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Number of Georgian emigrants and their socio-demographic characteristics

This chapter examines the size of the Georgian diaspora in the main destination countries, as well as its overall evolution since 2000. It provides a socio-demographic analysis of the emigrant population, focusing on age and educational distribution, emphasising differences by sex and across destination countries. For the main destination countries, it provides a snapshot of the geographic distribution of emigrants, as well as information on the acquisition of nationality. The chapter also presents evidence on overall emigration rates of the Georgian population and its highly educated population towards OECD countries. The overall analysis systematically compares the Georgian diaspora with two reference groups: the foreign-born population living in the OECD area and the emigrant populations from seven selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In Brief

- In 2020, close to 1 million Georgian emigrants were living abroad, which means that approximately one in five Georgians is an emigrant.
- Despite the decrease in flows since the early 2000s, the Georgian diaspora remains highly concentrated in the Russian Federation, where more than half of the emigrant population resides. The second destination country, Greece, hosts a much smaller population (10%).
- In 2020, approximately 300 000 Georgian emigrants were living in the OECD area. Greece, Israel, Turkey, and the United States host more than three-quarters of Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries.
- The number of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries more than doubled between 2000 and 2020. In absolute numbers, Greece led this increase, although the number of Georgian emigrants in the country has mostly stagnated since the 2008 global recession. Among the main destinations, Turkey registered the largest percentage increase, particularly after the elimination of the visa requirement in 2006.
- Half of the approximately 7 000 Georgian refugees live in France. The elimination of the visa requirement to enter the Schengen area in 2017 prompted an increase in the number of asylum seekers from Georgia, which practically doubled between 2017 and 2018.
- In 2019, 4 200 Georgian students were enrolled in a tertiary-level programme abroad. Eight in ten were studying in an OECD country and almost half in Germany alone. Turkey is gaining prominence as an educational destination.
- The Georgian diaspora in the OECD area is feminised: six in ten emigrants are women. The growing demand for female labour for domestic work and elder care in Europe and increased restrictions to emigrate to the Russian Federation, main destination for men, both account for this trend.
- Among the top five destinations, Turkey and Italy exhibit the greatest gender gaps with women accounting for more than 80% of Georgian emigrants in these countries. In the United States and Germany, the gender ratio is more balanced.
- Three-quarters of the Georgian emigrant population in OECD countries are of working age. Israel hosts a larger share of older Georgian emigrants, while Italy and Turkey host the largest proportion of working-age emigrants, and Germany, the largest proportion of Georgian families.
- Six out of ten Georgian emigrants arrived in the OECD area more than ten years ago, but Georgian immigration is still more recent than the overall immigration to OECD countries.
- While the educational level of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries has improved since 2000/01, it is still below the level of the Georgian population, which points to a negative self-selection in terms of educational attainment.
- In 2015/16, Georgian emigrants acquired the citizenship of their OECD host country at a higher rate than the average emigrant. Six out of ten Georgian emigrants hold the citizenship of their OECD country of residence.
- In 2015/16, Georgia had the highest female emigration rate among selected neighbouring countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.
- In 2020, the Georgian diaspora sent almost USD 2 billion in remittances, accounting for 13% of Georgia's GDP. Between 2000 and 2020, the income of seasonal or short-term workers accounted for 46% of these flows.

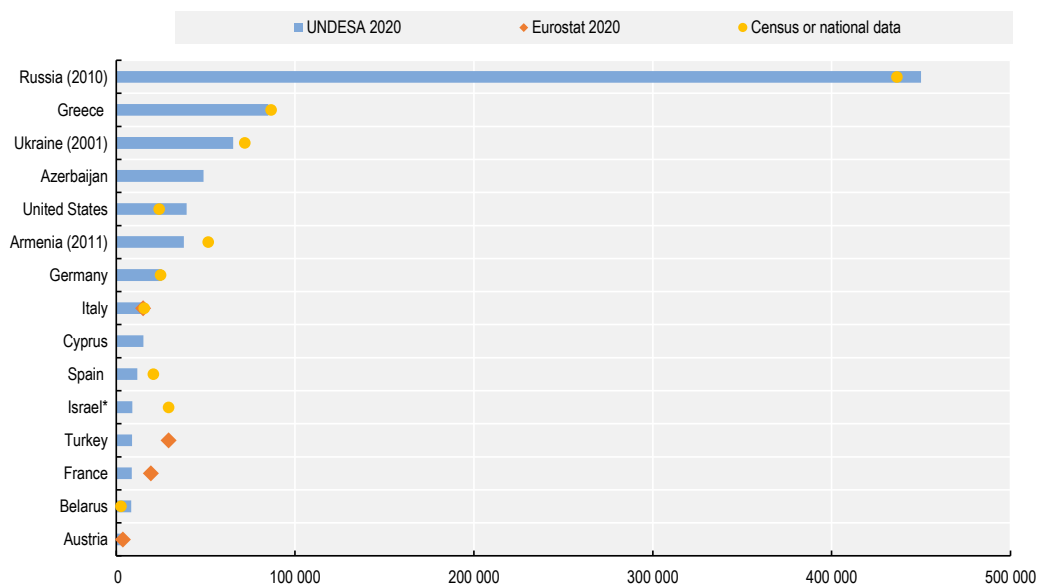
Recent trends in the number of Georgian emigrants

Close to 900 000 Georgian emigrants live abroad

According to United Nations estimates, approximately 860 000 Georgians individuals lived abroad in 2020, which represents 22% of Georgia's population (Figure 2.1). This diaspora is highly concentrated in Europe, which hosts 80% of the Georgian emigrant population. Asia and North America account for the remainder, with 15% and 5%, respectively.

According to UNDESA estimates, the Russian Federation remains the leading destination country, hosting more than half (52%) of all Georgian emigrants (450 000), despite the introduction of a visa for Georgian citizens in 2001 and the 2008 conflict (OECD/CRRRC - Georgia, 2017^[11]). Such geographic concentration is explained by pre-existing historical and economic ties, geographic and cultural proximity and knowledge of the language (European Training Foundation, 2013^[21]). Greece is the second largest destination country, hosting 10% of Georgian emigrants, followed by Ukraine (8%), Azerbaijan (6%), and the United States (5%).

Figure 2.1. Number of Georgian emigrants in main destination countries, 2020 or latest year available



Note: Data from national statistical offices in destination countries come from census, registries or household surveys. Where data are prior to 2015, the year is shown in parentheses next to the country name. In Germany and Italy, the Georgian population is estimated by country of citizenship.

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, International Migrant Stock 2020; Armenia (2011 Census via IPUMS); Germany (2019 Central Registry for Foreigners); Greece (2011 Census via IPUMS); Italy (Eurostat 2018 data); Israel (2020 OECD Secretariat estimate); the Russian Federation (2010 Census); Spain (2020 Census data); Ukraine (2001 Census via IPUMS); the United States (American Community Survey pooled data for 2017-19).

Box 2.1. The concept of diaspora

This report specifically looks at people born in Georgia and living abroad, especially in OECD countries. In particular, questions related to the children of emigrants born in host countries are not addressed because data on this group are only available in some OECD countries. While it is true that the broader diaspora, including children of emigrants born in host countries, can significantly contribute to the economic and social development of the origin country, data limitations make it challenging to enumerate them consistently and obtain information about their socio-demographic characteristics across OECD countries.

Box 2.2. The Georgian diaspora in national statistics

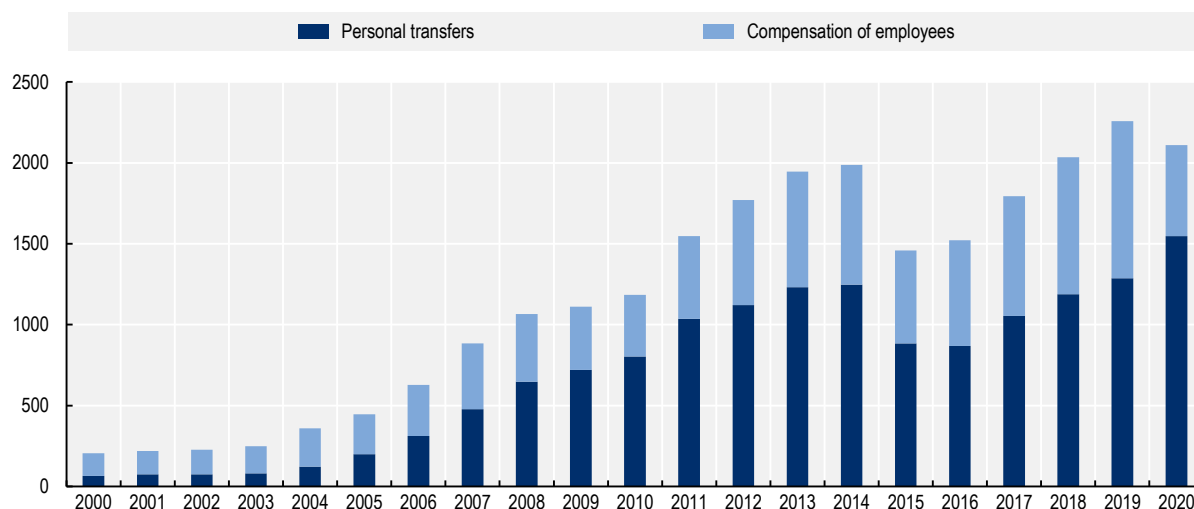
National data on Georgian emigration are problematic for several reasons. First, while Georgian citizens are required to obtain an emigration permit to leave the country permanently, many do not do so (Hakkert, 2017^[3]). Further, it was not until 2012 that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began measuring net emigration through border crossings and length of stay, emigrants defined as individuals who had moved abroad for at least 6 months and one day.

