



Diaspora engagement mapping ARMENIA

Facts & figures

Terminology: The terms 'diaspora' and 'diaspora members' are not defined by Armenia's national law. However, the Armenian term «ազգությամբ հայեր» is used by lawmakers. This term has different translations in English in the legal acts such as: Armenians by national origin, Armenians by nationality, ethnic Armenians, Armenian origin, Armenian ethnicity.¹

Political rights



Dual citizenship²



Right to vote in national elections
for citizens residing abroad³



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **4.92%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **1,278**

Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2024).

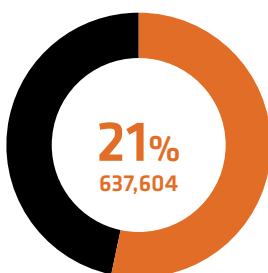
Emigration⁴



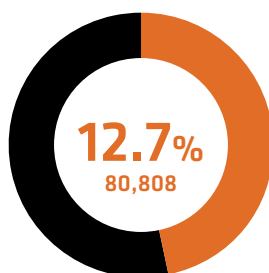
% of emigrants in
total population



% of which
in the EU



♂ 53.3%
♀ 46.7%



♂ 45.9%
♀ 54.1%

Top countries of destination



Russian Federation	340,512
Azerbaijan	116,637
Ukraine	48,740
France	42,785
Greece	15,479

1 Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (Art. 47) is available at: <https://www.president.am/en/constitution-2015/>
Law of the Republic of Armenia on Foreigners (Art. 9, 15, 16, 18) is available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ec2c.html>
Law on Citizenship (Art. 1, 10, 12.1, 13) is available at: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/51b770884.pdf>

2 Article 13.1 of the Law on the Citizenship of the Republic of Armenia <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/51b770884.pdf>

3 The Election Code of the Republic of Armenia stipulated: Armenian citizens residing abroad do not have right to vote in the national elections, available in Armenian at: <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=105967>

4 It is important to mention that numbers on emigration and diaspora vary greatly in Armenia due to its long diaspora history. According to the literature, interviews conducted by the researcher, as well as the Armenian government, the total size of the diaspora is close to 7 million with approximately 1.5 million in the EU. The main countries of destination of the diaspora are also different from the top countries of destination of migrants: Russia approx. 2.5 million, France 600.000, Ukraine 400.000, Georgia 250.000, Spain 80.000, Germany 60.000. H. Hakobyan (2017) „Armenian Diaspora in a Changing World“ Yerevan, pages 325-328. [Հակոբյան Հ. Հ., Հայկական սփյուռքը հարավփոփոխ աշխարհում: Եր.: Հեղ. Հրատ., 2017, էջ 31, 325-328]; Armenian Government, 2017 Program of the Government of Armenia, <https://www.gov.am/files/docs/2219.pdf>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2019** ● **Government Decision No 65-A⁵** defined priorities, measures and responsibilities of the Governmental Programme in order to achieve a comprehensive cooperation between Armenia and diaspora. According to the Programme, the national government is in charge of creating and developing pan-Armenian networks in the scientific, professional, educational and cultural, economic and other fields; building sustainable relations between Armenian diaspora communities and Armenia; adopting and implementing measures and programmes for deepening and expanding Armenia-Diaspora cooperation; considering and promoting repatriation as a priority; strengthening pan-Armenian national, spiritual, scientific and educational, cultural and other institutions and their role in the resolution of pan-Armenian issues; and supporting the establishment of the organisations representing the Diaspora.
- 2019** ● **Action Program** foresees the creation and adoption of the Law on Repatriation by the Government in 2020. The law aims to regulate the legal framework of the repatriation process in order to preserve a comprehensive tie with the Armenian Diaspora, promote repatriation, consolidate Armenians in the Homeland, and improve the demographic situation in Armenia. At the time of writing, the Standing Committee on Science, Education, Diaspora, Sport and Youth, had begun to work on the Law on Repatriation with the High Commissioner Office but there is currently no official draft version of the law available.
- 2023** ● **Armenia-Diaspora Partnership Strategy.⁵** Following the results and recommendations of the First Global Armenian Summit in 2022, the Office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs has developed the 2023-2033 Armenia-Diaspora Partnership Strategy, which is based on a vision of a “state-centered, pro-state” Diaspora and is elaborated with the diaspora’s support. The strategy document is currently undergoing a thorough consultation process and awaits further approval.

