

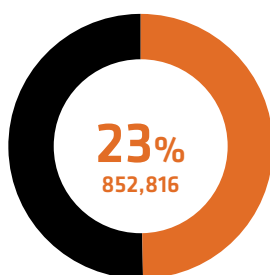


Diaspora engagement mapping GEORGIA

Facts & figures

Emigration

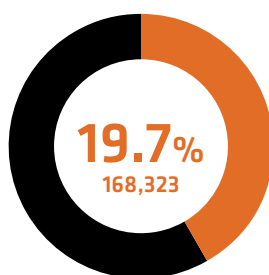
% of emigrants in total population



♂ 49.8%
♀ 50.2%



% of which in the EU



♂ 41.8%
♀ 58.2%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **16.7%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **3,854**



Top countries of destination



Russian Federation	450,115
Greece	81,272
Ukraine	65,042
Azerbaijan	49,137
Armenia	37,886

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²



Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



Terminology: According to the Law of Georgia on Compatriots Residing Abroad and Diaspora Organisations (2011), the term 'diaspora' covers the members of all Georgian migrant communities abroad, including historic diaspora, temporary short-term emigrants, long-term emigrants, expatriates, and Georgians who are already naturalised in their countries of residence.

Georgia does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

1 According to the amendments to the Law on Citizenship in 2018, it is possible to retain Georgian citizenship if, the citizen procures an official consent from Georgian authorities prior to acquiring the citizenship of another country. Any Georgian national that has lost Georgian citizenship due to acquiring another country's citizenship, is eligible to apply at the Public Services Development Agency with the request to reinstate Georgian citizenship until December 31, 2020.
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4273360?publication=0>

2 <http://cesko.ge/eng/static/1605/amomrcheveli-sazghvargaret>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2005** ● **Constitution of Georgia.**³ Article 5 points: “The State shall take care of maintaining and developing connections with the homeland for Georgian compatriots residing abroad.
- 2011** ● **Law of Georgia on Compatriots Residing Abroad and Diaspora Organisations**⁴ defines the principles of state policy with regard to compatriots residing abroad and establishes the grounds for the activities of the state authorities in order to implement such policy, and to define the legal status of compatriots residing abroad and diaspora organisations. The MFA and ICMPD have launched the cycle of amendments to the legislation related to diaspora matters making the Law more inclusive. The amended version of the Law is scheduled to undergo internal (state institutions) and public consultations by the end of 2023/beginning of 2024.
- 2014** ● **The Organic Law of Georgia on Georgian Citizenship**⁵ simplifies the determination of Georgian citizenship and modifies the naturalisation procedures.
- 2015** ● **The Law of Georgia on Labour Migration**⁶ largely regulates the norms of the labour emigration of Georgian citizens abroad, particularly emigration through intermediary organisations. The law also foresees mechanisms for the protection of the rights of labour migrants.
- 2020** ● **Georgia’s Development Strategy:**⁷ Vision 2030 - Georgian transnational communities are recognized as valuable human resources and an impactful social network that should be supported, mobilized and engaged in the development process. The key state institution in Georgia responsible for fostering Diaspora relations is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. Programmes and initiatives related to diaspora engagement provide a certain framework and are in agreement with national priorities: Enhancing Georgian Diaspora communities, strengthening their ties with homeland, engaging diaspora human capital in the development process, supporting the rights of compatriots residing abroad (Vision 2030, Goal 5).
- 2021** ∨ ● **Migration Strategy**⁸ (endorsed in 2020), the government is continuing to put mainstreaming migration into development at the top of its agenda. The Goal of the strategy related to diaspora engagement is: “Enhancing connections with the Georgian diaspora and creating wider opportunities for the compatriots living abroad to better engage in Georgia’s development” through (1) supporting compatriots abroad to maintain their national and cultural identity; (2) facilitating the engagement of highly-skilled Georgian migrants abroad in Georgia’s development processes; (3) enhancing the links between the Georgian State and the diaspora representatives abroad and ensuring effective communication between them.
- 2030**



Trends:

