



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



State Commission
on Migration Issues



***Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to
Promote Private Sector Development
Conference
November 24 and 25 2020
Format: Online - Georgia, Tbilisi time zone (GMT+4)***

FINAL REPORT

29 December 2020

This regional conference brought together government representatives and other stakeholders responsible for migration governance and diaspora engagement. The assembled experts have a focus on emigrants and diaspora engagement in private sector development through, inter alia, skills development and transfer, establishment of trade networks, and investment. The conference highlighted specific examples of engagement, focusing on the institutional structures and networks required to establish and manage migration policy as well as ensuring successful diaspora relations. The conference resulted in shared good practices and identifying potential areas for collaboration in this field.



Executive Summary

The regional conference titled: Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development held on 24 and 25 November 2020 online gathered stakeholders from countries across the South Caucasus/Black Sea including governments, agencies, NGOs, business networks and diaspora organizations, to share ideas, approaches and experiences on diaspora engagement in private sector development. The region faces a common set of challenges in social and economic development and the conference provided a platform to explore the topics from a regional perspective and identify ways to further connect, share and collaborate.

The IOM Georgia and Armenia missions are implementing a project titled: Enhancing Migrants' Rights and Good Governance in Georgia and Armenia – EMERGE funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which seeks to foster regional dialogue and enhance regional cooperation in the area of migration governance. This regional conference, hosted by the Government of Georgia, as a component of the EMERGE project, brought together the countries of Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine to exchange practices and expand regional cooperation in the field of migration governance.

The **Keynote Address**, by Kingsley Aikins of The Networking Institute, highlighted that diaspora engagement is a non-competitive endeavour, focusing on the factors to build successful diaspora engagement for investment and business development. The **High-Level Panel**, involving government officials from Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine, set the scene for diaspora engagement and migration governance. **Thematic Session I** presented diaspora investment and job creation from the perspective of business diaspora organizations and state policy interventions. **Thematic Session II** focused on the governing instruments and private sector initiatives to support diaspora returning to their country of origin. In **Thematic Session III**, the interventions outlined government and international agency approaches to gathering data on diaspora and on creating ways diaspora can address broader ambitions alongside social and economic development, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. The final **Country Panel** explored the whole-of-government approach (WOGA) and wider stakeholder involvement in migration partnerships and cooperation.

The overall key themes that emerged from the conference include:

Openness to Building an Evidence Base on Diaspora Engagement in and for the Region

This event signalled the appetite to create an open dialogue, share experiences and learn from the initiatives in diaspora engagement within the South Caucasus/Black Sea region and beyond, as the countries face many of the same challenges on migration governance. The continued learning and sharing among countries could include organization of future regional events and creating a repository of resources to support diaspora engagement in the region.

Knowing the Diaspora

The conference speakers reinforced the importance of knowing members of the diaspora, diaspora communities and diaspora organizations. Examples of mapping diaspora from Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova were shared during the event. IOM also offered insight on the methodologies for mapping diaspora, including new big data, to understand the fundamental questions posed by keynote speaker Kingsley Aikins: who they are, what they do and where they are. Traditional remittances to their country of origin demonstrate that diaspora connect to their country of origin through family and personal connections in villages and communities more than the whole country. Building trust with diaspora, listening and understanding their interests, motivations and needs will enable governments to better plan to meaningfully engage diaspora in investment, business and knowledge exchange activities.



Broad-based Capacity Building

The diaspora communities linked to the region are not necessarily new communities. However, there is evidence that capacity building would be helpful to ensure diaspora interventions, including in business, entrepreneurship and investment, can be maximized and sustained over time. Traditional diaspora organizations would benefit from capacity building to continue to mobilize diaspora beyond the key cultural and social components of connection to consider the broader business and investment calls from their country of origin. Both diaspora and business in the home country may benefit from joint mentorship and training, such as in identifying diaspora entrepreneurship opportunities and building partnerships. There is also a place for capacity building for government agencies to recognize the value of diaspora engagement and to create a compelling case for support to attract diaspora investment and knowledge transfer to match with the country's development needs.

Strategic, Comprehensive and Cohesive Information and Activities for/with Diaspora

Many of the interventions from the conference focused on the provision of information to diaspora and migrant communities, including interventions of the Bulgarian government representative on the benefit of Labour Attachés and Romania's private sector online support initiative RePatriot. Building on the whole-of-government (or society) approach, diaspora who are considering returning, investing or building business ties in their country of origin require strategic, comprehensive and cohesive information from a trusted source. Partnerships, projects and activities aimed for diaspora engagement must provide a clear purpose that offers a 'win-win-win' approach: for government, host country and for the diaspora.

Comprehensive, coherent approach to diaspora engagement and migration governance

The conference highlighted the importance of the WOGA in diaspora engagement activity and migration governance. The governing instruments related to diaspora and migration—legislation, regulation, strategies—would benefit from cooperation and partnership should be considered beyond solely WOGA towards a whole-of-society approach involving NGOs, private and other organizations.

Create a compelling business and investment friendly conditions to mobilize diaspora

The conference emphasized the importance of business and investment friendly conditions to mobilize diaspora to engage in such practices with their countries of origin. Trade agreements, business initiatives and tax incentives are some tools enacted by both governments and diaspora organizations in host countries. Interventions from the Canadian-Ukrainian and Georgian-UK diaspora business associations demonstrated cooperation to increase diaspora business and investment.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the need for agility and resilience in diaspora engagement. Many highly skilled and young migrants are returning to their country of origin. Therefore, skills matching to gaps in the labour market, social services support and remote working options may ease the transition and seize on this opportunity. Governments need to adopt practices and adapt to attract diaspora knowledge to support entrepreneurship, professional and business needs. Finally, the pandemic has shown the potential and ease of accelerating and further explore of online connection and networking between governments, NGOs, private sector, diaspora and diaspora organizations.

This regional conference reinforces the breadth of activities related to migration governance and diaspora engagement across the region. This report captures the learning from this conference to begin to renew dialogue and explore potential cooperation or partnerships across governments, agencies, NGOs, business networks and diaspora organizations to build private sector development. This conference also serves as a foundation of learning for future EMERGE events.



Contents

Executive Summary	2
Acronyms.....	6
1 Introduction.....	7
1.1 Conference Overview and Context.....	7
1.1.1 EMERGE Project Context	7
1.2 Day I: Introductory Conference Session	8
1.2.1 <i>Sanja Celebic Lukovac</i> – Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia.....	8
1.2.2 <i>Vladimer Konstantinidi</i> , Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.....	8
1.2.3 <i>Marko Soldic</i> , Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Norway in Georgia.....	8
1.2.4 <i>Renate Held</i> , Regional Director, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia	9
1.3 Keynote Presentation – <i>Kingsley Aikins</i> – CEO, The Networking Institute.....	10
2 High-Level Panel on Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development.....	14
2.1 Georgia: <i>Vladimer Konstantinidi</i> , Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia...	14
2.2 Bulgaria: <i>Milko Berner</i> , Deputy Minister, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria....	15
2.3 The Republic of Moldova: <i>Iulia Costin</i> , General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development, Government of the Republic of Moldova.....	16
2.4 <i>Taras Kachka</i> , Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine	16
3 Thematic Session I: Facilitating Diaspora Investment & Job Creation.....	17
3.1 Setting the Context: Introduction of Different Models of Leveraging Remittances and Diaspora Investment <i>Michael Newson</i> , Senior Labour and Human Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office in Vienna	17
3.2 Diaspora perspective – <i>Maka Abashidze</i> , Director and Founder, British Georgian Chamber of Commerce.....	18
3.3 Diaspora perspective – <i>Zenon Poticzny</i> , President of Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, Vice President of Ukrainian World Congress.....	19
3.4 Moldovan state policy on stimulating diaspora engagement for local development projects and investments – <i>Violina Donu</i> , Diaspora Relations Bureau, Government of the Republic of Moldova.....	19
3.5 Diaspora perspective – <i>Vitaliy Milentyev</i> , Partner and Portfolio Manager at Cornerstone Investment Counsel, Supervisory Board Member at the National Depository of Ukraine.....	20
4 Thematic Session II: Facilitating Return Migration to Meet Labour Market Needs.....	21
4.1 Setting the Context – <i>Michael Newson</i> , IOM Regional Office in Vienna	21
4.2 Presentation by <i>Sandra Pralong</i> , State Adviser in the Department for the Relations with Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania	21
4.3 Presentation by <i>Marius Bostan</i> , RePatriot Project, Romania.....	22
4.4 Engaging Bulgarian diaspora to return to address labour market needs – <i>Hristo Simeonov</i> , Secretary of the National Council on Labour Migration and Labour Mobility, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria.....	22
5 Day I - Panel Discussion	24
5.2 State and Diaspora in the context of COVID-19 – <i>Vladimer Konstantinidi</i> , Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia	24



5.3	Panel Discussion	24
6	Day II: Thematic Session III: Engaging Diaspora to Support Trade, Professional Networks & Business Development	26
6.1	Presentation of the Diaspora Forum event and methodology used to identify diaspora, and other stakeholders – <i>Mariam Keburia</i> , Attaché, Department of Relation with Diaspora, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.....	26
6.2	Diaspora engagement – <i>Natia Kvitsiani</i> , National Programme Officer, IOM Georgia.....	26
6.3	Engaging Skilled Representatives of Diaspora in the Country	27
6.4	Development – <i>Karinée Khojayan</i> , Project Coordinator, IOM Armenia.....	27
6.5	Presentation on Professional Networking and Business Development – <i>Gayatri Kanth</i> , Project Manager, International Organization of Employers.....	28
7	Q & A and Discussion.....	29
7.1	Country Presentations & Facilitated Discussion.....	29
7.1	Swiss Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration – <i>Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet</i> , State Secretariat for Migration, Government of Switzerland	30
7.2	Country Presentations on Experiences, Interests and Management Structures for Maintaining Communications and Fostering Relations with Diaspora.....	30
7.2.1	The development and implementation of the government strategic approach to the migration policy – <i>Hristo Simeonov</i> , Secretary on the National Council of Labour Migration and Labour Mobility, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria.....	30
7.2.2	Overview of the structure of the Romanian diaspora, programmes and policies to facilitate reintegration - <i>Cristina Robu</i> , Department for Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania.....	31
7.3	Guided discussion on opportunities and challenges to be addressed and areas for potential regional/cross border cooperation/information exchange in facilitating diaspora engagement.....	32
8	Concluding Remarks.....	34
8.1	<i>Sanja Celebic Lukovac</i> , Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia	34
8.2	<i>Vladimer Konstantinidi</i> , Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.....	34
9	References.....	35
10	List of Appendices.....	36
10.1	Final Conference Agenda.....	37
10.2	Moderator Biographies	39
10.3	Speaker Biographies.....	41
10.4	Presentations and Speaker’s Notes- List of Supplementary Materials.....	48
10.4.1	Diaspora Capital Wheel (<i>Kingsley Aikins</i> - Keynote Address).....	49
10.5	Media Releases for the Event	50
10.6	List of Conference Participants	52



Acronyms

ARDA – Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (Georgia)

AUCC – Alberta Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce

B2B – Business-to-business

CUCC – Canadian Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce

CUFTA – Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement

CUTIS – Canada-Ukraine Trade and Investment Support

DDI – Diaspora direct investment

EMERGE - Enhancing Migrants' Rights and Good Governance in Georgia and Armenia

EPIC – Economic Prosperity and Investment Committee

EU – European Union

FIZ – Free Industrial Zones (Georgia)

FDI – Foreign direct investment

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

ILO – International Labour Organization

IOE – International Organization of Employers

IOM – International Organization for Migration

M&D – Migration and Development

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Georgia)

MSME – Micro, small, medium-sized enterprises

NGOs – Non-governmental organizations

ODIMM – Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development

PARE – Programme for Attracting Remittances in Economy (Republic of Moldova)

R&D – Research and Development

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SME – Small, medium-sized enterprises

UK – United Kingdom

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

WOGA – Whole-of-government approach



1 Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive compilation of the material covered during the regional conference titled: Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development that took place in an online format on 24 and 25 November 2020 and was hosted by the Government of Georgia and organized by IOM Georgia. The purpose of this report is to offer conference participants, delegates and those with an interest in diaspora engagement with the key points and allow them to draw learning for their own diaspora context, including in mobilizing diaspora in private sector development through policy development, collaboration and activities.

