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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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Migration in Armenia:

A Country Profile

October 2008



IOM International Organization for Migration

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ACRONYM LIST

AGBU	Armenian General Benevolent Union
ANCG	Armenian National Committee of Greece
ASA	Swiss-Armenian Association
AST	Advanced Social Technologies
BSEC	Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DAG	German-Armenian Society
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FAAE	Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe
FEAJD	European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MLSI	Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSS	National Statistical Service
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RCP	Regional Consultative Process
SME	Small and medium enterprise
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UAR	Union of Armenians in Russia
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WGCC	Working Group on Combating Crime

FOREWORD

International migration is a prominent feature of globalization and one of the defining issues of this century. Increasingly, migration entails economic, social, demographic, cultural, security and environmental effects on both sending and receiving societies. The task of formulating effective and coherent approaches for the management of international migration poses formidable challenges and frequently has led to regional initiatives such as Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs).¹ These initiatives – which address a wide range of migration issues including migration and development, integration of migrants, smuggling of and trafficking in persons (TiP), irregular migration and so on – often reflect the different migration agendas of governments even though the challenges they face may be similar in nature.

Within this context and considering its proactive role in various RCPs, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 2006. One of the main aims of this agreement is to enhance cooperation in addressing irregular migration and combating TiP in the Black Sea region, an area that experiences significant migration challenges as a transit, origin, and destination hub for migrants. Consequently, in 2007, IOM launched the “Black Sea Consultative Process on Migration Management”, a joint project with the BSEC’s Working Group on Combating Crime (WGCC) (Particularly its Organized Forms).

The project aimed to contribute to effective migration management in the Black Sea region as well as combating irregular migration through strengthened regional cooperation and capacity building of relevant authorities in all twelve member states of the BSEC.² Specifically, IOM has drafted national **Migration Profiles** for those countries where such documents did not exist, and has reviewed and updated existing Profiles.³

Why country Migration Profiles? A concept and tool promoted by the European Commission (EC), the Profiles are an evidence-based approach to assess the migration situation in a country. IOM has adopted and further developed this

¹ Regional Consultative Processes bring together representatives of states, international organizations and, in some cases, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for informal and non-binding dialogue and information exchange on migration-related issues of common interest and concern.

² Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

³ Within the framework of the Slovenian presidency of the EU, IOM prepared Migration Profiles for the Western Balkan Countries including BSEC members Albania, Serbia and Turkey.

concept and has since implemented it in various regions such as the Balkans, Western and Central Africa, and Latin America. The intention is to contribute towards greater coherence of national migration policies and enhanced regional cooperation. This requires appropriate compilation of internationally comparable data among other features such as national coordination and cooperation among involved authorities and pursuit of an active international cooperation at bilateral, regional and global levels. The Profiles, using a common template, allow for comparability despite data limitations⁴ and different national contexts.

Furthermore, to ensure the legitimacy and recognized value of the Profiles, the BSEC member states and the BSEC WGCC provided substantial feedback on the Profiles. Drafted in IOM's office in Budapest and coordinated with IOM's Research Unit at IOM Headquarters in Geneva and the respective IOM office in each of the BSEC countries – to ensure high-quality – the Profiles also offer a set of policy recommendations for effective migration management in the region. These were thoroughly discussed during an expert meeting of the BSEC's WGCC in Istanbul on 10 September 2008. Subsequently, the recommendations were approved by the BSEC's Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs that convened in Tirana on 23 October 2008.

This set of Profiles is the result of intensive cooperation between many individuals within IOM and among IOM and other stakeholders. The input of the following people is highly appreciated: Christine Aghazarm and Verónica Escudero, Research Unit in IOM Geneva, as authors of the regional overview and for their extensive review of all the Profiles, Frank Laczko, head of the Research and Publications in IOM Geneva, for his supervision throughout the project, IOM staff in IOM offices in all the BSEC countries, and the dedicated finance and administrative colleagues in IOM Budapest. Special thanks to IOM's 1035 Facility who funded this project. Moreover, particular gratitude is warmly given to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Organization as the associate organization in this project, especially the Permanent International Secretariat who kindly arranged the meetings related to the implementation of the project. Not least, IOM gratefully acknowledges the support of the BSEC Member States in the production of the Profiles, above all for their input to their specific country profile and the endorsement of the regional migration policy recommendations.

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⁴ For a discussion on the quality and limitations migration data, see the regional overview.



Armenia – Basic facts	
Population (2007)	3,222,900
Total Area	29,800 sq. km
GDP per Capita (2006)	USD 937 (USD 890 in 2005; USD 766 in 2004; USD 540 in 2003).
Human Development Index (HDI) Rank (2005)	83 of 177
Net Migration Rate (2006)	-6.7/1,000 population
Sources: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division's World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision Population Database; UN Development Programme Human Development Report 2006; Armenia Statistical Yearbook 2007.	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF MIGRATION ISSUES

Migration has been and continues to be one of the most important social and economic phenomena affecting Armenia. Emigration of Armenians, due to various reasons including conflict and natural disaster and economic motifs, has been and continues to be a phenomenon of massive scale. Outflows are both regular and irregular. Immigration, on the other hand, is not large, and responds mainly to asylum-seeking purposes.

The modern Armenian diaspora formation started in the second half of the 19th century, when the first Armenians from the Ottoman Empire started to migrate to the United States. This immigration, mainly to the Americas and mainly from the Ottoman Empire, started to intensify and reached its peak during the time of the 1915-1920 Armenian massacre,¹ when the main diaspora centres in Northern and Southern America, Europe, and Middle East were formed.

After the first Republic of Armenia joined the Soviet Union in 1922, the population of Soviet Armenia started to grow, notably due to the inflow of Armenians from other parts of the Soviet Union, mostly from the other South Caucasian republics. In 50 years, there was more than a threefold increase in the population of Soviet Armenia (up to 2,491,900 in the 1980s).

Economic changes in the 1970s and the 1980s caused a change in the migration pattern. The economic growth dropped to zero and became negative in the late 1980s due to increased intensity of the systemic crisis of the Soviet economy. This, together with the signing of the Helsinki Agreements in the 1970s, which to a certain extent triggered the liberalization of immigration policy of the Soviet Union and the opening up to the outside world, resulted in new forms of migration mainly driven by socioeconomic motifs. These include:

- Seasonal migration, i.e., people temporarily working mostly in construction in the other republics of the former Soviet Union. The movements occurred mainly in spring, summer, and fall, and returning home in winter (so called “shabashnik”, шабашники), the number of which according to some esti-

¹ Yeghiazaryan, Armen (head of the research team), Vahram Avanesian, and Nelson Shahnazaryan (2003) How to reverse emigration? Armenia: America. Available via internet: http://www.ameria.am/downloads/Research_How%20to%20reverse%20emigration.pdf <http://www.ameria.am/downloads/Research_How%20to%20reverse%20emigration.pdf. Refers to the event where two million Armenians living in Turkey were eliminated from their homeland through forced deportations and massacres.

mates was about 150,000 migrants a year. The push factor for these movements is mainly the lack of labour opportunities in Armenia, especially in the rural areas and small cities.

- Migrants leaving the country to establish further abroad with a long-term perspective, mainly in the United States (about 70,000–100,000 people, according to estimates).

The migration from Armenia intensified after the Spitak earthquake in December 1988, with about 200,000 people emigrating in 1988-1989. This was the first and biggest wave of migration from Armenia so far, but the majority of them returned during the 1990s.

The next wave of migration was shaped by the conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.² In 1989-1990, about 170,000 ethnic Azerbaijani populations living in Armenia left the country while about 360,000 ethnic Armenians came to Armenia from Azerbaijan. Shortly afterwards, the majority of these ethnic Armenians migrated mostly to the Russian Federation and the United States.

