



REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

**EXTENDED
MIGRATION PROFILE**

2018-2021

Yerevan 2023

PREFACE

The Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Armenia (EMP) is an analytical report, which summarizes the administrative statistics of the Republic of Armenia (RA) and foreign countries on migration processes, open data, and analyses of local and international organizations.

EMP aims to provide comprehensive information on migration trends as well as on migration-related significant developments in legislation and policy to policymakers, researchers, and other professionals interested in the field of migration.

This report for the period of 2018-2021 is the second EMP of the Republic of Armenia (the first EMP that reflects the migration trends of 2013-2017 is available [here](#)). The report has been prepared with the support of the “Return and Reintegration Facility” project implemented by ICMPD for which the RA Migration Service expresses its gratitude.

The EMP of 2018-2021 has been developed on the data and clarifications provided by the Migration Service of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, RA Statistical Committee, RA Police Passport and Visa Department, RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Central Bank of Armenia, Office of High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, as well as on the open data of Eurostat, RF Ministry of Internal Affairs, United States Secretary of Defense, and on analysis and reports provided by local and international organizations.

The following report consists of three main parts:

Migration Processes in the Republic of Armenia in 2018-2021, in this part the migration trends, significant events that affect migration processes, and the statistics of immigration, emigration, and return are introduced.

Migration and development, in this part the remittances from abroad, as well as the opportunities to use the potential of the Armenian Diaspora for development are analyzed.

Migration Management System, in this part the institutional structure of migration management, significant developments in migration policy, migration legislation reforms, and international cooperation in the field of migration are discussed.



GENERAL INFORMATION

About Republic of Armenia

GENERAL INFORMATION

Official name **Republic of Armenia (RA), short Armenia**

Flag 

Area 29,743 sq/km

Capital city **Yerevan**

State border In the North - with Georgia, in the East - with Azerbaijan, in the West and Southwest - with Turkey, in the South - with Iran

Official language Armenian

Population as of 2022, January 1 **2,961,400**

Ethnic composition Armenian (98,1 percent), Yazidis, Russian, Assyrians, Ukrainian, Kurdish, Greek, Jewish, Georgian and representatives of other nationalities.

National currency AMD

GNI 2021 **6,982,962.5 million AMD (13.9 billion USD)**

Section A.

MIGRATION PROCESSES IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN 2018-2021

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MIGRATION PROCESSES

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN EVENTS AFFECTING MIGRATION PROCESSES

Due to a number of crisis situations (the devastating earthquake in 1998, the first Nagorno-Karabakh War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, transport and energy blockade, and drastic deterioration of the socio-economic situation), the first years of the newly independent Republic of Armenia marked with massive emigration of the population, as a result of which according to expert assessments in 1992-1995 more than 600,000 people or 17 percent of the population left the country.

The signing of the ceasefire in the first Nagorno-Karabakh War and the further stabilization of the situation starting from 1995 led to a significant decrease in the emigration rates and the negative balance of migration. Even though Armenia continued to be principally the country of origin of migration flows, temporary labor migrants began to dominate among emigrants (those who make temporary (seasonal) trips as well as the ones with long-term (indefinite) trips). This tendency, according to the data of various studies, is still preserved.

The period of 2018-2021 was marked by several pivotal events, which had a significant impact on the migration situation. According to migration statistics, the **'velvet revolution'** carried out in 2018 based on the ideas of democracy, rule of law, human rights protection, and free competition, significantly increased the attractiveness of Armenia both for foreigners and for the Armenian citizens traditionally looking for a job abroad. In 2018, the balance of border crossings was positive for the first time since 2006. Moreover, the positive border crossings of foreigners have doubled compared to 2017, and even though the border crossings of RA citizens were negative it has improved 8 times compared to 2017. The negative balance of migration has been significantly reduced, furthermore, the positive dynamics of migration statistics have been preserved also in 2019.

The balance (saldo) of border crossings is the difference between registered entrances and exits of all Armenian border checkpoints including the flows of foreigners and Armenian citizens regardless of the duration and purpose of the trip.

The net migration is the difference between emigrants and migrants (according to the UN definition) which since 2013 is calculated based on the results of the RA Statistical Committee's Household's Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS).

The positive expectations that were developed in 2018-2019 were replaced by the crisis year of 2020 when apart from the COVID-19 pandemic which was a global challenge, Armenia also faced the need to confront the military actions unleashed by Azerbaijan against the Republic of Artsakh on September 27 and the need to respond the consequences that were caused because of the **44-day war**. In 2020, for the first time since Independence, the migration balance in Armenia was positive because of COVID-19 international travel restrictions. At the same time, the 44-day war resulted in the forced displacement flow of people from Artsakh which greatly influenced the migration priorities of 2020-2021.

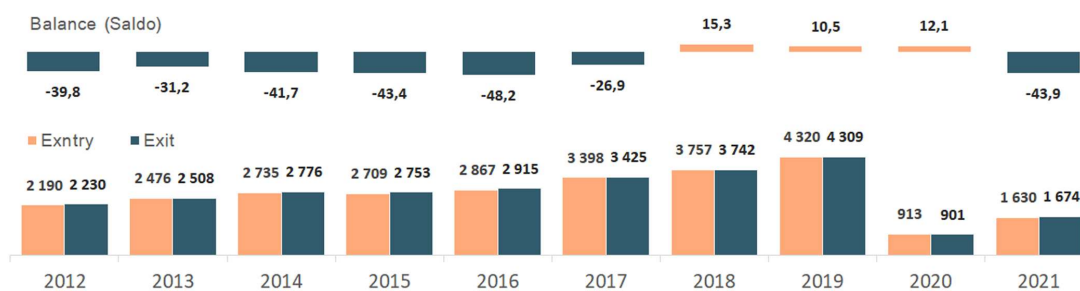
SUMMARY MIGRATION PROFILE OF 2018-2021

Border crossings

According to the data received for 2012-2021 via the Republic of Armenia border management information system, passenger flow in all RA border checkpoints (entrances and exits) in 2012-2019 had an upward trend. Meanwhile, the growth rate significantly accelerated in 2017-2019, and in 2018 for the first time since 2006, the saldo of entrances and exits was positive, and this tendency was preserved also in 2019-2020.

Conditioned with the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of border crossings in 2020 decreased almost five times and started to grow again in 2021 along with the elimination of travel restrictions again, reaching only about 38 percent of the indicators of 2019. At the same time, in 2021 the saldo of entrances and exits in border checkpoints of the Republic of Armenia was about -44,000.

The dynamics of the annual number of border crossings in 2012-2021 (thousand people)



RA Migration Service

Stating that the numbers in the table exclusively refer to the border crossings and not to the migration flows, however, it can be assumed that the negative saldo in 2021 was mainly conditioned by the realities caused by COVID-19 (for example, the return of people to their permanent countries of residency who temporary visited Armenia in 2020 and were not able to leave the country; the flows of Armenian seasonal migrants who were not able to go abroad for work and so on) as well as the deterioration of security atmosphere in Armenia as a result of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan in 2020 and the ongoing aggression in 2021.

Meanwhile, it is significant that the difference in entrances and exits of foreigners was positive during all years of the last decade except from 2020, whereas that of RA citizens was negative. However, in 2018 both indicators have drastically improved (for 2.1, and 7.9 times consequently).

The balance (saldo) of border crossings in 2012-2021 per country of citizenship



RA Migration Service

The volumes of migration flows and migration balance

As per the data of RA Statistical Committee Household's Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) results, in 2018-2021 Armenia accepted on average 10,780 immigrants annually, and at the same time on average 19,380 emigrants left Armenia to abroad; the estimates refer to both short-term and long-term migrants.

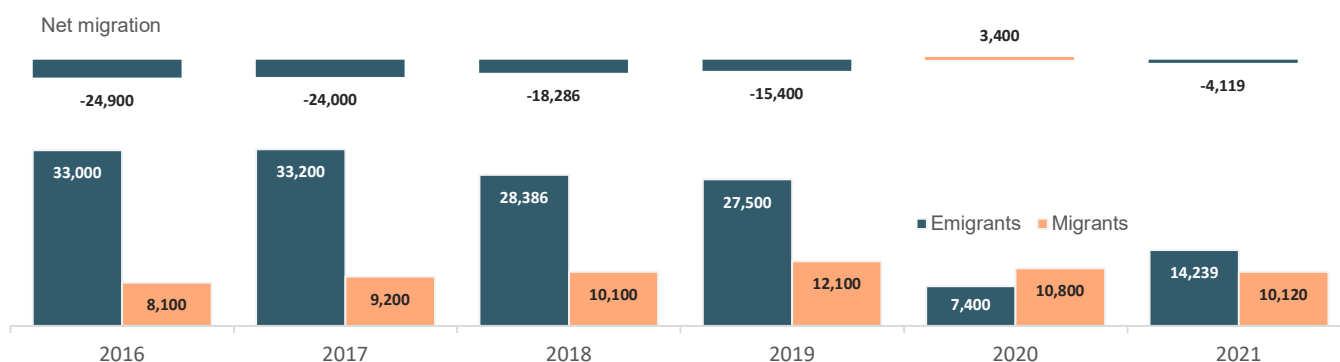
The definitions used in Household's Integrated Living Conditions Survey

Long-term migrant – people who move from their permanent (usually) residence country to another country for at least one year (12 months), i.e., the target country becomes their new permanent residence country. From the perspective of the departure country, a departing person is a long-term migrant (emigrant) and for the arrival country, the person is a long-term immigrant.

Short-term migrant – people who move from their permanent (usually) residence country to another country for at least 3 months but less than one year (12 months), except those cases, when this movement is for vocational purposes - holiday, visiting friends and family members, business trips, medical reasons, or religious pilgrimage. From the perspective of international migration statistics, the permanent residence country of short-term migrants during the time of their stay will be considered a country of destination.

According to the Household's Integrated Living Conditions Survey results, the migration balance registering the lowest number of the last decade in 2016 (-24,900) started to grow from 2017. At the same time, if in 2017 compared to 2016 the index improved by only 4 percent, then in 2018 compared to the previous year the index improved by 24 percent, and in 2019 again by 16 percent. In 2020 greatly conditioned with COVID-19, the migration balance was positive for the first time in the last decade, and even though it decreased again along with the removal of restrictions, the indicator of 2021 was about 6 times higher than in 2017.

Interstate migration 2016-2021



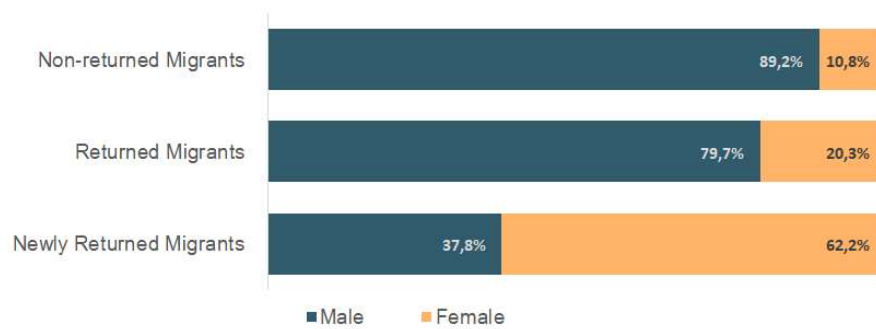
Estimated by RA Statistical Committee HILCS results

The demographic composition of migrants

The analysis carried out by the RA Statistical Committee referring to the period of 2019-2021 and based on ILCS results provides a general understanding about some demographic features typical to international migrants. [The Demographic Handbook of Armenia, 2022, part 7. Migration.](#)

According to the survey results, in 2019-2021, in the context of none yet returned migrants females made up only 10.8 percent of people who left Armenia to abroad for three or more months whereas among returned migrants the number is 20.3 percent and among newly returned migrants - 62.2 percent. The analysis also states that 80 percent of non-returned migrants are between 15-49 years old, whereas about 70 percent of returned migrants and only 50 percent of newly returned migrants are of the same age. These data prove that even though the negative effect of migration processes on the population of the RA has been somewhat mitigated in recent years, the impact on sex-age composition continues to persist.

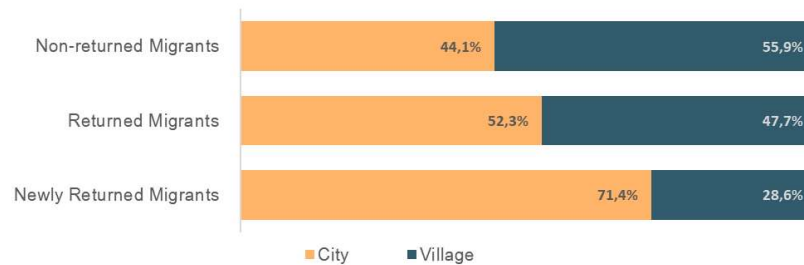
Gender distribution of people involved in migration processes in 2019-2021



ILCS

According to the survey results, in terms of urban and rural migrations, the previous period's tendency is preserved, when the great number of left and non-returned people are from rural communities, whereas the great part of returned and moreover newly returned people settle down in urban communities.

