
THE FINANCIAL: 41,000 GEORGIANS RESIDE IN ARMENIA

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There are 41,000 Georgians living in Armenia today, according to a study published by The Financial.

Georgia was one of the richest republics in the Soviet Union, and so, in 1990, very few Georgians — even among those with Armenian background — had reasons to emigrate to Armenia. Less than 2,000 Georgians resided in their southern neighbor country. The subsequent failure of Shevardnadze is nicely illustrated by the migration development in the years that followed: by 1995, almost 28,000 Georgians had moved to Armenia, and in the year 2000, this number stood at 47,000, the study says.

When the reformers took over in Georgia, many of these people decided to return to their home country. By 2005, there were only 31,000 Georgians left in Armenia, and by 2010, this number had gone down to 26,000. Now we are back to 41,000, giving support to the perception of many people that in the last years, Georgias economic fortunes worsened, the Financial said.

According to the study, in 2015, there were 1,980 Armenian nationals residing in Georgia, while there were almost 41,000 Georgians in Armenia.

In search for the reasons of the difference, The Financial refers to the figures presented by the Armenian statistical office Armstat, which claims that wages are slightly higher in Armenia. In 2014 the average wage was 788.5 lari in Georgia and 818 lari in Armenia (converted by the official rate of the Central Bank of Armenia). These numbers do not conflict with the fact that most sources state a slightly higher nominal per capita GDP for Georgia.

Unlike in Tbilisi, walking around in Central Yerevan evokes the impression that one is in a rather wealthy and very well-developed country. However, the suburbs of Yerevan do not look much different than the suburbs of Tbilisi, and the countryside of Armenia is in many places very dilapidated, the Financial writes.

A more plausible explanation might be that many of the Georgians in Armenia are in fact ethnic Armenians who moved to Armenia in the 1990s for good, integrated in the Armenian society and just did not return their Georgian citizenships. They would still be counted as Georgian migrants living in Armenia, while in fact they are Armenians living in Armenia who are essentially culturally and economically indistinguishable from their compatriots.

Kaynak/Source: