



PRAGUE PROCESS  
ПРАЖСКИЙ ПРОЦЕСС

# Republic of Armenia

Migration Profile Light

2014

Funded by  
the European Union



# PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND DISCLAIMER

After the adoption of the Building Migration Partnerships Joint Declaration at the Ministerial Conference in Prague in April 2009, the Building Migration Partnerships initiative (BMP) started to work on establishing the BMP Knowledge Base. The Knowledge Base, nowadays known as the Prague Process Knowledge Base, consists of a set of Extended Migration Profiles<sup>1</sup> elaborated and endorsed in 2010-2011 and the interactive online map (i-Map), which visualizes the available information.

The Prague Process Targeted Initiative (PP TI) is an EU-funded project, which builds upon the BMP initiative and implements selected priorities identified in the Prague Process Action Plan endorsed in Poznan in November 2011. One of the objectives of PP TI is to maintain the Knowledge Base, keep it up-to-date and develop it further.

While continuous attention to updating and developing Extended Migration Profiles remains, the PP TI has taken into account the feedback received from the Prague Process participating states and has proposed the concept of the Migration Profile Light. In comparison to the Extended Migration Profile, which from its name indicates that the information should be of thorough and detailed nature, the Migration Profile Light should be a handy tool with a limited number of pages clearly indicating the areas of interest. The Migration Profile Light should aim at key priorities and problems, easy annual updatability and standardized data for all countries involved.

The proposed Migration Profile Light (MPL) concept has been well received by the Prague Process participating states and Germany volunteered in testing the concept by filling in the template. The MPL on Germany has been developed and the process of its establishment has led to identification of gaps in the first template, which have been covered in cooperation with the PP TI Support Team at ICMPD.

The aim of the PP TI is to establish the Knowledge Base as a useful tool consisting of state-owned migration profiles with standard and comparable data categories. While aiming at the seven leading states of PP TI and the PP TI non-EU participating states, the interest of the Prague Process is to collect national MPLs for all 50 Prague Process participating states.

The MPL is an exercise, which targets all states, believing that this will lead to mutual understanding of the migration situation in partner states, existing migratory flows, priorities, problems and interests. The MPL should serve as an informative but also policy making tool. In case of need, methodological and expert support is planned to contribute to development of MPL in states with limited experience with such exercise.

Ownership and responsibility of the content in terms of data provided in this Migration Profile resides solely with the country elaborating the report.

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<sup>1</sup> Albania (endorsed 2010), Armenia (2011), Azerbaijan (2010), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010), Czech Republic (2010), Georgia (2011), Hungary (2011), Kazakhstan (2010), Kyrgyzstan (2011), Poland (2010), Romania (2010), Slovakia (2010), Tajikistan (2010), Ukraine (2011). Belarus, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan continue working on their Extended Migration Profiles.

The PP TI Support Team within the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is ready to help and can be contacted at [ppti@icmpd.org](mailto:ppti@icmpd.org). The Knowledge Base of the Prague Process is accessible at [www.pragueprocess.eu](http://www.pragueprocess.eu) and [www.imap-migration.org](http://www.imap-migration.org), section Prague Process.

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# Background information on the country

## 1.1. Size, population, bordering countries and length of borders

<b>Official name</b>	Republic of Armenia
<b>Capital</b>	Yerevan
<b>Territory</b>	29,743 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population</b>	3,022,000 (January 2013) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Year of accession to the EU</b>	-
<b>Membership in the Schengen Area</b>	No
<b>Neighboring countries</b>	Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Turkey
<b>Length of borders</b>	1,254 Km

## 1.2. Short characteristics of the country

The Republic of Armenia (RA) proclaimed its independence on September 21, 1991 and joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on December 21, 1991. After gaining its independence, the RA became an active participant of migration processes evoked by social and economic causes, natural disasters and escalation of the armed Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The latter two factors produced the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region.

The main emigration flow is directed to the Russian Federation, with up to 93% of labour migrants going there. The main reason for leaving is the issue of employment. According to the official data and expert estimates, about 30% of the Armenian population participated in external migration between 1990 and 2013.

According to the electronic control system of border control, in 2014 the number of departures exceeded the number of arrivals by 41.7 thousand (for the citizens of Armenia the figure was 47.1 thousand). Whereas before there had been a gradual decrease in the negative balance of passenger traffic, 2014 witnessed its increase by 10.5 thousand or 33.5% as compared to the previous year.

As in previous years, a large share of migration flows of the Republic is taken by labour migrants. Data analysis of the sample survey conducted in 2013 showed that out of every ten departures, eight are undertaken with the purpose of employment abroad.

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<sup>2</sup> National Statistical Service of RA, [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/demos\\_14\\_3.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/demos_14_3.pdf), P. 46, last accessed on August 18, 2015.

Immigration flows are relatively small. They are formed mainly by labour immigrants, students, foreign nationals of Armenian origin who received residency status in Armenia and asylum seekers.

In 2014, the number of foreign nationals receiving permission for either temporary or permanent residence in the Republic of Armenia was respectively 3295 and 1122 people as opposed to 3553 and 1077 of the previous year. Citizens of Iran, India and Russia accounted for 50% of the total number of persons who were issued a permit for temporary or permanent residence. In 2014, special residence status was granted to 702 foreigners, which was 148 less than in 2013.

In 2014 the number of foreigners granted the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia was 11,775 people, which was 44% lower than in 2013.

In 2014, the number of persons seeking asylum, was 226 people; of these 136 people were recognized as refugees and granted asylum. Of those granted refugee status 64 were the citizens of Syria and 43 the citizens of Ukraine.

The number of administrative violations committed by foreigners and related to migration was 2633 in 2014.

In 2014 non-commercial remittances by individuals via only the banking system amounted to 1.7286 billion USD, which is 7.6% less than the previous year. Russia's share in the total volume of remittances (10.7%) dropped somewhat as well and amounted to 83.0% of the total.

## 2. Migration flows and stocks of immigrants and emigrants

### 2.1. Migration Flows

According to the expert estimates based on data and sample surveys, negative migration balance amounted to about 1.2 million people in 1991-2012. Net migration amounted to -655.000 persons in 1991-1994, -250.000 in 1995-2001, -150.000 in 2002-2007 and -150.000 persons in 2008-2012.<sup>3</sup>

According to the data obtained on the basis of registration at the place of residence and removal from the register of the Passport and Visa Department of the RA Police, in the period from 2002 to 2008, about 71.8 thousand persons emigrated from Armenia, and 13.000 immigrated into the country.<sup>4</sup> However, it should be noted that these statistics are not complete and do not reflect the real scope of migration flows, since it

<sup>3</sup> Report on the household survey concerning migration in Armenia by the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, the IOM, the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan 2014, p. 63,  
[http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=41\\_7&products\\_id=1400](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=41_7&products_id=1400)

<sup>4</sup> National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia: [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/demos\\_12\\_20-21.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/demos_12_20-21.pdf), last accessed on Apr. 25, 2014

does not account for those Armenian citizens who emigrated without proper registration of their departure, as well as those who arrived without registration.

**Table 1. Net migration, thousand persons<sup>5</sup>**

Net migration	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	-34.3	-38.6	-37.3	-28.5	-9.4	-24.4

\* The 2008-2011 data were recalculated on the basis of the results of RA population Census of 2011.

The understanding of the volume of net migration may be formed on the basis of the data concerning border crossings. Thus, according to the Electronic Information System of Border Management (EISBM)<sup>6</sup> the difference between the arrivals and departures in the RA was about -23 thousand in 2008, -25 thousand in 2009, -46.7 thousand in 2010, -43.8 thousand in 2011., -42.8 thousand in 2012 and -31.2 thousand in 2013. In 2014, the number of departures from the republic exceeded the number of arrivals by 41.7 thousand (for the citizens of Armenia, the figure was 47.1 thousand). Whereas before that there had been a gradual decrease in the negative balance of passenger traffic, 2014 witnessed 10.5 thousand or 33.5% increase of it as compared to the previous year.

