

Foreword

Few events have changed the course of migration flows in the last half-century the way the dissolution of the Soviet Union did in 1991. The creation of new international borders and the opening towards the world generated distinct opportunities. Migration flows in Georgia were consequently altered and undertook a dramatic shift. Emigration as a percentage of population increased from around 13% in 1980 to 26% in 2000. Emigration also began benefiting the country as remittances followed, growing more than 500% between 2004 and 2014.

Georgia began taking action to leverage the benefits of migration for better development outcomes. It held diaspora fairs, for instance. In 2010, it created the State Commission on Migration Issues, charged with integrating migration more into the country's development strategy. The State Commission's goal is to base decisions on empirical knowledge. Few studies, however, provide sufficient knowledge to ensure that policy responses in the field of migration and development are coherent and well informed.

This report seeks to address that gap. In 2013, the OECD Development Centre and the European Commission began a project to provide empirical evidence on the interrelations between public policies, migration and development (IPPM) in ten countries around the world, including Georgia. The findings for Georgia in this report result from four years of fieldwork, empirical analysis and policy dialogue, conducted in collaboration between the Development Centre and the Caucasus Research Resource Center – Georgia (CRRG-Georgia), and with strong support from the State Commission on Migration Issues.

The report examines how the various dimensions of migration affect key policy sectors – the labour market, agriculture, education, and investment and financial services. It also analyses how policies in these sectors influence a range of migration outcomes, such as the decision to migrate, the use of remittances and the success of return migration. The empirical analysis is based on fieldwork in Georgia, which involved collecting quantitative data from 2 260 households and 71 communities across the country and conducting 27 qualitative stakeholder interviews.

The report on Georgia is published in parallel with nine other country reports and one comparative report that analyses cross-country findings and provides a coherent policy framework drawn from the fieldwork and analysis in all ten partner countries. The Georgian analysis is intended as a toolkit to better understand the role that public policies play in the migration and development nexus. It aims to foster policy dialogue

and provide guidance on how best to integrate migration into national development strategies. Building on discussions with key stakeholders and policy makers in Georgia, the OECD Development Centre and CRRC-Georgia look forward to continuing their co-operation to enhance migration's positive contribution to Georgia's sustainable development.

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