1.1 Conference Overview and Context

Migration in the South Caucasus/Black Sea region is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Regional migration patterns have responded to economic and political developments within the countries and to the impact of international influences ranging from investment and trade regulations, to the EU accession path, including the visa liberalization regime and circular migration, to changes in the immigration policies of destination countries and development of national policies in response to increased inbound immigration and transit. Georgia and Armenia face a common set of challenges related to increased emigration as well as immigration both impacted by and impacting social and economic development across the region and so do the neighbouring countries, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine. These countries have a high number of their citizens living and working abroad and experience higher levels of economic emigration. Financial remittances, now estimated to decline by 20% worldwide due to COVID-19 events, represent an important part of the income of families living in the region. However, studies also demonstrate that remittances constitute a relatively insignificant source of funding for entrepreneurship: micro and small enterprises and that motivation to search for employment tends to be lower among family members receiving money transfers.¹

These commonalities provide a strong rationale for bringing the countries (Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine) together to exchange practices on issues of mutual interest and further expand regional cooperation in the field of migration governance.

1.1.1 EMERGE Project Context

The IOM Georgia and Armenia offices are implementing a project titled: Enhancing Migrants' Rights and Good Governance in Georgia and Armenia - EMERGE, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which seeks to foster regional dialogue and enhance regional cooperation in migration governance. The EMERGE project Outcome 2: *National stakeholders have enhanced cross-border dialogue and cooperation in the area of migration governance and migrants' rights*, is aligned with the concept of a series of regional conferences and provides an umbrella under which IOM, in partnership with the Governments of Georgia, Armenia and other participating countries, can support three regional cooperation events.

This online event on 24 and 25 November 2020, titled: Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development, is the first in a series of regional conferences. This conference brought together government representatives and other stakeholders responsible for migration governance and diaspora engagement, with a focus on emigrants and diaspora engagement

¹ The World Bank. (2020). 'World bank Predicts Sharpest Decline in Remittances in Recent History.' World Bank Press Release, 22nd April. [accessed on 18/12/2020 [Link](#)]



in private sector development through, inter alia, skills development and transfer, establishment of trade networks, and investment.

1.2 Day I: Introductory Conference Session

The IOM Georgia Chief of Mission, Sanja Celebic Lukovac welcomed the conference participants jointly with Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Marko Soldic, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Norway in Georgia and Renate Held, IOM Regional Director for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and provided introductory remarks.

1.2.1 Sanja Celebic Lukovac – Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia

The conference opened with an address by Sanja Celebic Lukovac, who outlined the purpose of the conference: “We hope that the conference will offer a platform for the exchange of ideas and sharing best practices and models that have produced results.” She discussed the importance of the nexus between diaspora and development which remains an important area for exploration of migration within the region.

In her opening remarks IOM Georgia Chief of Mission, Sanja Celebic Lukovac stated: “The global COVID 19 pandemic has had an overreaching impact on all aspects of our present as well as our future life. It keeps pushing us to rethink the way we operate and do things. It also keeps offering new opportunities. In this particular moment, we also wanted to use this opportunity to reflect on migration management potentials and explore how diaspora involvement can help us address the immediate consequences of this global crisis, and moreover, help us in shaping up our ‘new normal’ in a longer term.”

1.2.2 Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

The welcome address by Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Vladimer Konstantinidi, focused on the importance of cooperation with diaspora to focus on sustainable recovery and development. He stated during this introduction: “To be more resilient towards uncertainties and unexpected disruptions we need engagement of our diasporas more than ever before. Their social capital and connections are essential for the backbone of economic development of the private sector.”

He emphasized the benefits of a comprehensive not separate approach with working in partnership with diaspora as piece of the economic development puzzle. Moreover, he welcomed the regional conference event as an opportunity to share experiences towards an evidence base demonstrating the value of cooperation with diasporas across the region. He acknowledged the role that diasporas of Georgia can play in unlocking the potential for the internationalization of science, education and the culture of Georgia.

1.2.3 Marko Soldic, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Norway in Georgia

Marko Soldic, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Norway of Georgia, sent greetings from Her Excellency Helene Sand Andresen, Ambassador to Georgia and Ambassador Designate of Armenia. He also expressed thanks to IOM and involved partners in the organization and production of the online regional conference event. “IOM is a key partner in Norway’s global development and migration agenda. We are also working closely in this region, particularly under the EMERGE project, which today’s event is a part of.” He expressed gratitude to the IOM for the long-lasting partnership and the achievements emanating from this partnership.



1.2.4 Renate Held, Regional Director, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Renate Held noted during her address: “Migration in the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. The countries represented at this meeting today face a common set of opportunities and challenges regarding migration governance. These impact – and are impacted by – social and economic development across the region. They require evidence-based policies and programming to best leverage the development potential of migration.”

She referenced the [Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) that recognizes the key role of the diaspora. It calls for creating the conditions to enable diaspora communities to fully contribute to sustainable development in their home and origin countries. She noted that the Compact emphasizes a whole-of-society approach, encouraging multi-stakeholder partnerships that include diasporas and the private sector.

Renate Held also referred to the [IOM “3E” strategy for diaspora](#): Enable, Engage and Empower. She noted that through the enabling, engaging and empowering of diaspora members, diaspora become agents for development.

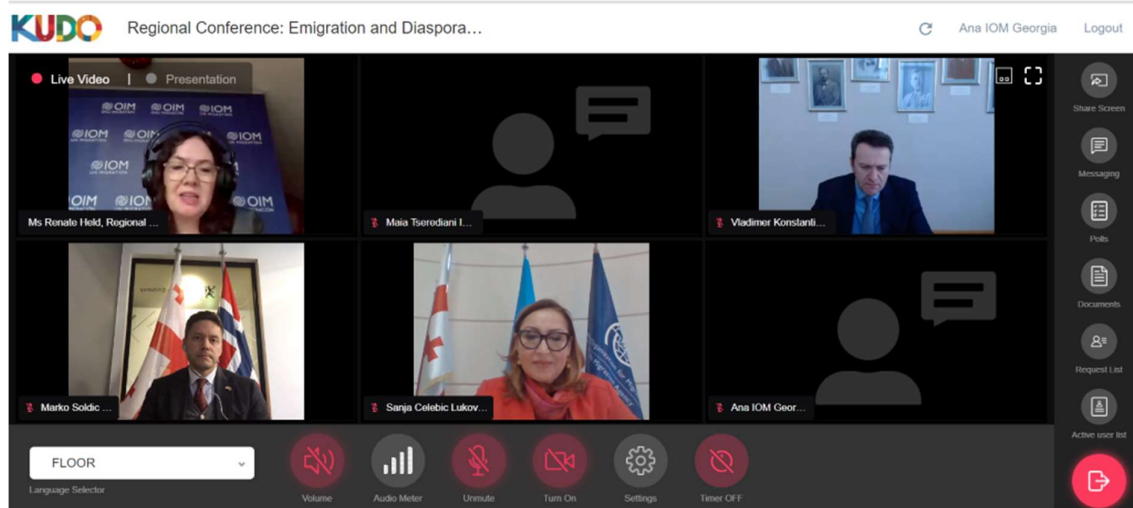


Photo 1: Introductory Remarks from (top left clockwise) Renate Held, Regional Director IOM Regional Office for South – Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; Vladimir Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia; Sanja Celebic Lukovac, Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia; Marko Soldic, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Norway in Georgia.



1.3 Keynote Presentation – Kingsley Aikins – CEO, The Networking Institute

Kingsley Aikins, CEO of The Networking Institute, opened his keynote address reminding the conference participants that diaspora engagement is a non-competitive sector, and those participating in the conference have so much to learn from each other, with ideas, initiatives and events that can be adapted as required in different country contexts. He stated: “One of the interesting elements of Diaspora Engagement is that it is a non-competitive sector so we should connect, communicate and collaborate as much as possible. I joke that I am a founding member of an organization called C.A.S.E which stands for ‘copy and steal everything.’ Figure out which countries are doing this well and see what programmes and projects could be ‘stolen’ and adapted for your own country.”

Drawing on some historical references to the origins of diaspora, Kingsley Aikins reminded the conference participants we are all diaspora that can trace our origins back to Africa. Diaspora is derived from two Greek words – *dia* meaning over and *speiro* meaning scattering, first used with reference to the exile of the Jews from Babylon in the 5th Century BC and for a very long time was used exclusively by Jews and Israel. Now, however, the word has gone mainstream, with over 100 countries, cities and regions talking about their diasporas. In a wider sense, organizations also have diasporas such as universities, referred to as *alumni*. Companies have diasporas and sports teams have diasporas.

He noted that all diaspora initiatives—like companies—all start small and with partnership and momentum can build success. He cited examples from the business world, including Steve Jobs, son of a Syrian migrant and his friend, Steve Wozniak, who built their first computer in a garage in Silicon Valley and so was born Apple Computers. The same is true of diaspora organizations and Kingsley Aikins offered the example of The Ireland Funds an organization he worked for over 20 years: “it started with a fundraising dinner in New York that was so unsuccessful that the only reason we had a second dinner a year later was to pay for the first dinner! However, that is over 600 million United States dollars ago and from that inauspicious start the organization grew to be active in 39 cities in 13 countries running over 100 events a year attended by over 20,000 people annually.”

He noted that while migration can conjure up negative connotations and imagery, diaspora has a much more positive image, despite the fact diaspora is created by migration. He reminded the conference: “Migration disperses people; Diaspora connects them back.” The word diaspora has now crept into common parlance and an important moment was in 2011 when *The Economist* had a front cover article entitled: [“The Magic of Diasporas”](#) which talked about the power of migrant business networks, written by the Business Editor of the Economist Robert Guest. Last year, he followed up that article with another cover article with the title [“The Magic of Migration.”](#)

In his address he referenced [Professor Anne Marie Slaughter of Princeton University](#), a champion for diaspora engagement from the time she worked in the US State Department under the Clinton Administration with the following quotation:

The vertical world of hierarchies has been replaced by a horizontal world of networks. In this world the measurement of power is connectedness. Networked power comes from the ability to make the maximum number of valuable connections and success comes from collecting the best ideas from around the world. Key is centrality in a dense global web—the country, region, city with the best and most connections will survive and thrive. The world is more a mosaic than a melting pot. Now, where you are from, means where you can, and do, go back and who you know well enough to network with and trust.



Diasporas represent globally distributed networks of trusted contacts.²

Kingsley Aikins spoke about the importance of networks: “The information age is over. We now live in the networked age. And in the networked age the measurement of power is connectedness. Success comes from connecting the best ideas from around the world.” He noted that there are three fundamental questions to ask about your diaspora: Who are they? Where are they? What are they doing? He reminded conference delegates of the mutually beneficial value proposition: Think first of what you can do for your diaspora rather than what your diaspora can do for you.

He recognized the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic can present. However, he reinforced the opportunities of our highly connected, online networked world and how this makes connecting with diaspora connections around the world much easier than ever before. He queried the commonly used phrase ‘social distance’ and suggested the replacement of ‘physical distance’ as even in these times we should remain socially engaged, especially to diaspora communities.

Alongside the challenges, Kingsley Aikins argued the pandemic presented some opportunities, including the benefits of connecting virtually. There are few geographic restrictions to this online, free connections and it even takes less time, energy and money to do so. More people are spending time online than ever before in history and everyone is currently available because they are working from home and are restricted in their movements. LinkedIn has the work experience and educational details of over 700 million people, and this means it is even easier today to find out information about our diaspora.

Diasporas are now more important than ever, Kingsley Aikins argued, as they represent soft power. Professor Joseph Nye of Harvard University pioneered the concept of soft power and wrote a [book](#)³ with the same name. Power is the ability to get what you want. Soft Power is about a country achieving its goals through attraction rather than coercion. Kingsley cited an example from Nye’s book from the Second World War which represents Hard Power and the Marshall Plan which represents Soft Power. Soft Power is made up of a country’s culture, political values and policies. Diasporas Soft Power can be converted into hard impacts; Seduction is always more effective than coercion.