**Table 2. The volume of international passenger traffic of the RA by year<sup>7</sup> (thousand persons)**

Year	Arrivals	Departures	Balance	Total passenger traffic	Flow increase / decrease as compared to the previous year, %
2000	399.7	457.2	-57.5	856.9	-
2001	508.2	568.6	-60.4	1076.8	125.7
2002	590.7	593.4	-2.7	1184.1	110.0
2003	618.3	628.5	-10.2	1246.8	105.3
2004	739.9	737.8	2.1	1477.7	118.5
2005	845.8	833.3	12.5	1679.1	113.6
2006	983.7	962.0	21.7	1945.7	115.9
2007	1293.6	1296.8	-3.2	2590.3	133.1

<sup>5</sup> National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, Population, part 2, [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/demos\\_14\\_3.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/demos_14_3.pdf), p. 43, last accessed on August 31, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv\\_09\\_13r\\_520.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv_09_13r_520.pdf), [http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv\\_12\\_13r\\_520.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv_12_13r_520.pdf), last accessed on August 4, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> The number of RA border crossings by year: [http://smsmta.am/?menu\\_id=18](http://smsmta.am/?menu_id=18)

<b>2008</b>	1397.1	1420.2	-23.1	2817.3	108.8
<b>2009*</b>	1432.0	1457.0	-25.0	2889.0	102.5
<b>2010*</b>	1754.2	1800.9	-46.7	3555.1	123.1
<b>2011*</b>	1945.1	1988.9	43.8	3934	110.7
<b>2012*</b>	2191.9	2234.7	-42.8	4426.6	112.5
<b>2013</b>	2476.3	2507.5	-31.2	4983.8	112.6
<b>2014</b>	2734.6	2776.3	-41.7	5510.9	110.6

\* National Security Service of the Republic of Armenia carries out targeted activities on program updating of the Information System of Electronic Border Control. As the result of these activities the difference between the number of arrivals in and departures from Armenia was calculated more precisely and was as follows: 19.3 thousand people in 2009, -37.9 thousand people in 2010, -43.5 thousand in 2011 and -44.8 thousand people in 2012.

**Table 3. The number of RA border crossings by the country of citizenship, 2010-2012<sup>8</sup>**

Country	2010		2011		2012	
	Arrivals	Departures	Arrivals	Departures	Arrivals	Departures
Armenia	905,691	<b>962931</b>	1,038,404	<b>1,087,530</b>	1,221,630	<b>1,271,276</b>
Georgia	302,941	301,866	303,929	301,609	321,046	318,750
Russia	277,795	271,899	297,155	294,450	350,614	350,375
Iran	120,867	118,813	139,560	138,894	111,028	111,453
US	21,010	21,084	22,315	22,668	23,420	23,782
Ukraine	16,358	16,130	17,365	17,341	19,521	19,672
France	14,166	13,771	16,276	16,414	16,209	16,260
Turkey	11,657	11,602	12,209	12,202	10,459	10,438
Germany	8,905	8,741	10,955	10,997	12,627	12,569
Italy	6,246	6,223	8,791	8,811	9,684	9,726
UK	5,234	4,647	5,797	5,850	8,064	8,169
Netherlands	4,528	4,672	5,222	5,180	5,283	5,329
Syria	3,690	3,531	4,449	4,269	9,428	4,701
Poland	3,238	3,217	3,637	3,678	4,766	4,797
Kazakhstan	3,049	2,942	3,309	3,304	4,012	3,969
Lebanon	2,641	2,610	3,145	3,107	4,109	3,688

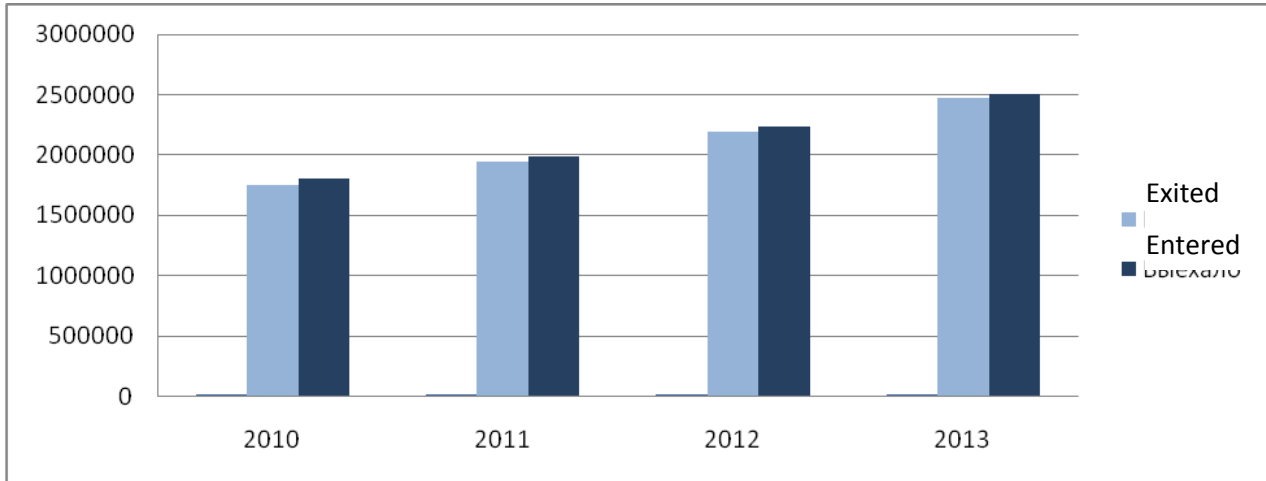
<sup>8</sup> National Statistical Service of Armenia. The full list of countries and data by countries: [http://armstatbank.am/Table.aspx?rxid=002ccgeg-1bc8-4ae6-aaa3-40c0e377450a&px\\_db=ArmStatbank&px\\_type=PX&px\\_language=en&px\\_tableid=ArmStatbank%5c2+Population+and+social+processes%5c28+Population%5c67-Migracia-new.px&layout=tableViewLayout1](http://armstatbank.am/Table.aspx?rxid=002ccgeg-1bc8-4ae6-aaa3-40c0e377450a&px_db=ArmStatbank&px_type=PX&px_language=en&px_tableid=ArmStatbank%5c2+Population+and+social+processes%5c28+Population%5c67-Migracia-new.px&layout=tableViewLayout1), last accessed on May 13, 2014.



Canada	2,683	2 715	2,982	3,003	3,127	3,130
Belgium	2,317	2,306	2,975	3,002	2,974	2,994
Greece	2,981	2,970	2,843	2,790	3,092	3,001
Israel	2,834	2,823	2,711	2,765	4,070	4,109
Belarus	2,397	2,318	2,392	2,341	3,142	3,132
Bulgaria	1,949	1,937	2,208	2,239	2,506	2,486
Switzerland	1,985	2,011	2,184	2,220	1,964	1,965
Spain	1,396	1,394	2,106	2,081	2,680	2,681
Austria	1,850	1,849	2,067	2,079	2,336	2,332
Sweden	1,610	1,601	1,909	1,940	2,028	2,033
Czech Republic	1,396	1,374	1,827	1,829	3,015	3,017
Japan	1,225	1,226	1,608	1,593	1,928	1,952
India	1,133	1,164	1,743	1,512	1,881	1,676
China	1,047	1,201	1,101	1,397	1,338	1,328
Australia	1,075	1,096	1,310	1,368	1,418	1,404
Uzbekistan	1,279	1,206	1,283	1,216	1,297	1,263
Moldova	1,123	1,090	1,144	1,155	1,162	1,159
Latvia	871	874	1,027	1,020	985	988
Denmark	1,071	979	1,083	1,020	1,417	1,376
Argentina	671	671	1,023	1,007	908	920
Finland	826	822	978	1,003	1,108	1,090
Lithuania	786	843	980	980	1,506	1,523
Turkmenistan	978	979	1,009	962	1,445	1,443
Iraq	398	388	926	909	1,062	975
Norway	502	518	804	792	712	709
Romania	574	542	782	757	815	796
Estonia	624	616	636	654	585	593
Slovakia	513	494	624	632	626	647
Other	8,104	8,212	7,055	8,368	8,930	9,065
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,754,214</b>	<b>1,800,898</b>	<b>1,945,118</b>	<b>1,988,938</b>	<b>2,191,957</b>	<b>2,234,741</b>

