



Migration Service of
the Republic of Armenia



Guide for Reintegration of Returnees in Armenia



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Guide for Reintegration **of Returnees** **in Armenia**

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List of Abbreviations

AMD	Armenian Dram
ARCS	Armenian Red Cross Society
CBA	Central Bank of Armenia
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ERRIN	European Return and Reintegration Network
EU	European Union
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ID	Identity Document
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MRC	Migration Resource Centre
MTAI	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia
NGO	non-governmental organization
OFII	French Office for Immigration and Integration
PEAs	private employment agencies
RA	Republic of Armenia
RCR	Referral Centre for Reintegration
RUEA	Republic Union of Employers of Armenia
SEA	State Employment Agency
SME	small and medium enterprises
SMEDNC	small and medium entrepreneurship development centre
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
VoTs	victims of trafficking

Foreword

Migration in Armenia is very much related to the country's economic situation and absence of sufficiently paid jobs which drive people to look for income abroad. After some time abroad, upon return people can face problems of their integration back into the society.

Reintegration of returnees is a key for sustainability of return. Returnees deserve being treated as a group in need of special attention. Therefore, provision of adequate environment for successful reintegration to returning Armenian citizens is very important.

The policy on reintegration in Armenia is being formulated and there is a need to map the various State and non-State bodies involved in reintegration and their respective roles with respect to the larger picture of the whole State administration dealing with the returning nationals.

Moreover, it is important to have a full picture of the reintegration services available in the country for returnees.

The first edition of the Reintegration Referral Guide was initiated with the goal of steering and improving the assistance to the returnees toward the sustainability of return and published in 2013.

The Reintegration Referral Guide was updated in 2016 considering the legal and institutional changes in Armenia concerning the return and reintegration of migrants.

Current, third edition provides updated information about roles of all relevant State, non-State and intergovernmental bodies involved in return of Armenian citizens and their successful reintegration in Armenia; and given that reintegration has different aspects (legal, social, psychological, cultural, economic, health related, etc.) which require a complex approach, this guide will serve as a referral point for further assistance.

The Guide describes the role and functions of State and non-State bodies in reintegration of returnees; covers the various issues related to reintegration includes useful addresses and links.

The guide is intended to strengthen the in-country network of reintegration service providers. Sound capacity-building focused on cooperation and coordination of reintegration services will hone the skills of the relevant officials and improve the reintegration services ultimately leading to more sustainable return.



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Part 1

Reintegration system in **Armenia**

Chapter 1. **Return**

1.1 Citizenship

Return begins in the country of destination when migrant makes decision to go back home regardless of the roots of such decision – whether it is completely vulnerable or made under pressure of the personal situation or, finally, it is mandatory as administrative measure.

In any case, the right to return home is one of the fundamental ones. The article 13(2) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states: “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.” Following this principle, the Part 3 of the Article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia stipulates: “Every citizen and everyone having the right to lawfully reside in the Republic of Armenia shall have the right to enter the Republic of Armenia.”

The Armenian Citizenship is regulated by the Republic of Armenia law on “Citizenship of the Republic of Armenia” which was adopted in 6 November 1995. Based on the Law, the Republic of Armenia Citizenship is acquired:

- 1. through recognition of citizenship;**
- 2. by birth;**
- 3. through receiving citizenship;**
- 4. through the restoration of citizenship;**
- 5. through receiving citizenship as a group;**
- 6. on the bases set forth in the international treaties of the Republic of Armenia;**
- 7. in other cases, set forth in the Law.**

Relevant to migrants is the first subparagraph of Article 6 which sets out that “Residence outside of the territory of the Republic of Armenia does not automatically result in loss of Republic of Armenia citizenship” as well as the second part of Article 7 which states that “The Republic of Armenia, its diplomatic and consular mission and the officials are required to protect the rights of the Republic of Armenia citizens abroad.”

1.2 Documents

Return home after years or months staying in a host country requires preparatory measures. Usually the very initial stage presumes crossing the border and, accordingly, obtaining all the necessary documents and respecting all the required procedures.

Normally, the Armenian citizen returning from abroad needs only passport or equivalent to cross the border to Armenia. All citizens of the Republic of Armenia older than 16 may carry an Armenian passport, regardless of place of residence. Armenians abroad can apply for or extend a passport at embassies or consular office of the Republic of Armenia. RA citizens residing abroad who do not have a valid passport or have expired passports from the former Soviet Union, but need to return urgently to Armenia, can be issued a return certificate (which is a temporary one-way travel document) by the embassy or consular office in the host country.

In Armenia it is the Police that issue passports through the Police Passport Department and the Passport Offices across the country. A Population Register was introduced in 2006 and holds information such as name, residence status, address, date and place of birth, sex, issued passport and ID documents and corresponding dates, citizenship of Armenia or other countries, number of social service card. It also contains information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received in their consulates on Armenians residing abroad. The information can be accessed by the Police, by the Passport Offices in Armenia, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Security. Some consular offices abroad are also linked to the

Population Register. Since 2007 the Population Register also includes pictures.

In 2012 an electronic passport featuring biometric data as well as an electronic identification card was introduced in Armenia. The biometric passport functions as a travel document and the electric ID card is for use within Armenia. The biometric passports have a picture, the digital image of the holder's fingerprint and the electronic signature of the holder. Both biometric passports and ID cards are valid for ten years. The cost for a biometric passport is AMD 25,000. An ID card costs AMD 3,000.

1.3 Return and Registration

During the return process, returning migrants who hold a valid passport, are not registered at the border points upon their arrival in Armenia and the Republic of Armenia does not keep statistics about rates of return migration. Once an Armenian citizen has returned to Armenia, he/she only needs to inform the authorities and register under the new address if they registered their emigration in the first place. Births, deaths, marriages and divorce need to be registered in one of the urban or regional divisions of the Civil Registry Agency. The Civil Registry Agency also keeps the civil registry archive.

Returnees that had civil changes whilst being abroad, (e.g. the birth of children, etc.) and did not inform the respective Armenian embassy or consulate will need to update their records in the Civil Registry Agency after their return. In case they used an alias name whilst being abroad and the alias name was used in the marriage or birth certificates, the Civil Registry Agency has to be alerted about this so that the record can be adjusted. So far there is no mutual legal assistance agreement with the EU for cases where the civil registry records need correcting. The agreements that Armenia has on mutual legal assistance is the Minsk Convention for CIS member States and bilateral agreements with Greece, Lithuania and Bulgaria. For countries where Armenia has no agreement, the Civil Registry Office will contact the relevant host country through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and through the local Armenian Embassy in order to confirm the information with the authorities and adjust the records accordingly. Returnees that require an amendment to their civil registry records are required to approach their local Civil Registry Office and the inquiry will start from there.

1.4 Entry to Armenia, Customs

In January 2015 Armenia joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and in 2015 adopted the new Law on Customs Regulation. The Armenian Law on Customs Regulation, Article 249, paragraphs 11 and 12 stipulate that "Physical persons arriving in the Republic of Armenia for permanent residence, including displaced

persons and refugees may import property for their personal use free of customs fee (excluding customs duty). The same persons enjoy the privilege set forth in the paragraph 11 of this article once in 5 years.”

According to the 3rd point of the article 98 of RA Law on Customs Regulation, the goods transported by physical persons through RA State border for which they are exempted from customs fees and taxes, are exempted from customs duty.

Besides, according to the point 41 of the article 64 of the RA Tax Code, the importation by physical persons of personal effects specified by law is not subject to Value Added Tax (VAT). Moreover, the property of physical persons arriving in the RA for permanent residence shall be imported no later than within 18 months since the date of arrival in the Republic of Armenia.

With respect to the transported property subject to the above privilege, the RA Law on Customs Regulation, Article 5 paragraph 1 clarifies what is considered as a personal property: “Personally used property of a physical person arriving in the Republic of Armenia for permanent stay, one private car, and household items without manufacturer’s packaging and labelling and which were purchased by the physical person prior to the arrival in the Republic of Armenia. Meanwhile, the private car must be registered for a period of at least six months by the person in the country where he/she was permanently residing prior to the last deregistration for importing the car in the Republic of Armenia and before registration in the Republic of Armenia as a permanent resident.”

In order to prove the legacy and use the benefits of the law and favourable customs conditions the returnee must submit a written application to the customs authority within 180 days.