Countries, in varying degrees, possess Diaspora Capital which Kingsley Aikins defined as “the overseas resources available to a country, region, city or organization and are made up of flows of people, knowledge and finance.”⁴ The potential exists for strategies to be developed and policies, programmes and projects launched. He reminded the conference delegates that the sheer size of diasporas is important. In 1990, there were 150 million people living outside the country they were born in – now that number is 280 million. If it were a country it would be the fifth largest country in the world. Technology has made the connection with people so easy: What were once ‘lost actors’ can now become ‘national assets.’ People are connecting instantaneously, constantly and continuously. They are keeping closely aware of what is happening back in their home countries, living ‘hyphenated and transnational’ lives as say American-Irish, Australian-Greek, Canadian-Georgian. He argued that geography is history: Geography no longer dictates your identity, it is more important what you do than where you are, especially acute during these times of remote working. He argued that nations that lost the most to emigration are in a position to benefit the most from their large multi-generational diasporas.

² Slaughter, A.M. (2017). *The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in a Networked World*. London: Yale University Press. ([link](#))

³ Nye, J. (2009) *Soft Power. The Means To Success In World Politics*. New York: Perseus Books Group. ([Link](#))

⁴ See the attached Diaspora Capital Wheel in the presentation section of the Appendix.



Characteristics of Diasporas

Kingsley Aikins explained that Diasporas have some unique characteristics that help when investing in their home countries:

- They are highly motivated despite the challenges of investing back home and they invest emotionally in their projects.
- They have knowledge and expertise globally and locally
- They have financial resources
- They have access to networks of 'affluence and influence'
- They want to bring to their home countries the techniques, values, attitudes and mores that made them successful in their host countries.

There is a difference between the State and the Nation – the State being about lines on a map and the Nation being a global notion. Diasporas can help countries promote their 'Nation Brand'. There is a hierarchy of involvement to diaspora engagement which often starts with remittances and extends to philanthropy, business investment, education, cultural and sporting involvements until it reaches a stage where the Diaspora can fundamentally change the institutions and structures of their home country.

The keynote address also outlined why diaspora engagement initiatives sometimes fail:

- The initial fireworks and enthusiasm for diaspora engagement can fizzle out quickly once the resources are not there to maintain the efforts.
- Sometimes diaspora engagement is viewed too simplistically—it is not a case of getting small amounts of support from many members of diaspora this is often not a realistic prospect.
- Very often diaspora groups are weak, poorly funded, lack governance and dispute amongst themselves or can be driven by a political agenda.
- There can also be a lack of data on the diaspora that can answer the key questions: who are they, where are they and what are they doing?
- There can be a lack of trust by diaspora in the home country
- The role of government is unclear whether as facilitators, implementors, etc.
- There are no specific 'asks and tasks' made of the diaspora. Diaspora sometimes feel that the only time they are approached is when somebody is looking for money.
- Diaspora initiatives sometimes only focus on the most successful in the diaspora and ignore the others.

There is no such thing as, for example, a Georgian Diaspora – there are many-- they are all different and need specific, tailored approaches.

Kingsley Aikins presented an example from his native country of Ireland. He spoke of the emphasis on Irish FDI (foreign direct investment) and how it could be described as DDI (diaspora direct investment). The Irish diaspora were not just important as investing directly into Ireland but in providing introductions to others and being the 'tipping agents' to support the realisation of private sector investment back into Ireland.



Key Points for Successful Diaspora Engagement

Kingsley Aikins also offered the following key points for successful Diaspora Engagement:

1. There needs to be a decision taken that this is an important topic and resources in terms of time, finance and staff dedicated to it
2. A national strategy should be developed
3. There needs to be an 'all of government' approach – this effort is not just for the Department of Foreign Affairs
4. Programmes need to attract the successful and look after the vulnerable in the Diaspora
5. Diaspora is not necessarily about a country – it is often about a place
6. It is important to identify and involve the business 'rock stars'
7. It is important to help build capacity in Diaspora organizations
8. Be 'hi-tech' and 'hi-touch'
9. Create and manage serendipity bringing 'over-achievers' in the home and host country together
10. Have a programme of 'Asks and Tasks'. If you don't ask you don't get
11. Diasporas don't have to return home to have a big impact
12. As little as twenty people in the Diaspora can have a big impact
13. See Diaspora Philanthropy as a way to benefit from the massive intergenerational transfer of wealth
14. Develop programmes for Baby Boomers and the next generation
15. Look for the Triple Win – a win for the Home Country, a win for the Host Country and a win for the Diaspora member
16. Explore what other countries are doing and look to see what might work for your country

He concluded by pointing out that if governments are serious about diaspora engagement it requires the investment of resources and an all-of-government approach and also decision if other external stakeholders would be involved in diaspora initiatives: "You have to listen to the diaspora, listen to what they say, decide what you can give them. Diaspora engagement is not about a country. It is about a place. People are very loyal to a city, a county, a region or a village more so than to the entire country—Remittances go to a family not a country. People are very focused on individual wants."

The COVID-19 pandemic means people are working remotely so they could be returning diaspora or in a host country but it is what they are doing—who they are working for—that could provide diaspora investment potential to their country of origin. He called for a global conference on diaspora and viewed this event, examining diaspora from a regional basis and sharing experiences, as a positive step in this direction. In conclusion Kingsley Aikins stated: "My hope is that this short presentation will convince you of the immense potential within your Diaspora and hope you might consider turning this 'Soft Power' into 'Hard Impacts'. There is only one mistake countries can make and that is not to have a strategy to develop this opportunity."



Photo (from top): Maja Wiebler, EMERGE
Project Manager, IOM Georgia;
Kingsley Aikins, CEO of The Networking
Institute and conference keynote speaker.



2 High-Level Panel on Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development

Following the keynote address, Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, assumed the position of moderator for the High-Level Panel on Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development. Alongside the presentation on diaspora engagement from Georgia offered by the Deputy Minister, there were contributions from Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

2.1 Georgia: Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

The Deputy Minister's address began with an exploration of Georgian diaspora in two parts: historical and relatively contemporary diaspora. The latter has emerged after restoration of the independence of Georgia.

As for the new flow of emigrants, the key driving factor was an economic hardship and seeking work opportunities abroad. He noted, unofficially, 1.5 million people have emigrated from Georgia with top destination countries as the Russian Federation, Greece, Ukraine, United States, Turkey, Italy, Germany and Spain.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Department of Diaspora Relations keeps a database of Georgian diaspora organizations as well as individuals to map and communicate with the compatriots residing abroad through regular forums, outreach campaigns, online consultation and webinars. The recently amended Constitution of Georgia includes a special paragraph (Article 5, point 8) to maintain and develop connections with Georgian compatriots residing abroad while the MFA administers a special programme entitled 'United and Strong Diaspora.'

As the Deputy Minister explained in his presentation, Georgia remains open to development including with its diaspora, even more important with the continuous challenges the COVID-19 pandemic poses to the country's economy. Therefore, Georgia maintains a favourable investment climate, reflected in the international institutions' ratings, for example, as 7th position, out of 190 countries, in the World Bank's 'Doing Business 2020' ranking, demonstrating the ease of doing business in the country.

Georgia has established a business-friendly environment. The country maintains preferential trade regimes, with further trade liberalization in the world's leading markets and Free Trade Agreements covering a 2.3 billion consumer market. In addition, the Deputy Minister described Georgia as a favourable investment location with a simple tax system and a service-oriented customs policy and administration. He outlined various financial incentives, including [Free Industrial Zones \(FIZ\)](#) operated by private companies, whereby companies producing goods in FIZ are exempt from all taxes except Personal Income Tax at 20 per cent derived from employees' salaries. Free Tourism Zones were also established to develop the tourism infrastructure, responding to the higher tourist volumes in recent years. Manufacturing development is a priority in the government's investment policy including the offer of free non-agricultural land and buildings for factory construction, subsidies for loan interest payment and grants for food processing factories.

To stimulate local and foreign businesses, the Government has created attractive environment through state incentives and funds including:



- A Partnership Fund with a budget of 1.4 billion USD, with participation in a project limited to a 50 per cent minority share. The Fund provides Greenfield as well as Brownfield financing and acts as a silent partner with a predetermined, clear exit strategy;
- A Start-up Support Programme to offer access to finance for innovative projects, as well as supports research and development (R&D) commercialization and technology transfer, with 40 million USD allocated for next 5 years; and
- The Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA), which promotes rural development in Georgia by implementing projects initiated by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia.

He concluded by re-emphasizing the Georgian government's continuous efforts to make all these investment measures accessible and appealing the Georgian diaspora representatives.

2.2 Bulgaria: Milko Berner, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria

Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria Milko Berner began his presentation by emphasizing the potential added value of diaspora for economic development, recognized by both national governments in countries of origin and of destination for migrants. This role is very much related not only to the provision of the workforce, but also to the economic impact of migration – both as direct work in the destination countries and as remittances being sent back to the home countries. He spoke of the enlargement of the diaspora communities internationally and in growth of their contributions by transferring resources, knowledge and know-how back to their home countries.

The Deputy Minister explained there are over 2 million Bulgarians living abroad, leading to depopulation and demographic challenges. The population of Bulgaria is projected to decrease by nearly 25 per cent by 2050. The most significant factor behind this trend is the active use of the rights of freedom of movement within EU after 2007 in continuation of the similar processes of emigration to Western Europe, as well as USA, Canada and others, from the 1990s and 2000s. He noted that due to the recent efforts of the Bulgarian Government, there is a reversal of this trend with more young people returning to the country and successfully integrating in the labour market.

The Government of Bulgaria is working towards filling in the gaps of the labour market in the country by attracting both highly qualified and seasonal workforce from abroad, as well as by keeping in touch with its diaspora worldwide, regularly making them aware of the opportunities arising in their home country. To facilitate entry and return of workforce, Milko Berner outlined active bilateral cooperation with third countries through the conclusion of bilateral agreements both in the area of labour migration regulation (such as agreements with Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia), and in the area of return policy.

Active engagement with diaspora remains a pillar of national migration policy. The Bulgarian government is making efforts to remove obstacles and increase opportunity to engage diaspora in economic development. The Deputy Minister listed some examples of specific actions to foster the strategic relationship with diaspora including the mapping of locations and skills of the diaspora and opening strategic communication channels with diaspora.

He explained that the Ministry of Interior has a central coordination role for national migration policy. This broad policy includes legal and illegal migration, borders and return with the Ministry maintaining an active liaison function with all relevant ministries, agencies, local authorities, academia, international



organizations and NGOs in its effective implementation. To conclude, Milko Berner noted that after the end of the current pandemic restrictions and the times of increased human mobility return to normal, the economic development needs will remain among the main migration triggers which would make the outcomes of this conference even more beneficial—not only in theory, but also in practice.

2.3 The Republic of Moldova: Iulia Costin, General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development, Government of the Republic of Moldova

Iulia Costin commenced her remarks by offering the context of migration in the Republic of Moldova. According to statistics, every day 106 people leave the country permanently, with official data showing that over 800,000 Moldovans are already abroad. She noted migration processes affect the country's economic potential: the labour market along with the public and private sectors which cope with the lack of skilled labour force. In addition, about 42 per cent of the economically active population of the Republic of Moldova is involved in short-term or long-term migration, with remittances representing about 26 per cent of the total GDP.

She explained how the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, together with the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Sector Development (ODIMM) are currently striving to create favourable conditions for the establishment of new SMEs and to growth of the existing ones, including building bridges and deliver opportunities with the diaspora. The National Strategy Diaspora 2025 was developed by the government with the support of IOM and UNDP in the Republic of Moldova. In response to COVID-19 crisis, the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure has adopted an Action Plan with specific measures of economic rehabilitation, ODIMM playing a key role in its implementation.

For more than 13 years, ODIMM has supported SMEs in the Republic of Moldova, creating partnerships, exchanging experience between countries and providing financial and training support to companies. Iulia Costin outlined that ODIMM liaised with 140,000 people: out of which more than 80,000 consultancies were offered, 35,000 companies trained, 4,000 companies financed with a total amount of 25 million euro, which generated over 60 million euro investment in the national economy and more than 8,000 jobs. ODIMM has become a trustworthy partner for international organizations.

She outlined the role ODIMM plays in implementing, together with the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, the [Programme for Attracting Remittances in Economy PARE 1 + 1](#) a highly in-demand instrument. Launched in 2010, the programme assisted around 2,000 migrants and their relatives to develop a business at home. As a core priority and next step, with the technical assistance and financial support of the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, Iulia Costin outlined the intention to extend the format of PARE 1+1 by adding the donor community and the local public authorities to the formula, to add further growth to the entrepreneurship options in the Republic of Moldova and for the Moldovan diaspora.

