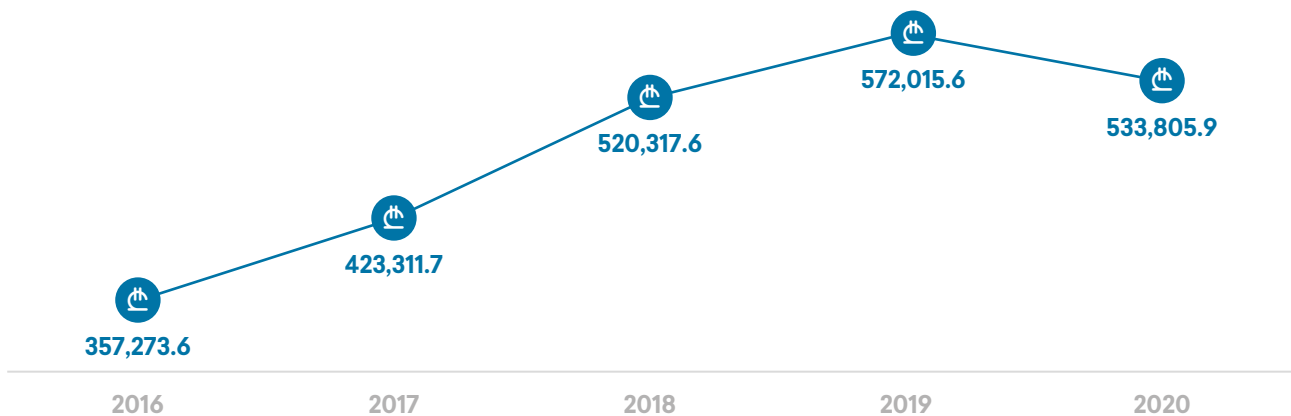
### Business entities registered as taxpayers founded only by foreign citizens



SOURCE: Revenue Service

In 2016-2019, the amount of sum contributed as taxes to the state budget by foreign citizens – founders of business entities had also been increasing. The figure slightly declined in 2020, but still exceeding the figure of 2018.

### Taxes paid by foreign-founded business entities by years (in thousands of GEL)



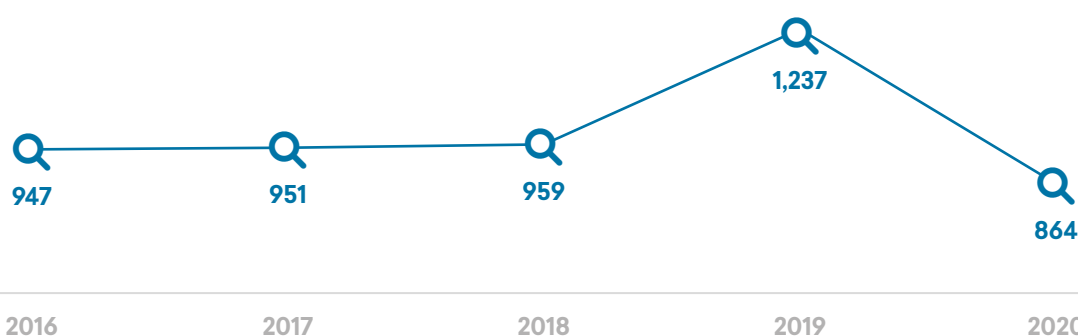
SOURCE: Revenue Service



## International Protection in Georgia

Number of asylum seekers in Georgia varies by year. The rate remained almost the same in 2016-2018, while it has seen a 25% increase in 2019. The number of asylum applications decreased in 2020 (by 29% compared with 2019) and hit the lowest mark for the last five years. The underlying reason may be COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently decreased international mobility and travel restrictions.

















**Number of asylum seekers in Georgia by years**



SOURCE: MIA

The number of countries of origin of asylum seekers has also been going up in recent years. While in 2016 persons from 41 countries of origin were seeking asylum in Georgia, in 2019 the number increased to 51.

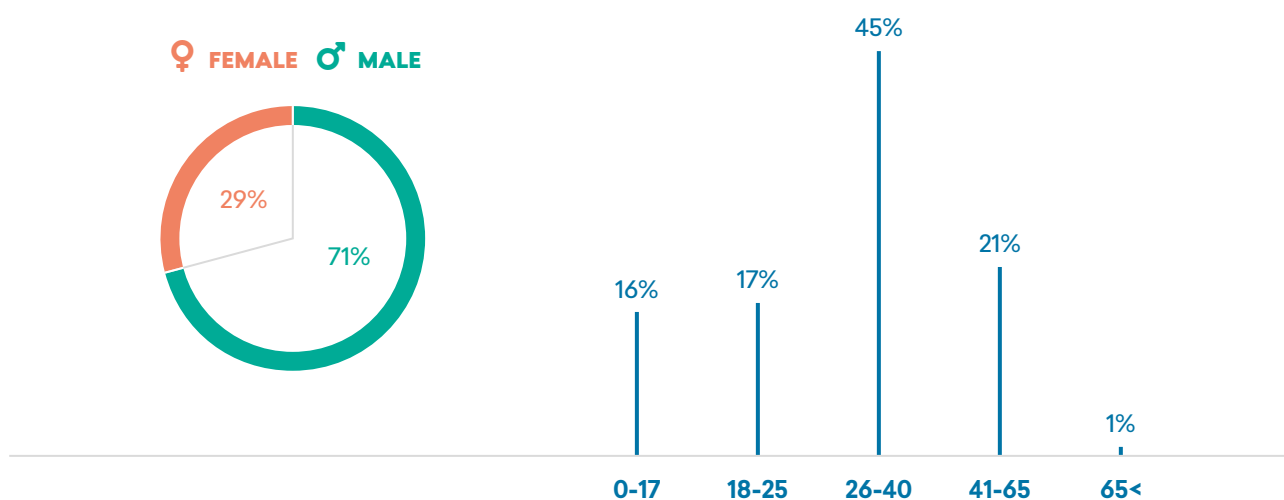
**Asylum seekers in Georgia by year and citizenship**

	 2016	 2017	 2018	 2019	 2020	 SUM
 Iran	63	90	225	470	267	1,115
 Iraq	259	93	75	59	45	531
 Egypt	73	105	70	113	24	385
 Turkey	34	67	78	64	94	337
 India	73	38	35	101	52	299
 Russia	34	49	35	79	64	261
 Bangladesh	69	32	48	30	36	215
 Nigeria	82	23	16	35	24	180
 Ukraine	54	20	17	6	12	109
 Somalia	42	31	18	12	2	105
Other	164	403	342	268	244	1,421
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>4,958</b>

SOURCE: MIA

The majority of asylum seekers in Georgia are male (71%), and the major part (45%) falls into 26-40 age group.

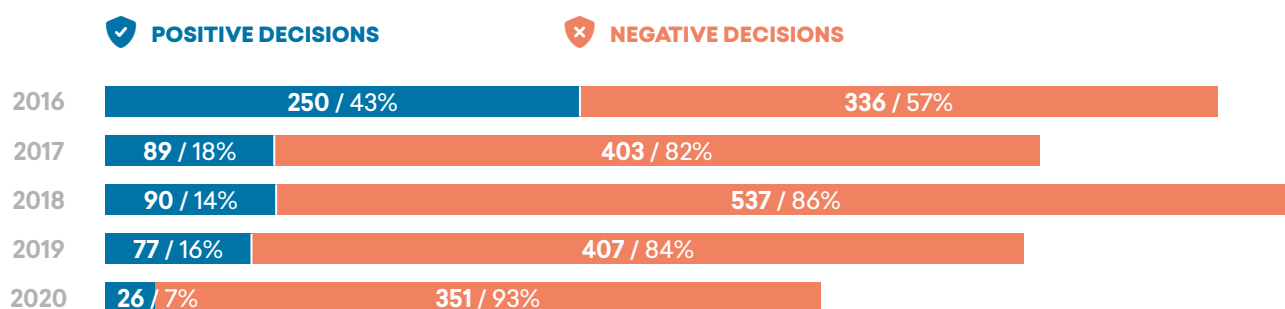
### Asylum seekers in Georgia by gender and age



SOURCE: MIA

An increase in the share of negative decisions on asylum claims in the total number of asylum decisions issued each year during the last five years was observed. The trend relates primarily to increased number of unfounded applications for international protection.

### Number and percentage share of positive and negative decisions on asylum applications by year



SOURCE: MIA

The majority of international protection holders are from Iraq and Ukraine.

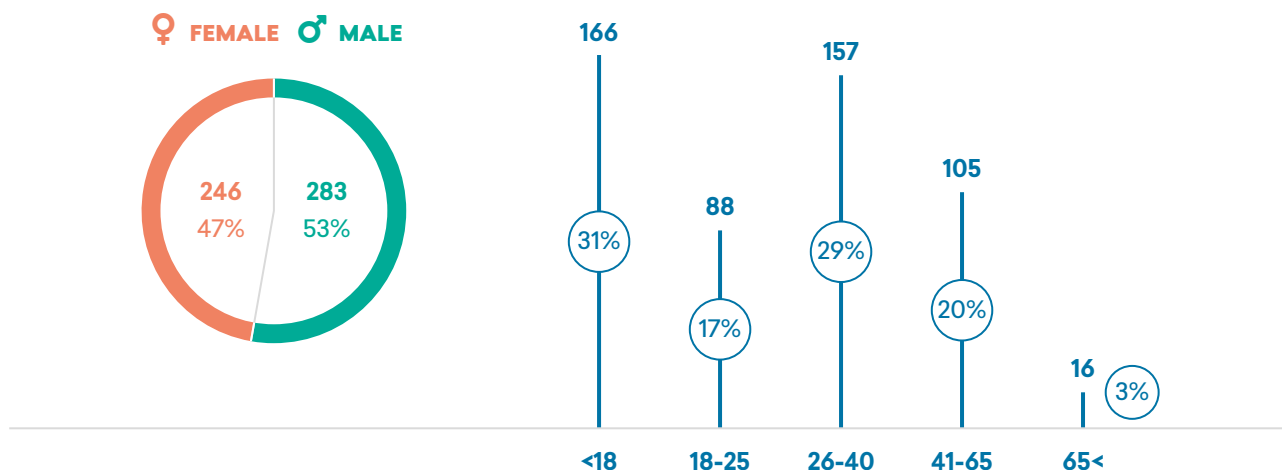
### Number and percentage share of international protection status granted in 2016-2020 by citizenship

	Iraq		193	36%	
	Ukraine		71	13%	
	Egypt		61	12%	
	Yemen		57	11%	
	Syria		17	3%	
	Other		133	25%	

SOURCE: MIA

Over the half of international protection status holders in Georgia are male (53%), whereas 31% of them are minors.

### Number and percentage share of international protection status holders in 2016-2020 by gender and age

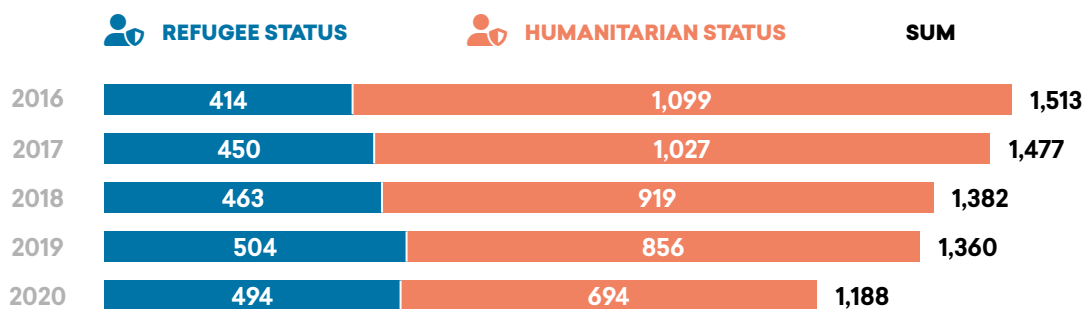


SOURCE: MIA

For the last five years (2016-2020) refugee and humanitarian status was terminated<sup>42</sup> to 542 persons. The majority of them (54%) are citizens of Iraq.

By the end of 2020, there were 1,188 refugees and humanitarian status holders registered in Georgia.

### International protection status holders (by 31 December of each year)



SOURCE: MIA

















<sup>42</sup> The grounds and procedures of termination, revocation or withdrawal of refugee and humanitarian status are presented in the VI Chapter of Law of Georgia on International Protection: <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/3452780?publication=4> (Accessed: 18.10.2021).

## Asylum Requests by Georgian Citizens in EU/Schengen States

In 2016-2019, there has been a growing trend of Georgian citizens claiming asylum in EU/Schengen States, particularly after the introduction<sup>43</sup> of visa-free travel. In 2020, the number of asylum seekers dropped sharply, becoming equal to the rate of 2016, which is potentially attributed to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions.<sup>44</sup>

In 2016-2020, France and Germany were the countries in which Georgian citizens were seeking asylum most often. Rate varies by countries, in some of them the number of asylum applications began to wane even before the outbreak of the pandemic, in 2019, compared to 2018, for instance in Switzerland (31%), Austria (28.5%), Italy (16.3%), Sweden (16%) and Germany (6.9%). Particular decrease is observed in Luxembourg, where 140 Georgian citizens claimed asylum in 2018, the number decreased to 35 (by 75%) in 2019. Comparing to 2018, in 2019 the number of asylum applications lodged by Georgian citizens has seen a marked increase in Cyprus (by 310%), decreasing majorly again in 2020. This, on the one hand, can be attributed to COVID-19 pandemic, and on the other hand, to Georgia being included in Safe Country of Origin list by Cyprus in 2020.

**Asylum requests by Georgian citizens by year and major destination countries**

	 2016	 2017	 2018	 2019	 2020	 SUM
 France	1,165	2,100	7,770	8,825	2,595	22,455
 Germany	3,770	3,460	4,160	3,875	2,520	17,785
 Greece	690	1,105	1,460	1,605	875	5,735
 Sweden	720	1,100	1,155	970	400	4,345
 Spain	70	350	1,020	1,810	555	3,805
 Italy	195	540	1,165	975	490	3,365
 Switzerland	465	670	875	600	245	2,855
 Cyprus	20	85	395	1,620	325	2,445
 Netherlands	595	505	375	380	175	2,030
 Austria	350	455	455	340	115	1,715
Other	795	1,765	2,200	2,040	615	7,415
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,835</b>	<b>12,135</b>	<b>21,030</b>	<b>23,040</b>	<b>8,910</b>	<b>73,950</b>

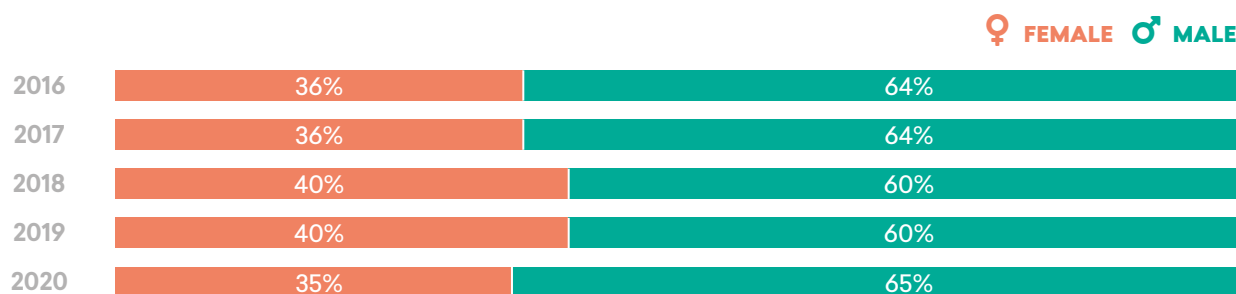
**SOURCE:** Eurostat (data extracted: 24.05.2021)

The majority of Georgian citizens seeking asylum in EU/Schengen States are male. According to the data of 2016-2020, 68% of asylum seekers were male.

43 28 March 2017.

44 1/3 of 2020 applications were lodged in January-February, - Asylum Trends 2020, preliminary overview; EASO <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-trends-2020-preliminary-overview> (accessed: 15.02.2020).

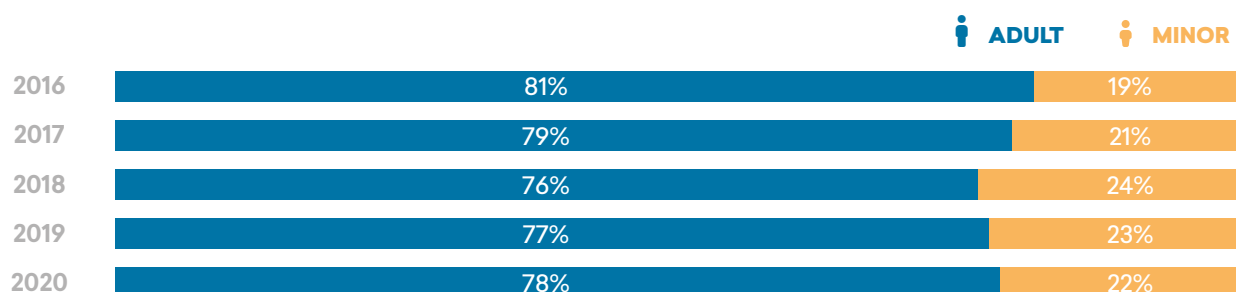
### Asylum applications of Georgian citizens by year and gender



SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 24.05.2021)

Among asylum seekers in EU/Schengen States, the majority (78%) are adults (over 18 years old).

