

POST-PANDEMIC MIGRATION PROCESSES AND THEIR CHALLENGES FOR THE COUNTRY

Lia Pitiurishvili

Professor

Georgian National University SEU

Neli Sesadze

Professor

Georgian National University SEU

Ambrosi Grishikashvili

Doctor of Economics

Abstract

Global migration manifests itself in many forms: economic migrants are forced to voluntarily leave their homeland in search of work, refugees are forced to leave their country as a result of conflict and violence. The source of migration processes today is technological, geopolitical, and climatic change.

With globalization and increased mobility, people have more opportunities to study and work around the world.

Migration processes have not bypassed Georgia either. In the case of Georgia, legal migration is determined by these three main reasons, although the emphasis is still on labor migration.

Migration can be an economic good, but it can also become a serious problem for the economic or political life of a country. The non-return of young people who have left the country for education, the "brain drain," and other important challenges for the country necessitate effective migration management.

Keywords Migration, globalization, circular migration, "brain drain".

Introduction.

Contemporary economic or military events have accelerated population migrations, slowing down somewhat the processes of the pandemic. About 281 million people, or 3.6 percent of the world's population, live outside their country.

Before the pandemic, the figure for 2019 was 272 million, or 3.5 percent. Of these, 135 million are female international migrants, or 3.5 percent of the world's female population (2019 - 130 million, or 3.4 percent), 146 million are male international migrants, or 3.7 percent of the world's male population (2019 - 141 million, or 3.6 percent), 169 million Labor migrants worldwide (2019 - 164 million), as of 2020, worldwide missing, 3900 migrants have died.¹

¹ World Migration Report 2022 <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022> [L. s. 14.03.2023].

Key facts and figures from IOM reports 2000 and 2022

Table 1

	2000 წ	2022წ
Estimated number of international migrants in million	173	281
The share of international migrants in the world population	2,8%	3.6%
Share of female international migrants Calculation share	49.4%	48%
A country with high international migration	Emirates	Emirates
The number of labor migrants in million	-	169
Global international money transfers in million	128	702
Number of refugees	14	26.4
Number of internally displaced persons	21	55

The increase in migration processes is reflected in such an indicator as the number of remittances. As of 2020, international remittances of international migrants worldwide totaled \$702 billion. Events developed because of COVID-19 caused an actual decrease in remittances by 2.4% (719 million in 2019).

By 2020, \$540 billion in international remittances were sent to low- and middle-income countries, up from \$548 million in 2019.

1. Reasons for migration

Economic globalization, increased movement of people, as well as the development of transportation and technological changes have provided more opportunities for people to continue their education or find work around the world.

The search for work is the main driving force behind migrants. Labor migrants account for two-thirds of all international migration. For these people and their families, migration can bring significant benefits in terms of income, education, and health. For countries of origin, emigration can reduce unemployment and improve educational attainment, as migrant remittances provide financial flows and a source of stable income.

In the case of Georgia, global migration processes have the reasons mentioned above, although the main one is still labor migration.

As of January 1, 2022, Georgia's population was 3,688.6 thousand people, down 1.1 percent from the corresponding period of the previous year.

It should be noted that in 2021 there is a negative natural increase (-13,960) and a negative migration balance (-25,966).²

² Migration <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/322/migratsia>[L. s. 14.03.2023].

Components of population change, thousand

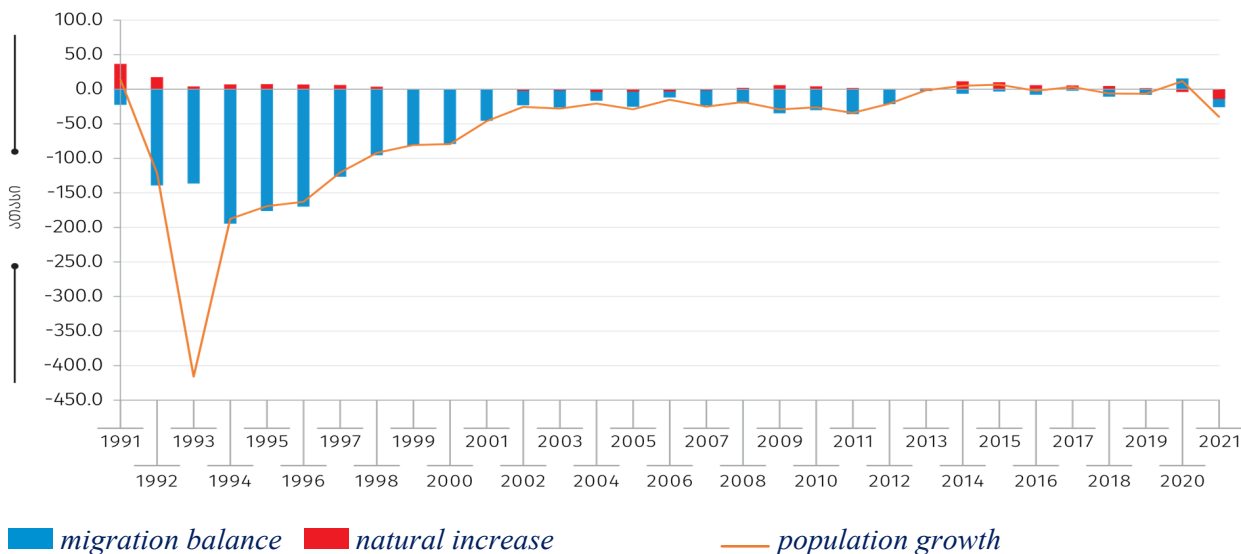


Fig. 1 Source: National Statistical Service of Georgia

As of January 1, 2022, 59.7 percent of Georgia's population lived in urban areas. In addition, St. Tbilisi's population is nearly one-third of the total population.

In 2021, the number of immigrants was 99,974, an increase of 34.6 percent over the previous year, while the number of emigrants decreased 17.8 percent to 74,008.

During the same period, 82.5 percent of immigrants and 88.6 percent of emigrants are of working age (age group 15-64).

Number of immigrants and emigrants in 2021 by main age groups

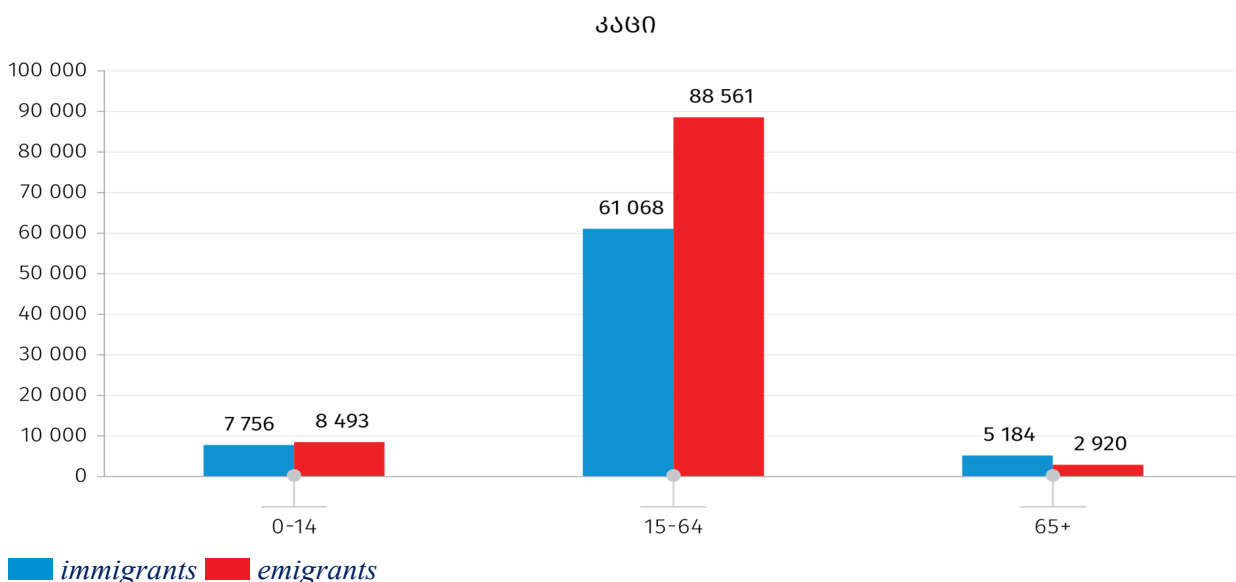


Fig. 2 Source: National Statistical Service of Georgia

In 2021, 53.4 percent of immigrants and 80.4 percent of emigrants are Georgia citizens.

Number of immigrants and emigrants in 2021 by citizenship
Table 2

citizenship	immigrants	emigrants
all	74 008	99 974
Georgian citizen	39 526	80 351
A citizen of another country	34 433	19 568
Stateless / not specified	49	55

Fig. 2 Source: National Statistical Service of Georgia

After the start of martial law between Russia and Ukraine, the flow of people from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia to Georgia and not only to Georgia increased.

Its records are kept by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the National Statistical Service of Georgia. However, it is very difficult to identify these migration flows according to various criteria. We can only say that the number of incoming and outgoing visitors from these countries has increased.

