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## MIGRATION

*Special Editor: Denis Dafflon*

- Challenges of Migration Policy-Making in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia 2  
Shushanik Makaryan, University Park, PA
- Azerbaijani Migrants in Russia 5  
Adeline Braux, Paris
- Female Migrants from Georgia: Profiles and Migratory Projects 8  
Maroussia Ferry, Tbilisi
- STATISTICS 11  
Data on Migration
- OPINION POLL 12  
Russian Public Opinion on Migrants from the South Caucasus

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## Challenges of Migration Policy-Making in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

Shushanik Makaryan, University Park, PA

### Abstract

This article discusses migration policy-making and its challenges in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia since 1991, explores the structural challenges for migration policy formulation, and elaborates on the main themes addressed in the migration policy frameworks of these three countries.

### Migration Dynamics

During the last 23 years, wars, ethnic conflicts, and political and socioeconomic hardships in post-Soviet Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia had a dramatic impact on migration: In the first decade following the Soviet collapse in 1991, negative net migration resulted in a population decline of more than 15% in Armenia and Georgia (Mansoor and Quillin 2006: 33). Azerbaijan is the only country in the South Caucasus that, despite persistently high emigration trends, avoided a population decline given its high crude birth-rate. To date emigration-related concerns have not diminished. According to the United Nations and the World Bank data (ETF, 2011), the emigration stock remains as high as 28% of the population in Armenia, 25% in Georgia, 16% in Azerbaijan; and only in 2011 migrant remittances accounted for 20% of the GDP in Armenia, 11% in Georgia, and just 3% in Azerbaijan.

To date, the ultimate objective in all three countries is to reverse ongoing migration flows, i.e. to increase immigration over emigration. This article comparatively discusses migration policy-making and its challenges in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

### Factors Shaping Migration Policy Conceptualization

Migration policy-making has been quite challenging in post-Soviet states, and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are no exception. With the collapse of Soviet statistical data collection systems, data on annual migration flows became too unreliable to guide policy action. As a consequence, the lack of accurate migration data was the first policy challenge.

Second, young post-Soviet states could not immediately build the legislative and institutional capacity necessary to address migration. In the early stages of state-building, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia addressed migration issues in policies on economic and demographic development and poverty reduction, whereas legal aspects of migration were regulated in laws on citizenship, the status of aliens, and refugees and asylum seekers. Models for these laws were often borrowed from Western (immigrant-receiving) countries, and thus, cen-

tered on regulating immigration, which explains their disconnect from the emigration reality that dominated population trends in the South Caucasus.

Third, despite the highly politicized nature of migration, there was not much input from diverse political actors on migration policy itself (Makaryan 2013), especially in the early years of migration policy-making. While in the United States or in the European Union representatives from various sectors (industry, civil society, government, academia) are involved in debating the particularities of migration policy (such as border control strategies, or whether to ease procedures for work permits for migrants in agriculture), in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia the debate has focused on the structural causes of migration, such as the on-going economic crisis or governmental corruption. On the one hand, the lack of policy input from other social actors gave the government considerable leeway in drafting and implementing its policy agenda on migration. On the other hand, without much input from the public and political parties, the responsibility for not only implementing, but also initiating migration policy fell on the authorities. This situation, therefore, made the authorities by default the primary target of blame for enduring emigration, and also increased the constraints on the kind of policy initiatives they could enact. For example, in Armenia, the authorities have to date not adopted the Law on the Regulation of Overseas Employment (drafted in 2001 and revised several times since then) to avoid public criticism if the law is perceived as encouraging emigration (Chobanyan, 2012).

In recent years, cooperation with the European Union (EU), as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP), has increased the engagement of local civil society in migration policymaking. The EU funding and grant opportunities have forged collaborations between the authorities and non-profit entities at the national level, regionally in the South Caucasus, and with the EU.

Fourth, even when migration policy objectives were aligned with migration trends, the lack of implementation plans, unrealistic objectives or poorly estimated funding needs often delayed migration policy implemen-

tation, especially for the first waves of migration policy frameworks adopted in the early 2000s.

### Comparative Analyses of Migration Policy Frameworks

In 2000 Armenia was the first country in the South Caucasus to adopt a Concept on State Regulation of Migration. It was revised into the second policy framework in 2004, and into the third policy concept in 2010 (in force until 2016). Azerbaijan adopted its first migration policy concept only in 2004, and then revised this document in 2006 into the State Program on Regulation of Migration. In 2013, Azerbaijan consolidated its migration-related legislation into the newly drafted Migration Code, which is the first among post-Soviet states and was adopted by Azerbaijan's parliament in June 2013. Georgia adopted its first migration policy only in March 2013.

The adoption of Georgia's migration policy was delayed in part by political events in the country (conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Rose revolution of 2003) but also as an intentional strategy of the Georgian authorities to attract investors and migrants by minimizing migration restrictions. Consequently, Georgia unilaterally established a visa-free regime that today extends to more than 100 countries. Additionally, the legislative regulation of migration was minimized to the extent that a tourist could start working in Georgia without actually violating a law (IOM 2008). This approach had its benefits because businesses, such as those involved in the construction of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan, Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum, and Baku–Supsa pipelines, had fewer obstacles in operating or employing foreign labor in Georgia. However, unregulated migration also brought high costs—such as human trafficking, and Georgia becoming a migrant transit route for immigrants from Russia and Asia who target Turkey or the European Union as their final destination.

In Armenia and Azerbaijan, migration policy agendas centred on domestic challenges—resettlement and housing of refugees and IDPs; capacity building for enhanced migration regulation, such as migration measurement, legislative reforms, and institutional coordination; consequences of migration from rural areas; as well as the rights of co-citizens and co-nationals abroad and possibilities for their return and repatriation. The emphasis on these issues has not diminished even as newly emerging policy priorities have received increased attention. Similar issues were salient also in Georgia. But in the absence of a harmonized and centralized migration strategy, these issues were addressed through various legal acts.

To facilitate the return of migrant co-nationals (in Armenia also diaspora repatriation), Armenia and Geor-

gia have adopted laws to engage with their diasporas (dual citizenship in Armenia since 2007, Georgia's Law on Compatriots Living Abroad and Diaspora Organizations, adopted in 2011). However, while migrant return is also an objective in Azerbaijan, the opposite—the institutionalization of an Azeri diaspora—is also equally important and was actively pursued by the government of Azerbaijan (Rumyansev 2012) and has been framed by Azeri authorities as a mechanism to expand the political lobbying power of Azerbaijan abroad. Thus, the migration policy of Azerbaijan puts considerable emphasis on creating Azeri diaspora organizations abroad which would help mobilize the Azeri diaspora, extend the state's agenda abroad to its citizens, and help protect the rights of Azeri migrants abroad.