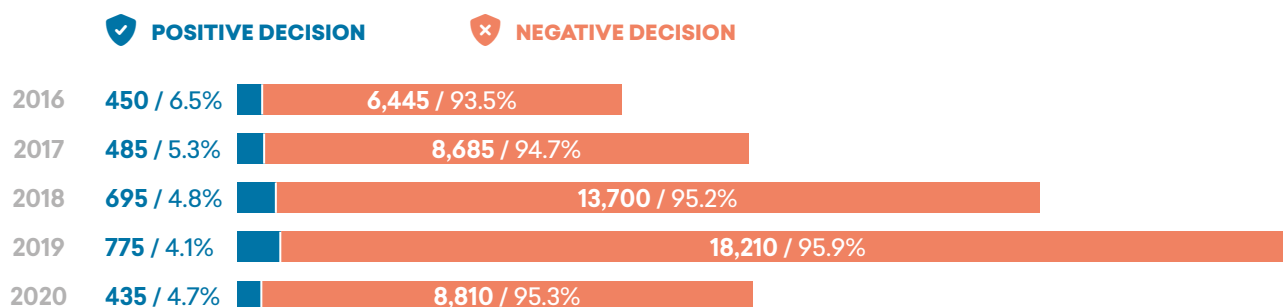
### Asylum applications of Georgian citizens by year and age group



SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 24.05.2021)

In 2016-2020, a majority of Georgian citizens' claims for asylum in EU/Schengen States were considered unfounded and resulted in negative decisions. Worth noting also is that the recognition rate has been around 5% in recent years, which is quite low.

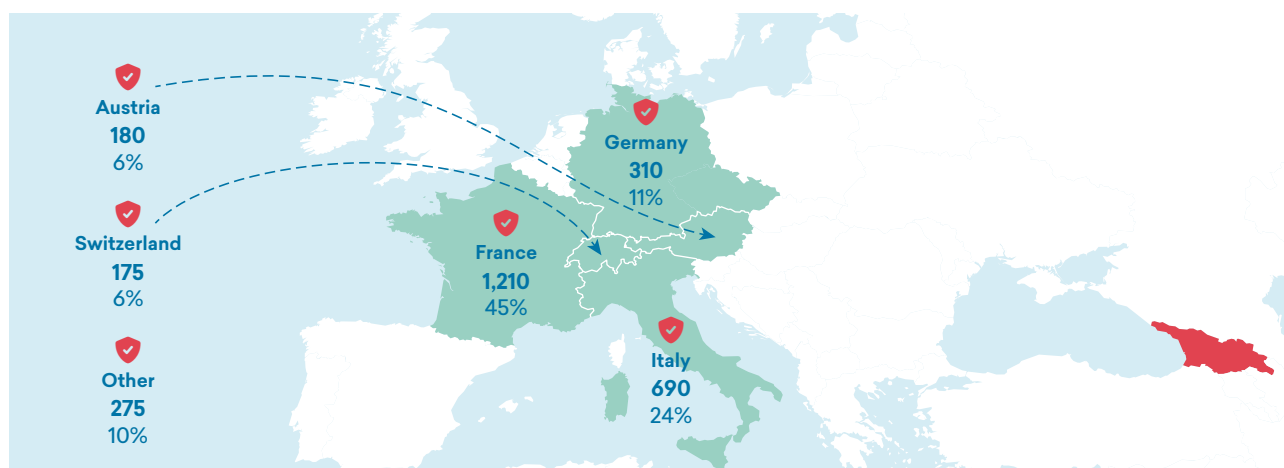
### Number and percentage share of positive and negative decisions on Georgian citizens' asylum applications to EU/Schengen States by year



SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 24.05.2021)

In 2016-2020 within the EU/Schengen States a majority of positive decisions on asylum applications of Georgian citizens were issued in France, Italy and Germany.

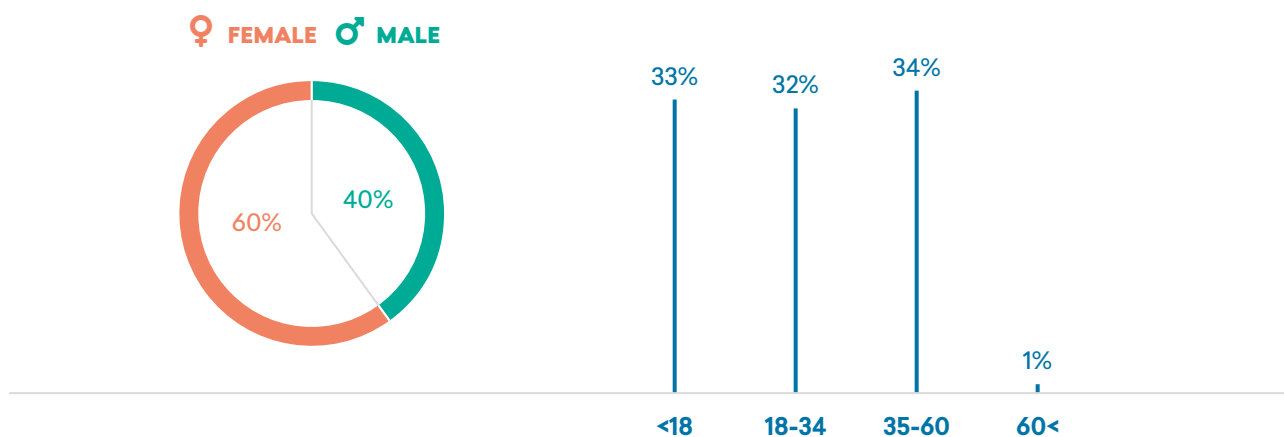
## Number and percentage share of positive decisions in 2016-2020 on Georgian citizens' asylum applications by country



SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 24.05.2021)

The majority of Georgian citizens granted international protection status by EU/Schengen States in 2016-2020 are female (60%). As for age groups, persons over 60 represent a minority. The percentage distribution is almost equal between other age groups.


















## Percentage share of Georgian citizens granted international protection status by gender and age



SOURCE: Eurostat (data extracted: 17.06.2021)

It should be highlighted that EU/Schengen States, which have a list of Safe Countries of Origin, Georgia has been recognized as such<sup>45</sup> by 17 states and added to the corresponding list<sup>46</sup>. Thus, low recognition rate on asylum applications lodged in EU/Schengen States by Georgian citizens can most probably be explained by this factor.

#### List of EU/Schengen States, which have recognized Georgia as Safe Country of Origin

2005	2013	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
 Bulgaria	 France	 Austria	 Iceland	 Ireland	 Czech Republic	 Sweden
		 Belgium	 Luxembourg	 Estonia	 Cyprus	
		 The Netherlands		 Denmark	 Slovenia	
					 Switzerland	
					 Lichtenstein	
					 Greece	

SOURCE: SCMI website<sup>47</sup>

Although Norway does not have a list of Safe Countries of Origin, it uses the “Concept of Safe Countries of Origin”, based upon which, Georgia practically is considered as such.

45 A country where, on the basis of the legal situation, the application of the law within a democratic system and the general political circumstances, it can be shown that there is generally and consistently no persecution as defined in Art. 9 of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive), no torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and no threat by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict. *Glossary of Migration Terms, version 7.0, EMN* [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/safe-country-origin\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/safe-country-origin_en) (accessed: 13.06.2021).

46 Individual EU/Schengen States annually review the “Safe Countries of Origin” list and update it according to necessity (e.g. increase in a number of asylum seekers and/or change(s) in the safe environment in a particular country).

47 Information is presented as of May 25, 2021: [https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article\\_id=229&clang=1](https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=229&clang=1) (accessed: 17.06.2021).

## Family Reunification

### Residence permits issued on the ground of family reunification by year and citizenship

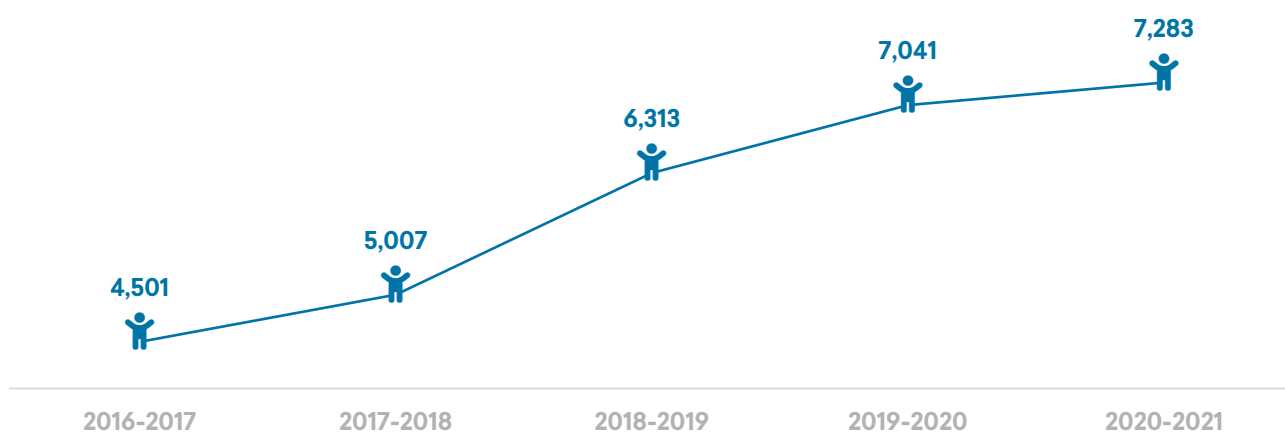
2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Iran	322 19%	Iran	762 35%	Iran	907 48%	Iran	856 49%	Iran	381 26%
Turkey	280 17%	Turkey	433 20%	Turkey	219 12%	Russia	171 10%	Russia	260 18%
India	209 12%	India	246 11%	Russia	137 7%	Turkey	149 8%	Ukraine	160 11%
Russia	150 9%	Russia	131 6%	India	128 7%	India	124 7%	Turkey	132 9%
Ukraine	134 8%	Azerbaijan	95 4%	Azerbaijan	86 5%	Azerbaijan	80 5%	India	102 7%
Other	599 35%	Other	523 24%	Other	400 21%	Other	362 21%	Other	414 29%

SOURCE: PSDA

## General Education

The overall number of foreign pupils enrolled in general educational institutions has been increasing over the years. By academic year 2020-2021, 7,283 foreigners are studying in public and private schools of Georgia. Considering the duration of education in general educational institutions, this rate is likely to be growing in upcoming years, as the number of newly enrolled students is added to the existing amount each year.

### Foreign pupils studying in general educational institutions in Georgia by academic year

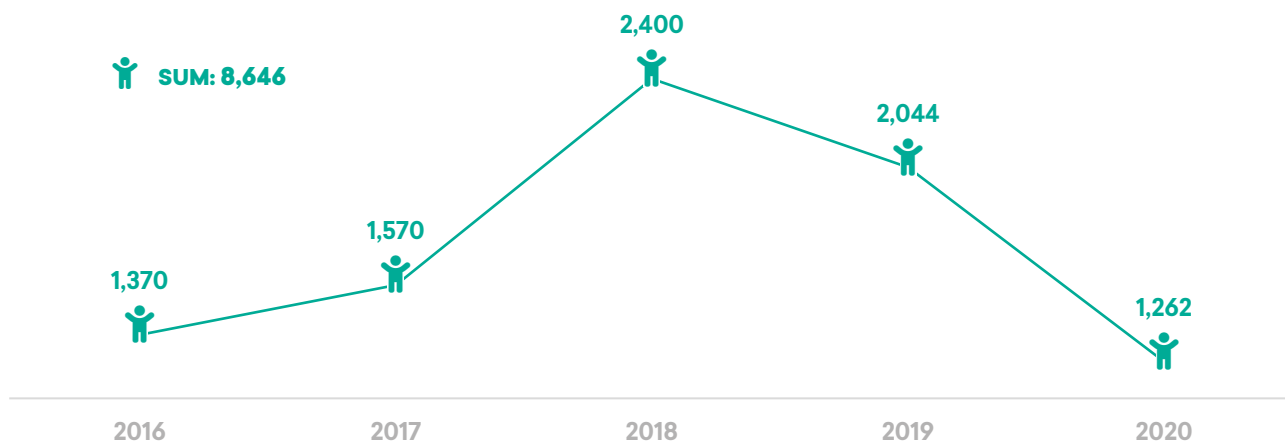


SOURCE: MoES

Highest number of foreign pupils were enrolled in general educational institutions in 2018, after which the trend declined, and like other migratory trends reduced as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, reaching its lowest point in 2020.



### Foreign pupils enrolled in general educational institutions in Georgia by years



SOURCE: MoES

In 2016-2018, enrolment rate was high for citizens of Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Kazakhstan.

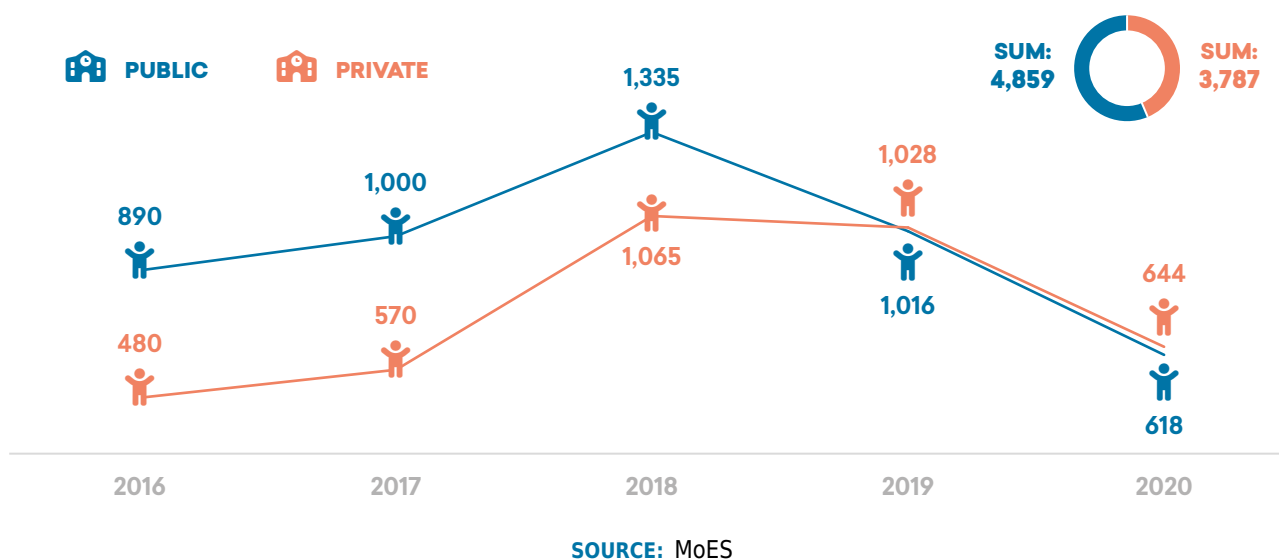
### Foreign pupils enrolled in general educational institutions in Georgia by year and citizenship

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM
Russia	427	489	670	578	356	2,520
Iran	27	181	466	267	93	1,034
Azerbaijan	185	175	220	189	136	905
Ukraine	156	134	188	161	120	759
Turkey	164	117	110	101	73	565
Armenia	80	106	130	87	60	463
Kazakhstan	45	47	80	63	58	293
USA	36	28	49	57	47	217
Germany	25	13	36	31	22	127
Belarus	9	16	24	44	16	109
Other	216	264	427	466	281	1,654

SOURCE: MoES

In 2016-2020, more than half (56%) of foreign pupils were enrolled in public schools. It is noteworthy that in 2016-2017 absolute majority of foreign pupils were enrolled in public schools. Since 2018, the picture changed and in 2019 and 2020, number of foreign pupils enrolled in private institutions surpassed that of pupils enrolled in public schools.