Distribution of people involved in migration processes per urban and rural settlements in 2019-2021



ILCS

IMMIGRATION

VISAS ISSUED TO FOREIGNERS

The RA entry visas are issued for a period of up to 21 or up to 120 days of stay in Armenia with a 60-day maximum extension possibility if no other term is defined by the law or RA international agreements.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues and extends 'official' and 'diplomatic' entry visas as well as offers electronic entry visas via [E-visa](#) system. 'Visitor' and 'transit' entry visas are issued and extended by the Police Passport and Visa Department under the RA Government.

The citizens of [57 countries](#) can receive the RA entry permit only in the RA diplomatic representations in foreign countries **only based on the invitation**.

Citizens of 44 countries (including the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and the complete list [here](#)) **are unilaterally exempted from the requirement of obtaining the RA entry visa**.

Based on the bilateral principle the citizens of the following 20 countries holding all kinds of valid passports **are exempted from the requirement of obtaining the RA entry visa**.

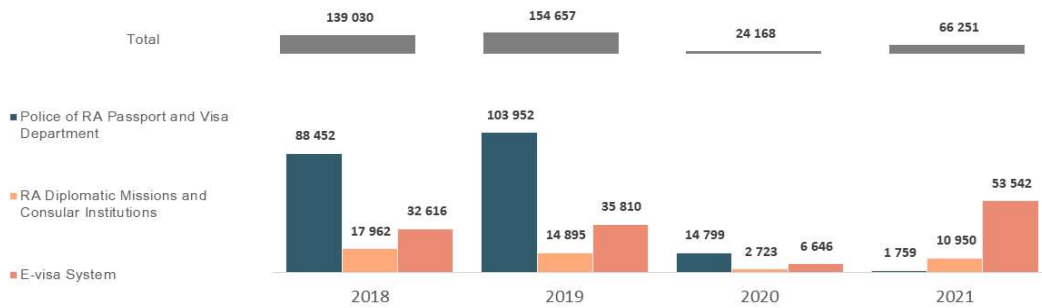


The citizens of those countries for whom a non-visa regime is applicable for entering to the Republic of Armenia, can stay in the territory of Armenia for a period of 180

days maximum within a year unless there is no other date established with the RA international agreements.

During 2018-2021, 384,106 RA visas have been issued to foreigners, out of which 54.4 percent has been issued on the RA border by the RA Police Passport and Visa Department, 33.5 percent has been issued via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' E-visa system and 12.1 percent has been issued by the Republic of Armenia diplomatic and diplomatic representations and consulates.

Dynamics of the number of visas issued to foreigners



The RA Police Passport and Visa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA

After increasing by 11.2 percent in 2019 as compared to 2018, in 2020 because of COVID-19 and the 44-day War the number of visas issued to foreigners has been reduced by around 6.4 times. In 2021, along with the elimination of travel restrictions, the number of issued visas again increased by reaching around 66,000.

Even though this is a 2.7 times smaller index as compared to the pre-crisis period, it is worth mentioning that the situation is largely connected to the implementation of visa facilitation or visa regime abolition agreements. Thus, in 2018-2021 the citizens of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, North Korea, Albania, China, Hong Kong, Serbia, and Dominica have been exempted from the requirement of obtaining the RA entry visa.

In 2018-2021, the largest number of visas were issued to Indian citizens. The Philippines, Turkey, Lebanon, and China are also in the top five countries in the number of visas issued to citizens.

Visas issued to foreigners by the country of citizenship

Citizenship	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
India	37,131	40,469	3,379	30,030	111,009
The Philippines	20,483	20,514	5,483	5,674	52,154
Turkey	12,751	12,268	5,225	4,690	34,934
Lebanon	10,701	11,302	1,890	4,494	28,387
China	9,065	15,602	274	5	24,946
Turkmenistan	10,315	10,748	308	121	21,492
Canada	5,845	6,981	645	2,391	15,862
Israel	6,190	6,955	474	2,148	15,767
Iraq	4,633	5,111	447	5,226	15,417
Syria	2,884	2,794	642	1,545	7,865
Jordan	1,847	1,930	304	1,173	5,254
Other countries	17185	19983	5097	8754	51019
Total	139,030	154,657	24168	66,251	384,106

The RA Police Passport and Visa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA

FOREIGNERS RESIDING IN ARMENIA

Residence status of foreigners according to the RA legislation

According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On foreigners” (article 14, provision 1) the following residence statuses are defined for foreigners: a) temporary residence, b) permanent residence, and c) special residence.

Temporary residence status is granted to any foreigner if they prove the conditions justifying their stay in the territory of the Republic of Armenia for a period of one year and longer.

Such conditions can be:



Education



Work permit



Being the partner, parent, or child of a foreigner holding a temporary RA residence status



Being the partner or close relative (parent, child, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild) of the RA citizen or of a foreigner holding RA permanent or special residence status



Implementing entrepreneurial activities in Armenia



Being of Armenian ethnic origin



Other cases as defined by the law.

The temporary residence status is granted for a period of up to one year with the possibility of extending it by one year at a time.

The permanent residence status is granted to foreigners if they:

- Prove being a spouse or close relatives (parent, child, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild) of RA citizens or have special residence status in Armenia, is provided with housing and means of living in the Republic of Armenia, and prior submission of an application for obtaining a permanent residence status, has legally resided for at least three years in the Republic of Armenia.
- Implementing entrepreneurial activities in Armenia.
- Being of Armenian ethnic origin.

The permanent residence status is granted for a period of five years, with a possibility of extending it for a period of five years at a time.

The special residence status is granted by the order of the Republic of Armenia Prime Minister to foreigners having Armenian ethnic origin, as well as other foreigners implementing economic or cultural activities in the Republic of Armenia.

The special residence status is granted for ten years.

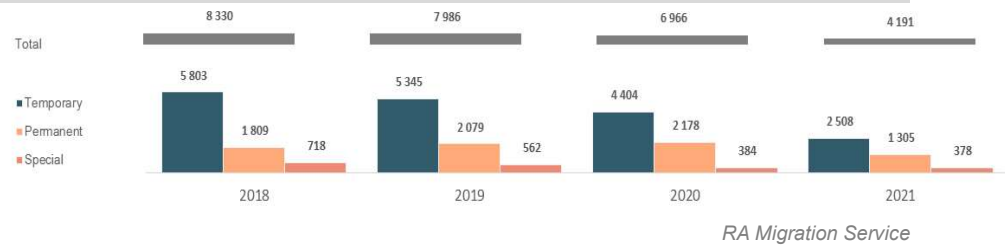
Those who are granted with special residence status are granted with special passport of the Republic of Armenia with which they can freely enter the territory of the Republic of Armenia and reside there without an entry visa. The foreigners with special residence status have equal rights, freedoms, and responsibilities as the citizens of the RA except for the right to vote in the territory of the Republic of Armenia. The duty to serve in the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia does not apply to them.

The foreigners granted with the residence status

If in 2015-2017, albeit small, but continued the annual growth in the number of foreigners granted with residency status in Armenia (4 percent growth in 2016 and 2 percent growth in 2017) was recorded, in 2018 the number of people granted with special residence status drastically grew reaching to 8,330, by exceeding the same indicator of 2017 with about 37 percent.

Meanwhile, starting from 2019 the number of foreigners receiving residence status had a decreasing trend reaching 4,191 in 2021 (decreasing by around 50 percent as compared to 2018). The decrease was mostly noticeable in the case of those receiving temporary and special residence statuses. At the same time, the number of foreigners with permanent residence status continued to grow in 2019-2020, then drastically decreased in 2021 by coming back to the index of 2017.

The number of foreigners having received residence status in RA per type of status

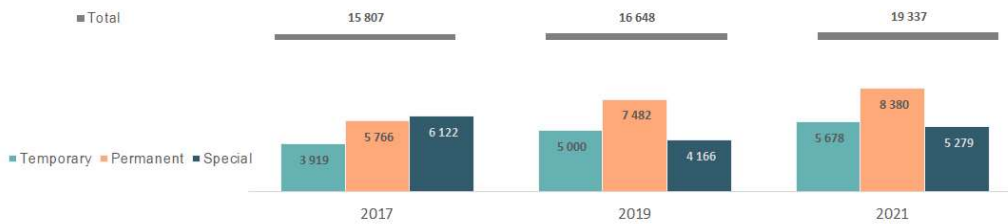


During 2018-2021 more than half of the people granted with temporary residence status were the citizens of India and Iran. Most people granted with permanent residence status have been citizens of Russia and Iran. The special residence status has been granted mostly to the citizens of Syria, Iran, Iraq, and the USA.

Foreigners with valid residence status as of the end of 2021

As of the end of 2021, the number of foreigners with valid residence status in the RA has been 19,337 people (or 0,65 percent of the country's population) exceeding the end-of-the-year index of 2019 by 16 percent and that of 2017 by 22 percent.

Foreigners with valid residence status in RA as of the end of the year



RA Migration Service, RA Statistical Committee

Foreigners with temporary residence status

Like in 2019, as of the end of 2021 as well, most foreigners with temporary residence status have obtained the status on the ground of education.

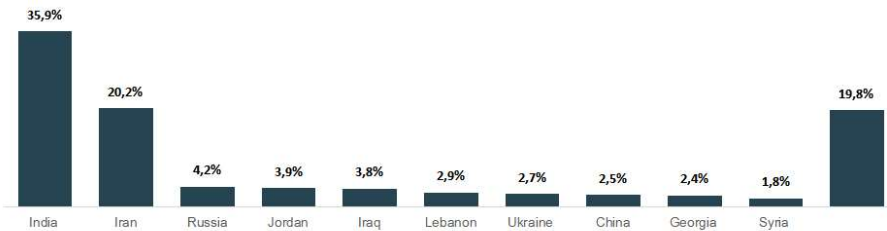
Number of foreigners with valid temporary residence status at the end of the year (%) per status base



RA Migration Service, RA Statistical Committee

As of the end of 2021, most people with valid temporary residence status have been citizens of India and Iran.

Number of foreigners with valid temporary residence status as of the end of 2021 (%) by country of citizenship

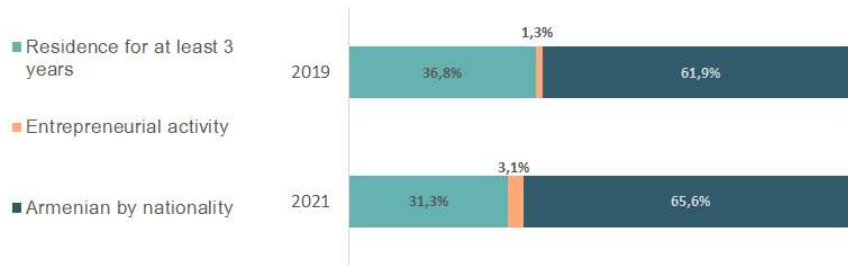


RA Migration Committee, RA Statistical Committee

The foreigners with permanent residence status

As of the end of 2021, the majority of 8380 foreigners (66 percent) with valid permanent residence status obtained the residency on the ground of being Armenian ethnic origin. Even though foreigners receiving permanent residence status on the ground of entrepreneurial activity are in the minority, as compared to 2019, the share of foreigners who were granted with the status on this ground and had a valid status at the end of 2021 increased by about 2.5 times.

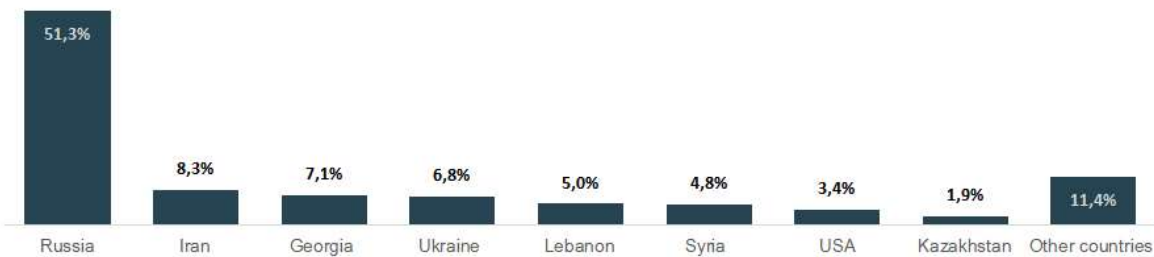
Number of foreigners with valid permanent residence status as of the end of the year (%)
per status base



RA Migration Service, RA Statistical Committee

As of the end of 2021, more than half of foreigners with permanent residence status have been citizens of Russia.

Number of foreigners with valid permanent residence status per country of citizenship



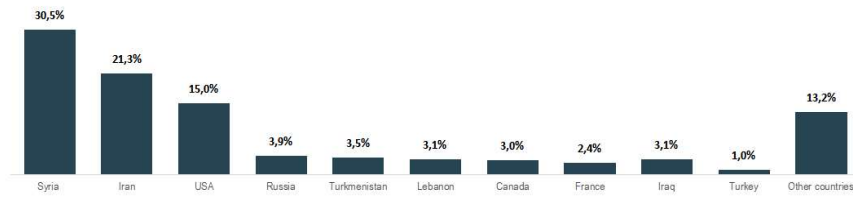
RA Migration Service, RA Statistical Committee

Foreigners with special residence status

During 2018-2021, in general, 2,042 foreigners have been granted with the special residence status. As of the end of 2021, 5,279 foreigners had a special residence status in the RA, 99.2 percent of people received the status on the ground of being of Armenian ethnic origin and only 44 foreigners received the status on the ground of implementing economic or cultural activities.

