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## The migration policy of Armenia

**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to describe the legal bases of the migration policy of Armenia and its practical implementation in 1995–2013. The author examined the international and national documents that provide the legal bases of Armenia’s migration policy, as well as the balance between departures and arrivals in the period 1995–2013, Armenian citizens’ reasons for emigrating and the occupations of emigrants. The study was based on the following research methods: content, system and quantitative analysis. The results of the analyses performed indicate that the objectives of Armenia’s migration policy were not completely fulfilled. Between 1995 and 2013, the number of emigrants declined, but Armenia’s overall migration balance was negative. The majority of those leaving the country went to Russia, followed by the other states of the CIS.

**Key words:** emigration, Armenia, policy, occupational groups, Russian Federation, CIS

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### Introduction

The Republic of Armenia is the smallest country of the South Caucasus, a mere 29,800 km<sup>2</sup> in size. According to data from December 31, 2012, Armenia had 3,026,000 inhabitants, with ethnic Armenians accounting for 98.11% of the country’s population, the majority of whom were members of the Armenian Apostolic Church (*Population in Armenia*). After the fall of the Soviet Union, when Armenia regained independence, the main task of the new government was to resolve the country’s political and economic problems. In the early 1990s, Armenia was engaged in a war with Azerbaijan for Nagorno-Karabakh, which concluded in 1994 with an armistice on terms favorable to Armenia. As a result of the war, however, 750,000 Azerbaijani and Kurdish people were displaced from the conflict zone (Czachór, 2014, p. 78). The accession of Armenia to the CIS failed to solve its economic problems or ease its economic woes in the early 1990s. In 1991–1995, its GDP decreased by more than 50%, and its economy was characterized by a high rate of inflation and unemployment affecting almost 40% of the working-age population. This situation was due to the closure of many industrial plants and the severance of economic relations with the states of the former Soviet Union. Some citizens of Armenia sought to improve their economic situation by emigrating (Gomółka, Borucińska-Dereszkiewicz, 2015, pp. 45–47).

The aim of the study is to describe the legal bases of the migration policy of Armenia and its practical implementation in 1995–2013.<sup>1</sup> The research hypothesis is as follows: the laws and strategies of Armenian migration policy failed to limit emigration. To test this hypothesis, the author formulated the following research questions: 1. Which inter-

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<sup>1</sup> Complete statistical data from this period was provided by the national statistical service of Armenia.

national and national documents form the legal basis of Armenia's migration policy?; 2. What was the balance between departures from and arrivals in Armenia in 1995–2013?; 3. How many members of different occupational groups left Armenia?; 4. What were the reasons behind the emigration of Armenian citizens?

This study was based on the following research methods: content, system and quantitative analysis. The sources used include statistical data obtained online and the available literature related to the subject.

### **The legal bases of the migration policy of Armenia**

The legal bases of the migration policy of Armenia consist of international and national legal instruments. The international documents include the UN Convention of 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees, signed by the government of Armenia in 1993 (Convention relating to the Status of Refugees), the UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons (United Nations Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons), UN Convention of 1957 on the Nationality of Married Women (Convention on the Nationality of Married Women) and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950 (the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms). In 1995, Armenia entered into the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities) and the ILO Convention against Discrimination in Employment and Occupation (Convention No 111 of the International Labor Organization concerning discrimination regarding employment and occupation).

Since 2009, Armenia has participated in the activities of the Emigration Forum and in the Prague Process, as well as in the efforts of the World Bank in the areas of migration and the transfers of funds (*C097 – Migration for Employment Convention*). In the framework of the Eastern Partnership, it is involved in the project titled “Integrated Border Management Systems Support” for the South Caucasus (Galstyan, Prutsch, Rossi-Longhi, 2008, pp. 15–16). In 2010, Armenia ratified the “Convention on the legal status of migrant workers and members of their families in the Member States of the CIS” (*Convention on legal...*).

The issue of migration was also addressed in a framework of bilateral agreements on economic migration, signed by the government of Armenia with: Georgia (1993), Russia (1994), Ukraine (1995) and Belarus (2000). However, due to the absence of appropriate mechanisms, none of those agreements were implemented properly and their provisions need to be revised. The Armenian-Russian working group negotiated an amendment to the agreement over the course of a series of meetings in Moscow in June 2010 and in Yerevan in June 2011. In the 2010s, subsequent agreements on economic migration were signed with Bulgaria (2011), Italy (2011) and Kazakhstan (2012). In addition, in the following years, Armenia commenced negotiations to enter into similar agreements with Lithuania, Estonia, Netherlands, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, India, Qatar and the UAE (Galstyan, Prutsch, Rossi-Longhi, 2008, p. 11).