Practices

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Neruzh programme

The Republic of Armenia in close cooperation with the Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST) runs the Neruzh programme for young entrepreneurs of Armenian descent who wish to bring their start-up ideas and projects to Armenia. Armenians aged 18-35 who have lived in Armenia for a maximum of 6 are eligible to apply. At least one (co)founder should be of Armenian descent. The target sectors of the programme will be agriculture, tourism and innovative technologies.

In December 2019, the Neruzh programme hosted 80 individuals representing 47 start-ups from 17 countries around the world. Six start-ups received government grants of between \$ 15,000 - \$30,000.

⁵ The Government Decision No 65-A dated the 8 February 2019 “On the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia” <https://www.gov.am/files/docs/3562.pdf>

⁶ <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1129041.html>

LEAD-Armenia project

The Republic of Armenia in close cooperation with ICMPD will launch the LEAD-Armenia project in summer 2020. The project aims to increase the number of migration-related investments, encourage businesses and create jobs in Armenia. It will develop diverse and innovative diaspora investment instruments as a future investment scheme for Armenian banks and other financial institutions and raise awareness on investment opportunities among Armenian migrant communities.⁷

Step Toward Home

Step Toward Home is an educational programme designed to preserve and promote Armenian national identity among diaspora youth (13 to 18 years of age). The programme offers Armenian language classes, lessons in national songs and dances, educational visits to historical and cultural landmarks, meetings with public officials, cultural and artistic figures, as well as participation in sports and cultural events.

iGorts Program

The iGorts Program was launched in September 2020 and is a Fellowship which allows for Armenian professionals from around the world to serve in the Government of Armenia. The programme aims at improving and developing Armenian public institutions as well as to promote professional repatriation. Diaspora professionals are placed in state agencies across different sectors and during 12 months work on different projects, offer their knowledge of international best practices and offer advice as to how to improve the government systems.

Diaspora Youth Ambassador Program

The program is an annual initiative by the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, designed to empower young Armenians from global diaspora communities. It aims to deepen the participants' understanding of Armenia's political, social and economic landscapes, fostering stronger connections between Armenia and diaspora communities. In 2024, 28 Armenian youth (20-35 years old) from 18 countries were selected to participate to the 15-day training and immersion program in Armenia, after which they have returned to their respective communities to implement projects and activities that promote Armenia-Diaspora relations.

Repatriation and Integration Centre

The Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs has established a Repatriation and Integration Centre, which serves as a comprehensive resource center offering essential assistance to potential repatriates during their relocation process to Armenia. The goals of the centre are to promote repatriation, ease the repatriation process, and ensure a smoother integration process for Diaspora Armenians moving to the homeland. It offers individualised support on citizenship and residency permits, moving personal belongings and business equipment, healthcare, education and culture, social services, employment and work permits, military conscription and service, taxes, registration, licensing, banking and finance, and housing.

Global Armenian Summit

The Global Armenian Summit is an annual conference organised by the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, which provides a unified platform to discuss the current challenges and issues facing Armenia and the Diaspora, as well as opportunities for sustainable development. Topics range from national security to high technology, economics, science, repatriation, and the vitality of diaspora communities. During its second edition, approximately 1,000 representatives from both the Diaspora and Armenia convened in 2024 in Yerevan to engage in these crucial discussions about the present and future.