In the 2014 Georgian Population and Housing Census, an emigrant is defined as a usual resident of Georgia who lives abroad permanently or temporarily since 1 January 2002, and who has been absent from Georgia for more than 12 months. Following this definition, the emigrant population was estimated at 89 000 (approximately 2% of the total population), lowering to 70 000 when considering only those with Georgian citizenship. As such, the figure significantly underestimates the Georgian emigrant population as it is based on information provided by household members living in Georgia, thus omitting emigrants who were living alone before leaving, as well as the departure of entire households. Further, due to its definition of emigrants the question effectively excludes those who emigrated before 2002. In fact, most people who could and wanted to emigrate from Georgia had done so by the early 2000s, after which emigration slowed down (Jones, 2013^[4]).

In 2020, the Georgian diaspora sent almost USD 2 billion in remittances

Unsurprisingly, Georgia, a country with a small population of 3.7 million and significant levels of labour migration, is highly dependent on remittances with a ratio of remittances to GDP at 13.3% in 2020 (Figure 2.2). However, this ratio is almost on par with the average from the reference group (13.8%). The level of personal remittances to Georgia gradually increased between 2003 and 2014, when they amounted to approximately USD 2 billion. The 2015 decrease can be partially explained by sluggish macroeconomic conditions in the Russian Federation as well as the Eurozone debt crisis, which particularly affected Greece. Between 2000 and 2020, almost half (46%) of personal remittances were composed by the income of border, seasonal, and other short-term workers which are catalogued as employees' compensation.

Figure 2.2. Personal remittances sent to Georgia (USD million), 2000-20



Note: Remittances include workers remittances and compensation of employees.

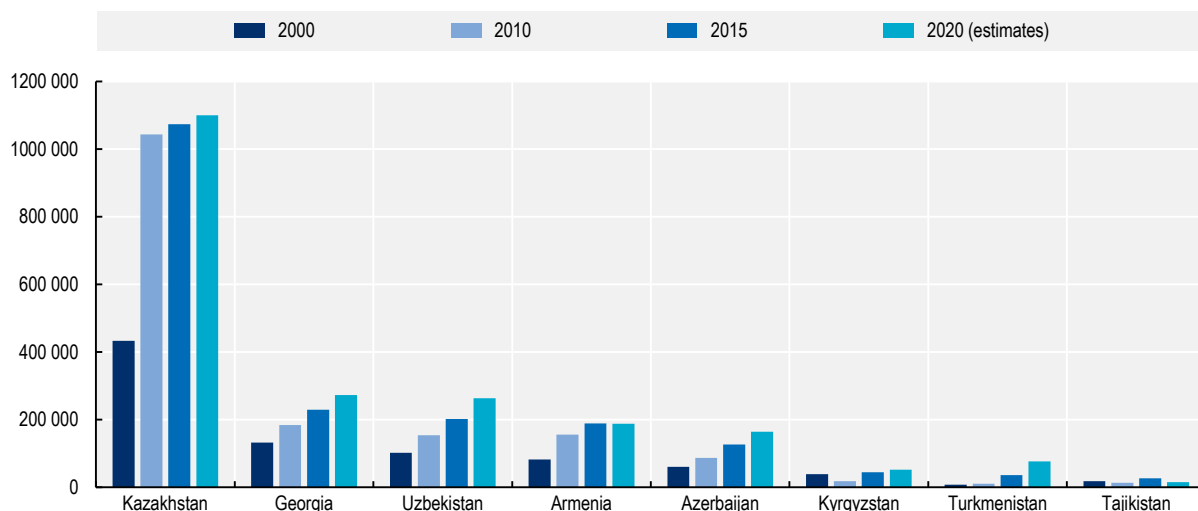
Source: IMF Balance of Payments, 2022.

Approximately 275 000 Georgian migrants live in OECD countries

According to the most recent estimates, approximately 275 000 Georgian migrants lived in OECD countries in 2020 (Figure 2.3). Among the selected reference group – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – Georgia’s diaspora is the second largest in OECD countries, only after Kazakhstan’s. The preponderance of the Kazakhstani and Georgian diaspora in the OECD area also reflects the importance of the Russian Federation as a destination for the other countries. In 2010, when data are available, approximately 70 and 75% of the Kazakhstani and Georgian emigrants resided in the Russian Federation, compared to 97% of the Tajikistani and Kyrgyzstani emigrants.

Between 2000 and 2020, the number of Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries increased twofold. In absolute terms, such growth (+ 141 000) ranks third among the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, below Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In percentage terms, however, Georgia ranks among the three lowest, only before Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Figure 2.3. Number of emigrants from Georgia and selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries living in OECD countries, 2000-20



Notes: Reference population includes all persons.

Source: Data for 2000, 2010 and 2015: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC). Data for 2020: OECD Secretariat estimates.

In the OECD area, Greece, Israel, Turkey and the United States account for three-quarters of the Georgian diaspora

In 2020, the Georgian diaspora in the OECD area was concentrated in Greece (34% of the emigrant population), Israel (14%), Turkey (12%), Germany (10%) and the United States (10%). These four countries account for more than three-quarters of the Georgian diaspora in the OECD area. Across the main destination countries, however, the Georgian migrant population has evolved differently since 2000.

Greece has been the leading destination in the OECD area since 2000. Georgian emigration responded to the demands of the Greek labour market, the transport infrastructure between the two countries, cultural and religious affinities (Christian Orthodox religion) and strong social networks that date back to the early 1990s (Marouf, 2017^[5]; Triandafyllidou, 2018^[6]). Among the seven main destinations shown in Figure 2.4, between 2000 and 2020, the Georgian diaspora in Greece registered the third largest increase in absolute numbers (+22 000). In percentage terms, however, the increase is only the sixth highest (+36%). Moreover, this growth was mostly observed between 2000 and 2010, when the Georgian diaspora increased by 38%, after which it practically stagnated between 2010 and 2020. The latter tendency is linked to both a drop in new arrivals and an increase in return migration amidst a context of economic recession in the Greek labour market following the 2008 global recession and the 2015 Eurozone crisis (Marouf, 2017^[5]).

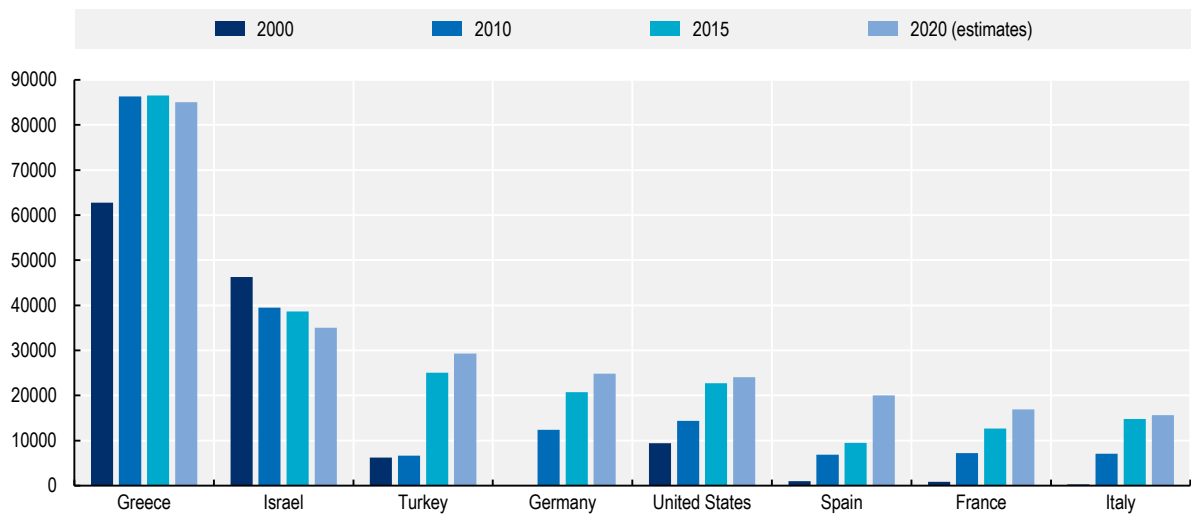
In Israel, the second destination country in the OECD area, the Georgian diaspora has gradually decreased between 2000 and 2020. Starting with a population of approximately 46 000 Georgian emigrants at the beginning of the century, there were approximately 35 000 by 2020 (-24%), a trend that is explained by an ageing population that arrived, in its majority, during the early 1990s as a result of the USSR's dissolution and repatriation programmes in Israel (Denisenko, 2020^[7]).

Conversely, in Turkey, the size of the Georgian diaspora grew almost five-fold between 2000 and 2020, the third largest percentage increase among the main destination countries. While Turkey has been a popular destination for emigrants since Georgian independence in 1991 due to its geographical proximity, its attractiveness increased after the abolition of a visa requirement for Georgian citizens in 2006 (IOM,

2008^[8]). Indeed, while the number of Georgian emigrants only grew by 6% between 2000 and 2010, it increased by 341% between 2010 and 2020.