According to the RA Law on Customs Regulation, Article 249, points 18 and 19 for the physical persons **not registered in the Republic of Armenia** the date of arrival in the Republic of Armenia for permanent residence is considered the date of their registration in the Republic of Armenia for permanent residence within 180 days from their arrival. For the physical persons **already registered in the Republic of Armenia** the date of arrival in the Republic of Armenia for permanent residence is considered the date of submission of a written application to the customs within 180 days from their arrival.

1.5 Importing Currency into Armenia

Under Resolution of the Central Bank of Armenia of 29-07-2005 No.386-N, physical persons are entitled without written customs declaration (except cases provided by law) to import to the Republic of Armenia cash equivalent to up to USD 10,000. In case of exceeding the above limit, the importation of this amount is subject to written customs declaration.

Chapter 2.

Reintegration

2.1 Socioeconomic Reintegration and the Role of State Bodies

In order to make return sustainable, reintegration plays an important role. Effective reintegration of migrants back into their home communities is an essential element in their ability to lead productive lives upon return and to facilitate the sustainability of return. Effective reintegration consists of many elements, including social, political and economic, and requires the active engagement of the migrant. Productive reintegration into local economic and social activity enables the migrant to attain self-sufficiency and the country of origin to more effectively use the skills, expertise and resources gained in the host countries. Socioeconomic reintegration refers to the social and economic process of reinsertion into the local community. It is generally recognized that the most immediate and urgent need is for economic reintegration in order to secure an income that can provide for both the returnees and their families. Socioeconomic reintegration is ideally complemented by a psychological, political, cultural and legal reintegration support.

Assistance to return and reintegration is an important part of migration policy and management¹ system in Armenia. The main issues of migration flows regulation, the main challenges of migration policy and the ways of their solution are defined in the “Concept of State Policy of Migration Regulation in the Republic of Armenia.” The third issue mentioned in the Concept Paper concerns the reintegration of returning migrants, which forms part of the migration management system and concerns the return of Armenian citizens, as well as their reintegration. The draft “State Program on Primary Assistance for Reintegration of Returning Citizens of the Republic of Armenia” has been elaborated, which will be approved by the Government of Armenia in the near future.

1. According to IOM Glossary 2019. Term **migration management** refers to planned approaches to the implementation and operationalization of policy, legislative and administrative frameworks, developed by the institutions in charge of migration.
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf.

The State authority for coordination of migration issues and policymaking is the Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia (MTAI).

If there has never been a public administration body in Armenia previously authorized by the State to organize the reintegration of returning migrants, an institutional step has been taken in this direction: since 2019 the Department of Return and Reintegration has been established in the Migration Service, which is entrusted with the implementation of the “State Primary Assistance Program for Reintegration of Returned (including Compulsory Returned) Citizens to the Republic of Armenia,” approved by the Decision N 336-L of 19 March, 2020 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The programme provides primary assistance to RA citizens returning to Armenia to ensure their full and sustainable reintegration in the future. It consists of two components: (1) providing information and referral based on the needs assessment both voluntary and compulsory RA returnees; (2) a housing component, which relates only to forcibly returned RA citizens who will be provided with a 6 month subsidy of AMD 60,000 for renting an apartment.

The target groups of the project are the returnees within the readmission agreements and the RA citizens deported or expelled from foreign countries.

The project is based on the vulnerability of people rather than on their migration experience, so the priority will be given to the following vulnerable groups:

- a. large families (with 4 or more children);**
- b. the elderly (over 65);**
- c. persons with disabilities;**
- d. persons in need of urgent medical support;**
- e. unaccompanied children who have returned and left without parental care in Armenia.**

The programme also sets time standards - duration of residence abroad for at least 1 year and maximum application period of 3 months after return.

Since February 2018, the Migration Service organized a “One Window” Reintegration Service, which ensures continuity of the former Referral Centre for Reintegration (RCR)² operating within the Migration Service.

The service is intended for citizens returning to Armenia from EU member States and other European countries, regardless of the nature of the return, who need advice and

2. RCR was founded in March 2014 by the Targeted Initiative for Armenia project funded by the European Union and implemented by the French Office for Immigration and Integration, signed within the framework of EU-Armenia Mobility Partnership. The Centre served as a “one-stop shop” for returning RA citizens, where they learned about reintegration opportunities and were referred to services tailored to their needs.

assistance in settling in Armenia after return. The Service Adviser provides the returnee with necessary information on reintegration programmes, the organizations implementing them, the types of support provided, as well as the State authorities involved in return and reintegration. Where appropriate, the returnee is directed to other Government agencies and programmes, mainly implemented by international and local organizations or NGOs. To receive reintegration assistance, returnees must meet the eligibility criteria for the programmes they are directed to.

Since November 2018, a new European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) Armenia project of the European Network for Return and Reintegration, implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in Armenia, is operating in the Migration Service to support the returnees. The project is currently providing assistance to RA citizens who have voluntarily or forcibly returned from Germany. The provided assistance includes counselling, primary health care (referral), housing assistance (renting), professional development and training, and small business start-up support.

The Migration Service has set up an online information system (www.tundarc.am) for citizens (as well as dual citizens) with the intention of returning to the Republic of Armenia from foreign countries, also for those who want to go abroad. It provides useful information on return and reintegration processes and programmes in the field. The system also enables visitors to send online messages about return and reintegration issues.

Aiming at the effective implementation of return and reintegration processes in Armenia, a Forum on Return and Reintegration) has been established to provide discussions on issues and programmes in the field, exchange of experiences, and other functions. The forum is a non-formal cooperation platform that operates on a voluntary basis and is attended by representatives of Government agencies, International Organizations, and NGOs. The forum carries out its activities through regular working meetings, which usually take place once in a quarter. Since 2018 the Forum activities are coordinated by the Migration Service.

2.2 Migration Resource Centres

There is no formal referral system set up in the RA so far. Potential and returned migrants can find assistance in one of 51 offices of the State Employment Agency of the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues by getting job-related advice, information on vacancies and employment programmes, jobseeker mediation, support for vocational guidance and retraining, support for entrepreneurship initiatives and inclusion in State employment programmes.

Some offices of the State Employment Agency have **Migration Resource Centres** (MRC). MRCs have two target groups, potential labour migrants and migrants that returned to Armenia. The MRCs provide potential labour migrants with information on visa procedures, legislation and employment opportunities in host countries as well

as inform, orient, and train labour migrants in preparation for employment and stay abroad, and reintegration upon their return home.

Being in the structure of the employment centres, the MRC-s also provide information about vacancies in Armenia and in those foreign States, with whom the Armenian Ministry of Labour has working arrangements or bilateral / multilateral labour agreements. MRC has two target groups, potential labour migrants and migrants that returned to Armenia. The MRCs provide potential labour migrants with information on visa procedures, legislation and employment opportunities in host countries. They also inform returnees about existing reintegration programmes, refer to State employment programmes, and undertake skill assessments for returnees and invites employers and potential job candidates to so called job clubs.³

The system of Integrated Social Services was introduced by the Armenian Government in 2013 and its establishment is still in process. This system sees all social services united “under one roof.” Currently 19 Integrated Social Services Regional Centres (ISSRC)⁴ are functioning in the Republic of Armenia, 6 ISSRCS are functioning in Yerevan. The objectives of the Integrated Social Services system are on hand to increase efficiency and reduce paperwork within the authorities but at the same time they are there to provide an individual approach to beneficiaries, especially families and to provide one place where a recipient can receive all available information relating to services ranging from social security, social services, employment service and medical boards. The Integrated Social Services work with caseworkers who carry out an assessment of families and develop individual social support and protection plans tailored to the needs of the particular family.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs also created and runs the official website of the integrated social services information system (<http://esocial.am>). The system of integrated social services is a complex of measures and implemented within the social assistance functions of State and non-governmental authorities, organizations and individuals. The system of integrated social services prevents a difficult life experience, removes the causes and consequences by providing integrated social services, which are being provided by the operating on the territory of the Republic of Armenia regional centres of integrated social services. On the site one can find information about the activities, news, materials of the Integrated Social Services Regional Centres, and the whole information about everything that is related to the Integrated Social Services and contact the on-line advisors in case of need.

3. Job clubs are events where employers present their companies to a group of jobseekers.

4. Integrated Social Services Centres; www.epension.am/am/one_window/one_window_integrated.

2.3 Reintegration Programmes

Returnee's issues do not fall under one specific Ministry as returnees do not constitute a separate group and will be defined as employed, unemployed, pensioner, etc., i.e. there is a number of Ministries involved in the reintegration process. Returnees have the same rights and responsibilities as all citizens of the Republic of Armenia.