The last two decades have been characterized by labour migration flows. It is estimated that over 800,000 citizens or more than one-quarter of the total population left Armenia during the 1990s.³ This trend has continued in recent years. Approximately three-quarters of the Armenian emigrants in the last decades have settled in the former Soviet Union countries, mainly in the Russian Federation, 15 per cent in various European countries, and 10 per cent in the United States. More than 60 per cent of emigrants are men, of working and reproductive age (20-44), and with average educational level that significantly exceeds the average national standards. Migration to the Russian Federation and Ukraine is mainly of a temporary nature generally for seasonal work purposes, while migration to Europe and the United States is primarily for permanent residence with the emigrants taking their families with them. In Europe, the majority claims asylum and a large proportion ultimately faces deportation. According to a survey of 1,500 households⁴ conducted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Advanced Social Technologies (AST), the most popular sector of activity of Armenian labour migrants is construction where two-thirds of them are engaged in. Next, though six times smaller in proportion, would be

² Official United Nations denomination. It is recalled that this region is disputed between the two countries concerned.

³ Yeganyan, Gagik "Migration situation in Armenia: Challenges and solutions", in IOM (2006) *Migration Perspectives. Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Planning and Managing Labour Migration*, pp. 17-25, page 18.

⁴ AST (Advanced Social Technologies)/OSCE (2005) *Labour Migration from Armenia 2002-2005*.

trade/public food and services, which together account for 21-22 per cent of the surveyed migrant households.

While the large scale of economic emigration in the last decade has caused a significant brain and skill drain phenomenon, it has also brought a strong remittance benefit. Remittances constitute the largest source of foreign exchange surpassing both foreign direct investment and the value of exports. Unfavourable demographic trends caused by both emigration and declining birth rates are hampering economic recovery prospects. Although there is recent evidence that the country's emigration rates are declining, the OSCE/AST report concludes that the damage to the Armenian development may prove long lasting.

Armenia is also host today to an estimated 235,235 immigrants as of 2005. The majority of them are asylum seekers and refugees, mainly resulting from the conflict in and around the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

Irregular migration from (and through) Armenia (including human trafficking) mainly towards Western Europe remains a concern. IOM's comprehensive studies on trafficking in Armenia indicate that the phenomenon is still underestimated. Data collected from interviews with victims of trafficking and other sources suggest that Armenian women are trafficked mainly to the United Arab Emirates and Turkey.

Armenia has a relatively well-developed migration policy with a legal and institutional basis. However, implementation and enforcement remain relatively weak as a result of both financial difficulties and partial ineffectiveness of the administration. Armenia cooperates closely with the Russian Federation being the main destination country, which in effect guarantees a good level of social and legal protection of Armenians in the Russian Federation.

1. IMMIGRANTS

1.1. Number of immigrants

Stock⁵

Total.....	235,235 (2005)
As percentage of total population.....	7.8% (2005)
Gender ratio.....	58.9% female (2005)

Flows⁶

.....	9,662 (2006)
.....	10,441 (2005)
.....	9,126 (2004)

1.2. Status of immigrants

Refugees and asylum seekers⁷

Refugees	113,714 (2006)
Asylum seekers.....	78 (2006)
As percentage of the total immigrant population	93.3% (2005)

[Labour migrants (N/A)]⁸

[Irregular migrants (N/A)]

1.3. Main countries of origin

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russian Federation, Iran, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Turkey, Greece, Uzbekistan, Lebanon⁹

⁵ United Nations Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2005) *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision*. The number of international migrants generally represents the number of persons born in a country other than that in which they live.

⁶ National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2007) *Population of the Republic of Armenia*.

⁷ UNHCR (2005, 2006) *Statistical Yearbooks 2005 and 2006. Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons*.

⁸ According to unofficial data, most labour migrants in Armenia come from the Islamic Republic of Iran while the ethnic Armenians come from Georgia.

⁹ World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2005) *Migration and Remittances Factbook*.

Table 1. Estimates of migrant stocks in Armenia: Top countries of origin, 2005

Country of origin	No. of migrants
Azerbaijan	119,353
Georgia	54,996
Russian Federation	23,941
Iran, Islamic Republic of	13,173
Syrian Arab Republic	4,401
Ukraine	3,536
Turkey	2,669
Greece	2,438
Uzbekistan	1,569
Lebanon	1,540
Turkmenistan	1,120
Kazakhstan	1,074
Germany	901
Others (South)	4,524
TOTAL	235,235

Source: World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008*. Data taken from Ratha and Shaw (2007) *Bilateral Estimates of Migrants Stocks Database, South-South Migration and Remittances*, World Bank Working Paper No. 102, <http://go.worldbank.org/ON5YV3Y480>

2. EMIGRANTS

2.1. Number of emigrants

Stock¹⁰

Total.....	812,700 (2005)
As percentage of total population.....	26.9% (2005)

Flows¹¹

.....	16,087 (2006)
.....	18,135 (2005)
.....	17,885 (2004)

<u>Gender ratio</u> ¹²	51.5% female (2007)
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2.2. Status of emigrants

Refugees and asylum seekers¹³

Refugees	14,918 (2006)
Asylum seekers.....	6,932 (2006)
As percentage of total emigrant population	1.6% (2005)

Labour migrants	116,000-147,000 (2002-2005) ¹⁴
Emigration rate of tertiary educated:.....	19.7% ¹⁵

Irregular migrants: the majority of labour migrants, especially in the Russian Federation, have no work permit and are therefore considered irregular migrants¹⁶

2.3. Main countries of destination

Russian Federation, United States, Ukraine, Georgia, Germany, Israel, Turkmenistan, Greece, Spain, Belarus.¹⁷

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2007) Population of the Republic of Armenia.

¹² National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2007).

¹³ UNHCR (2005, 2006) *Statistical Yearbooks 2005 and 2006. Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced.*

¹⁴ OSCE (2005) *Labour Migration from Armenia in 2002-2005. A Sociological Survey of Households.*

¹⁵ National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2007),

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Table 2. Estimates of Armenian emigrants: Top countries of destination, 2005

Country of destination	No. of emigrants
Russian Federation	485,460
United States	76,364
Ukraine	69,134
Georgia	20,314
Germany	16,663
Israel	14,939
Turkmenistan	7,807
Greece	7,788
Spain	6,836
Belarus	6,634
France	6,373
Kazakhstan	5,977
Other countries	86,346
TOTAL	812,700

Source: World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008) Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008. Data taken from Ratha and Shaw (2007) Bilateral Estimates of Migrants Stocks Database, South-South Migration and Remittances, World Bank Working Paper No. 102, <http://go.worldbank.org/ON5YV3Y480>

3. REMITTANCES

3.1. Quantitative aspects of remittances

Table 3. Amount of incoming migrant remittances in million USD¹⁸

Year	Amount	As % of GDP
2003	686	-
2004	813	-
2005	940	-
2006	1,175	18.3%
2007	1,273	-

Source: World Bank.