In Germany, the fourth destination country, the lack of data provide an incomplete picture of the diaspora's evolution. Yet, the latter doubled between 2011 and 2020. In the United States, the number of Georgian emigrants more than doubled between 2000 and 2020. Italy, Spain and France saw the largest percentage increases, respectively, which can be explained by strong base effects. From less than 300 Georgian migrants in 2000, Italy now hosts 16 000. Similarly, in Spain and France, the Georgian diaspora grew from less than 1 000 in each country to almost 20 000 and 17 000 in 2020, respectively.

Figure 2.4. Evolution of the number of Georgian emigrants in main OECD destination countries, 2000-20



Note: Reference population includes all persons. In Germany, the Georgian population is estimated by country of citizenship.

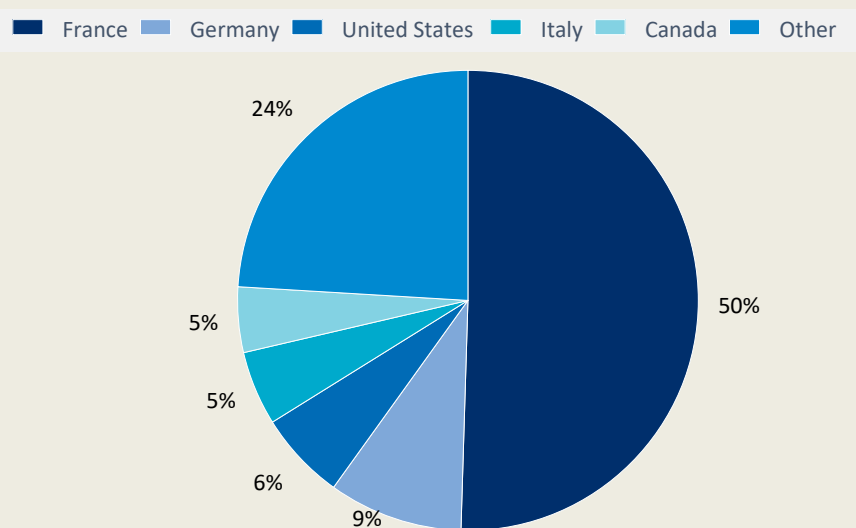
Source: Data for 2000, 2010 and 2015: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC). Data for 2020: OECD Secretariat Estimates. Data for Germany: Database of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2011, 2015 and 2020).

Of the total Georgian population residing abroad, approximately 7 300 are refugees (Box 2.1). Refugees are theoretically estimated as part of the foreign-born population in their respective host countries, but in practice, this depends on data sources and host country practices.

Box 2.3. Half of Georgian refugees worldwide reside in France

In 2020, there were 7 346 recognised Georgian refugees worldwide, half of which reside in France, which has been a leading destination country since 2011. Germany and the United States host an additional 9 and 6%, respectively. While the number of Georgian refugees has been relatively stable since 2013 (between 6 000 and 70 000), the number of asylum seekers has registered important variations. As detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, in 2017, the European Commission allowed Georgian citizens to travel without visa to the Schengen area. This policy change prompted an increase in the number of Georgian asylum seekers: between 2017 and 2018, asylum application from Georgia in the European Union almost doubled (+88%) (Eurostat, 2020^[9]) and peaked at approximately 21 000 in 2019. Overall, admission rates in the European Union are low: between 2011 and 2020, on average, 95% of asylum cases from Georgian citizens were rejected in first instance.

Figure 2.5. Distribution of Georgian refugees in main destination countries, 2020



Source: UNHCR (2020), UNHCR's Refugee Population Statistics Database (<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>).

Eight in ten Georgian international students reside in OECD countries, among which half are in Germany

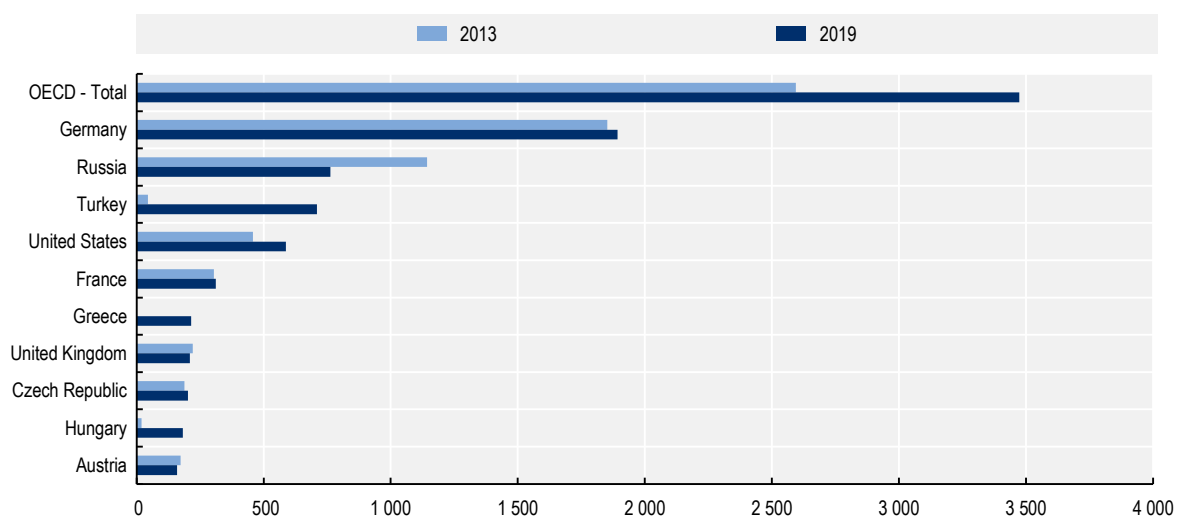
International students comprise another specific category of Georgian emigrants. After the 2003 Rose Revolution, Georgia pushed for improvements in higher education. Among other measures, the new administration promoted greater exchanges for faculty and students, particularly to European and American institutions (Campbell, 2016^[10]). An additional driver of student mobility from Georgia – and former Soviet Republics more generally – was the adherence to the European Higher Education Area in 2005, a set of agreements and commitments that allow national education systems to be more compatible and strengthen their quality assurance mechanisms (European Commission, 2020^[11])

In 2019, approximately 4 200 students from Georgia enrolled in a tertiary-level institution abroad, which represents 3% of all tertiary-level enrolments in Georgia. Among Georgian international students, eight in ten were studying in an OECD country (Figure 2.6). Between 2013 and 2019, the population of Georgian international students gained approximately 500 students, an increase of 13%. In 2019, among the

selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, Georgia was the fifth most important origin of international students in the OECD area (5% of the total), with Azerbaijan leading and accounting for a third of the total.

Germany hosted the largest number of Georgian students in 2019, accounting for almost half (45%) of the total, followed by the Russian Federation (18%) and Turkey (17%). While the number of Georgian students in Germany has remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2019 (1 800 on average), it has varied considerably in the second and third leading destinations: in the Russian Federation, the population of Georgian students decreased by 33% since 2013, while in Turkey it grew from 45 to over 700 students in the same period. Even when considering the strong base effect for Turkey, the country has become an attractive destination for Georgian students in recent years.

Figure 2.6. Main destination countries for international students from Georgia, 2013 and 2019



Note: Enrolled Georgian students (who are not citizens of the destination country) in a tertiary education programme.

Source: OECD/Eurostat/UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021), *Education at a Glance Database*.

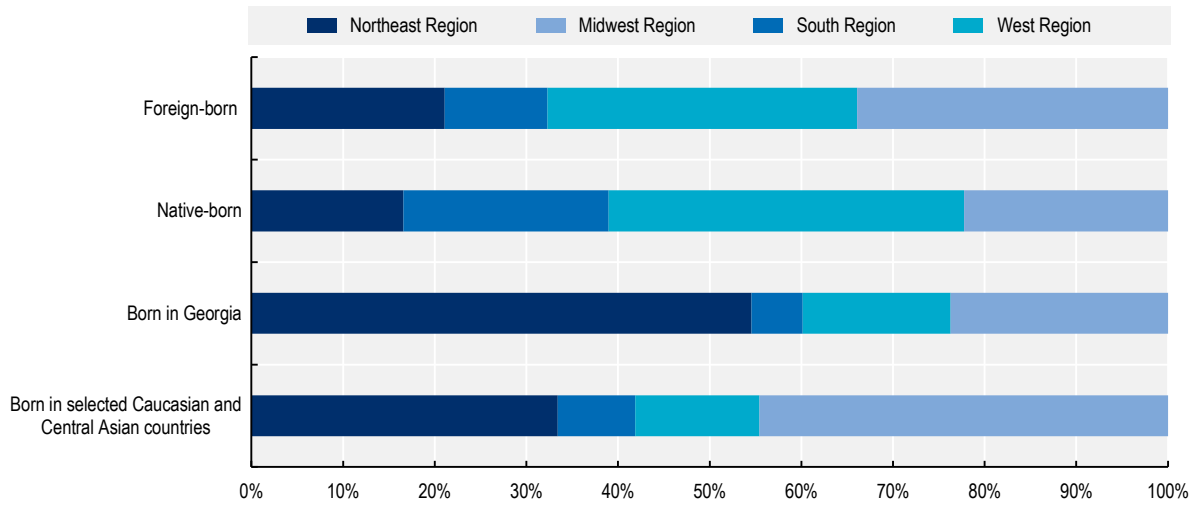
Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in selected destination countries

National data sources make it possible to study the location of Georgian emigrants in certain main destination countries and to map their regional distribution. In the United States, of the 24 000 Georgian migrants that reside there, more than half (55%) is settled in the Northeast region and particularly in the states of New York (37% of all Georgian emigrants), New Jersey (9%) and Pennsylvania (5%).