According to the RA Law on Employment the returned migrants are considered to be uncompetitive in the labour market and can benefit from the annual State employment programmes that support the reintegration of returnees through employment.

In Armenia there the following organizations are implementing specific reintegration programmes to facilitate the reintegration of returnees in areas like, for example, employment, vocational training and social welfare:

- **“Armenian Caritas” Benevolent NGO;**
- **French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII);**
- **The Armenian Fund for Sustainable Development (AF4SD);**
- **Mission Armenia NGO;**
- **International Organization for Migration (IOM).**

Most of the reintegration programmes target returnees from a defined spectrum of countries and offer a variety of assistance with differing amounts of assistance. Depending on the donor, each is finite. In most cases the assistance starts pre-departure in the host country of the returnee and continues with reintegration assistance upon arrival in Armenia. The objective of these programmes is to aid in the initial reintegration phase and to therefore enhance a sustainable reintegration in Armenia.

2.3.1 “Armenian Caritas” Benevolent NGO

“Armenian Caritas,” which is a registered benevolent NGO was established in 1995 and has four strategic directions such as **social protection, public health care and community development; migration, integration and prevention of trafficking; advocacy, lobbying and network collaboration; and emergency preparedness and response.** “Armenian Caritas” implements projects assisting vulnerable groups such as the elderly, orphans, disadvantaged children, physically impaired, disadvantaged pregnant woman and persons with disabilities in Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik, Ararat regions and Yerevan. “Armenian Caritas” provides social, medical, small-scale/start-up business development grants and noninterest loans, community social development grants. Assistance also can include resolving temporary housing problems (renting a house or buying a house with returnee contribution), providing medical, social, psychological assistance, and providing opportunities for vocational and professional re-orientation training. It provides information and consultancy in legal, social, economic, health and employment issues.

“Armenian Caritas” implements the following projects related returnee’s reintegration from EU countries: “Sustainable Reintegration after Voluntary Return” Belgium, Returnees from Germany, Returnees from Austria, Returnees from Denmark, Returnees from the Netherlands. Within all above-mentioned projects all returnees are vulnerable returnees who are assisted to return by IOM and then “Armenian Caritas” provides reintegration assistance upon arrival in Armenia. Before their departure the beneficiaries have to design a business plan so that upon arrival in Armenia the returnee has a concrete project idea in order to implement it in Armenia.

“Migration and Development” project is funded by the Government of Liechtenstein and Caritas Austria since 2010. The main target groups of the project are returnees from EU countries, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The beneficiaries are persons who have lived in one of these countries at least for 6 months, were asylum seekers or labour migrants there, have returned to Armenia and applied to “Armenian Caritas” for reintegration assistance not later than six months period after their return. They could be both voluntary and deported.

All mentioned projects include the following types of assistance:

- **Individual counselling of the returnees (legal, social and business);**
- **Assistance with housing problems;**
- **Assistance for the families’ economic stability;**
- **Provision of medical, social, psychological and legal assistance;**
- **Tailor-made vocational trainings such as nail art, make-up and hairdressing, etc.;**
- **Start-ups’ advice and business loans;**
- **Assistance with employment search.**

Starting from 2013 the “Migration and Development” project aims to help returnees to stabilize their social status through the establishment of their own businesses in the home country. The programme provides beneficiaries of the project with no interest rate loans. Nationals of the RA who have lived abroad for at least one year and returned to Armenia after January 2018 are eligible to apply for the loan. The loan amount is up to EUR 2,500, or its AMD equivalent. The loan is provided for one to two-year period depending on the business type, and the repayment process begins three months after receiving the funds. “Armenian Caritas” and the beneficiary will sign a bilateral contract, which includes the conditions of the loan and the repayment schedule. So far, businesses have been carried out in the following areas: agriculture, dried fruit production, greenhouse farming, beekeeping, transport (taxi service), health and beauty salon services (hairdressing), shoe repair, tailoring and retail.

Vocational and reorientation trainings are provided to returnees in the following areas: floristic design, computer courses, the English language courses, stand-up meal and party designing, hairdressing, accounting, cooking, manicure, make-up, table design, etc.

Health care includes reimbursement for various medical services and medicines for returnees and their family members in case of availability of checks, or transfer of funds to the account of the returnee's preferred medical institution based on provision of preliminary diagnostic documents and bills.

2.3.2 French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII)

The French Office of Immigration and Integration, which is under the authority of the French Ministry of Internal Affairs, carries out four main missions:

- **Regular migration process management in conjunction with and for prefectures, diplomatic and consular posts;**
- **Acceptance and integration of migrants authorized to reside in France permanently and sign an Acceptance and Integration Agreement with the State for this purpose;**
- **First reception of asylum seekers;**
- **Assistance to foreigners returning to their homeland.**

OFII is a government-entrusted body responsible for migration flows. It operates over fifty departments, delegations, and reception platforms, both in France and in 10 foreign countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Romania, Mali, Senegal, Canada, Cameroon, Georgia and Armenia).

Internationally, in the field of migration, OFII is particularly involved as an expert or project leader in bilateral cooperation and European projects, in particular in the framework of Mobility Partnership (MP).

Established in 2014, the OFII office in Yerevan carries out two main missions: bilateral activities for assisting migrants' economic and social reintegration and managing the Targeted Initiative Armenia (TIA) European Program.

In addition to the technical assistance and support (provided in France) as part of the voluntary return, the OFII continues to assist Armenian migrants returning to their homeland.

Reintegration support includes social support (acquisition of essential items, health-care costs, educational expenses for children), as well as organization of training courses and employment issues, and eventually material, technical and financial assistance may be provided to start and run a small business.

Within the framework of these three types of activities, the OFII works closely with the French Embassy in Armenia, local authorities, and the following NGOs: “People in Need,” “Empowering and Developing Business Initiatives,” and “Qualified Smart Essentials.”

The Federal Office of Migration and Refugees of Germany (BAMF) has been involved since 1 September 2019 in the French reintegration project known as “CAROB” that is

run in OFII. Working together with OFII in Armenia enables the Federal Office to make existing support and advice structures available to returnees.

CAROB (Cooperation for Assistance in Reintegration OFII-BAMF) is a Franco-German reintegration project supporting Armenian nationals once they have voluntarily returned from Germany or France when it comes to their reintegration in Armenia.

The project's main goals are:

- **To provide individual support after voluntary return to Armenia via qualified, comprehensive advice and guidance on the spot;**
- **To develop and implement innovative reintegration concepts;**
- **To obtain and exchange knowledge regarding the further development of the project, as well as on cooperation with European partner countries;**
- **To expand cooperation with France on return and reintegration.**

CAROB Armenia offers the following benefits in kind:

- **support in the social field (including help with finding a place to live, placing children in schools), and in medical issues;**
- **support in finding work and in vocational training;**
- **support in starting up a business.**

2.3.3 The Armenian Fund for Sustainable Development (AF4SD)

The Armenian Fund for Sustainable Development (AF4SD) – (former French Armenian Development Foundation) was founded in 2004 by Association Armenienne d'Aide Sociale with the purpose to contribute to the sustainable development of Armenia.

Main objectives of the AF4SD are:

- **to contribute to the realization of social, cultural, educational and scientific initiatives;**
- **to elaborate, support and implement projects aimed at the contribution of the sustainable development in Armenia;**
- **to support and contribute to the social development and economical rise in Armenia;**
- **to provide and foster cooperation in various fields with relevant stakeholders.**

Since its creation the AF4SD has implemented more than 300 development projects with international, European and local partners: European Union, World Bank, UN agencies, OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration), BAMF (German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), Veolia Foundation, Fondation des amis de l'atelier, British Embassy, Czech Embassy, Polish Embassy, German Embassy and others.

Since 2005 the Armenian Fund for Sustainable Development (AF4SD) together with the French Office of Migration and Integration (OFII) and Association Arménienne D'Aide Sociale (AAAS) has been implementing the project "Return to Sources" with the aim to support to people who are in irregular situation and want to return to Armenia voluntarily.

Within the framework of this project a Reception and Orientation Centre opened in Paris the mission of which is to provide detailed information to all those who are interested on the economic and socio-political situation of Armenia and organize their return.

The Centre offers an initial elaboration of business which is already developed in Armenia by the contribution of the Armenian Fund for Sustainable Development.

The AF4SD ensures social assistance, works out the feasibility study of the project and finally supports the implementation of the business.