Like in 2019, as of the end of 2021 as well, most foreigners with special residence status have been citizens of Syria and Iran.

Number of foreigners with valid special residence status as of the end of 2021 (%)
per the country of citizenship

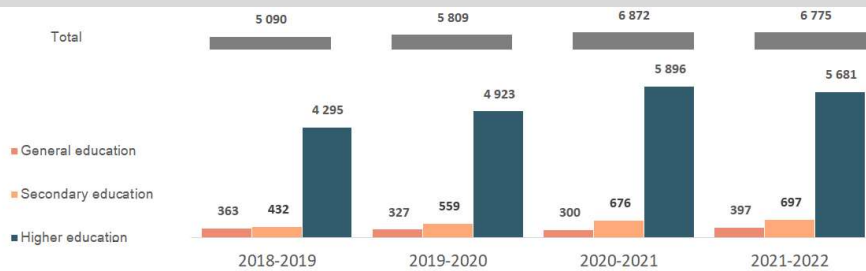


RA Migration Service, RA Statistical Committee

Foreigners studying in Armenia

In 2018-2021, there was an upward trend in the number of foreigners studying in Armenia. During the academic year of 2021-2022 in total 6,775 foreigners studied in the Republic of Armenia public and private secondary professional and higher educational institutions which exceeded the index of the 2018-2019 academic year by 33 percent.

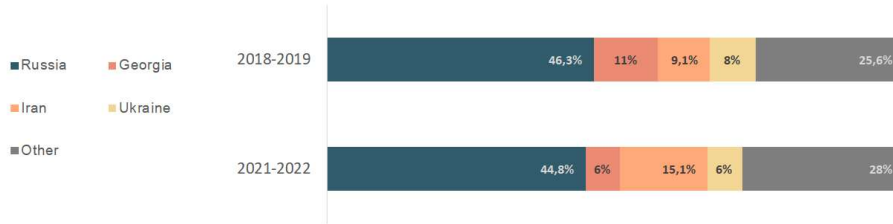
The dynamics of the number of foreigners studying in RA



RA Ministry of Education, Science,
Culture And Sports, Statistical Committee

In 2018-2019, as well as in 2021-2022, most foreigners studying in **public** educational institutions were citizens of Russia, Georgia, Iran, and Ukraine.

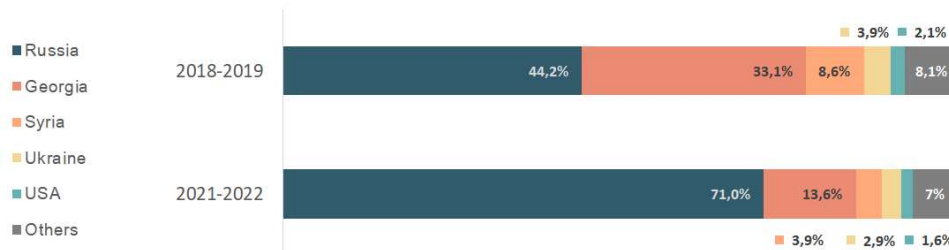
Foreign students in the RA public educational institutions per country of citizenship



RA Ministry of Education, Science,
Culture And Sports, Statistical Committee

Russian and Georgian citizens made up more than three-quarters of the total number of foreigners studying in **vocational secondary educational institutions**. Moreover, the number of Russian citizens significantly increased in 2018-2019 whereas the number of Georgian citizens decreased.

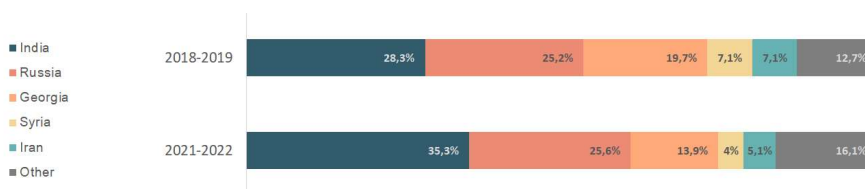
Foreign students in secondary educational institutions of the RA per country of citizenship



RA Ministry of Education, Science,
Culture And Sports, Statistical Committee

The situation in **higher educational institutions** is different. The biggest foreign student influx is from India, and compared to the 2018-2019 academic year, in the 2021-2022 academic year, the number of Indian citizens among the total number of foreigners studying in RA universities has increased by 7 percent.

Foreigners studying in the RA higher educational institutions per country of citizenship



RA Ministry of Education, Science,
Culture And Sports, Statistical Committee

CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

The procedure of acquiring and terminating the RA citizenship

According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia 'On citizenship of the Republic of Armenia', any person not holding citizenship of the Republic of Armenia who has attained the age of 18 has a right to apply for a citizenship of the Republic of Armenia if they resided in the Republic of Armenia for the past three years as prescribed by law, are able to express themselves in Armenian and are familiar with the Constitution of Armenia.

According to the same law, in a simplified procedure without the requirements of permanently residing in the Republic of Armenia for the past three years and meeting the requirements of knowledge of Armenian language an individual can acquire Armenian citizenship if:

- ✓ Is married to a citizen of the Republic of Armenia or have an Armenian citizen child,
- ✓ Parents or one of them previously held the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia or was born in the Republic of Armenia and who applied for getting Armenian citizenship three years after attaining the age of 18,
- ✓ Is of Armenian ethnic origin i.e., has Armenian ancestors,
- ✓ Has renounced the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia of their own accord after 1 January 1995.

Armenian citizenship can be awarded without any above-mentioned requirements to people who have provided exceptional service to the Republic of Armenia.

The Republic of Armenia citizenship is terminated on the grounds of changing Armenian citizenship, depriving the Armenian citizenship as well as on the grounds of the Republic of Armenia international agreements.

Everyone reaching adulthood (18 years old) has a right to change Armenian citizenship: renounce the Armenian citizenship and acquire another country's citizenship.

The application for renouncing the Armenian citizenship is rejected when:

- ✓ The applicant is under criminal investigation.
- ✓ There is a sentence or judgment against the applicant pending execution.
- ✓ Renunciation the Armenian citizenship contradicts state security interests.
- ✓ The applicant has unsettled obligations towards the State, organizations, or citizens.

A person can be deprived of the Republic of Armenia citizenship, if:

- ✓ Permanently resided abroad; within seven years without a valid reason was not registered in the counsellor section.

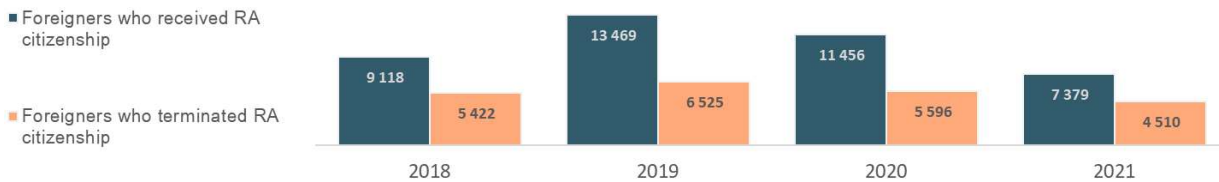
- ✓ Armenian citizenship was acquired through false data and false documentation.
- ✓ By violating the RA citizenship legislation acquired another country's citizenship.

The issues of acquiring and terminating the RA citizenship are resolved by the executive decrees of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

The dynamics of the number of people who acquired and terminated the RA citizenship

During 2018-2021, 41,422 foreigners have been granted with the RA citizenship. In the same period, the RA citizenship of 22,053 citizens has been terminated. Both the numbers of people acquiring citizenship and terminating citizenships have been increased in 2018-2019 and then decreased in 2020-2021.

The dynamics of the number of people who received RA citizenship and those who terminated RA citizenship



The RA Police Passport and Visa Department

Dual citizenship

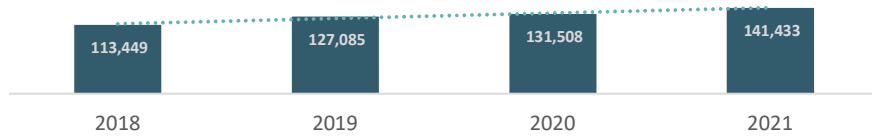
The dual citizen of the Republic of Armenia is considered a person who apart from the Armenian citizenship has a citizenship of another country (countries).

The dual citizen of the RA is recognized as only the RA citizen for the Republic of Armenia. The dual citizen of the RA has all the rights provided to the citizen of the RA and carries all the responsibilities and duties of the RA citizen except the cases defined in the RA international agreements or laws.

In case of accepting or acquiring citizenship of another country, the RA citizen is obliged to inform the authorized body of the RA Government within a month per established procedure, and the violation of this requirement of law causes legal liability.

During 2018-2021, the number of RA dual citizens continuously grew. Particularly, in 2018 the number of dual citizens was 113,449 and in 2021 the number reached 141,433, thus registering an increase of around 25 percent.

The dynamics of the number of people with RA dual citizenship as of the end of the year



The RA Police Passport and Visa Department

As of the end of 2021, most of the RA dual citizens had citizenship of Georgia (27 percent), Russia (22 percent), Syria (17 percent), and Lebanon (17 percent) apart from Armenian citizenship.

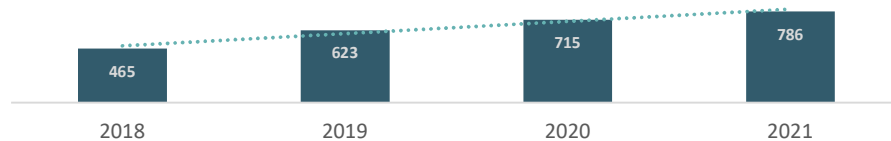
Stateless people

Any person who is not a citizen of Armenia or another country can apply for the acquisition of stateless status in Armenia. In case of a positive decision, the Passport and Visa Department of the RA Police grants the applicant a certificate of residence of a stateless person.

The number of stateless people holding residence certificates in the Republic of Armenia increased during 2018-2021 by almost 70 percent reaching 786 as of the end of 2021.

Previous studies carried out by the Police Passport and Visa Department showed that the citizens of the Republic of Armenia often applied for the termination of citizenship by presenting a written certificate issued by a competent authority of a foreign state, however after terminating the Republic of Armenia citizenship, due to various circumstances, they did not acquire the citizenship of the state issuing the certificate, and in fact acquired the status of a stateless person. These people, remaining without a valid identity document, did not have an opportunity to exercise their rights and were obliged to apply to the Police Passport and Visa Department to obtain a certificate of a stateless person. As a result, the number of stateless people was artificially increasing.

The dynamics of stateless people



The RA Police Passport and Visa Department

THE GRANTING OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

The legislative framework regulating the international protection of foreigners in Armenia

Based on universally recognized human rights, internationally accepted norms, and national legislation, Armenia provides asylum (protection) to all foreign citizens and stateless people, who have been forced to leave their country of citizenship or permanent residency due to persecution. Those persecutions, as well as the reasonable possibility of being subjected to such persecution, can be a serious threat to the life and freedoms of the mentioned people.

More than 140 countries of the world, that have joined the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, provide international protection to people who were a subject of persecution for certain reasons in their country of citizenship or permanent residency.

On November 27, 2008, Armenia adopted the national Law 'On refugees and asylum' regulating the field of asylum, in which, in addition to the five grounds defined by the 1951 Convention, another five grounds were defined for a person to be recognized as a "refugee"- massive violations of human rights, widespread violence, external attack, internal conflicts, serious violations of public order. In other words, people who were forced to leave their country due to any of these five grounds, may also be recognized as refugees and receive asylum if they seek protection in Armenia.

During the entire period of asylum claim hearing, (3 months, with the possibility of extension for another 3 months), asylum seekers are accommodated in temporary accommodation centers for asylum-seekers.

If there is no possibility to be accommodated in a special center, asylum-seekers are provided with financial assistance to cover their basic life needs. After being recognized as a refugee in Armenia and after receiving asylum in the Republic of Armenia, the asylum seeker residing in the temporary accommodation center is obliged to vacate the room, and in case of financial aid, the provision of aid is stopped as there are integration programs implemented for the recognized refugees.

Asylum seekers and recognized refugees in Armenia, who possess proper documentation, have equal rights with foreign citizens and stateless people legally residing in the Republic of Armenia, particularly, free of charge legal assistance, right to education, medical aid, social security, employment, free movement, and other rights. Asylum seekers and refugees, while exercising their rights defined by law, must respect the laws of the Republic of Armenia, the legal interests, rights, and freedoms of citizens of Armenia and other people, and maintain public order and the security of the Republic of Armenia.

More details on the submission of asylum-seeking applications, acquisition of refugee status, and rejection of the application are available on the website of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia

with the following links: [From asylum application to status granting stage](#) and [From rejection to deportation](#).

Foreigners seeking asylum in Armenia

As compared to 2017, the number of foreigners seeking asylum in Armenia increased by around 44 percent in 2018, and in 2018-2021 ranged from 206-260 per year. For the same period, refugee status was granted to about 347 foreigners, or around 37 percent of 932 people requesting asylum.