The World Bank calculates remittances as follows: "Migrant remittances" are defined as the sum of workers' remittances, compensation of employees, and migrants' transfers. "Workers' remittances", as defined in the IMF Balance of Payments manual, are current private transfers from migrant workers who are considered residents of the host country to recipients in their country of origin. If the migrants live in the host country for a year or longer, they are considered residents, regardless of their immigration status. If the migrants have lived in the host country for less than a year, their entire income in the host country should be classified as compensation of employees. More details can be found at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDECPROSPECTS/Resources/476882-1157133580628/FactbookDataNotes.pdf>

Table 4. Official data on remittances to Armenia in million USD¹⁹

Remittances	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Non-emigrant remittances (seasonal workers)	58	50.6	56.6	77.3	106.2	147.3	97.85	320.9
Emigrant remittances	14.9	9.3	10.2	10.2	9.3	32.52	41.95	55.85
Diaspora transfers	88	94.7	114.9	132.9	173.7	405.27	463.19	608.03
Total current remittances	160.9	154.6	181.7	223.7	289.2	585.09	602.99	984.78

Source: Armenian National Statistical Office

The National Statistical Service (NSS) of the Republic of Armenia classifies Armenians working abroad into three types:

- Non-emigrant (temporary/seasonal) workers: those working less than one year abroad;
- Emigrant workers: those working for over one year but less than two years; and
- Diaspora: those who have been outside Armenia for over two years.

Armenian remittance flows are measured both using data on monetary transfers through the formal financial sector (from the Central Bank) and data from the annual Armenian household survey (carried out by the NSS with World Bank support). The NSS states that tax and social payments of non-emigrant workers are assumed to be 20 per cent of income.

¹⁸ Development Prospects Group (2008) Migration and Remittances Factbook.

¹⁹ National Statistical Service (2004, 2006) Balance of Payments of the Republic of Armenia, 1999-2003 and 2004-2006.

3.2. Qualitative aspects of remittances

The diaspora's remittances are crucial for Armenia's economy. According to the Central Bank of Armenia, remittances from the diaspora are double the size of the country's budget and keep many families above the poverty line.²⁰ Remittances have had a particular impact on the construction sector, which has been the leading sector of the economy in recent years. In 2006, growth in the sector was 37.1 per cent, constituting 26 per cent of the country's GDP. This growth has been mainly driven by an increased demand for higher quality housing funded primarily by remittances. The Armenian diaspora, which is seeking a base in Armenia, has also contributed significantly to the demand in the construction sector.²¹

According to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) study, most of the remittances sent to Armenia come from the Russian Federation (70%), and correlate strongly with Russia's GDP growth.²² The study also indicates that Armenians mainly send remittances in US dollars (90%) and through banks (from 55 to 85%; 60% according to a 2007 survey). Although trust and confidence in the banking system continues to be low, there are positive trends in the use of formal channels of transfer. An informal survey of diasporas by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)²³ revealed that formal financial channels are much more widely used by Armenians transmitting from the Russia Federation than from Western Europe. This is largely due to the appearance of two transfer systems, Anelik (2001) and Unistream (2002), in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). These systems significantly lowered transactions costs thus encouraging remittance transmission through formal channels. Transactions costs for remittances from CIS countries are in any event generally significantly lower than the transaction costs for remittances from the United States, Canada, or Europe.²⁴ Other than money, about 30 per cent of a representative group of migrants surveyed in 2007 have sent or brought to Armenia food, clothes, durable products, and vehicles of an estimated average value of 700 US dollars per sender.

A report on "Remittances in Armenia: Size, Impacts, and Measures to Enhance Their Contribution to Development"²⁵ shows that remittances contribute

²⁰ The Armenian Economist (December 2006) *Money Outflows from Armenia*.

²¹ US Commercial Service (2005) *Doing Business in Armenia*.

²² Oomes, Nienke (2007) *Coping with Strong Remittances: The Case of Armenia*, IMF.

²³ Bryan W. Roberts, PhD of BearingPoint in collaboration with Professor King Banaian, St. Cloud State University (2004): *Remittances in Armenia: Size, Impact and Measures to Enhance Their Contribution to Development*. For the purposes of this study, Suren Gevinyan conducted an informal survey of diasporan Armenians consisting of interviews with 166 individuals in five cities (London, Paris, Brussels, Moscow, and Rostov).

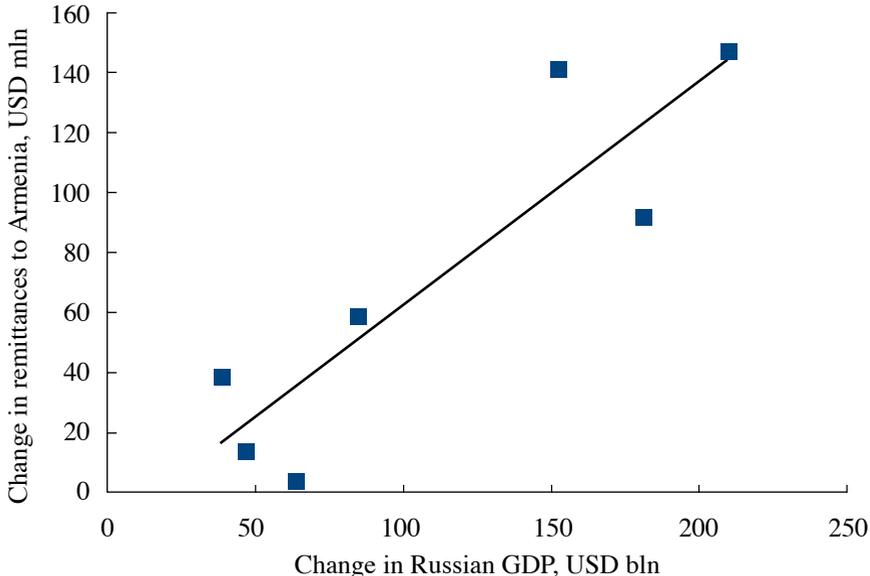
²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ *Ibid*.

to reducing poverty in Armenia. It is less clear, however, what their impact on inequality is. Some studies, such as the 2002 Armenian household survey,²⁶ show that in Armenia, remittances contribute to the reduction of inequality. According to income data reported in the survey, remittances make up 80 per cent, on average, of the income of households receiving remittances. Remittances appear to be going to some of the most vulnerable households in Armenia. The survey also highlights that there is the same percentage of urban and rural households receiving remittances, but that rural households receive relatively more remittances from CIS countries and less from the United States and Canada.

At the macroeconomic level, remittances have been important for Armenia during the transition period. They were a key financing component of external imbalance that enabled Armenia to run large deficits with the outside world and maintain decent living standards and investment. During the boom of the last three years, their role in financing the trade deficit has also grown. Remittances continue to be an important source of external deficit financing, and major positive or negative shocks to remittance flows may have important consequences for the Armenian macro-economy.

Figure 1. Correlation between remittances sent to Armenia and Russia's GDP



Source: IMF Armenia.

²⁶ The Armenian National Statistical Service (NSS) uses data on formal sector wire transfers and also remittance income as captured in a household survey carried out on a yearly basis.

4. MIGRANT COMMUNITIES/DIASPORAS

4.1. Estimates

Table 5. Historic Armenian diasporas, 1988 and 2003²⁷

Country of destination	Estimation 2003	% total	Estimation 1988	% total
Russian Federation	2,000,000	28.8	530,000	8.1
United States	1,000,000	13.3	650,000	10
Georgia	320,000	4.4	440,000	6.8
France	300,000	4.2	250,000	3.8
Ukraine	150,000	2.1	55,000	0.8
Iran, Islamic Republic of	100,000	1.4	100,000	1.5
Lebanon	100,000	1.4	120,000	1.8
Syrian Arab Republic	70,000	1.0	80,000	1.2
Argentina	70,000	1.0	40,000	0.6
Azerbaijan	70,000	1.0	400,000	6.1
Turkey	60,000	0.8	70,000	1.1
Canada	50,000	0.7	30,000	0.5
Bulgaria	50,000	0.7	10,000	0.2
Australia	40,000	0.5	20,000	0.3
United Kingdom	20,000	0.3	15,000	0.2
Other	800,000	11.1	600,000	9.2
Total	7,200,000	100	6,510,000	100

Source: Panossian (2003).