Currently the beneficiaries of the voluntary return project have the opportunity to benefit from three different projects proposed by the OFII: reintegration through social assistance, reintegration through work and reintegration through an enterprise creation.

2.3.4 Mission Armenia NGO

Mission Armenia in the frames of UNHCR-funded project provides social, medical, legal and shelter services to refugees and asylum seekers in Armenia.

The services include:

- Programmes aimed at integration, including documentation support, assistance ensuring access to State social services, etc;
- Care of bedridden persons and/or of people with limited mobility;
- Doctor consultation, provision of medication, arrangement of treatment and examination, when necessary;
- Cash-based assistance, provision of packages, including hygienic, bedding items, clothing, food, etc;
- Shelter, place of residence related support, including provision of partial rental subsidy and social housing;
- Legal counselling, court representation;
- Various awareness-raising meetings on the rights and privileges of refugees and asylum seekers.

2.3.5 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. IOM operates in Armenia since 1993 and has played an important part in reforms of migration management in Armenia through extensive capacity-building policy advice and shaping, research, technical assistance, public awareness as well as direct assistance to various categories of migrants. IOM Armenia mainly works in the following fields: technical cooperation on migration; migration policy and research; migrants rights and international migration law; border and identity management; labour migration; migration health; emergency and post-emergency operations; migration data; assistance to migrants and assistance to vulnerable migrants such as victims of trafficking.

The provision of reintegration assistance to migrants in their countries of origin is an essential element to ensure sustainability of returns. IOM and partners in countries of origin provide migrants with socioeconomic support to promote their self-sufficiency and contributions to their local communities. The sustainability of returns may, however, ultimately only be ensured in tandem with socioeconomic development.

Typically, potential returnees are referred to IOM by authorities of the host country, such as the immigration service, local asylum centres, or NGOs. The assistance provided to returnees varies broadly and ranges from return assistance which includes pre-departure information and counselling and the organization of voluntary return, to schemes that include help with long-term reintegration and economic viability of the migrants once they are back in their countries of origin, and upon return Rehabilitation Assistance (assistance to returnees for medical treatment and other rehabilitation activities) and reintegration assistance (usually through grants allocated by the Governments of the countries from where the migrant returns to start up their businesses or pursue studies, as per individual needs).

IOM's support programmes aim at providing orderly, humane and cost-effective return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

2.4 Reintegration Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants

Vulnerable⁵ migrants such as elderly migrants, victims of trafficking (VoTs),⁶ migrants with health needs and unaccompanied minors (UAMs) fall under the responsibility of the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and the RA Ministry of Health as well as the RA National Security Service and RA Police.

The assistance to victims of trafficking is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Identification of and Support to Persons Subjected to Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation (2014). The Law regulates the relations regarding the processes of referral of persons suspected to have been subjected to trafficking in human beings and/or exploitation from the moment of their detection, as well as the processes of gathering and exchange of information with regards to those persons, their identification as victims or victims of special category, providing them with support and protection, and the provision of a reflection period. The purpose of the Law is detection, proper identification, provision of support, protection and effective social reintegration of persons subjected to trafficking in human beings and/or exploitation by developing strategic cooperation procedures between the Government and local self-governing bodies, as well as with the NGOs, International Organizations and civil society.

The institutions assisting returning VoTs and UAMs are IOM, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Migration Service, the Ministry of Health, OFII, and UMCOR. These include tailored assistance such as legal, material or medical help, study or vocational training, temporary accommodation, and/or business start-up depending on the needs of the beneficiary. “Armenian Caritas” runs a Migration and Trafficking Resource Centre. Shelter Assistance to Victims of Trafficking is provided by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) Armenia.

Unaccompanied minors, also known as Separated children, are defined as persons under the age of majority in a country other than that of their nationality, who are not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other adult who by law or custom is responsible for them. Unaccompanied children present special challenges for border control officials, because detention and other practices applied to undocumented adult non-nationals may not be appropriate for children. At the international level, voluntary return assistance for unaccompanied minors is provided in line with the principle of “the Best Interests of the Child” and the UNHCR Guidelines for repatriation of minors. At the EU level there are two important documents: The European Council Resolution

5. Depending on the context, any group or sector of society (such as children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities, migrants, particularly those who are in an irregular situation, or persons of diverse sex, sexual orientation and gender identity (SSOGI)) that is at higher risk of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, social disadvantage, or economic hardship than other groups within the State. IOM Glossary on Migration 2019: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf.

6. Any natural person subject to trafficking in human beings, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted. IOM Glossary on Migration 2019: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf.

on unaccompanied minors⁷ who are nationals of third countries; and the European Council Conclusions on unaccompanied minors.⁸

The IOM assesses the return request for UAMs in terms of family identification; pre-departure medical screening; psychosocial needs; the socioeconomic situation in the country of origin; legal considerations; reintegration schemes available in the countries of origin; assistance in obtaining a valid travel documents.

For vulnerable migrants IOM also organizes health assessment; health procedures on movement assistance (including medical escort), uninterrupted health care after return. Medical confidentiality is assured throughout the process.

When assisting elderly migrants, health aspects are very important. In many cases the elderly require being placed at care centres. The MLSA oversees State-owned elderly houses.

Decision No. 318-N of the Government of Armenia on “State-Guaranteed Free Medical Care and Service” specifies the individuals who belong to one of the socially disadvantaged groups and who are entitled to receive State-guaranteed free-of-charge medical care and services. The full list of socially disadvantaged and separate/special/ groups entitled to receive State-guaranteed free-of-charge medical care and services are given in *Annex 1*.

In order to receive State-guaranteed free in-patient health-care care services, patients should present a referral from the local polyclinics, their passport, with the exception of “those urgent cases not requiring all day long surveillance when the patient does not possess identity documents,” whereas socially disadvantaged individuals and those included in separate (special) groups should submit the identity document and corresponding documents certifying the social status (Ministry of Health of Armenia, 2012b).

According to the RA Law on Employment, since 2015, all the State Agencies with 100 and more employees will be obliged to hire at least 3 (at least 3% of employees) disabled persons and/or persons that have not reached the retirement age. Since 2017 the same requirement will be obligatory for the private sector but in the size of 1 per cent.

Organizations working with returnees and vulnerable groups of people in Armenia:

- **Mission Armenia;**
- **Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS);**
- **“Armenian Caritas” Benevolent NGO;**
- **The Armenian Fund for Sustainable Development (AF4SD);**
- **French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII);**
- **International Organization for Migration (IOM).**

7. The Council Resolution of 26 June 1997 on unaccompanied minors who are nationals of third countries is available at

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:1997:221:0023:0027:EN:PDF>.

8. The Council conclusions on unaccompanied minors of 3 June 2010 are available at

<http://avrr.belgium.iom.int/images/stories/uam%20eu.pdf>.

Chapter 3.

Sectorial Reintegration

3.1 Employment

3.1.1 State Institutions

The **State Employment Agency** is a separate division of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The task of the agency is the execution of the State police on employment regulation.

The agency carries out its activity within the framework of the RA law “On Employment” the Statute of the Agency and sub-legislative acts proceeding from the law.

The main goal of the agency is the implementation of State programmes on employment regulation directed at the creation of conditions for providing full and effective employment of the population.

The main goals of the Agency are implementation of the State programmes aimed at securing sustainable employment for jobseekers and securing labour demand satisfaction and ensuring effective utilization of the available labour force.

According to the Law “On Employment” re-migrants are considered as persons uncompetitive in the labour market and can benefit from eleven (11) programmes of the SEA. According to the paragraph 7 of the point 2 of the Annex 14 approved by the RA Government Decree of 17 April 2014, the risk of a person to become a labour migrant is one of the conditions to recognize the person as uncompetitive in the labour market. A person is considered uncompetitive if he or she:

- Has returned from abroad and hasn't managed to become employed within one (1) year;
- Has gone abroad more than one time during the past three (3) years and each time has stayed abroad more than one (1) month;
- Has lived abroad more than 1 year for the past three (3) years.

The programmes can be accessed from the official website of the State Employment Agency at: www.employment.am.