Source: National Statistical Service of Armenia

**Fig. 1. The number of registered RA border crossings, 2010-2012, persons**



In the period of 2007-2012 population outflow from Armenia increased slightly as compared to the period of 2002-2006 (for about 20% - an average of about 25 thousand to 30 thousand people a year). In addition, there occurred some changes in the structure of emigration, manifested by the fact that the ratio of short-term immigrants (labour migrants) and long-term immigrants (going abroad as a family for permanent residence) was 50/50 instead of 60/40 in the previous cycle.

In 2007-2012 every 8 out of 10 exits were made with the purpose of earning (348.4 of 434.8 thousand). Visits for family reasons (family reunification, marriage, divorce, etc.) came second with 14.5% of the total. Departures for permanent residence abroad accounted for about 3.9% of the total.

According to the data received via sociological surveys, about 8% of RA population over 16 years participates in labour migration. Over 90% of migrants are aged between 20 and 54, with over 89% males.<sup>9</sup>

According to the survey, the external migration of the population has a rather broad geography (it encompasses 39 countries on 5 continents). Yet, the country of the first entry, just as in the entire post-Soviet period, remains to be the Russian Federation. It is the first country of destination for 89.4% of all departures, which significantly exceeds the figures for 2002-2006 (76.4% in the survey). France is the second by popularity with 1.5% of the total number of migrants; the USA takes 1.2%, and so on.<sup>10</sup>

The main migration flows are directed to Russia, which accepts a flow of labour migrants, including seasonal labour migrants traveling to earn money. The EU countries are a chief destination for those leaving in search of permanent residence abroad. Many of those who entered the EU do not leave after the end of their stay period and thus turn into illegal immigrants. To obtain a residence permit in the host country and to get access to social services, they apply for asylum. In most cases, asylum is denied and they either become irregular migrants in the host EU country, or come back to Armenia.

<sup>9</sup> Data from the CIS Internet-portal, <http://www.e-cis.info/page.php?id=19711>, last accessed on Apr. 10, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> The report on the household survey on migration in Armenia, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, Yerevan 2014. [http://rau.am/uploads/blocks/3/31/3115/files/Migration\\_Project\\_Report\\_final.pdf](http://rau.am/uploads/blocks/3/31/3115/files/Migration_Project_Report_final.pdf)

**Table 4.** The number of residence permits issued to Armenian citizens in the European Union Member States, Switzerland, Norway, and Turkey in 2009-2012, as of December 31 of each year<sup>11</sup>

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012
Austria	-	-	106	226
Belgium	-	1,717	1,487	673
Bulgaria	-	-	-	74
Czech Republic	279	194	58	82
Denmark	18	18	31	19
Estonia	9	6	8	5
Ireland	4	6	6	10
Spain	622	544	706	574
Italy	109	131	139	119
Belgium	131	117	59	53
Lithuania	15	11	34	20
Luxembourg	2	5	6	9
Hungary	22	17	21	15
Netherlands	68	96	100	112
Romania	31	6	12	10
Slovenia	1	3	0	0
Slovakia	27	12	1	1
Finland	19	6	9	4
Sweden	177	174	217	246
Switzerland	103	73	67	60
Norway	5	21	15	30
Turkey	30	50	40	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,672</b>	<b>3,207</b>	<b>3,122</b>	<b>2,342</b>

Source: EUROSTAT database

## 2.2. Migrant stocks

The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Foreigners" envisages three residence statuses for foreigners to stay in the Republic of Armenia: temporary, permanent and special.

<sup>11</sup>EUROSTAT database, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>, last accessed on May 14, 2014. "-" means the data is unavailable. No data whatsoever is available for the following countries: Great Britain, Germany, Greece, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Poland, and Portugal.

**Temporary residence status** is granted to any foreign person, if he/she proves that there exist circumstances that testify to the fact of his/her residence on the territory of the Republic of Armenia for one year or more. Such circumstances may include:

- study, or
- issued work permit, or
- if the person is a spouse, parent or child of a foreign person who has a temporary residence status in the Republic of Armenia, or
- if the person is a spouse or close relative (parent, child, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, grandchild) of a citizen of the Republic of Armenia or of a foreigner having permanent residence or special status in the Republic of Armenia, or
- entrepreneurial activities;
- if a person is of Armenian ethnic origin;
- other cases prescribed by law.

Temporary residence status is granted for up to 1 year with the possibility of extending the term by 1 year at a time.

**Permanent residence status** granted to foreigner if he/she:

- provides a proof of having a spouse or close relative (parent, child, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, grandson) who is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia or has a special status of stay, has accommodation and possesses means of livelihood in the Republic of Armenia, and by the time of application for permanent residence status has legally resided in the Republic of Armenia for at least three years, or;
- Armenian by ethnic origin or carries out entrepreneurial activities in the Republic of Armenia.

Permanent residence status is granted for five years with the possibility of extending it for the same period at a time.

**Special residence status** is granted to foreigners of Armenian ethnic origin. Special residence status may also be granted to other foreigners carrying out economic and cultural activities in the Republic of Armenia. Special residence status is granted for ten-year period. It may be granted more than once.

**Table 5. The number of foreigners granted residence status in the Republic of Armenia in 2010-2014, by nationality and type of status**

Nationality	2010			2011			2012			2013			2014		
	temporary	permanent	special	temporary	permanent	special	temporary	permanent	special	temporary	permanent	special	temporary	permanent	special
<b>Total</b>	<b>2420</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>3230</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>3309</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>3553</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>3228</b>	<b>1104</b>	<b>391</b>
including:															

Iran	1185	40	206	1069	146	359	1363	128	246	958	108	194	710	112	97
Russia	263	65	8	667	276	7	253	254	14	228	274	14	290	372	6
India	240	2	-	372	8	-	548	6		770	16	1	676	19	-
Syria	120	16	36	108	43	50	148	96	132	249	126	362	137	103	171
USA	110	29	137	139	74	113	151	65	126	152	69	123	153	91	19
Georgia	76	19	-	142	38	6	77	40	4	202	160	6	150	121	9
Ukraine	12	10	-	61	30	1	63	44	4	154	101	4	133	99	-
Other countries	414	82	247	672	161	211	706	171	203	840	163	146	979	187	89

As of January 01, 2015, the number of foreigners with a valid residence status in the Republic of Armenia totaled 10,772 people. Of these, 3,120 had temporary, 4,134 permanent and 3,518 special residence status.

## 3. Legal Migration with Special Focus on Labour Migration

### 3.1. Responsible state authorities

**State Employment Agency (Agency)** is a separate branch of the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Agency's task is to implement state policy in the field of employment regulation. The agency is authorized to implement projects/programs devised to regulate internal and external employment trends. The Agency may enter into contracts with foreign countries and organizations for the supply of labour migrants. Specific arrangements for the implementation of this particular function are not defined, and thus, as of 2013, the practical results of Agency's activities in the field of labor migration are negligible.