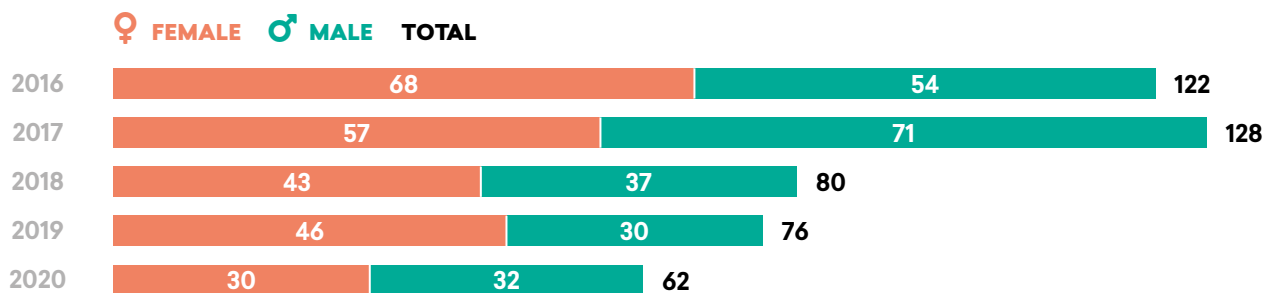
## Foreign pupils enrolled in general educational institutions by year and school status



## Vocational Education

A small number of foreign citizens living in Georgia acquire vocational education. The reason might be an overall absence of interest towards vocational education (the majority of them have higher education and professional skills) and lack of accessibility to the vocational programmes conducted in foreign language<sup>48</sup>. Compared with 2017, the number of foreign citizens enrolled at vocational courses halved in 2020<sup>49</sup>. 52% of foreign citizens enrolled at vocational programmes in 2016-2020 are female.

### Number of foreign citizens enrolled at vocational educational programmes by gender and year



Like immigrants, number of international protection status holders enrolled in vocational educational institutions in 2016-2020 is also low, which is also likely to be related to the mentioned factors.

48 „Study on the Socio-Economic Situation of Refugees, Humanitarian Status Holders and Asylum-Seekers in Georgia“; 2016, UNHCR <https://www.refworld.org/docid/575519054.html> (accessed: 20.08.2021).

49 It is to note that overall number of students (including foreigners) enrolled at vocational courses in 2017 was 16,554 reducing to 9,528 in 2020, which represents almost halved rate as well.

## International protection status holders enrolled at vocational educational programmes in 2016-2020 by citizenship















SOURCE: MoES

More than half (54%) of international protection status holders were enrolled in state vocational educational institutions.

## Social Assistance

Number of foreign citizens receiving social assistance from the state remained stable in 2016-2019.













### Foreign citizens, who have received social assistance<sup>50</sup> by year and residence permit status

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Permanent Residence Permit Holder	 293	 314	 318	 368	 457
	Temporary Residence Permit Holder	 92	 80	 6	 2	 3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>385</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>460</b>

SOURCE: MoH

Social assistance is also granted to persons under international protection in Georgia, mainly those holding refugee status.

### International protection status holders who have received social assistance<sup>51</sup> by year and international protection status

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Refugee Status Holder	 67	 63	 38	 37	 50
	Humanitarian Status Holder	 34	 23	 4	 9	 21
<b>SUM</b>		<b>101</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>71</b>

SOURCE: MoH

In the frame of the Governmental Anti-Crisis Economic Plan against COVID-19<sup>52</sup>, along with the citizens of Georgia, foreign citizens also received one-time social assistance for children under 18.

50 Social assistance includes subsistence allowance and social package.

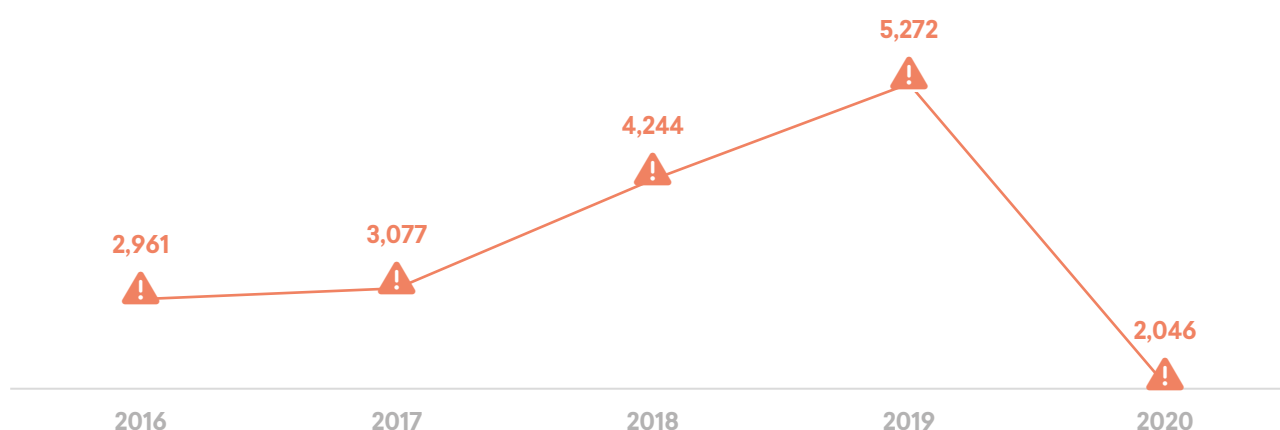
51 Social assistance includes subsistence allowance only.

52 <https://stopcov.ge/en/Gegma> (accessed: 7.07.2021).

## Visa Regime Violation

In parallel with accelerated migratory processes, the number of cases of Georgia's visa regime violation by foreigners also increased. The rate almost doubled in 2019, compared to 2016 and diminished significantly in 2020. The number reduced by 30% compared to 2016 and by 61% compared to 2019. Most probably, it is related to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions and limited international mobility.

Cases of visa regime violation by years



SOURCE: MIA

The visa regime in Georgia is predominately violated by citizens of Iran, China and Russia. In 2016-2019, trend varies by country: the number of visa regime violations by citizens of neighbouring countries (Russia, Armenia) declines, while the number increases in case of citizens of China and Iran.

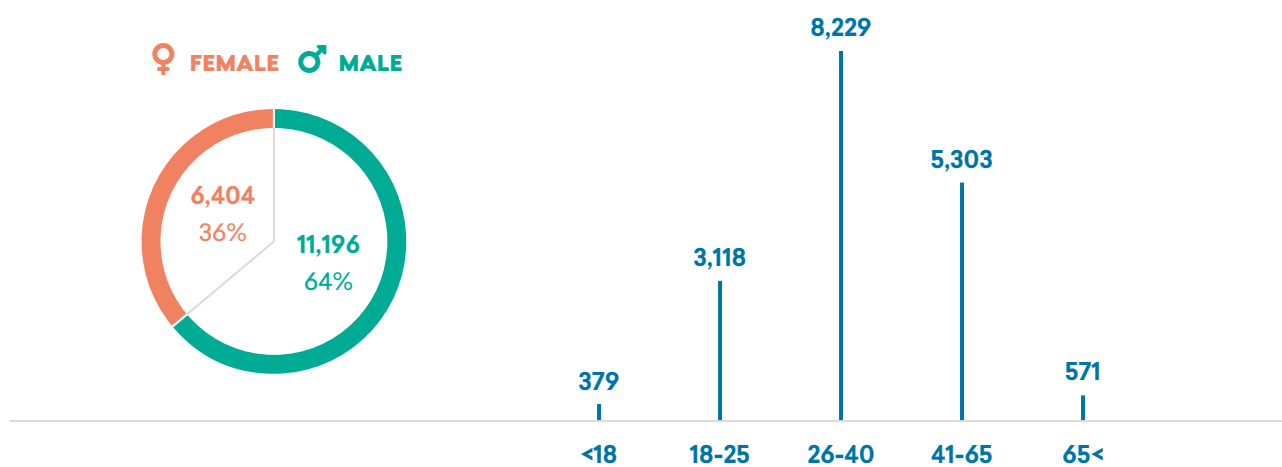
Cases of visa regime violation by year and citizenship

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	SUM	%
Iran	310	735	1,509	1,858	480	4,892	28%
China	521	411	715	1,275	471	3,393	19%
Russia	399	369	307	290	129	1,494	9%
India	269	142	264	171	73	919	5%
Armenia	286	230	193	155	48	912	5%
Other	1,176	1,190	1,256	1,523	845	5,990	34%

SOURCE: MIA

Majority of visa regime violators are male (64%), 47% of them are persons aged 26-40.

### Visa regime violators in 2016-2020 by gender and age















SOURCE: MIA

## Expulsion from Georgia

There was an increase in the number of expulsion decisions in respect of foreigners taken in 2016-2019 as well as in the execution rate of these decisions.

### Expulsion decisions in respect of foreigners and execution of expulsion decisions

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
 Expulsion Decisions	 71	 79	 110	 126	 63
 Executed Expulsions	 74	 78	 100	 104	 49

SOURCE: MIA

In 2016-2020, 36% of foreigners expelled from Georgia were citizens of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran. Trends vary by country.

### Foreign citizens expelled from Georgia by citizenship

	👤 2016	👤 2017	👤 2018	👤 2019	👤 2020	👤 SUM
🇦🇿 Azerbaijan	6	7	9	32	7	61
🇹🇷 Turkey	8	9	12	11	6	46
🇮🇷 Iran	4	3	10	11	9	37
🇦🇲 Armenia	7	9	2	3	2	23
🇷🇺 Russia	7	5	6	2	2	22
🇮🇳 India	2	4	6	8	2	22
🇳🇮 Nigeria	2	6	4	7	3	22
🇪🇬 Egypt	1	6	7	5	0	19
🇬🇧 Bangladesh	0	0	13	1	3	17
🇱🇰 Sri-Lanka	6	2	8	0	0	16
Other	31	27	23	24	15	120

SOURCE: MIA

Based on expulsion decisions, in 2016-2020, 91% of foreigners voluntarily left the country.

### Foreign citizens returned based on expulsion decisions in 2016-2020 by type of return

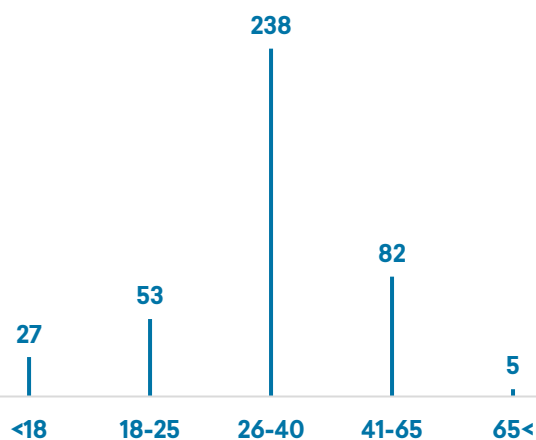
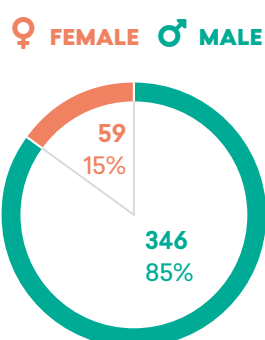
👤× FORCED    👤✓ VOLUNTARY



SOURCE: MIA

The majority (85%) of expelled foreign citizens from Georgia are male. 59% of the expelled persons belong to 26-40 age group.

### Foreign citizens expelled from Georgia in 2016-2020 by gender and age



SOURCE: MIA

## BORDER MANAGEMENT

The rate of crossing state border of Georgia was increasing in 2016-2019. The trend is predominantly related to foreign citizens entering and leaving Georgia. The number of border crossings by Georgian citizens slightly declined in 2017-2019, hitting the lowest mark in 2020. In a general sense, rate of crossing state border of Georgia by both Georgian and foreign citizens dropped by about 5 times in 2020, which is mainly related to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent travel restriction and limited international mobility.

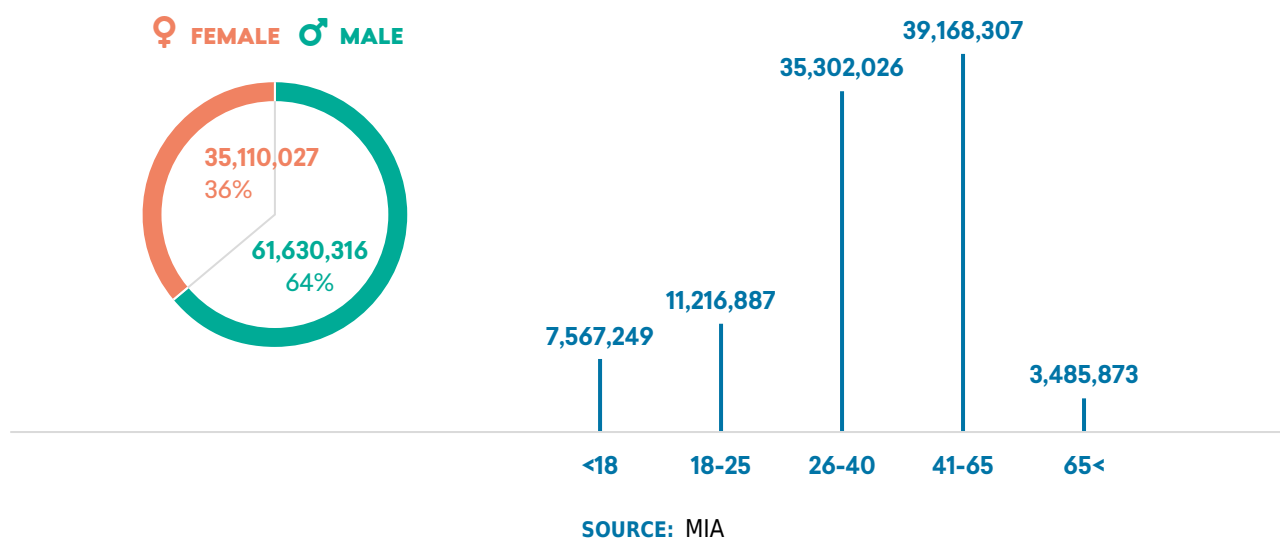
Persons enter and leave Georgia through BCPs open for international mobility, where passport control for state border crossing is conducted<sup>53</sup>. 22 BCPs<sup>54</sup> are operational across the country three of which are for air traffic and are located at Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi international airports. Four open seaports are operating in Batumi, Supsa, Poti and Kulevi. The other 15 BCPs intended for railway and motorway traffic are located at the land border.

In 2016-2020, the busiest BCPs by passenger flow were motorway-crossing points at the border with the neighbouring countries (Sarpi/Turkey, Red Bridge/Azerbaijan, Sadakhlo/Armenia, Kazbegi/Russia) and the Tbilisi International Airport.

Considering the passenger flow at BCPs, state border of Georgia most often was crossed by citizens of neighbouring countries.

The state border of Georgia has mostly (64%) been crossed by males, whereas 40% of those who crossed the border belong to the age group of 41-65.

### Number of persons crossing Georgian state border in 2016-2020 by gender and age






53 [https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article\\_id=152&clang=1](https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=152&clang=1) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

54 BCPs at the Georgian-Russian state border in occupied Abkhazia and the occupied Tskhinvali region are currently out of Georgian state control. However, the airspace and maritime space of these sections are still monitored.

The number of foreigners refused entry to Georgia, compared to 2016, increased by three times in 2018 and five times in 2019. In parallel to the reduced mobility rate following COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of refusals on state borders declined and almost equalled to 2017 data.

Despite the increasing number of refusals of entry, an annual refusal rate showed in percentage in the total number of foreigners willing to enter the country is quite low.

#### Number and percentage share of foreigners willing to enter the country and entry refusals

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
 Entry	✔ 6,347,594	✔ 7,552,044	✔ 8,325,499	✔ 9,023,480	✔ 1,557,532
 Refusals of entry (quantity)	✖ 5,724	✖ 7,870	✖ 16,025	✖ 25,549	✖ 7,419
 Refusals of entry (percentage)	✖ 0.1%	✖ 0.1%	✖ 0.2%	✖ 0.8%	✖ 0.5%





SOURCE: MIA



## **TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

Number of criminal prosecutions for the THB crime was increasing in 2016-2019. The highest number (27) of launched criminal prosecutions was recorded in 2019.

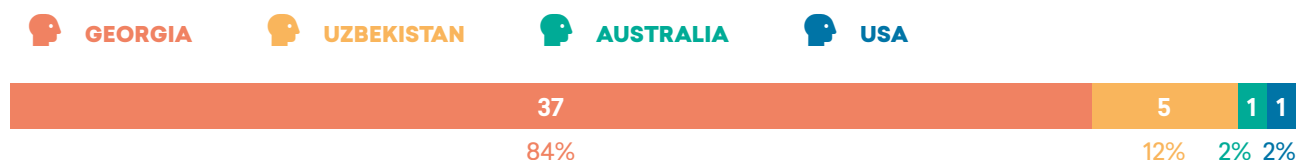
### Cases of THB crime by status of cases

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
 Investigation	 20	 21	 21	 21	 15
 Prosecuted persons	 1	 4	 7	 27	 4
 Convictions (number of cases)	 2	 2	 4	 2	 5
 Number of convicts	 4	 2	 6	 3	 29

**SOURCE:** Secretariat of the THB Council

In 2016-2020, a total of 44 persons were convicted of 15 trafficking cases. Most of them are citizens of Georgia.

### Persons convicted of THB crime by citizenship in 2016-2020





**SOURCE:** Secretariat of the THB Council

56 victims/statutory victims<sup>55</sup> of THB crime were identified in 2016-2020, a majority of whom were citizens of Georgia and Uzbekistan.