4.2. Description of the relationship between the diasporas and the country of origin

Armenia has a population of 3.2 million and the diaspora estimations range from six to over seven million. Many of the Armenian migrants are settled in the Russian Federation, United States, Canada, CIS countries, and to a lesser extent, in Western Europe.

The diasporas resulting from historic waves of emigration had perhaps a stronger link with the Republic, with the exception of those originating from

²⁷ Panossian, Razmik (2003) *The Armenian Diaspora Today: Lobby, Political and Identity Groups*, London School of Economics.

lost territories, who do not see modern Armenia as their real homeland. Modern diasporas (economic migrants of the last two decades), and second-generation Armenian migrants are rather cosmopolitan. This diaspora is both attracted and repelled by the motherland. There exist some emotional, personal, and institutional ties but such ties can be very selective and irregular. They tend to feel a dual nationality both as Armenians and as citizens of their host country. But in general, to a different extent, the Armenian diasporas continue their active participation in the political and economic life of their former homeland (e.g., taking part in charitable causes, lobbying during elections, recognition of the Armenian Massacre abroad, etc.).

4.3. Migrant communities/diasporas' organizations²⁸

Historically, the Armenian diaspora organizations were mainly of political or religious character. However, in the last 25 years, they have evolved to encompass a variety of purposes including social, academic, professional, political, and cultural, among others.

(Please note the list below does not purport to be exhaustive or representative. IOM does not take responsibility for the accuracy of the contact details.)

International

- **Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)**
Established in 1906 with the purpose of helping to preserve and promote the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural, and humanitarian programmes, the AGBU (<http://www.agbu.org/>) now has representations in Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan (Nagorno Karabakh), Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, South Africa, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom, United States, and Uruguay, and an international budget of 36 million dollars. The AGBU also has a news magazine and implements a wide range of benevolent projects in countries having Armenian communities.
- **Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe (FAAE)**
Established in 1998 to assemble and facilitate cooperation between Armenian organizations in the European diaspora, the FAAE (<http://www.armenianforum.org>) now has member organizations in 16 European countries and growing. Armenians from all over Europe, east and west, have thus been

²⁸ For a full list, go to <http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/followup/organizations.html>

meeting every year in June since 1999 under the aegis of the FAAE to network and develop joint initiatives. The Forum, furthermore, is pluralistic and deals with all issues of interest to its member organizations, including international relations, human rights issues, economic cooperation, and cultural matters.

- **European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (FEAJD)**
The FEAJD is a Brussels-based Armenian lobby group that fights for the advocacy of Armenian issues. Its most significant accomplishments include the recognition of the Armenian Massacre by the European Parliament on 18 June 1987. The FEAJD (<http://www.feajd.org>) also fights for the progressive inclusion of Armenia in European and international institutions

Austria

- **Armenian Apostolic Church Community of Austria**
Based in Vienna, its website (<http://www.armenia.at/aakg/>) provides services and information including a forum, a community events calendar, links to other Armenian organizations, Armenian news, and more. The site also contains historical and cultural information about Armenia
- **Austrian Armenian Cultural Society**
Founded 1974 in Vienna, the Austrian-Armenian Cultural Society (<http://www.oepak.org/>) is an organization that promotes cultural ties between Armenia and Austria and vice versa. Its main goal is to introduce Austrians to the Armenian culture and heritage as well as to inform Armenians about the Austrian culture and history. The Austrian-Armenian Cultural Society—whose members are Armenians as well as Austrians, e.g., scientists, writers, artists, renowned intellectuals, etc.—is maintaining cultural ties to various organizations in Austria, Armenia, and the diaspora. Among its vast activities include Armenian language lessons, assistance programmes to Armenia, and youth camping events.

Cyprus

- **Hayem**
This internet site (<http://www.hayem.org/>) has mostly news about the Cypriot Armenians and Armenia. It has a phone directory, a gallery, and an e-card section.

Germany

- German-Armenian Society (DAG)
The DAG (<http://www.deutsch-armenische-gesellschaft.de/>) was founded in Berlin in 1914. Its aims are to promote mutual understanding between Germans and Armenians and to safeguard the interests of Armenians living in Germany. Furthermore, the DAG defends the rights and interests of Armenian minorities, including in Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries.

Greece

- Armenian National Committee of Greece (ANCG)
The ANCG (<http://www.ancg.org>) was established in 1965 and maintains offices in various cities of Greece. Affiliated committees function in all the communities of the Armenian diaspora, and constitute the world network that promotes the Armenian cause. The ANCG is the official political institution that represents the Armenian diaspora. Its fundamental goal is to spread the Armenian cause at the international level and to promote solutions that will repair the damage caused by the 1915 Armenian Massacre in Turkey to the Armenian people.

Netherlands

- The Abovian Armenian Association (<http://www.abovian.nl>)
This is an Armenian community centre located in the Hague, which hosts regular events that include lectures, films, art, and music. Recently, it hosted a series of discussions on Armenian politics and Turkey's accession to the European Union (EU) featuring a number of guest lecturers. It also offers Armenian language courses and traditional dance lessons for both children and adults.
- 24 April Comite
The 24 April Comite (<http://24aprilcomite.ontheweb.nl>) belongs to the Federation of Armenian Organizations of the Netherlands. It is dedicated to fighting the denial of the Armenian Massacre through international recognition.

Poland

- Armenian Cultural Association
Based in Krakow, the Armenian Cultural Association (<http://otk.armenia.pl/new/>) organizes events aimed at the promotion of Armenian language, culture, and history.

Italy

- The Armenian Community of Rome
The purpose of the Armenian Community of Rome (<http://www.comunitaarmena.it>) is to maintain, defend, and reinforce the Armenian spirit and identity through the organization's social, cultural, and religious activities. Among its many activities include Armenian language lessons for adults, conferences, celebrations of Armenian holidays, and religious festivals.

Russia

- Union of Armenians in Russia (UAR)
The UAR (<http://www.souzarman.ru>) is the first and the only whole Russian-Armenian public organization. Its main objectives are the preservation of the national identity, rendition of mutual social support, and provision of assistance (economic, humanitarian, social, etc.) to the historical motherland—Armenia.

Switzerland

- Swiss-Armenian Association (ASA)
The goal of the ASA (<http://www.armenian.ch>) is to cultivate and encourage friendly cultural and economic ties between Switzerland and Armenia. The organization is headquartered in the German-speaking city of Bern (slightly northeast of the centre of the country). With no political affiliation, the ASA supports endeavors that strengthen Armenian history, culture, and identity.

United Kingdom

- Centre for Armenian Information and Advice (CAIA) “Hayashen”
The CAIA (<http://www.caia.org.uk>) is the principal focus for the welfare and educational needs of over 15,000 Armenians scattered across London. Established in 1986 through funding from the London Borough Grants Scheme, its primary aim is to enhance the quality of life of the disadvantaged members of the Armenian community, specifically those in poverty and isolation such as refugees, older people, women, and children.
- Diaspora-Armenia Connection (DAC) (United Kingdom and France)
The DAC (<http://www.da-connexion.com>) was created in 1999 by a group of French-Armenian volunteers. Each summer, it brings groups of young Armenians from around the world to volunteer in various Armenian villages.

In addition to teaching the arts and foreign languages to children and to renovating schools, the projects focus on training local doctors.

United States

- US Research and Education Programs Alumni Armenian Association (US-REPAAA)

A non-government, non-profit organization, the USREPAAA (<http://www.usrepaaa.org/>) was created on 4 July 1997 with the goal of bringing together Armenian citizens who have spent extensive time studying or participating in academic and research programmes in US universities and other academic institutions. It unifies these students and researchers to attain common goals, and to utilize their experience and knowledge gained in the United States to provide for a better life for the people of Armenia. The USREPAAA is the first alumni association of Armenian students in the United States. The experience and successful projects of the USREPAAA gave birth to other alumni associations in Armenia, Russia, and other post-Soviet countries.