Migration flows have their short-term effects, which are reflected in the exchange rate, rising prices of consumer goods, and rising real estate prices. These trends continue today.³

The development of circular migration schemes is important for the promotion of labor migration. It is a form of migration that is set up in such a way as to allow a certain degree of legal mobility between two countries. It is recognized as contributing to the economic growth of the labor supplying country and avoiding brain drain and other negative consequences.

2. Migration processes in the educational field

The growth of human capital is an absolute priority for our country and the only opportunity that will allow us to include Georgia among the countries with a developed economy.

European integration has significantly intensified migration processes in the aspect of education. If in 1993-2003 the population went abroad mainly for the purpose of employment, since 2004 the situation has changed somewhat and a significant part of emigrants (more than 50%) are young people, whose main motivation for leaving, along with employment, is primarily the desire to get education.

The European integration of Georgia's educational sphere and the creation of a single educational space promote student mobility, university cooperation in the implementation of educational programs and other effective projects.

³ Tourism or migration? https://idfi.ge/ge/tourism_or_migration_rate_of_stay_of_russian_citizens_in_georgia [L. s. 14.03.2023].

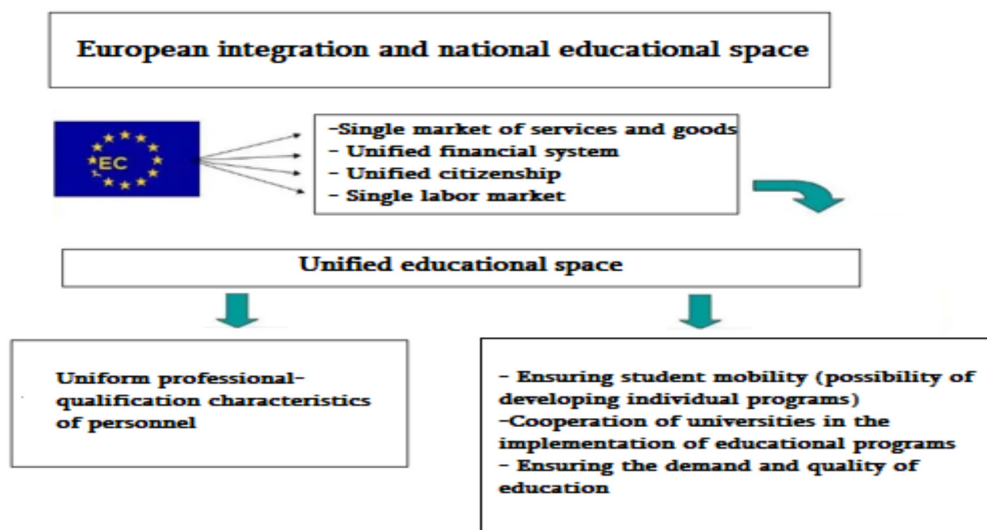


Fig. 3 Unified educational space

The economic, political and social benefits of educational migration for the country are obvious - the mobility of students and young scientists to foreign countries for higher, second higher and additional education or internships in universities and factories is a source of formation of qualified personnel in the country.

By the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year, 484 students had been sent to study abroad, 195 more than in the previous year. The number of students sent from public universities is 2.4 times greater than the number of students sent from private universities.

The negative side of this process is the decision taken by a certain part of the students (even a small one) not to return after graduation for various reasons. On the one hand, this will reduce the population reproduction rate, which is already low from the demographic point of view, and on the other hand, from the economic point of view, the country will lose its highly educated human capital.

The number of immigrants to the country for education is increasing. In the academic year 2021-2022, 17,500 international students were enrolled in the country's universities (2019 - 14,617), an increase of 19.7 percent over the previous year. Of these, 4,892 are undergraduate students, while the rest are graduate, medical (veterinary) and residency students. As for the number of foreign doctoral students, according to the data of 2021, 33 students are studying in the country's universities. The bulk of the students (12) are Turkish citizens. A large number of students are Indian nationals.⁴

The basis for intensification of educational migration are scholarship programs operating in Georgia: for example: Stipendium Hungaricum in Hungary, academic programs in Italy, Fulbright program in the USA, Master programs in France, academic programs in San Diego. in the University, etc. It is also worth noting the cooperation in the framework of EU programs and scholarship programs of the International Education Center of the Ministry of Education, for example: Erasmus+; Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree.

In order to encourage scientific mobility, international business fellowship programs should be available to young scientists. This will increase the mobility both of foreign scientists for employment at Georgian enterprises and of Georgian scientists for medium-term secondment to conduct research at foreign companies.