In Germany, more than half (54%) of Georgian emigrants are concentrated in three federal states: North-Rhine Westphalia (22% of total Georgian population), Baden-Württemberg (16%) and Bayern (15%). Moreover, the majority resides in big cities such as Berlin (9% of the total), Munich (6%), Hannover (3%) and Hamburg (3%). This geographical distribution around big urban areas is explained by the availability of educational institutions, employment opportunities and migrant networks (ICMPD, 2014_[12]).

In Italy, more than half of Georgian migrants are concentrated in three regions: Puglia (22%), Umbria (21%) and Toscana (13%). According to surveys among returnees, the presence of social networks in Italy largely influences the settlement patterns of Georgian migrants, leading to concentration in destinations that are not necessarily optimal in terms of job opportunities, income level and migration policies (Badurashvili, 2012_[13]).

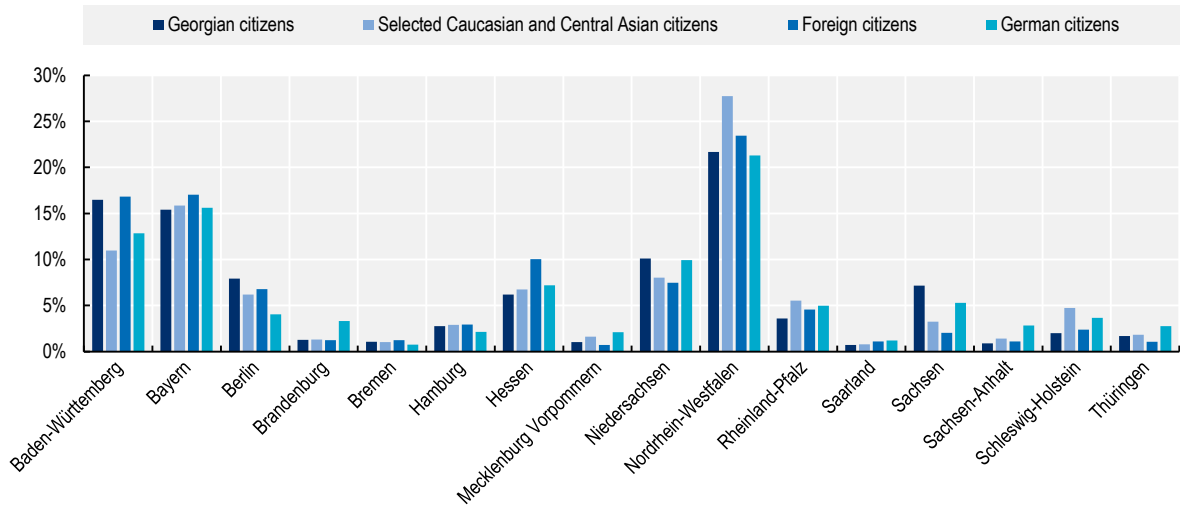
Figure 2.7. Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in the United States, 2017-19



Note: The category of Central and Caucasian countries includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and the category of USSR, not specified.

Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; pooled data from 2017, 2018, 2019.

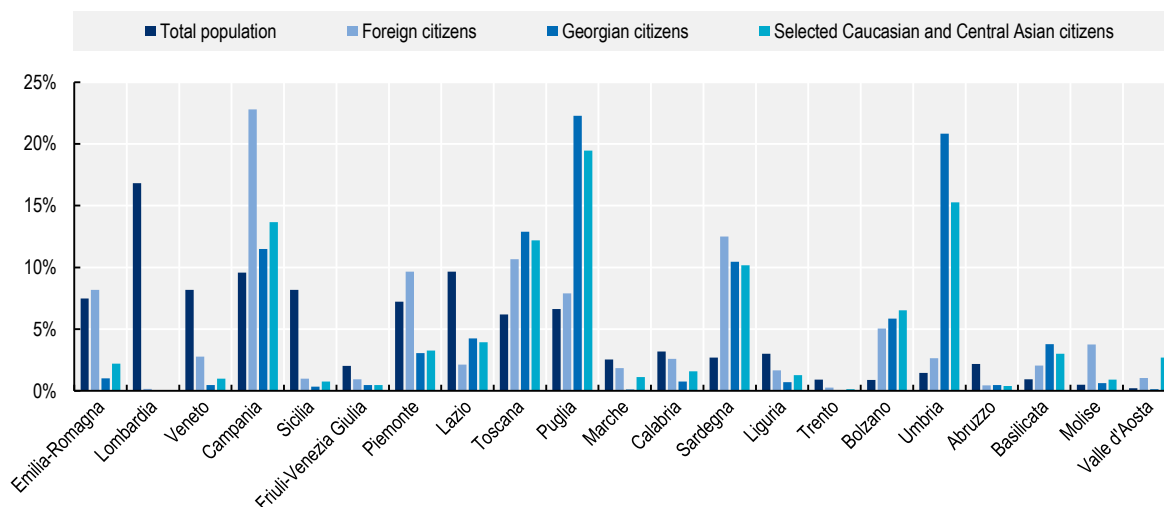
Figure 2.8. Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in Germany, by citizenship, 2020



Note: Data by country of birth are not available. Foreigners include individuals with a foreign citizenship, stateless persons and those with "uncertain" citizenship.

Source: Germany's Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), 2020.

Figure 2.9. Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in Italy, by citizenship, 2020



Note: The foreign population is determined by country of citizenship in Italian census data.
Source: Istat, 2020.

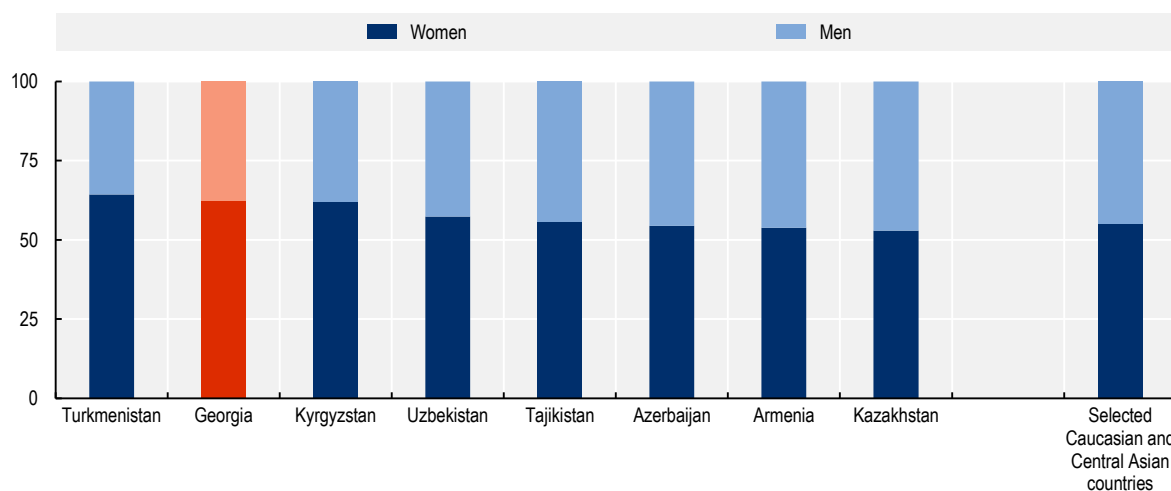
Demographic composition of the Georgian diaspora

In 2015/16, six in ten Georgian migrants living in an OECD country were women

In 2015/16, 62% of Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries were women. Georgia is the second most feminised diaspora among the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, and ranks above the group average of 55% (Figure 2.10). The share of women in the emigrant populations of these eight countries is also slightly higher than the share of women among the foreign-born population (51%). Moreover, the share of Georgian emigrant women increased by 15% since 2000, the third-largest percentage increase among the reference group.

A combination of push and pull factors account for the feminisation of the Georgian diaspora. Among the former, employment rates of women across the former Soviet space plummeted since the transition to market economies, despite Soviet-era policies that promoted the participation of women both in higher education and labour markets (Vanore, 2015^[14]). Among the pull factors, the growing demand for female labour in the domestic and elder care markets increased opportunities for women (Vanore, 2015^[14]; Truth Hoffman, 2012^[15]). Simultaneously, opportunities for labour migration in the Russian Federation, which used to be the traditional destination, became more limited for men. Indeed, 2010 data show that the Georgian diaspora residing in this country is more gender balanced (50% of the emigrant population is composed by women).

Figure 2.10. Share of women in the emigrant population from Georgia and selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries living in OECD countries, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes all persons.

Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

While women account for the majority of the emigrant population in the OECD area, its distribution varies significantly by country of destination (Figure 2.12). Among the top five destinations, Turkey and Italy exhibit the greatest gender gaps, with women accounting for 84% and 80% of the diaspora, respectively, followed by Greece and Israel (61 and 58%, respectively). In the United States and Germany, the gender ratio is more balanced (52 and 57% of the migrant population is composed by women, respectively).