The EU, an active player in migration policy reform in post-Soviet states in recent years, has not changed the migration policy priorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Rather, with its European Neighborhood Policy, launched in 2004, and its Eastern Partnership Initiative, launched in 2009, it has only expanded the agenda on combating irregular migration—an issue of mutual interest also to the EU. Thus, the EU's primary involvement has been on technical capacity building, such as a border registration system, document security and biometric passports, and unified information systems on entry/exit; legislative reforms, such as those addressing refugee and asylum policy and human trafficking; and dealing with irregular migrants already in the EU, such as the readmission and return of overstayed or undocumented migrants.

To minimize the number of illegal migrants from the South Caucasian states, and to facilitate the migration of legal migrants, the EU has signed bilateral readmission, as well as visa facilitation agreements (i.e. reduced visa paperwork and reduced fees for legal travelers of select categories) with Armenia and Georgia, and the process is underway with Azerbaijan.

The EU's impact on policy change has been most visible in Georgia, where the migration policy framework would probably not have been adopted had the EU not included it among the ENP 2006 Action Plan objectives with Georgia. The migration policy concept, finally adopted by Georgia in 2013, was fully drafted along the priorities of the ENP Action Plan and centered on legal and illegal migration, asylum policy, and readmission and reintegration of return migrants. The activities are similar to the reforms happening in Armenia and Azerbaijan—i.e. the improvement of border management, data system on entry/exit, institutional coordination of migration and asylum flows, legislative reform, etc. The implementation plan (for 2013–2015) is tightly linked to EU financial support and to already ongoing EU-funded projects in Georgia.

## The Ultimate Objective: Turning Emigration into Immigration

While Armenia and Georgia are still predominantly migrant-sending countries, Azerbaijan's boom in the energy and construction sectors has helped attract migrant workers from Turkey, Georgia, Pakistan, Russia and Central Asia while emigration of its own citizens and their stock abroad still remains high. In the late 2000s, the state migration program of Azerbaijan specified annual immigration quotas and defined penalties for organizations employing undocumented migrants. These quotas—set at 11,970 persons for 2012—have been criticized by migration experts for their arbitrary nature, for underestimating the labor-force demand for international migrants in Azerbaijan, and for shifting the burden from employers onto migrant workers themselves to maintain the legal status with work permits (Zerkalo, 2012). The Migration Code of Azerbaijan adopted in 2013 did not eliminate quotas, but as the authorities insist, has eased the process of granting work permits to foreigners. The Code, widely advertised by the State Migration Service of Azerbaijan, has also waived the requirement for work permits to migrants married to a person holding Azerbaijan's citizenship, or having adopted an Azerbaijani child. Persons who have invested in Azerbaijan's banking system or enterprises are eligible for a three-year residence permit. However, the Migration Code has also created some measures, such as preconditioning the permanent residency on knowledge of the Azeri language. This will increase the obstacles of integration of immigrants in Azerbaijan, and will poten-

tially expose the migration policy debate to xenophobic or nationalistic attitudes.

Georgia has also benefitted from the construction of gas and oil pipelines that carry Azerbaijan's energy resources through Georgia and have attracted numerous migrant workers for their construction. However, emigration of Georgia's own citizens remains very high and is still a concern for its authorities.

Armenia comes in last since, without managing to attract a foreign labor force (except very minimally from Iran), it also has not been able to halt the emigration of its own citizens.

## Conclusion

To date the primary emphasis of migration policy frameworks in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia remains on combating irregular migration—both of their own citizens who emigrate or reside abroad without documents or in violation of their migrant status, and of foreign migrant workers (for Azerbaijan and Georgia). Synergies, starting to evolve in recent years, with other policy areas have been tailored towards economic development, and frequently neglect linking migration policy, such as the engagement of migrants abroad, with political reforms. Yet, emigration in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia is due not only to economic dynamics, but also to corruption and political repression. Thus converting emigration into immigration is not only about migration policy, but also about achieving real economic, political and social structural changes in these countries.

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## Azerbaijani Migrants in Russia

Adeline Braux, Paris

### Abstract

Russia has been the most popular emigration destination for Azerbaijanis since even before the end of the USSR. About 600,000 Azerbaijanis live in the Russian Federation where they are engaged mainly in the trade sector, especially in retail markets. Unlike more recent migrants, particularly those from Central Asia, they are now quite well integrated economically and tend to be a new middlemen minority.

### Introduction

According to the International Organization for Migration, the Russian Federation has been a host country for more than 12 million migrants since 1989 and roughly 9% of the population in Russia are immigrants. Since 1991, Russia has indeed recorded a positive net migration rate with almost all the member states of the former Soviet Union (not taking into account the Baltic states).

Before 1991, populations originating from the South Caucasus and from Central Asia were among the least mobile of the USSR, both inside and outside their republic, but today this situation changed diametrically, and questions the post-imperial character of these migration flows. Russia is now the most popular emigration destination for Azerbaijani nationals, far more so than Western Europe or the United States, and everything indicates that this tendency will continue: indeed, while the European Union remains largely closed to all work-related legal immigration, Russia has left its borders, at least for the moment, relatively open.

In this regard, migrations in the post-Soviet area sometimes take on post-imperial aspects. Moreover, they are a remarkable example of the way social issues develop on their own since they are often excluded from official policy. Indeed, a lot of institutions were created since 1991 to maintain formal relations between the former ex-Soviet republics, and above all the Commonwealth of Independent States. But these institutions have been revealed as barely operational, and thus the migrations of previously Soviet citizens to Russia contribute to maintaining some links. From this point of view, Azerbaijani citizens benefit from a favourable regime as they have no obligation to obtain a visa to enter Russia. Although immigration from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to Russia is a relatively recent phenomenon that can be dated back to the beginning or mid-2000s, Azerbaijani immigration took root as of the late 1980s, early 1990s. It is based on a number of networks, some of which were set up before the breakdown of the USSR.

### Statistics and Recent Historical Background

The number of Azerbaijanis in Russia, whether they possess Russian citizenship or not, is at an all-time high.

Their number is subject to widespread speculations. On the one hand, the media and some organizations representing Azerbaijanis have a common tendency, though different motives, to overestimate them to a 2 million community. On the other hand, most Russian scholars as well as the Federal Migration Service (FMS) agree on a number ranging from 600,000 to one million persons of Azerbaijani background. This may be the most cautious estimation since, according to the last population census carried out in the Russian Federation in 2010, 603,070 people in Russia declared themselves “Azerbaijanis”, which makes them one of the ten most numerous ethnic groups in the country. Among them, almost 360,000 are men. In addition to that, the World Bank’s statistics for 2010 showed a bilateral migration matrix of almost 900,000 in favour of Russia. As far as Azerbaijani remittance inflows for 2013 are concerned, the World Bank’s projections show that money transferred from foreign countries to Azerbaijan, should amount to \$2.2 billion, sent mainly from Russia. As for migrant remittance outflows from Azerbaijan, they reached \$2.1 billion in 2012. These figures are just a partial slice of reality but they tend to show that Azerbaijan generates emigration, but now attracts migrants, too.