<sup>55</sup> In 2017-2018, three women from Uzbekistan were granted the status of both the victim and statutory victim of THB.








## Number of persons granted with the status of statutory victim and victim of THB in 2016-2020 by citizenship

		UZBEKISTAN	GEORGIA	UKRAINE	TURKMENISTAN	KIRGIZSTAN
	Victim	6	2	-	1	1
	Statutory Victim	6	41	2	-	-

SOURCE: Secretariat of the THB Council

The most widespread form of THB committed in Georgia has been sexual exploitation. Cases of labour exploitation have also been recorded since 2017 (it is noteworthy that forced begging is a particular trend among minors).

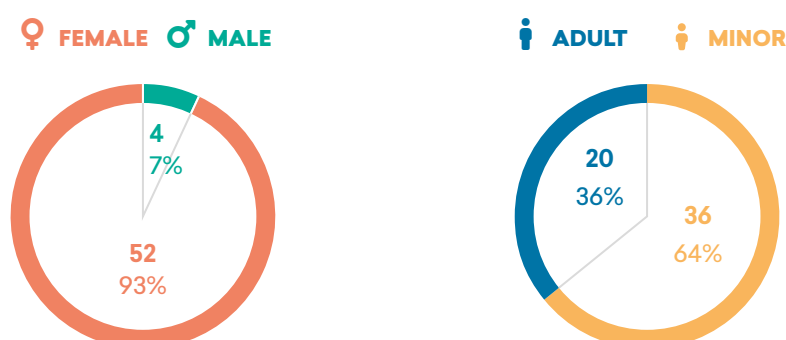
## Persons granted with the status of statutory victim and victim of THB, by the type of THB crime

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Victim							Statutory Victim					
	Sexual Exploitation	1	4	2	-	2		Sexual Exploitation	2	6	4	23	1
	Labour Exploitation	-	-	-	-	1		Labour Exploitation	-	2	2	6	2
								Purchase or Sale	-	-	1	-	-

SOURCE: Secretariat of the THB Council

93% of trafficking victims (statutory victims) identified were women and 64% were minors.







## Persons granted with the status of statutory victim and victim of THB, by gender and age



SOURCE: Secretariat of the THB Council

The majority of THB victims and statutory victims identified in 2016-2020 have benefited from assistance of state shelters.

#### Assistance provided to victims and statutory victims of THB in 2016-2020

	Shelter/Crisis Centre	31	55%	<div></div>
	Legal Counseling	21	37%	<div></div>
	Legal Protection	16	28%	<div></div>
	Psychological Assistance	17	30%	<div></div>
	Medical Assistance	12	21%	<div></div>
	Compensation	4	7%	<div></div>

**SOURCE:** Secretariat of the THB Council

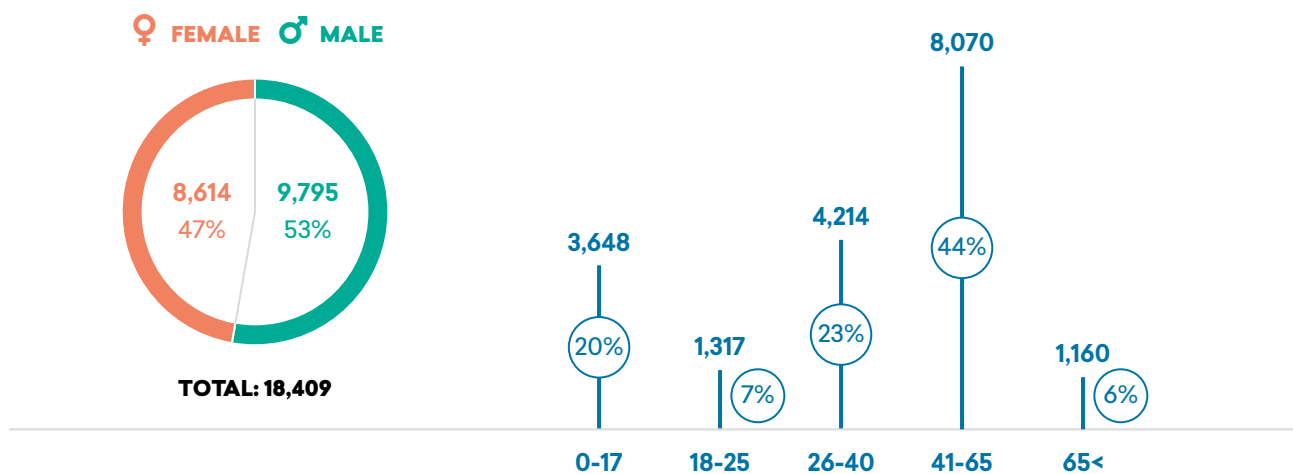


## CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

### Naturalization

In 2016-2020, Georgian citizenship was granted through naturalization<sup>56</sup> to 18,409 persons, out of which 47% were female and 53% were male. As for the age groups, the majority (44%) of cases of granting citizenship is recorded among 41-65 age group members. Given tendency of distribution by gender and age is maintained in almost all indicators with detailed data.

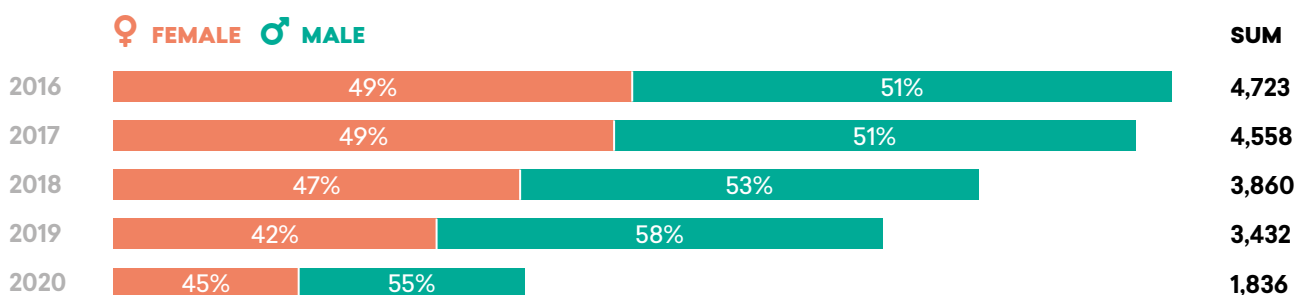
**Granting Georgian citizenship in 2016-2020 by age and gender**



SOURCE: PSDA

The rate of granting Georgian citizenship has been diminishing year by year slightly but steadily. As for the distribution by gender, the rate remains intact throughout the years.

**Granting Georgian citizenship in 2016-2020 by year and gender**

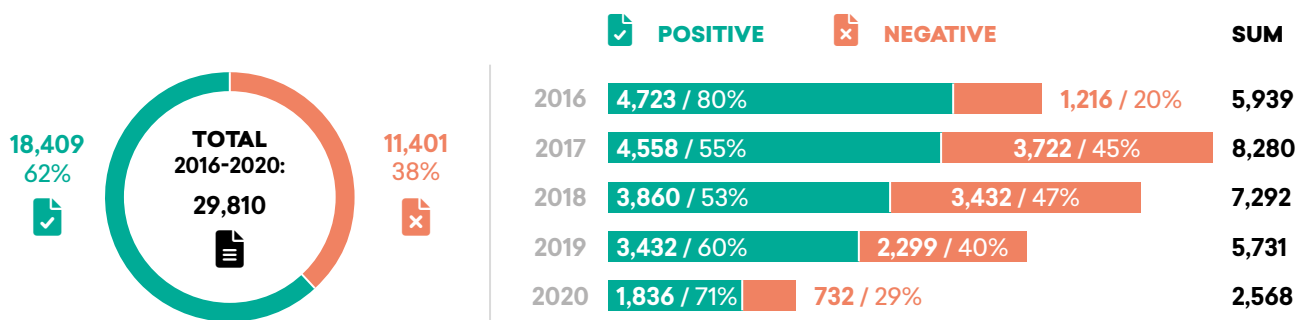


SOURCE: PSDA

<sup>56</sup> Rate of granting Georgian citizenship through naturalization is calculated based on: granting citizenship under: ordinary, simplified, exceptional, restoration and special procedures. Calculation also includes the data on exercising temporary right for restoration of Georgian citizenship.

Significant decrease recorded in 2020 may be caused by breakout of COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent travel restrictions and limited international mobility. In a general sense, the same trend is observed both in the number of applications and decisions made on granting Georgian citizenship; but it is noteworthy that despite the decrease in total number of applications, the share of positive decisions in 2020 is higher than in previous years. In 2016-2020, 62% of applications for granting Georgian citizenship were positive and only 38% were denied.

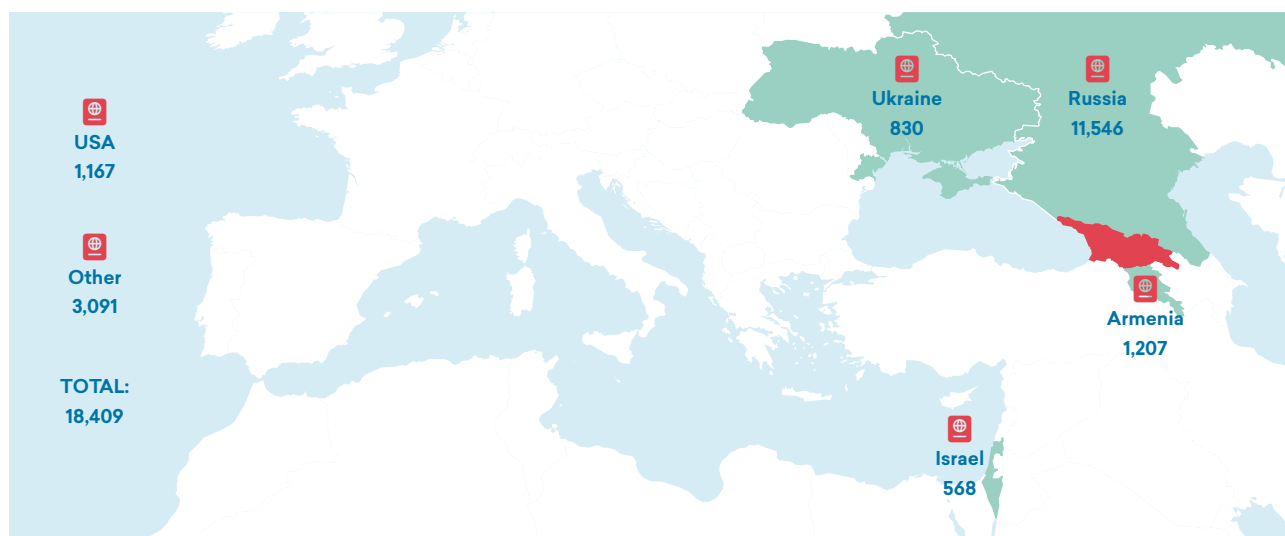
#### Decisions (positive/negative) on granting Georgian citizenship by years



SOURCE: PSDA

The majority of persons who were granted Georgian citizenship were citizens of Russia, which remains to be on a leading position in this regard over the years. Alongside Russia, Georgian citizenship was granted to citizens of Armenia, Ukraine, Israel, USA and Greece. **It is noteworthy that based on different sources, these are the major destination countries for Georgian emigrants, indicating that Georgian citizenship is mainly granted to either former Georgian citizens or persons originating from Georgia.**

#### Major countries whose citizens were granted Georgian citizenship in 2016-2020



SOURCE: PSDA

Among types of naturalization, granting Georgian citizenship by way of exception is the most in demand. In 2016-2018, 98% of Georgian citizenships were granted by way of exception. The trend changed in 2019-2020, where a major part of cases of granting Georgian citizenship was based on temporary right for restoration of Georgian citizenship (50% of positive decisions in both years)<sup>57</sup>.

## Stateless Persons

The number of recognized stateless persons in Georgia remained stable in 2016-2020. Most of these cases (593) were recorded in 2017. The statistics of recognized stateless persons in Georgia did not change much during this period of time. Gender distribution is more or less equal, with the share of women (55%) surpassing that of men (45%). As for the age groups, most of the stateless persons belong to 18-59 age group, constituting 78% of the total number in 2020.

### Number of recognized stateless persons in Georgia in 2016-2020 by year, gender and age

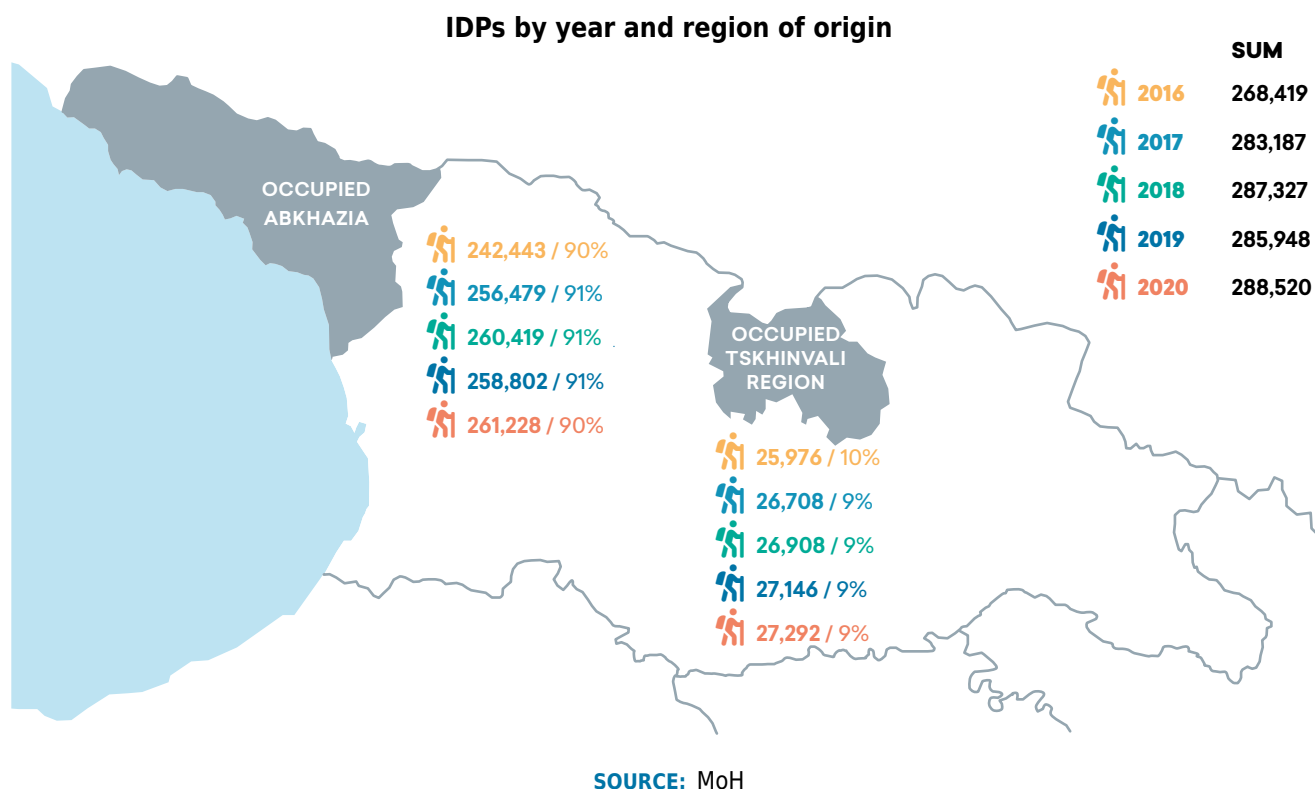
	♀ FEMALE	♂ MALE	👶 0-17	👤 18-59	👴 60+	SUM
2016	324 / 56%	258 / 44%	14 / 2%	469 / 81%	99 / 17%	582
2017	333 / 56%	258 / 44%	16 / 3%	477 / 80%	100 / 17%	593
2018	311 / 55%	255 / 45%	9 / 2%	448 / 79%	109 / 19%	566
2019	308 / 55%	250 / 45%	8 / 1%	436 / 78%	114 / 20%	558
2020	299 / 55%	242 / 45%	9 / 2%	422 / 78%	110 / 20%	541

SOURCE: PSDA

57 This is related to the legislative amendment entered into force in August 2021 according to which a former Georgian citizen, who has lost Georgian citizenship due to acquiring foreign citizenship, may, before 31 December 2020 (currently prolonged until 31 December 2022), apply to the relevant Agency for granting him/her Georgian citizenship by way of its restoration.

## Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

In 2016–2020, 90% of internally displaced persons (IDPs) registered in Georgia were from occupied Abkhazia and they outnumber IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region by almost ten times.



Number of IDPs from occupied Abkhazia registered in 2016–2020 was stable. Their gender distribution is almost even: 53% of IDPs from occupied Abkhazia are female, while 47% are male. Regarding the age groups, according to 2020 data, the majority of IDPs from Abkhazia fall under 41–65 age category.