Seven migration resource centers operate within the Agency. They are located both in Yerevan and in Armenian regions.

**The main tasks of the migration resource centers are:** informing, orienting and training people who plan to travel and work abroad (mainly labour migrants); promoting their reintegration upon return.

The Agency also includes the **Department for Labour Migration**. The principal functions of the department include:

1. Providing mediation between persons wishing to engage in labor activity or to pass training in foreign countries and foreign employers;
2. Providing for field work, as well as consulting, recruitment and training in the issues related to migrant rights protection for the period of labour migration;

3. Studying possible return options for the RA citizens to go back to their home country, as well as for the ways to promote their reintegration at home; making recommendations on how to implement these to the resource centers by means of pilot projects or for their implementation in the future.
4. Studying international experience related to running migration resource centres; providing suggestions on the expansion of their activities as well as new programs on labour migration;
5. Monitoring the work of organizations and regional centres engaged in implementing employment programs related to labour migration and immigration. Developing recommendations based on the results of monitoring.

The agency also operates a hotline (08000 10 20), which daily informs citizens both on changes in labour legislation or government programs and on the barriers to the entry into the Russian Federation and changes in the RF migration legislation.

**The State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia (SMS)** is the central body responsible for the development and implementation of the state policy in the field of migration management, including policies related to the issues of refugees, asylum seekers, and so on. SMS also coordinates the activities of government agencies in the development of migration policies and legislation.

The **Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia** is responsible for issuing visas, passports and certificates of return, as well as special residence status.

**National Security Service of the Republic of Armenia (NSS) and the Border Troops** are engaged in border management and control. The Border Guard Service of the RA National Security Service carries out control at checkpoints across the state border. Armenia operates 8 border checkpoints: 6 border crossing points at land borders and 2 at the airports. Land borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey are currently closed.

The **RA Police** has two departments responsible for migration issues:

1. The **Department for Combating Illegal Migration and International Cooperation**, established in 2003, investigates illegal crossings of the state border; fraud and forgery, sale and use of forged documents, stamps, seals, blank forms, and vehicle number plates, and mostly works with illegal migrants who are citizens of the RA.
2. The **Passport and Visa Department** is responsible for registering population, issuing visas at the border, visa extension, granting residence permits, foreigner registration in the RA and issuing exit permits for the citizens of RA.

The **National Statistical Service (ArmStat)** collects, processes, generalizes, and publishes statistical data on money remittances, immigrants and migrants, and conducts population censuses.

### 3.2. Policy and policy documents

The Action Program aims at protecting the rights and interests of Armenian citizens traveling abroad to work. In this context, it is scheduled to discuss the possibility of concluding bilateral interstate agreements related to the international labour market. In order to expand the opportunities of working abroad on a

contractual basis Armenia also plans to join the existing international treaties aimed at protecting the interests of labour migrants.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.3. Statistics

In 2007-2012, as in the previous years, large shares of migration flows in the republic are labour migrants. Data analysis of a sample survey conducted in 2013 showed that out of every ten departures eight are made with the purpose of employment abroad.<sup>13</sup> Most seasonal migrants tend to leave the country at the beginning or the end of spring and return to Armenia in late autumn/early winter. With regard to the duration of trips, the majority of migrants stayed abroad from 5 to 11 months. Accordingly, the average actual duration of a trip is nine months, which is somewhat higher than the average duration of trips planned by migrants. The main flows of labor migration from Armenia are directed to Russia (up to 90%) and some other CIS countries, namely Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Armenia has visa free regime with the most of the CIS countries. In addition, journey expenses are less as compared with the European countries. Knowledge of the Russian language and cultural similarities make Russia and other CIS countries more attractive to migrants.

According to the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, the immigration of Armenian citizens into Russia was 20% higher (by about 670 thousand) in 2013 than in 2012. According to the Eurostat statistics, the most numerous flows of labour migrants from Armenia to the countries other than of the CIS, were directed in 2009-2012 to: Spain - 1,627 people, Poland – 626 and Czech Republic - 316 people.

**Table 3.** The number of residence permits issued to the citizens of Armenia for employment purposes in 2009-2012<sup>14</sup>

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012
Austria	5	8	7	12
UK	27	33	39	35
Belgium	15	18	21	9
Bulgaria	2	-	2	1
Czech Republic	132	102	19	63
Denmark	5	10	9	7
Germany	48	56	73	106
Estonia	6	3	4	1

<sup>12</sup> The Concept of State Regulation Policy (2010) and the National Action Program for the implementation of the "Concept of State Regulation Policy for Migration in Armenia" for 2012-2016 adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>13</sup> Household survey report on migration in Armenia, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, IOM, the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan 2014. [http://www.un.am/up/library/Household\\_survey\\_eng.pdf](http://www.un.am/up/library/Household_survey_eng.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> EUROSTAT database

Ireland	2	0	3	5
Greece	6	5	7	1
Spain	574	394	394	265
France	54	60	54	64
Italy	90	72	26	25
Cyprus	19	37	27	17
Latvia	3	0	4	4
Lithuania	16	13	26	28
Luxembourg	1	-	2	1
Hungary	19	9	3	3
Malta	1	0	1	3
Netherlands	9	4	7	10
Poland	436	83	-	107
Portugal	4	1	3	1
Romania	2	3	1	3
Slovenia	0	0	2	1
Slovakia	0	5	5	10
Finland	1	1	3	4
Sweden	33	22	69	36
Norway	3	11	6	4
Switzerland	-	-	-	10

In terms of labor migration to Armenia, the Republic has adopted a liberal hiring regime, under which the only thing foreigners need for their employment is registration at the place of temporary residence. Under the legislation in effect, they enjoy equal with the locals rights. Labour migrants do not have to apply to the migration service and get registered. Therefore, the exact number of foreign labour migrants in the country is not known.<sup>15</sup>

On June 22, 2015 the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia voted an amendment to the RA law "On Foreigners," which states that in order to receive a work permit for a foreigner, his/her employer has to apply to a governmental body authorized in the field of labour and employment. To ensure the practical realization of this requirement, the relevant amendment was proposed to the RA Law "On State Duty." In particular, for foreign nationals to obtain a work permit in the Republic of Armenia, their employer must pay a state fee which is 25 times of the basic duty or 25,000 drams.

<sup>15</sup> News Portal Mir.24.tv data, <http://mir24.tv/news/community/6073164>, last accessed on May 15, 2014.



## 4. Irregular Migration in the Country

### 4.1. Responsible state authorities

#### Irregular Immigration

The **second Department for Combating Illegal migration of the National Security Service** focuses on illegal border crossing and violations related to identity document forging.

The **Department for Combating Illegal Migration and International Cooperation** within the RA Police investigates illegal crossings of the state border, fraud, forgery, selling and using forged documents, stamps, seals, blank forms, and vehicle number plates, and mostly works with illegal migrants who are citizens of the RA.

The **Prosecutor General's Office** participates in deciding on administrative punishments (fines) for violation of the rules of stay in the RA by foreign citizens.

#### Irregular Emigration

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** provides documents from the RA diplomatic missions or consular departments to RA citizens who stay abroad illegally, do not have valid travel documents, and return to Armenia voluntarily or on a forced basis.

The **State Migration Service (SMS)** develops and implements relevant programs aimed at combating illegal migration. The SMS is the key agency responsible for implementation of readmission agreements and negotiations with the interested countries on return of the Armenian citizens residing abroad without authorization. The SMS also provides legal recommendations to those intending to emigrate from Armenia to enhance population awareness on the consequences of illegal migration.

### 4.2. Policy and policy documents

Illegal immigration is not a major issue in Armenia, unlike illegal emigration, in the course of which Armenian emigrants typically leave the country on legal grounds and become irregular migrants in the destination country through overstaying.