Yet, the levelling tendency of statistics should not obliterate the fact that there are as many types of migration as immigrants themselves, whose trajectories and reasons for migrating are extremely diverse. The years 1989–1992 were a period of sharp increase in migration flows to Russia due to the conflicts in the post-Soviet area. Then, from 1994, the flows decreased dramatically. Migration flows at this time were characterized by their heterogeneity since there were refugees and IDPs, as well as transit migrants and economic immigrants. Indeed, migration factors were often intertwined. These qualitative and quantitative elements also concern migration flows from Azerbaijan to Russia and gave birth to immigrant communities that are nowadays labelled “diasporas.” At the very beginning of the 1990s and contrary to immigrants from Central Asia who were predominantly ethnic Russians, migration flows from Azerbaijan were composed of the nationals who formed a majority in the former Soviet republic. In fact, Russians started leaving



the republics of the Southern Caucasus as early as the 1960s; therefore the number of Russian candidates for emigration was reduced. As a result of the Karabakh conflict, massive displacements took place and Azeri IDPs headed on from Karabakh and surrounding districts to Baku, before migrating to Russia, mainly due to dire economic conditions. If Moscow and St. Petersburg remain the most popular destinations for obvious reasons, the Ural region—particularly Yekaterinburg, Tyumen and Siberia in general, where the workforce deficit is blatant, have attracted and still do attract Azerbaijani immigrants in large numbers.

### The Importance of the Service Sector for Employment

Whatever the circumstances that led them to leave their country of origin, most Azerbaijani immigrants in Russia, be they long-term or recent settlers, are involved in the trade sector, where they are believed to account for as much as 20% of the retail business. It only takes a walk through any Russian market, especially in Moscow, to notice that Azerbaijanis run many stalls. Trade and sales remain a means of economic integration for many recent and earlier South Caucasian migrants in a context marked by the rapid development of services upon entry into the market economy.

The networks which are prolonged or constituted as a result of post-Soviet migration appear significant in explaining, notably, the presence of particular groups of immigrants in certain economic sectors. They assist in the comprehension of, for instance, the ways of launching and of developing immigrant businesses, as well as entrepreneurial practicalities, for example ways of managing labour forces, relationships with marketed products and customer profiles. The presence of the so-called “Azerbaijani diaspora” in some “niche markets”, such as the flower business, dates back to Soviet times.

In the Russian Federation, as in many other countries, immigrant entrepreneurship has found a way to blossom in the service sector. The networks acquire a particular significance for the immigrant communities and take on different configurations according to the contexts and the individuals concerned. They can be considered as a means of questioning the collective dynamics in migration, notably the permanent tension between adoption of the norms of the society of settlement and preservation of a given community, integration into Russia and conservation of a link with countries of origin by different vectors.

Restaurants are another attractive economic sector for Azerbaijanis in Russia, especially for small investors: small market snacks intended for Azerbaijani customers (but not only), restaurant complexes comprising several

banquet rooms and hired singers, karaokes, or even restaurants that offer European and Japanese food along with traditional Azeri cuisine. This is nothing new since the service sector usually offers many job opportunities to immigrants, especially in global cities. Yet, this sector has experienced a real boom in Russia since service industries were almost nonexistent during the Soviet period, or were run by the state in a quite inefficient way.

Some Azerbaijanis who settled in Russia as of the 1980s started from scratch and made their way in Russia while opening a so-called “cooperative business” in the wake of the economic liberalisation launched by Mikhail Gorbachev. Then they climbed up the social ladder and became successful businessmen. There are even some well-known success stories: Araz Agalarov and Vagit Alekperov for instance, respectively lead Crocus International Holding and Lukoil, and Telman Ismaylov (who used to own Tcherkizovsky market before it was closed down in 2009) is also a well-known figure.

### A New “Middlemen Minority”

Since the mid-2000s, a majority of immigrants from the former USSR in Russia come from Central Asia, first and foremost from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These new immigrants form a kind of *lumpenproletariat* engaged in the so-called “3D jobs” (dirty, dangerous, and difficult), mainly in the construction business, but also in care and cleaning sectors. In this respect, Azerbaijani immigrants in Russia gained a certain status compared to their Central Asian counterparts. Nowadays, they act as a kind of new “middlemen-minority”, that is to say a community well integrated economically and acting as a “go-between group” in society but that may become a scapegoat in a context of socio-economic rivalries with the local population. Thus all the more as Caucasians are first and foremost affected by racist behaviour, the motivations for which stem as much from the representations and the history of Caucasians as from stereotypes and prejudices anchored in the contemporary context.

In October 2013, there was a blatant example of how an isolated case involving a migrant can spark a violent anti-migrant campaign. Orhan Zeynalov, an Azerbaijani native suspected of killing a Russian man in Moscow on 10 October, was arrested by the police. At the very beginning, peaceful demonstrations of the local population of Biryulovo, the district where the murder occurred, took place. They demanded tighter control of the police in this area, and more severe immigration laws. On October 13 though, a crowd of thousands of anti-migrant protestors, some of them belonging to nationalist groups, stormed the local warehouse where a lot of migrants were employed, as they searched for the sus-

pected man, and clashed with police. Finally, the vegetable warehouse was closed by the authorities and the warehouse's directors, also originating from Azerbaijan, were arrested on the grounds of employing a (foreign) illegal labour force.

The retail business, especially retail markets, is considered particularly impenetrable and plagued with criminality, especially in Moscow. In the wake of the 2006–2007 anti-migrant campaign, one of the first measures taken by local authorities had been the closing down of Tcheriomushki retail market, where a lot of migrants from Georgia used to work. The widespread stereotypes in Russia against immigrants engaged in trade activities also has a lot to do with the Soviet period, when trade was associated with speculation, and therefore punishable by criminal law. And, Caucasian minorities, including Azerbaijanis who are known—rightly or wrongly—to “hold” several retail markets in Moscow, are perceived as particularly good at doing business. This has much more to do with the economic conditions than with some “ethnic abilities.” When asked about their professional activities, a lot of Azerbaijanis engaged in the trade sector prefer using the expression “individual entrepreneurship” (in Russian *individual'noe predprinimatel'stvo*) which is a way to present a wide range of activities (from import-export trade to the ownership of a cheap eat-

ing place or very small retail businesses), and helps give their activities a semblance of prestige, if not of legality. Some of them even boast, saying “they have trade in their blood”, and members of the Azerbaijani intelligentsia contend, in an hazardous attempt to give a historic explanation, that the presence of their countrymen in the trade sector is somehow related to the Silk Road period, whereas in fact, the Eastern Caucasus was not situated on the main route to China.

So, unlike migrants from Central Asia, the Azerbaijani “diaspora” in Russia seems more integrated, at least economically. Another interesting point is the presence of advocacy organizations which try to lobby in favor of Azerbaijanis. In Moscow, the two most active organizations are the All-Russia Azerbaijanis Congress (VAK) and the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Azerbaijanis. For instance, when the new legislation on foreigners came into force in 2007, they tried to obtain a more liberal implementation for the citizens of Azerbaijan. In Zeynalov's case, they immediately offered their help to Russian authorities to arrest the suspected man when it was revealed that he came from Azerbaijan. However, their impact remains very dependant on the state of the relations between the Azerbaijani and Russian authorities.