3.1.2 Private Employment Agencies

There are various private employment agencies in Armenia. The agencies collaborate with the Union of manufacturers and businessmen, Republican Union of Employers of Armenia and the Union of small and medium enterprises as well as with international organizations working in the territory of RA. The **Republican Union of Employers of Armenia** (RUEA) is assuring improvement of business environment and advocacy of business community. RUEA unites six territorial and five sectorial unions and has about 10,000 members, including SMEs and sole entrepreneurs. One of its sectorial unions is the union of the private employment agencies in Armenia. The **Sectorial Union of Private Employment Agencies of the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia** was established in 2010. The mission of PEA union is to be a powerful and influential structure assuring support and advocacy of the interests of private employment agencies in Armenia as well as create the convenient legal environment for their successful work. Activity of PEAs allows the member private employment agencies to collaborate with State organizations and structures, exchange information, to participate in Law discussions and to be involved in different employee placement programmes.

3.1.3. Self-employment

Self-employment and entrepreneurship is regulated by RA law “On State Support to Small and Medium Entrepreneurship,” which defines the criteria for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Republic of Armenia as well as the basic directions for State support to SME. There are several organizations in Armenia that provide consultancy and entrepreneurial training and supporting entrepreneurship/self-employment development for returnees. For example, the **Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Armenia** (SMEDNC) provides several types of assistance to entrepreneurially minded individuals with up to three years of State registration (regardless of background and age). The goal of the programme is to establish and promote new SMEs in the RA and to establish new workplaces.

Since 1 January 2020, physical persons that are not registered as sole proprietors, can be considered a micro-entrepreneur if they are engaged solely in the activities listed in *Annex 2*. Individuals who are not sole proprietors and who are licensed to be a microenterprise entity shall be exempted from the obligation of all state taxes arising from micro-entrepreneurship, with the exception of environmental tax, road tax, and tax for imported goods to the Republic of Armenia (including Eurasian Economic Union Member States).

3. 2 Health

3.2.1. General and Legal Provisions

Delivery of health care in Armenia is regulated through a variety of legal acts, such as the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, the Law on Health Care, and the Law on the State Budget. In accordance with Article 85 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, “Everyone shall, in accordance with law, have the right to health care. The law shall prescribe the list of free of charge basic medical services and the procedure for the provision thereof. Everyone shall, in accordance with law, have the right to health care.”

The implementation of the constitutional norms is ensured through the number of laws and legislative acts and decisions. For example, Decision N318-N, adopted on 4 March 2004 regulates in detail the organization and financing procedure of free charge medical assistance and services guaranteed by the State.

The **Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia** is the body that coordinates activities within the health sector and is responsible for formulation and implementation of State strategies and policies in the health sector.

The law on “Medical assistance and service provision to the population” (1996) lays down the legal, economic and financial basis for the organization of medical care and services ensuring the exercise of the constitutional right to human health.

Several statements of the law are:

- **Primary health care as a type of medical assistance and service which is free of charge for each person, is based on more accessible methods and technologies and is guaranteed by the State;**
- **Anybody, irrespective of nationality, race, gender, language, religion, age, State of their health, political and any other convictions, social origin, property or other status has access to medical assistance and service in the RA;**
- **Citizens have the right to choose their health-care provider;**
- **Financing sources for health-care services may include the State budget, insurance contributions, direct payments, and other sources not prohibited by law. Every child is entitled to free medical aid and services within the scope of State health-care programmes;**
- **A person suffering from a disease dangerous for the surrounding shall have a right to receive State guaranteed free of charge medical assistance and services and get treatment in specialized establishments providing that medical assistance and services;**
- **Persons who have suffered in emergency situation enjoys State-guaranteed free of charge medical assistance and services.**

3.2.2 System of Co-payment

Since 2004 the Government of RA has introduced the *system of co-payments*. In accordance with the principle of co-payment, the expenses of medical services incurred by the citizens are partially reimbursed by the State.

The following people are exempt from co-payment:

- 1.** diseases and conditions requiring resuscitation measures approved by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia only during the period of resuscitation services;
- 2.** socially vulnerable and separate (special) groups of the population entitled to free medical care and services guaranteed by the State;
- 3.** children aged 7 to 18 years, not included in the list of socially vulnerable and separate (special) groups of the population;
- 4.** persons not included in the list of socially vulnerable and separate (special) groups of the population who were referred by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia to receive free medical care and services.

Some organizations provide their employees with employment benefit packages, which also include health insurance. There is no special State programme for providing medical insurance for vulnerable and unemployed groups. To obtain medical insurance from private insurance companies in Armenia a passport and a social insurance card are required.

In the context of reintegration of returnees, there is no special policy or strategy developed and the returnees have access to medical care in accordance with the law as any other person.

3.2.3 Hospital Care

The cases when hospital care can be provided for free are regulated by the RA Government Decision N318-N, adopted on 4 March 2004. According to the aforementioned, treatment of the following diseases and the following services are provided for free for the whole population:

- Treatment of intestinal and other infectious diseases;
- Treatment of sexually transmitted infections;
- Psychiatric care;
- Emergency medical care, in cases requiring intensive care;
- Treatment of addiction;
- Provision of haemodialysis;
- Obstetrician and gynaecological services;
- Intensive health care;
- Health-care services for vulnerable and special groups;
- Clinical and social rehabilitation and examination of the ability to work;
- Medical care for reproduction;
- Examination and treatment of individuals of pre-conscription and conscription age.

The list of illnesses and conditions requiring urgent free emergency medical care by the state (for persons under 18 years of age and persons 18 and older) is approved by the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia N 65-N of 18 October 2013.

3.2.4 Medication Supply

1. **The list of social groups entitled to free or discounted medication provided primary health-care organizations, is defined in RA Government decision N 642-N of 30 May 2019 he Social or special groups of the population, that the drugs are provided with full reimbursement:**
 1. Persons with 1st and 2nd disability groups;
 2. Disabled children (under 18);
 3. WWII veterans and persons equal to the latter;
 4. Children without parental care, as well as unilateral orphans (under 18);
 5. Children of multi-child families (under 18, with four and more minor children);
 6. Family members of the servicemen killed in action when defending the Republic of Armenia as well as the ones who died in the line of duty;

- 7.** Children from families consisting of disabled people (under 18);
- 8.** Children under 7;
- 9.** Beneficiaries with poverty score of 30.01 and above included in the family benefit system.

2. Social groups provided with medication at 50 per cent discount:

- 1.** Persons with 3rd disability group;
- 2.** Participants in Chernobyl accident elimination work;
- 3.** Repressed;
- 4.** Single not working pensioners;
- 5.** Families consisting only of not working pensioners (including ones taking care for a minor child);
- 6.** Single mother's children (under 18).

3. Not working pensioners get medication at a 30 per cent discount.

List of diseases for which free medication is provided by polyclinics and hospitals:

- 1.** Tuberculosis (anti-tuberculosis drugs);
- 2.** Mental illnesses (psychotropic drugs);
- 3.** Malignant Tumors (Anti-Tumor Drugs, Hemophilia Drugs, Anesthetic Drugs, Drugs);
- 4.** Diabetes and non-diabetes (antidiabetic drugs);
- 5.** Epilepsy (anticonvulsants);
- 6.** Myocardial infarction (first 2 months after discharge - drugs to improve coronary blood circulation);
- 7.** Periodontal disease (cochlear and / or other drugs);
- 8.** Heart valve defects (anticoagulants after prosthesis);
- 9.** Malaria (anti-malarial drugs);
- 10.** Chronic renal failure (in cases of renal transplantation and / or programmed hemodialysis (cyclosporine, erythropoietin, mofetil mycophenolate and / or any equivalent);
- 11.** Phenylketonuria (baby food without phenylalanine);
- 12.** Symptoms of sudden neonatal respiratory distress (drugs containing active ingredient);
- 13.** Human immunodeficiency (HIV) infection (drugs, tests);
- 14.** Pituitary Dysfunction Symptom (Hormone Drugs);
- 15.** Viral hepatitis C disease (antiviral drugs).

For free or discounted **medication**, **returnees** need to apply to the polyclinic in their service area and provide ID (Armenian passport or any other document certifying their identity and Armenian citizenship) (birth certificate for children) and documents certifying that the persons belongs to a certain socially.

The returnees often need importing medication. According to Armenian Government Decision N 202-N of 28 February 2019, for the course of treatment or personal use of a physical person travelling to a foreign country or arriving from a foreign country it is permitted to import or export medicines **registered or unregistered in the Republic of Armenia without a certificate**, up to 10 names of medicines, each with three consumer packages in case there is no certificate (prescription or extract from the epicrisis) justifying a bigger amount needed for the treatment.

3.3 Education

3.3.1 Educational System of the Republic of Armenia

The **Republic of Armenia (Armenian) Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport** is a national body of an executive authority which implements the policies of the Armenian Government in the Education and Science sectors.