2.4 Taras Kachka, Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine

Taras Kachka, Deputy Minister for Economic Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine outlined that the country had a long history of relations with the Ukrainian diaspora, including over 100 years of diaspora across North America and Europe along with recent waves of legal migration to the EU. He noted the similar general trends of labour migration and economic development involving diaspora across the region are also similar in the Ukraine.



He spoke of the economic challenges of recent years in Ukraine and the opportunity that labour migration policy can play to build diaspora engagement for business and economic development. The stabilisation of the economy and the equalisation of salaries in Ukrainian companies, compared to neighbouring countries led to a flow of Ukrainian diaspora back into the country. The bottlenecks at the border before and after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown illustrating the seasonal and temporary migration to and from Ukraine.

The Deputy Ministry explained that the Government of Ukraine operates a licensing system to regulate the 400 companies that offer services for employment abroad. Over 60,000 Ukrainian citizens are placed in employment in Poland, Germany and the UK along with in trade shipment work. Therefore, as labour migration continues, the dialogue between neighbouring states and in the region remains a priority for the labour and social protection of Ukrainians working abroad.

3 Thematic Session I: Facilitating Diaspora Investment & Job Creation

Giorgi Khishtovani, the Research Director of the Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG), Georgia offered some introductory remarks as the panel moderator, to open Thematic Session I. Despite the growing evidence of migration's varied effects on development, the perception of remittances as the main, and perhaps only, mechanism of migration's developmental impact on origin countries persists today. He noted that this view contributes to a simplistic understanding of the link between migration and development. The Thematic Session I moderator asserted three major mechanisms through which migration influences development in sending countries: remittances, return migration and diaspora engagement. He introduced the Thematic Session I as an opportunity to view diaspora investment and job creation from the perspective of business diaspora organizations and through the lens of state policy interventions.

3.1 Setting the Context: Introduction of Different Models of Leveraging Remittances and Diaspora Investment *Michael Newson, Senior Labour and Human Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office in Vienna*

This presentation commenced with Michael Newson offering the context on government objectives and strategies for diaspora investment described under three key themes. First, the influx of financial capital for public development projects and/or private sector growth, such as through Diaspora Bonds or Diaspora Investment Funds. Second, the direct investment through special diaspora status or incentive programmes to grow existing or new businesses. The final theme is the alignment of common investment interests such as diaspora investment in green energy real estate or in sustainability-related projects including energy-efficient home building.

Michael Newson emphasized the importance of creating the right environment for diaspora investment, including alignment of a diaspora engagement strategy with broader economic development objectives. During the question and answer session, he responded to a question related to Diaspora Bonds noting that from a promotional perspective examples of successful diaspora bonds tend to be linked to tangible infrastructure projects (e.g. Israeli diaspora bonds or Ethiopian Renaissance Dam) so diaspora can see their contribution in their country of origin. A Diaspora Bond to service financial debt, while this may seem to be an attractive financial investment for diaspora, does not hold the same emotional connection to place nor does it garner the same potential from diaspora investors.



He navigated through the conditions required to translate diaspora engagement into diaspora investment. Diaspora mapping and research as a preliminary step enables the identification of the types of potential diaspora investors available to be matched to investment projects. By opening a dialogue and building relationships with key prospective diaspora investors, this also facilitates an understanding of the obstacles to their engagement. He noted the focus should be on streamlining or eliminating bureaucratic procedures to build diaspora engagement and investment. Finally, implementing a strategic diaspora communications plan, highlighting key government programmes and initiatives related to investment, raises the awareness among the diaspora that their country of origin is open to business cooperation including diaspora communities.

During the question-and-answer session, Michael Newson offered some additional insights on the mapping of diaspora communities. He described how IOM support the mapping of diaspora, beginning by understanding the government's purpose for wanting to engage with diaspora and what is already known about its diaspora communities and existing diaspora structures or organizations that have developed organically. He spoke of the importance of building trust and cooperation with these existing diaspora groups towards identifying individuals within the diaspora or key mechanisms that would motivate engagement. If the diaspora communities are not well established, Michael Newson reported that a diaspora mapping exercise can rely on interviews, focus groups and census data from countries of destination. He also noted the recent use of big data in diaspora mapping research. He cited the example of the Republic of Moldova that analyzed the location of diaspora and the interests of these diaspora based on traffic to key national Web sites. In addition, Armenia and Georgia have both undertaken onomastic-related analysis, focused on taxonomies of personal name references on open source databases such as ZoomInfo, LinkedIn, business registration databases along with academic databases such as ORCID.

3.2 Diaspora perspective – *Maka Abashidze, Director and Founder, British Georgian Chamber of Commerce*

The goal of the [British Georgian Chamber of Commerce](#), presented by the founder Maka Abashidze, is a one-stop-shop to make commerce easier and more active between the United Kingdom (UK) and Georgia. After outlining there are approximately 25,000 members of the Georgian diaspora in the UK, Maka Abashidze's presentation focused on the [UK-Georgian Trade Hub](#) simplifying trade between the UK and Georgia. She noted that the UK is Georgia's largest trade partner and Georgia offers the UK a gateway into the wider regional markets as a direct result of the absence of customs and import tariffs.

Maka Abashidze explained that starting in December 2020, there is also an opportunity for wholesale purchases through the UK Georgian Trade Hub in advance of the [Free Trade Agreement between the UK and Georgia](#) set to take effect in January 2021. These interventions will also enable for the import specialist Georgian goods into the UK potentially attractive for smaller purchases for restaurants, small shops or start-ups in the UK. She cited an example of the proliferation of Georgian wine now available in 60 merchant shops and restaurants throughout the UK. She outlined the opportunities that the Free Trade Agreement between UK and Georgia will offer, beginning in 2021, especially in educating British companies, such as the clothing manufacturing sector, that investing in Georgia can bring the two countries closer together for mutually beneficial results.



3.3 Diaspora perspective – Zenon Poticzny, President of Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, Vice President of Ukrainian World Congress

Zenon Poticzny shared with the conference the 28-year history of the [Canada Ukraine Chamber of Commerce \(CUCC\)](#) as a business gateway between Canada and the Ukraine. CUCC promotes and facilitates trade and investment between Canada and Ukraine, creates forums for networking, communication and learning, and is a respected voice for governments and key sectoral agencies. He also outlined the work of the [Ukrainian World Congress](#), a worldwide international NGO established in 1967 as the global voice representing over 20 million Ukrainian diaspora communities in 60 countries.

The [Canada-Ukraine Free Trade agreement \(CUFTA\)](#), entered into force in 2017, immediately eliminated tariffs on 86 per cent of Canadian merchandise exports. CUFTA strengthens the Canada-Ukraine partnership for peace and prosperity, contributing to long-term security, stability, and broad-based economic development in Ukraine.

His presentation offered details on the five-year [Canada-Ukraine Trade and Investment Support \(CUTIS\)](#) project that began in 2016 as a development assistance initiative undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada. The CUTIS project aims to reduce poverty and increase sustainable economic growth in Ukraine through the expansion of Ukrainian exports to Canada, supporting Ukrainian SMEs and the encouragement of Canadian investment in Ukraine. The cumulative value of SME exports from Ukraine to Canada from CUTIS to date is over 3 million CAD (1.9 million euro). To date, the cumulative value of investments from Canada to Ukraine through the CUTIS project is 285.75 million CAD (183 million euro). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CUTIS project has pivoted to offer virtual buyer and trade missions, including 18 virtual business matching events attended by 19 Ukrainian SMEs.

3.4 Moldovan state policy on stimulating diaspora engagement for local development projects and investments – Violina Donu, Diaspora Relations Bureau, Government of the Republic of Moldova

The presentation by Violina Donu focused on state policy challenges in stimulating diaspora engagement successfully linked to the development of local communities. She emphasized a whole-of-government approach (WOGA) in diaspora engagement, from building the capacity of diaspora and diaspora communities to the creation of partnerships to stimulate active participation of diaspora in the development of their communities of origin. Established in 2012, the role of Diaspora Relations Bureau within State Chancellery is to coordinate state diaspora, migration and development policies, including the [National Strategy “Diaspora 2025”](#) and the plan for the reintegration of returned citizens.

Violina Donu outlined two key Government programmes and activities for diaspora in cooperation with the UNDP in the Republic of Moldova and Swiss Cooperation Office in the Republic of Moldova: first the [“DAR 1 + 3” Diaspora Home Succeeds Programme](#) and finally the [Diaspora Engagement Hub](#). The purpose of these programmes is to strengthen local government authorities’ activities for diaspora involvement in local development. She offered some additional information on the Diaspora Engagement Hub, launched in 2015, distributed over 100 grants for innovative projects and activities that the transfer of skills, knowledge and international experience of diaspora for the academic, social and economic development of the Republic of Moldova. During the question and answer period of the conference, Violina Donu added details on the call for such grants based on key themes, such as



youth initiatives. The projects, for two weeks to two months in duration, are promoted to the diaspora through social media, existing diaspora databases held by the government authorities and key national web sites.

In her conclusion, Violina Donu presented the value of diaspora associations as think tanks in the transfer of useful experiences and international best practices in various sectors to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country of origin. She noted that diaspora associations have demonstrated an appetite in investment and entrepreneurship opportunities at a national level, and, at a local level, in development projects for their hometown regions. At the same time, the state policy for diaspora must be oriented to offer capacity building for diaspora association to consolidate and maximize their potential impact on their country of origin and country of destination.

3.5 Diaspora perspective – Vitaliy Milentyev, Partner and Portfolio Manager at Cornerstone Investment Counsel, Supervisory Board Member at the National Depository of Ukraine

Vitaliy Milentyev’s presentation focused on the [Alberta Ukraine Chamber of Commerce \(AUCC\)](#), promoting the business cooperation between the province in western Canada and Ukraine. Alberta has one of the largest Ukrainian diaspora communities in Canada. The AUCC provides opportunities for business connections, market information and opportunities for exchange of business expertise and learning while also advocating for government policies and practice of importance to business. Some business sectors of mutual interest include conventional energy (oil and gas) and alternative energy (solar and wind), agriculture and food products, construction materials and information technology.

He focused his remarks on the role of Ukrainian diaspora to support the development of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and institutional investment to develop Ukraine’s economic potential. Vitaliy Milentyev concluded his presentation noting the investment is proven to be more complex than trade and integral part of diaspora engagement is the effective promotion of private sector development in the Ukraine.

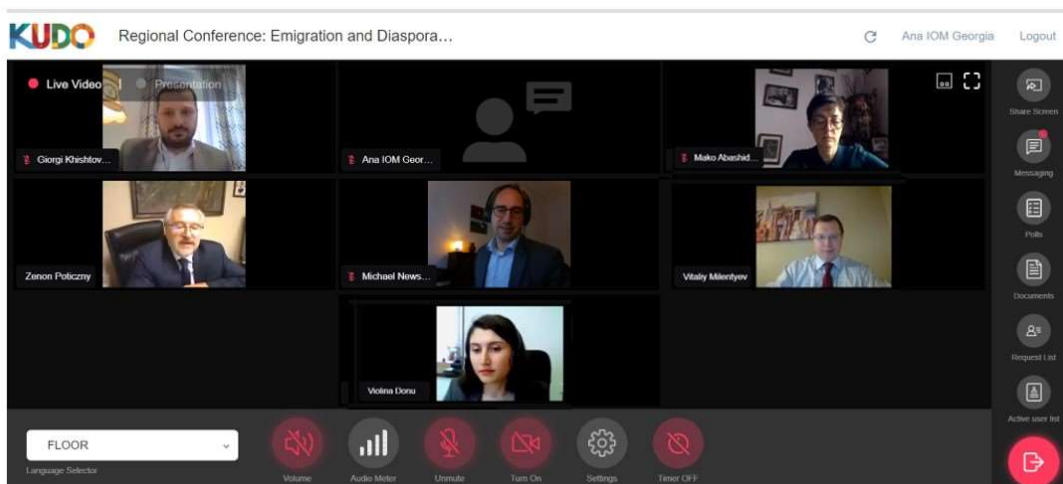


Photo from Thematic Session I (top row left to right): Giorgi Khistovani; Maka Abashidze; (middle row) Zenon Poticzny; Michael Newsen; Vitaliy Milentyev; (bottom row) Violina Donu



4 Thematic Session II: Facilitating Return Migration to Meet Labour Market Needs

Thematic Session II addressed the role of institutions, policy, and programming in supporting return and connecting returnees to the labour market and supporting private sector development. The session was opened by Michaella Vanore, research fellow at the University of Maastricht. In her moderator role she outlined how perceptions and frames used to understand the role of migrants and diaspora on labour markets may focus on simple metrics, for example, the absence of young workers paying into social protection systems. Yet impacts or potential consequences of migrants and diaspora members on the resilience and potential growth of local economies and labour markets can be more subtle and nuanced. She noted the role of knowledge exchange, including through mentoring, training, and other forms of capacity development for those returning for short or longer-term periods. Such knowledge exchange may be facilitated informally through diaspora activity or formally by inter-governmental organizations or governments. However, the issue of knowledge asymmetries—the lack of connection of diasporas/migrants to local institutions and opportunities—emphasizes the role of institutions and policies in supporting these connections.