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## Female Migrants from Georgia: Profiles and Migratory Projects

Maroussia Ferry, Tbilisi

### Abstract

The profile of Georgian migrants depends on whether they migrate to countries within or outside the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The distinction is also gendered. Closely examining female migrant profiles reveals key trends in their migration projects. Reflecting Georgian economic instability as well as social and family organization, these goals often appear to be rather short-termed and circumstantial. At the same time, partly because of the ways remittances are used, returning to Georgia is often as difficult as deliberately planning long-term migration. However, in this context, female migration to Turkey offers a special and more flexible case of mobility.

### Georgian Migration to and Outside the CIS: A Sharp Contrast

Observers agree that migration is a significant issue for Georgia, but they differ in estimating the scale of the phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Figures range from 198,904 registered migrants (MPC 2013) to 1.5 million (CRRC 2007), which is the highest estimation including undocumented migrants. Estimates about remittances also illustrate the key role of migration in Georgia. In 2010, remittances represented 8.1% of the GDP (MPC 2013). Considering that this figure only takes bank service transfers into account, that is, only one third of the total money transfers (CRRC 2007), one can estimate remittances to be around 24% of the GDP. Thus, it is obvious that migrating became a nation-wide survival strategy. However, Georgian migrations are far from homogeneous and every kind of destination country is characterized by different migrants' profiles, migration projects and social perceptions. Here again, it is difficult to get reliable figures. Yet, by combining various surveys conducted in the last five years, the main features of migrants' profiles according to their destinations can be highlighted.

First of all, a larger stock of Georgian migrants is to be found within the post-soviet space, mainly in Russia. Estimates taking into account the large flows of Georgian undocumented migrants range from 400,000 up to 1 million (IOM 2008). After 2006, migrating to Russia became more difficult. Along with Western labor market demands, this led to a significant shift within migration patterns in Georgia. Besides Russia, the most popular destination countries are Greece, Italy, Turkey, Germany, Israel and the United States. This shift in destination countries in the last decade has resulted in the increase of female migration.

There is a sharp contrast regarding the profiles of Georgian migrants within the CIS and migrants to other countries. Georgian migrants to OECD countries are generally better qualified than migrants to CIS countries as leaving the CIS requires more linguistic, human and financial capital. In OECD countries, 38.7% hold a university diploma in comparison to 27.7% in CIS countries (MPC 2013). However, as those migrants are more educated, unlike migrants in the CIS, they also tend to occupy jobs far below their education. Migrants outside the CIS are mostly employed in the elderly and child care industries, crafts, factories, agriculture and construction. Interestingly, destinations outside the CIS are perceived by the public and by migrants as the only proper migration destinations since they are out of the historical zone of mobility. Thus, the downward mobility through migration and its feminization end up shaping the opposite image than that of the relatively successful man in Russia. Both are significant elements to understand the material and symbolic violence that migration causes to Georgian society.

### Destination Countries Strongly Defined by Gender

In 2001, it was believed that women represented between one third and 40% of migrants (CRRC 2007); according to various surveys, they now represent 50.8 % of migrants outside the CIS but only 36% within the CIS (MPC 2013). And, according to the combined results of two surveys (Geostat and CRRC), in 2008 women represented approximately 64% of migrants to Turkey and Greece while men constituted 70% of migrants to Russia (Trough Hofmann 2012). In general, informal migration job networks are strongly gendered. Firstly, this is simply because, except for factory jobs, men and women are employed in different sectors. Second, women tend to keep their distance from men in migration, mostly for the sake of reputation. This, along with the increasing demand in the care sector, is also an explanation for this strongly gendered destination pattern. Moreover, for

1 This article is based on the combination of survey results and anthropological fieldwork consisting of observations and qualitative formal and informal interviews (so far 25 formal in depth interviews and 60 cases reported) conducted in Georgia and Turkey.



the kind of jobs that those destinations offer, if there is a choice, female migration is preferred for various reasons: first, it is safer, care jobs being somehow less precarious than jobs in factories or on construction sites, second it is more profitable, women being less likely to spend their salaries abroad and having the reputation of being “better migrants” (Lundkvist-Houndoumadi 2010).

### Profile of Female Migrants

The first striking feature is that Georgian female migrants are more educated than their male counterparts. World Bank statistics show that 52.7% of female migrants who returned to Georgia had completed higher education, in comparison to 37.7% of their male counterparts (IOM 2008). Even if it is common belief among migrants that the downward social mobility is more difficult to bear for men than for women (which is one of the reasons given for the feminization of migration), it nevertheless causes significant social suffering for women. This suffering is increased by the nature of jobs in the care sector. Indeed, for most women, working in a family of strangers as a “servant,” being paid for what is conceived as the natural duty of women for their own family aside of a real and fulfilling job, is considered a greater humiliation than working, for instance, in factories. Even though most women do feel self-satisfaction helping their own families financially, in regard to individual identity it is often impossible for them to conceive of migrating to perform unskilled jobs as a life project.

In contrast to male migration, female migration is much more strongly linked to family circumstances. Female migrants are twice as likely to be divorced as non-migrants, which is not the case for male migrants (Badurashvili 2012). Erin Trough Hofmann (2012) found that to come from a household with at least two women or no adult male tends to be positively associated with migration, while it is not the case for men. Women who choose to migrate have to be sure before departure that they can find a family arrangement for their children and their house. Because women do not only have the responsibility of bread-winning but also of the well-being of their family, their migration projects are more precarious and circumstantial.

### Short-term Migration Projects

Migration is often presented as an individual life course accident strongly connected with collective events such as the fall of the USSR or the 2008 Russian–Georgian war. The instability of the Georgian economy, consisting in short cycles, the dependence of many households on loans and the weakness of social policies, is also reflected in the migration time frame, its rhythm and expectations. In most cases, migration is seen as the only way

out of debts, the loss of one’s house or job, the disease of a family member or the failure of a business. It is then conceived as the only way to pursue an individual economic transition.

As it is linked to a specific problem, migration should cease when that problem is solved. But often, migration lasts longer than expected and the migrant enters a “migratory cycle”. This “cycle” is linked to the fact that remittances are used first for providing daily life necessities (food, health, education) of the family left behind, rather than for long-term personal investments. Causes for that phenomenon are multiple; the main one is the economic situation which makes it difficult to save money. Women also tend to have little control over how remittances are used, therefore, they can be “wasted”, or at least spent indiscriminately. As remittances become crucial for the family life, it is more and more difficult to consider returning back home. Those women who “attempted a return”, in the same way as they “attempted a departure”, on average leave again after a year because they did not find work at home. Various surveys show that it is very complicated for migrants to readjust to the Georgian labor market. This can be explained by the importance of personal networks: the longer one is abroad, the more one’s informal networks in Georgia weaken and by contrast the more one’s migration networks abroad are reinforced. Often, after a while, migration networks are reactivated or even reactivate themselves through job proposals from a family where one used to work or from a friend abroad.

