



# 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.<sup>1</sup>

### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>2</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>3</sup>



### Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **6%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **1,451**

### 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 (2023).

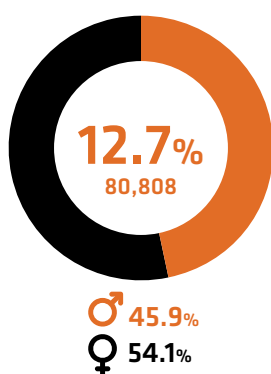
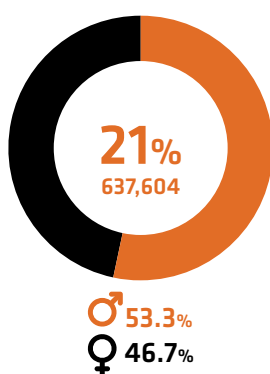
### Emigration<sup>4</sup>



% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



### 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 հարավօտար 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-A**<sup>5</sup> 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** ▼  
**2023** ● **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** ▼  
**2033** ● **Armenia-Diaspora Partnership Strategy**.<sup>5</sup> 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.

### » Trends

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 investor<sup>7</sup> and seen as the country’s biggest hope for positive demographic development.

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>

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

**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*".<sup>8</sup>

**Financial and social capital:** The Armenia 2020 and subsequent Armenia 2030 Initiative<sup>9</sup> 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".<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the diaspora mobilization remains below its potential. Furthermore, the level of mutual trust is quite low.<sup>11</sup>
- **Lack of policy framework and information to support repatriation:** The various government agencies provide select information on their webpages. However, there is no one unified platform summarising and providing detailed information in an easily understandable manner. Mechanisms and programmes supporting business relocation are also needed. Potential repatriates often hesitate because of the risk of losing their overseas business and the uncertainties surrounding starting a new business in Armenia.
- **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.

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

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

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

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

## SPOTLIGHT: effective and innovative practices

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### Neruzh programme

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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.

### LEAD-Armenia project

#### INVESTMENT

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.<sup>12</sup>

### Step Toward Home

#### YOUTH + IDENTITY + TOURISM

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

#### SKILLS TRANSFER


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

#### YOUTH + NETWORKING + SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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.

<sup>12</sup> ICMPD. LEAD-Armenia Concept



## 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.

RETURN AND REINTEGRATION  
+ IDENTITY + HOUSING +  
HEALTH + EMPLOYMENT

## 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.

COMMUNICATION AND  
INFORMATION + NETWORKING  
+ IDENTITY

## 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."

## 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.

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 430+ institutions](#)



## Diaspora organisations in Europe

### Armenian General Benevolent Union Europe (AGBU Europe) 2009 Europe

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



#### ☑ Development activities

Established in 2009 in Belgium,<sup>13</sup> 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.

### Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation<sup>14</sup> 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

CCAF<sup>15</sup> - 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.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.agbueurope.eu>

<sup>14</sup> <https://gulbenkian.pt/en/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.ccaf.info>

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