The educational sector in the Republic of Armenia as well as the powers of the Ministry is defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, Laws of the Republic of Armenia “On education,” “On pre-school education,” “On general education,” “On primary vocational (handicraft) and middle level vocational education,” “On higher and post-graduate professional education” and other legal acts as well as by international treaties. In the context of the reintegration of migrants there are no special policies or procedures. All the citizens of the Republic of Armenia are subject to the same law.

Educational system of the Republic of Armenia includes all levels of education - from pre-school to post-graduate education. Educational programmes implemented in the Republic of Armenia are the following:

- **general education programmes;**
- **professional education programmes.**

General education programmes are aimed at comprehensive development of individuals, formation of their world outlook, creation of bases for selecting and mastering appropriate professional education programmes in line with their preferences, inclinations and abilities.

Basic general education programmes shall be the following:

- pre-school;
- elementary (general, specialized, special);
- basic (general, specialized, special);
- secondary (general, specialized, special).

Professional education programmes shall be designed to prepare specialists with relevant qualification, develop their abilities and skills, enhance their knowledge and raise their qualifications through sequencing general education and professional levels of education.

Basic professional education programmes shall be the following:

- primary vocational (handicraft);
- middle level vocational;
- higher professional;
- post-graduate professional.

Since December 2014, there has been a transition to universal inclusive education in the general education system. Inclusive education is about ensuring that every child, including those in need of special education needs, in accordance with developmental characteristics, is provided with the necessary conditions and the maximum possible participation in the educational process by providing a customized environment. A three-tier system for responding to a child's educational needs is applied. Children with special educational needs will receive pedagogical-psychological support at three levels, in secondary school, regional and national pedagogical-psychological support centres. By 1 August 2022, at least one special education institution operating in each Marz of the Republic of Armenia, and at least four special education institutions in Yerevan, will be reorganized into a regional pedagogical-psychological support centre. By 1 August 2025, the system of inclusive education will be introduced.

3.3.2 Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications.

For further reintegration of returnees, who acquired new qualifications abroad and wish to continue education in Armenia or find employment, the RA Government introduced the system of diploma/certificate acknowledgement. The certificate of acknowledgement is issued on the basis of the act of “Acknowledgement of international Certificates and Diplomas in the Territory of Armenia.”

Under this act the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport acknowledges and confirms the equivalence and certificates of education, academic titles and academic ranks conferred by international educational establishments and issues a certificate detailing equivalence.

Recognition and assessment of qualifications is done by the **National Information Centre for Academic Recognition and Mobility of the Ministry of Education (ARMENIC)**.

The ARMENIC provides:

- **information, advice or formal decision on the recognition and assessment of qualification;**
- **adequate, reliable and authenticated information on qualifications, education systems, and recognition organizations, public authorities and other interested parties;**
- **advice, final decision on the recognition of qualifications on the basis of their assessment by applying existing criteria and procedures;**
- **information on their rights regarding recognition;**
- **authentic information on the recognition of higher education credentials and qualifications at national level.**

The application form, list of the necessary documentation for the recognition of foreign qualifications and the prices for the provided services are available at the following link: www.armenic.am/application.php.

3.3.3 Language Training

The relevant knowledge of the Armenian language is one of the critical points for migrant reintegration into society. Proficiency in the Armenian language will help them to enter both educational institutions and colleges. Most of the organizations, working with migrants, can hire a tutor and organize Armenian language training courses if the need is identified for returnees. So the availability of courses is mainly demand driven.

The higher education entities also have language departments (mainly for foreign students). The Armenian State University as well as other institutions has special Foreign Students Training Faculties. Citizens of the RA can also participate in these courses to improve their language skills.

Students, who apply to this faculty, are divided into three groups:

- **Students with no knowledge of Armenian;**
- **Students with basic knowledge of Armenian;**
- **Students with excellent knowledge of Armenian.**

In one academic year students gain enough knowledge to continue their professional courses in Armenian. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport can provide information about available Armenian language training courses upon request or in case of necessity help to organize them for special groups.

3.4 Social Protection

The **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** administers the social protection system in Armenia. The most important types of State social allowances in Armenia include:

- family allowance;
- social benefits;
- urgent help;
- lump-sum child benefit;
- childcare benefit up to two years old;
- temporary disability benefits;
- maternity benefit;
- old age benefit;
- disability benefits;
- benefit in case of loss of feeder;
- funeral allowance.

Persons entitled to receive the allowances are:

- Armenian citizens;
- Foreign citizens holding an appropriate status of residence;
- Persons without citizenship;
- Refugees.

3.4.1 Family Living Standards Enhancement Benefits

Family living standards enhancement benefits are provided to assist in raising the living standards of disadvantaged families or to prevent deterioration of their condition. The Family living standards enhancement benefits are: family benefit, social benefit, and emergency assistance.

One of the adult family members who consider themselves insecure, with the written consent of the other adult members, applies to the Social Assistance Agency (Division) of the actual place of residence in order to be included in the family insecurity assessment system, submitting an application form and certifying documents to calculate the family insecurity characteristics of the family.

A family, with a family member of up to 18 years old and registered in a family insecurity assessment system, which vulnerability score is higher than the family allowance limit set by the Government of the Republic of Armenia for a given year, shall be entitled to family benefit.

A family, with no family member under 18 years old and registered in a family vulnerability assessment system, which social security score is higher than the social security threshold set by the Government of the Republic of Armenia for that year shall be entitled to receive social benefits.

The amount of the family benefit is calculated by adding to the base of the family benefit a supplement for each member who is in the family and resides in the household.

The types of emergency assistance are:

1. one-time emergency assistance;
2. quarterly emergency assistance.

The amount of one-time emergency assistance for a family entitled for a family benefit is defined as:

1. AMD 50,000 for the birth of a child;
2. AMD 25,000 for the first grade of the child;
3. AMD 50,000 in case of death of a family member.

Quarterly emergency assistance is set at the rate of social benefit (AMD 18,000) for a period of three months (quarterly).

The **one-off lump sum benefits** all new-born babies and is set at AMD 50,000 for the first and second child, AMD 1,000,000 for third and fourth children, and AMD 1,500,000 for the fifth and for subsequent children. Applications are made through the social service district offices.

Women have the right to **pre-and postnatal maternity paid leave** of 140 days (70 days before and 70 days after delivery (more for complicated deliveries or multiple birth). Maternity leave is only provided to women in formal employment.

3.4.2 Pensions

The State body responsible for pensions and social welfare is the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** (MLSA). The Ministry is in charge of implementing all policies in the labour and social security sectors apart from health care. Within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs the Social Security Service is the body that provides the services in the field of social security. Pensions are legally regulated through the 'Law of the Republic of Armenia on State Pensions', which was adopted on 22 December 2010. The basic pension in Armenia is AMD 14,000.

Persons who have reached the age of 63 and have at least 10 years of work experience are entitled to an age working pension. A person who is not entitled to age working pension, is entitled to an old-age pension when 65 years of age.

Instead of previous **distributive pension system** from January 2014 the new accumulative pension system started for all citizens aged below 40 and was introduced with both mandatory and voluntary funded pension options. This accumulative

retirement plan means that from January 2014 working citizens below 40 years will save their future pensions themselves by having 5 per cent deducted from their monthly salaries, if the monthly amount of the salary does not exceed AMD 500,000 and 10 per cent and the difference of AMD 25,000 if the monthly amount of the salary exceeds AMD 500,000, and transferred into a savings account. The Government will then double that amount. For those over 40 years the accumulative scheme is optional. As of 2014, pension funds are run by private/business funds.⁹ The citizens will have access to their pension when they reach the official pension age.

There are two categories of pensions in Armenia:

Labour pension:

- old age;
- privileged;
- long service;
- disability;
- survivors;
- partial.

Military pension:

- long-term service;
- disability;
- survivors.

To receive a pension in Armenia, returnees have to be eligible according to the law and need to have a registered place of residence i.e. address in the Republic of Armenia. State pensions are currently administered and disbursed by the 51 Pension Offices across Armenia. Applications for State pensions are accepted by the State Social Security Service of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

For Armenian citizens that had permanent residence abroad, the multilateral agreement '*On Guarantees of Civil Rights in the Field of Pension Provision*' is of relevance, which was signed on 13 March 1992 by 12 members of the Commonwealth Independent States regulating pension provision within the CIS countries. This agreement entitles CIS citizens to receive their pension in their place of residence after retirement when the country of their previous permanent residence has ceased remunerating their pensions. Based on the agreement, the **International Association of Pension and Social Funds** was set up with participation of the CIS countries, Georgia and the Baltic States.¹⁰ The aim of the Association is the protection, promotion and development of social security and the coordination of social and pension funds. Important in this context is that the pension amount, the retirement age and the pension eligibility criteria vary in the different CIS countries.