Armenia also concluded readmission agreements with: Russia on August 20, 2010, the Czech Republic on May 17, 2010, the Kingdom of Norway on January 29, 2010,

the Benelux states (Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Kingdom of the Netherlands) on June 3, 2009; the Kingdom of Sweden on November 7, 2008, the Republic of Bulgaria on November 13, 2007, the Federal Republic of Germany on November 16, 2006, the Swiss Federal Council on October 30, 2003, the Republic of Lithuania on September 15, 2003 and the Kingdom of Denmark on April 30, 2003. Furthermore, Armenia is a party to agreements concerning professional activity and social protection of employees, signed with Belarus on July 19, 2000, Ukraine on June 17, 1995, and the Russian Federation on July 19, 1994 (Galstyan, Prutsch, Rossi-Longhi, 2008, p. 17).

Relations between Armenia and the European Union are of great importance for migration policy. The issue of migration was addressed in the document concerning the implementation of the EU's neighborhood policy in 2007 – in part V, devoted to cooperation in the areas of justice, freedom and security. It was stressed that Armenia had signed readmission agreements with several EU member states, introduced electronic databases at border crossing points, examined the possibility of introducing biometric passports, centralized the passport issuing procedure and undertaken efforts to update the law on refugees and asylum (*Commission Staff working*). The accession of Armenia to the Eurasian Economic Union resulted in the suspension of negotiations regarding an association agreement in November 2013 (Zasztowt, 2015, p. 125). In January 2014, two previously signed agreements came into force: 1. Agreement on the facilitation of the issuing of visas (The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas); 2. Agreement on the readmission of persons residing without authorization (The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the readmission of persons residing without authorization). The Commission also continued its negotiations with Armenia on a new horizontal agreement. The talks were conducted from December 7, 2015 to May 23, 2017 and ended in an announcement about the need to sign an agreement on a comprehensive and reinforced partnership, and the adoption of partnership priorities for the years 2017–2020: common values, commitment to democracy and human rights, economic cooperation for sustainable growth and increased mobility (Priorities of the Partnership between the European Union and Armenia).

In the process of reviewing the political, economic and social reforms in Armenia, the European Commission recommended an investigation into the alleged violations of human rights during the Yerevan crisis in 2016. It called on Armenia to deal with its problems in the area of justice and take action against corruption. During the summit of the Eastern Partnership on November 24, 2017, the leaders of the six countries agreed on a joint declaration in which they stressed their commitment to partnership, support for territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the states, and to the conclusion of association agreements by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; they also appealed for a peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region (Eastern Partnership Summit, 2017). The leaders also adopted 20 objectives for 2020 in the areas of cooperation agreed in Riga in 2015, in four areas: 1. a stronger economy, achieved by increasing market capacity, investment, growth and development of SMEs, better financial infrastructure, creating new jobs at the local level, and development of trade between the members of the Partnership and the EU; 2. effective management based on the rule of law and the application

of anti-corruption policy, implementation of reforms in the judiciary and public administration, and increased cooperation in the field of security; 3. efficient energy policy, environmental protection to prevent climate change, free movement of goods and people, more efficient use of renewable energy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and support for changes aimed at environmental protection; 4. a strong society, improved mobility and interpersonal contacts achieved by the liberalization of the visa system, continued dialogue and partnership for mobility, increased investment in the training of young people, development of entrepreneurship and capacity for self-employment and the creation of an Eastern Partnership European School, and development of innovative research (*20 Deliverables...*). During the 2017 summit, the EU and Armenia signed **an agreement on a comprehensive and reinforced partnership** and **an agreement on aviation links**. Furthermore, the EU included the Partnership members in the trans-European transportation network (TEN-T) (Draft high-level agreements within the meaning of Article 49(6) of EU regulation).

Among the most important national legislation relating to migration policy is the constitution of Armenia, adopted on August 15, 1995. Article 25, on basic rights and freedoms, states that every citizen has the right to enjoy the freedom of movement and choice of residence within the country's borders, and to leave the country and return to it. Article 30 defines the conditions for receiving Armenian citizenship by a child, one of whose parents is a citizen of Armenia. Article 47 confirms that people of Armenian origin who settle in the country's territory are entitled to Armenian citizenship. It ensures that a citizen of Armenia cannot be deprived of the right to change citizenship, and citizens residing abroad are protected according to the provisions of international law (*Constitution*).