In that regard, the case of Georgian female migrants in Turkey, which has been little investigated, presents a slightly different situation.

### The Special Case of Female Migrants to Turkey

Migrating to Turkey tends in general to be depreciated, mainly for religious reasons and because of the lower salaries that are offered. The bad reputation of Turkey as a destination country also lies in the risks of trafficking and prostitution. Moreover, migrating to Turkey being easier (no visa regime since 2007) and cheaper, it is perceived as a desperate migration move and thus, even though there is no evidence for it, a destination for rural people. However, migration to Turkey seems to present less of the “tragedy” aspect when compared to other migration stories. Indeed, family ties can remain more intense because of the obligation to come back to Georgia every third month and, since March 2012, to stay for another three months on Georgian territory before entering Turkey again. Women who succeed in getting a work permit also tend to return to Georgia on a regular basis because of the proximity and of low

travel costs. Hence, women can keep on playing their role within their families more efficiently than through *Skype* and telephone calls. Because ties to the family are more frequent, women are less separated from their environment and, in numerous cases, the use of remittances is better controlled as well. Thus, migration to Turkey, which has the reputation of being exclusively “survival migration,” can be more profitable than expected.

Migratory projects are also impacted by these different conditions. Migrating to Turkey allows wider latitude for decision and control regarding one’s migratory project. Paradoxically, migration to Turkey is more likely to be a short-term migration or a more long-term planned one. Unlike women who are going to Greece or Italy and who must wait for a few months and learn the language before having jobs interviews, migrants in Turkey can find a family where they can work within two weeks, and without any interviews, through acquaintances or through the numerous informal job agencies. Therefore, migration to Turkey can be used as a quick means of generating income or can be progressively seen as a more long-term primary source of earning as the psychological cost is relatively lower. It also has the advantage of giving migrants the feeling that it is always

possible to come back and, even more significantly, to migrate again. For other destinations, the illegal crossing of the border or the difficulty of obtaining a tourist visa often prevents the migrant from trying to come back as it will be a lot more difficult to migrate again. Thus, for many respondents, if choosing Turkey is not the only financial option, it is a choice consciously made with the purpose of not losing one’s family links and of remaining tied with one’s Georgian life. Therefore, the choice of helping one’s family financially requires fewer sacrifices on the part of the migrant.

### Conclusion

As migration in Georgia is still in its early phase, observing Georgian migration processes make it possible to explore how migration strategies are progressively shaped according to various factors such as economic rhythms, social policies, family arrangements or perceptions of success. As female migration adds to the social malaise caused by migration, it especially embodies the transitive nature of migration incentives and dynamics, both at the individual and social level, as well as the strategies undertaken to overstep it.

#### *About the Author*

Maroussia Ferry is a Ph.D. candidate at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris and a fellow at the French Institute for Demographic Studies (INED). She is currently conducting fieldwork in Georgia and Turkey, investigating how the feminization of migration impacts post-Soviet Georgia.

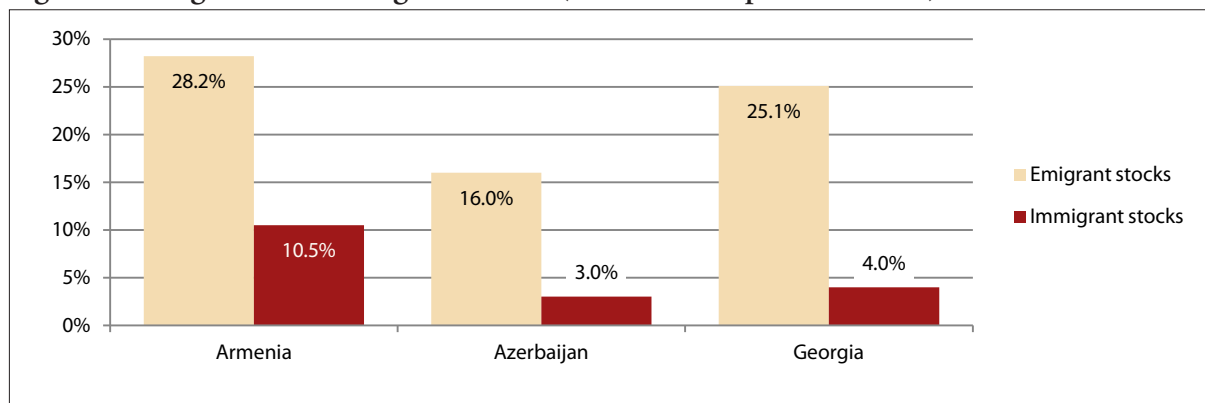
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## STATISTICS