### Number and percentage share of IDPs from occupied Abkhazia by gender and age

	Occupied Abkhazia	FEMALE	MALE	<18	18-25	26-40	41-65	60+
2016	242,443	54%	46%	29.33%	9.22%	20.05%	30.07%	11.32%
2017	256,479	54%	46%	28.40%	10.10%	20.06%	29.61%	11.83%
2018	260,419	53%	47%	28.47%	9.96%	19.96%	29.33%	12.28%
2019	258,802	53%	47%	28.39%	8.60%	22.08%	29.34%	11.58%
2020	261,228	53%	47%	28.30%	8.86%	20.72%	28.02%	14.10%

**SOURCE:** MoH

In 2016–2020, the number of IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region remained stable as well, reaching 27,292 in 2020. Gender distribution is equal in this case. Persons aged under 18 and between 41–65 are represented evenly (almost 30% of total number) among age groups.

### Number and percentage share of IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region by gender and age

	Occupied Tskhinvali region	FEMALE	MALE	<18	18-25	26-40	41-65	60+
2016	25,976	50.39%	49.61%	28.18%	9.83%	21.05%	28.31%	12.63%
2017	26,708	50.43%	49.57%	27.12%	10.50%	21.35%	28.57%	12.46%
2018	26,908	50.44%	49.56%	27.27%	10.26%	21.26%	28.82%	12.38%
2019	27,146	50.40%	49.60%	27.33%	9.22%	22.01%	27.98%	13.46%
2020	27,292	50.45%	49.55%	27.40%	10.68%	19.98%	28.34%	13.59%

SOURCE: MoH

The trend of resettlement of IDPs saw a major change after 2016. In 2016, 56% of IDPs from occupied Abkhazia lived in compact settlements and 44% in private housings. In 2017, on the contrary - the majority of IDPs from Abkhazia (55%) were already settled in private housings, and by 2020, the share increased to 59%. On the other hand, while in 2016 73% of IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region lived in private housing and only 27% in compact settlements, the situation changed radically in 2017, when 72% of IDPs already live in compact settlements and 28% in private housings. In terms of resettlement, this picture is maintained as of 2020.

### IDPs by resettlement type and region of origin (%)

### OCCUPIED ABKHAZIA:

Private
 Compact

2016	106,772 / 44%	135,671 / 56%
2017	140,441 / 55%	116,038 / 45%
2018	142,350 / 55%	118,069 / 45%
2019	150,941 / 58%	107,890 / 42%
2020	153,014 / 59%	108,823 / 42%

### OCCUPIED TSKHINVALI REGION:

Private
 Compact

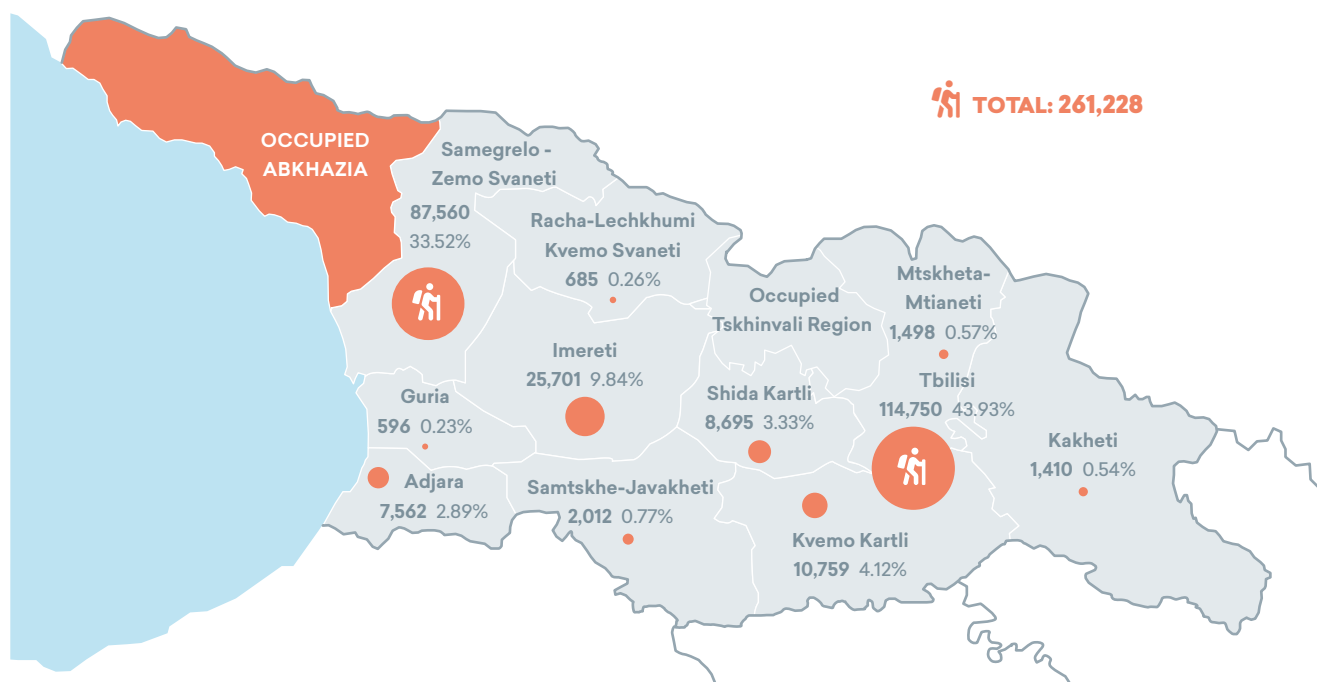
	18,906 / 73%	7,070 / 27%
	7,377 / 28%	19,331 / 72%
	7,373 / 27%	19,535 / 73%
	7,613 / 28%	19,533 / 72%
	7,655 / 28%	19,637 / 72%

SOURCE: MoH

The situation varies in terms of regions of resettlement as well. IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region now reside mostly in Shida Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions that are adjacent to Tskhinvali region. IDPs from occupied Abkhazia are mostly settled in Tbilisi and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region.

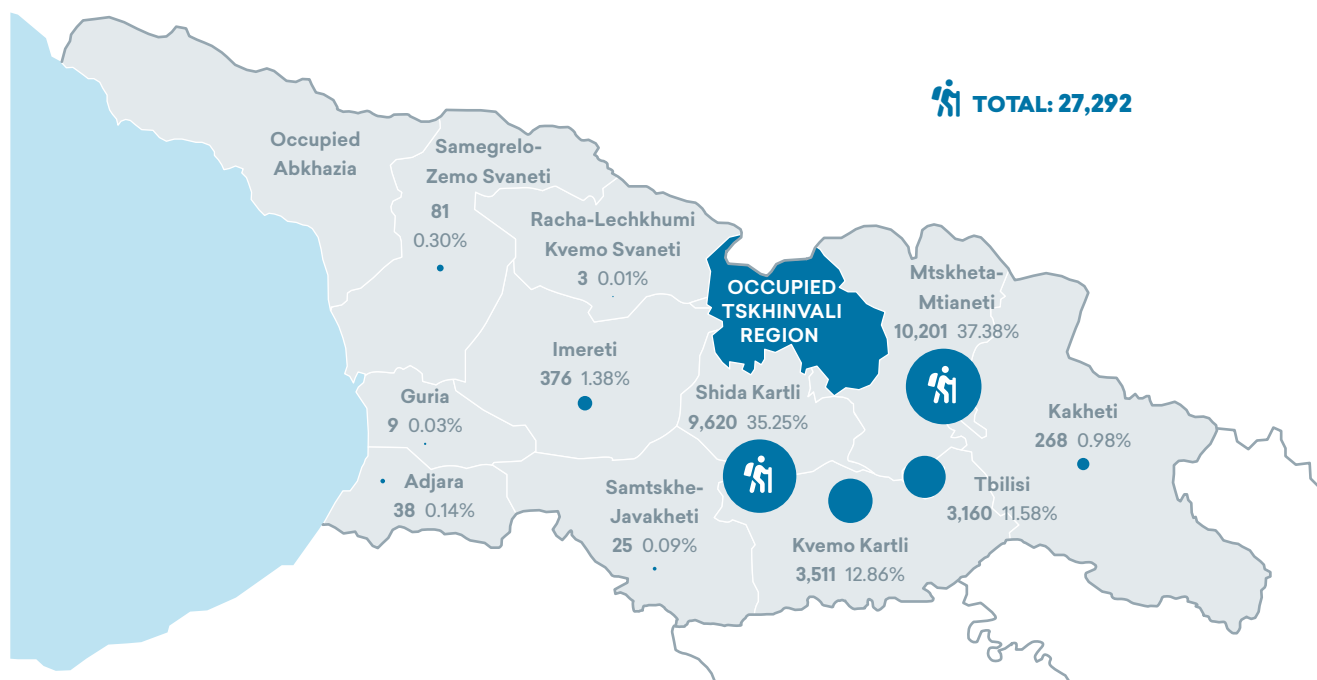


### IDPs from occupied Abkhazia by region of resettlement in 2020



SOURCE: MoH

### IDPs from occupied Tskhinvali region by region of resettlement in 2020

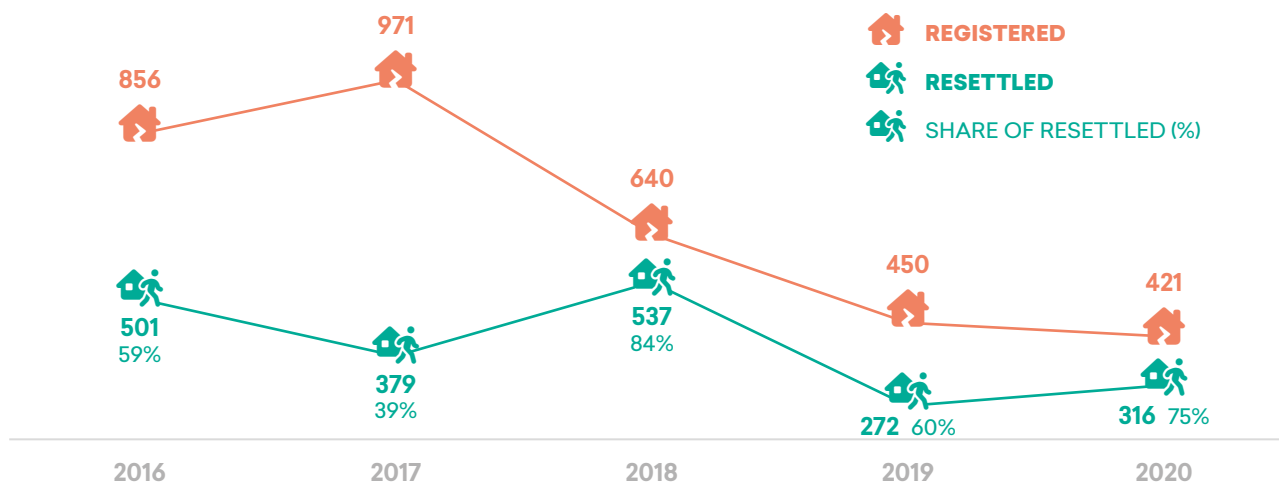


SOURCE: MoH

## Ecological Migrants

In 2016-2020, the highest number of ecomigrant families was registered in 2017, but only 39% of them were resettled. The rate of resettlement increased significantly in following years, reaching 75% in 2020.

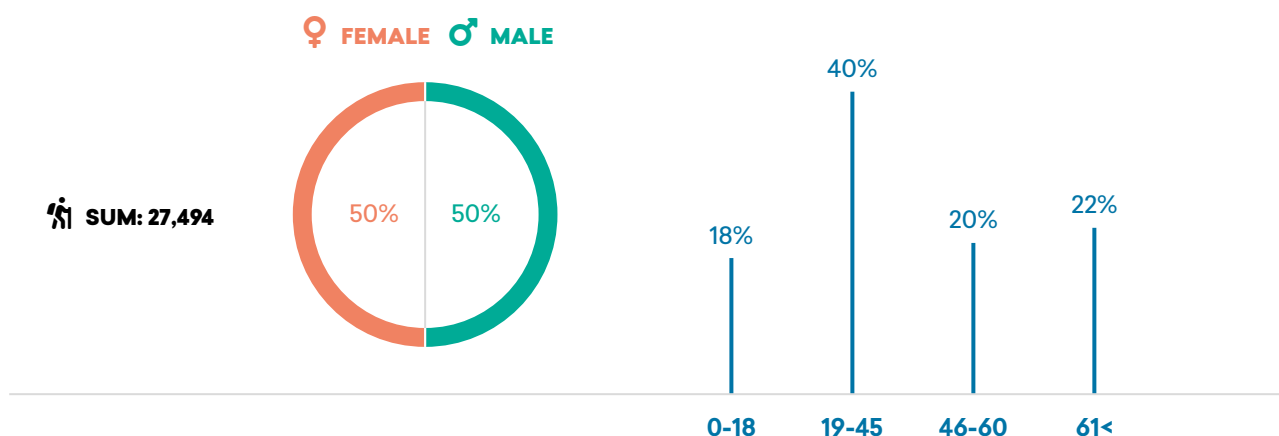
**Registered and resettled ecomigrant families in 2016-2020**



SOURCE: MoH

As of 31 December 2020, 27,494 ecomigrants were registered, with equal numbers of men and women. As for the age category, most eco-migrants are between the age of 19 and 45.

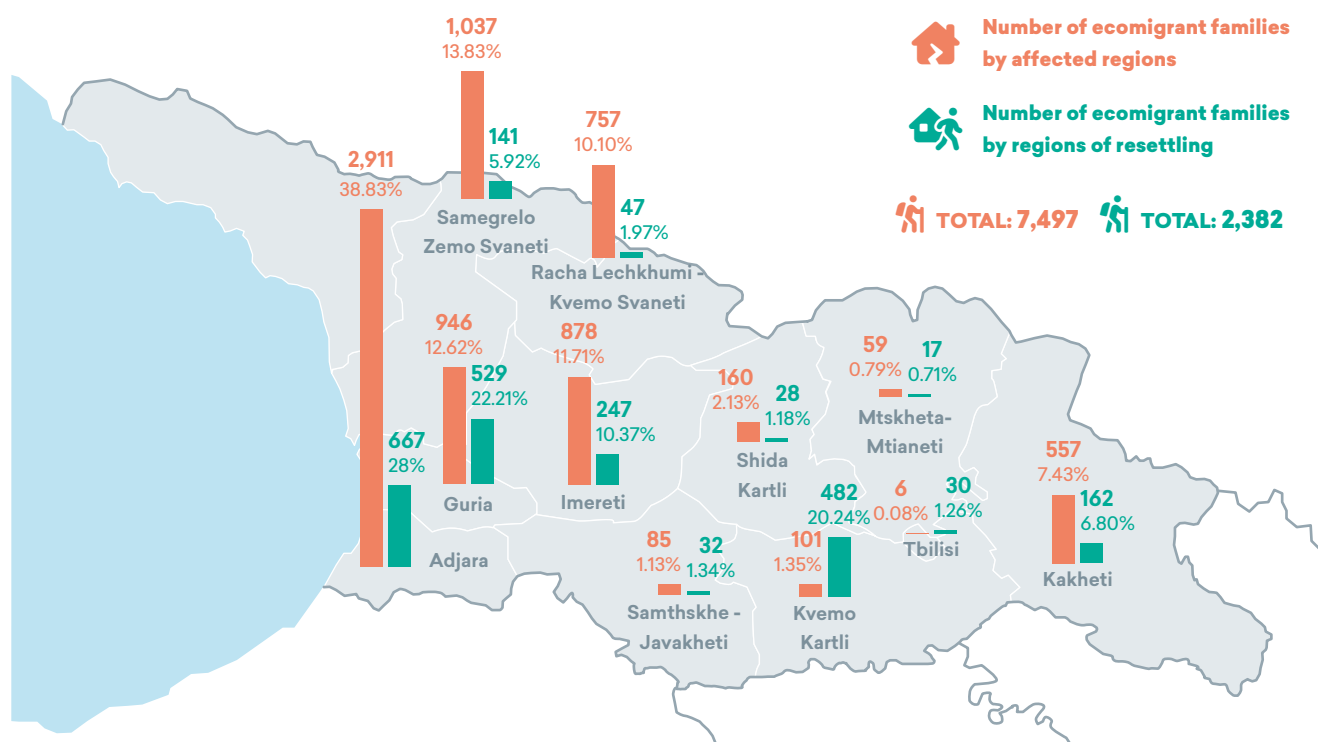
**Ecomigrants by gender and age (as of 31 December 2020)**



SOURCE: MoH

As of 2020, 39% of ecomigrants are registered in Adjara, followed by Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria, Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti regions. According to the latest data, Adjara is leading as area of resettlement (28% of total number). Ecomigrants are resettled also in Guria, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions.

## Registered and resettled ecomigrant families by regions





SOURCE: MoH

## Rural-Urban-Rural Migration

According to Geostat data, the share of urban population in total number of the country's population is growing every year, while rural population is decreasing. Accordingly, in the last five years, the share of urban population increased from 58.02% to 59.42%, and the share of rural population decreased by 1.4%.