Legislative measures to regulate migration processes and actions to counter irregular migration are developed in line with the norms and principles contained in international legal documents.

Since June 1, 2012, based on the Presidential decree of March 15, 2008 on the migration concept of the RA and introduction in the RA of biometric electronic passports and identification system of RA citizens, machine-readable e-passports and e-ID cards were introduced.

Implementation of this system was prompted by the UN Security Council Resolution № 1373 of September 28, 2001, pursuant to which countries have provided for a number of measures as part of combating international terrorism to enhance control over the mechanisms of manufacturing

identification documents and travel passports. The new electronic passport meets the EU and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards, has high level of security, and contains personal data in Armenian and English. The document has a microchip with a biometric identifier, which contains an electronic photo, holder's signature, and fingerprints of the left and right thumbs and index fingers.

To implement the Action Plan on the Priority issue 7 (*Prevention of irregular migration from the Republic of Armenia, improvement of legislation on irregular migration*) an extensive work to increase public awareness and carry out readmission agreements, as well as on the improvement in the legislative field, has been carried out. Thus, on June 21, 2014 a law on the amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia was adopted, which qualified the organization of illegal migration as a criminal offence. By date, under this article of the Criminal Code, three criminal cases have been initiated. On December 17, 2014 a law was adopted on "Trafficking of people, identification and assistance to the victims of exploitation," enacted on 17 June, 2015.

The Police of the RA, in accordance with international standards, drafted additions the article 329.1 "Organization of illegal migration" of the Criminal Code, which were adopted on 21 June, 2014.

The RA Police carries out annual preventive activities called "Nelegal" (illegal migrant) aimed at combating illegal immigration of third country nationals, as well as human trafficking. In 2014 the RA Police investigated 20 criminal cases related to illegal migration.

### 4.3. Statistics

There is no illegal migration to the country as a mass phenomenon. Entrance to Armenia, as a rule, is done legally. Violations, if any, relate to the rules of stay in the RA.

According to the National Security Service of Armenia, 3,659 Armenian citizens attempted to cross the state border in 2010; 3,411 people in 2011; 2,707 in 2012 and 2,210 in 2013.

According to the Passport and Visa Department of the RA Police, during 2010 - 2013 administrative sanctions were imposed on 3,891 foreigners: 701 in 2010, 908 in 2011 and 806 in 2012. In 2013, a total of 1,476 foreigners and Armenian nationals permanently residing abroad were subject to administrative liability, including 831 Armenian nationals - residents of the Syrian Arab Republic. In 2014 the number of administrative offenses committed by foreign nationals was 2,633.

**Table 7. Armenian citizens staying in the EU illegally and the number of Armenian citizens who were court-ordered to leave the EU MS of their stay (rounded data, persons), 2009-2013**

Country	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Citizens	Decisions	Citizens	Decisions	Citizens	Decisions	Citizens	Decisions	Citizens	Decisions
Austria	280	420	275	405	325	330	395	135	310	180
UK	5	5	20	20	20	20	10	10	20	20
Belgium	70	380	65	575	225	1,865	195	1,665	200	1,570

Bulgaria	40	40	40	40	5	5	10	10	5	5
Czech Republic	80	60	60	35	85	55	75	35	85	40
Denmark	0	:	5	:	0	10	5	15	0	60
Germany	335	135	345	220	260	130	420	105	720	-
Estonia	5	0	5	5	10	10	5	5	5	5
Ireland	10	0	10	0	15	5	5	0	0	0
Greece	160	160	100	105	60	60	85	105	-	-
Spain	210	285	180	235	155	225	150	180	130	95
France	325	1,020	265	1,240	335	1,390	320	1,765	365	2,490
Italy	10	10	10	10	5	5	5	5	5	5
Cyprus	40	5	40	5	50	5	50	10	40	10
Latvia	0	5	5	5	5	20	5	10	0	10
Lithuania	40	30	25	25	25	20	5	5	15	10
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	-	:	0	0	0	0
Hungary	0	20	5	15	5	20	5	10	10	5
Malta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Netherlands	45	490	80	610	95	745	-	740	-	950
Poland	110	215	145	220	160	140	135	125	135	80
Portugal	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Romania	10	10	5	20	10	10	0	5	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	30	20	10	5	10	5	10	5	5	5
Finland	5	10	10	15	10	10	10	10	5	10
Sweden	190	180	240	200	220	310	190	265	200	175
Switzerland	135	-	110	-	-	-	30	5	45	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>3,505</b>	<b>2,055</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>2,090</b>	<b>5,395</b>	<b>2,120</b>	<b>5,225</b>	<b>2,305</b>	<b>5,745</b>

Source: EUROSTAT database

## 5. Return, readmission and reintegration

### 5.1. Responsible state authorities

The **State Migration Service of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations** is the chief state authority responsible for readmission. The SMS drafts readmission agreements and edits final documents and comments. The SMS receives requests for readmission of the citizens of the republic of Armenia, foreigners residing without authorization on the territory of the country, as well as requests for transit of third countries nationals via the territory of the RA.

**The RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (Consular Department) issues return certificates (Laissez-passer) and deals with readmission when citizenship confirmation is needed and identity needs to be established via face-to-face interview.

The Police of the Republic of Armenia proceeds and answers readmission requests from the citizens of the Republic of Armenia within 15 working days thus confirming or refuting the fact of Armenian citizenship.

**The RA National Security Service** issues decisions in special cases wherever needed.

**The State Employment Agency** carries out a number of programs promoting integration of returning migrants

## 5.2. Policy and policy documents

Since 2003, the readmission agreements were concluded with 13 countries: Latvia (2003), Denmark (2004), Lithuania (2004), Switzerland (2005), Germany (2008), Bulgaria (2008), Sweden (2009), Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, 2010), Norway (2010), Czech Republic (2011), and Russia (2011). In April 2013, an Agreement on Readmission with the EU was signed and an Action Plan was adopted.

For the purpose of implementing the agreement, **the Government of the Republic of Armenia made a number of decisions** establishing the procedure and timing of proceeding for requests filed within the framework of Readmission agreements by the RA State authorities (for example, the Interdepartmental Working Group was established to monitor implementation of the commitments pursuant to the agreement and to discuss issues of access to the database of the State Migration Service as to the passports of the RA citizens and ISEBM (Information system of electronic border management) on exits by air). Armenia's diplomatic representations, whose staff engages in the procedure of establishing citizenship of particular persons by interviewing them, are also actively involved in this process.

In order to efficiently implement **Readmission Agreement between the RA and EU**, signed in April, 2013 and in effect since January, 2014, a process on drafting **relevant Protocols** has been initiated. Draft Protocols received from the Benelux countries, Latvia, Lithuania, France, Estonia and Poland were agreed upon by the Armenian State authorities and are currently in the process of agreeing with the aforementioned countries.

In accordance with the 19th article of the agreement, a joint EU-RA committee was formed to implement agreements reached. The Committee has already held two sessions.

In the end of 2014 Armenian IOM office published two study manuals.<sup>16</sup> The first of these is a reference manual and contains study materials on readmission which may involve participation of state officials, whereas the second was done as Readmission Guidelines drafted by a team of international experts.

Reintegration assistance to the Armenian citizens returning to the RA from other countries is a priority objective of the **"Concept of Study and Prevention of Irregular Migration from the RA"**. The Concept

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<sup>16</sup> *Processing Readmission Cases in Armenia Guide and training materials for officials of the state bodies mandated to process readmission cases:*  
[http://www.un.am/up/library/Reintegration\\_referral\\_guide\\_eng.pdf](http://www.un.am/up/library/Reintegration_referral_guide_eng.pdf); *R.E.A.D.M.I.T Training Manual on Readmission:*  
[http://www.un.am/up/library/Readmission%20manual\\_eng.pdf](http://www.un.am/up/library/Readmission%20manual_eng.pdf)

determines specific steps for arranging reintegration after return: reintegration-targeted employment programs; consultation services for the returnees; and negotiations on providing assistance in reintegration of returnees to Armenia with the support of the receiving countries.