Another legal act adopted by the Parliament was the Law of November 28, 1995 on nationality. It was comprised of six parts concerned with the acquisition and renouncement of citizenship, and the legal status of foreign nationals and stateless persons. Article 24 is related to persons under the age of 18 wishing to change citizenship. A further part of the Law named the authorities with the power to grant or restore citizenship (*Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, November 28, 1995*). The Law on citizenship was supplemented by the Law of March 3, 1999 on refugees (*The Law of the Republic of Armenia on Refugees*) and the Law of December 6, 2000 "on legal and socio-economic guarantees for persons forcibly displaced from the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1988–1992 who acquired Armenian citizenship." The latter document regulated the legal status of people who had been forced to settle in Armenia. Until 2000, migration policy was limited to matters related to refugees (Ghazaryan, 2003, pp. 5–7). Further legal acts were adopted at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: in 2001 – the Law on political asylum (*Law of the Republic of Armenia on political asylum of September 26, 2001*) and the Law on the protection of state borders (*Law of the Republic of Armenia on border guard troops of November 20, 2001*), and in 2002 – the Law on the register of the state's population (*Population Register Law of March 26, 2002*). A new Law on foreign nationals, adopted in 2006, also governed the issues of foreigners temporarily staying in Armenia (*Law of the Republic of Armenia on foreigners of December 26 2006*). The 2007 amendment of the Law on citizenship established the right to dual citizenship (*Law of the Republic of Armenia on foreigners of February 3, 2007*),

whereas the Law on refugees and asylum, enacted in 2008, adapted the requirements to be met by asylum-seekers to the standards of international law (*Law of the Republic of Armenia on refugees and asylum of November 28, 2008*).

Issues relating to migration policy were dealt with by three strategies. The first, adopted in 2000, consisted of three chapters. The first chapter – “Provisions of the Migration Policy of the Republic of Armenia” – specified the rules, tasks and operating principles of this policy. The second chapter provided for changes in legislation in accordance with the tasks of the national migration policy. Chapter 3 contained a list of institutions dealing with matters of migration and their activities (Makaryan, 2013, p. 2).

The priorities of migration policy in the strategy, published on June 25, 2004, were as follows: 1. effective management of the emigration and immigration processes; 2. integration of the Armenian labor market with the international labor market; 3. combating illegal immigration and supporting the return of Armenian emigrants; 4. preventing human smuggling and trafficking; 5. improving the system of protection of stateless persons and refugees residing in Armenia; 6. maintaining relations between the old and new Armenian diaspora; 7. counteracting the inflow of migrants to Armenia; 8. creating a database for the monitoring of migration processes; 9. managing the processes of internal migration in accordance with the principles of sustainable development; 10. forming public opinion conducive to the implementation of an effective migration policy (Kabeleova, Mazmanyanyan, Yeremyan, 2007, pp. 32–34).

Neither of the migration policy strategies of 2000 and 2004 specified any plans concerning policy implementation or the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policy.

The third migration policy strategy was adopted in 2010 (*The Demographic-Economic...*). It pointed out that migration policy can be divided into two periods. The first stage lasted from 1988 until 1999, when the main goal was to resolve the problems of refugees from Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and other states of the former Soviet Union. The second stage began in 2000, after the resolution of the refugee issue – with the adoption of the new legislation on foreigners, political asylum, social protection, employment and unemployment, establishing the authority of border guard and the adoption of other legislative acts regulating migration processes. That period was also marked by attempts to harmonize the law of Armenia with international standards, and the establishment of the state authorities responsible for migration policy. The program for 2010–2012 prioritized active demographic policy, prevention of migration from the mountain regions and border areas, and attempts to reduce departures from the country and encourage immigration. It pointed to the necessity of joining the international labor market and provided for the improvement of the protection of stateless persons and the introduction of biometric passports and electronic identification cards for citizens crossing the border. Mass emigration of Armenians was identified as the main problem, leading to:

- 1) demographic changes: declining population and falling number of residents of working age – mainly in rural areas – leading to unfavorable gender and age distribution, acceleration of population ageing, and concentration of the population in the capital and nearby towns;
- 2) economic changes: “brain drain” and capital flight, reduced economic potential of the country, increasing gap between supply and demand on the local market;

3) social transformations: long periods of absence of economic migrants in the country, weakened family ties, deteriorating health of the population, risk of national and religious persecution, human trafficking, lack of integration of refugees and persons displaced from Azerbaijan and other countries of the former Soviet Union.