Overall, destinations outside the Caucasian and Central Asian countries are more attractive to women migrants due to the widespread availability of domestic and service jobs (Truth Hoffman, 2014_[16]). Moreover, while informal job networks for migrants are highly gendered, they are particularly so in European destinations such as Italy and Greece (Ferry, 2013_[17]). In Turkey and Greece, Georgian women migrants are in high demand as domestic workers, caregivers, babysitters, janitors and waiters (ICMPD, 2014_[12]). Similarly, in Spain, qualitative data suggests that Georgian women are employed mostly in the domestic sector as cleaners, housekeepers, nannies and caregivers (ICMPD, 2019_[18]). Finally, the salience of Turkey as a destination for Georgian women migrants is also explained by the geographical proximity and low travel costs, which allow women migrants to return to Georgia on a regular basis and, in turn, permits them to maintain their family roles and control the use of remittances (Ferry, 2013_[17]).

Eight in ten Georgian migrants living in OECD countries are of working age

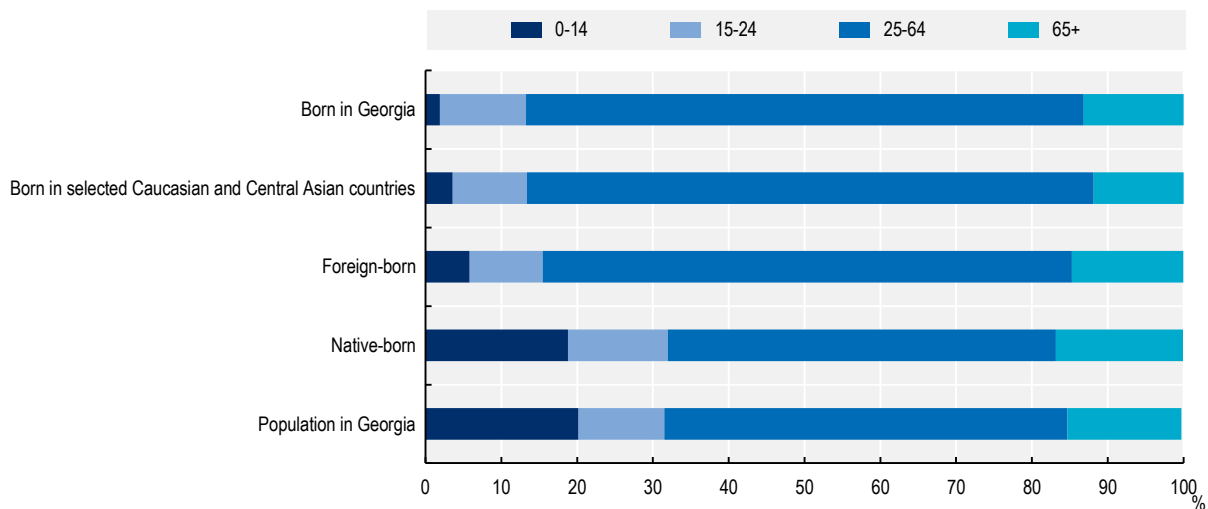
The Georgian diaspora living in OECD countries is primarily of working age: 83% of its emigrants were between 15 and 64 years old in 2015/16, similar to that of the Caucasian and Central Asian countries selected for comparison. Among these countries, 85% of emigrants belong to the same age group (Figure 2.11). The predominance of working age individuals in the Georgian diaspora is more significant than among the foreign-born and native populations of OECD countries (+4 and +19 percentage points, respectively). This positive self-selection among Georgian individuals in working age also means that the share of Georgian emigrants younger than 15 and above 64 is disproportionately low.

The population younger than 15 accounts for only 2% of the Georgian diaspora in OECD countries, a lower share than among both the foreign-born (6%) and native (19%) populations. Similarly, individuals older than 64 represent 13% of the Georgian diaspora, compared to 17 and 15% of the native and foreign-born populations, respectively.

Moreover, the age distribution of the Georgian diaspora highly contrasts with the population of Georgia and, again, points to a positive self-selection among those in conditions to work: only half (53%) of Georgians are of working age, compared to three-quarters (74%) of its emigrants. Similarly, 20% of the Georgian population is less than 15 years old, compared to 2% of the population that migrates to an OECD country.

The age distribution of the Georgian diaspora also varies significantly by country of destination (Figure 2.12). The Georgian diaspora in Israel is older than in the rest of the main destination countries: the share of people over 64 years of age is 22%, compared to 3% in Italy. Conversely, Italy and Turkey host the largest proportions of Georgian migrants of working age (85% of the total in both countries). Germany accounts for the largest proportion of children: the share of migrants under 15 years of age is 15%, reflecting the preponderance of permanent family emigration. Finally, the United States is the only country, among the main destinations, where Georgian men represent a larger proportion of the working age population (37% versus 31% of women).

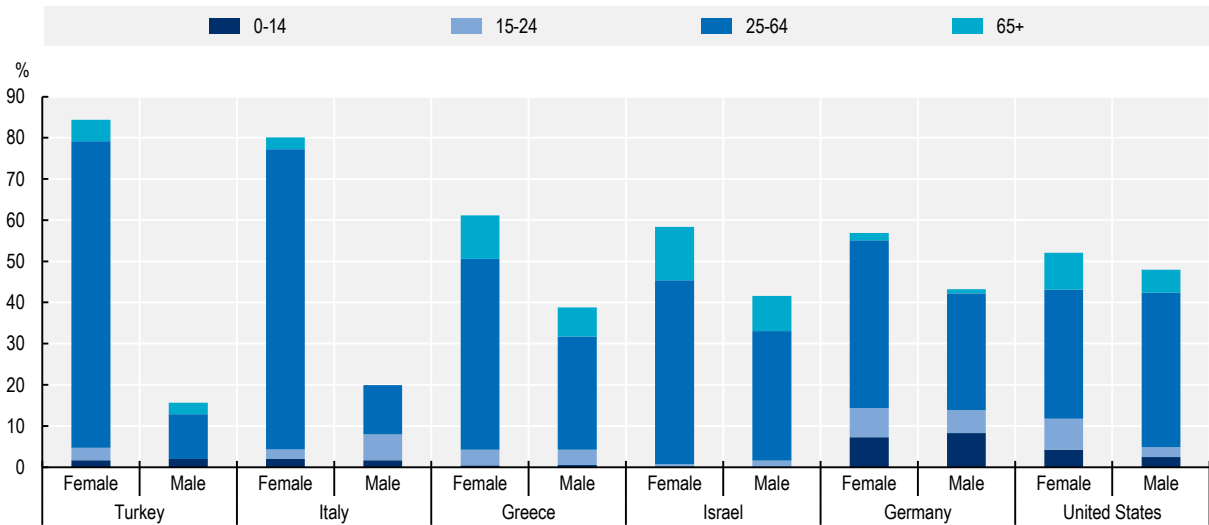
Figure 2.11. Distribution of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries by age groups, 2015/16



Note: Born in Georgia: individuals born in Georgia living in OECD countries in 2015/16. Born in selected Caucasian and Central Asian republics: individuals born in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan living in OECD countries in 2015/16. Foreign-born: all immigrants living in OECD countries in 2015/16. Native born: individuals born in an OECD country and living in their country of birth in 2015/16. Population in Georgia: individuals living in Georgia in 2015/16.

Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16; Population in Georgia: UNDESA World Population Prospects 2019 (2015 estimates).

Figure 2.12 Distribution of Georgian emigrants in selected OECD countries by age and sex, 2015/16

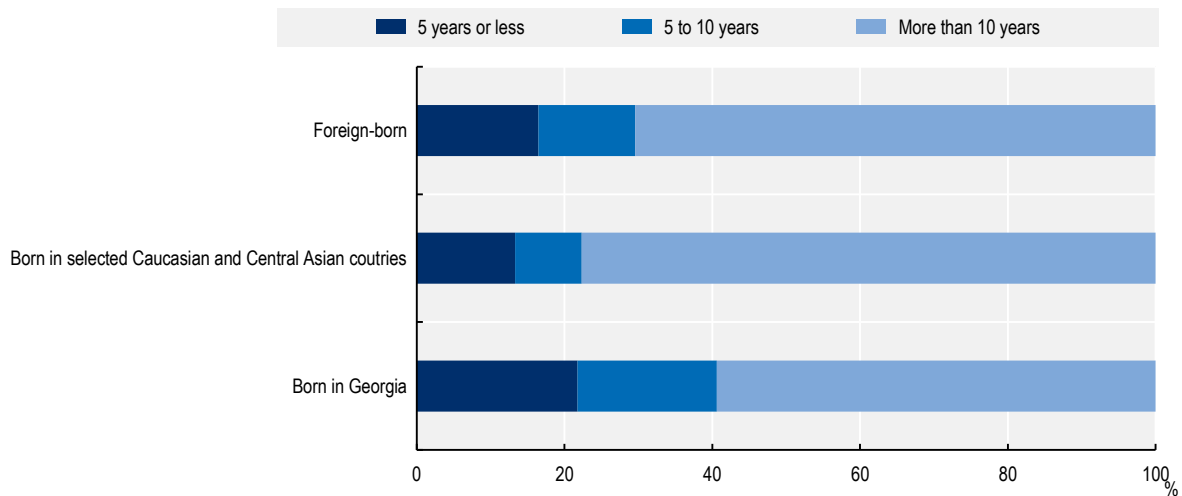


Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16; Germany: 2019 data from Germany’s Federal Statistical Office (Destatis).

One out of five Georgian emigrants recently arrived in their host country

Emigrants who arrived in their respective destination country within the past five years can be considered recent emigrants. According to 2015/16 data, 22% of Georgian emigrants in the OECD area are recent migrants, while approximately 60% are settled migrants (arrived in the country more than ten years ago) (Figure 2.13). Compared to other diasporas in OECD countries, Georgia’s is less mature on average – especially compared to the emigrant populations from other Caucasian and Central Asian countries, suggesting that temporary labour migration among individuals of working-age is far more widespread in Georgia (Barbone, Bonch-Osmolovskiy and Luecke, 2013_[19]).