The Action Plan to implement the "Policy Concept of State Regulation of Migration in the RA" for 2012-2016 stipulates improvement of information Internet-based systems facilitating return of Armenian citizens; organization of employment programs facilitating reintegration of returnees and introduction of new programs; organization of consultative services for the returnees; and negotiations with the receiving countries on organization of reintegration assistance with the support of the receiving countries.

In September 2014, as a part of the realization of the 8th priority of the Action Plan and in order to support the return of Armenian citizens, the Armenian government approved maintenance procedures for the specialized internet information system: <http://www.tundarc.am>. This system provides useful information on the return and reintegration, programs implemented in this area, as well as state-of-the-art electronic channels to apply to the state authorities with particular questions, concerns and recommendations.

According to the **RA law "On Employment,"** returning migrants are offered 13 state programs aimed at resolving employment difficulties.

In accordance with the paragraph 7 of the Resolution of the government of the RA № 534-N of 17 April, 2014 "On the rules for the procedure of identifying labour market non-competitiveness of the unemployed," the following criteria were established as the basis to determine non-competitiveness of the unemployed:

- a) an unemployed person came back from a foreign country, but was unable to find a job within one year;
- b) an unemployed person has traveled abroad more than once in the past three years and each time resided in the country of destination for more than one month;
- c) an unemployed person has been living abroad for more than one year within last three years.

Jobseekers can register as unemployed and benefit from the annual state employment programs. Returning nationals who meet the criteria outlined above are considered to be non-competitive on the labour market and can benefit from public employment programs.

Within the first applied program of the **Joint Declaration on Mobility Partnership between the EU and Armenia**, seven EU countries (France, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden) took part in the implementation of the program: **"Strengthening Armenia's Migration Management Capacities, with Special Focus on Reintegration Activities"** with a three million EUR budget and designed for the period of three years. The French Immigration and Reintegration Bureau manages the implementation of the program since October 2012.

The goals of the project are attained by: strengthening the capacities of relevant state authorities and Armenia's public organizations; active support of decent sustainable return and reintegration; solving problems related to illegal migration, as well as increasing opportunities for legal migration.

On 11 March 2014, as part of the program implementation **Reintegration Consulting Centre** was opened under the State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations. For those returning to the RA the Centre works as "one window" service, where they can learn about

reintegration opportunities and, depending on the individual situation, are then redirected to the relevant governmental services. The Centre works in close cooperation with government agencies and civil society organizations that provide assistance in reintegration. A specialized forum was established, comprising NGOs working on return and reintegration programs and government and international organizations (11 organizations in total).

### 5.3. Statistics

On the course of 2011-2012 the SMS received a total of 75 requests for readmission from Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Russia, which were approved in 53 cases and rejected in 22. On the course of 2013 from the competent authorities of Sweden, Norway and the Russian Federation 39 applications concerning readmission of 65 persons were received and processed. The citizenship of 43 of these was confirmed, whereas no information is available regarding 22 persons.

In 2014, 95 claims were received concerning the readmission of 207 people with citizenship of 144 confirmed. Sweden filed 56 claims (148 people), the citizenship of 94 of these was confirmed, while there is no information concerning 17. Poland sent 11 claims for 18 people; the citizenship of 14 was confirmed; there is no information concerning 4 of these. Russia sent 28 applications (for 41 persons) – nationality of 36 people was confirmed; in respect of 5 any information is missing.<sup>17</sup>

According to the National Security Service, 1,123 citizens of Armenia were deported to Armenia in 2010, 1,390 - in 2011, 1,448 in 2012 and 1,665 in 2013.

Voluntary return assistance programs in Armenia are mainly implemented by non-governmental and international organizations; some of the state institutions also engage in the implementation of these projects.<sup>18</sup>

In 2009-2012 a **Czech non-governmental organization “People in Need” (PIN)** implemented a project **“Strengthening Migration Flow Management in Armenia”**, having provided assistance to 2,633 persons, of whom 1,460 were returnees from the RF, Ukraine, Moldova, Czech Republic, and Belgium. Under the project Migration Information centers were established in five regions of Armenia (Kotaiik, Lori, Shirak, Gegharkunik and Yerevan). Each center offers potential migrants counseling services before their departure, vocational training to return migrants, information on organizations in the country and abroad, providing social assistance to migrants, as well as information on employment opportunities in Armenia. Since 2015 PIN has been working on the program **“Supporting circular migration and reintegration in Armenia”** funded by the European Union. As part of the project 4 migration resource centers were established in such regions as Armavir, Ararat, Vayots Dzor and Syunik.<sup>19</sup> The courses in professional training were organized for the returning migrants, with 151 people finding employment. Through small grants 17 business projects were financed and 60 new jobs created.

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<sup>17</sup> *Data of the SMS of Armenia.*

<sup>18</sup> Haykanush Chobanyan, *Return Migration and Reintegration Issues: Armenia*. Research Report 2013/04, CARIM-East. EUI, RSCAS, , [http://www.carim-east.eu/media/CARIM-East-RR-2013-04\\_RU.pdf](http://www.carim-east.eu/media/CARIM-East-RR-2013-04_RU.pdf), last accessed on May 21, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> <http://migrant.am/home.html>

Since 2006, **"Caritas Armenia,"** together with some EU countries, has been implementing a number of programs to prevent illegal migration and to create sustainable measures for the reintegration of migrants, returning to Armenia. The program **"Sustainable Reintegration after Voluntary Return"** has been in implementation in partnership with "Caritas Belgium" since 2006. On the course of running the program, which is funded by the Government of Belgium and the EU, reintegration assistance was provided to 163 families totaling 273 members. In 2010, under the **"Migration and Development"** program, funded by the Government of Liechtenstein and Caritas Austria, assistance was provided to 198 family members of 83 families. The **"Returning from Europe"** program, funded by the EU in partnership with Caritas Germany and Caritas Netherlands, has provided assistance to 10 returnees since 2008.<sup>20</sup>

**French-Armenian Development Foundation in Armenia (FADF)** implements the Armenian-French project **"Back to the Origins"**. The purpose of the project is to support the voluntary return of Armenian citizens who have been illegal migrants in France since 2005.

The project **"Strengthening the institutional capacity in the field of information on migration and cooperation in the integration of Armenian migrants"** is aimed at preventing illegal immigration and promoting legal migration. The project intends to promote social and economic reintegration of migrants returning to Armenia and to provide for the contribution of the Armenian Diaspora organizations to Armenia's development. To date, more than 800 people have decided to return to Armenia in order to build a new life. The program has funded more than 170 companies to create new projects.<sup>21</sup>

## 6. Integration

### 6.1. Responsible state authorities

**The State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia** is an authorized state institution for the development and implementation of the state policies on the integration of refugees deported from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992, foreigners and stateless persons who individually received asylum and refugee status in Armenia, as well as long-term migrants. A decision by the Government of the Republic of Armenia N 212 of March 6, 2014 introduced changes to the structure of the SMS, creating the Integration Issues Department as a part of the Service.