The principles of migration policy adopted in the document included: 1) equal rights of immigrants without regard to sex, race, color, ethnic and social origin, language, age, religion, political views or membership of a national minority, health, wealth, birth or disability; 2) entitlement of each migrant legally present in the territory of Armenia to freedom of movement within the country, choice of place of residence and freedom to leave and return to the country; 3) implementation of international legal commitments taken on by the Republic of Armenia; 4) resolution by state authorities and non-governmental organizations of the problems relating to migration; 5) increasing society involvement in the processes of implementing migration policy (*Concept*).

The following years showed, however, that the migration policy provided in these strategies did not reflect the existing Armenian legislation. The purpose of the National Security Council, established on December 30, 2010, was to prepare a plan of implementation of the concepts contained in the State Migration Policy. The Council commenced its work but failed to develop a comprehensive plan of administrative action to support migration, because of the absence of the necessary legislation. An audit conducted by experts revealed shortcomings in the management of migration, which facilitated the flow of illegal immigration and the growth of international crime. In order to increase the effectiveness of Armenian migration policy, it was necessary to implement a national strategy including: 1) approximation of the Armenian legislation and principles governing the functioning of public administration to European regulations; 2) introduction of biometric passports and identity cards that reliably certify the identity and nationality of the holder; 3) introduction of integrated border management; 4) development of an information system for recording migration flow; 5) protection of the rights and interests of citizens of Armenia leaving to work abroad; 6) introduction of a legal framework that gives priority in employment to Armenian citizens before foreign nationals; 7) prevention of illegal migration; 8) administrative assistance for returnees; 9) improvement of the asylum system, ensuring effective integration of foreign nationals with society after obtaining refugee status; 10) ensuring the integration of refugees who were forced to leave Azerbaijan in 1988–92; 11) managing the processes of internal migration in accordance with the requirements of national security and sustainable development of the Republic of Armenia; 12) regulation of the potential mass movements of the population in emergency situations; 13) combating human trafficking and protection of the victims thereof; 14) monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of migration policy (*Progress*).

The institutions responsible for the development of migration policy in Armenia include: 1) the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs – Department of Employment – responsible for matters relating to economic migration; 2) the Ministry of Territorial Administration – Department for Refugees and Migration created in 2000, responsible for the formulation, implementation and coordination of real migration processes;<sup>2</sup> 3) the State Migration Service – a unit within the Ministry of Territorial Administration – responsible for coordinating

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<sup>2</sup> The Agency for Refugees and Migration, established in 2000, was responsible for the formulation and implementation of the country's migration policy. In 2005, it was renamed as a Department in the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

the migration policy and the organization and implementation of programs relating to the regulation of migration and refugees; 4) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Legal Department, Consular and Migratory Division – responsible for issuing visas and passports and maintaining relations with Armenians staying abroad; 5) the Ministry of Justice – involved in the implementation of the processes of the mobility partnership, setting out the rules for issuing visas and carrying out the readmission procedure; 6) the Border Guard Service responsible for border management and illegal migration control, whose task is carried out in cooperation with the National Security Service; 7) the Police Department for Passports and Visas – responsible for the control of migratory processes, issuing visa, registration of foreigners visiting Armenia and granting permits to enter the state territory; 8) the President of Armenia granting Armenian citizenship; 9) the Ministry of Economy, setting out the rules governing the employment of immigrants; 10) government administration, coordinating implementation of the Armenian electronic administration strategy (including the introduction of electronic identification cards and biometric passports); 11) the Ministry of the Diaspora, acting with a view to the strengthening of the ties between Armenia and Armenian Diaspora; 12) the National Statistical Office of Armenia – responsible for the collection, analysis and publication of statistical data on migration and conducting censuses; 13) the National Security Council – monitoring the implementation of state migration programs and coordinating the activities of the state in the field of national security. The Council also sets the direction of the strategic development of the country, including the armed forces, law enforcement authorities, fiscal and customs systems, border management and combating illegal migration, and monitors the implementation of obligations towards the EU.