DiasPro

The Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs has launched the DiasPro programme, inviting Armenians from the Diaspora to contribute their professional expertise to support the work of Armenia's state and local self-government bodies. Diaspora specialists contribute through professional consultations, experience sharing, training sessions, and other forms of expertise and skills transfer. Most of the work is conducted online, with the exception of tasks that require on-site involvement.

Observations

The “Observations” and “Obstacles” sections contain additional information on the context of diaspora engagement that does not fit directly into the other sections. They are based on a combination of literature review and comments from the authors. New information is incorporated during the annual updates. Readers are invited to verify the relevance of the information at the time of reading, as the context may have evolved.

Overall trend: Armenia has a very rich history of diaspora engagement. Although it is a relatively small country, its diaspora is estimated to be two times bigger than the population of the country. The Armenian diaspora has traditionally been quite active in engaging with the country. There are plenty of diaspora organisations around the world, many of whom now have their own branches in Yerevan or other Armenian cities. Unlike other Former Soviet Union countries, Armenia has a common understanding that the diaspora has a huge potential and brings social and financial capital to its homeland. The Armenian diaspora is the largest investor⁸ and seen as the country's biggest hope for positive demographic development.



Achievements

Diaspora engagement: Participation of Diaspora Armenians in Armenia's programmes on social, political, scientific, educational and cultural affairs are a priority to Armenia. Since 1999, the state of Armenia has held six Pan-Armenian Forums.

⁸ ASUE (2015): Investments of Diaspora into the RA Economy: Development Prospects <https://asue.am/en/amberd/research/diasporas-investments-armenian-economy-development>

Repatriation: Armenia has a huge interest in supporting diaspora Armenians in obtaining dual citizenship and in adopting laws on repatriation. Repatriation rhetoric is that “Every Armenian should want to be inspired to connect his identity with the homeland and the *Armeniancy*”.⁹

Financial and social capital: The Armenia 2020 and subsequent Armenia 2030 Initiative¹⁰ were launched by prominent diaspora Armenians to identify development prospects for Armenia. These exercises led to strategic priorities for Armenia, both inside and outside the country. Armenia 2030 focuses on strategic analysis of long-term growth opportunities for Armenia and Armenians.

Obstacles



- **Overlapping mandates and competencies:** Diaspora organisations and state actors often have competing interests and/or overlapping mandates.
- **Insufficient information and trust measures:** The state still lacks knowledge on “what potentials the diaspora has in each specific country and what the estimated influence is. The system [of state-diaspora relation] is not sufficiently organized”.¹¹ Consequently, the diaspora mobilization remains below its potential. Furthermore, the level of mutual trust is quite low.¹²
- **Language knowledge:** Repatriates and their family members, school-aged children in particular, often find it difficult to follow the school curriculum because of a lack of knowledge of the Armenian language.

9 Armenian press (2019): Strong Armenia-Strong Diaspora. The High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs sums up the year. <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1000508/>

10 <https://www.idea.am/armenia-2020>

11 <https://www.tert.am/en/news/2019/02/12/nikol-pashinyan/2919488>

12 Page 6., <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/301351468206660466/pdf/393810AM0Diasporas0contribution01PUBLIC1.pdf>

Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions

- **National institutions**
 - At ministerial level

Prime Minister's Office of the Republic of Armenia

The PM's office aims to reaffirm pan-Armenity as a priority of the Republic of Armenia and reflecting the new policy pursued by the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the context of Armenia-Diaspora relations.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia

The ministry plays a key role in maintaining relations with Armenians living abroad and strengthening co-operation with friendly and partner countries.

Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Diaspora, Youth and Sport

Based at the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, the committee activities centre on science, education, culture, repatriation, relations with the diaspora, youth, sports, information, press, radio, television and laws governing those areas.

- At sub-ministerial level

Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs

Under the Prime Minister's office, the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs aims at developing, implementing and coordinating the state policy on Armenia-Diaspora partnership development, as well as at strengthening pan-Armenian targeted programmes, and at providing support for repatriation and enhancing Armenia-diaspora cooperation. The Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia from 2008 performed these functions until its abolishment in June 2019.