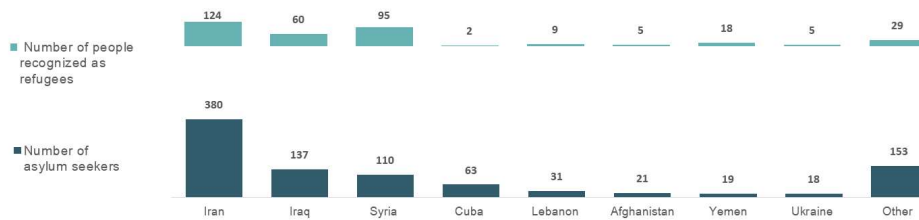
The number of foreigners who applied for asylum in Armenia, the number of people recognized as refugees, the number of terminated/suspended and rejected applications



Ministry Of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Migration Service

In 2018-2021 most often, citizens of Iran Iraq and Syria applied for asylum in Armenia.

The number of people who sought asylum in Armenia and were recognized as refugees, according to the citizenship of the asylum seeker in 2018-2021



Ministry Of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Migration Service

Even though the number of male applicants seeking asylum in Armenia continued to dominate in 2018-2021, starting from 2020 this number demonstrated a decreasing tendency. At the same time, the share of 18-34 years old asylum seekers has partially decreased since 2020, whereas that of 35-64 years old has increased.

Sex-age composition of the RA asylum-seekers

	0-13		14-17		18-34		35-64		65+		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
2018	12%	9%	4%	0%	30%	11%	20%	13%	0%	0%	67%	33%
2019	8%	5%	4%	1%	33%	8%	25%	10%	1%	3%	72%	28%
2020	6%	6%	6%	3%	25%	8%	27%	16%	0%	1%	66%	34%
2021	8%	11%	3%	3%	20%	12%	26%	15%	0%	1%	58%	42%
Total	8%	8%	4%	2%	27%	10%	25%	13%	1%	1%	66%	34%

Ministry Of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Migration Service

The integration assistance projects for people recognized as refugees in Armenia

The action plan established by the RA Government in February 2017 aimed in the implementation of the “Conceptual framework for the integration policy of individuals recognized as refugees and granted asylum in the Republic of Armenia, as well as of long-term migrants” envisaged three main actions:

- ✓ Organization of Armenian language courses.
- ✓ Organization of civil orientation courses.
- ✓ Granting of temporary accommodation.

In 2018-2019, around 50 refugees from various countries (Yemen, Iran, Nigeria, the Ukraine, and others) participated in the **Armenian language courses** organized by the Armenian General Benevolent Union’s Virtual College. Because of the COVID pandemic and the war unleashed by Azerbaijan in Artsakh in 2020, the project has not been implemented in 2020-2021.

Civil orientation courses are aimed at contributing to immigrant’s knowledge on the values, culture, their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of the host society. In 2018-2019, four groups of courses were organized: two groups for Armenian-speaking, 1 group for Arabic-speaking, and 1 group for Persian-speaking refugees. In total, around 30 refugees participated in the courses in 2018-2019. In 2018 the courses were organized by the Yerevan State University and in 2019 by the “KASA” Swiss Humanitarian Foundation. In 2020-2021 the project has not been implemented because of the above-mentioned force majeure situations.

The granting of temporary accommodation is realized by accommodating refugees in existing social apartments as well as by providing money to rent an apartment. In 2018-2019, 216 people (92 families) benefited from the project by receiving 60 thousand AMD within 9 months including 79 people in 2018, 38 people in 2019, 45 people in 2020, and 54 people in 2021.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The illegal immigration is not a mass phenomenon in Armenia. As a rule, entry to Armenia is done legally and the violations, if any, mostly relate to the legal provisions of stay in the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

During 2021, 44 cases of illegal border crossings have been recorded in the Republic of Armenia. The attempts of illegal border crossings have been mainly realized by using false passports, visas, and other travel documents.

According to the data of the Passport and Visa Department of the RA Police in total around 18,000 illegal migrants have been identified during 2018-2019.

For the same period 1,819 foreigners were denied with the right to reside in Armenia, and 66 foreigners were deprived of the right to stay in Armenia.

The number of foreigners with illegal stay in Armenia



According to the Republic of Armenia Law “On foreigners”, the foreigner must voluntarily leave the territory of the Republic of Armenia if:

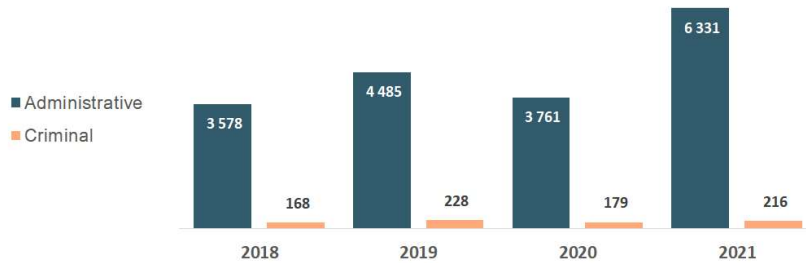
- ✓ The validity period of entry visa or stay permit has expired,
- ✓ The entry visa has expired,
- ✓ The application to receive stay permit status or extend the stay has been rejected,
- ✓ Have been deprived of stay permit status.

If the foreigner has not voluntarily left the territory of the Republic of Armenia in cases prescribed by the law, the authorized public administrative body of the Republic of Armenia Police sector initiates a deportation case and submits to the court.

For the period of 2018-2021, deportation measures have been initiated only against 11 foreigners.

For the same period, on average around 4,500 foreigners have been subjected to administrative responsibilities and on average around 200 foreigners to criminal liabilities for various violations of law.

The number of foreigners subjected to administrative and criminal liability in Armenia



RA Police

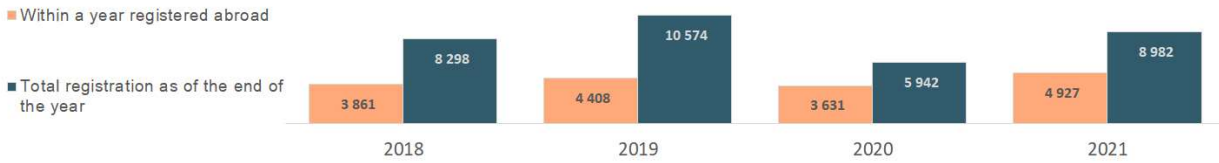
EMIGRATION

EMIGRATION FLOW VOLUMES, GEOGRAPHY, AND CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Unlike immigration indices, the information collected and published by the official sources of Armenia about the volumes of emigration from Armenia and the characteristics of the emigration flow is limited for obvious reasons. Administrative statistics are available only on those citizens registered in foreign countries who have notified those countries diplomatic missions or consulates of Armenia about their residency abroad.

According to the data received from the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs and RA Police Passport and Visa Department, in the period of 2018-2021 on average 4,200 Armenian citizens were registered (and notified) abroad, and as of the end of 2021 total of around 9,000 Armenian citizens have been registered abroad.

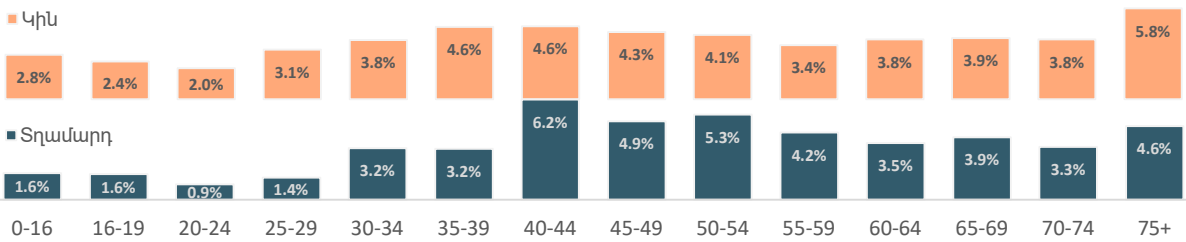
The number of RA citizens registered abroad (the information about the registration has been transferred to RA consulates abroad)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, RA State Register of Population

According to the RA State Population Register, as of the end of 2021, 52 percent of Armenian citizens registered abroad were women, and 48 percent were men; moreover, about two-thirds of the citizens registered abroad were between the age of 20-64.

The sex and age composition of RA citizens registered abroad as of the end of 2021



RA State Register of Population

According to the same source, most Armenian citizens, around 60 percent registered (and notified) abroad, as of the end of 2021 were registered in Russia, Lebanon, or Georgia. 13 percent of the citizens were registered in the EU Member States and EFTA countries, 5-6 percent in Iran, USA, and Syria.

RA citizens registered abroad as of the end of 2021 (reported to RA consulates abroad) per country of registration



RA State Register of Population

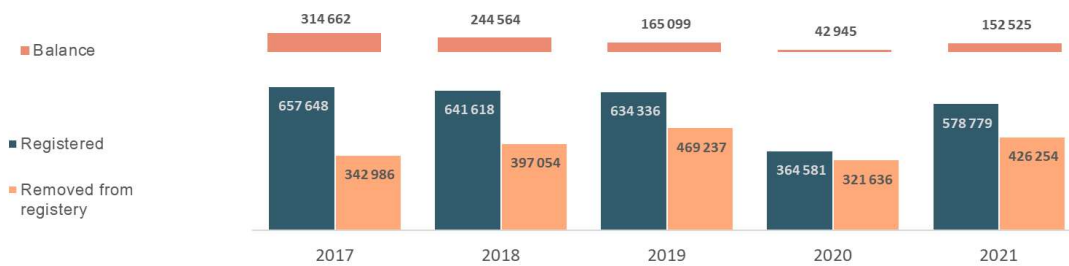
Taking into consideration that more comprehensive statistics on emigration flows from Armenia can be received from certain host countries' official sources, below we will briefly refer to two main target points of Armenian emigrants: Russia and the EU Member States and EFTA countries.

The main indices of emigration from Armenia to Russia

According to the [publications](#) of the RF Ministry of Internal Affairs, the number of Armenian citizens registered in the migration registry of Russia had a slow decreasing tendency in the period of 2017-2019 (annually with 1-2 percent), and due to COVID-19, the number was decreased with around 43 percent in 2020. During 2021, the number of Armenian citizens registered in Russia again significantly increased, however, compared to the pre-pandemic 2019, the number of Armenian citizens registered in Russia was less by around 9 percent.

It is worth mentioning that in 2017-2020, the difference between the number of RA citizens who were registered in Russia and those who withdrew the registration during the year was reduced at a more significant rate.

The number of RA citizens included in the migration register and removed from the register in Russia in 2017-2021



RF Ministry of Internal Affairs

According to the same source, only 7-10 percent of Armenian citizens have been registered in Russia by their place of residence, and the vast majority by their location in 2018-2021. The latter were included in the migration registry mainly on the grounds of work or private visits. In 2021, 138,946 RA citizens submitted work-related or civil-legal contracts in Russia.

The number of RA citizens taken from the migration register per the location and the purpose of the trip to Russia in 2018-2021



All the above-mentioned data coincide with the data of the RA Statistical Committee as well as with the survey data carried out by various other Armenian independent research centers, which prove that the migration flow from Armenia to Russia mostly consists of temporary work migrants.

The statistical analysis of the RA citizens granted with citizenship or stay permits in Russia in 2017-2021 records several significant tendencies.

- ✓ In 2017-2021, the number of Armenian citizens receiving first-time temporary stay permits continuously decreased within a year (with 49 percent in 2021 as compared to 2017), as well as the number of Armenian citizens with valid temporary permits also decreased by the end of the year (with 61 percent in 2021 as compared to 2017).
- ✓ The number of Armenian citizens receiving the stay permit for the first time during the year had a decreasing tendency in 2017-2019 (by 11 percent in 2019 as compared to 2017) then in 2020-2021 it drastically increased (by 77 percent in 2021 as compared to 2017). At the same time as of the end of the year, the number of people with valid stay permits in Russia steadily decreased (by 30 percent in 2021 as compared to 2017).
- ✓ The number of people granted with Russian citizenship in 2017-2019 ranged between 24-27,000 per year, then increased in 2020-2021 (by 87 percent in 2021 as compared to 2017).

The number of RA citizens who received residence status or citizenship in Russia in 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
RA citizens who received a temporary residence permit for the first time during the year	22,860	19,526	16,632	8,490	11,720
RA citizens with a valid temporary residence permit as of the end of the year	41,247	34,881	30,098	20,257	15,905
RA citizens who received a residence permit for the first time during the year	13,320	12,058	11,856	18,291	23,511

RA citizens with a valid residence permit as of the end of the year	66,043	63,974	60,561	56,155	46,255
RA citizens who were granted with Russian citizenship during the year	25,144	27,134	24,024	30,538	46,931

RF Ministry of Internal Affairs

The main indices of emigration from Armenia to the EU and EFTA member states

Compared to migration flows to Russia where traditionally temporary work migrants are dominated, the migration flows to the EU Member States and EFTA countries are dominated by long-term migrants. As such, according to Eurostat data, for the period of 2018-2021 as of the end of each year more than 90 percent of Armenian citizens had long-term (one year and more) stay permits in the EU Member States and EFTA countries.

The analysis of the Eurostat database also shows that:

- ✓ In 2018-2021 the number of RA citizens with valid stay permits in the EU Member States and EFTA countries continuously increased (by 15 percent as of the end of 2021 as compared to 2017).
- ✓ During the year, the number of RA citizens with first time stay permits in the EU Member States and EFTA countries ranged between 7,800-9,700 increasing by around 17 percent in 2021 as compared to 2017.
- ✓ At the same time, the number of RA citizens with factual long-term stay permits (one year and more) in the EU Member States and EFTA countries in 2017-2021 did not undergo significant changes ranging between 28-29,000.
- ✓ The number of RA citizens who were granted with the citizenship of the EU Member States and EFTA countries also was not drastically changed during 2018-2021 by 2,700-2,800 people receiving citizenship annually.

The number of RA citizens who received residence status or citizenship in the EU and EFTA member states

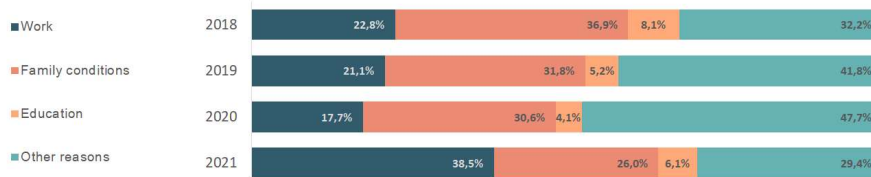
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
RA citizens granted with a residence permit for the first time during the year	7,460	8,201	9,740	7,827	8,759
Short-term (till 1 year)	2,273	2,457	3,230	2,688	4,120
Long-term (1 year and more)	5,187	5,744	6,510	5,139	4,639
RA citizens with a valid residence permit as of the end of the year	63,996	65,287	67,504	70,533	73,463
Short-term (till 1 year)	3,261	3,201	5,455	4,376	5,539

Long-term (1 year and more)	60,735	62,086	62,049	66,157	67,924
As of the end of the year, Armenian citizens living long-term in EU Member States and EFTA countries	27,875	27,986	27,403	28,861	29,164
RA citizens who were granted with the citizenship during the year	2,559	2,831	2,722	2,727	-

Eurostat

According to the same source, between 2018-2021 work and family conditions were the two main basis for RA citizens to receive the first time stay permit in the EU Member States and EFTA countries. In 2018-2020 the citizens who were granted with the stay permits on the grounds of family conditions dominated as compared to work migrants, however, in 2021 the number of stay permits granted on the grounds of work drastically increased and exceeded the number of permits granted on the grounds of family conditions.

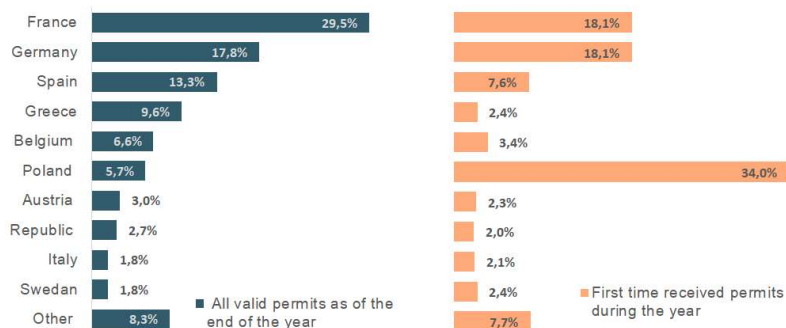
RA citizens who were granted with residence permit for the first time according to the purpose of the trip in 2018-2021 in the EU and EFTA member states



Eurostat

According to the Eurostat data, more than 60 percent of Armenian citizens residing in the EU Member States and EFTA countries as of the end of 2021 resided in France, Germany, and Spain. At the same time, Poland was the leading country in providing residence permits to RA citizens for the first time in 2021.

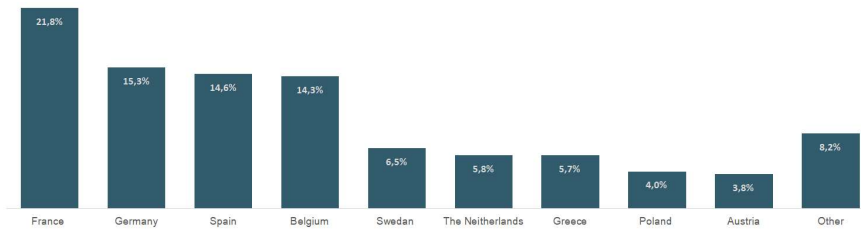
The number of RA citizens with residence permit as of the end of the year in the EU and EFTA member states in 2021 and RA citizens who received a residence permit for the first time per country in 2021



Eurostat

In 2018-2020, Armenian citizens were granted with citizenship of the EU Member States and EFTA countries most often in France, Germany, Spain, and Belgium.

The number of RA citizens who were granted with citizenship in the EU and EFTA countries in 2018-2021 per countries



Eurostat

THE NUMBER OF ARMENIAN CITIZENS SUBMITTING ASYLUM APPLICATIONS ABROAD

By combining the data of UNHCR, Eurostat, and the US Department of Defense can be stated that compared to 2017, in 2018 the number of RA citizens first-time seeking asylum decreased by around 27 percent and continued to decrease in 2019-2020, although the number of first-time asylum seekers again increased in 2021 whereas the index compared to 2017 was low with almost 58 percent.

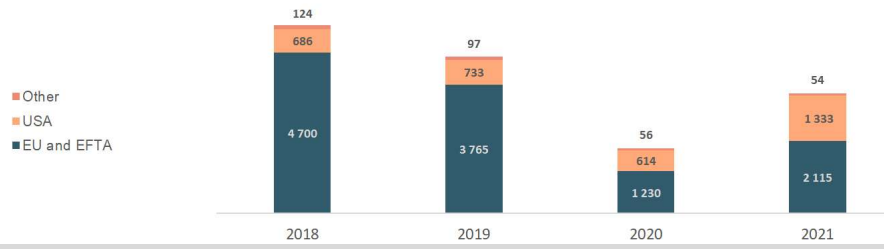
The dynamics of number of RA citizens seeking asylum abroad



UNHCR, Eurostat, US Department of Defense

According to the same sources, most first-time asylum seekers, in 2018-2021 sought asylum in EU Member States and EFTA countries mostly in France and Germany. At the same time if in other countries (mainly in the USA) the share of asylum seekers was only 15 percent, in 2021 it was already 40 percent.

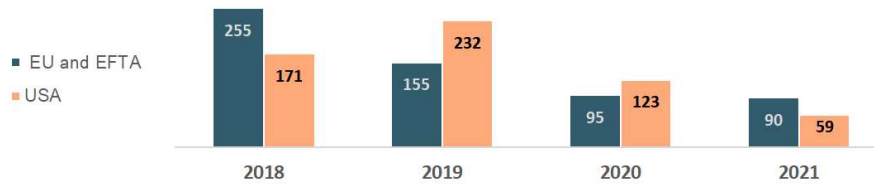
The number of RA citizens seeking asylum for the first time per countries



UNCHR, Eurostat, US Department of Defense

It is significant that in total 1,180 RA citizens were granted with refugee status in the EU Member States and EFTA countries and in the USA whereas, for the same period 20,000 applications were submitted by RA citizens in the mentioned countries (including double claims and complaints).

The dynamics of the number of RA citizens who received refugee status in the EU and EFTA member states and the USA



UNCHR, Eurostat, US Department of Defense

PREVENTION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION ORIGINATING FROM ARMENIA

To fight against irregular migration from Armenia, since 2019 the Migration Service, together with international partners and civil society organizations has initiated and implemented a series of information campaigns and media capacity-building events. The main goal of these events is to raise awareness among the population about the negative consequences and risks of emigration. The long-term goal is to support the development of informed and careful migration behavior. Particularly, the Migration Service initiated a series of “**Media and Migration**” meetings aimed at introducing migration-related media content to a population in a correct and trustful way.

With the characteristics of organizing illegal migration, 38 criminal cases have been initiated in Armenia during 2018-2021. Within the framework of the fight against illegal migration and human trafficking, the relevant services of the RA Police conduct constant monitoring of the Internet’s .am and Armenian language domains to detect and quickly respond to information with illegal content that is aimed at neutralizing false job announcements that are disseminated via the Internet and social network as well as to ensure safe migration.

RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

TENDENCIES OF RETURN TO ARMENIA

In 2018-2021 the return flows to Armenia had an upward trend which was mainly conditioned by the strict migration policies of European Union Member States on the one hand, and the COVID-19 pandemic on the other hand.

Because of the 2015 European migration crisis, the return of migrants to their countries of origin was the priority of the EU migration policy agenda, and the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum Documents adopted on 23 September 2020](#) is aimed at strictly preventing irregular migration and restraining the asylum system to be misused.

The migrants that left Armenia are mostly economic migrants and do not meet the necessary requirements to be granted asylum or refugee status as defined by the 1951 “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees”. Armenia has also been recognized as a “safe” country by several EU member states, such as Bulgaria, Norway, and France (since 2010).

On the other hand, due to COVID-19, since 2020 voluntary return has increased when Armenian citizens residing in different countries preferred to return to their home country voluntarily including the migrants with irregular status. However, the opposite phenomenon also existed when people preferred staying in host countries realizing that once they leave the host country, they will no longer be able to return.

Given the pandemic and war situation, agreements were reached with the relevant structures of the host countries to postpone the forced return, however, in 2021, this process again reactivated, and the European countries started returning Armenian citizens who were residing in their countries with irregular status. Thus, during 2021 the EU member states organized 13 direct flights to Armenia, 12 out of which were from Germany (345 returnees) and 1 flight was from Sweden (7 returnees). During 2021, in total 352 RA citizens returned to Armenia with direct flights.

Statistics of the return of RA citizens to EU member states and EFTA countries

	2018	2019	2020
Accepted return decisions	4,135	3,765	2,900
Actual return	1,950	2,095	815
Return percentage	47.1%	55.6%	28.1%

Eurostat

READMISSION

The purpose of readmission agreements is to facilitate the return of people who do not have grounds for legal stay in the territory of the countries of the contracting parties to their country of origin or last residence.

Since 2002, the Republic of Armenia has been actively involved in the process of concluding the readmission agreements, considering it as one of the tools to combat illegal migration.

The Republic of Armenia has readmission agreements with the following countries:



Latvia (2003)



Sweden (2009)



Danmark (2004)



Union Benelux (2010)



Lithuania (2004)



Norway (2010)



As of 2021, within the framework of the Armenia-EU readmission agreement, the protocols implementing the agreement with the following states went through the process of ratification and came into force.



Since February 2019, the **Readmission Case Management Electronic System (e-RCMS)** has been operating which ensures the implementation of the readmission request and response transfer process regarding a person thus making the procedures smoother and faster.

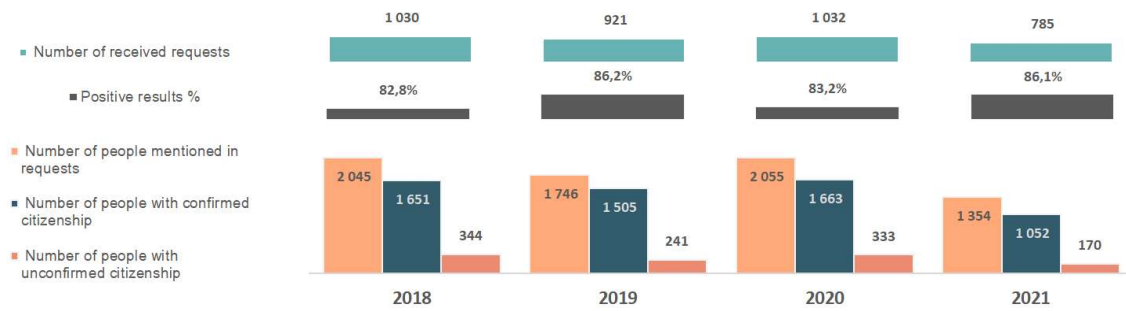
As of 2021, via e-RCMES readmission requests have been received from the representatives of relevant bodies dealing with migration issues of 13 countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, Bulgaria, Austria, France, Romania, Italy, Denmark, Luxemburg, Sweden, and Greece).

After Armenia joined the Eurasian Economic Union, starting from 2014, the conclusion of readmission agreements in a bilateral format was initiated. As a result of implemented activities, in 2021 the readmission agreement with Belarus has been signed, currently, the draft agreements with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are being discussed.

Draft readmission agreements with Georgia, the Ukraine, and Moldova are also in various stages of discussion and agreement.

According to the framework of ongoing readmission agreements, in 2018-2021 in a total of 3,768 readmission cases, (about 7,200 people) have been received and duly processed. Germany is the leading country in terms of received cases (2,452 cases about 4,868 people), out of which the citizenship of 4,509 people on the list has been approved (86.3 percent). The second country in the number of applications received is France with 457 cases about 609 people, out of which the citizenship of 553 has been approved (98.2 percent).

Statistics of readmission requests for 2018-2021



RA Migration Service

The **percentage of positive answers** is calculated from the total sum of the number of people whose citizenship was not confirmed and the number of people whose citizenship was confirmed during the year. The difference between the number of people mentioned in the claims and the sum of the people whose citizenship is confirmed and the people whose citizenship is not confirmed is the number of people mentioned in the claims who are still in the process of identification.

In 2020, for the first time, readmission requests from Armenia were sent for one citizen of the Netherlands and one citizen of Russia with irregular status in Armenia to be sent back to their countries of origin.

REINTEGRATION

RA Migration Service, “Armenian Caritas” benevolent NGO, International Organization for Migration (IOM), French Office for Emigration and Integration (OFII) with its service providing five partner organizations and Return and Reintegration European Network (ERRIN Armenia) implement assistance projects for migrants who returned to Armenia.

Since 2020, the Migration Service has been implementing the ‘Government Program of Primary Assistance for Reintegration of Nationals Returning to the Republic of Armenia (including forced returnees)’. The Project consists of two components:

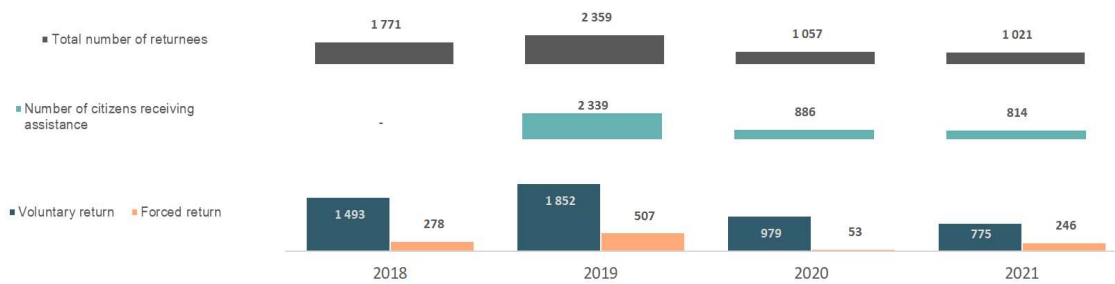
- A.** Provision of informational support and appropriate need-based referral.
- B.** Reimbursement of accommodation rental fees for forced returnees; and since 2021 in special cases for voluntary returnees belonging to certain vulnerable groups (families with many children, people with disabilities).

During 2020-2021, within the framework of a housing rental reimbursement component 31 beneficiary families (88 people) returned from Germany, France, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Russia, and Turkey were provided with AMD 60,000 monthly assistance for 6 months.

According to the existing statistics, in the period of 2018-2021, 6,208 Armenian citizens returned and applied to reintegration projects including the Government-sponsored project implemented by the Migration Service. As most projects implemented in the field assist the voluntarily return, in 2018-2021 most applicants (82.1 percent) were voluntarily returnees.

Since 2019, the Migration Service has collected detailed statistics about the beneficiaries through the reintegration projects implemented by partner organizations. In total, during 2019-2021 4039 (91 percent) of the returned 4,437 citizens have received reintegration assistance.

Summary statistics of reintegration programs in 2018-2021



RA Migration Service

In 2018, for effective coordination of return and reintegration activities in Armenia, with the initiative of the Migration Service a Forum on Return and Reintegration was established, which is a platform for informal cooperation of stakeholders from state, international and non-governmental organizations. The forum provides an opportunity for all stakeholders involved in the field to exchange information about reintegration programs implemented in Armenia, discuss existing problems and challenges, as well as share their best practices and experiences. Representatives from **IOM, ICMPD, OFII, Armenian Caritas, People in Need, Armenian Foundation for Sustainable Development**, and other organizations are involved in the Forum.

THE ISSUES OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE AND REFUGEES AS A RESULT OF NAGORNO KARABAKH

FIRST KARABAKH WAR (1988-1994)

The mass massacres of Armenian citizens in Sumgait, Kirovabad, Baku, and in other territories of Azerbaijan and the following military actions in Nagorno Karabakh and in surrounding areas resulted in the forced displacement of more than half million Armenians from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992. 360,000 forcibly displaced people found

an asylum in Armenia and according to the data of registration as of 1997, the number of refugees, residing in Armenia was 310,000 people.

On November 21, 2019, the RA Government approved the project of 'The provision of housing through housing purchase certificates at the expense of allocations provided by the annual state budget of the RA' which is aimed at providing families with permanent housing who fled from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992 and live in temporary accommodation centers. As a result of project implementation, the constitutional inalienable right to a dignified life of displaced families from Azerbaijan is being ensured and the 30-year-old housing problem is being solved. The responsible body for the implementation of the process of issuing apartment purchase certificates is the Migration Service of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration.

The project was implemented in Yerevan city in 2019-2021 within the framework of which 272 families received housing purchase certificates, 221 of which have already redeemed the certificates (the actual cost is around 3, 8 billion AMD).

The issue of permanent housing of forcibly displaced families from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992 who do not live in temporary accommodations but at the same time do not own permanent accommodations is not solved yet. With the aim to solve the housing issues of those people the RA Government Decision No 330 adopted on August 9, 1997, established 'The procedure of registering and providing living areas to refugees who need housing' which is aimed at solving the accommodation problems of those people: the latter has not been implemented yet. According to the same Decision, the registration of refugees who need housing is realized per the place of their actual residence based on the applications submitted by refugees in the Social Service Territorial Departments (SSTD now Unified Social Service) regarding the need for housing. According to the lists provided by the Social Service Territorial Departments and Yerevan Municipality that were updated in March-April 2019, the number of refugees who need housing in Armenia is 2,589 families 1,070 of which reside in Yerevan and 1,519 in regions.

44-Day War (2020)

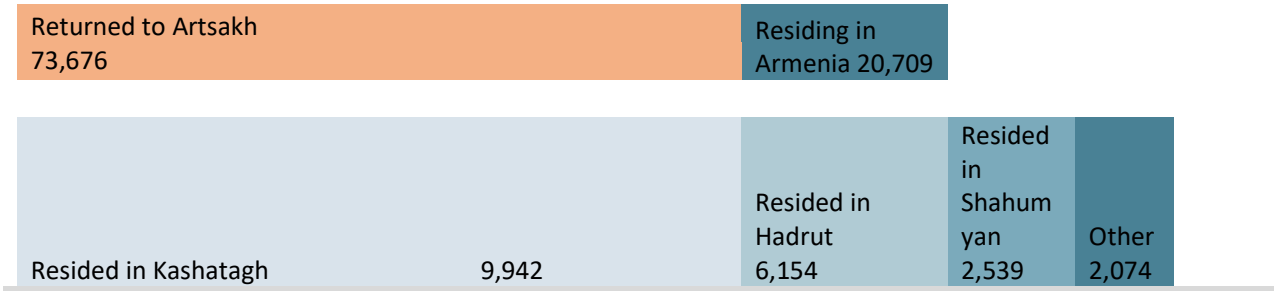
In September 2020, the Migration Service elaborated an information system that is accessible to both local self-governing bodies as well as state-interested bodies to register, evaluate the needs, and further assist people displaced from Artsakh due to the 44-day war unleashed by Azerbaijan on September 27, 2020. The identification of the people in the system is realized by combining them with the RA State Population Register.

In 2020, 94,385 people (30,423 families) were registered in the system, out of whom 65 percent were women and 35 percent were men. At the same time, most men were 0-16 years old (60 percent) or older than 65 years old (13 percent). As such, the displaced people from Artsakh were mainly women, children, and older people.

After the military actions in Artsakh, most displaced people from Artsakh (78 percent) returned to their permanent residency places as of the end of 2021. The

exceptions were those areas that went under Azerbaijan’s control. As of the end of 2021, around half of the displaced 20,709 people staying in Armenia were the residents of Kashatagh province; the following large groups were the residents of Hadrut and Shahumyan regions.

Pre-war residency of people forcibly displaced from Artsakh and still residing in Armenia
as of the end of 2021



RA Migration Service

About a quarter of people displaced from Artsakh and still residing in Armenia in 2021 (5,567 people 1,588 families) resided in Yerevan, the other large groups resided in Kotayk (3,291 people, 832 families), in Syunik (3,250 people, 900 families), and in Ararat (3,124 people, 793 families).

To mitigate the consequences of the 44-Day War for the displaced people from Artsakh, the RA Government approved and initiated 20 assistance projects. 97 percent of Artsakh people received assistance from one of the 20 projects.

People from Artsakh also received various assistance from different international organizations and charitable organizations operating in the Republic of Armenia.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The fight against human trafficking or exploitation in the Republic of Armenia has been going on for more than two decades, starting in 2002 and making significant progress in the following years. A fundamental legislative mechanism has been elaborated which outlines the functions of all involved parties in the fight against human trafficking or exploitation and the framework of protection and support of victims of human trafficking or exploitation. The adoption of the Law of the Republic of Armenia 'On identification of and assistance to victims of human trafficking and exploitation' on December 17, 2014, had significant importance in terms of establishing legislation and is aimed at making the protection and support to people who have been subjected to human trafficking and exploitation more productive. The adoption of the law was followed by the adoption of several legal acts ensuring the implementation of the law as well as making appropriate changes and additions to other legal acts regulating the sector.

To productively fight against human trafficking and exploitation in the Republic of Armenia three-year national programs have been developed and implemented. When developing these programs, assessments, and recommendations mentioned in the reports on the implementation of the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention against the exploitation (trafficking) of human beings by Armenia and US State Department reports have been taken into consideration.

According to the third published report (the first was published on September 21, 2012, and the second was published on March 20, 2017) by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), after the last report Armenian authorities continued to improve anti-trafficking laws and policies; among the legislative changes, the changes were mentioned in the criminal, criminal proceeding, and labor codes in 2021. National programs of anti-trafficking actions for 2016-2018 and then for 2020-2022 have been approved.

Armenia continued to be mainly the country of origin of trafficking, but cases of inner trafficking, as well as cases of exploitation of foreign citizens has been reported. The report refers to the data provided by the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, according to which 11 cases of exploitation have been reported in 2017, 9 cases in 2018, 8 cases in 2019, and 9 cases in 2020. In 2021, a drastic increase of trafficking victims was reported reaching 31.

According to the European Council report, 68 victims of trafficking have been identified in 2017-2021. All of them were Armenian citizens and have been the subject of exploitation in Armenia. The 2/3 of victims of trafficking were women and girls. Out of identified victims 35 were women, 19 were children (13 boys and 6 girls) and 14 were men. The predominant pattern of crime was sexual exploitation (34 victims) which was followed by labor exploitation (23 victims), forced beggary (8 victims), and slavery or related phenomena (3 victims).

Most identified victims (55) were the citizens of Armenia. A small number of Armenian citizens have been subjected to trafficking in other countries, particularly: two victims have been reported in Cyprus, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates, and one victim in Georgia and Turkey. Five foreigners have been subjected to labor exploitation in Armenia. In 2018, cases of labor exploitation of five Indian citizens (male) were reported, and in 2019 one case of an Iranian male citizen was reported. Among the asylum seekers in Armenia, no victims of trafficking have been reported.

In 2018-2021, in total 30 criminal cases have been initiated with the characteristics of human trafficking in Armenia. At the same time, 56 RA citizens have been identified and supported by the committee of victims of human trafficking and exploitation.

Since 2020, the project on "Social-psychological rehabilitation of people subjected to human trafficking, exploitation, and sexual violence" has been implemented through the delegated service provided organization by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The assistance package includes the provision of shelter, in-kind assistance, the provision of necessary documentation or recovery of documentation, medical care and service, legal, psychological, and counselling assistance, care provision (including in the relevant institution), provision of translation services, and provision of basic education.

The qualified service provider organization is selected through the competitive procedure and the contract is signed with the selected organization. In the framework of the contract, all potential victims, victims of a special category, as well as people at risk are being provided with all types of support provided by law. The organizations are committed to having qualified professionals, for example, psychologists, nurses, social workers, and lawyer-advocates experienced in the field of fight human trafficking and exploitation.

Apart from the above-mentioned assistance, based on the appropriate mediation defined by the legislation, the victim/victim of a special category is also provided with a one-time monetary support in the amount of AMD 250,000.

In 2021, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs jointly with the partner "UMCOR ARMENIA" Charitable Foundation, organized awareness raising trainings on human trafficking and exploitation, as well as, on the ways to prevent it for the employees of Child Care Institutions operating under the Ministry, social workers of Regional Social Service Bodies and for 14-18 years old children and their parents of Child Care Centres.

In 2021 the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs signed a memorandum of cooperation with the World Vision Armenia within the framework of the "Together against the Human Trafficking" Project. The aim of the Memorandum is by combining the efforts and resources of the parties, to promote the harmonization and improvement of legislation in the field of identification and support of people subjected to human trafficking and exploitation, to establish and empower new institutional mechanisms, to develop and improve capacity building skills of employees of authorized state bodies as well as to realize actions on establishing an

electronic system about the data of people subjected to human trafficking or exploitation. Within the framework of the Project, a Manual about "Social Work with People Subjected to Human Trafficking: The Prevention, Intervention and Rehabilitation" has been elaborated for the trainings of social workers. Also, trainings have been organized among the employees of the Unified Social Service Regional centres and community social workers.