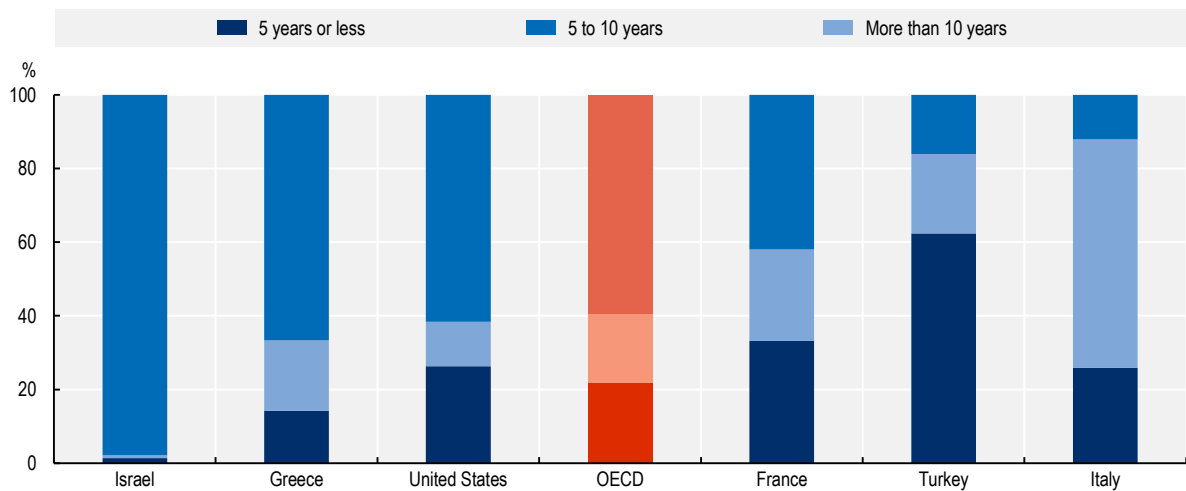
Figure 2.13. Distribution of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries by duration of stay, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes all persons.
 Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

There are also differences in the duration of stay among Georgian emigrants by country of destination (Figure 2.14). Among the main OECD destination countries – except for Germany where data is not available – Israel hosts the diaspora with the highest share of settled emigrants: 98% of the Georgian emigrant population arrived more than ten years ago, well above the OECD average of 69%. Greece and the United States are other destinations with a mature diaspora; more than half (67 and 62%, respectively) of Georgian migrants can be considered settled migrants. In contrast, a significant share of Georgian emigrants living in Turkey (83%) and Italy (88%) arrived to those destinations less than ten years ago. Of particular salience is the fact that more than 60% of Georgian emigrants in Turkey – presumably circular migrants working in the agricultural sector – are recent migrants (Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14. Distribution of Georgian emigrants by duration of stay in main OECD destination countries, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes all persons.

Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

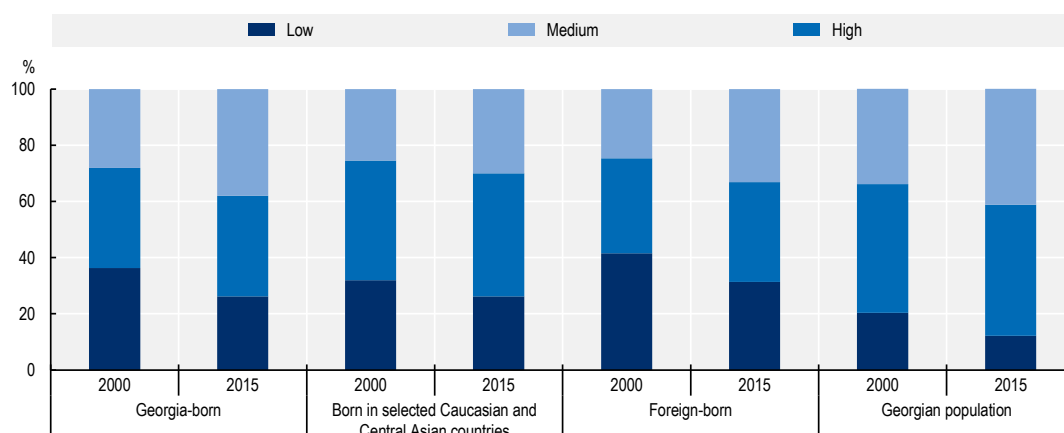
Distribution of education among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries

Georgian emigrants are not positively selected with regards to their educational attainment

In 2015/16, 72% of Georgian emigrants aged 15 years and over and living in OECD countries had at least an upper secondary education; 38% had a tertiary education (Figure 2.15). Since 2000/01, the educational level of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries has increased. The share of emigrants with a low level of education (up to lower secondary) fell from 36% to 26%, while the share of highly or tertiary-educated emigrants increased by 10 percentage points. In 2015/16, Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries were, on average, more educated than the foreign-born population and the emigrant populations from the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries.

In terms of educational attainment, however, Georgian emigrants are not positively selected among the Georgian population. In 2015/16, 41% of the Georgian population had a tertiary education, while only 12% were low-educated. (Labadze and Tukhashvili, 2013^[20]) attribute the latter phenomenon to misguided education policies which generated an over-supply of university graduates. Thus, the educational profile of Georgian emigrants does not point to a case of 'brain drain'.

Figure 2.15. Level of education among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries, 2000/01 and 2015/16

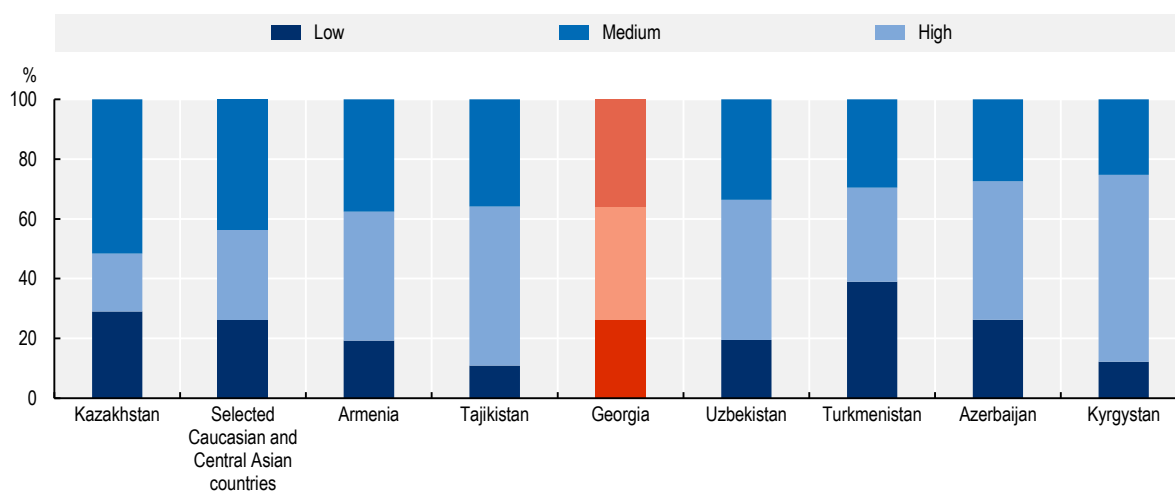


Note: Reference population includes persons aged 15 and older.

Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2000-15; Georgia Population and Housing Census 2002; Georgia General Population Census 2014.

Compared to the emigrant populations of the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, Georgian emigrants are relatively better educated (38% of Georgian emigrants had a tertiary education compared to 30% among the reference group). However, the regional average seems to be disproportionately weighted by low-educated Kazakhstani emigrants in OECD countries, which comprise about half of the emigrant populations of the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries (Figure 2.16). Emigrants from other countries in the reference group have a higher share of highly educated individuals than Georgia. This is particularly the case of countries with small populations – Kyrgyzstani, Tajikistani.

Figure 2.16. Level of education among migrants from Georgia and selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries in the OECD area, 2015/2016



Note: Reference population includes persons aged 15 and older.

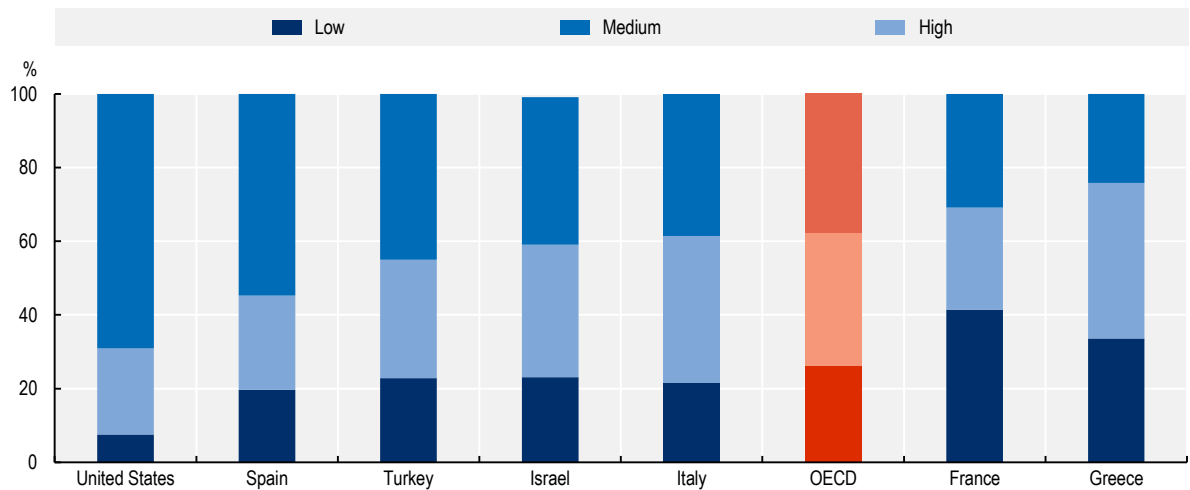
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2000/01 and 2015/16.