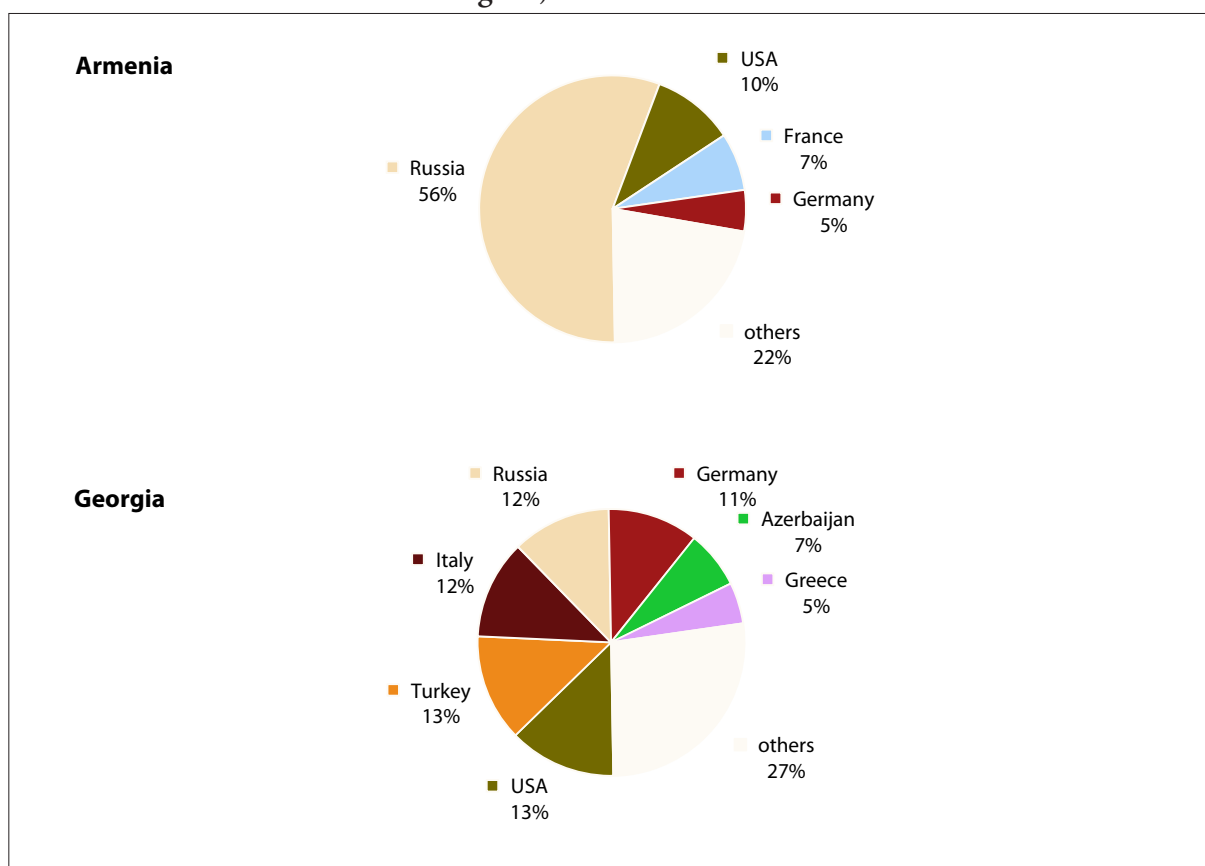
## Data on Migration

Figure 1: Emigrant and Immigrant Stocks (as Share of Population, 2010)



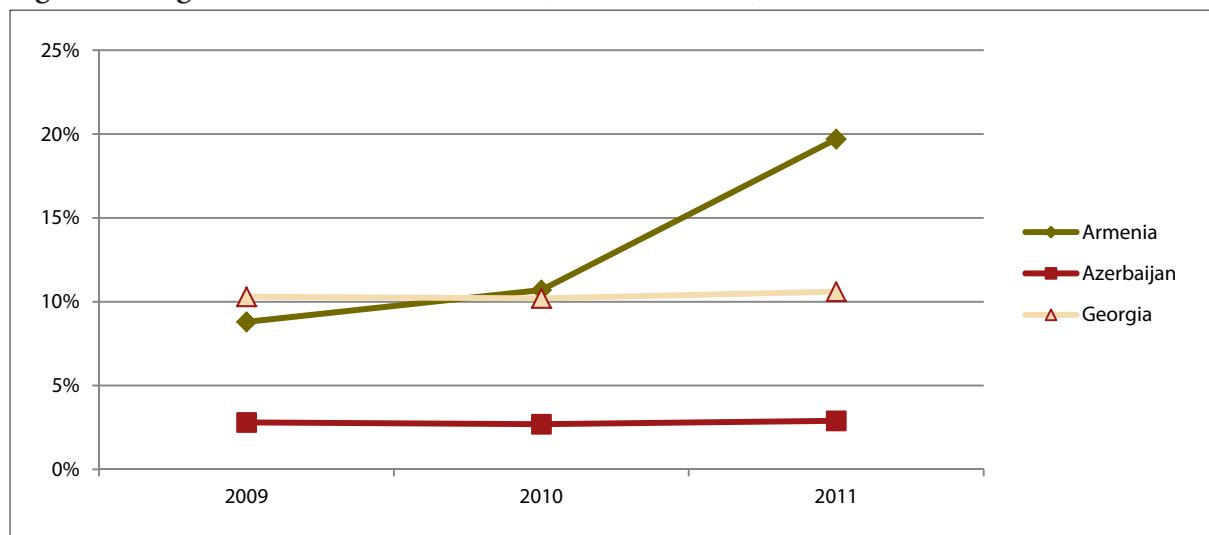
Source: ETF (2011). (ed. Bardak, U). *Labour Markets and Employability: Trends and Challenges in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine*. European Training Foundation, p. 181

Figure 2: Preferred Destinations of Potential Emigrants (Representative Poll, 2011/12, Answers of Those Who Plan to Emigrate)



Source: ETF (2013). *Migration and Skills in Armenia, Georgia and Morocco: Comparing the Survey Results* (prepared by M. Collyer, U. Bardak, E. Jansova and O. Karkkainen). European Training Foundation, p. 28

Figure 3: Migrant Workers' Remittances (as Share of GDP)

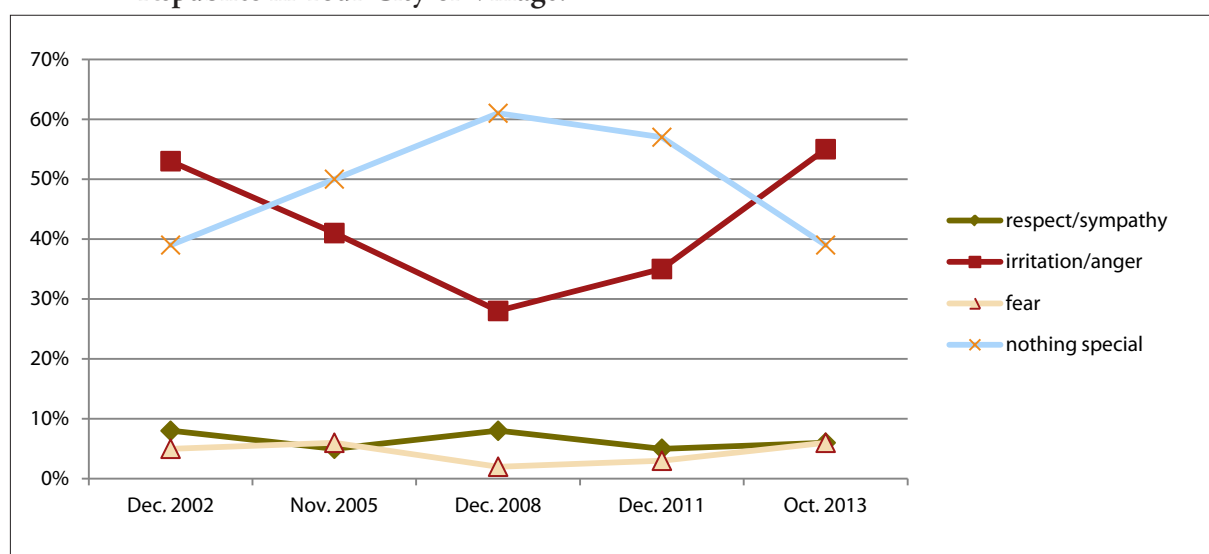


Source: World Bank (n.d.). Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP). <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS>>, accessed October 18, 2013