- Armenian Students Organization

This student organization (<http://www.asainc.org/index.php>) has both educational and charitable goals in that it encourages educational pursuits by Armenians in America and the raising of their intellectual standards, provides financial assistance in the form of scholarships and loans to deserving Armenian students, develops fellowship among them, cultivates in them the spirit of service in the public interest, and acquaints them and the entire American community with the culture of Armenia.

- Armenian American Cultural Association

The aims of the Association (<http://www.aacainc.org/>) are to promote cultural, educational, and scientific endeavours between the United States and the Republic of Armenia and to sponsor health and humanitarian projects for the people of Armenia.

- Armenian Assembly of America

Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Armenian Assembly of America (<http://www.aaainc.org/>) is the largest non-partisan Armenian-American advocacy organization in the United States. For more than 30 years, the Assembly has promoted public awareness of Armenian issues, encouraged greater Armenian-American participation in the American democratic process, and assisted in humanitarian and development programmes in Armenia, while strengthening the US-Armenia relationships.

5. IRREGULAR MIGRATION

5.1. Numbers/estimates of irregular movements

After the fall of the USSR and the establishment of the Republic of Armenia in 1991, three categories of irregular migration routes emerged:

- Emigration of Armenians based on deterioration of living standards: route leading from Armenia to the territories of the Russian Federation, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland and the Czech Republic and Poland to Austria and other Schengen countries (with Germany accounting for more than a half of Armenian irregular migrants) as well as to the United States. The Russian Federation and Ukraine are also destination countries. Transit through CIS countries is mainly due to the visa-free regime among countries.²⁹
- Other transit countries for Armenian irregular migrants include Moldova-Romania (via Ukraine) and Turkey-Greece/Bulgaria. Moscow is also a hub for those travelling with visas and on air transport.
- Emigration of ethnic Armenians from Azerbaijan caused by the conflict in and around Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan—to Armenia or to Western Europe.
- Transit migrants from Asia and the Middle East (i.e., Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Palestine, Egypt and recently China) —on their way to the Russian Federation, Western Europe, and United States.

Emigrants traditionally rely on the help of the Armenian Diaspora and in the majority of cases enter legally and then overstay their visas or enter on grounds of asylum seeking. Illegal entry is facilitated by smugglers and travel agencies operating on the territory of Armenia (cooperating with smugglers in transit countries and in countries of destination) who arrange for immigrants' jobs and documents. According to the Police and Ministry of Security, smugglers outside Armenia—among them many Armenian nationals—play key roles in the organization of the movements.

²⁹ International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) (2005) *Overview of the Migration Systems in the CIS Countries*

Table 6. Citizens of Armenia in the EU, 2003³⁰

Country/Status	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Slovakia	Bulgaria
Apprehended	5	-	-	519	996	61
%	0.3%	-	-	5.9%	8%	13.4%
Removed	13	7	16	292	19	79
%	7.6%	1.9%	1.9%	5%	1%	9.7%

Note : % refers to the percentage out of the total number of refused/apprehended/removed aliens in a given country.

Source: European Commission, 2003. CIREFI, Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration.

Table 7. Profile of Armenian irregular migrants

Sex	No.
Female	33
Male	67
Age	
18-29	8
30-35	21
36-49	57
50-65	14
Marital Status	
Single	8
Married	72
Divorced	10
Widowed	10
Children	
Yes	83
No	17
Accompanying Family Member	
None	51
Spouse	37
Children	37
Grandchildren	1
Education	
Secondary	57
Graduate	43

³⁰ European Commission (2003) *Annual Report on Asylum and Migration*, http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/asylum/statistics/doc_annual_report_2003_en.htm

Place of Origin	
Yerevan	67
Alaverdi	4
Armavir	5
Echmiatsin	4
Talin	4
Pyatigorsk	2
Villages	10
Other	4
Occupation in Armenia	
Own/Family Business	6
Unemployed	65
Blue collar employee	6
White collar employee	12
Other	11

Source: IOM *Irregular Migration and Smuggling of Migrants from Armenia, 2002*, page 16. Information based on a survey of 100 migrant Armenian returnees from Western Europe (who were either irregular migrants or rejected asylum seekers).

5.2. Figures and information on return migration flows

Return of irregular Armenian migrants is both forced and voluntary. In a survey of 100 irregular Armenian migrants conducted by IOM,³¹ 93 persons said they were deported. Seven persons returned voluntarily. In another survey of 300 Armenian returnees from Germany, deportations comprised 56 per cent and voluntary return 43 per cent.

³¹ IOM (2002) *Irregular Migration and Smuggling of Migrants from Armenia*. For the purposes of this publication, structured interviews were held with 100 respondents in Yerevan and other cities and villages of Armenia.

Table 8. Assisted voluntary return to Armenia

Return from:	2005	2006	Total
Austria	23	36	59
Belgium	193	184	377
Czech Republic	1	6	7
Germany	158	133	291
Hungary	1		1
Ireland	1	3	4
Italy	1		1
Netherlands	119	61	180
Norway	4		4
Poland	1	4	5
Serbia and Montenegro		6	6
Slovakia	2	1	3
Spain	2		2
United Kingdom	4	7	11
Others	15		15
Total	525	441	966

Source: IOM, 2007.

5.3. Figures and information on trafficking in human beings

Information about trafficking in human beings in, from, and through Armenia is sketchy and often not reliable. Existing limited knowledge about the profile of trafficked persons, vulnerability factors influencing the occurrence of trafficking, and the modus operandi used by traffickers is generally based on information gathered from Armenian victims who have been identified and assisted and have returned home. Even the limited information available is not systematically collected and analysed. No single actor collects and analyses available data. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that assist victims of trafficking do not have the capacity to provide generalized data due to lack of financial and human resources and each government agency provides at best basic data referring to their particular area of responsibility only.

According to available information, Armenia is primarily a source country and, to a lesser extent, a transit country for women and girls trafficked to the United Arab Emirates and Turkey for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. There are concerns that Armenians are also trafficked to Russia for the purpose of

forced labour.³² Trafficked Armenian women and girls transit through Moscow to the United Arab Emirates as well.

³² Yerevan, Anna Minasyan and Blanka Hancilova (2006) *Labour Migration for Armenia 2002-2005*, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; Yerevan, Anna (2007) *Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Armenia. An Assessment of Current Responses*, OSCE.

6. ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION ISSUES

6.1. Government institutions responsible for migration policy and contacts with expatriate communities

The following are the principal agencies that participate in administrative decision-making on international migration issues or are responsible for those issues as part of their mandate:³³

The **Migration Agency (MA)**, formerly the **Department for Migration and Refugees (DMR)**, is one of the principal agencies.³⁴ In 2005, the DMR (<http://www.dmr.am/ADMR/INDEX.HTML>; <http://www.backtoarmenia.am>) was restructured into the Migration Agency (MA) and placed under the Ministry of Territorial Administration (<http://www.mta.gov.am/>) based on Governmental Decision No. 633-N of 19 May 2005. The MA does not deal with every migration-related state responsibility. It designs and implements projects that focus on migration management and refugee issues. Its first objective is to count passenger flows. MA also receives every month information from the Central Bank of Armenia on remittances. MA has, however, no function in matters relating to residence permits, visa, or border management.