4.1 Setting the Context – Michael Newson, IOM Regional Office in Vienna

Michael Newson presented information on the relevant demographic developments leading to labour market shortages in the region including the declining labour market projections for the region, due to the aging population, low fertility rates and large-scale mobility of migrants. The current and forecasted labour market shortages and dependency ratios to reach or exceed 50 per cent continue to put a strain on the labour market. He noted the 'brain drain' is not only the highly skilled in the labour market but among the medium skilled and those in rural areas. The rural to urban migration also creates inter-regional and seasonal migration.

He discussed international examples of large-scale seeking out of large number of returnees with varying skills, with the incentive of improved job opportunities and salaries, such as the Japanese programmes for diaspora return from second and third generation Japanese in Brazil. Other government programmes target the return of highly skilled diaspora matching to key identified labour market needs and development objectives. He cited the Chinese Thousand Talents Programme as one such targeted initiative to attract the return of highly skilled diaspora.

To best leverage spontaneous return involves preparation including information and referral services, the recognition of education qualifications from abroad and job matching programmes. The COVID-19 pandemic means countries within the region, and globally, have seen large-scale diaspora returns. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a further growth in remote work and companies are rethinking long-term workforce structures. This presents opportunities for countries of origin, with the appropriate infrastructure—IT Hubs and shared workspaces—to draw back young and talented migrant groups who work remotely.

4.2 Presentation by Sandra Pralong, State Adviser in the Department for the Relations with Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania

At the start of her presentation, entitled 'Diaspora as Developmental Capital', Sandra Pralong outlined the diaspora context of Romania: 22 per cent of the population lives abroad with the effects of mobility largest foreign investor 2 per cent of GDP with 3 billion euro in 2019. Although Romania experienced labour shortages prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now an influx of returning workers to



the country. Reintegration programmes, involving cooperation between international agencies, civil society organizations and initiatives such as RePatriot, focus on the economic and social fabric of the country matching employment alongside educational, health and housing programme services.

Sandra Pralong spoke of diaspora governance with reference to the [Department of Romanians Abroad](#), and the need for legislation to broaden the portfolio of the Department beyond cultural and identity matters. The government approach is to focus on the assets of the diaspora, recognizing that some risk-averse diaspora requires mentorship or training to venture into business and entrepreneurship. She noted the importance of knowing the diaspora, to build trust towards the modernisation of the country. By empowering civil society actors to facilitate networks of Romanians diaspora professionals (e.g. entrepreneurs, professors, artists) there is the potential for the transfer such as the “soft engagement” including knowledge, experience and confidence-building measures to business in Romania and abroad.

Sandra Pralong described the interagency approach to migration and diaspora matters as the ‘coalition of the willing.’ She concluded her remarks by presenting information on the government’s role in supporting the vulnerable in society that are often the consequence of labour migration including the elderly and children left behind. During the question and answer session she revisited this concept noting the Romanian experience of broad stakeholder involvement in key migration issues, citing the example of a working group on the children left behind due to migration that includes multiple ministries, civil society organizations, international agencies thus creating a coalition that has a stake in the progress and resolution of work of this group.

4.3 Presentation by Marius Bostan, RePatriot Project, Romania

RePatriot is a platform aimed at facilitating access of Romanians abroad to economic opportunities in their country of origin by providing support, counselling, mentoring, business education. Marius Bostan introduced the project to the conference, outlining its aims to bring back Romanians working abroad to their country of origin through entrepreneurship. He explained the initiative was established by the Romanian business leaders to foster relationships, trust and opportunities between Romania and its diaspora from all over the world. The Annual RePatriot Business Summit event offers plenary sessions, dialogue, networking and creativity along with informal meetings organized for different sector to create strategic partnerships.

The broader RePatriot brand, facilitated through the main [RePatriot Web site](#) and App, provides Romanians abroad to have a single window environment with information to return to their country of origin. Key information on employment (RePatriot Jobs) or on support services, such as RePatriot Medical, are some examples of the broad breadth of topics covered that may be of interest to those considering returning to Romania to live and work. RePatriot Diaspora Days connect all Romanian diaspora as the country’s greatest underutilized asset and greatest investor in business. He highlighted the success stories of stewardship and mentorship that enabled Romanians to successfully return to the country.

4.4 Engaging Bulgarian diaspora to return to address labour market needs – Hristo Simeonov, Secretary of the National Council on Labour Migration and Labour Mobility, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria

In starting his presentation, Hristo Simeonov described migration as a horizontal topic with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy working in a cross-cutting manner with other government



ministries and agencies. He outlined the legal and institutional framework that underpins the work on migration and diaspora engagement in Bulgaria. He noted that government ministries and agencies involved in diaspora and migration are numerous, including the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad with functions towards historical diaspora, contact with diaspora organizations and fostering cultural, educational initiatives and information to Bulgarians abroad.

Relevant laws and codes offered a legal framework to focus on the quality and efficiency of the human capital in circular migration. Returning migration in Bulgaria also focuses on professional returnees such as teachers, engineers and medical staff, where initial emigration was due to higher salaries and standard of living elsewhere. Hristo Simeonov reported that many Bulgarians are exercising their freedom of movement within the EU.

In 2005, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy developed a system of Labour and Social Attachés, geographic in scope based in locations within Europe with a concentration of Bulgarians including Athens, Berlin, Madrid, London and Vienna with secondary phase of such Attachés in Nicosia, Dublin and Bern. The Attachés offer services and information to the largest Bulgarian diaspora communities already existing in the EU. The Labour and Social Attachés have temporary diplomatic status and are situated in the Embassies abroad. These Attachés are anchored in legislation to better regulate its work presented to citizens abroad.

Attachés are directly involved with the diaspora interested in returning to Bulgaria through organizing information days, labour market fairs and career fairs, often segmented into diaspora audiences to appeal to certain skills sets or sectors. In addition, the Attachés have also been enabling Bulgarians to exercise their rights and entitlements where they live. In the question-and-answer session, Hristo Simeonov reinforced the importance of building trust with the Bulgarians abroad to ensure diaspora feels heard and involved, and each Attaché has a website to offer information and contact details to forge further connections. He concluded his presentation by noting that the COVID-19 pandemic led to a pause on the full adoption on an incentive plan for Bulgarians to return to their country of origin, focusing on Bulgarians with higher education qualifications. The Attachés also assist in the identifying key members of the diaspora communities to target with such incentivized programmes.

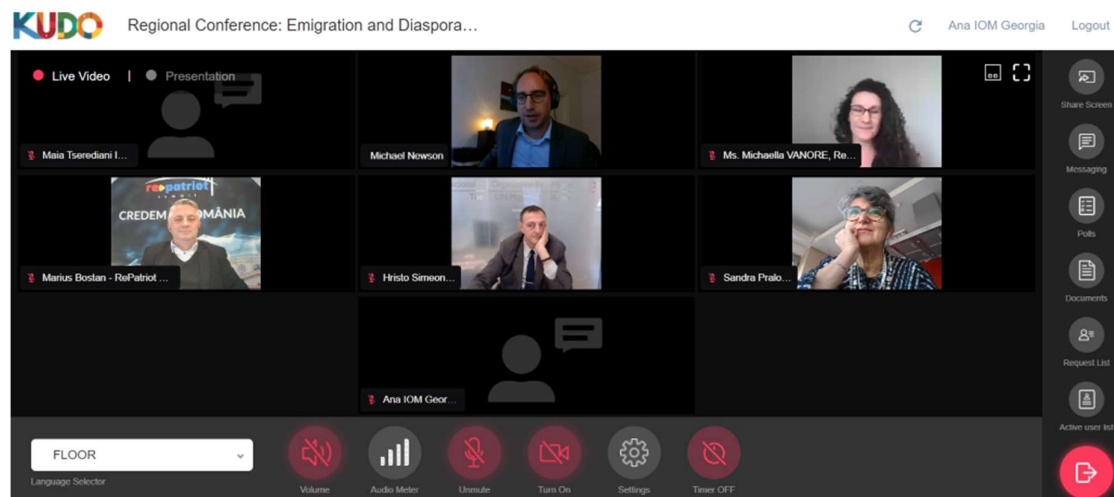


Photo of Thematic Session II (top row, from left to right): Michael Newson; Michaela Vanore; (middle row) Marius Bostan; Hristo Simeonov; Sandra Pralong



5 Day I - Panel Discussion

The final panel discussion of Day I was facilitated by Kingsley Aikins. In his introduction he set the context by drawing on diaspora themes that emerged from the first day of the conference. He reminded the conference that we are in a period of remarkable and rapid change, including change that has occurred even over the last decade. Even before COVID-19 pandemic and even amidst the advent of AI, robotics and other technologies, there remains a business challenge: the attraction and retention of talent. Now as we enter a post-COVID-19 pandemic period, companies will reconfigure workforce structures and employees will re-evaluate their careers, which may include a decision to return home.

There remains the challenge of diaspora engagement for economic development and investment. He cited examples of calling the diaspora home, extending an invitation to the global diaspora such as the [Homecoming in Scotland](#). He also cited the example of [The Gathering in Ireland](#) that created over 5000 events to bring over 300,000 people of Irish heritage back to Ireland, in particular to rural villages across the country. He noted the diaspora are often less about the country and more about a place *in* a country.

As people get older, they reflect more on their engagement with their country of heritage. Kingsley Aikins presented the challenges on how we engage the next generation of diaspora, the children of those who migrated.

Kingsley introduced the panel: Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia; Sandra Pralong, State Adviser in the Department for the Relation with Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania; Marius Bostan, Repatriot Project; and Michael Newson, IOM Regional Office.

5.2 State and Diaspora in the context of COVID-19 – Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

In his short address, Deputy Minister Vladimer Konstantinidi reported that the COVID-19 pandemic caused major shifts in understanding the complexities and challenges with diaspora engagement. The pandemic itself initiated an interagency council headed by the Prime Minister of Georgia, to mobilize responses for diaspora abroad. This support included assisting 23,000 Georgian citizens abroad with the safe return, prioritizing those with special needs. He emphasized the efforts and cooperation between the state and diaspora and the potential to mobilize diaspora in the post-pandemic world.

5.3 Panel Discussion

The panel discussed the common themes that emerged from the conference to date. The importance of diaspora communities not only as investors but re-conceptualising diaspora as potential networkers and advocates. The broader cooperation between private and public sector actors was also a common theme from the day, each playing a role in advancing interests for diaspora business interests and for the countries of origin. There are immense additional learning opportunities between countries who wish to understand further the mechanics of setting up some of these initiatives and how this could be replicated in another country within the region.

Michael Newson reminded the conference delegates that IOM has resources and expertise to develop diaspora engagement. He also suggested that in the region there is potential to leverage resources and create a hub to share experiences and pilot opportunities. Sandra Pralong posed the question: “Diaspora is a progressive force for change and democracy. How do other countries soften the edges



and deal with this resentment and envy that pushes diaspora away from returning because they are met with occasional hostility?” In response, Marius Bostan offered details on an economic mission proposed by members of diaspora called the RePatriot Summit - building a bridge between the country of origin and businesses. [Scale-Out](#), a spin-off of RePatriot supports the scaling of Romanian companies outside the country. This also enables entrepreneurs who already deploy their activities outside of the country to help Romanian business and bring products and services, global. Marius Bostan added that in his experience, the pandemic has also accelerated the trend to come back to Romania including young people working for technology companies to go to the countryside. With excellent internet connections in even rural areas, the option for remote working for a healthy quality of life while combatting rural depopulation.