As a result of the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Georgia, engagement of the Georgian diaspora in the country’s development is thoroughly reflected in Georgia’s migration policy. Therefore, the Georgian government has included migration and development in the Georgian Migration Strategy for 2016–2020 and 2021-2031 whose annual action plans include a number of programmes directed at diaspora engagement. As underlined within the migration strategy, in the migration management process it is very important to carry out policies that harness the potential of diaspora and migrants for the socio-economic development in the country. Therefore, the developments over the last two decades have shown the increased

3 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/30346?publication=36>

4 http://migration.commission.ge/files/law_on_compatriots_eng.pdf

5 <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2342552?publication=5>

6 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2806732?impose=translateEn&publication=3>

7 Vision 2030 available only in Georgian language at the following link: <https://www.gov.ge/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/khedva-2030-saqarthvelos-ganvitharebis-strategia-1.pdf>

8 https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms30_eng_web2.pdf

interest in the diaspora from the Georgian government, including in terms of diaspora potential and positive impact on strengthening Georgia's current development efforts.



Achievements

In 2019, Georgia established a brand new grant programme⁹ for diaspora organisations that would like to implement projects directed towards development processes in Georgia, academic/scientific cooperation and supporting access to the rights of migrants in destination countries. The grant programme focuses on topics such as strengthening diplomacy, support to healthy lifestyle, protection of Georgian diaspora interests and human rights abroad as well as supporting return, and maintaining national and cultural identity.

The government has also made significant steps towards establishing a circular migration scheme with France (initiated in 2014 and ratified in 2019); negotiations on establishing circular migration schemes are underway with: Germany, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Ireland.

Obstacles



- **Return and reintegration:** Due to the unfavourable return and reintegration measures in the country, many migrants consider immigration again in the search for better opportunities and a higher standard of living. Migrants who have returned voluntarily having gained knowledge, education and skills abroad that they are willing to contribute to the labour market in Georgia do not always find opportunities within Georgia.
- **Trust:** Having experienced several waves of emigration linked with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, regaining Georgia's national independence and severe economic crises during the 1990s, establishing trust between migrants and the government became a challenge. In later years, in order to combat this challenge, the Georgian government began establishing initiatives to rebuild trust with its recent and historic diaspora by prioritising diaspora engagement and the role of diaspora in the country's overall development. Many programmes/initiatives are directed towards improvement of the government's approach to diaspora engagement, establishing further networking and closer connections to their nationals abroad.

SPOTLIGHT: Effective practices



Diaspora Forums¹⁰

The Georgian Diaspora Forum is organised once a year in Tbilisi, Georgia. It brings together prominent Georgian diaspora members, government officials, academia, civil society, private entities and international organisations, with the aim of networking, organising workshops and thematic discussions and establishing cooperation opportunities in the fields of economics, business, education and science, philanthropy, public diplomacy as well as youth engagement, athletics and culture.

⁹ The grants programme established by the Government of Georgia is entitled "Supporting Diaspora Initiatives" being implemented by the MFA. As a result of an open call for applications, there were 28 applications selected in 2019 that were each issued a grant for approx. 8,300EUR. <http://gda.ge/news/sagranto-programa-diasporuli-initsiativebis-khelshetskoba>

¹⁰ <http://gda.ge/Search?q=%E1%83%A4%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A0%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9B%E1%83%98>

High-Profile Diaspora Awards

NETWORKS + HUMAN CAPITAL

A high-level event with the involvement of the President of Georgia, Minister of Foreign Affairs and other high-level representatives of the Government, diplomatic representations and international community was established in cooperation with the EU-funded ICMPD ENIGMMA 2 project. The awards are organised annually in Georgia. The main purpose is to attract and increase the involvement of high-profile diaspora members in the development processes of Georgia. This is carried out by creating a network of diaspora professionals from diverse sectors that are implementing pilot activities. As a result, the achievements of prominent Georgian diaspora members is recognised and highly publicised through national and international media.

Legal Migration Guidelines

MIGRANT RIGHTS

In order to support the access to rights that Georgian migrant and diaspora communities are entitled to in the countries of destination, the guidelines on national migration related legislation have been developed focusing on the three EU MSs with the highest concentration of Georgian migrants – Greece, Italy and Spain. The guidelines provide comprehensive information on specific laws and regulations related to the issues of residency, employment, social security and other persistent issues. The guidelines were developed within the EU-funded ICMPD ENIGMMA 2 project.