Diaspora organisations in Europe

Armenian General Benevolent Union Europe (AGBU Europe) 2009 Europe

Development activities

Established in 2009 in Belgium,¹³ AGBU Europe is the European arm of the international AGBU, the largest non-profit organisation devoted to upholding the Armenian heritage. AGBU Europe coordinates and develops pan-European activities to further the AGBU mission by bringing together, supporting and mobilising the many chapters and members of the organisation in Europe and by helping to develop and fundraise for projects contributing to the socio-economic development of Armenia through educational, cultural and humanitarian programmes.

¹³ <http://www.agbueurope.eu>

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 520+ institutions](#)



Read more about diaspora organisations in "[Starting guide: What is a diaspora organisation](#)"



Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation¹⁴ 1956 Portugal

Founded by a prominent Armenian diaspora member, Gulbenkian, the foundation was established in 1956 in Lisbon, Portugal. Its main purpose is to improve quality of life through art, charity, science and education, including education grant for Armenian diaspora.

Conseil de Coordination des Organisations Arméniennes de France 2001 France

CCAF¹⁵ was created with the main objective of coordinating intra-community activities to fight the denial of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish Government in 1915, to defend the interests of the Armenian community and to represent the collective viewpoint on matters of public policy, while serving as liaison between the community and the State bodies.

The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) 2002 Belgium

The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy is a grassroots umbrella organization which represents a significant part of the Armenian diaspora in Europe. It coordinates advocacy and lobbying activities with EU institutions, the European Parliament and other international bodies to promote Armenian interests, including human rights, recognition of the Armenian Genocide and EU–Armenia relations. It works through national chapters across numerous European countries.

Committee of Armenians of Belgium 1922 Belgium

Founded in 1922, the Belgian Committee of Armenians is the oldest Armenian organization in Belgium, initially under the name “Belgian-Armenian Diaspora Organization”, but later renamed to the “Committee of Armenians of Belgium”. It coordinates cultural, educational and social activities for Armenians living in Belgium and acts as an intermediary with Belgian institutions.

Asociación Cultural Armenia de Barcelona (ACAB) 2002 Spain

ACAB works on educational, cultural and humanitarian activities to maintain and promote Armenian heritage in Barcelona. Its main goals are: preservation and dissemination of national roots and values, teaching Armenian language and history to Armenian children, consolidation of the Armenian community, integration of Armenian society and cooperation of Armenian youth both locally and among countries.

Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe (FAAE) 1998 Switzerland

An umbrella organisation representing Armenian associations across 23 European countries. It was created to foster coordination and solidarity among Armenian communities in Europe and to represent their interests collectively. The forum also promotes cooperation between diaspora communities and Armenia.

Central Council of Armenians in Germany (Zentralrat der Armenier in Deutschland) 2002 Germany

The Central Council of Armenians in Germany represents Armenian communities and associations across the country. It advocates for the political and cultural interests of Armenians in Germany, promotes Armenian cultural heritage and engages with German federal and regional institutions on issues related to the diaspora and Armenian–German relations.

¹⁴ <https://gulbenkian.pt/en/>

¹⁵ <http://www.ccaf.info>

Federatie Armeense Organisaties Nederland (FAON) 1989 the Netherlands

FAON is the main umbrella organisation representing Armenian associations in the Netherlands. It works to preserve Armenian identity, culture and language, while also advocating for Armenian community interests in Dutch society and politics. The organisation frequently engages in policy advocacy and commemorative events related to the Armenian Genocide.

Unione degli Armeni d'Italia (Union of Armenians of Italy) 1915 Italy

The Union of Armenians of Italy represents Armenian cultural and community associations in Italy. Its activities include cultural events, educational initiatives and fostering ties between Armenia and Italy.

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