Michael Newson expanded on his initial point for capacity building for diaspora organizations. Many of these diaspora organizations want to collaborate at an institutional level, with governments and other organizations and scale their work but need support to do so. He cited some examples of including Italy’s [AMICO project](#) training manual to support organizations to better organize, develop a strategy for growth and measure results. Capacity building is also required for government to be able to effectively outreach to their diaspora, Michael Newson noted the cross-governmental cooperation required and how there is a need for a long-term approach. He noted that the IOM can be involved to support the development of capacity in diaspora engagement and help governments be clear about their purpose for diaspora engagement work.

Sandra Pralong commented on the value of events like the conference today, especially if the learning can be captured to share with colleagues in government. In response to Kingsley Aikin’s question on how to engage the next generation of diaspora, Marius Bostan recalled some collaborative initiatives including for connections between student organizations for Romanians who study abroad. They link up youth and mentors through a summer camp, with the hope that with increased government support these initiatives will be expanded as an investment in the future.

The final discussion of Day I focused on changing the narrative about migration and diaspora engagement. The panel discussed the interest in employing big data to identify key members of the diaspora to build a valuable network. They discussed the opportunity to improve communications between corporations and governments where data can contribute to these conversations. A segmentation of diaspora by profession and then providing a platform to share their experiences is key. Developing not only diaspora based on geography but on trade, business, peer interests to build meaningful, mutually beneficial diaspora engagement.

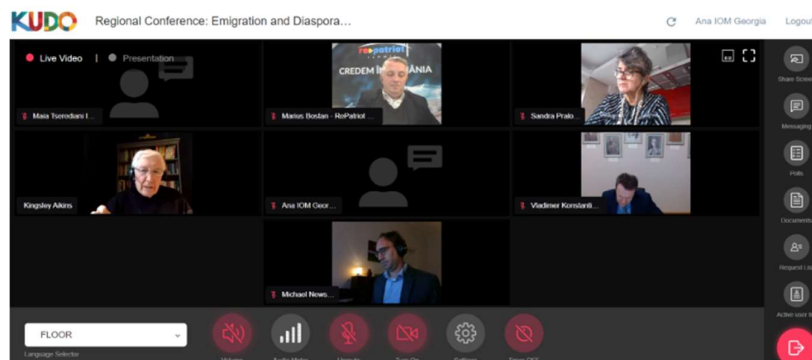


Photo from the Day I Panel (top row): Marius Bostan; Sandra Pralong; (middle row): Kingsley Aikins; Vladimer Konstantinidi; (bottom row): Michael Newson.



6 Day II: Thematic Session III: Engaging Diaspora to Support Trade, Professional Networks & Business Development

Natalia Nemyliwska, the Director of the Economic Prosperity and Investment Committee (EPIC) of the Ukrainian World Congress commenced the second day of the conference introducing the third thematic session. In her role as panel moderator, she described the conference as an opportunity of bringing together diasporas from the region to explore “the 3Cs”—collaborate, cooperate and connect—towards timely and practical discussions and valuable insights.

6.1 Presentation of the Diaspora Forum event and methodology used to identify diaspora, and other stakeholders – Mariam Keburia, Attaché, Department of Relation with Diaspora, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

The presentation by Mariam Keburia, Attaché in the Department of Relation with Diaspora- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia centred around the programmes and practices to reach out to the Global Georgians. She outlined the efforts of diaspora community organizations to promote Georgian culture, language and history abroad through events and activities. The government database is a valuable resource for these diaspora organizations to be able to widely disseminate their activities and events.

The Ministry also holds information on the prominent Georgian research community and professionals from various sectors. Mariam Keburia noted the government administers an [annual reward programme](#) with [the support of ICMPD](#), to both recognize the contribution of these Global Georgians and regularly update the data on highly skilled, high profile diaspora.

To maintain dialogue with the diaspora and integrate their feedback into local initiatives, Mariam Keburia offered details on the annual [Diaspora Day](#) and [Georgian Diaspora Forum](#) with key sessions on business and economics, education, culture and the diaspora media. She also outlined the [GDA portal](#), supported by IOM, a virtual single window environment for the Georgian diaspora to offer information on investment, business and private sector activities, updated information on COVID-19 along with a map of [Georgian diaspora organizations](#). She also outlined a recently launched [Grants for Georgian diaspora organizations](#) to design actions and activities to help other Georgian communities abroad – aimed on mitigating and addressing hardship from COVID-19—with 49 initiatives supported by the MFA to date. In conclusion, Mariam Keburia spoke about the Young Ambassador Programme which creates an opportunity for the youth living or studying abroad to become Ambassadors for a one year period, to organize events and promote cultural activities while abroad.

6.2 Diaspora engagement – Natia Kvitsiani, National Programme Officer, IOM Georgia

Natia Kvitsiani presented on the Georgia Diaspora Mapping project, supported by the EU, with the aim to know the diaspora, by employing a large commercial and open-data source employing Namsor, a big data mining software for onomastic analysis.⁵ She reported that over 94,000 individual data files of Georgian diaspora were collected initially from five professional academic, research and business portals (ORCID – Scientists ; DOAJ – Articles & Scientists, PUBMED - Life Scientists & Affiliations, GB Companies House - UK Company Details and ZoomInfo – businesspersons). Following some data

⁵ Natia Kvitsiani explained onomastic analysis is the study of the history and origin of personal names, categorizing them with various taxonomies, e.g. gender, linguistic and cultural origin.



filtering and cleansing, 2,000 individual diaspora profiles emerged from a wide geographic distribution, primarily in Europe and across various professions and sectors.

She explained the next stage of the project was the outreach to the newly identified members of the diaspora via e-mail or LinkedIn with clear messaging on the purpose for the contact. Next, members of the diaspora were sent a questionnaire to gather information on their current connection to Georgia and to understand their attitudes, perceptions and priorities regarding MSME development, investment related prospects and/or professional engagement opportunities in Georgia. The Diaspora Business Forum, scheduled in January 2021, is an action to offer comprehensive information on opportunities for doing business and investing in Georgia, including business development support programmes, access to financing and services offered by the State and non-state actors. The aim of the Diaspora Business Forum is to stimulate discussion and cooperation among the Georgian diaspora in local MSME development projects or in establishing business to business (B2B) networking.

6.3 Engaging Skilled Representatives of Diaspora in the Country Development – Karinée Khojayan, Project Coordinator, IOM Armenia

Karinée Khojayan informed the conference delegates that Armenia has one of the largest and oldest diaspora populations in the world, with 8 to 10 million people of Armenian descent living in over 100 countries. With over a century of diaspora involvement in Armenia's development, the main areas of engagement are charitable and cultural activities along with ad hoc scientific and investment projects. She also noted that remittances from diaspora exceed 11 per cent of nominal GDP of Armenia. For more than 20 years, the government of Armenia has prioritized diaspora engagement, through the coordination in the Office of High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Prime Minister's Office and through policy, including Armenian Transformation Strategy 2050. During this time, six Armenia Diaspora Forums have been established by the government.

Two recently completed studies, the Armenian Diaspora Survey and the Armenian Diaspora Online Survey captured the demographics and opinions of the global Armenian diaspora. Karinée Khojayan reported on the IOM mapping of skilled Armenian diaspora, centred in France and the USA, through big data onomastic research tools, focusing on the skills, education and professions of diaspora. The ZoomInfo database of over 156 million records, identified over 270,000 records of professional and business profiles with reference to Armenian diaspora. ORCID, with 5.2 million records, identified 27,000 records of academic significance related to the Armenian diaspora. She offered a detailed overview of the results of this mapping exercise, demonstrating, for instance, that almost 23 per cent of the records linked to medical, nursing and health sciences professionals and almost 18 per cent of the Armenian records relate to professions in biology, biochemistry and natural sciences. The top countries of the Armenian diaspora include Russian Federation and the United States.

She described the pilot of the Armenian diaspora mapping exercise during the first few weeks of the COVID-19 outbreak. Part of this pilot included two videoconferences organized between leading Armenian doctors and radiologists with Armenian diaspora medical specialists at New York University in the United States and School of Medicine of Paris Descartes University in France on the request of the Armenian Ministry of Health. Karinée Khojayan concluded her presentation by reinforcing that diaspora engagement will remain the priority of the government in partnership with IOM. She noted the role of diaspora as accelerators [across all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) in Armenia, with a focus on [Goal 17: 'Partnerships for the Goals.'](#)



6.4 Presentation on Professional Networking and Business Development – Gayatri Kanth, Project Manager, International Organization of Employers

Gayatri Kanth, noted that [International Organization of Employers \(IOE\)](#), is the world's largest private sector network with over 150 member federations in nearly 148 countries, representing more than 50 million companies. The IOE offers three types of services to its members: advocating, convening and capacity building for sustainable development and promoting responsible business conduct. Her approach to the conference theme concentrated on how emigration and diaspora should be part of the larger discussion on the labour migration governance issues. She argued the benefits of diaspora either through remittances or through knowledge transfer can have best impact if the migration happens in a regular and predictable manner.

She discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has virtually stopped global mobility, resulting in huge repatriation of migrant workers, largely low skilled. The ban on issuance of visas to highly skilled workers, or the renewal of existing visas impacted the movement of highly skilled workers as well. Some countries of origin are faced with the task of reintegrating returnee migrants in the domestic labour market, which highlights the importance of predicting and understanding the national skills shortages, skills requirement and skills availability.

Gayatri Kanth noted that two goals in particular of the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) are relevant to this conversation. First, [Target 8.8 – Protect Labour Rights and Promote Safe Work Environments](#) that states: “Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment” and [Target 10.7 – Responsible and Well-Managed Policies](#) which calls for “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well managed migration policies.”

In posing the question: “what does this mean to business and how does it influence the discussion on tapping diaspora to promote business development,” she argued there are two priority issues in response. First, a well-managed migration fulfils personal aspirations, balances the labour market demand and supply, sparks innovation, enables transfer of skills. When migration is regulated, it is easier for countries of origin to collect data on the type of skills— high, medium, low— which are leaving the country. Second, she noted the importance of addressing skills shortages and skills development given that the skills requirements are changing constantly with the technological advances. In a recent IOE-Deloitte study, [Future Skills Assessment Report](#), one of the key lessons learned from the pandemic crisis on skills development was the need for agility, where new ways are tested and adopted or discarded. Adaption and adoption will be two critical skills in the future of work. She also cited [Work for a Brighter Future](#), the International Labour Organization (ILO) Global Commission on the Future of Work report: “Technological advances—artificial intelligence, automation and robotics—will create new jobs, but those who lose their jobs in this transition may be the least equipped to seize the new opportunities. Today's skills will not match the jobs of tomorrow and newly acquired skills may quickly become obsolete.” She argued that a government-private sector dialogue can predict the skills needs and availability in the short-medium-long term. Such discussion will also give the necessary intelligence on the labour migration policies which have a direct impact on the economic and business development of the country. She also noted that the higher educated the migrants are, the better the diaspora: stronger, educated, wealthy and more linked to the country of origin.

Gayatri Kanth also outlined the importance of whole-of-government approach in formulating the labour migration governance. There is a need to consult with the Ministries of Labour; Foreign Affairs;



Skills Development; Education; Interior; Health and Finance; Trade and Commerce; for a holistic approach. She also advocated for a whole-of-society approach, including a multi-stakeholder consultation including the private sector, that can give the necessary intelligence on these policies which have a direct impact on the economic and business development of the country.

She concluded by outlining ways the private sector, especially federations, can engage with the diaspora including: liaise with the government at national or province level on diaspora engagement initiatives; find ways of reducing costs of remittance transfers through use of technology—like mobile transfers; provide technology transfer and knowledge to MSMEs; ensure access to investment-related information through a single-window system; explore skills matching for the returnees; establish linkages with universities and research institutions; provide scholarships and funding for training and research.

6.5 Q & A and Discussion

In opening the questions and answer and discussion portion of Thematic Session III, Natalia Nemyliwska commented on the need for a coordinated approach to the involvement of the private sector with diaspora engagement. She noted the importance of strengthening institutional mechanisms to lead this coordination in a strategic and structured manner. Drawing on the interventions from the session, coordination is not only a whole-of-government approach but broader to include a whole-of-society approach involving all the relevant stakeholders towards effective diaspora mobilization. Moreover, diaspora engagement cannot be viewed as a short-term activity but a sustained long-term strategy approach to building meaningful relationships to benefit social and economic development.

To illustrate the importance of a whole-of-government and society approach, the discussions centred on mismatch that can occur between the skills gaps in labour and skills development. There is a need for horizontal coordination between ministries to ensure there is strategic alignment in skills policy to match the needs of the labour market and for economic development or other key priorities as identified by government.