### Population of Georgia (as of 1st January of each year) by rural and urban types of settlements (in thousands)

	 URBAN SETTLEMENT	 RURAL SETTLEMENT	TOTAL
2017	2,161.9 / 58.02%	1,564.5 / 41.98%	3,726.4
2018	2,174.8 / 58.31%	1,554.8 / 41.69%	3,729.6
2019	2,184.3 / 58.66%	1,539.1 / 41.34%	3,723.5
2020	2,194.5 / 59.04%	1,522.4 / 40.96%	3,716.9
2021	2,215.6 / 59.42%	1,512.9 / 40.58%	3,728.6

SOURCE: Geostat

In 2016-2020, the population increased in Tbilisi (4.99%), Adjara (3.46%) and Kvemo Kartli (1.77%). This rate increases as urban population grows. At the same time, the population decreased significantly in Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti (7.46%) and Imereti (6.39%). The decrease is observed in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (4.87%) and other regions of Georgia as well.

Although the share of urban population in total population is constantly higher than the rural population, this is mainly due to population growth in urban settlements of Tbilisi, Adjara, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Kvemo Kartli.

## Developments in the field of migration

*This part of MMP 2021 presents key measures at legislative, policy and practical levels to demonstrate the country's progress in the field of migration in 2019-2021(as of July).*

### MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

#### *Multisectoral issues*

In September 2019, the SCMI/Commission developed a brand-new-type, fully visualized, MMP<sup>58</sup> that is being actively used by researchers, academia members and other interested persons and organizations in their work. It also represents an important source for civil servants in designing and implementing evidence-based migration policies.

The most conspicuous and global-scale event in 2020-2021 has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a huge impact on virtually all areas of public life, including migration. Georgia launched its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic one month before the first case of infection was confirmed (February 26, 2020). In particular, an Inter-Agency Council was formed on 28 January 2020, and an Operational Plan to Contain, Suppress and Respond to the COVID-19 Infection<sup>59</sup> was approved. On 21 March 2020, a state of emergency was declared,<sup>60</sup> which lasted until 22 May, 2020. The state of emergency came with a number of restrictions, including a ban on international travel. Once the emergency was lifted, a majority of restrictions were also lifted, but a number of limitations related to border crossing and international travel have remained in force. With the restrictions in effect, various electronic services were introduced and special conditions of entry into the country were established for foreigners intending to enter Georgia for study,<sup>61</sup> business and/or distance work.<sup>62</sup> Since 1 February, 2021, a new/simplified entry regime came into force for foreign citizens entering Georgia by means of air transport<sup>63</sup>, while since 1 June, 2021 land BCPs also opened up for foreign visitors subject to mandatory presentation of relevant documents.<sup>64</sup>

Foreigners who were in the territory of Georgia by 14 March 2020 and were not able to leave the country before the expiration of their legal stay deadline due to the pandemic, were several times granted the right to stay by the Coordination Council, with 1 July 2021 being the last-established deadline.<sup>65</sup>

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58 Georgia's Migration Profile 2019, SCMI, [https://migration.commission.ge/files/mp19\\_eng\\_web3.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/mp19_eng_web3.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

59 Report on actions taken by the Georgian Government against COVID-19, the Government of Georgia, [https://stopcov.ge/Content/files/COVID\\_RESPONSE\\_REPORT\\_ENG.pdf](https://stopcov.ge/Content/files/COVID_RESPONSE_REPORT_ENG.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

60 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4830372?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

61 [https://registration.gov.ge/pub/form/22\\_/abrckq/](https://registration.gov.ge/pub/form/22_/abrckq/) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

62 *Ibid.*

63 [http://gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=GEO&sec\\_id=288&info\\_id=78445](http://gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=288&info_id=78445) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

64 [https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=557&info\\_id=79402](https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=557&info_id=79402) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

65 <https://mfa.gov.ge/News/%E2%80%8Bglobaluri-pandemiit-gamocveuli-shezgudvebis-gatva.aspx?CatID=5&lang=en-US> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, during 2020, the SCMI actively continued to work on drafting Georgia's Migration Strategy for 2021-2030 (Strategy/MS), which is the fourth fundamental framework document of its kind in the field of migration. The Strategy's long-term vision is based on the principle of Migration and Development,<sup>66</sup> which aims at minimising negative consequences of migration and, conversely, maximizing its positive effects to contribute to country development. The Strategy determines sectoral priorities such as: improvement of migration management, facilitation of legal migration, fight against illegal migration, reintegration of returned migrants, inclusion of diaspora in country development, improved asylum system and integration of foreigners. The Strategy was elaborated using a special e-platform developed by the SCMI Secretariat and in accordance with Government's new policy planning regulations.<sup>67</sup> The Strategy comes with a Logical Framework outlining strategic goals, objectives and relevant indicators together with baseline, midterm and final target values. Each strategic goal is linked to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>68</sup> After a working version of the Strategy was sent out to and agreed with partner organizations, it was submitted to and approved by the Government of Georgia by its Ordinance no. 810 as of 30 December 2020.<sup>69</sup>

Alongside the drafting process of the Strategy, there was another ongoing work involving partner international and donor organizations to prepare a 2021 Action Plan (AP) for the MS implementation. The Action Plan was endorsed and approved by the SCMI in January 2021.<sup>70</sup>

### *International dimension*

In the recent years Georgia put intensive efforts to join the European Migration Network (EMN/Network).<sup>71</sup> Success came in March 2021 when it was granted the status of EMN's observer country.<sup>72</sup> Immediately after joining the Network, Georgia began active participation in EMN's various research activities and thematic events.<sup>73</sup> Georgia's participation in the Network's activities helps the SCMI member agencies to not only develop institutionally but to make direct contacts with their European counterparts. Being part of the ENM will also facilitate the institutional approximation with the EU (especially in the sphere of migration management) and the sectoral integration process. It will also benefit the development of migration policy planning and analysis and augment the research and analytical capabilities of SCMI's member agencies. From the EU perspective, on the other hand, accepting Georgia as part of the EMN will enable the EU to share European good practices in managing migration while getting a better understanding of migration from the Caucasus perspective.

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66 The principle of Migration and Development is broad concept meaning a coordinated, proper and pragmatic orchestration of all directions contributing to the country development, encompassing, along with economic dimension, the social, cultural, technological, institutional and human capital development.

67 [Ordinance of the Government of Georgia no. 629 dated 20 December 2019](#) "On Approving the Rule on the Elaboration, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Documents".

68 <https://sdg.gov.ge/text-page/35> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

69 [https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms\\_2021-2030\\_eng\\_08.02.21.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms_2021-2030_eng_08.02.21.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

70 [https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms\\_ap\\_2021\\_eng\\_11.02.21.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms_ap_2021_eng_11.02.21.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

71 [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/networks/european-migration-network-emn_en) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

72 [https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article\\_id=327&clang=1](https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=327&clang=1) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

73 [https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article\\_id=330&clang=1](https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=330&clang=1) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

## Migration data

The Unified Migration Data Analytical System (UMAS)<sup>74</sup> is an important tool used in developing evidence-based migration policies. Based on Big Data, UMAS produces analytical reports on various themes of the country's migration profile. These reports serve to provide an analysis of migration flows by linking data from various states agencies to each other, discern migratory trends and help the SCMI develop or update the Georgia's Migration Profiles.

A comprehensive analysis of migration policies requires not only modern analytical systems, but availability of quality statistical data. With the help of the Geostat, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Swedish Government, 2020-2023 National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics of Georgia was drafted in 2019.<sup>75</sup> According to the Strategy, one of the main priority is to establish effective, modern and sustainable data collection process and produce demographic statistics, including migration stats, consistent with the European standards. An action plan for 2020-2021 for the Strategy implementation was also adopted.

By its Ordinance no. 589 dated 22 September 2020, the Government of Georgian approved a Statute for the Governmental Coordination Commission on Population Census<sup>76</sup> and preparatory works to conduct the census were launched.

In 2020, Geostat created several new web portals for its users, including one titled "Statistics for kids and teenagers";<sup>77</sup> it allows children and adolescents to receive useful information by modern visual means on the country's socio-economic situation and demographics (including information on migration).

## LEGAL MIGRATION

### *Visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States*

With a view to implementing the visa-free regime to the EU unimpededly, on 2 September 2020, the Parliament of Georgia amended the Law of Georgia on the "Rules and Procedures for Georgian Citizens Leaving and Entering Georgia",<sup>78</sup> which came into force on 1 January 2021.<sup>79</sup> According to the amendment, Georgian citizens are now checked for possession of required documents to travel visa-free to EU/Schengen States at Georgia's BCPs (i.e. in all international airports and at the Sarpi land BCP). A Georgian citizen may be denied crossing the Georgian state border if s/he has been banned from entering any EU/Schengen State or if s/he fails to present legally required documents prescribed by the EU's relevant regulations on visa-free travel.

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74 State Commission on Migration Issues, Unified Migration Data Analytical System, 2019, [https://migration.commission.ge/files/umas\\_eng\\_.pdf](https://migration.commission.ge/files/umas_eng_.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

75 <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/630/strategy-for-the-development-of-statistics> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

76 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4999321?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

77 <http://juniors.geostat.ge/en> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

78 <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/93850?publication=18> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

79 <https://www.geoconsul.gov.ge/en/schengen> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had tangible consequences in terms of not only reduced mobility by Georgian citizens to EU/Schengen States, but also activities to raise awareness on visa-free travel related issues. Due to reduced mobility, next awareness campaign on visa-free travel was temporarily suspended. However, as a result of the amendment enacted to the Georgian Law on the "Rules and Procedures for Georgian Citizens Leaving and Entering Georgia", information activities were resumed after 1 January, 2021:



Two video clips providing information on above mentioned legislative amendments were prepared and posted on relevant agencies' and international organizations' official Facebook pages<sup>80</sup> and different platforms such as travel groups;



Workshops were conducted for the Hotline operators of the Foreign Affairs Ministry's Consular Department and Unified Service Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as for the employees of the Information Center on NATO and EU, and its regional offices;



Based on the frequently asked questions (FAQ) prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an infographics were produced and disseminated through the social media in cooperation with IOM;



A section on visa-free travel at <https://www.geoconsul.gov.ge/en> was fully updated. The portal provides Georgian citizens with updated and comprehensive information on visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States.

In 2019-2021, up to 400 online and face-to-face information meetings were held with citizens to inform them on their rights and obligations related to visa-free travel to EU/Schengen States. About 17 thousand individuals attended the meetings.

In June 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ICMPD worked together to draft a research document titled "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Migration, Mobility and Visa-Free Travel to the European Union". The research aimed at surveying Georgian citizens' perceptions of and attitudes to the visa-free travel, understanding individual assessments by Georgian citizens of the Georgian Government-provided assistance to Georgian citizens in EU/Schengen States during the pandemic, and identifying citizen-preferred information and communication channels. In June 2021, "EU Visa Free" mobile app was updated;<sup>81</sup> the app is available free-of-charge on Google Play and App Store. The app provides updated information on visa-free travel rules and regulations of various EU/Schengen States. Through a calendar integrated in the app, users can calculate the number of days remaining till expiration of their visa-free stay in EU/Schengen member states.

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80 <https://www.facebook.com/mfageorgia/videos/3580272985390621/> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

81 <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ge.mygo.schengen> (accessed: 18.10.2021).



Promotion of the active labour market and employment policy, including creation of opportunities for Georgian citizens for temporary legal employment in foreign States, is a priority for Georgia. There are ongoing activities to develop inter-state cooperation in the field of labour (circular) migration, broaden opportunities for temporary legal employment abroad and to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements on the protection of the rights of labour migrants.

On 30 September 2019, “An agreement to regulate labour migration between the Republic of Bulgaria and Georgia” was signed.<sup>82</sup> The agreement became effective on 5 November 2019. Parties to the agreement are continuing to work on the document (an implementing procedure) devising a specific scheme of temporary legal employment.

On 17 January 2020, Georgia and the Federal Republic of Germany signed an agreement on employment of Georgian workforce for seasonal works in the Federal Republic of Germany. Within the agreement, Georgian citizens are able to legally work in Germany in the agricultural sector for up to 3 months. Registration of those willing to be employed at seasonal works in Germany started on 15 February 2021<sup>83</sup> and several groups of workers have already been to Germany for work.

On 30 September 2020, a bilateral agreement was signed between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the State of Israel on temporary employment of Georgian citizens in specific sectors of labour market in the State of Israel.<sup>84</sup> The agreement came into force on 6 November 2020. On 1 October 2020, the first implementing protocol of the agreement was signed, which specifies the relevant sector of Israel’s labour market. Based on the protocol, Georgian citizens are able to get employed as assistant workers at medical facilities for patients requiring a long-term care.

Georgia initiated dialogues with and forwarded draft agreements on cooperation in the field of temporary labour (circular) migration to six countries. Some of these countries have already responded positively to the requests for future cooperation. Meanwhile, there are ongoing negotiations to sign bilateral agreements in the field of circular labour migration with two of these countries. With two other countries, there is a consultation process to initiate pilot projects first, as these countries do not have the practice of entering into bilateral agreements on labour migration.

In October 2019, a State Agency for Employment Support – a legal entity under public law – was set up within the MoH.<sup>85</sup> The goal of the Agency is to assist Georgian citizens with labour and employment, and to implement active labour market policies to this end. The Agency will also work towards practical implementation of circular labour migration schemes with various countries.

On 21 July 2020, Georgia’s new Law on Facilitating Employment came into force.<sup>86</sup> The Law determines the tasks of the Employment Agency in the field of employment facilitation, including the field of labour migration.

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82 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4701239?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

83 <https://www.moh.gov.ge/ka/news/5704/> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

84 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5036950?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

85 Order of the Minister for IDPs from Georgia’s Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs no. 01-110/N dated 31 October 2019, <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/4690652?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

86 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4924109?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

The coverage area of Georgian consular posts abroad is regularly being expanded to provide Georgian citizens with effective protection of their rights and legal interests.

By 1 July 2021, Georgia operated 74 diplomatic missions abroad.<sup>87</sup> In 2019-2021, Georgia opened its Embassy in the United Arab Emirates and General Consulates in Bari (Italy) and, in San Francisco (USA). In those countries where Georgia does not have either diplomatic missions or consular representations, the institute of Honorary Consuls is widely used. By 1 July 2021, Georgia had 77 honorary consuls appointed in 60 countries worldwide.<sup>88</sup> In 2019-2021, 33 new honorary consuls were appointed in 29 countries.

The new rule for consular registration and removal from consular registration was adopted by the Order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs N.01-72, on 23 April 2020.<sup>89</sup> The elaboration of the new rule was stipulated by the amendments enacted in the Law of Georgia on the Procedure for Registering Citizens of Georgia and Aliens Residing in Georgia, for issuing an Identity (Residence) Card and a Passport of a Citizen of Georgia. The new rule defines the way consular registration data are stored after the launch of Consular Case Management Electronic System, which already allows registration, storage and processing of such data.

The Consular Case Management Electronic System –“Geoconsul” has been operational since 2014.<sup>90</sup> The system was created with the goal of enhancing the effectiveness of consular activities and improving the quality of consular services available to citizens. The first stage of the system’s major update was completed in the first quarter of 2021. The system is currently underway the next stage of update, which inter alia includes the launching of a mobile application.

The Georgian Electronic Visa Portal (E-VISA PORTAL)<sup>91</sup> allows to short-term foreign visitors to obtain the visa of Georgia via simplified procedures. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the operation of E-VISA PORTAL was temporarily suspended from the second half of March 2020 till 1 July 2021.

In respect of improvement of the visa procedures, worth noting is the cooperation with VFS Global since 2017. By July 2021, VFS Global was accepting applications for visas of Georgia through its 18 centers located in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.<sup>92</sup> Currently, the work is ongoing, both to identify the necessity for additional centers as well as to improve services offered by already operating centers.

As of 1 July 2021, citizens of Georgia could travel visa-free to 66 countries worldwide, while holders of diplomatic or service passports of Georgia do not need visa for traveling to 84 countries.<sup>93</sup>

On 1 March 2019, an Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Mutual Visa Exemption entered into force.<sup>94</sup> Based on the agreement, citizens of Georgia can travel to Ukraine with their electronic ID cards. Also, the Ordinance of the Government of Georgia N.255,

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87 <https://mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/EmbassiesRepresentations/GeorgianMissionsAbroad.aspx> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

88 <https://mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/EmbassiesRepresentations/HonoraryConsulsGeorgia.aspx> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

89 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4855487?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

90 <https://geoconsul.gov.ge/en> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

91 <https://www.evisa.gov.ge/GeoVisa/> (accessed: 18.10.2021)

92 <https://www.vfsglobal.com/georgia/india/> (accessed: 18.10.2021)

93 <https://www.geoconsul.gov.ge/HtmlPage/html/View?id=992> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

94 <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/4500266?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

dated 5 June 2015 was amended on 28 November 2019 allowing citizens of the Swiss Confederation to enter Georgia with their ID cards.<sup>95</sup>

“Rule of Action in Crises Situations Abroad” and a corresponding manual were elaborated and adopted in 2018. Based on the mentioned rule, a Crisis Management Council was set up within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tasked with coordinating the work of and assisting Georgia’s embassies and consular posts abroad with crisis management activities whenever a crisis situation emerges outside Georgia. During 2019-2021, most of Georgia’s missions abroad had prepared their crisis management manuals. In addition, a training course on consular crisis management was developed and included in the consular officers’ training curriculum.