Part B

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

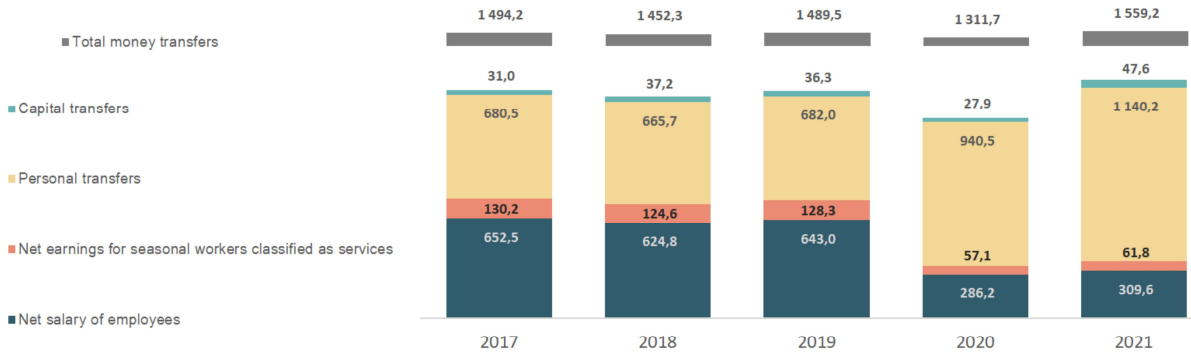
REMITTANCES

The volumes and influence of remittances

According to the publications of the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia in 2018, the volume of remittances made by individuals to the Republic of Armenia decreased by 3 percent and in 2019 increased by 3 percent, in 2017-2019 the volume almost has not been changed making an annual average of about 1.48 billion US dollars. Although, because of COVID-19 in 2020 there has been reported a drastic decrease in the volume of remittances (12 percent) made by individuals, in 2021 the volume has not only improved but also reached USD 1.56 billion (11.2 percent of 2021 GDP) exceeding the index of 2017 by about 4 percent. Taking into consideration the migration index dynamics of 2017-2021 (particularly the decrease in emigration in 2018-2020 and then the increase in 2021) all these tendencies become completely explainable.

From the point of view of the structures of remittances to the RA individuals, it is significant that in 2020-2021 (and especially in 2020) in the total volumes of remittances, the net salaries of migrant workers, and the net earnings of seasonal workers have decreased significantly, in contrast, the personal transfers significantly increased.

Structure and volumes of remittances made by individuals (million US dollars)
towards RA in 2017-2021

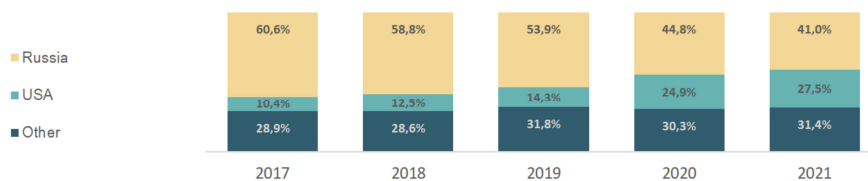


RA Central Bank

Although the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia does not publish data on the geographical distribution of the countries from where the remittances were made by individuals, some insights can be obtained by studying the geography of transfers received from the abroad by the name of individuals through the banks of the Republic of Armenia, which, according to expert estimates covers a wide range of transfers but can still be useful for understanding the tendencies.

As a result of the study of these data, it becomes clear that in 2017-2021, year by year the share of remittances made from Russia to Armenia has steadily decreased in the total volume of remittances, instead, the share of remittances from the US has steadily increased. It is significant that the share of remittances from other countries for the same period has not almost changed.

Transfers received from abroad with the name of individuals through RA banks per country



RA Central Bank

The RA Statistical Committee Integrated Living Conditions Survey provides additional information on transfers received from abroad and on their usage. According to the Survey estimates of 2017, 2019, and 2020, in 2017 around 261,500 people received transfers from abroad, then in 2019 the number of people was already 127,000, and in 2020 only 87,500 people. At the same time, in 2017 80.3 percent of transfers were received from Russia, in 2019 - 73.7 percent, and in 2020 only 65 percent.

In terms of remittances received from abroad, one of the most important findings of the ILCS is that remittances almost all have been used solely for the aim of current household consumption (99 percent in 2017, 88 percent in 2019, 92 percent in 2020) and only a small part has been directed to capital investment or entrepreneurship.

EU4IMPACT ARMENIA PROJECT

Projects to encourage the use of remittances for development are an important priority in terms of enhancing the positive impact of migration.

One of those projects is 'EU4IMPACT ARMENIA' which launched in 2020. The overall goal of the Project is to contribute to the empowerment of migrant workers, returnees, and their family members through the mobilization of remittances by making investments for local development and job creation. The Project (the duration 2020-2024) is financed by the European Union and is implemented by the International Center for Migration Policy Development.

The Project provides grants in the amount of 2,000 to 10,000 euros for business establishment as well as assists in acquiring all necessary knowledge and skills for proper, literate, and professional business management. The Project applicants should be ready and commit to making their own investments equal to the amount of the requested grant.

As a result of the training organized during the first stage, the participants develop their business models. Based on the competition of presented business models, 80 participants have been selected out of 125 participants who will continue to participate in the online trainings organized by Iris Business Foundation. The trainings cover the following topics: marketing, business operations, legal issues, finance, and accounting. The courses will last from April 25, 2022, after which the participants will develop their business plans and present them to juries.

USING THE POTENTIAL OF DIASPORA

Repatriation and the effective integration of repats in Armenia is a state priority that is aimed at improving the RA demographic and security situation, involving the diaspora's professional potential and financial resources, ensuring RA modernization and progress, assisting the return of compatriots from emergency and threatened communities and other strategic issues.

In 2018-2021, along with the increasing rate of repatriation, the efforts of the state to encourage the professional, technological, and financial potential of the Diaspora directed to the development of Armenia have been significantly intensified.

Since 2020, the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs has been implementing the 'iGorts' Project which is fully financed by the RA Government.

The Project invites Diaspora Armenian specialists to work in the public sector and Government of the Republic of Armenia. “iGorts” is a 12-month fellowship project that allows 50 Armenian specialists from all over the world to work in the RA Government. The two main goals of the Project are the improvement and development of Armenian state institutions as well as the promotion of professional repatriation. The Diaspora professionals are placed in various fields of state departments that need their expertise and contribute to the improvement and development of programs and policies within the state institution. During the 12 months of their activities, the repatriated professionals work on various projects, contribute their knowledge on the best international experience, and provide recommendations on how to improve management systems.

According to the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, 70 percent of participants of the 1-year project stayed in Armenia after the completion of the Project.

The “nerUzh” project, which was initiated and implemented by the Office of High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs and the RA Ministry of High Tech Industry, is aimed at promoting the repatriation of technological and entrepreneurial talents from the diaspora.

The Project is aimed at empowering the Armenian startup ecosystem by promoting the influx of innovative, expandable technology startups from the diaspora and by using the intercontinental network to present Armenia in the international market as a gateway to impactful technology deployment and expansion. “NerUzh” technological Project is aimed at introducing diaspora entrepreneurs to the possibilities and country’s business practices of establishing startups in Armenia as well as to the local ecosystem.

The winners of the competition are invited to repatriate to Armenia and receive financial assistance equal to USD 15,000-30,000 as well as receive mentorship for developing their project with the condition that they will present a business plan, will register their company in Armenia and will open local corporate bank accounts.

More information about the projects involving the diaspora potential and encouraging repatriation can be found on [High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs webpage](#).

PART C

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2022

The migration management in Armenia is decentralized and migration-related functions are divided between various state bodies. In the field of migration RA Police, National Security Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs all have responsibilities, and the main responsible body is the Migration Service which operates under the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure.

The institutional structure of migration management

GOVERNMENT

Approves the strategy of migration policy, and ensures the coordinated activity of state government bodies in the field of migration.

PRESIDENT

Solves the issues concerning the granting and terminating of RA citizenship.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Adopts laws on migration and ratifies international agreements.

POLICE

Implements activities to prevent, solve and investigate illegal migration and human trafficking crimes.

National Security Service

The prevention of illegal border crossings, entry rejections, the isolation of foreigners with no documents or irregular migrants, and the identification of their identity.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs

The promotion of repatriation, the promotion of smooth integration of repats, the involvement of diaspora professional potential, and the support to diaspora investors.

Statistical Committee

The collection, development, summarizing, and publication of migration-related data.

Migration Service

The development and implementation of migration focused projects, the monitoring of migration situation, the decision-making for asylum provision, the integration of refugees, the conclusion of readmission agreements and the implementation of functions fixed in these agreements.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

The development of recommendations for improving the legislation on internal and external movement of workforce.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Acts as the coordinator for the implementation of international projects and the responsible body for visa policy, as well as issues entry visas abroad.

Passport and Visa Department of RA Police

The organization of unified passport system operation, the admission of citizenship issuing and terminating documents, the provision of entry visas, permits statuses, the management of population state register, and the processing of visas at border checkpoints.

Integration Department

The organization of integration for asylum-seeking and recognized refugees, as well as for long-term migrants in Armenia.

Return and Reintegration Department

The implementation of reintegration-related projects for RA returned citizens, the provision of responsibilities as defined by the readmission agreements and the improvement of relevant procedures, cooperation with state bodies of foreign countries, specialized international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations operating in the field for migration process regulation.

Migration Projects and Monitoring Department

The participation in the development of the policy of state regulation of migration processes on the basis of international experience and implementation within the limits of its authorities.

Asylum and Legal Department

The organization of asylum provision to foreign citizens or stateless people, the preparation of legal acts and documentation on the service functions, the provision of legal support to Service departments about their functions, and the implementation of asylum applications court-appealing procedures.

Unified Social Service

The provision of consultation to individuals who want to work and study abroad, mediation with employers in foreign countries.

THE EXPECTED CHANGES WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

The RA Government Decision No 638-L adopted on April 23, 2020, approved the reform strategy of the Police of the Republic of Armenia and the resulting action plan for 2020-2022. One of the main directions of Police reforms is the establishment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which will allow increasing the sector productivity level and ensure both parliamentary and civilian control of the field.

As a result of reforms, the Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and RA Police Passport and Visa Department will join by developing a new functioning body – the Migration and Citizenship Service, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Police reform strategy justifies the necessity of migration management new model in the following ways:

The practice of leading countries and cross-border structures shows that migration services are best implemented under relevant internal affairs structures (in case of Australia – Department of Home Affairs, in case of the USA – Department of Homeland Security, in case of the EU – DG for Migration and Home Affairs), taking into consideration the nature of migration functions and types of services provided (organizing asylum provision to foreign citizens and stateless people, ensuring the fulfilment of commitments defined by interstate readmission agreements, and so on).

The main reason the migration functions are carried out in an unproductive way in Armenia is that one of their significant components, the provision of services to citizens, foreigners, and stateless people, is distributed among various state bodies, and beneficiary groups must deal with various departments to solve one issue. As a result, management productivity and inter-involvement in the migration field are decreasing, the coordination of actions is becoming complicated, the processes of public service provision slow down, duplication of actions increases, issues related to data transfer and database synchronization arise, and complications in the identification of cases and people occur.

The continuous alteration in the migration situation and the re-evaluation of the priorities of the migration policy makes the issue of reforming and increasing the efficiency of the state system of migration management relevant today. With the aim of overcoming the mentioned gaps and increasing the productivity and comprehensiveness of migration management, it is advisable to have a centralized structure by merging the Migration Service of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure along with the Police Passport and Visa Department under a single policy-making body of the sector in the form of a civil service and demonstrating an integrated approach for the management of all the components of the migration chain.

In 2020, the Migration Service jointly with the Ministry of Justice worked on the development of a package of draft laws on the structure and operation of the Government and related laws. In addition, new drafts of the service regulation, employee-training program, and digitalization modules of the functions to be performed by the service were developed jointly with the RA Passport Police and Visa Department.

The establishment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was planned to be completed in 2021, according to the 2020-2022 RA Police reform Action Plan, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 44-day war in 2020, the process was somewhat slowed down, and the establishment of the Ministry is planned in March 2023 according to the RA Government Action Plan of 2021-2026.

MIGRATION POLICY

THE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS OF MIGRATION POLICY IN 2018-2021

With the Government Decision N801-L adopted on May 20, 2021, the concept, and Action Plan for state management of migration of the Republic of Armenia has been approved.

The migration management-related reforms stipulated by the Concept focusing on border management, document security, return and reintegration, fight against human trafficking and organized crime will contribute to strengthening ties with the European Union and pave the way for visa liberalization negotiations. The stipulated reforms will also enable strengthening cooperation in the frames of Eurasian Economic Union by facilitating labour mobility and promoting economic development.

According to the Concept, the RA Government is directed by three **basic principles**: co-management, cooperation, and evidence-based principles.

The **values** of migration state management policies are national security and public solidarity, the rights and dignity of all groups of migrants, cultural diversity and reconciliation of civic values, mobility, and international participation.

The **target groups** of the Concept are foreigners, returnees, repats, internally displaced peoples, asylum-seekers, refugees, forced displaced people, and emigrants.