⁴Short form migration profile https://migration.commission.ge/files/bmp_22_students_ge.pdf [L. s. 14.03.2023].

Number of residence permits by citizenship for foreign students⁵

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	sum
india	2,556	4,486	4,068	2,291	1,917	15,318
iran	145	326	607	456	440	1,974
Nigeria	253	268	321	316	475	1,633
offer	1,183	971	1,036	1,080	2,079	6,349
sum	4,137	6,051	6,032	4,143	4,911	25,274

In order to obtain positive results of educational migration, it is important to intensify exchange programs for student mobility in the country, to promote orderly, safe, legal, responsible migration. There is a need for state support in this direction.

3. Migration of private capital

In addition to labor and educational migration, the world's millionaires are characterized by migration processes. In this aspect, providing them with a favorable investment climate will be an important factor in economic growth.

After a two-year break due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the world's millionaires are beginning to migrate again. Experts predict that in 2023, the migration of private capital will reach a record pace: 125 thousand millionaires a year. On the main trends of migration of wealthy people over the last decade, as well as the forecasts for the future period Henley experts presented the Global Citizens Report.⁶

The question of trends in the migration of private capital and investment remains relevant not only for our country, but also for the whole world. And we are talking not only about wealthy investors and investment market professionals, but also about politicians. Their strategic tasks include, in particular, the development of effective investment programs that will contribute to economic growth and job creation.

The study covers 62 countries from 8 regions of the world and includes data on the travel and migration habits of more than 150,000 wealthy people. It is important to note that the migration of millionaires affected only those who moved and stayed in the country for more than six months. The target group of the study is people with assets of \$1 million or more.

According to this study, the world's wealth has grown from about \$150 trillion to \$500 trillion since 2000. At the same time, the number of high- and ultra-high-income people has increased. As of December 31, 2021, there were:

- ✓ More than 15.3 million people with more than \$1 million in assets,
- ✓ 593,340 people with more than \$10 million in assets,
- ✓ With more than \$100 million in assets - 26,670 people and
- ✓ Billionaires - 2,241 people.⁷

⁵ Short form migration profile https://migration.commission.ge/files/bmp_22_students_ge.pdf [L. s. 14.03.2023].

⁶ Global Citizens Report <https://www.henleyglobal.com/publications/henley-global-citizens-report/2022-q2> [L. s. 14.03.2023].

⁷ Global Citizens Report <https://www.henleyglobal.com/publications/henley-global-citizens-report/2022-q2> [L. s. 14.03.2023].

The global distribution of the world's richest people and private wealth at the end of 2021 is as follows (the personal wealth of all people living in the country, including all their assets minus any liabilities):

countries	\$ billion
USA	68,781
China	23,280
Japan	20,099
India	8,893
Germany	8,868
Great Britain	8,848
Australia	6,447
Canada	6,247
France	5,750
Italy	3,824

Source: Global Citizens Report Q2 2022

The growth of HNWI and UHNWIs in recent decades has been driven by the following circumstances: Growing global GDP dynamics, reflected in rising global standards of living; The result of loose fiscal and monetary policies implemented to mitigate the economic effects caused by the 2008-2009 crises and the pandemic has been an increase in global savings, rising asset prices, which has helped increase the wealth of asset owners. Increasing life expectancy leads to an increase in savings, hence an increase in assets for investment.

The upward migration trend of HNWI continued even before the pandemic. Covid-19 made it difficult to accept information about migration processes. Projections for 2022 and 2023 show a rapid recovery in the rate of migration growth.



Figure 6 Number of wealthy people emigrating Henley & Partners, Global Citizens Report 2023

The increase in migration flows in 2016 was due to investment programs in Australia, the United States, Canada, and New Zealand. They contributed to the inflow of millionaires to these countries

Wealthy people often move their businesses to another country along with their jobs, workforce skills, qualifications, and influence. This is why it is especially important now that countries reconsider their migration policies. Only in this way can host countries take full advantage of attracting new talent.

In order to obtain effective results by increasing migration flows, the issues of state management of migration processes become relevant.

The acceleration of the rapprochement process with the European Union gave a significant impetus to the development of the migration management system in Georgia. During this period, migration strategies for 2013-2015 and 2016-2020 were developed with the aim of creating, improving and increasing the efficiency of the management system.⁸

In 2010, the Government Commission on Migration was formed, which brought together all the important participants in the migration process and organized its activities at the state level.⁹

As a result of innovations and changes in the field of migration new challenges have emerged. That is why a migration strategy was developed for 2021-2030, which aims to meet the challenges in the field of migration in accordance with the new realities.

The strategy involves highlighting the country's interests in migration and discussing them in terms of "migration and development" policies. It also seeks to relate to successful international experience and develop its own system.