In addition, other institutions cooperating in the area of migration include the Ministry of Health (taking action to prevent the spread of diseases), the Ministry of Education (implementing educational policy), the Ministry of Transport (implementing policy concerning transportation, information and communications technologies), the Ministry of Emergency Situations (coordinating the state policy in the field of civil defence and civil protection in emergency situations), the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs (elaborating measures in the area of sport), the Ministry of Finance (responsible for the management of state finance and revenues), the Ministry of Defence (implementing policies in the defence sector), and the Council on Human Trafficking Issues (acting in an advisory capacity on matters related to human trafficking) (*Progress*).

### **Emigration and immigration in Armenia in 1995–2017**

Before 1992 Armenia was one of the states of the USSR, and was characterized by a low level of migration (Ghazaryan, 2012, p. 2). The reestablishment of independence by Armenia, accompanied by economic collapse, inflation, high unemployment, pauperization of society and paralysis of the transportation system, caused a dramatic increase in the numbers of emigrants. The period 1992–1994 marked the largest flow of Armenian citizens out of the country. During these three years, 980,000 people emigrated from Armenia and only 370,000 returned. More than 60% of emigrants were economically active men.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> These are estimates of the departures from Armenia. No data from that period is available in statistical yearbooks.

As a result, the demographic structure of the Armenian population was seriously distorted and underwent significant changes. The percentage of elderly people increased, while the proportion of married couples and the birth rate declined. The emigrants of that period included many people with secondary or higher education, the unemployed and those of average wealth, with resources allowing them to leave the country. After 1994, the number of migrants driven by the economic shock decreased as a result of the gradual improvement of the economic situation of Armenia, and legislation introduced by the neighbor states limiting the influx of immigrants. The departures in that period were mostly due to the process of family reunification and settling permanently outside Armenia. The numbers of departures and arrivals of Armenian citizens in 1995–2013 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

**Emigrants and immigrants in Armenia in the period 1995–2013\***

Year	Population (in thousands)	Departures per 1,000 people	CIS	Other countries	Arrivals overall per 1,000 people	CIS	Other countries	Overall balance
1995	3260.3	11.5	10.4	1.1	3.7	3.6	0.1	-7.8
1996	3248.8	8.6	7.3	1.3	2.4	2.3	0.1	-6.2
1997	3246.0	9.5	8.1	1.4	2.1	2.0	0.1	-7.4
1998	3238.2	8.8	8.1	0.7	1.6	1.6	0.0	-7.2
1999	3232.1	8.6	6.5	2.1	1.7	1.4	0.3	-6.9
2000	3226.9	12.0	11.1	0.9	1.6	1.2	0.4	-10.4
2001	3215.3	11.9	10.7	1.2	1.6	1.5	0.1	-10.3
2002	3212.9	10.9	8.5	2.4	1.7	1.1	0.6	-9.2
2003	3210.3	9.5	7.7	1.8	1.9	1.4	0.5	-7.6
2004	3212.2	9.2	7.6	1.6	1.5	1.2	0.3	-7.7
2005	3215.8	9.3	7.5	1.8	1.5	1.3	0.2	-7.8
2006	3219.2	8.0	6.2	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.3	-6.7
2007	3222.9	7.5	5.4	2.1	1.1	0.7	0.4	-6.4
2008	3230.1	6.7	4.6	2.1	0.9	0.5	0.4	-5.8
2009	3238.0	4.8	4.1	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.2	-3.9
2010	3249.5	3.3	2.8	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.2	-2.4
2011	3262.6	2.6	2.2	0.4	1.3	1.1	0.2	-1.3
2012	3274.3	4.8	4.0	0.8	2.5	2.2	0.3	-2.3
2013	3026.9	4.9	4.1	0.8	2.0	1.8	0.2	-2.9

\* No complete data is available for the later period – from 2014. The analyses are based on estimates – Armenia does not have any reliable tools to measure migration, which in itself is a serious problem for a country with such a high level of migration.<sup>4</sup>

**Source:** Own elaboration based on data from the *Population Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 1996–2014*, <http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=586&year=2000>, 12.01.2018.

<sup>4</sup> One of the methods currently used for the determination of migration in Armenia is the residual number of passengers departing and arriving by air, rail and motorway. The balance – negative or positive – is used by many as an approximate indicator of migration. This only provides quantitative data that is very difficult to analyze if the purpose is to reveal the actual causes and state of migration. According to that method, the country loses about 1.5% of its population every year. To make matters worse, those departing are the most active individuals of working and reproductive age. This is a very high number for a country of 3 million inhabitants, because it also has an impact on the demographic structure. On the basis of transportation data (airlines, rail and state highway) the net migration in 2000 was estimated at -57,500; -60,400 in 2001; -23,100 in 2008; -55,000 in 2009 and nearly -30,000 in 2010.