**The RA Ministry of Diaspora** coordinates the activities carried out in relation to the Syrian Armenians. In the summer of 2012 a decree by the RA Minister of Diaspora established a working group on the Syrian Armenians. The Working Group prepared a draft Action Plan<sup>22</sup> to provide support in solving the problems of the Syrian Armenians. After that, "The Interdepartmental commission on the coordination of issues related to the Syrian Armenians," was created by the decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia,<sup>23</sup> headed by the Minister of Diaspora, with the participation of deputy heads of state institutions,

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.caritasarm.am/en/projects/migration-a-integration/migration-and-development>

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.ffad.am/am/Migrations\\_Ongoing\\_Project](http://www.ffad.am/am/Migrations_Ongoing_Project)

<sup>22</sup> An Action Plan of the Working Group of Interdepartmental commission on the coordination of issues related to the Syrian Armenians for 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Decree of the Prime Minister of the RA on the creation of the Interdepartmental commission on the coordination of issues related to the Syrian Armenians of 14.01.2013, N 9-A.

its meetings attended also by representatives of international organizations and NGOs dealing with the Syrian Armenians. Despite the actions already undertaken,<sup>24</sup> according to the Commission's report, there still are unsolved or partially solved problems such as the provision of medical care, employment, housing and food, clothing, and the lessons of the Eastern Armenian language.<sup>25</sup>

## 6.2. Policy and policy documents

### *The integration of refugees deported from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992*

In 1988-1992 about 500,000 ethnic Armenians left Azerbaijan as refugees, of whom 360,000 found refuge in Armenia. Since the late 1990s, when it became clear that the safe and voluntary return of Armenian refugees who had fled from Azerbaijan was unlikely, Armenia adopted the "full-scale policy of refugee integration." This was the transition to a comprehensive and radical approach in solving the problems of refugees, which came to replace *ad hoc* measures prevalent in the 1990s. The policy based on these principles is to become the principle tool for the efficient integration and naturalization of refugees in Armenia.

The most problematic issue hindering integration has always been and remains the problem of housing. A small number of returnees (mainly rural residents) were able to solve the problem on their own: by exchange of housing with Azerbaijani families leaving Armenia or buying an apartment/house. Yet the majority of refugees were either placed in communal centers: hostels, hotels, etc., or received temporary accommodation with their relatives or friends. Gradually, most of the housing problems have in some way been solved (through the transfer of ownership of the occupied living spaces, housing built at the expense of the government of Armenia, as well as of a number of other European countries and international organizations that provide vouchers for the purchase of accommodation, and so on). However, to this day, the problem has not yet been resolved completely. According to the SMS data, 924 refugee families from Azerbaijan still live in communal centers and are included in the program for the provision of priority housing (20 million USD), approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, whereas some families (of which, unfortunately, no exact data are available) still live with relatives and friends.

### *Internally Displaced Persons*

In 1991-1993, in relation to the military hostilities of the Karabakh conflict, about 72 thousand people from 186 settlements of the five regions bordering with Azerbaijan were relocated within the Armenian territory (UNDP, 2009, p. 40). After a ceasefire took place in 1994, most of these people returned to the places of their permanent residence. A relatively small number of IDPs settled in new places, with the remainder emigrating from the country.

The complexity and diversity of the problems of the Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons which arose as a result of the earthquake of 1988 overshadowed the problems of IDPs.

A draft law "On promoting the return of internally displaced persons from the borderline settlements of Armenia to their places of origin," adopted by the Armenian government in 2008 and based on a poll

<sup>24</sup> Shogikian G. New Advantages for the Syrian Armenians. The Government considers it viable to cancel all fines and pensions. Available at: <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/24749273.html>. Published on October 24, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Report of the Ministry of Diaspora Armenians on the assistance to the Syrian Armenians of January 29, 2013.



survey of IDPs, provides assistance for their return to the places of permanent residence and resettlement to their own restored or renovated housing. The total cost of the project amounted to 38.53 million USD. The project was to be carried out in 2008-2010, however due to the lack of funds, the project was not implemented.

### *Refugees from Syria, Iraq and other countries*

Active influx of refugees from Syria to Armenia became evident in early 2012 when the situation in Syria became critical. As the result, around 6500 Syrian Armenians moved to Armenia as of January 1, 2013.<sup>26</sup> Some of them returned to Syria or moved to other countries. Over 12 thousand Syrian Armenians-refugees from Syria moved to Armenia in 2012-2014.<sup>27</sup> Currently there are over 16 thousand Syrian Armenians in Armenia, most of whom settled in Yerevan. Most of them are engaged in small businesses.

However, some of them appealed to the State Migration Service with a request for asylum, which can be explained by the fact that the refugees arriving from Syria consider the SMS primarily as an agency responsible for the provision of temporary housing. Thus, the SMS is applied to mostly by those who do not have in Armenia relatives or friends, with whom they could share accommodation, or those who do not have finance to buy or rent accommodation.

## 6.3. Policy documents

Despite a large number of activities carried out in order to integrate refugees displaced to Armenia from Azerbaijan, Syria, Iraq and other countries, there have not yet been a comprehensively planned strategy developed for their integration. Nevertheless, the issue of integration both of long-term migrants and foreign nationals, who were granted refugee status in the Republic of Armenia, is important for Armenia and appropriate steps have been made in this regard. In 2010 and 2011 two documents on regulation of migration policy were adopted, which determined, among other things, integration policies to be implemented by the SMS, which include:

1. "The policy concept of state regulation of migration in the Republic of Armenia" approved by the Protocol Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of December 30, 2010 № 51; The concept defines 14 priority issues related to migration, including:

**Priority № 8: Support of the return of Armenian citizens from foreign countries and their reintegration at home.**

**Priority № 9: Improving the asylum system of Armenia. Ensuring efficient integration of foreign nationals into the Armenian society as they are granted refugee status.**

**Priority № 10: Ensuring the implementation of the policy on the integration into the Armenian society of the refugees, who were forced to emigrate from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992.**

<sup>26</sup> Report of the Ministry of Diaspora on the assistance to the ethnic Armenians from Syria of 29 January 2013.

<sup>27</sup>The Armenian community in Syria up until 2011 numbered, according to various estimates, 80-100 thousand people, including about 60 thousand in Aleppo, and was considered one of the most influential in the Diaspora.

2. "Action Plan for 2012-2016 to implement the policy concept of state regulation of migration in the Republic of Armenia" was adopted on November 10, 2011, by the resolution of the Government of the RA number 1593-N to ensure implementation of the priorities identified in the "Concept of state regulation of migration in the Republic of Armenia."

"Action Plan for the realization of the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights" introduced by the annex to the decision of the RA Government № 303-N of 27 February, 2014, emphasized the need to develop a single comprehensive strategy for the integration in accordance with paragraph 8.3 of the Action Plan: "it is necessary to adopt a legislative act to create favorable conditions for the complete integration of people recognized as refugees and granted asylum in the Republic of Armenia. "

As of now, preparations continue on the above-mentioned legal act on the "Strategy for the integration of immigrants." It will be finished and submitted for approval to the Government of Armenia in the third quarter of 2016.

## 6.4. Statistics

According to information provided by the SMS, 519 Syrian Armenians applied for asylum in Armenia in 2012, of whom 372 were granted asylum; 290 applied for asylum in 2013 with 249 granted asylum and 50 in 2014 with 35 granted. The State Migration Service of Armenia provided temporary housing to 107 persons in the centers for asylum seekers. In addition, private individuals provided apartments/housing to another 37 persons.<sup>28</sup>

# 7. Migration and development

## 7.1. Responsible state authorities

**The Ministry of Economy, Ministry for International Economic Integration and Reform of the RA, State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations of the RA.**

## 7.2. Policy and policy documents

In October 2011 the **EU-Armenia Declaration "On Mobility Partnership"** was signed. The partnership's objectives are to manage migration flows between Armenia and the EU, combat illegal migration, and regulate legal entry into the country by Armenian citizens. Signing of the Declaration is a significant component of the Armenian EU alignment policy aimed at stimulating contacts between Armenian and EU citizens for development purposes.

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<sup>28</sup> The SMS Report at a meeting of the Interdepartmental Commission responsible for the resolution of the key problems of Syrian Armenians.