### *Residence permits*

On 30 March 2021, the Parliament of Georgia adopted amendments to the Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons<sup>96</sup> with the aims to enhance preventive mechanisms of illegal migration to Georgia and improve the management of migratory processes. Pursuant to the amendments:



Validity term of temporary residence permits was extended from 6 to 12 years, and the length of residence requirement for eligibility to be granted a permanent permit based on a temporary residence permit was increased from 6 to 10 years;



For the purpose of preventing the obtaining of residence permits on forged documents, the LEPL “Public Service Development Agency” (PSDA) was given the authority to establish monitoring during a year after a residence permit is issued and to verify the facts indicated in the applicant-submitted documents. In addition, grounds for denying issuance of residence permits and grounds for terminating a foreigner’s stay in Georgia were expanded.



Connection between C category (ordinary) visas and requests for a residence permit was made clear. In particular, a person holding an ordinary visa can only ask for investment or special residence permits. Also, except for investment residence permits, special residence permits and temporary residence permits indicated in subchapter (i) of Article 15 of the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons, no residence permits will be issued to foreigners who are staying in Georgia on the basis of visas and/or residence permits issued by the countries listed in the Ordinance of the Government of Georgia no. 256 dated 5 June 2015.<sup>97</sup>



The notion of “a family member” has changed; now, for the purposes of issuance of a residence permit, a foreigner’s child or parent will be considered “a family member” only if the foreigner requesting a residence permit is a parent to a minor residing in Georgia or is an underage child of a foreigner residing in Georgia. This new rule on the issuance of residence permits on the ground of family reunification ensures the right to reside in Georgia to individuals who are socially and legally dependent to each other.

95 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4716630?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

96 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2278806?publication=9> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

97 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2867377?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).



There is also a new development in respect of foreigners' extended stay in Georgia. In particular, while administrative proceedings for the issuance of a residence permit and for granting the Georgian citizenship are ongoing, to make sure that the respective foreigner's stay in Georgia is legal, the PSDA will, *proprio motu*, postpone the legal stay for the foreigner to leave the country for the period of the ongoing administrative proceeding. Another development is that a foreigner who is involved in a legal proceeding before a court of general jurisdiction in Georgia and who wishes to postpone his/her legal stay, should submit an application for postponement 14 days prior his/her legal stay expires, instead of the previously existing 7-day term.

Considering the limitation imposed on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, the PSDA has converted all of its key services into the electronic format, which allowed both Georgian citizens as well as foreigners to access PSDA's services in a distant mode, without impediment. This development was immediately reflected in the statistics of use of PSDA's online services. For example, if only 59 applications for residence permits were received from foreigners distantly in 2019, this figure surged almost by 30 times in 2020 (1,632 applications) and the rising trend maintained in 2021 too (compared with the pre-pandemic period).

## RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

### *Return migration*

When many countries had their borders closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Georgian government agencies shifted to an emergency working mode in order to provide assistance to Georgian citizens physically located in foreign countries and to bring them back home safely. Citizens who found themselves in hardship abroad due to the pandemic were provided a range of different types of assistance by Georgian diplomatic missions and consular posts (food, shelter, medications, transport and information on restrictions imposed by their host countries). Vulnerable categories and those with special needs (minors, persons with chronic diseases, senior citizens, students, citizens having a serious health condition, pregnant women, disabled people, cancer patients and seafarers) were determined and provided help as a matter of priority. By 31 August 2020, Georgian diplomatic missions and consular offices assisted 23,309 citizens on the spot.

116 charter flights were organized from 35 countries where a considerable number of Georgian citizens found themselves without financial and other resources and expressed will to return home (part of the charter flights were funded by the Government of Georgia). With the Government's assisted charter flights and via land and sea routes, in total 25,198 citizens of Georgia were returned home in an organized manner.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, relevant state authorities continued to implement Georgia's readmission agreements unimpededly, bringing back persons staying in foreign countries without legal basis safely and in an organized manner. In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was actively involved in joint return operations organized by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX).<sup>98</sup>

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98 As an example, with the support from FRONTEXT, 107 Georgian citizens were returned from Cyprus to Tbilisi in May 2020 – an operation considered the largest among voluntary return operations coordinated by FRONTEX, [https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/General/In\\_Brief\\_2020/20.0147\\_inbrief\\_2020\\_11th\\_web\\_fixed4.pdf](https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/General/In_Brief_2020/20.0147_inbrief_2020_11th_web_fixed4.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

To further the implementation of the Agreement between Georgia and the EU on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorization,<sup>99</sup> Georgia and the Czech Republic signed an implementing protocol on 10 July 2019,<sup>100</sup> and in June 2020, the signing of an implementing protocol between the Georgian and Italian Governments was reinitiated. It was also in June 2020 that an “Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the United Kingdom on the Readmission of Persons Residing Without Authorization” was initiated.

For the purpose of effectively implementing its readmission agreements, Georgia is receiving and processing readmission applications through “Readmission Case Management Electronic System”.<sup>101</sup> Two more countries (Finland and Sweden) enrolled in the system between 2019 and July 2021. For the moment, 19 European countries are using the system actively<sup>102</sup> and it is widely recognized as an effective and efficient tool for ensuring safe return of persons residing without authorization. Considering its effective work, there are plans to replicate the system and introduce it in other countries too. In September 2018, an additional function of electronic return ID cards was added to the system. The new function received recognition soon as one of the most effective tools offered by the system.

### *Reintegration*

In 2019, an Agency for Internally Displaced Persons, Ecomigrants and Livelihoods<sup>103</sup> was established within the MoH as a Legal Entity of Public Law. One of the key goals of the Agency is to implement programs to support reintegration of returned Georgian citizens. The Agency started implementing State reintegration programs on its own since 1 July 2020. Until that date, the programs were being implemented by non-governmental organizations based on grants from the Agency. For effective implementation of the program, a Reintegration and Integration Service was created within the Agency. The Service employs personnel with appropriate expertise and institutional memory. It is notable that the program is being implemented in both the capital and regions.

Since 2015, the state started allocating funds from the state budget on a regular basis to fund reintegration programs for those returning to Georgia from abroad. GEL 600,000 were allotted from the State Budget in 2016, 590,000 in 2017 and 650,000 in 2018 through 2021, each year.

To mitigate the consequences of the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 19 school pupils who returned to homeland from foreign countries received laptops as part of the reintegration program assistance so that they could join the distant learning process here in Georgia without impediment.

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99 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A2011A0225%2803%29> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

100 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4657425?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

101 The system was created with the support of IOM and within a project funded by the European Union.

102 Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, France, Belgium, Romania, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Italy, Ireland, Czechia, Finland, Sweden and Denmark.

103 The Agency was created by Ordinance of the Government no. 487 dated 10 October 2019. It started full-fledged functioning since 1 January 2020: <https://idp.gov.ge/en/reintegration-2/> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

### *Diaspora engagement*

At the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a mechanism to fund diaspora projects was set up. Based on pre-determined priorities, the Ministry funded 28 projects in 2019 and 45 projects in 2020. The program aims at preserving the national and cultural identity among compatriots, promote Georgia's economic potential, as well as develop public diplomacy and economic ties. The 2020 grant program entitled "Facilitating Diaspora Initiatives" was aimed at providing assistance to compatriots in foreign countries during the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A web-portal to communicate with the diaspora — [GDA.GE](http://GDA.GE) — was set up based on a concept jointly developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IOM. The web-portal is a reliable and a mutually beneficial source of information based on the principle of one-stop-shop. It helps support close ties of compatriots residing in various countries and diaspora organizations with both each other and their homeland. For the moment, the portal operates in a test mode. It gets updated on a regular basis.

In 2019-2021, several diaspora forums were held aimed to help engage the Georgian diaspora in country development focusing on education, culture and socio-economic issues.

In 2020, within the program "Become Young Ambassador of Your Country", 25 young ambassadors from 35 countries were selected as winners through a competition. The program is being implemented in cooperation with ICMPD and its purpose is to have the young ambassadors promote Georgia in their host countries, create a network of foreign friends and maintain relations with Georgian diaspora representatives.

To help Georgian citizens in Greece, Spain and Italy in acquisition of legal status in the respective host countries, practical guidelines on migration legislation of these countries were prepared in cooperation with ICMPD.<sup>104</sup> The guidelines provide comprehensive information on immigration laws of and integration opportunities in the host countries.

### *Internationalization of education*

In September 2019, Georgia became a member of EURAXESS, a EU's inter-State organization for research and innovation. Joining to the EURAXESS<sup>105</sup> facilitates Georgia's stronger integration into EU's scientific research area, career development of Georgian scientists, and widening of cooperation opportunities for the country's universities and research institutions. With EURAXESS, Georgian scientists gained access to all the services of the network that are currently available to their counterparts from other European states. Georgia's membership in EURAXESS will help increase mobility between Georgian and European researchers; it will expand career opportunities for Georgian researchers while foreign students and researchers will show more interest in visiting Georgian universities for study and research.

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104 1 - Italy: [http://www.enigma.ge/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Migration\\_Guideline\\_Italy-Web.pdf](http://www.enigma.ge/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Migration_Guideline_Italy-Web.pdf) 2 - Spain: [http://www.enigma.ge/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/migration-guidline-spain-2\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.enigma.ge/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/migration-guidline-spain-2_FINAL.pdf) 3 - Greece: <http://www.enigma.ge/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/migration-guidline-web.pdf> (last accessed: 18.10.2021).

105 <https://www.euraxess.ge/> (last accessed: 18.10.2021).



Within the “Study in Georgia” program, with the financial support of the government, five Georgian state universities participated in international exhibitions, bringing together more than 10,000 representatives from over 100 countries and 3,500 academic institutions. At Georgian universities’ initiative, an agreement was made with other universities on the exchange of academic and administrative personnel for the development and implementation of new technologies.

The LEPL “International Education Center” implements programs helping Georgian citizens to receive best education abroad through state funding and use their knowledge having returned to their homeland after graduation. In 2019, the Center implemented 11 programs issuing more than 6 million GEL worth scholarships to 170 students.<sup>106</sup> In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center implemented 10 scholarship schemes/programs issuing more than 100 stipends; overall, more than 4 million GEL were paid by the state to fund beneficiary studies in foreign countries.<sup>107</sup>

In the context of internationalization of education, the mobility schemes under the ERASMUS+ program should also be mentioned.<sup>108</sup> For joint master’s degree programs, the ERASMUS scholarship was issued to 40 Georgian citizens in 2019, 29 citizens in 2020 and 30 citizens in 2021.

Several practical initiatives were launched in 2020 directed at internationalization of education. Through close cooperation among the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), UNDP, Georgian Farmers’ Association, and public and private education institutions, a project – “Internationalization of vocational education and an international practice initiative between Georgia and Germany/UK in the field of agriculture” was launched. As part of the project, members of vocational training institutions and education specialists/experts were trained with Cambridge International College’s distant learning program, while vocational and university students majoring in agriculture were able to do a five-month paid internship in Germany.<sup>109</sup>

In 2021, an active work continued to harmonize the „Law of Georgia on Vocational Education” with EU regulations and directives and elaborate respective bylaws according to the implementation plan of the Law. To establish capacities for the internationalization of vocational education, rules and conditions for joint and exchange programs in the vocational education sphere were prepared.

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106 See International Education Center, 2019 Report, [https://iec.gov.ge/portals/\\_default/Skins/Xcillion/Images/File/ganaTlebis%20saerTaSoriso%20centris%20angariSi%20sabooloo%20qurvi.pdf](https://iec.gov.ge/portals/_default/Skins/Xcillion/Images/File/ganaTlebis%20saerTaSoriso%20centris%20angariSi%20sabooloo%20qurvi.pdf) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

107 <https://iec.gov.ge/Portals/0/final.pdf?ver=2020-12-29-094608-260&timestamp=1609220801823> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

108 <https://erasmusplus.org.ge/ka> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

109 The Georgian Ministry of Education and Science, Reforming vocational education, 2020 Report, <https://mes.gov.ge/uploads/files/2020%20VETangarishi.pdf> (viewed on 18.10.2021).

## INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Important changes were made in the legislation for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of the asylum procedure. On 6 April 2020, the Minister of Internal Affairs issued Order no. 33 approving “Asylum Procedures”,<sup>110</sup> which helped to improve a set of standards to ensure proper flow of the process. Amendments were also made to the legislation governing the processing of personal data of asylum seekers and international protection beneficiaries. On 3 June 2020, the Minister of Internal Affairs issued Orders no. 78<sup>111</sup> and 79<sup>112</sup> on the basis of the Georgian Law on International Protection, approving “Rules of deadline setting for the storage of processed personal data” and “Rules of taking and processing fingerprints of asylum seekers”.

With a view to improving the identification of claims for international protection by foreigners and stateless persons at the State Border and fine-tuning cooperation among various agencies and units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on 21 July 2020, the Minister of Internal Affairs issued Order no. 99 approving the “Rules of detecting claims for international protection by foreigners and stateless persons at the Georgian State Border and exchanging information among the Ministry’s Migration Department, Patrol Police Department and the State Subordinated Entity the Georgian Border Police.”<sup>113</sup>

In order to provide access to general education, minor asylum seekers and minor international protection beneficiaries are offered a Georgian language-teaching program. Between 1 July 2019 and 1 July 2020, 33 beneficiaries benefited from the program. The goal of the program is to help minors who are either asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection raise their level of knowledge of the Georgian language.

## INTEGRATION

One of the functions the Agency for IDPs created within the MoH is to implement local integration programs targeting beneficiaries of international protection in Georgia, persons seeking asylum in Georgia and stateless persons recognized in Georgia. Another task of the Agency is to operate the Integration Center.<sup>114</sup> Since 1 July 2020, the Agency for IDPs started implementing integration programs and operating the Integration Center on its own. Until that date, the task was performed by non-governmental organizations operating on grants issued by the Agency. With a view to ensuring effective implementation of the integration program, a Reintegration and Integration Service was then set up within the Agency. Moreover, the Integration Center changed its location moving from the suburbs to downtown Tbilisi, which resulted in improved accessibility of both the Center and the integration services it offers.

In 2020, the Agency for IDPs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) implemented a joint project to support the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in Georgia. Within the project, livelihood projects submitted by 15 internally displaced persons (IDPs) received funding; as a result, 15 beneficiaries of international protection were able to get employed at the IDP-run enterprises.

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110 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4840014?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

111 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4880224?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

112 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4880135?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

113 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4920483?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

114 <https://idp.gov.ge/en/integration-2/> (accessed: 18.10.2021).



On 21 June 2021, a State Program to Support Integration of Foreigners Residing in Georgia was approved. Compared with the previous year, a new component - funding of medical assistance and/or medications - was added to the 2021 program. The new component envisages funding healthcare services and medications within the range of GEL 1,000 for beneficiaries with international protection status and persons with recognized statelessness status in Georgia.

Based on the MoH's Order no. 01-285o as of 23 July 2021, the following categories were included in the State Immunization Program to get vaccinated against COVID-19:



Foreign citizens and stateless persons legally staying in Georgia (if their legal stay can be proven with their visa, residence permit or the duration of their visa-free stay in the country) who are present physically in Georgia and at least 3 months have passed since their entry into the country;



Foreign citizens enrolled in the "Work from Georgia" State program and their family members;



Foreign students staying in Georgia for study purposes (who were not able to leave the country), based on a student list provided by their respective education institution;



Foreign staff, including their family members, of diplomatic missions, consular offices, offices of international organizations accredited in Georgia and other representative offices equated to such missions and offices;



Population residing in Georgia's occupied territories, regardless of their nationality; also persons employed in projects that are funded by diplomatic missions and international donor organizations and implemented in the occupied territories of Georgia and their family members.

On 27 May 2019, an amendment was made to the Education Minister's Order on the "Rules on verification of the validity of education documents issued in Georgia and recognition of foreign qualifications", articulating the procedure of recognition of received education by persons with an international protection status.

Within the "State language teaching and integration program" run at the LEPL "Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration", 118 foreign citizens used the program-offered education services between 1 July 2019 and 1 July 2021. The program aims at teaching the Georgian language to interested persons and facilitating civic integration of foreigners. Worth noting is that from March 2020 the State Language Teaching and Integration program went fully online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The School prepared learning materials in an electronic format for the beneficiaries. In 2019-2020, in cooperation with NGO World Vision Georgia, the LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration implemented a project on "State language tuition for foreigners and stateless persons". At the first stage of the project (2019), 122 foreigners residing in Tbilisi were trained, while at the second stage (2020) 43 foreigners with temporary residence permits residing in Kutaisi and Batumi took the course.