The data in Table 1 suggests that the number of Armenian citizens leaving the country in the period 1995–2013 followed a downward trend. As the economic situation of Armenia improved, the number of emigrants declined. The main destinations were the CIS states; far fewer people left for other countries. There were significantly fewer immigrants than emigrants – their number remained around the same for the whole studied period. They returned to Armenia from the former USSR states. The overall migration balance in Armenia is negative. This means that, throughout the whole period of the study, Armenia was an emigrant country.

According to the report analyzing the migration processes, in 2010, 41.9% of people departing from Armenia had completed secondary (ten-year school) education, 24.8% – secondary vocational education and 21.1% – university education. Armenia experienced a 42% deficit in two age groups: 19–29 and 39–49 years (*Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*). According to the data of the World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook of 2013, Armenia was among the states with the highest percentage of emigrants who had completed tertiary education. That percentage peaked at 28.8% in 2011, compared to 29.1% in the Republic of Macedonia, 23.9% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 11.8% in Romania and 9.0% in Albania (*Migration and Remittances Factbook 2014*).

Among the university graduates who emigrated due to a lack of job opportunities were economists, doctors, teachers, and specialists in humanities and social sciences, mainly lawyers. Many of those who stayed in the country found employment in fields requiring lower qualifications, with around 40% of graduates working in food production, textiles and light industries. Emigration data relating to selected occupational groups in the period 1995–2013 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

**Estimates of emigration in selected occupational groups in 1995–2013**

Occupational groups	Estimated size	Percentage unemployed	Percentage of migrants	Number of migrants
Economists	146,000	30	7.5	11,000
Medical professions	115,000	32	5.5	6,000
Education	104,000	25	6.5	7,000
Humanities and social sciences	101,000	28	9.1	9,000

**Source:** Own elaboration based on: N. Barsounian (2013), *To Greener Shores: A Detailed Report on Emigration from Armenia*, <https://armenianweekly.com/2013/01/22/to-greener-shores-a-detailed-report-on-emigration-from-armenia>, 14.01.2018.

The data presented in Table 2 suggests that the largest group of immigrants were specialists in humanities and social sciences. Medical professionals were the most affected by unemployment. The numbers of emigrants with degrees in engineering, agriculture, visual arts, music and natural sciences are given in Table 3.

The data presented in Table 3 demonstrates that the group most affected by unemployment included light industry workers and artists, whereas the lowest unemployment rate was observed among transportation workers and information technology specialists. Architects, construction engineers and mechanical engineers accounted for the largest

percentage of emigrants, whereas electronic engineers made up the smallest group of departing specialists. The low rate of migration of IT professionals can be explained by the demand for IT services in Armenia and orders placed from other countries, e.g. Russia. The reasons for departure and destinations of Armenian emigrants in 1995–2013 are presented in Table 4.

Table 3

#### Estimates of emigration in selected occupational groups in 1995–2013

Occupational groups	Number of degree holders	Percentage unemployed	Percentage of emigrants	Number of emigrants
Natural sciences	67,000	21%	7.8%	5,000
Architecture and design	59,000	24%	18.5%	11,000
Mechanical engineers	51,000	24%	13.7%	7,000
Art and culture	50,000	31%	10.9%	5,000
Agronomy	40,000	25%	10.5%	4,000
Electrical engineers	28,000	21%	12.3%	3,000
Electronic engineers	26,000	33%	12.0%	3,000
Textile and light industry	26,000	40%	6.0%	2,000
Process engineers	21,000	20%	6.2%	1,000
Transportation	17,000	19%	14.9%	3,000
Food industry	15,000	42%	5.1%	1,000

**Source:** Own elaboration based on: N. Barsounian (2013), *To Greener Shores: A Detailed Report on Emigration from Armenia*, <https://armenianweekly.com/2013/01/22/to-greener-shores-a-detailed-report-on-emigration-from-armenia>, 14.01.2018.