The **Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (MLSI)**/Department of Labour and Employment deals with issues related to labour migration. The MLSI (<http://www.mss.am>) has a database of organizations, vacancies, and unemployed people and is therefore able to implement a unified policy. Previously, the Migration Agency used to be a department in the MLSI. The Ministry conducts thorough analysis of the labour market and organizes trainings for persons willing to work abroad, sending them afterwards to countries where a high demand for workers exists. Though not yet enforced, it is expected that MLSI will be responsible for the issuance of work permits for foreigners. The Ministry also has separate subdivisions, such as the State Labour Inspectorate and the State Occupation Service.

³³ Kabeleova, Hana, Armen Mazmanyan, and Ara Yeremyan (2007) *Assessment of the Migration Legislation in the Republic of Armenia*, OSCE.

³⁴ The DMR was established by a government decision in April 1999. Until 1999, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was in charge of migration and asylum issues. The DMR developed a migration policy, including the drafting or amendment of existing legislation, launch of programmes of social assistance for vulnerable groups, and maintenance and updating of statistical records on migration.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (Legal Department, Consular Department, Migration Desk) is responsible for visa and passport issuance, and relations with Armenians abroad. Its Consulate Department deals with repatriation issues and also with readmission. The Ministry (<http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/>) also has online access to the Border Management Information System (BMIS) where applicants' documents are electronically stored.

The **National Security Service (NSS)** (Second Division on Combating Illegal Migration of the General Second Directorate and the Border Guards Troops) deals with border management and control. NSS has data on foreigners granted residence status. In case a foreigner applies for a special residence status, NSS gives its opinion on the issue.

The **Armenian Border Guards** (<http://www.sns.am>) have a Border Control Detachment in charge of border management and control. In accordance with the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance and the Declaration on the Collaboration towards the 21st Century of 29 December 1991, the Russian Federal Border Guards, on the other hand, secures Armenia's borders with Turkey and Iran.

The **Armenian Police** (<http://www.police.am>) has two divisions responsible for international migration issues. The **Division of Combating Illegal Migration and for International Collaboration** was established in 2003 and investigates cases of illegal state border crossing; swindling; and forgery, sale or use of forged documents, stamps, seals, letterheads, and vehicle license plates. It also deals mostly with Armenian citizens who become irregular migrants. Meanwhile, the **Department of Passports and Visas** (AVV in Armenian and OVIR-Otdel viz I registracii in Russian), which reports to the Prime Minister, is responsible for visa issuance at the borders, visa extension, registration of foreigners on the territory, issuance of exit stamps (passport validation) for Armenian citizens, and operates the passport database of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia.

The **National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (Armstat)** (<http://www.armstat.am>) collects, processes, summarizes, analyses, and publishes statistical data, including migration-related data. It also coordinates the information and data collection according to the unified classification and coding system based on international standards, organizes statistical surveys, and carries out population censuses. Armstat also collects data on remittances (household surveys of 2002 and 2006) and on immigrants and emigrants.

The **Administration of the President of the Republic of Armenia - Office of Acquittals, Citizenship, Awards and Titles of the Staff of the President** (<http://www.president.am/administration/eng/>) has the following main responsibilities: to grant pardon to convicted persons; to offer citizenship; to offer political asylum; to bestow orders and medals of the Republic of Armenia; and to confer top military and honorary titles, as well as top diplomatic and other ranks. The Office also fulfills other functions prescribed by the law.

The **Ministry of Trade and Economic Development** (<http://www.minted.am/en/>) is responsible for the elaboration and implementation of tourism development policy and investment policy in the country. It also carries out the state policy for entrepreneurship development, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The Ministry has created the National Center for Development of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship (<http://www.smednc.am/>) in 2002. Among other activities, the Center provides consulting and training to those wishing to venture into entrepreneurship, including foreign citizens. The Center's goals are to provide support to start-up and operating SMEs; to enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of SMEs; to ensure the availability of business development services to SMEs; to expand financing opportunities for SMEs; to provide innovations and support the introduction of new technologies; to support the establishment of start-up businesses; to stimulate the economic activity of SMEs in the international market; and to develop more business opportunities in Armenia.

The **Ministry of Health** (<http://www.moh.am/>) elaborates and implements the policies of the Armenian government in the healthcare sector. Among other functions, the Ministry is responsible for the sanitary-epidemic security of the population, takes measures to prevent dangerous and infectious diseases, organizes primary and specialized health care for the population, and manages health-care in emergencies.

The **State Customs Committee** (<http://www.customs.am>) of the Republic of Armenia manages, organizes, and monitors customs activities, and controls the entry and exit of goods.

The **Ministry of Justice** (<http://www.justice.am>) oversees the Penitentiary system. Since there are no migrant accommodation centres in Armenia, illegal migrants are kept in general penitentiary institutions. The State Register of Legal Persons is also a unit under the Ministry of Justice. The Bodies of Registering the Civil Status Acts are also situated within the Ministry of Justice.

The **Inter-agency Commission (IAC) for Anti-Trafficking Issues** was established by the Armenian government in October 2002 to “study the issues and make suggestions in regard to illegal transfer and trafficking in humans from the Republic of Armenia with the purpose of exploitation.” The following agencies are represented in this body: MFA, Prime Minister’s Office, Prosecutor General’s Office, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, National Security Service, Police, Department for Migration and Refugees (later renamed the Migration Agency and included as part of the Ministry of Territorial Administration), National Assembly, NSS, and Armenian Red Cross.³⁵

The Council on Trafficking Issues was established in December 2007 upgrading the Interagency Commission on Combating Trafficking in the Republic of Armenia established in October 2002 to a higher level. The Council is chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister, the Minister of Territorial Administration, and has Ministers and heads of the respective Government Agencies as its members. Decision was made to preserve the Interagency Commission in the form of a Working Group under the Council on Trafficking Issues to ensure for continuity and effective functioning of the work of the Council.

The 2007-2009 National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted in December 2007 marking the second phase of the national strategy to combat trafficking in human beings in the Republic. A National Referral Mechanism was drafted and it is currently undergoing a pilot testing period and an approval procedure within the Government for adoption.

6.2. International legal framework in place

International Treaties Ratified by Armenia

- C97 Migration for Employment Convention 1949, ratified on 27 January 2006
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees 1951, ratified on 6 July 1993
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965, entered into effect for the Republic of Armenia on 23 July 1993
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966, entered into effect for the Republic of Armenia on 23 September 1993

³⁵ International and intergovernmental organizations (IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, OSCE, etc.) as well as local non-government organizations (NGOs) have observer status in the IAC.

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, entered into effect for the Republic of Armenia on 13 December 1993
- 143 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975, ratified on 27 January 2003 and entered into effect in Armenia on 5 November 2005
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, ratified on 14 September 2006
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984, entered into effect for the Republic of Armenia on 13 October 1993
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, entered into effect for the Republic of Armenia on 22 July 1993
- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified on 1 July 2003
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000, ratified on 1 July 2003
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000, ratified on 1 July 2003

Council of Europe Conventions

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, entered into effect on 26 April 2002
- European Convention on Extradition, entered into effect on 1 November 1998
- Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, signed on 16 May 2005

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

- Agreement on Cooperation on Labour Migration and Social Protection of Migrant Workers, entered into effect for the Republic of Armenia on 26 February 1996
- Agreement on Cooperation between CIS Countries against Irregular Migration, entered into effect by the Republic of Armenia on 20 June 1999

Bilateral Labour Agreements

- **Ukraine**

Agreement between Ukraine and Armenia on labour activity and social protection of their citizens working beyond their borders, signed on 17 June 1995.

- **Belarus**

Agreement between Belarus and Armenia on temporary professional activity and social protection of their citizens working beyond their borders, signed on 19 July 2000.