There is also substantial heterogeneity in the educational attainment of Georgian emigrants across destination countries (Figure 2.17). Greece, the main destination, hosts the Georgian emigrant population

with the lowest share of tertiary educated (24%), reflecting the fact that the majority of Georgian emigrants, mostly female and middle-aged, moved to Greece in the 1990s and early 2000s for economic reasons (ICMPD, 2019_[21]). Conversely, Georgian emigrants in the United States, a main destination for Georgian international students, have a high level of education: more than two-thirds hold a tertiary degree and less than 10% are low educated. Similarly, Georgian emigrants in Spain show high levels of educational attainment with more than half (55%) holding a tertiary degree. Such distribution is likely a reflection of the earlier flows of migration during the late 1990s, when Georgian emigrants arriving in Spain were mostly highly educated. Recent Georgian emigrants in Spain have, on average, a primary education and primarily come from rural areas in search of employment (ICMPD, 2019_[18]).

In the Russian Federation, according to the 2010 Census, more than 30% of Georgians aged 15 and over were highly educated, while 32% of Georgian emigrants were low educated, suggesting that low-educated Georgians are more likely to migrate to the Russian Federation than OECD countries.

Figure 2.17. Distribution of education levels among Georgian emigrants aged 15 and older in selected OECD countries, 2015/16



Note: Only countries with at least 10 000 Georgian emigrants aged 15+. OECD total includes all destination countries.

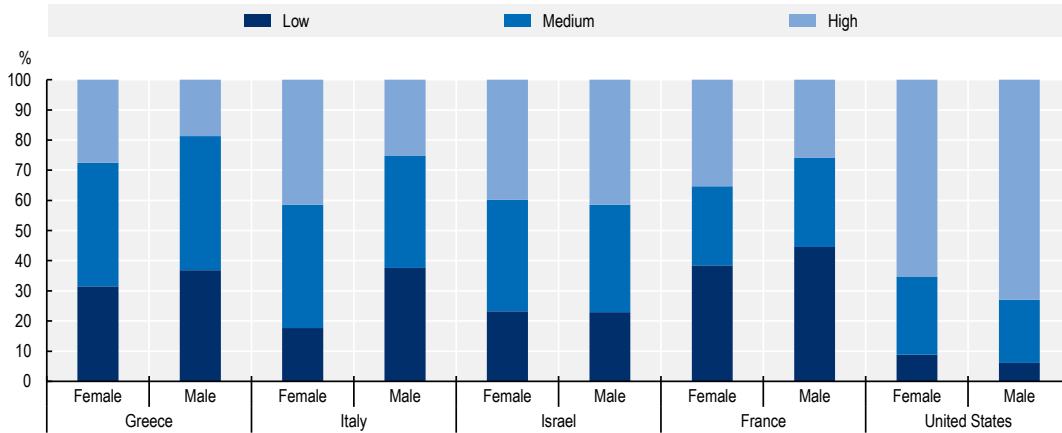
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

Among Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries, women have a higher educational attainment

Differences in the educational level of Georgian emigrants also vary by gender and destination country (Figure 2.18). Italy and Turkey exhibit the highest educational gaps in favor of women: almost 40 and 50% of Georgian female emigrants hold a tertiary degree, respectively. Conversely, in Israel and in the United States, the educational distribution among Georgian emigrants is relatively similar among men and women.

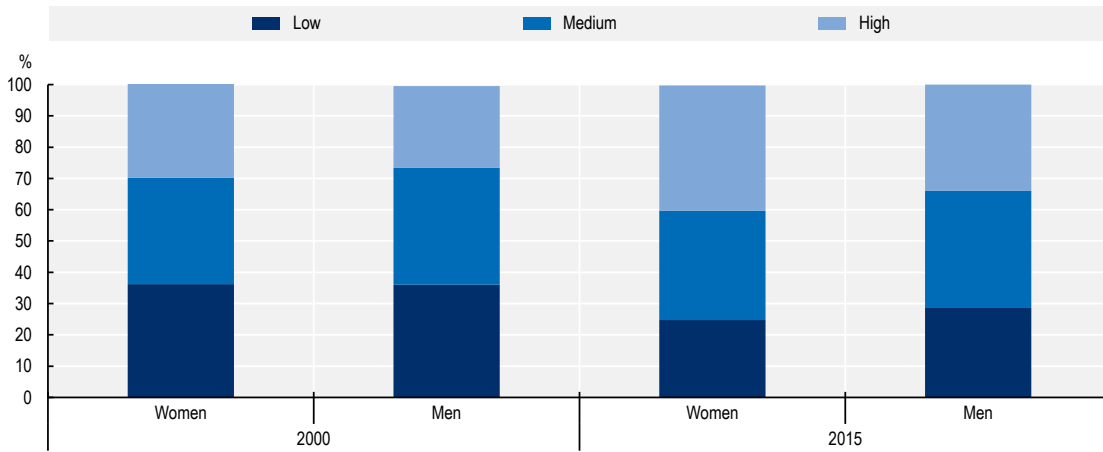
In the OECD area, the educational gap in favor of Georgian emigrant women has increased since 2000/01 (Figure 2.19). Whereas in 2000/01 the share of low-educated emigrants was virtually identical among men and women, in 2015/16 the share of low-educated men was 4 percentage points higher than among women. Similarly, the share of highly educated emigrants was 6 percentage points higher for women in 2015/16, whereas the gap between men and women was only 4% in 2000/01.

Figure 2.18. Level of education among Georgian emigrants by sex in main OECD destination countries, 2015/16



Note: Only countries with at least 10 000 Georgian emigrants. OECD total includes all destination countries.
 Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

Figure 2.19. Level of education among Georgian emigrants by sex in OECD countries, 2000/01 and 2015/16

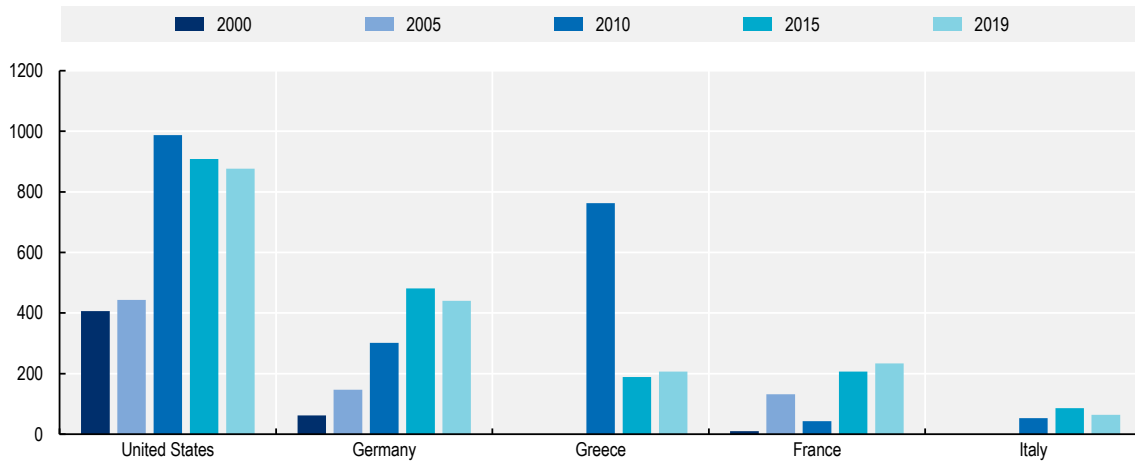


Note: Reference population includes persons aged 15 and older.
 Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

Acquisition of nationality among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries

There are some notable patterns in the acquisition of nationality among Georgian emigrants in the main OECD destination countries – the United States, Germany, Greece, France and Italy. The figures are not available for Israel and discontinued for Turkey. While the number of Georgian emigrants who acquired American or German nationality increased significantly between 2000 and 2019, it dropped drastically in Greece by 2019.