Policy Guidelines on Diaspora Engagement in Crisis Management

CRISIS RESPONSE

The Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Supporting an Evidence-Based Approach for Effective and Cooperative State Action project (MICIC, funded by the EU, implemented by ICMPD) developed policy guidelines with Georgia on diaspora engagement in times of crisis. Recommendations provided in this document are based on suggestions shared by Georgian diaspora representatives and other stakeholders engaged during the MICIC project workshops in host countries.

Young Ambassadors Programme

YOUTH + NETWORK

This annual programme is designed for Georgian youth living abroad to represent Georgia in their respective countries of residence through cultural and educational events; the objective of the programme is to increase awareness on ongoing political-economic or social issues in Georgia, to promote tourism, to encourage investment and to engage other youth and local residents in networking activities. The programme is implemented in cooperation with the EU-funded ICMPD ENIGMMA 2 project.

Diaspora Website

NETWORK

This platform - developed by the Diaspora Relations Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - provides an opportunity for diaspora members from all over the world to network and stay up-to-date with ongoing legislative and policy changes in the country and gain information on issues relevant for the diaspora. www.gda.ge



Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions

- **National institutions**

State Commission on Migration Issues 2010

http://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=1&clang=1

The Commission is a coordinative body of all the State Institutions working on migration issues and aims to develop and implement a coherent migration policy ensuring proper management. The permanent members of the SCMI are: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the State Security Service; the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport; the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development; the Ministry of Finance and the National Statistics Office of Georgia. International organisations such as ICMPD, IOM, UNHCR and NGOs working on migration issues are called to the quarterly sittings of the Commission as consultative members.

- At ministerial level

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2016 <https://mfa.gov.ge/>

Carries out Georgia's national interests, protecting the rights of Georgian citizens outside the country and contributes to the formation of a better world community. The MFA is the key state institution in Georgia responsible for fostering Diaspora relations.

Diaspora Relations Department 2016

In 2016, due to the reshuffling of the Georgian government, the Diaspora Relations Department was established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Until today, this department remains the main institution responsible for maintaining and strengthening contacts with Georgians abroad, developing and implementing the state strategy on diaspora and maintaining the profile of migrants residing abroad. The Diaspora Relations Department aims to implement individually designed initiatives and programmes for Georgian communities abroad.

Diaspora organisations in Europe



None of the organisations are currently working on development projects, but have the potential to get involved in various development activities.

Association Georgian Diaspora in Poland <https://www.facebook.com/disporagruzinskawpolsceofficial/>

The association supports Georgian migrants in Poland, providing cultural events, language lessons, dance lessons and other networking activities.

Caucasus Cultural Center Greece 2006 <https://el-gr.facebook.com/CaucasusCentreAthens/>

The organisation in Athens prides itself for providing Georgian children with a Sunday school, dancing lessons, integration activities and various cultural events.

Georgian Association in France 2016

http://georgiensenfrance.fr/?fbclid=IwAR0SOo5iKn3CzvW1GIR9XceaMR3yY5h1Z_vv9AJY2EmlmsBB_FEtIDL_1vA

The association provides support to migrants as well as organising cultural events.

Georgian Diaspora in the UK <https://www.facebook.com/IN.sarajishvili.3>

The organisation provides Georgian migrants with language classes, dance and other cultural events, including sports and youth engagement.

Georgischer Verein in Deutschland e.V. Germany 1945 www.satvistomo.net

The diaspora organisation in Munich is the oldest in Germany and one of the most prominent. They provide language lessons, consultations, dance classes, cultural events and more.

Greek-Georgian Cultural Association Greece

<https://www.facebook.com/HellenicGeorgianCulturalAssociation/>

The Athens based association provides Georgian children with Georgian language lessons, dance classes, and more. In addition, the association provides migrants with consultations on various issues such as legislation, obtaining the residence permit, integration and job-related problems.

Written by: Ketevan Gorgoshidze
Edited by: EUDiF
April 2020
Updated December 2023

Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union



Find out more at www.diasporafordevelopment.eu