### 7.3. Statistics

In 2014 remittances by individuals not for commercial purposes via only by the banking system amounted to 1.7286 billion USD, which is 7.6% less than the previous year. Russia's share in the total volume of remittances dropped as well (by 10.7%) and was 83.0%. In 2013 private transfers from Russia to Armenia to the private individuals for non-commercial purposes received through the banking system amounted to about 1.6 billion USD. For comparison, the expenditure of the RA state budget for 2014 was about 3.07 billion USD.<sup>29</sup> According to the Central Bank of Armenia money transfers from Russia amounted to 83.5% of the total amount of 738 million USD transferred to Armenia in the first two quarters of 2013, which is 12% more than for the same period of 2012. In 2012, the total amount of remittances by individuals with non-commercial purposes only via the banking system amounted to 1 686.1 million USD, which is 9% higher than in 2011.

## 8. Asylum and international protection

### 8.1. Responsible state authorities

The **SMS** is an authorized state agency for processing asylum applications submitted by foreigners and granting refugee status.

The Passport and Visa Department of the **Armenian Police**, provides the refugees with conventional travel documents which, according to the Geneva Convention, are treated as identity cards and refugee travel documents.

### 8.2. Policy and policy documents

Based on Armenia's international obligations, the Government's policy in the field of asylum strives at harmonization of national legislation on the rights of asylum seekers and refugees with international, European in particular, standards.

In 1993, the Supreme Council of the Republic decided to accede to the Geneva "Convention relating to the Status of Refugees" 1951 and its 1967 Protocol. On the basis of these documents, in 1999 the RA developed and adopted the law "On Refugees" establishing the procedure for granting refugee status and asylum in Armenia.

A new, upgraded, version of the law "On Refugees and Asylum" was adopted in 2008.<sup>30</sup> In 2009-2010 the Government of Armenia adopted eight resolutions and SMS developed three departmental regulations

<sup>29</sup>Data of the News Agency regnum.ru of 03.03.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/1773574.html>, last accessed on 15, May, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> The CIS Executive committee, Migration Situation in the Republic of Armenia, <http://www.cis.minsk.by/page.php?id=18989>, last accessed on August 31, 2015.

dealing with the issues of accommodating asylum seekers in temporary accommodation centers; provision of identity cards and documents; promotion of voluntary repatriation to the countries of citizenship and, for stateless persons, to the places of their permanent residence; registration of asylum-seekers in border crossing points of Armenia. 10 internal standard operating procedures were adopted in 2013-2014 (SOP).

There had previously been two documents provided to the refugees in Armenia: a refugee certificate and a document for travelling abroad. The RA Law "On Refugees and Asylum" (2008) combined the two documents into one. Refugees are issued conventional travel documents. The law also includes a provision on temporary protection, which is equivalent to refugee status.

Armenia lacks legal framework to protect the rights of persons internally displaced as the result of conflict, since the Law on protection of the population in emergency situations deals with the results of natural cataclysms and anthropogenic disasters, and does not consider people internally displaced as the result of conflict, human rights abuses or mass violence. The government treats the displaced as ordinary citizens who enjoy constitutional rights equal to those of other citizens of Armenia. Government of the Republic of Armenia has developed a number of programs aimed at assisting persons displaced by the conflict in their return to the areas of origin. In particular, in some border villages measures were undertaken to rebuild houses and repair irrigation systems. Some of the IDPs residing in temporary shelters are included in the program for the provision of landed property for building houses.

To provide temporary accommodation to asylum seekers in the RA, a "Special Reception Center" was established in 2001, where all the accommodation related costs were covered by the government funds.

### 8.3. Statistics

After Armenia joined the Geneva "Convention relating to the Status of Refugees" of 1951, foreign citizens and stateless persons started to apply for asylum in the RA. To be recognized as refugees persons applying for asylum, since 1993 and to this day, are individually processed.

The flow of refugees and applications for the refugee status is determined by existence of conflicts in the region. Armenia was acquainted with the phenomenon of refugees and IDPs before officially acquiring its independence, already in 1988, with the arrival of ethnic Armenian refugees from the Azerbaijani city of Sumgayit. As the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh exacerbated, the flow of refugees increased. According to the RA SMS, as of 2014, the number of refugees from the ethnic conflict areas of the former USSR (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and North Ossetia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan) in the late 1980's-early 1990's who acquired RA citizenship was 83,642.

In total, from 1999 to 2014, according to official data,<sup>31</sup> the *asylum application* in the RA was submitted by 2,920 foreigners, of whom 1,808 were granted refugee status.

- 1) With the beginning of hostilities in Iraq, 1,084 Iraqi citizens applied for asylum and 1,079 of them received temporary protection and refugee status in Armenia.
- 2) In 2006, during the armed conflict between Israel and Lebanon, 348 citizens of both countries applied for asylum in the RA, which, together with asylum seekers from other countries, made up 650 persons.

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<sup>31</sup> The State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations of the RA.

- 3) In 2007, 291 people applied for asylum in Armenia (mainly the immigrants from Iraq), of whom 271 received temporary asylum; three people received refugee status.
- 4) In 2008, the number of asylum seekers was 207 persons, predominantly natives of Georgia and North Ossetia.
- 5) In 2009, the number of asylum applications reduced to 67 (mainly the immigrants from Iraq), of whom 44 received temporary asylum; five people received refugee status.
- 6) In 2010, 50 foreigners applied for asylum in Armenia, of whom 13 received a positive response, 31 – negative, and 6 applications were stopped. The Migration Service applied to the police for deportation from Armenia of 6 persons with a final refusal. On the Service initiative, 95 persons were deprived of the refugee status. 264 refugees applied for housing. The Armenian citizenship was granted to 284 refugees.<sup>32</sup>
- 7) In 2010-2012 armed conflicts in the regions caused 1248 persons to apply for asylum, of whom 834 were recognized as refugees and granted asylum. Processing of the cases of 333 persons was terminated. In 2012, out of the total of 579 asylum seekers 519 were citizens of Syria (90%) and in 2014, out of 226 asylum-seekers 50 people were citizens of Syria, which amounted to 24%; 114 people were the citizens of Ukraine, which accounted for 50% of the total.

Other countries, whose citizens predominantly apply for asylum in Armenia, include Iran, Turkey, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Congo, as well as Iran, Afghanistan, China, Georgia, Nigeria, Mali, and Syria.

**Table 8. The number of persons who applied for asylum and were granted asylum in the Republic of Armenia by year and country of citizenship<sup>33</sup>**

Country of citizenship	Total		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	applied	granted	applied	granted	applied	granted	applied	granted	applied	granted
Total	1198	818	73	54	579	390	320	260	226	114
Azerbaijan	6	6	1	1					5	5
Turkey	5	0	1	-	3	-			1	
Iran	72	7	16	4	14	3	15	-	27	
Iraq	83	80	38	37	15	15	11	11	19	17
Lebanon	3	0	1	-					2	
Cote d'Ivoire	15	6	7	6	5	-	2	-	1	
Syria	865	662	6	6	519	372	290	249	50	35
Other countries	149	57	3		23		2		121	57

Source: \* The number of foreign nationals who applied for asylum in the Republic of Armenia up until 2010 is shown in a separate table (see. Tables characterizing the process of granting asylum in the Republic of Armenia in 1999-2009). This is due to the fact that according to the RA Law "On Refugees and Persons of asylum seekers in the Republic of Armenia" adopted in 1999, two types of status could be granted: that of a refugee or of a person granted temporary asylum. The new RA Law "On Refugees and Asylum", adopted in 2008, admits only one - the refugee status.

<sup>32</sup> News Agency REGNUM, of Jan. 12, 2011, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1363523.html#ixzz32vY7xHQQ>, last accessed on May 27, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> State Migration Service, [http://smsmta.am/?menu\\_id=146](http://smsmta.am/?menu_id=146)



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