9. For further information visit the Pension System Awareness Centre at www.epension.am.

10. For further information please see www.apsf.ru.

3.5 Legal Aid and Personal Data Protection

3.5.1 Legal Aid

According to the Armenian Law on Advocacy in certain cases legal aid can be provided to people who cannot afford to retain a lawyer. In specific cases, free legal aid can also be provided to people who have not yet been officially identified as a suspect or defendant, but there are substantial grounds to believe that the relevant body is preparing a charge against them. Free legal assistance is provided by the Chamber of Advocates of Armenia through its **Office of the Public Defender** at the State's expense.

The Office of the Public Defender also provides free legal aid to the following persons:

According to Article 41 of the RA Law on Advocacy, free legal aid to suspects and accused in criminal cases is provided solely **based on a decision of the body conducting the proceedings**.

Free legal assistance is provided to individuals of the social groups listed below, **based on applications** from the victim, victim legal successor, civil plaintiff or civil defendant in criminal, constitutional, and criminal proceedings:

- 1.** the family members of a soldier killed (deceased) while protecting the borders of the Republic of Armenia;
- 2.** persons with disabilities of groups 1 and 2;
- 3.** the convicts;
- 4.** family members registered with a family insecurity score above 0;
- 5.** Participants of military operations during the Great Patriotic War and protection of the borders of the Republic of Armenia;
- 6.** the unemployed;
- 7.** pensioners living alone;
- 8.** children left without parental care, as well as persons belonging to children left without parental care;
- 9.** refugees;
- 10.** persons granted temporary asylum in the Republic of Armenia;
- 11.** insolvent individuals who are presenting valid proof of their insolvency;
- 12.** people with mental disorders receiving treatment in a psychiatric institution;
- 13.** persons recognized as victims or victims of a special category by the Commission on Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking and Exploitation, as prescribed by law;

- 14.** asylum seekers in the Republic of Armenia;
- 15.** victims of torture as prescribed by Article 1087.3 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia;
- 16.** victims of domestic violence in accordance with the RA Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence and Restoration of Family Solidarity.

Complaints of individuals regarding the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms provided by the Armenian Constitution and laws and the international treaties of the Republic of Armenia, as well as by the principles and norms of International Law, caused by the State and local self-governing bodies and their officials can be filed with the **Office of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia**.

3.5.2 Protection of Personal Data

Social reintegration of returnees, especially the venerable ones (e.g. victims of trafficking) is very much dependant on the respect of their right to privacy and personal data protection. Therefore, in the process of referral of the returnee from one institution to another it is vital to duly protect their personal data and all joint actions and cooperation activities should be conducted with respect for right to privacy and personal data protection. The privacy concerns are associated with the rapid growth of information technology and the fact that data are digitally transferable and easily accessible, and inadvertent disclosure of those can result in harm or threat to the safety of vulnerable people, youngsters at risk, disabled, VoT-s, etc.

The Armenian Government has ratified the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data. The Law of the Republic of Armenia on Protection of Personal Data was adopted on 18 May 2015, which regulates the procedure and conditions for processing personal data, exercising State control over them by State administration or local Self-Government bodies, State or community institutions or organisations, legal or physical persons. By the decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 734-N of 2 July 2015 of 2 July 2015 the Agency for the Protection of Personal Data of the staff of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia was established as an authorized body, and the statute and structure of the Agency for the Protection of Personal data of the Ministry of Justice was approved.

3.6 Military Service

The legislation on military service and the status of servicepersons consists of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, international treaties of the Republic of Armenia, the Law on Military Service and the Status of a Serviceperson and other normative legal acts.

Compulsory military service in the Republic of Armenia is organized through conscription. Men from 18 to 27 years of age, as well as men of up to 35 years of age who passed military training at the higher education institutions and are reserve officers, are subject to conscription.

For evading compulsory military service criminal liability is provided.

Contractual military service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia and other troops may be conducted by:

- 1.** Citizens under 18 years of age if admitted to military education institutions;
- 2.** Conscripts serving in compulsory military service;
- 3.** Male citizens registered in the reservation with no prior military service and up to 40 years of age and female citizens, irrespective of being registered in the reservation, and citizens up to 45 years of age registered in the reserve of ordinary or junior sub-officer squadrons.

Ministry of Defence operates free hotline and provides answers to the questions regarding military service.

Hotline number: 1-28; (+374 12) 21 00 00.

Part 2

Useful Links and **Contact Details**

The structure of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the activities of the Ministries, of the Bodies under the Government and under the Prime Minister can be found at: www.gov.am.

The comprehensive legal framework of the Republic of Armenia can be found at: www.arlis.am.

The official statistics of the Republic of Armenia is available at: www.armstat.am.

The guidelines and publications developed by IOM and IOM Mission of Armenia can be found at: <http://publications.iom.int>.

Information on banks and credit organizations of Armenia can be found at: www.cba.am.

The terms of money transfer and online banking can be found at: www.banks.am

Private employment agencies that provide online information on available jobs: www.careercenter.am; www.hr.am; www.jobfinder.am; www.ashxatanq.am; www.job.am; www.tanger.am.

Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure

Address: Yerevan 0037, 31 Karapet Ulnetsi Street
Phone: +374 60 27 50 03
Email address: migrationservice.sms@mta.gov.am
Website: www.smsmta.am

“One Window” Reintegration Service in the Migration Service

Address: Yerevan 0037, 31 Karapet Ulnetsi Street, room 210
Phone: +374 60 27 50 35
Email address: achobanyan.sms@mta.gov.am; return.ms@af4sd.org
Website: www.smsmta.am

**European Network for Return and Reintegration
 (“ERRIN Armenia” project)**

Address: Yerevan 0037, 31 Karapet Ulnetsi Street, room N 310
Phone: +37460 27 50 20
Email address: Arpine.Vardikyan@returnnetwork.eu;
Eduard.Grigoryan@returnnetwork.eu;
Anush.Khanoyan@returnnetwork.eu

Employment Agency of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

Address: 68 Ulnetsi Street, Yerevan
Phone: +374 60 65 27 04
Email address: info@employment.am
Website: www.employment.am

State Social Protection Service, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

Address: 13 Nalbandyan Street, Yerevan 0010
Phone: +374 10 52 45 74
Fax: +374 10 51 14 11
Email address: info@ssa.am
Website: www.ssa.am

**Agency of Medical and Social Expertise of the
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia**

Address: Yerevan 0047, Nork-Marash, 129 A. Armenakyan Street
Hotline: + 374 60 65 28 72
Email address: info@hhbsp.am
Website: <http://hhbsp.am>

Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia

Address: Yerevan 0044, 5 Bagrevandi Street
Hotline: 1-28; +374 12 21 00 00
Phone: + 374 10 29 46 99
Email address: modpress@mil.am
Website: www.ssa.am

Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia

Address: Yerevan 0010, 6 Vazgen Sargsyan Street

Hotline: +374 10 59 26 93

Website: www.cba.am

Office of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia

Address: Yerevan 0002, 56a Pushkin Street

Phone: +374 10 53 76 51

Hotline: 116

Email address: ombuds@ombuds.am

Website: <http://ombuds.am>

**National Center for Small and Medium Entrepreneurship
Development of Armenia**

Address: Yerevan 0010, 5a Mher Mkrtchyan Street

Phone: +37410 12 54 16 48, 56 37 14, 58 32 61

Email address: info@smednc.am

Website: www.smednc.am

National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility

Address: Yerevan 0002, 27 Amiryan Street

Phone: +374 10 53 09 04

Email address: info@armenic.am

Website: www.armenic.am

Chamber of Advocates of the Republic of Armenia

Address: 3 Zakyan Street, 7-2 building

Phone: +374 10 60 07 01; 60 07 04; 60 07 03:

Email address: info@advocates.am

Website: www.advocates.am

International Organization for Migration

Address: Mission in Armenia

Address: 14 Petros Adamyan Street

Phone: + 374 10 58 56 92

Email address: iomArmenia@iom.int

Website: www.iom.int/countries/armenia

Non-governmental Organizations

Business Support Center

Address: 6 Ekmalyan Street, Business Pale Center, 2nd Floor
Phone: +374 10 57 47 78, 53 23 13, +374 99 57 47 78, +374 77 57 47 78
Email address: bsc@bsc.am; marketing@bsc.am
Website: www.bsc.am