The strategy is based on the principle of "migration and development," which serves to minimize the negative effects of migration and increase the positive effects.

Conclusion

Migration is important for economic prosperity, human development and security, and safer and better regulated migration has become a global priority.

Improving migration management, promoting legal migration and combating illegal migration, reintegration of returnees, diaspora involvement, asylum system and integration are the highest priorities of migration processes in Georgia.

It is necessary to regulate and control the activity of intermediaries who are engaged in employment abroad. This will help protect the rights of labor immigrants, as well as enhance the work of reliable employment agencies in this area.

Development of temporary (circular) labor migration schemes. This will help bring migration into a legal framework, take into account the interests of countries of origin and destination, as well as the migrant workers themselves, and, most importantly, facilitate their return home.

Despite the abundance of information provided to citizens, raising public awareness of legal migration opportunities and the dangers associated with irregular migration is a national challenge.

For the further development of the country it is important to promote international mobility in the field of higher education and science, which will increase the flow of Georgian students and scientists to educational institutions in foreign countries, as well as the growth of foreign-language educational institutions in the country. The basis for this will be the activation of scholarship, academic and master's programs implemented by the Ministry of Education together with international partners.

The introduction of foreign-language educational programs in Georgian higher educational institutions will increase the mobility of foreign students in the educational space of Georgia.

International students contribute significantly both to the country's economy and to the development of universities. The tuition they pay allows Georgian universities to invest heavily in infrastructure and technology and to develop new educational programs.

⁸Migration strategy of Georgia for 2016-2020 https://migration.commission.ge/files/migration_strategy_2016-2020_geo_final_-_amended.pdf [L. s. 14.03.2023].

⁹ Migration strategy of Georgia for 2021-2030 https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms_2021-2030_geo.pdf [L. s. 14.03.2023].

The question of trends in the migration of private capital and investment remains relevant not only for our country, but also for the whole world. And we are talking not only about wealthy investors and investment market professionals, but also about politicians. Developing and offering them effective investment programs will contribute to economic growth and job creation in the country.

It is necessary to support the reintegration of returned migrants into the local labor market.

Cooperation between the central government and local governments is becoming increasingly important in improving migration management. Municipalities have more information about different groups of migrants and their needs.

It is necessary to increase the involvement of municipalities with regard to legal migration, as well as issues of return and reintegration, providing information on the state of migration and other projects to potential migrants.

In order to solve migration problems, it is important for Georgia to participate intensively in global or regional international processes and platforms. It is necessary to exchange global best practices in migration management, take into account their experience in solving migration problems. It is also important to bring the Georgian vision of migration issues to international events and popularize it.

Migration and other forms of cross-border mobility are issues of high policy importance. Demands for statistics in these areas have further increased in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The statistical community continues to be challenged to capture international migration and cross-border mobility in a way that would meet the growing needs of users.

It is clear that no country can cope with migration problems alone. Transnational problems require transnational solutions. Migration is global, requiring global approaches and global solutions.

Bibliography

1. United Nations Migration Network Work Plan 2021-2022 priorities
https://georgia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11311/files/documents/network_-_workplan_2021-2022_GEO_final%20.pdf [Last seen 14.03.2023];
2. Skills and Migration Country Georgia https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/etf_skills_and_migration_country_fiche_georgia_2021_en_0.pdf [Last seen 14.03.2023];
3. Migration strategy of Georgia for 2022-2030
https://migration.commission.ge/files/ms30_geo_web4.pdf [Last seen 14.03.2023];
4. 2021 Migration Profile of Georgia, Government Commission on Migration Issues
https://migration.commission.ge/files/bmp_22_students_ge.pdf [Last seen 14.03.2023];
5. 2019 Migration Profile of Georgia, Government Commission on Migration Issues
https://migration.commission.ge/files/mp19_web3.pdf [Last seen 14.03.2023];
6. Tourism or migration? (Indicator of stay of Russian citizens in Georgia - March-June 2022)
https://idfi.ge/ge/tourism_or_migration_rate_of_stay_of_russian_citizens_in_georgia [Last seen 14.03.2023];
7. National Statistical Service of Georgia
<https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/322/migratsia> [Last seen 14.03.2023];
8. Migrationsdatenportal. Das große Ganze <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/> [Last seen 14.03.2023];
9. The 3rd International Forum on Migration Statistics (IFMS 2023)
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/migrationstat-forum-2023/index.html> [Last seen 14.03.2023];
10. Henley Global Citizens Report <https://www.henleyglobal.com/publications/henley-global-citizens-report/2022-q2> [Last seen 14.03.2023].