Table 4

#### Reasons for and directions of emigration in 1995–2013 (in percent)

Reason for emigration	Yerevan	Other regions	Russia	Other countries CIS	European countries	USA and Canada	Other	Total
Work	6.5	2.3	85.0	2.4	1.3	0.5	1.8	100
Seeking employment	1.2		95.0	0.9	0.6		2.3	100
Lack of jobs	1.5		86.7	4.7		3.5		100
Economic crisis			100.0					100
Seasonal work		0.2	98.8					100
No reason stated					100.0			100
Family matters	13.5	13.0	55.7	0.9	8.3	5.3	3.3	100
Visiting friends	15.2	20.1	54.7	–	0.4	9.6		100
Holiday	1.3		73.2	25.5				100
Other	29.4	42.3	1.4	1.8	0.3	0.4	24.4	100

**Source:** N. Barsounian (2013), *To Greener Shores: A Detailed Report on Emigration from Armenia*, <https://armenianweekly.com/2013/01/22/to-greener-shores-a-detailed-report-on-emigration-from-armenia>, 14.01.2018.

The findings of the research conducted in Armenia, summarized in Table 4, indicate that the main reasons for emigration in the period 1995–2013 were visits to friends and family matters – presumably family reunification – followed by searching for a job. The largest number of emigrants came from Yerevan and the surrounding areas. Regard-

less of the reason for emigration, the most frequently chosen destination was the Russian Federation, with long-term emigrants accounting for 41.6% of the total number of emigrants. This direction was probably chosen by Armenians because of their generally good command of the Russian language, as well as visa-free travel. Holiday was the most frequent purpose of visits to the CIS, whereas the Armenians travelling to the European countries did so without a specific purpose. Family matters and visits to friends were the main reasons for travelling to the USA and Canada.

### Conclusions

Armenia is the smallest country in the South Caucasus, with ethnic Armenians accounting for more than 98% of its population. The Nagorno-Karabakh war, along with the economic and political transformation resulting in a reduced standard of living and an unemployment rate exceeding 40%, led to high levels of emigration. The legal bases of the migration policy of Armenia consist of international laws: UN conventions on the status of refugees, stateless persons and the nationality of married women, the European Convention for the protection of human rights and protection of national minorities, and the ILO Convention against discrimination in employment. The processes of migration are supported by bilateral agreements between Armenia and Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia, and readmission agreements have been signed with more than ten countries. Armenia's relations with the EU, the regulations concerning the implementation of its neighborhood policy and the agreement on the facilitation of the issue of visas and readmission play a very important role in Armenian migration policy. The most important national legislation includes the Constitution, as well as the laws on nationality, political asylum, refugees, the protection of the state border, the register of the population and foreign nationals. In addition, issues of migration policy were dealt with by three separate strategies.

In practice, the largest wave of departures, observed in the period 1992–1994, resulted in a distortion of the demographic structure of the Armenian population. In the following years, the levels of emigration gradually decreased as the economic situation improved. The main destinations for Armenian nationals were the CIS states; other countries were less frequently chosen. There were significantly fewer immigrants than emigrants – Armenia's overall migration balance was negative, which means that it was an emigrant country throughout the period considered in the study. Most of the emigrants had completed secondary education. The largest group of emigrating university graduates were economists, teachers and lawyers. The most common reasons for emigration were visits to friends and family matters, followed by seeking employment. Regardless of the reason for emigration, the most frequently chosen destination was the Russian Federation, followed by other states of the CIS. This destination was chosen by Armenians because of their generally good command of the Russian language, as well as the opportunity to travel visa-free.

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## Polityka migracyjna Armenii

### Streszczenie

Celem pracy jest charakterystyka podstaw prawnych polityki migracyjnej Armenii oraz jej praktycznej realizacji w latach 1995–2013. Autorka badała dokumenty międzynarodowe i krajowe tworzące podstawy prawne polityki migracyjnej Armenii, bilans wyjazdów i przyjazdów w latach 1995–2013, powody emigracji obywateli Armenii, grupy zawodowe emigrantów. W pracy zastosowano następujące metody badawcze: analizę treści, systemową, ilościową. W wyniku przeprowadzonych analiz ustalono, że dokumenty polityki migracyjnej nie były realizowane w pełni. W latach 1995–2013 liczba emigrantów spadała, jednak bilans migracyjny był dla Armenii ujemny. Wyjeżdżający najczęściej udawali się do Rosji, a następnie do państw WNP.

**Słowa kluczowe:** emigracja, Armenia, polityka, grupy zawodowe, Federacja Rosyjska, WNP