Head office of Armenian Caritas

Address: 3118 Gyumri, 8 H. Sargsyan Street, lane 3
Phone: +374 312 57 201

Armenian Caritas in Yerevan

Address: 34 Tchaikovsky Street
Phone: +374 10 56 57 66
Email address: info@caritas.am
Website: www.caritas.am

French Office for Immigration and Integration

Address: Representation in the Republic of Armenia
Embassy of France in Armenia
8 G. Lusavorich Street, Yerevan
Phone: +374 60 65 19 50
Website: <https://am.ambafrance.org>

Armenian Foundation for Sustainable Development (AF4SD)

Address: 10/7 Freedom Avenue, Yerevan 0037
Phone: +374 10 20 18 40
Email address: info@ffad.am
Website: www.af4sd.org

International Center for Human Development

Address: 19 Sayat Nova Avenue, Yerevan 0001, “AniPlaza Hotel”
Phone: +374 10 58 26 38, +374 10 52 83 21
Email address: mail@ichd.org
Website: www.ichd.org

Mission Armenia NGO

Address: 42 Garegin Nzhdeh Street, Yerevan 0026
Phone: +374 10 44 47 92, 44 47 93, 44 47 61, 44 47 32
Fax: +374 10 444792
Email address: org@ngo.mission.am
Website: www.mission.am

Armenian Red Cross Society

Address: Yerevan 0015, 21/1 Paronyan Street

Phone / Fax: +374 60 62 50 50

Email address: redcross@redcross.am

Website: www.redcross.am

Repat Armenia Foundation

Address: Yerevan 0010, 37 Republican Street

Phone: +374 60 46 46 60

Email address: contact@repatarmenia.org

Website: <http://repatarmenia.org>

Republican Union of Employers of Armenia

Address: Yerevan 0010, 26a Movses Khorenatsi Street

Phone: +374 10 52 74 21

Email address: ruea@employers.am

Website: www.employers.am

“UMCOR Armenia” Charitable Foundation

Address: Yerevan, 14 Karapet Ulnetsi Street

Hotline: 0-800-50-558

Phone: +374 10 24 81 41, 28 29 77

Fax: +374 10 24 92 15:

Email address: umcor@umcor.am

Website: www.umcorarmenia.am

Part 3

Annexes

Annex 1.

List of socially vulnerable groups entitled to receive State-guaranteed free-of-charge medical care and services

1. Beneficiaries with poverty score of 28.00 and above included in the family benefit system;
2. People with 1st group of disability;
3. People with 2nd group of disability;
4. People with 3rd group of disability;
5. Children under 18 years of age;
6. Participants of the Great Patriotic War and individuals equated to them;
7. Women of reproductive age in pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal periods;
8. Individuals belonging to the group of children without parental care - persons aged 18-23;
9. Individuals undergoing additional medical examination by referral of the State authorized body in the field of medical and social expertise;
10. Persons of conscription age (in-patient medical assistance and in-patient examination);
11. Servicemen and persons equated to them, members of their families, family members of those servicemen who were killed (deceased) during the defense of the Republic of Armenia, as well as family members, former servicemen subject to military pensions for long-term service or for disability;
12. Rescue officers and members of their families, retired rescue officers, disabled rescue officers, family members of rescue officers killed (deceased) during service;

13. Arrested persons, detainees, and persons sentenced to imprisonment;
14. Persons receiving care in elderly houses and temporary shelters for the homeless;
15. Repressed;
16. Participants in works of Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant accident elimination;
17. Victims of human trafficking and exploitation;
18. Asylum seekers and their family members;
19. Persons discharged from military service due to disruption, injury, or illness who were not recognized as disabled as a result of medical and social examination (hospital medical care and services within the framework of an individualized rehabilitation programme developed by the authorized State body in the field of medical and social expertise).

Annex 2.

Since 1 January 2020, physical persons that are not registered as sole proprietors, can be considered a micro-entrepreneur if they are engaged solely in the activities listed below.

Activities	
1	By order of the population:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manufacture of footwear and leather goods and similar products, repair of footwear and leather goods
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Production and repair of clothing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Production and repair of hats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manufacture and repair of carpets and rugs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manufacture of wooden items, repairing furniture and home furnishings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manufacture and repair of non-expensive jewelry
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repair, software maintenance of computer equipment, televisions, washing machines, air conditioners and other home appliances
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Production of bicycles and wheelchairs, repair of household goods for personal use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Production of economical and ornamental ceramic products
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manufacture of other porcelain and ceramics products
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tinwork

2	Repair of watches, timers, repair of musical instruments
3	Other narrow professional training courses
4	Language training courses
5	Preparatory courses for admission to higher and other institutions
6	Dance and singing teaching activities
7	Activities in the field of performing arts, supporting activities in the field of performing arts
8	Creative activity
9	Feast management
10	Educational activities and extracurricular education in gymnastics and sport
11	Provision of services (without distinction) to private households for their own consumption
12	Forging activity
13	Hotel services through tourist houses (including those directly related to these services: public catering (breakfast, lunch, dinner))

Annex 3.

IOM Data Protection Principles

1. LAWFUL AND FAIR COLLECTION

Personal data must be obtained by lawful and fair means with the knowledge or consent of the data subject.

2. SPECIFIED AND LEGITIMATE PURPOSE

The purpose(s) for which personal data are collected and processed should be specified and legitimate, and should be known to the data subject at the time of collection. Personal data should only be used for the specified purpose(s), unless the data subject consents to further use or if such use is compatible with the original specified purpose(s).

3. DATA QUALITY

Personal data sought and obtained should be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the specified purpose(s) of data collection and data processing. Data controllers should take all reasonable steps to ensure that personal data are accurate and up to date.

4. CONSENT

Consent must be obtained at the time of collection or as soon as it is reasonably practical thereafter, and the condition and legal capacity of certain vulnerable groups and individuals should always be taken into account. If exceptional circumstances hinder the achievement of consent, the data controller should, at a minimum, ensure that the data subject has sufficient knowledge to understand and appreciate the specified purpose(s) for which personal data are collected and processed.

5. TRANSFER TO THIRD PARTIES

Personal data should only be transferred to third parties with the explicit consent of the data subject, for a specified purpose, and under the guarantee of adequate safeguards to protect the confidentiality of personal data and to ensure that the rights and interests of the data subject are respected. These three conditions of transfer should be guaranteed in writing.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of personal data must be respected and applied to all the stages of data collection and data processing, and should be guaranteed in writing. All IOM staff and individuals representing third parties who are authorized to access and process personal data, are bound to confidentiality.

7. ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY

Data subjects should be given an opportunity to verify their personal data, and should be provided with access insofar as it does not frustrate the specified purpose(s) for which personal data are collected and processed. Data controllers should ensure a general policy of openness towards the data subject about developments, practices and policies with respect to personal data.

8. DATA SECURITY

Personal data must be kept secure, both technically and organizationally, and should be protected by reasonable and appropriate measures against unauthorized modification, tampering, unlawful destruction, accidental loss, improper disclosure or undue transfer. The safeguard measures outlined in relevant IOM policies and guidelines shall apply to the collection and processing of personal data.

9. RETENTION OF PERSONAL DATA

Personal data should be kept for as long as is necessary and should be destroyed or rendered anonymous as soon as the specified purpose(s) of data collection and data processing have been fulfilled. It may, however, be retained for an additional specified period, if required for the benefit of the data subject.

10. APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES

These principles shall apply to both electronic and paper records of personal data, and may be supplemented by additional measures of protection, depending inter alia on the sensitivity of the personal data. These principles shall not apply to non-personal data.

11. OWNERSHIP OF PERSONAL DATA

IOM shall assume ownership of personal data collected directly from data subjects or collected on behalf of IOM, unless otherwise agreed, in writing, with a third party.

12. OVERSIGHT, COMPLIANCE AND INTERNAL REMEDIES

An independent body should be appointed to oversee implementation of these principles and to investigate any complaints, and designated data protection focal points should assist with monitoring and training. Measures will be taken to remedy unlawful data collection and data processing, as well as breach of the rights and interests of the data subject.

13. EXCEPTIONS

Any intent to derogate from these principles should first be referred to the IOM Legal Affairs Department for approval, as well as the relevant unit/department at IOM Headquarters.



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Third Edition