Readmission Agreements

Armenia has concluded readmission agreements with a number of countries, particularly the destination countries for Armenians. The conclusion of readmission agreements in Armenia is considered as an essential part of the policy for fighting illegal migration. The Republic of Armenia has signed readmission agreements with Lithuania, Denmark, Switzerland, and Germany. Negotiations were successfully finished in 2006 with Benelux countries, Norway, Czech Republic, Sweden, Poland, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Estonia, the Russian Federation, and Romania.³⁶

6.3. Migration policies in place

Armenia does not have a comprehensive policy covering all migration issues. Various aspects of migration in Armenia are governed by separate laws and government decisions. Often, these laws tend to leave significant discretion to the implementing authorities and thus in effect raise questions about the feasibility and efficacy of democratic oversight over migration issues. The key policy documents and laws related to migration are the following:

The Government Programme for 2007³⁷ addresses the issues of migration and diaspora in Sections 4.4.7 “Diaspora” and 4.4.8 “Migration”.

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Consular Department.

³⁷ Approved by Decision No. 695-A of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on 21 June 2007, available on http://www.gov.am/enversion/reform_12/books/cragir_eng2007.pdf.

Concept of State Regulation of Migration of Population in the Republic of Armenia (<http://www.dmr.am/ADMR/ORENSD~1/hajetcang.HTM>)³⁸

Concept of Resettlement of Population in the Republic of Armenia (2000, DMR/MA) (available in Armenian)

Concept of Creation of an Information System on Population Movement (MA) (<http://www.dmr.am/ORENSD~1/MTH.htm>) (available in Armenian)

The **National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan for 2007-2009** was drafted by the Inter-Agency Commission for Anti-Trafficking and was approved in December 2007. The previous three-year Action Plan (2004-2006) was mainly oriented to the creation of legislative and structural mechanisms. This recently elaborated plan is intended to be used by each unit and meant for the improvement of the activity. Retaining the measures taken in the past as well as the general focus, this document will amplify common efforts in combating trafficking and address the gaps in the system through the creation of new mechanisms. Prevention and severity of punishment lies in the heart of this Plan.

Policy of Integration and Naturalization of Armenian Refugees from Azerbaijan

The **Law for the Republic of Armenia on State Border (25 December 2001)** determines the functions of state entities at the border points of the Republic of Armenia and defines the state border.

The **Law on Foreigners (2006)** regulates issues of visas, entry, and residency. It contains more up-to-date approaches to entry and residency matters than the previous Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens (HO-110, passed on 17 June 1994) and is based on basic international standards.

The **Amendment to the Constitution in 2005** removed the ban on dual citizenship of Armenian citizens. The **Law on Citizenship** provides the legal regulation on dual citizenship.

The **Draft Law on Organization of Overseas Employment (29 November 2005)** aims at “creating new working places for realization of the right of its citizens to work and for the regulation of the ratio of supply and demand in the labour market”, “creating favourable conditions for its citizens, targeted at their

³⁸ Adopted as Annex to Decision No. 24 of 25 June 2004 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

involvement in short-term and mid-term overseas employment”, and “protecting the rights and interests of labour migrants”.

Law of Refugees (1999) and Law on Political Asylum (2001)

The **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2003** makes reference to the special needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, particularly with regards to their local integration

6.4. Labour market analysis and migration

Armenia is a resource-poor country, with a per capita GDP of USD 937 (2006). However, the strong growth in recent years was instrumental to the reduction of poverty. By 1993, the GDP had shrunk to less than half of the 1990 level, but from 1994 to 2003, the GDP growth averaged 8.2 per cent per annum. In 2005, the GDP growth rate reached 13.9 per cent, exceeding IMF forecasts. Although the driving forces behind the Armenian growth are debated, it appears that the country’s recent performance can largely be attributed to remittances sent by emigrants (in addition to the construction boom and increased exports). However, on the flipside, high emigration rates and declining birth rates are resulting in an ageing population, which could hamper Armenia’s labour market situation and economic recovery prospects.

Despite impressive economic growth rates, Armenia has yet to experience growth in employment. Typical of many other European and Central Asian countries, workers displaced in the “old” public sectors experience difficulty in finding jobs in the “new” private sectors. As a result, unemployment, which was officially recognized in 1992, has shown an increasing trend over time. The highest unemployment rates, ranging between 32.7 and 65.9 per cent, occur among younger people (the 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 age groups). The scarcity of productive job opportunities and the under-utilization of labour are major socioeconomic problems in the country, which together serve as a large explanatory variable in the continuing outflow of migrants in Armenia.

6.5. Policies to address irregular migration

The main responsibilities in the fight against irregular migration in Armenia rest with the National Police, the National Security Service, and the Migration Agency. Policies to counter irregular migration to and through Armenia include:³⁹

³⁹ Ibid.

- More rigid visa regime; stricter border control
- Exchange of information on migration movements between CIS countries, Black Sea Region countries, and international organizations;
- Planned regular exchange of information on migration movements and processes with destination countries of irregular migration: selected EU countries, United States, and the Russian Federation⁴⁰
- Creation of a professional electronic database (accessible at all border crossings) for the registration of persons entering and leaving Armenia
- Planned creation, within the framework of the Armenian Police, of a separate section for monitoring illegal migration
- Activities of the permanent office of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation in Yerevan
- Completion of labour agreements with quotas for Armenians to work abroad– facilitating regular labour migration as a way to prevent irregular migration (see Section 6.4)
- Completion of return and readmission agreements with countries of destination of irregular Armenian migrants (see Section 6.4).

There are a number of initiatives underway that aim at particularly combating irregular labour emigration of Armenians. The MA implements various projects in the field, the MLSI collaborates with foreign governments, and the international and intergovernmental organizations are carrying out a number of initiatives aimed at decreasing irregular migration and promoting labour migration.

6.6. Policies to address trafficking in human beings

Although the Armenian government is making significant efforts to combat human trafficking, it does not fully comply with the minimum standards for its elimination.

As positive measures, however, it is important to note that in 2002, the Armenian government established an advisory body on trafficking in human beings. In the years since then, the legislative framework criminalizing trafficking has improved, law enforcement agencies and other actors started to identify victims of trafficking, and the number of victims assisted by NGO shelters in Armenia almost doubled between 2005 and 2006. The cooperation between the state authorities and NGOs and other service providers has improved and law enforcement agencies have started referring some victims to NGOs. Specialized NGOs

⁴⁰ For instance, Armenia takes part in the Cluster Process, migration dialogue aimed at countering irregular migration from South Caucasus to the EU.

have gathered valuable experience and knowledge. In general, the capacity of all anti-trafficking actors has increased. In 2004, the government adopted a National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Between 2004 and 2006, it took some steps to increase awareness about trafficking.

Despite such efforts, Armenia is still placed on the Tier 2 Watch List by the US Trafficking in Persons (TiP) report of 2006 for the third consecutive year because of its failure to show evidence of increasing efforts over the past years, particularly in the areas of fighting trafficking-related corruption (the US TiP report identified two notable cases of official corruption in 2006) and providing victim assistance.

The international community agrees that there is a need for a clear national referral mechanism and an institutionalized victim protection programme. There is also a notable shortage of both financial and human resources for the implementation of the National Plan of Action.

6.7. Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, and relevant policies in place

Refugees and forcibly displaced persons started arriving in Armenia (at that time, still a Soviet Republic) in spring 1988 and continued coming until late 1991. During this time, Armenia gave shelter to approximately 420,000 refugees and displaced persons, 360,000 of whom had fled Azerbaijan (at that time, still part of the former Soviet Union) in the late 1980s as a result of the conflict in and around Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. The rest came from regions of the former Soviet Union (Abkhazia, Chechnya, and Ossetia).⁴¹ The refugees from Azerbaijan resulting from this are all ethnic Armenians and were offered full Armenian citizenship when they fled into Armenia. For various reasons, only 70,000 refugees have so far accepted Armenian citizenship.⁴²

Many of the refugees are unemployed and live under difficult conditions in collective centres in urban areas, or in containers in more rural districts. Getting jobs and permanent housing are more important factors for their successful integration into the Armenian society than citizenship.