## OPINION POLL

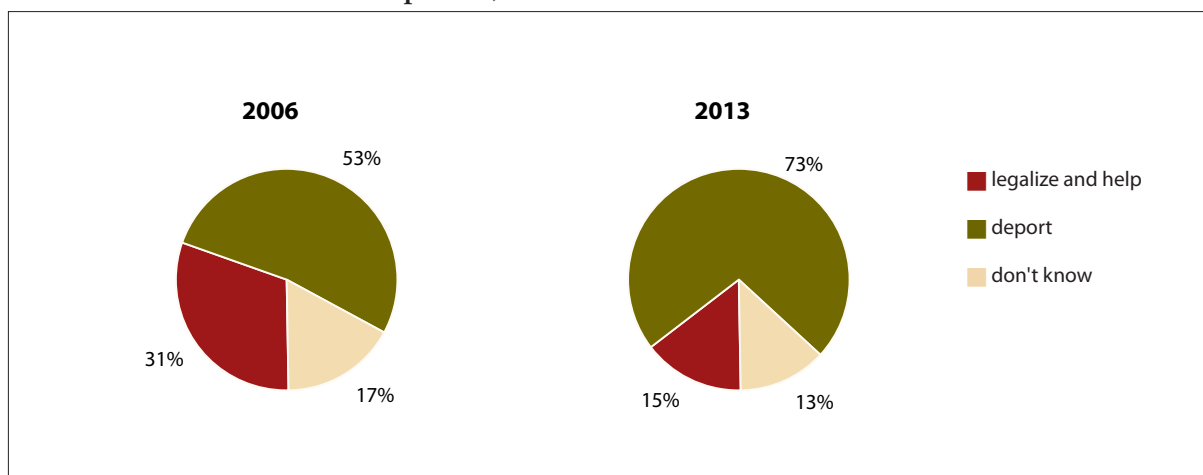
## Russian Public Opinion on Migrants from the South Caucasus

Figure 1: What Are Your Feelings Towards Migrants from the Southern (Former Soviet) Republics in Your City or Village?



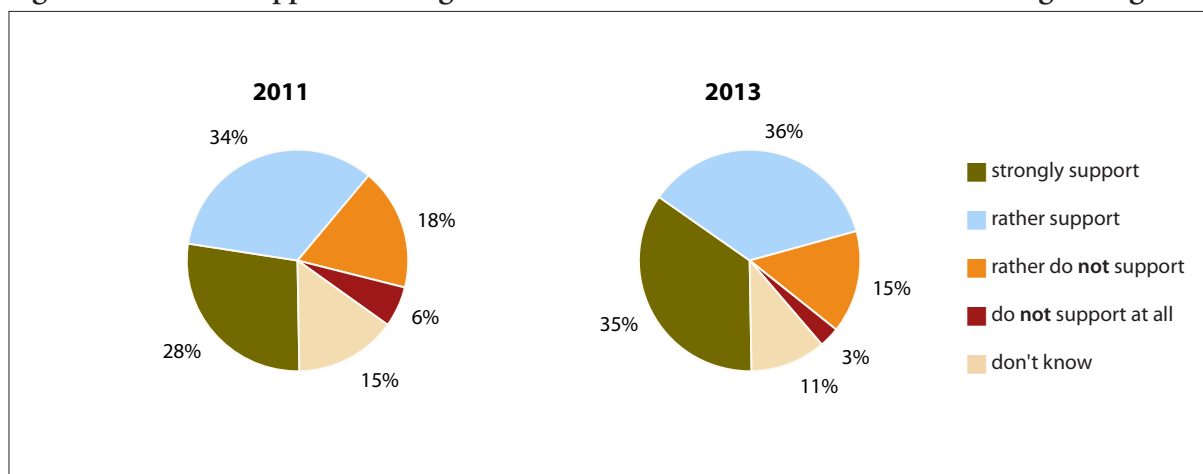
Source: representative polls of the Russian population conducted by the Levada Center, <<http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyane-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti>>

Figure 2: In Your Opinion, What Should Be Done With Migrants from the Near Abroad (i.e. the Former Soviet Republics)?



Source: representative polls of the Russian population conducted by the Levada Center, <http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyane-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti>

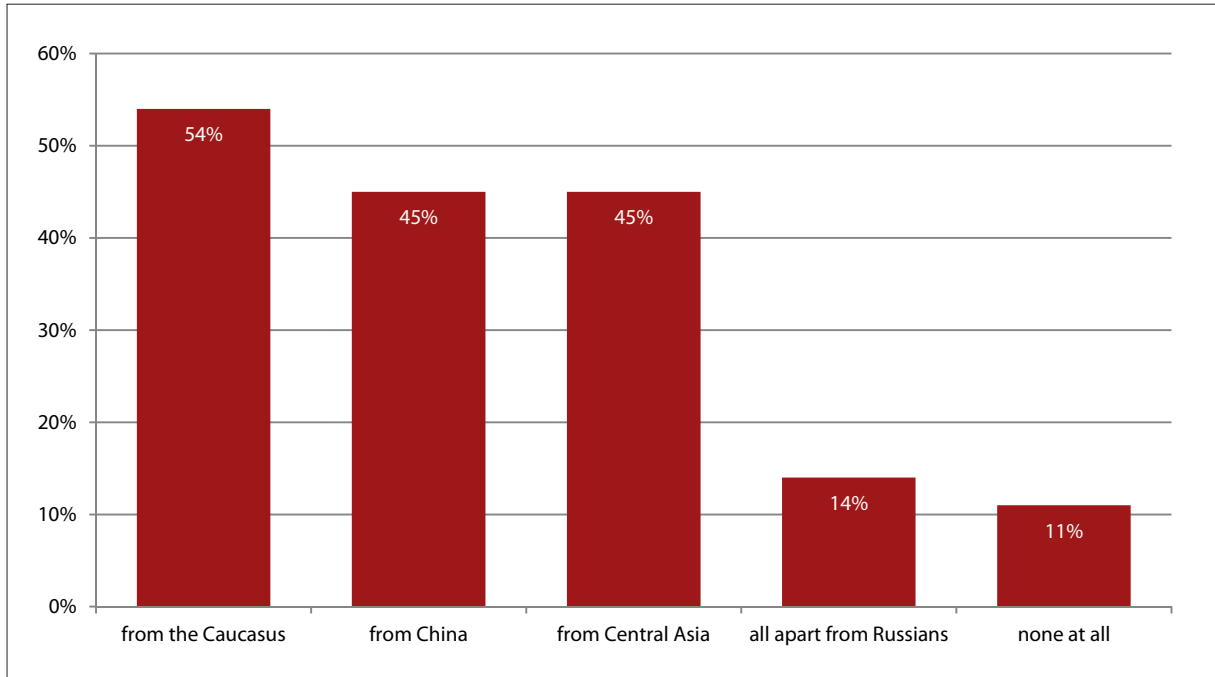
Figure 3: Do You Support the Slogan “We Have Fed the South Caucasus for Long Enough”?