The School also prepared a handbook - "Introductory course in the Georgian language", which envisages teaching beneficiaries the Georgian alphabet, computer skills, basic knowledge of Georgia's socio-cultural environment and the ability to integrate into the society using simple communication tools.

Since 2020, the MoES started working on new methods of teaching the state language, which envisages elaboration and implementation of program teaching state language by vocational educational institutions/ colleges. In 2021, first draft concept of teaching (state) language and relevant procedures were prepared. Currently the document undergoes the final procedures in accordance with state language teaching general policy. Studying at the mentioned program will be possible with an aim of learning vocational educational program (for those whose native language is not Georgian), as well as learning state language.

## **COMBATING ILLEGAL MIGRATION AND DOCUMENT SECURITY**

### *Combating illegal migration*

On 24 January 2020, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Georgian and French Ministries of Internal Affairs on the prevention of Georgian citizens' illegal migration through the [Project Prometheus](#); an undertaking that envisages official deployment of Georgian police officers at French airports. With a view to preventing illegal migration towards the EU, FRONTEX officers were stationed in the Tbilisi and Kutaisi international airports. Within a joint FRONTEX operation, Georgian officers were seconded for monthly rotation periods to EU member states' airports.

To further prevention of illegal migration, Georgia's BCPs were equipped with modern equipment in 2020. With the EU's financial support, IOM has donated the Patrol Police Department UV light tools. The donated equipment meeting international standards will be a meaningful assistance to Georgian border officers in examining documents and ascertaining their validity at the State border.

At the same time, important steps were made towards improving the protection of the rights of foreigners in the TAC run by the Migration Department of the MIA. Measures were taken also to enhance the Center's capabilities and improve safety standards there. More specifically, the number of medical personnel has been increased to ensure provision of 24/7 healthcare services to individuals accommodated in the Center. Moreover, it is now possible to screen the persons placed in the TAC for contagious diseases (such as tuberculosis, hepatitis B and C, HIV/AIDS).

An additional room adapted to the needs of people with disabilities was arranged at the Temporary Accommodation Center. Moreover, in order to increase access of irregular migrants to the open air during most of the day infrastructure for outdoor activities has been improved. Also, additional accommodation space (quarantine rooms) for irregular migrants were constructed.

With the support of international organizations and partner countries, the MIA is constantly caring for providing initial and subsequent training opportunities to its employees responsible for combating illegal migration. The staff is actively involved in training courses and workshops on the procedures for expulsion of persons staying in Georgia without a legal basis, management of the Temporary Accommodation Center and protection of the rights of individuals subject to expulsion.

## Document security

With the support from UNDP and the Government of the United Kingdom, in October 2020, the PSDA introduced a new, electronic apostille service.<sup>115</sup> For documents issued in Georgia to be recognized as valid in foreign countries, they should be verified by apostille. This explains why the PSDA-offered apostille service is one of the highest in-demand services by citizens.

PSDA's e-apostille service allows the customers to save time and resources by securing electronic verification of select documents from any place in the world using modern innovative technologies, without having to leave home. Furthermore, using the e-apostille service provides better document reliability and level of protection. Citizens can receive documents verified by e-apostille through the relevant webpages ([www.my.gov.ge](http://www.my.gov.ge) and <http://apostille.cra.ge/>) or e-mail.

On 1 June 2021, the Law on Civil Status Acts was amended<sup>116</sup> to say that a civil status record and a civil status registration certificate are electronic documents verified through a qualified electronic signature or a qualified electronic stamp.<sup>117</sup> Such e-documents are fully consistent with the provisions of the Georgian Law on Electronic Documents and Electronic Trust Services.<sup>118</sup> The electronic format of civil status records and civil status registration certificates increase their reliability and level of protection. Original copies of civil status registration certificates that are issued in the form of e-documents can be viewed and downloaded through the PSDA's webpage at <https://sda.gov.ge/?lang=en>.

Worth pointing out is that the aforementioned amendment offers strong safeguards in respect of the issuance, exchange and ensuring availability to interested persons of electronic documents in compliance with the personal data protection standards. A person can view and download an e-document from the web portal only if s/he enters a specific access code.

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115 [https://sda.gov.ge/?us\\_portfolio=ელექტრონული-აპოსტილი](https://sda.gov.ge/?us_portfolio=ელექტრონული-აპოსტილი) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

116 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5179597?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

117 [https://sda.gov.ge/?page\\_id=13294](https://sda.gov.ge/?page_id=13294) (accessed: 18.10.2021).

118 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/3654557?publication=0> (accessed: 18.20.2021).

## INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT

A final draft Strategy on Integrated Border Management of Georgia for 2021-2025 was elaborated for the purposes of enhancing the border security, capacity building of border protection authorities and further improving the integrated state border management system.

A series of infrastructural projects were implemented, border equipment was modernized and electronic surveillance systems were installed for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of protection of the “green section” of the State border. A combination of these measures increased the effectiveness of detecting violations at the State border and improved prevention of illegal migration and transnational crime. It also helped ensure more rational use of human resources.

The infrastructure was improved at eight border sectors in 2019-2021. Installation of electronic surveillance systems was additionally completed at four border sectors. Similar projects are planned to be implemented at other vulnerable sections of the state border as well. For better prevention of incidents at the state border, 17 more border sectors were equipped with border incident detection tools. Detection capabilities of border violations were strengthened and four border sectors were equipped with mobile surveillance systems.

A new project entitled “High speed border security communication network” was initiated in 2021. Effective implementation of border security tasks requires dealing with large amounts of information and data, hence, appropriate communications infrastructure is needed. Within the project, with the state funding, a 20-kilometer fiber-optical technology-based network infrastructure was created, which ensures due management of border security information and effective functioning of electronic surveillance systems at 3 sections of the State border.

To increase operational capabilities and on-time response to incidents, all-terrain patrolling vehicles were distributed across 41 sectors of the state border, while 12 sectors with hard-to-access terrain received off-road vehicles to ensure unhampered patrolling of those areas. Border personnel at five border sectors were provided with a border officer’s personal equipment (border incident detection tools and appropriate means of communication to react to border incidents).

Important steps were made to develop international cooperation on border issues. On 11 February 2021, the MIA of Georgia and FRONTEX signed a new Working Arrangement<sup>119</sup> replacing a previous agreement as of 2008. The arrangement aims at deepening the existing cooperation through joint risk analysis, elaboration of information exchange mechanisms, and active involvement in joint operations and collecting return operations.

With a view to raising the effectiveness of cooperation with the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and timely resolving issues arising in the field of migration, since 2021, FRONTEX has appointed a liaison officer to interact with liaison officers appointed within the region and other relevant state/local and international partners on migration issues.

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119 <https://police.ge/en/evropis-sasazghvro-da-sanapiro-datsvis-saagentostan-frontex-akhali-samushao-shetankhmeba-gaformda/14386> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

For the purposes of deepening cooperation and experience sharing between border agencies, a plan of cooperation for 2021-2022 was signed between the Lithuanian State Border Protection Service and the Border Police of the MIA of Georgia.

In 2020, the Romanian Agency for International Development (RoAid) and the Georgian Border Police signed a memorandum of cooperation for 2020-2023. Within the memorandum, a variety of activities based on the needs of the Georgian Border Police (such as trainings, donation of equipment, etc.) will be carried out.

On 19 November 2020, German Federal Police and Georgia's Border Police signed a grant agreement as part of cooperation between the two agencies. The Georgian Border Police will receive equipment (medical moulages) needed by the Border Police's Healthcare and Insurance unit.

## **TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

Measures in the field of combating trafficking in human beings (THB) are based on the universally recognized 4 P's paradigm: prevention of the crime of trafficking, protection of victims, proactive investigation and effective criminal prosecution, and improvement of partnership measures.

### *The international dimension*

According to the US State Department's Report of 2016 on Trafficking in Persons, Georgia shifted up on anti-trafficking ranking to find itself in the so-called Tier 1 countries alongside many of the EU member states. According to the Reports from 2017 through 2021, Georgia has been keeping this ranking.<sup>120</sup> This means Georgia has been systematically meeting the standards on combating THB and the government has been actively carrying out measures to fight THB. Worth noting also is that, according to the Reports for years 2018 through 2021, only Georgia remained highest in the ratings out of other Eastern Partnership countries.

The Walk Free Foundation, an international organization publishing Global Slavery Index on an annual basis, in its 2019 report entitled "Measurement, Action, Freedom", placed Georgia 18th in the ranking among 183 countries.<sup>121</sup> According to the report, despite its low GDP level, Georgia is notable for effective measures taken against trafficking and is thus ranking first in the region.

On 5 May 2020, the OSCE's Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings issued a report on Georgia, including comments by the Georgian Government.<sup>122</sup> The report stresses the Government's strong political will to fight THB and assesses the existing national referral mechanism as one of exemplary models.

In its third evaluation report on Georgia's implementation of the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings,<sup>123</sup> which was published together with Georgian Government's comments on 16 March 2021, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) gave positive evaluation to the reforms implemented by Georgia in the field of combating the THB crime.

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120 <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

121 <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

122 <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/5/451561.pdf> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

123 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/-/greta-publishes-its-third-report-on-georgia> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

Since 27 July 2019, a cooperation agreement between Georgia and EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (EUROJUST) came into force<sup>124</sup> aimed at strengthening the fight against organized crime, including THB. Since 1 June 2020, Georgia has been seconding its liaison prosecutor to EUROJUST.

### *National action plans*

On 24 December 2018, Interagency Coordinating Council for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (THB Council) approved a National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan for 2019-2020 developed in close cooperation with, and taking into consideration the recommendations of, local and international partners. A subsequent national action plan for 2021-2022 was approved on 2 December 2020.<sup>125</sup> In addition, the Secretariat (International Public Law Department of the Ministry of Justice) of the THB Council prepared a report on the implementation of the 2019-2020 national action plan. Further, at the Justice Ministry's initiative and with ICMPD's assistance, two independent experts evaluated the implementation of the activities envisaged by the action plan for 2017-2018 and the first year of the action plan for 2019-2020.<sup>126</sup>

The Government of Georgia is paying special attention to the prevention of trafficking in children living and working on the street (due to their vulnerability to becoming victims of trafficking) and their involvement in a variety of State-run programs. The THB Council is currently working on Strategy for the protection of children living and/or working on the street from all forms of violence including trafficking and a corresponding implementation action plan.

### *Awareness raising*

Because of the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, relevant State authorities were unable to conduct large-scale information campaigns and face-to-face meetings with various target groups on the matter of prevention of THB. Nevertheless, face-to-face and online information meetings and other events were held with more than 2,100 persons throughout Georgia during the reporting period.

In October 2020, Ministry of Justice and IOM jointly implemented an information campaign entitled "Danger Might be Invisible at First" on children living and/or working on the street as the most vulnerable category.<sup>127</sup> Within the campaign, a video clip was prepared and shown on social media and television stations, information banners were put up in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Kutaisi, Batumi and Telavi Public Service Halls. Information materials were posted for display also at bus stops in Tbilisi and Batumi.

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124 <https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/agreement-cooperation-between-eurojust-and-georgia> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

125 <https://justice.gov.ge/files/YBKNDy64sqe3.pdf> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

126 <https://justice.gov.ge/files/4pvH1pam0mc6.pdf> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

127 <https://georgia.iom.int/news/danger-might-be-invisible-first-iom-marks-18-october-european-anti-trafficking-day> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

## *Detection and Prevention*

In order to improve detection of the THB cases, since September 2019, the number of inspection mobile groups of law enforcement representatives has been increased from 4 to 6. The inspection mobile groups along with “Task Force” consisting of investigators and prosecutors having relevant special knowledge and expertise continued inspection visits to high-risk areas susceptible to trafficking and interviewing people to detect signs of the THB crime.

Since 1 January 2021, the LEPL Labour Inspection Service<sup>128</sup> started to function within the frames of the MoH. The Labour Inspection Service is a legal successor to the Labour Inspection Department established back in 2015. The Labour Inspection Service has a broader mandate to include, in addition to inspecting work safety in the workplace, the checking of observance of the rights of workers. The new mandate comes with increased human and organizational resources and agility to enable the Service effectively implement its tasks, including those related to prevention and detection of forced labour and labour exploitation.

At initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with support of IOM (and EU funding), a Trafficking Handbook for Consular Officers was produced. The Handbook was formally endorsed by the Foreign Minister through his Order no. 01-95 dated 26 May 2020. It is designed for Georgian consular officers abroad and provides guidance on a range of topics such as the nature of the THB crime, the governing legal framework, referral mechanisms, detailed description of actions to be carried out, etc.

At the initiative of the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the LEPL “Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Trafficking” (“the State Care Agency”) and with the support of IOM, “A guide on issues of trafficking in human beings for social workers dealing with homeless children” was prepared for mobile groups tasked with identifying children living and working on the street.<sup>129</sup> On 10-11 June 2021, the author of the Guide gave a training course for members of the State Care Agency and other organizations providing various services to children in need of care.

In 2019-2021, numerous basic and advanced trainings were conducted for investigators, prosecutors, border personnel (MIA and Revenue Service), Georgian military personnel taking part in peacekeeping missions, the permanent task force on trafficking victim identification, labour inspectors, members of the State Care Agency (mobile groups, psychologists and social workers), lawyers, media representatives and other persons.

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128 <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Government-Organization/> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

129 <https://informedmigration.ge/uploads/files/615ffad702779.pdf> (accessed 18.10.2021).

## *Protection of victims and statutory victims*

Despite the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, shelters and crisis centers for victims and statutory victims of trafficking are continuing to operate under the auspices of the State Care Agency, in compliance with all the relevant healthcare recommendations. The shelters and crisis centers offer legal and medical assistance, a psychologist's consultation (including remotely, when necessary) and one-off state compensation.

By virtue of the amendments to the Law on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings,<sup>130</sup> rules of disbursement of state compensation to victims and statutory victims of human trafficking have been simplified since 13 April 2021; in particular, payment of the compensation is no longer dependent on payment of damages by the perpetrator based on a court ruling. The new rule applies also to victims and statutory victims who were granted the victim status before the amendment. Based on the amendment, on 28 April 2021, the THB Council approved the "Rules of disbursement of the one-off compensation to victims and statutory victims of trafficking".



## **CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS**

In May 2021, an amendment was made to the Organic Law on Georgian Citizenship<sup>131</sup> to extend timeframes for retention, restoration, granting under the special rule and determination of Georgian citizenship until 31 December 2022. The amendment was enacted to simplify the mentioned procedures for citizens and to reduce statelessness.

At the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) held in October 2019, Georgia committed itself to facilitate naturalization of stateless persons and take measures to help them with exercising their rights.<sup>132</sup> Part of these commitments have been fulfilled, while the remaining measures (some of which were hampered due to the COVID-19 pandemic) are in the process of implementation.

By its Ordinance no. 210 dated 11 May 2021,<sup>133</sup> the Georgian Government halved the fee for statelessness determination procedure.

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130 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5137523?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

131 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5174747?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

132 <https://www.unhcr.org/5da8728c7> (accessed: 18.10.2021).

133 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5166125?publication=0> (accessed: 18.10.2021).



### *Internally Displaced persons (IDPs)*

One of the primary goals when setting up the IDPs Agency within the MoH in 2019 was to ensure effective implementation of various programs on the resettlement, social assistance and provision with livelihoods of IDPs.

By its Ordinance no. 1046 dated 22 June 2020, the Georgian Government approved an action plan for 2020-2021 on the implementation of the Strategy for the Provision of IDPs and Ecomigrants with Access to Livelihoods. The action plan includes programs related to livelihoods generation, professional development and employment that are run by the IDPs Agency, the LEPL “Enterprise Georgia”, the not-for-profit entity “Rural Development Agency”, the LEPL “Education Management Information System” and the LEPL “Employment Support State Agency”.

On 5 March 2021, an action plan on the implementation of the 2021-2022 State Strategy on Internally Displaced Persons was approved. The action plan envisages important activities directed at long-term resettlement of IDPs, improving their socio-economic conditions and raising their awareness on COVID-19 issues.

In 2021, a long-term resettlement pilot project was launched to provide veteran IDPs and families of those who fell in hostilities for Georgia’s territorial integrity with homes in order to pay tribute to their merits to homeland. Within the project, up to 200 families will receive new homes in 2021.

In 2020, a webpage of the Agency for IDPs was created (<https://idp.gov.ge/en/home/>), which is used for proactively publishing news related to issues falling within the Agency’s mandate and other information as well as for communicating with the Agency’s beneficiaries.

### *Ecomigrants*

Based on the Governmental Ordinance no. 1045 dated 22 June 2020, the scope of the Strategy on Livelihoods Provision approved by the previous Ordinance no. 257 as of 13 February 2014 was extended to the ecomigrants who have been affected by natural calamities. Accordingly, since 2020, ecomigrants have also been added to the list of beneficiaries of state programs on livelihood provision – something that will facilitate ecomigrants’ full-fledge socio-economic integration.