7 Country Presentations & Facilitated Discussion

The final session of the conference was moderated by George Jashi, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the State Commission for Migration Issues, Government of Georgia. His introductory remarks centred on two main points: a) examining and exploring the role of a whole-of-government approach (WOGA) within the migration and development (M&D) oriented policy; and b) how the nexus between migration and development is understood in different countries, regions and globally. While speaking on WOGA, it was noted that such an approach can indeed provide with strong basis for establishing a strong nexus between two important spheres—migration and development. For that, as noted in other session, bureaucracy needs to be overcome, to involve wider range of actors—experts, NGOs, academia, private sector and others being part of migratory processes. He also touched upon the impact of, now becoming central, the digital management of migration on WOGA and through it, M&D. The capacities, possibilities and challenges associated with the big data application in migration governance was addressed and discussed. The whole-of-government approach is a theme threading through the session interventions.

George Jashi concluded his entry remarks by Henry Ford's quote that encompasses the role of diaspora (which is a part of M&D policy) and other actors in bigger picture of migration governance within the WOGA: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."



7.1 Swiss Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration – Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet, State Secretariat for Migration, Government of Switzerland

Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet, opened her presentation by stating that although the underlying causes of migration – poverty, war, human rights violations, economic crises and climate change – remain essentially unchanged, the scale and global implications of migration have increased its complexity.

She outlined the overarching principles of Switzerland foreign policy on migration as a comprehensive, partnership and whole-of-government approach. Switzerland takes a partnership approach to the successful management of migration flows, in cooperation with countries of origin and transit. Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet noted that these range from general dialogues on migration to a series of international agreements on re-admission, migration cooperation, visa facilitation, visa exemption for holders of diplomatic service or special passports, visa waiver programmes and trainee programmes, to complete migration partnerships.

In 2011, the Federal Council was set up the [Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration](#) (ICM Structure) to coordinate the migration-related activities and ensure coherence in migration foreign policy. The IMC Structure brings together key units from the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (FDEAER).

As part of her presentation Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet also described [Migration Partnerships](#) as the flagship key instrument of the Swiss foreign migration policy, which takes into account the interests of all stakeholders. The objective of migration partnerships is to adopt a comprehensive, global approach to migration while taking account of Switzerland's own interests, those of the partner country and those of the migrants themselves (a “win-win-win” approach). Migration partnerships establish a general framework for all aspects of cooperation on migration between Switzerland and the respective partner country, such as through bilateral agreements. In conclusion, she outlined how this Swiss whole-of-government approach improves the conditions to enable migrants to have the largest possible impact. By developing the capabilities of diaspora and migrant organizations with crucial project management skills, they can support and work directly on projects towards further cooperation.

7.2 Country Presentations on Experiences, Interests and Management Structures for Maintaining Communications and Fostering Relations with Diaspora

7.2.1 The development and implementation of the government strategic approach to the migration policy – Hristo Simeonov, Secretary on the National Council of Labour Migration and Labour Mobility, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria

The presentation from Hristo Simeonov navigated the adoption and implementation of migration policy and associated strategic documents over the last decade in Bulgaria. By outlining the full list of migration-related legislation in Bulgaria, he demonstrated the horizontal impact of migration across the government. The development of a comprehensive national migration strategy began in 2006-2007, with a high-level working group that adopted a General Migration Management Framework, outlining all aspects of migration.



The first National Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria on Migration and Integration 2008-2015 was driven by the diaspora and specifically addressed the diaspora, especially historical diaspora. Though this National Strategy focused on legal and labour aspects of migration, it covered all aspects of migration and established the first National Council on Labour Migration. It was followed by a second National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (2011-15) focused on security and the Third National Strategy on the Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection (2014-2020) focused on integration.

He outlined the broad nature of national policies on migration, asylum and integration, which covered areas including border control, visas, irregular migration, trafficking in human beings, diaspora, legal migration and international agency and NGO cooperation. The current National Council on Migration, Borders, Asylum and Integration was established by an Order of the Council of Ministers with membership from all relevant ministries and agencies with the chair and secretariat in the Ministry for Interior. He also noted the establishment of the National Council on Labour Migration and Labour Mobility functioning as a main tripartite body for social dialogue in this area, with membership that includes equal number from the state, employers and employees. He concluded on the ongoing process for the development of a new strategy that draws on the structure from the current strategy and the learning of the process to date.

7.2.2. Overview of the structure of the Romanian diaspora, programmes and policies to facilitate reintegration - *Cristina Robu, Department for Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania*

Cristina Robu presented some context on the trend of emigration among Romanians from the 2019 [OECD Talent Abroad Survey](#), including the high number of women, an increasing proportion of highly educated people and declining number of those previously unemployed involved in migration. Moreover, the report highlights that nine out of ten Romanian emigrants were at working age in 2016, up from only three out of four in 2000. She also noted the return of over 1.2 million Romanians, both permanent and temporary, due to the COVID-19 crisis, out of which it was expected that over 300,000 were searching for employment in Romania upon return.

She reported that returnees are often confronted with fragmented information, bureaucracy and uncoordinated support from both local and central authorities. Information campaigns are an important aspect of the returning process, targeting both the opportunities available in the homeland and all the procedures that need to be completed upon return. The Department for Romanians Abroad created the Return Guide, which includes all the relevant information in the returning and reinsertion process, provided by the competent authorities. The Guide includes information on documents renewal, the enrolment in the medical, educational and social systems, as well as the labour market and business opportunities.

She also outlined the [Diaspora Hub](#) digital platform as an immediate response to the need to help the vulnerable Romanians abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on Italy and Spain as two European countries most impacted by the pandemic. Diaspora Hub is now developing into a large-scale project, with the aim to become an effective instrument in facilitating the reintegration of the returnees and linking the Romanian professionals and researchers from the country and from abroad. She concluded by highlighting the “Brain Gain” section of the site, designed as a meeting point of Romanian professionals and researchers inside and outside the country, interested in collaborating on academic or professional projects.



7.3 Guided discussion on opportunities and challenges to be addressed and areas for potential regional/cross border cooperation/information exchange in facilitating diaspora engagement

The guided discussion began with George Jashi posing a question to the speakers on if and how their national migration strategies are influenced by the [new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). In responding for the government of Switzerland, Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet reported that the main objectives of their migration strategy are revised every four years, and new objectives for 2021-2024, not yet released, are likely to be in line with multi-lateral cooperation with the European Union. Both Bulgaria and Romania, as member states of the EU, are monitoring the development of the proposed EU Pact to inform their national policies.

Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet responded to questions related to examples of the Swiss WOGA approach in practice. She noted that the State secretary on Migration works closely with IOM and that the interventions are country specific but usually include financial assistance for returnees to their home country and project support for social and professional reintegration. To respond to a question on specific private sector projects in the Western Balkans, she explained projects with the private sector are conducted by the Economic Affairs Department with a focus on capacity building with the private sector. Switzerland's focus is on vocation and educational training (VET) with the aim is to increase employability for young people and secondly to improve the conditions for doing business and improve the investment climate.

George Jashi asked the final question to the speakers: Weather or not the WOGA is the central engine of migration and development-oriented state policy and asked to concentrate on how the M&D is understood in respective states? Cristina Robu responded that in terms of migration and development it is crucial that Romanian policies are coherent, attempting to build a whole-of-government approach instead of separate action plans. This enables state bodies to collaborate, from the perspective of migrants as assets, whether they reside at home or abroad. She concluded her comments by stating that the Romanian diaspora community need clarity on what their homeland expects from them – whether at home or abroad, thus a cohesive not fragmented approach to this messaging is the ideal.

In the Swiss context, Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet re-emphasized the importance that government departments work in very close cooperation employing a whole-of-government approach in migration and development, involving all the identified key actors and agencies.

George Jashi offered the perspective from Georgia, explaining that while applying the migration and development policy the most effective way of management proved to be the whole-of-government approach which makes the state able to deal with all branches of modern migration, that nowadays penetrated in and impacted on practically all fields of our everyday life.

With the final response from Hristo Simeonov, he noted his agreement with speaker colleagues, and in the Bulgarian context there is an effort to be inclusive of all stakeholders based on respective roles in migration development and other migration areas. Therefore, Bulgaria takes a holistic approach to migration involving NGOs, academic, media, academics, researchers, to draw on broad perspectives towards the creation of a comprehensive approach to migration policy.

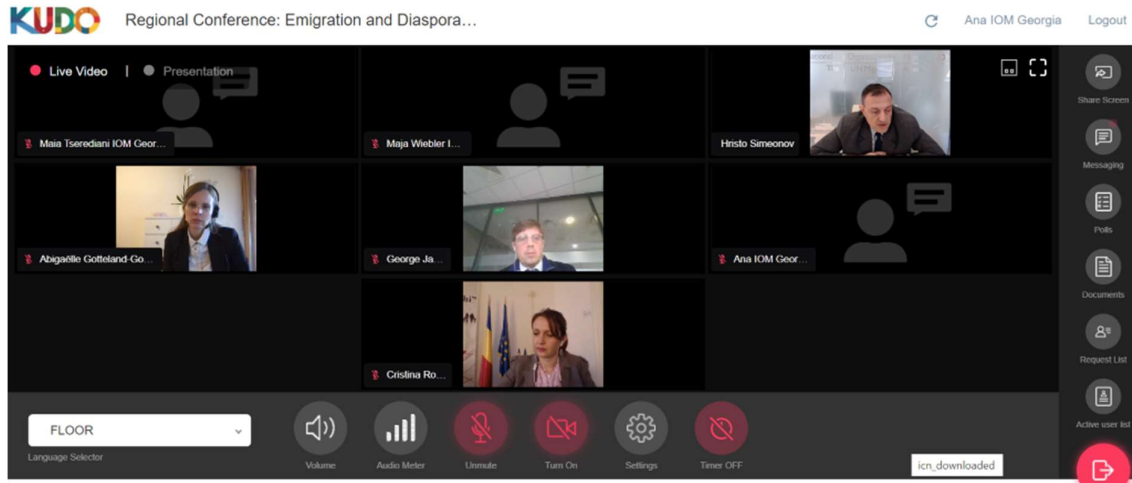


Photo from the Country Panel (top row): Hristo Simeonov; (middle row): Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet; George Jashi; (bottom row) Cristina Robu.



8 Concluding Remarks

8.1 *Sanja Celebic Lukovac, Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia*

Sanja Celebic Lukovac shared some concluding remarks drawing on the discussions and ideas shared at the conference. She stated: “Our intention was to gather experts from governments, private sector academia and other fields in order to showcase different approaches to diaspora mobilization and engagement, attracting diaspora investment and how important this aspect of migration is not only for preserving economic, societal and cultural ties but also to contribute to a country’s broader and longer-term development processes.”

She noted COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on mobility requiring different approaches to migration governance and new opportunities for diaspora involvement for post-pandemic recovery. She noted the creative and innovation contributions from the conference, reconfirming the position of diaspora as a powerful force for development. She also recognized the potential for a regional approach and continued learning from neighbouring countries: “It goes without saying that these two days called for more comprehensiveness, more togetherness, more cooperation across the regional lines and also internationally.”



Photo: Sanja Celebic Lukovac

Sanja Celebic Lukovac thanked the panelists and moderators for driving the discussion and the conference participants on their questions and interest in the event. Finally, she acknowledged her IOM colleagues for the months of effort in organizing the successful event.

8.2 *Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia*

Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, offered the final address of the conference. He expressed his gratitude for the robust contributions from speakers, moderators and from conference participants. The interventions by distinguished speakers demonstrated the promising role of diaspora in private sector development. He cited that transnational cooperation is more important considering the global pandemic and economic downturn. A whole-of-government approach creates an enabling environment for examining diaspora direct investment (instead of simply foreign direct investment), identifying diaspora rockstars and rethinking holistic approaches to diaspora engagement.

He expressed thanks to the IOM Georgia for organizing this event and for the ongoing project activities and to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for supporting this dialogue. Finally, he recommended that diaspora involvement in private sector development remain high on the agenda and to keep the dialogue within the region and with diaspora open.