Given the situation in the field of migration and existing issues as well as the predictions about new migration flows, the Concept defines **nine strategic goals** for each one outlining several migration management directions, in particular:

1

Intensification of the interrelationships between Migration management and the improvement of the Republic of Armenia's demographic situation and repatriation policies

Encouraging the return and repatriation

Evaluation of necessary volumes and structures of migration flows and the promotion of targeted inflows

Evaluation of emigration flows and reduction of target flows

2

Increasing the effectiveness for the fight against irregular and illegal migration

Prevention of illegal border crossings

Improvement of stay permit registration and regulation systems for foreigners

Productive and humanitarian management of irregular migration cases

Strengthening of supervision of private organizations engaged in labor recruitment

Fight against human trafficking and exploitation

Reduction of irregular migration originating from the Republic of Armenia

Fight against passport and visa forgery in Armenia

3

Increasing the effectiveness of management of borders, entries, exits, and stay permits for foreigners

Improvement of people identification systems on the border

Improvement of the procedures for the transfer of people from the border checkpoints to the jurisdiction of other structures

Re-evaluation of Border Electronic Management Information System and their complete usage from the point of migration flow management

Capacity building of border service staff

Inclusion of migration management agenda in the process of visa policy review

Reform of the policy of issuance and extension of RA entry visas

Improvement of the asylum provision system

Increase of information availability

Improvement of readmission and return processes in Armenia

Improvement of deportation processes

4

Improvement of rights and interests of various groups of migrants, development of international protection system

Improvement of the Republic of Armenia citizens' rights and interests in foreign countries

Social and health protection of the Republic of Armenia citizens' abroad

Improvement of migrants' rights protection in the Republic of Armenia

Improvement of existing regulations on employment activities of foreigners in Armenia

Legal and social protection of internally displaced people and forced displaced people (who don't have legal grounds for applying for refugee status, particularly the RA citizens displaced from Syria to Armenia, forced returnees from Artsakh Republic)

Improvement of international protection system

Strengthening quality control and efficiency of asylum procedures

5

Reform of organization of foreigner's integration and returnee's reintegration in Armenia, as well as the improvement of the host environment of foreigners in Armenia

Increasing access to education, healthcare, social support, and protection of rights

Cultural integration

Improvement of civic integration

Supporting employment and economic inclusion

Creation of welcoming and hospitable environment in Armenia

6

Increasing migration influence on sustainable human development in Armenia

Prevention of brain drain and reduction of target groups flows

Promotion of migration with the aim of educational and experience exchange programs

Reduction of labor migration

Decreasing the negative influence of migration and reducing risks, creating alternatives for traditional forms and directions (the countries of Commonwealth of Independent States)

Identification of human and economic potential in diaspora and introduction of mechanisms to use that potential for the sustainable human development of Armenia

Directing remittances from abroad to development

Strengthening relations with Armenian communities abroad

7

Promotion of international cooperation

Increasing preparedness to respond to migration crises

Creation of migration crisis management system

Management of border crisis

Creation of flexible system of international protection

Creation of mechanisms for conducting statistics, monitoring, and bilateral transfer of information

Establishment of systems for documentation, registration, and referral of displaced people

Provision of infrastructure

Elaboration of programs and mechanisms ensuring the security, and crisis assistance for people

Management of international mobility restrictions

Expanding international cooperation around mass influx crisis management

Provision of sustainable funds

8

Increasing international and interstate cooperation in the field of migration

Increasing regional and global cooperation

Intensification of bilateral cooperation

Expansion of cooperation between state institutions

Enhancing the participation of international organizations and civil society structures in RA

Increasing of Armenia's role in international platforms

9

Increasing coordination, unity, and productivity of migration management

Creation of institutional grounds for comprehensive migration management

Promotion of the evidence base approach in migration policy formation and implementation

Increasing of effectiveness of result and impact assessment of migration policy

Increasing of quality and accessibility of public services provided to different group of migrants

Capacity-building on migration management

Inclusion of internal migration in the migration management policy agenda

Creation of mechanisms to secure sustainable funds

THE POLICY DOCUMENTS UNDER PROCESSING OR APPROVAL STAGE

The Concept of State Management of Migration of the Republic of Armenia stipulates the development of four programs:

- ✓ Regulation of integration and reintegration policies
- ✓ Management of migration flows
- ✓ Crisis management of forced migrants' mass influx
- ✓ Promotion of repatriation

The RA migration policy strategy on the regulation of **integration and reintegration issues** (2022-2023) and draft action plan has been elaborated in 2021. This comprehensive document addresses the formulation and measurement of integration and reintegration, the principles of integration and reintegration policies, the target groups and their main needs, the strategic goals of integration and reintegration policies, the main actors of the policy, their cooperation format and result evaluation mechanisms as well as to the financial means for implementing the strategic and action plans. The draft of the strategy has been introduced to the Office of the Prime Minister in December 2021.

The development of the project for **migration flow management** is assigned to the newly establishing Ministry of Internal Affairs

The draft of the project **of forced migrants' mass influx crisis management** has been introduced to the Office of Prime Minister in March 2022. It is stipulated, that with the approval of the project conditions for a proper response to migration crises will be settled and the level of cooperation between the bodies of the state administration system in the management of forced migration flows will be strengthened. In addition, the project will ensure coordinated activities between central and local self-government bodies and local, international, public, and other organizations. This will result in the increase of management productivity of forced migration flows.

The elaboration of the **Repatriation project** is authorized to the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs and Migration Service. The draft of the Project will be ready in September 2022.

LEGISLATIVE FIELD REFORMS

The program for “The establishment of the electronic management system for **issuing work permits** to foreigners and registering employment contracts concluded with foreigners” has been approved by the RA Government Decision No 670-L (adopted on April 30, 2020), in the framework of which the following legal acts have been drafted and approved in 2021.

- ✓ The Republic of Armenia Law ‘On making amendments and additions to the Law ‘On Foreigners’.
- ✓ The Republic of Armenia Law ‘On making amendments and additions to the Law ‘On administrative legal violations in the Republic of Armenia Code of Conduct’.
- ✓ The Republic of Armenia Law ‘On making amendments and additions to the law ‘On State Duty’.

The suggested amendments enable possessing the complete picture of migrants arriving in Armenia, which is important not only for preventing irregular migration but also for protecting the rights of those people.

As a result of approved legislative amendments:

- ✓ The unified electronic system for registering foreign employees will be launched from January 1, 2022, which will enable the provision of simultaneous access to all government agencies involved in the work permit process, reducing the time spent on the process and improving administration.
- ✓ The procedure for issuing the work permit is being simplified. Previously, the work permit has been issued to the employer, on the grounds of which the employee has been receiving residence status. According to the new regulations, the work permit is a confirmation issued on an electronic platform, on the grounds of which the foreigner receives temporary residence status. As a result, the administrative tasks are reduced, and the burden of both the employer and the foreigner is lightened.
- ✓ The execution of the norms regulating the work activities of citizens of the Eurasian Economic Union member states stipulated by the Eurasian Economic Union agreement is clarified.
- ✓ The functions of states authorized bodies involved in the process of issuing stay permits as well as the functions of other bodies involved in the process are clarified.
- ✓ The opportunity to collect complete statistical data, including the data on foreign citizens working in the territory of the Republic of Armenia without work permits.

Another package of 2021 approved legislative reforms was for the **rights of asylum seekers**, particularly, the norms related to the right of imprisoned people to receive asylum in the Republic of Armenia in accordance with the law.

The Law of the Republic of Armenia ‘On refugees and asylum’ with the amendments done in the Code of Administrative Jurisdiction and in the Criminal Code has

clarified the procedures for applying for asylum or for receiving refugee status in the manner established by the law for the foreigners whose freedom has been restricted or for stateless people; also the procedure for judicially appealing the negative decision made by the competent authority as stipulated by law, with clear and predictable deadlines have been set for ensuring the legal certainty, criminal responsibility, and the inevitability of punishment, the normal course of criminal proceedings and excluding the possibility of violation of rights.

THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF MIGRATION

In 2018-2021 Armenia continued to develop and expand international cooperation in the field of migration in multilateral and bilateral formats, especially in the fields of readmission agreements, return and reintegration, and in the field of migration management. Because of COVID-19, from 2020, in the agenda of international cooperation discussions on migration management in crisis situations have significantly increased, in which Armenia has also actively participated.

The significant events and achievements of international cooperation in the field of migration in 2018-2021 are summarized below

2018

The second high-level meeting on [Mobility Partnership between Armenia and the EU](#) was held in Brussels on January 23.

The [Memorandum of Understanding was signed between RA Migration Service and the France-Armenian development organization](#) on February 22. Within the frames of the Memorandum, the France-Armenian development organization provides information to RA returned migrants on reintegration issues, reintegration project, relevant stakeholders, and the types of assistance provided through the “One Window” service activity.

[Cooperation has been established with the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency \(FRONTEX\)](#). On July, Armenian delegation participated in introduction visit to the headquarter of the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) Warsaw office. An agreement has been reached on providing training courses by the FRONTEX to the employees realizing readmission functions.

The European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) Armenia program launched on November 8, and is financed by the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The Project consists of 15-member states consortium, which is the initiative of the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) Project, the leading organization of which is the Repatriation and Return Service of the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands. The overall goal of the Project is the strengthening of Armenian capacity in the field of migration

management, as well as the provision of social-economic reintegration assistance to RA forced and/or voluntarily returning citizens from EU member states. [The Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between RA Migration Service and International Center for Migration Policy Development Armenian office.](#)

"Global Declaration on Migration" was adopted under the auspices of the United Nations during the [high-level intergovernmental conference on the Global Declaration on Safe, Regular and Secure Migration convened](#) in Marrakesh, Kingdom of Morocco. Armenia was among the delegations of 150 countries.

2019

[On September 26-27, a capacity building training as well as a seminar on "EU – the best experience in the field of return"](#) was organized for the employees involved in return and readmission fields

The first [Global Refugee Forum was held](#) in Geneva and organized within the framework of the Global Refugee Declaration approved by the UN General Assembly in December 2018. Armenia was representing the delegation led by Mr. Suren Papikyan, the Minister of RA Territorial Administration, and Infrastructures.

During 2019, by the initiative of the Armenian side, visits have been organized to EU countries of significant importance with the aim of promoting negotiations on the launch of the EU visa liberalization dialogue. As such, Armenian delegations with official visits have been [to Germany, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, France, Spain, the Czech Republic, Sweden, and Finland.](#)

The first high-level conference on the ["Quality Initiative of Asylum Systems in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus"](#) was hold in Geneva. It brought together relevant ministries and asylum stakeholders from six program countries, along with senior UNHCR officials, with the aim to evaluate implemented activities and to jointly identify further steps to strengthen asylum and refugee protection in the region.

2020

With the initiative of the Migration Service, [a meeting-discussion was held in Vienna with RA consuls performing readmission functions in EU Member States and colleagues responsible for readmission issues in EU Member States,](#) on theoretical and practical issues of return, readmission and reintegration.

In cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), several activities were carried out within the framework of the regional program "[Enhancing Migrants' Rights and Good Governance in Armenia and Georgia](#)" (EMERGE).

2021

In 2021, the ratification process of the Comprehensive and Extended Partnership Agreement (CEPA) concluded between Armenia and the EU and the European Atomic Energy Community and their member states was completed and as of the 1st of March it fully came into the force. The 14th and 15th articles of the 3rd part of the Agreement

refer to “Cooperation on Migration, Asylum and Border Management Issues, Movement and Readmission of People”.

[European Migration Network \(EMN\) delegation](#) organized a visit to Armenia to discuss the cooperation vision and the opportunity for Armenia to join the EMN network as an observer.

The project “[EU4IMPACT ARMENIA](#)” has been officially launched which is financed by the EU and is implemented by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

Within the framework of cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Armenia participated in the IOM International Dialogue on Migration online session on the topic of “Responding the crisis in COVID-19 conditions” Armenia hosted the EMERGE project's second regional thematic online conference on "Return, reintegration and labor migration in the context of the new coronavirus pandemic" and participated in the second sitting of Project implementing body, as well as participated in the [112th session of the IOM Council](#) on "The Impact of COVID-19 on Borders, Migration and Mobility: learning lessons and preparing for the future".

Armenia participated in the [meeting of high officials organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#).

On November 26, the 7th round table of Return and Reintegration European Network (ERRIN) high officials took place focusing on return issues.

In 2018-2021, within the framework of its commitments, Armenia continued to participate in regular sessions and meetings in different formats of international cooperation in the field of migration, including:

The session of the joint committee on the implementation of the RA-EU agreement on the readmission of people residing without a permit (in 2018- Brussels, in 2019- Yerevan, in 2020- through a written format, in 2021 – through a video conference).

The sessions of the RA-EU subcommittee on justice, freedom and security (in 2018 – Yerevan, in 2019 - [Brussels](#), in 2021 – [Yerevan](#)).

The meetings of the Council of Heads of Migration Bodies of the Commonwealth of Independent States (in 2018- Bishkek, in 2019 – Yerevan, in 2021 on February 18 through the video conference, and in 2022 – through the conference).

The regular 6th Advisory Committee session on Eurasian Economic Union Migration Policy was held in Yerevan, on September 20, 2018

Meetings of the Armenian-Russian task force in 2019 and 2021, set up for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the agreement signed on July 19, 1994 between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the Russian Federation “On the labor activities and social protection of citizens of the Republic of Armenia working in the territory of the Russian Federation and citizens of the Russian Federation working in the territory of the Republic of Armenia”

Within the framework of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Extended Partnership Agreement (CEPA), [the first session of cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Armenia](#) took place on November 27, 2018, and the second meeting was organized in Brussels on December 16, 2019.

The meetings of high officials of the Prague Process (in 2018 – [Prague](#), in 2019 – [Bucharest](#), in 2021 – through the [video conference](#)).

The Annual Migration Conference of Vienna ([2018](#), 2019, 2020 – through the video conference, [2021](#)) is an important annual event organized by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and brings together politicians, high officials, government experts, sectoral specialists, representatives of international organizations, civil society, academic institutions and media outlets and is aimed at discussing important components of migration policy development.