Source: representative polls of the Russian population conducted by the Levada Center, <http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyane-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti>

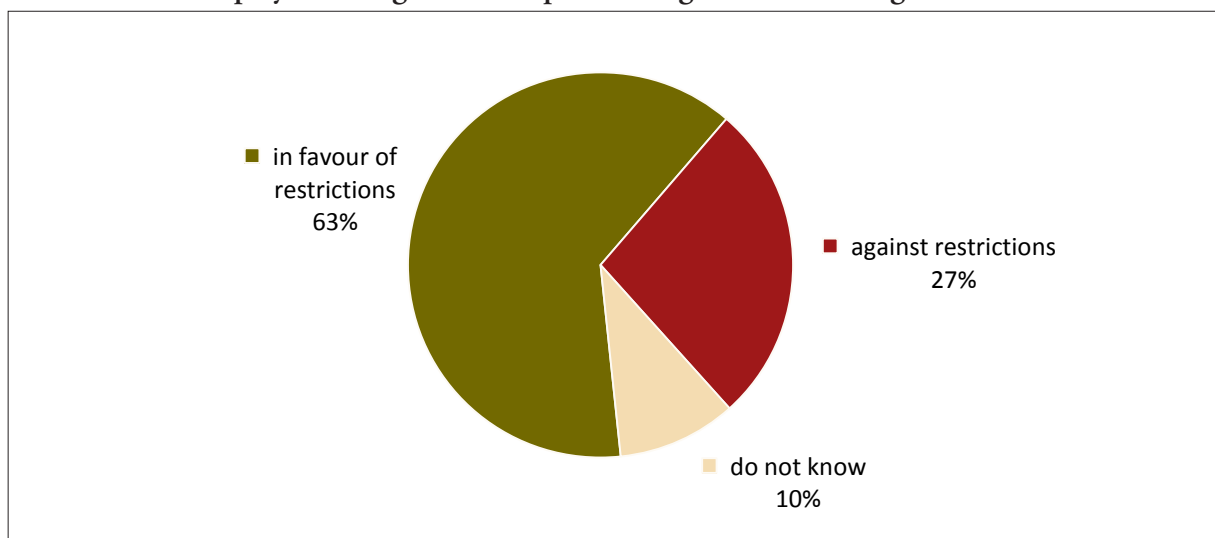


Figure 4: What Do You Think, the Immigration of Which Groups Should Be Restricted?  
(Multiple Answers Possible)



Source: representative poll of the Russian population conducted by the Levada Center in October 2013,  
<<http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyane-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti>>

Figure 5: For Comparison: Would You Be in Favour of or Against the Idea to Restrict Residence  
and Employment Rights for People Coming from Other Regions of Russia?



Source: representative poll of the Russian population conducted by the Levada Center in October 2013,  
<<http://www.levada.ru/05-11-2013/rossiyane-o-migratsii-i-mezhnatsionalnoi-napryazhennosti>>

## CHRONICLE

## From 25 October to 2 December 2013

25 October 2013	The Georgian Prosecutor's office says that new power abuse charges will be brought against former defence minister and prison system head Bacho Akhalia
27 October 2013	Presidential candidate Giorgi Margvelashvili from the Georgian Dream party is elected President in Georgia with 62% of the votes
28 October 2013	The EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle congratulate Giorgi Margvelashvili on his victory in Georgia's presidential elections in a joint statement
31 October 2013	Georgian parliamentary deputies from the Georgian Dream party initiate a bill in Parliament that foresees cutting the Tbilisi mayor's powers
2 November 2013	Former Georgian Interior Minister Irakli Garibashvili is named as Georgia's new Prime Minister following the announcement by billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili to resign from this post
5 November 2013	The Armenian police clashes with dozens of nationalists trying to march to the presidential residence in Yerevan
6 November 2013	Armenia signs a memorandum of cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Commission, a body overseeing the integration of former Soviet republics into the Russia-led Customs Union, during a meeting of Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian with visiting senior officials from the Customs Union's member states Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in Yerevan
6 November 2013	Georgian Defence Minister Irakli Alasania visits France to meet with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian and representatives of the French "military-industrial complex" to discuss bilateral cooperation
12 November 2013	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian visits the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh to inspect military forces
12 November 2013	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visits Turkey on his first trip abroad since his reelection in October to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries
12 November 2013	The Georgian border police says that a cargo ship en route to Turkey is being detained for unauthorized entry into the breakaway region of Abkhazia
14 November 2013	Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze meets with the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle in Brussels to discuss preparations for initiating the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius
15 November 2013	Outgoing Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says in a written statement that he will not attend the presidential inauguration of President-elect Giorgi Margvelashvili on 17 November as he is involved in launching an international research center and will "refrain from participating in Georgia's everyday politics"
16 November 2013	US President Barack Obama congratulates Georgia and the role of the outgoing President and the new President in "strengthening" democratic institutions on the eve of the presidential inauguration of Giorgi Margvelashvili
17 November 2013	Giorgi Margvelashvili is sworn in as Georgia's fourth President for a five-year term during an oath-taking ceremony which also marks the entry into force of a new constitution significantly cutting the presidential powers in favor of increasing the authority of the Prime Minister
18 November 2013	Georgian acting Interior Minister and Prime Minister designate Irakli Garibashvili and Israeli deputy interior minister Faina Kirschenbaum sign a visa-free agreement between the two countries which will allow Georgian citizens to stay in Israel without a visa for a maximum of 90 days
19 November 2013	The US State Department praises the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia for meeting in Vienna under the auspices of the OSCE's Minsk Group as "an important step toward restoring dialogue" in the negotiations over a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict
20 November 2013	Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka begins a two-day visit in Azerbaijan to advance bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two countries
21 November 2013	Georgian Prime Minister's special envoy for relations with Russia Zurab Abashidze and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin meet in Prague to discuss trade, economy, humanitarian and cultural issues in the bilateral relations between the two countries

24 November 2013	Georgian billionaire and former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili announces his withdrawal from politics during a party congress following the presidential elections of October 2013
26 November 2013	The Georgian authorities arrest six men suspected of a deadly shooting at the Sadakhlo checkpoint on the Georgian-Armenian border
26 November 2013	The Azerbaijani Ministry for National Security announces the arrest of a third member of a group that allegedly planned an attack against a mosque in Baku
28 November 2013	An Association Agreement (AA) between Georgia and the European Union is technically initiated in Vilnius on the first day of the Eastern Partnership summit
29 November 2013	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili and French President François Hollande meet on the sideline of the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius with Margvelashvili thanking his French counterpart for supporting Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration
29 November 2013	Georgian State Minister for reintegration Paata Zakareishvili says that the State Ministry for Reintegration will be renamed into State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civil Equality starting from 1 January 2014 to ease direct contacts with the authorities in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia
2 December 2013	About one thousand activists protest Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Yerevan and Armenia's plans to join the Russia-led Customs Union
2 December 2013	Russian President Vladimir Putin declares that Russia will strengthen its positions in the South Caucasus during the third Russian-Armenian Interregional Forum in Gyumri, an Armenian town hosting a Russian military base
2 December 2013	The Azerbaijani government announces a sharp increase in the state-regulated price ceiling for gasoline
2 December 2013	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says in an interview with Russia Today that no Georgian government delegation will be attending the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games

*Compiled by Lili Di Pippo*

*For the full chronicle since 2009 see <[www.laender-analysen.de/cad](http://www.laender-analysen.de/cad)>*

**ABOUT THE CAUCASUS ANALYTICAL DIGEST**

Editors: Denis Dafflon, Lili Di Pippo, Iris Kempe, Natia Mestvirishvili, Matthias Neumann, Robert Orttung, Jeronim Perović, Heiko Pleines

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