Despite the rapid pace of recent GDP growth, the overall socio-economic situation in the country continues to be characterized by high levels of unemploy-

⁴¹ IOM (2006) Migration Perspectives. *Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.

⁴² Norwegian Refugee Council (2007) Facts about NRC Country Programme.

ment and pervasive poverty. Half of the population still lives below the poverty line, with refugees being among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.⁴³ Refugee issues are already incorporated into the general development policy (Poverty Reduction Strategy) and programmes of the Armenian government and the UN agencies specialized in development.

Development of the asylum system, reduction of statelessness, and local integration are the three major protection concerns in Armenia. With its location at the crossroads between Europe and the Near East, Armenia is increasingly becoming a transit point for irregular migrants, including asylum seekers trying to reach Western and Central Europe.

Thus, while the basic elements of the national asylum system are in place, further efforts are necessary to improve the specific legal framework and its implementation in accordance with international standards in order to meet the likelihood of increased numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Armenia. A new set of amendments to the Refugee Law was adopted in early 2004 making it more in line with internationally recognized standards, although some gaps remain to be closed. More efforts have been given in improving the quality of the refugee status determination procedure, the management of asylum data, and the reception and management of asylum seekers at border entry points.

The continued involvement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in facilitating the naturalization of refugees from Azerbaijan is based not only on implementing a durable solution for this refugee group (naturalization being one of the numerous components of local integration) but also in line with its mandate to promote the reduction of statelessness. By 2006, some 65,000 refugees from Azerbaijan had voluntarily naturalized while others kept their refugee status for various reasons, including psychological and socio-economic ones.⁴⁴

Although the Armenian government has adopted a policy of local integration of refugees from Azerbaijan, the most persistent constraint towards their successful local integration remains to be their poverty and inability to benefit from economic growth. While the refugees have access to the labour market, the general lack of employment restricts their capacity to become self-reliant. Likewise, while refugees have access to the national social services, including the national social welfare system, the system is not able to adequately meet the needs of the

⁴³ World Food Programme Regional Bureau for Eastern Europe (2003) Blue Book; Government of Armenia (2003) *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*.

⁴⁴ UNHCR (2006) Country Operation Plan.

socially disadvantaged, including the refugees. Another major constraint towards the local integration of refugees continues to be their housing problem.

6.8. Important migration actors within the country *(listed in alphabetical order)*

The **European Commission's (EC)** delegation to Armenia and Georgia funds a large IOM project aimed at promoting labour migration. The EC also supports the Armenian Migration Agency to implement (together with the International Center for Human Development and the British Council) a project on Support to Migration Policy Development and Relevant Capacity Building in Armenia.

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The **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, in cooperation with the ICMPD and the OSCE implements a regional project on counter-trafficking.

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The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** has been operating in Armenia since 1993. IOM Armenia mainly works in the following fields: technical cooperation in migration; labour migration; counter-trafficking; and movement and assisted returns. IOM is the chair of the Migration Management Coordination Group in Armenia, which is part of the larger Donor Coordination group in Armenia.

Since 1996, IOM has been collaborating with the Republic of Armenia within the framework of a Capacity Building in Migration Management Programme (CBMMP), which continues to provide technical assistance in areas such as developing migration legislation, strengthening operational and administrative structures, and enhancing border management. IOM has done extensive capacity building to bodies involved in migration management, such as MA / DMR, NSS and its Border Guards Troops, Interpol Armenia NCB, Police and its Department of Passports and Visas, MFA and its Consular Services, and MLSI.

IOM has assisted and involved Armenia in the inter-regional migration and asylum management dialogue (the "Cluster Process") between the sending

and transit countries of the South Caucasus and receiving EU member states. Through the Cluster Process, mechanisms and policies to reduce irregular migration are being promoted while simultaneously strengthening the South Caucasus' institutional capacity and systems to promote legal migration and sustainable return and reintegration practices and policies. Triggered by the Cluster Process meetings, Armenia and Sweden established a country team to increase cooperation on migration management and return. As part of this cooperation, IOM is conducting an Armenia Migration Management Assessment, which will be used as a baseline study to provide guidance for designing the migration part of the National Plan of Action for Migration and Asylum.

IOM also works in the prevention of irregular migration from Armenia through vocational training for under-aged students at the Armenian boarding schools. IOM Armenia also implements a Micro-Enterprise Development Project with offices in Yerevan and Giumri and a Migration Resource Centre, which is mobile and works in several regions of Armenia.

IOM has also been active in counter-trafficking activities in Armenia and has lobbied for the inclusion of human trafficking as a criminal act in the Armenian Criminal Code. IOM contributed to the development of the National Plans of Action to Combat Human Trafficking and has implemented seven projects on counter-trafficking in Armenia ranging from research and capacity building to victim assistance and public awareness. IOM is the co-chair of the International Organizations' Working Group on Counter-Trafficking (together with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and OSCE).

IOM Armenia provides assistance to returnees for medical treatment and other rehabilitation activities, as well as reintegration grants to start up their businesses or pursue studies. IOM organizes the safe movement of people for temporary and permanent resettlement or return from Armenia to their countries of origin. It also provides pre-departure medical screening and cultural orientation programmes.

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The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** Office in Yerevan assists the Armenian government in its efforts to combat human

trafficking, and to develop anti-trafficking policies and mechanisms to protect and assist victims. The Office's activities are currently focused on developing a national referral mechanism (NRM) and improving anti-trafficking training for Armenia's law enforcement bodies. It also co-chairs with UNDP and IOM the International Working Group on Anti-Trafficking, an informal forum for exchanging information on anti-trafficking developments.

The Office also assists the government in improving the legislative and administrative framework related to migration. It has supported two surveys (in 2005 and 2007) on trends in labour migration, as well as an assessment of migration legislation published in 2007.

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The **United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)** implements a project to conduct a survey on migrants together with the Armenian Statistical Service.

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<http://tsc.unfpa.org/armenia/index.htm>

The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** has a number of protection activities and programmes in Armenia. Aside from providing legal assistance in housing-related issues, it advocates with the Armenian government and the judiciary for a clear legal framework for the protection of refugees at risk of eviction from privatized communal centres.

Given the fact that the durable solution for the main refugee group in Armenia is local integration, the UNHCR continues to carry out activities aimed at solving refugees' shelter problem. It implements its shelter activities through the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) of Armenia Shelter. So far, over 3,500 refugee families have obtained permanent housing and upgraded their living conditions.

In addition, the UNHCR, with its implementing partner Mission Armenia, continues its limited social and material assistance to refugees and naturalized former refugees living in communal centres in Yerevan and in six other provinces.

To protect the social, economic, and civil rights of refugees and asylum seekers, it also provides legal counselling and representation for refugees and asylum seekers.

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The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the Armenian government signed a 2005-2009 Country Programme Document, which focuses on reducing the levels of poverty and income inequality; increasing the quality and accessibility of basic social services; improving the transparency and accountability of government institutions; and promoting environmentally sound technologies and effective management of natural resources. Among its efforts, UNDP has taken various initiatives to combat human trafficking. It manages a programme on Capacity Building, Cooperation and Victims Assistance for National and Local Mechanisms to Combat Trafficking of Armenians. The aim of this two-year project is to facilitate the development of a national framework to tackle the problem of human trafficking at the policy and institutional levels as well as to provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking.

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