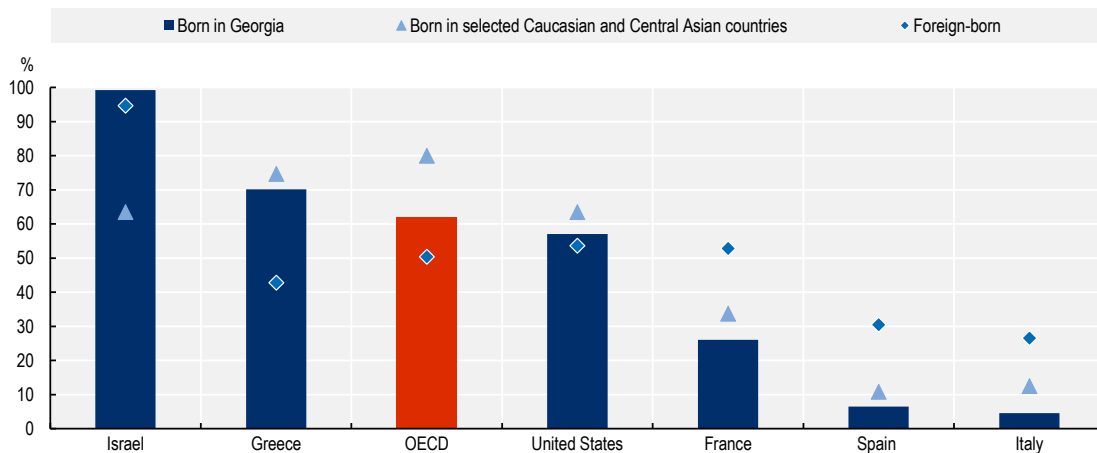
Figure 2.20. Number of Georgian emigrants who acquired the nationality of their host country, selected OECD countries, 2000-19



Note: Only countries with at least 20 000 Georgian emigrants. OECD total includes all destination countries.
Source: OECD International Migration Database, 2020.

Furthermore, the share of Georgian emigrants holding the host country citizenship in 2015/16 was high in three main destinations, Israel, Greece, and the United States: 99, 70 and 57%, respectively, held the nationality of these three host countries (Figure 2.21). Over 90% of naturalised Georgian emigrants in OECD countries were residing in these three countries.

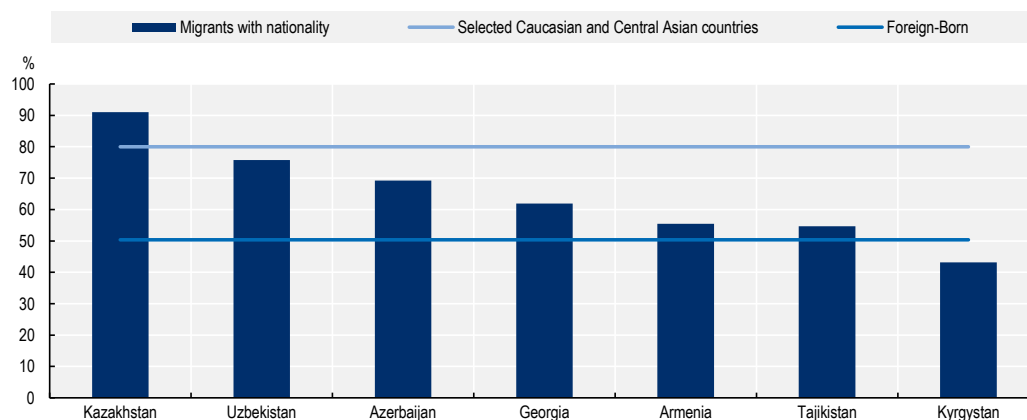
Figure 2.21. Share of Georgian emigrants holding the nationality of their destination country, 2015/2016



Note: Only countries with at least 10 000 Georgian emigrants. OECD total includes all destination countries.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

According to the most recent data available, 62% of Georgian emigrants held the citizenship of their OECD host country in 2015/16 (Figure 2.22), a rate 18 percentage points lower than for selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, and more than 10 percentage points higher than for the foreign-born population. Among the reference group, Georgia boasts the fourth highest citizenship acquisition rate after Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

Figure 2.22. Acquisition of nationality among emigrants from Georgia and selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries in the OECD area, 2015/16



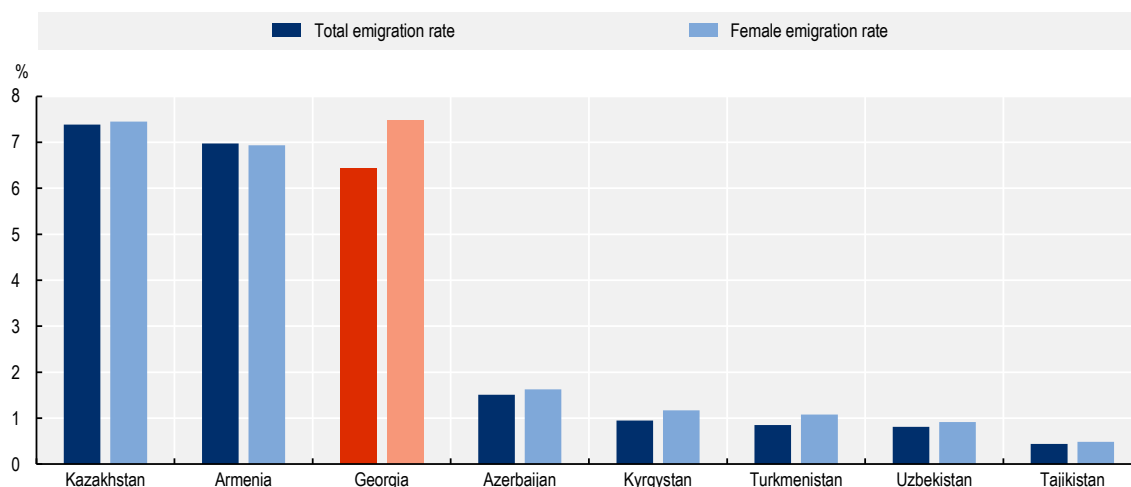
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

Emigration rates

Emigration rates are defined as the ratio between the number of emigrants from a specific country living in OECD countries and the total sum of the resident population of this country and emigrants living in OECD countries. While Georgia had the third highest emigration rate among the reference group of Central Asia at 6.4% in 2015/16, it held the highest female emigration rate at 7.5% in the same year (Figure 2.23).

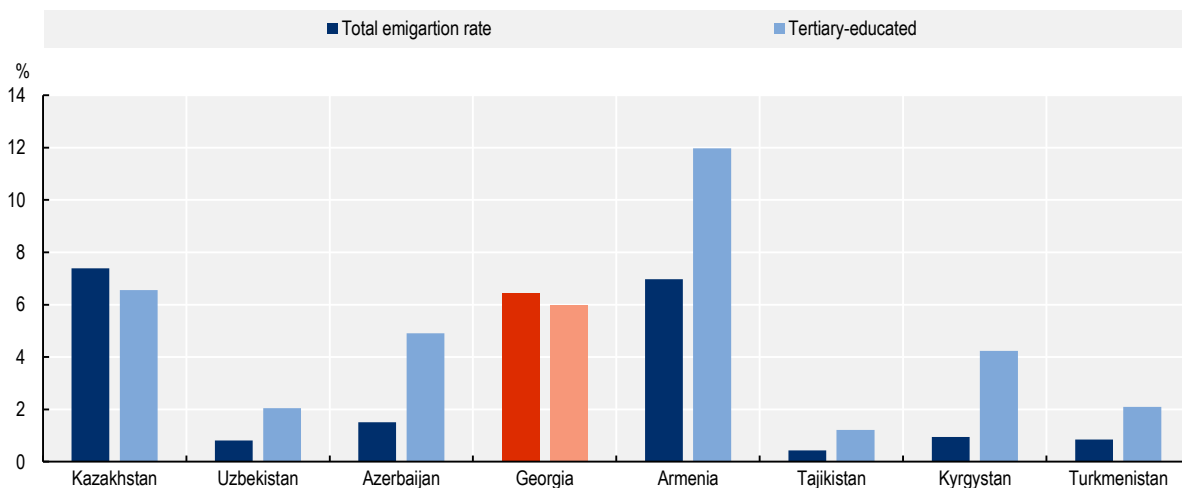
Furthermore, the emigration rate among the low-educated (12.9%) is much higher than among the medium and high-educated individuals (5 and 6%, respectively), suggesting that emigration from Georgia to some OECD countries is not primarily composed by high-skilled workers but responds to the demand for lower-skilled labour. This pattern is particularly noticeable in the cases of Greece and Turkey (ICMPD, 2014^[12]), (OECD/CRRC - Georgia, 2017^[11]) (Figure 2.24).

Figure 2.23. Emigration rates to OECD countries, 2015/16



Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16; Lutz et al. (2018), *Demographic and Human Capital Scenarios for the 21st Century*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/835878>.

Figure 2.24. Emigration rates to OECD countries by educational level, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes individuals aged 15 and older.

Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries 2015/16; Lutz et al. (2018), *Demographic and Human Capital Scenarios for the 21st Century*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/835878>.

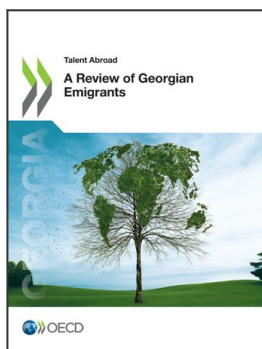
Conclusion

This chapter analysed the number of Georgian emigrants in main OECD destination countries, as well as the overall evolution of the emigrant population since 2000. While highly concentrated in the Russian Federation, approximately 300 000 Georgian emigrants reside in the OECD area, mainly in Greece, Israel, Turkey, and the United States. The analysis of the Georgian emigrant population in comparison with other reference groups – emigrants from Caucasian and Central Asian countries, the foreign-born and native-born populations – shows that the Georgian diaspora in the OECD area is feminised and mainly of working age, suggesting a growing demand for female labour in Europe and increased restrictions to emigrate to the Russian Federation. Georgian emigrants' negative self-selection in terms of educational attainment and their comparatively higher citizenship acquisition rate also characterise the Georgian diaspora in OECD countries.

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