9 References

Emerge Project – IOM Georgia <https://georgia.iom.int/emerge>

European Union. *The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum*. [accessed 09/12/2020
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1706]

Guest, R. (2011) 'The Magic of Diasporas.' *The Economist*. 19th November [accessed on 02/12/2020
[Link](#)]

Guest, R. (2019) 'The Magic of Migration.' *The Economist*. 16th November [accessed on 02/12/2020
[Link](#)]

Nye, J. (2009) *Soft Power. The Means To Success In World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs,
Perseus Books Group. ([Link](#))

Slaughter, A.M. (2017). *The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in a
Networked World*. London: Yale University Press. ([link](#))

The World Bank. (2020). 'World bank Predicts Sharpest Decline in Remittances in Recent History.'
World Bank Press Release, 22nd April. [accessed on 18/12/2020 [Link](#)]

United Nations (2019) *Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. [accessed
10/12/2020 [Direct Link](#); [IOM Link](#)]



10 List of Appendices

10.1 Final Conference Agenda

10.2 Moderator Biographies

10.3 Speaker Biographies

10.4 Presentations and Speaker's Notes - List of Supplementary Materials

10.4.1 Diaspora Capital - Keynote Address

10.5 Media Releases for the Event

10.6 List of Conference Participants



10.1 Final Conference Agenda

Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development Agenda

November 24-25, 2020

Format: online Georgia, Tbilisi time zone (GMT+4)

Day One	
12:00 – 12:30	<p>Introductory Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanja Celebic Lukovac, Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia • Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia • Marko Soldic, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Norway in Georgia • Renate Held, Regional Director, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
12:30 – 13:00	<p>Keynote Speech – Kingsley Aikins, The Networking Institute, Ireland (30 Minutes)</p>
13:00 – 14:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level panel on Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development (Moderator: Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia) • Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia • Milko Berner, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Bulgaria • Iulia Costin, General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development, the Republic of Moldova • Taras Kachka, Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine
14:00 – 14:30	<p>Break</p>
14:30 – 16:00	<p>Thematic Session I: Facilitating Diaspora Investment & Job Creation (Moderator: Giorgi Khishtovani, Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG), Georgia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory remarks by the moderator Giorgi Khishtovani (10 min) • Setting the Context – Introduction of Different Models of Leveraging Remittances and Diaspora Investment – Michael Newson, Senior Labour and Human Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (10 min) • Diaspora perspective – Zenon Poticzny, President of Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, Vice President of Ukrainian World Congress (10 min) • Diaspora perspective – Maka Abashidze, Director and Founder, British Georgian Chamber of Commerce (10 min) • Moldovan state policy on stimulating diaspora engagement for local development projects and investments: good practices and challenges – Violina Donu, Diaspora Relations Bureau, Government of the Republic of Moldova (20 min) • Diaspora perspective – Vitaliy Milentyev, President of Alberta Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, Partner and Portfolio Manager at Cornerstone Investment Counsel, Supervisory Board Member at the National Depository of Ukraine (10 min) • Q & A and Discussion (20 min)
16:00 – 17:30	<p>Thematic Session II: Facilitating Return Migration to Meet Labour Market Needs (Moderator: Michaella Vanore, Professor, University of Maastricht)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory remarks by the moderator Michaella Vanore (10 min) • Setting the Context – Michael Newson, Senior Labour and Human Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (10 min) • Presentation by Sandra Pralong, State Adviser in the Department for the Relation with Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania (15 min) • Diaspora perspective – Marius Bostan, Repatriot Project, Private sector (15 min)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging Bulgarian diaspora to return to address labour market needs – Hristo Simeonov, Secretary of the National Council of Labour Migration, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria (15 min) Q & A and Discussion (25 min)
17:30 – 17:50	Break
17:50 – 19:00	<p>Facilitated Discussion (moderator: Kingsley Aikins, The Networking Institute)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction and setting the context by the moderator Kingsley Aikins (10 min) State and Diaspora in the context of COVID-19 – Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (10 min) Facilitated discussion (panelists: Sandra Pralong, State Adviser in the Department for the Relation with Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania; Marius Bostan, Repatriot Project, Private sector organization; and Michael Newson, Senior Labour and Human Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia)
End of Day One	
Day Two	
12:00 – 13:40	<p>Thematic Session III: Engaging Diaspora to Support Trade, Professional Networks & Business Development (Moderator: Natalia Nemyliwska, the Ukrainian World Congress, Director, Economic Prosperity and Investment Committee (EPIC))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory remarks by the moderator Natalia Nemyliwska (10 min) Presentation of the Diaspora Forum event and methodology used to identify diaspora, and other stakeholders – Mariam Keburia, Attaché, Department of Relation with Diaspora, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (15 min) Diaspora engagement – Natia Kvitsiani, National Programme Officer, IOM Georgia (15 min) Engaging Skilled Representatives of Diaspora in the Country Development – Karinée Khojayan, Project Coordinator, IOM Armenia (15 min) Presentation on Professional Networking and Business Development – Gayatri Kanth, Project Manager, International Organization of Employers (15 min) Q & A and Discussion (30 min)
13:40 – 14:10	Break
14:10 – 16:00	<p>Country Presentations & Facilitated Discussion (Moderator: George Jashi, Secretariat of the State Commission for Migration Issues, Government of Georgia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory Remarks by the moderator George Jashi (10 min) Swiss Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration – Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet, State Secretariat for Migration, Government of Switzerland (15 min) Country Presentations on Experiences, Interests and Management Structures for Maintaining Communications and Fostering Relations with Diaspora (30 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development and implementation of the government strategic approach to the migration policy – Hristo Simeonov, Secretary of the National Council of Labour Migration, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria (15 min) Overview of the structure of the Romanian diaspora, programmes and policies to facilitate reintegration - Cristina Robu, Department for Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania (15 min) Guided discussion on opportunities and challenges to be addressed and areas for potential regional/cross border cooperation/information exchange in facilitating diaspora engagement (20 min)
16:00 – 16:20	<p>Concluding Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanja Celebic Lukovac, Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia (10 min) Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (10 min)



10.2 Moderator Biographies

Kingsley Aikins, The Networking Institute, Ireland



Mr. Kingsley Aikins is CEO of The Networking Institute based in Ireland which is a consultancy and training company that delivers online and offline courses in Networking, Philanthropy & Fundraising and Diaspora Engagement. He is an Economics and Politics graduate of Trinity College Dublin. For ten years he worked for IDA Ireland and The Irish Trade Board and was based in Sydney Australia and he was responsible for attracting foreign direct investment into Ireland and promoting Irish exports. He then ran Ireland's largest Diaspora organization, The Ireland Funds, based in the US. During his 21 years running The Ireland Funds over a quarter of a billion

dollars was raised for projects of Peace, Culture and Charity in Ireland, North and South. Since returning to live in Ireland in 2010 and establishing The Networking Institute he, and his colleagues, have worked with over 30 countries, regions and cities helping them develop strategies to connect with their Diasporas. He developed the concept of Diaspora Capital that is made up of three flows – flows of people, knowledge and money. He has written and spoken extensively on the topic around the world. He lives in Dublin with his wife and three children.

Giorgi Khishtovani, Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG), Georgia



Dr. Giorgi Khishtovani is a Research Director at Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG) and PMC Research Center. His research focuses on the political economy and governance, on fiscal policy, human capital development, migration, international trade and global finance. He has more than 10 years of professional working experience at public, private and non-governmental sectors in Georgia and abroad. Before joining PMCG and PMC Research Center Giorgi worked as the deputy dean of faculty of business administration and economics at Tbilisi State University (2009-2011), in 2011-2014 he was as a research fellow at the University of Bremen, while in 2015-2016 he worked as the head of research at Institute of

Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) and in 2015-2017 he worked as the director of grants and programmes at the National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSF). Giorgi has extensive experience as a researcher, trainer and consultant within the framework of various international projects conducted by the World Bank, the IFC, the European Commission, UNDP, UNIDO, GIZ and Federal Foreign Office of Germany. Currently, Dr. Khishtovani is an Associate Professor and Head of Department of Finance and Investments at the Business School of Ilia State University and previously taught economics and business administration at the University of Bremen and Caucasus International University. He has published numerous papers in academic journals. Giorgi is fluent in German, English, Russian and Georgian.

Michaella Vanore, Research Fellow, University of Maastricht



Dr. Michaella Vanore is a research fellow at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance/United Nations University-MERIT, where she has worked for the past nine years as a researcher and lecturer with a focus on migration and development and social protection for children. In the course of her work at the School of Governance, Michaella has worked on topics such as defining and analysing multidimensional poverty among migrant children, assessing the consequences of family-member migration for children and the elderly who remain in the home country, refining targeting approaches for child-focused social protection, diaspora engagement (specifically related to trade, private sector development, and

developing diaspora engagement strategies) and contributions in conflict and post-conflict settings, and remittances. Most of her research has a focus on application and on ensuring the research evidence is used to support more responsive policy making.



Natalia Nemyliwska, the Ukrainian World Congress, Director, Economic Prosperity and Investment Committee (EPIC)



Ms. Natalia Nemyliwska is currently serving as the Director of the recently established Economic Prosperity and Investment Committee (EPIC) of the Ukrainian World Congress. As Director of EPIC, Natalia works to enable the capacities of diaspora Ukrainians as entrepreneurs, investors, policy advocates, partners and bridge-builders, to advance Ukraine's economic growth and development. The mission of EPIC is to strengthen the position of diaspora Ukrainians as strategic agents of transformation and change for Ukraine. Ms. Nemyliwska's prior professional experience includes serving as Director of the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv (2011-2017) and its Deputy Director (2008-2010). The NIDC is a diplomatic mission of NATO to Ukraine tasked to communicate NATO and NATO-Ukraine relations to Ukrainian audiences. As the public arm of NATO in Ukraine, the NIDC's core mandates are two-pronged: public information and strategic communications. Ms. Nemyliwska has also worked for the Government of Ontario, Canada, in Financial Services Delivery where she held the position of Project Manager. Ms. Nemyliwska holds a Master of Arts Degree in Russian and East European Studies from Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, and an Honors Bachelors of Arts in International Relations and Employment Relations with a Minor in Ukrainian Language and Literature from the University of Toronto. Ms. Nemyliwska is fluent in three languages, English, Ukrainian and Russian, with English being her native.

George Jashi, Secretariat of the State Commission for Migration Issues, Government of Georgia



Mr. George Jashi holds an MA in Oriental History, International Relations and Foreign Policy. After the graduation from the university in 1997 he was hired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and served there for five years on different positions, beginning as the Attaché and ending as a Counsellor. While in diplomatic service, he was a member of the task forces responsible for Georgia's accession to the "European Cultural Convention" (1997) and later the Council of Europe (1999). In 2001 he moved on to the Council of Europe as the deputy director of its Office in Georgia and the director from 2004. The main task of the Office was to support the country in honouring its statutory obligations and specific commitments as a Council of Europe member state. From 2012 he works at the Public Services Development Agency under the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, as an Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for the State Commission on Migration Issues. As a member of inter-ministerial task-force the Commission played an important role in the successful fulfilment of different reforms within and beyond the EU-Georgia Visa-Liberalisation Action Plan (2013-2015) resulting in establishment of the visa-free movement (2017) of Georgian citizens in EU/Schengen area and continuation of migration management related reforms.



10.3 Speaker Biographies

Sanja Celebic Lukovac, *Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia*



Mrs. Sanja Celebic Lukovac, a national of Belgium and Croatia, has been appointed the Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission to Georgia in July 2018. She has been with the IOM since 1 March 1998 and has acquired extensive experience in migration issues and IOM's programmes. From 2011 to 2018, Mrs. Celebic Lukovac served in IOM Mission in Iraq as Head, Programme Development and Support Unit/Senior Programme Development and Donors Liaison Officer, working on a range of humanitarian crisis, population displacement and migration management issues in the context of the complex protracted displacement and migration crisis in Iraq and Middle East. Prior to that, she worked in the Regional Liaison and Co-ordination Office to the European Union as Liaison and Project Development Officer covering Northern Africa and Middle East, Western Balkans, and Turkey. Ms. Celebic Lukovac holds a Bachelor Degree in International Relations from the University of Sarajevo, as well as a Master's Degree in European Integration and Development from Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and a Master's Degree in Advanced Studies of Humanitarian Operations and Supply Chain Management from Università della Svizzera Italiana. She speaks Croatian/Bosnian/Serbian, as well as English and French.

Vladimer Konstantinidi, *Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia*



Mr. Vladimer Konstantinidi is the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia with a distinguished career in diplomatic service. Prior to this role, he held a number of senior positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, including the head of Division at Consulate Department, Consul, Charge d'Affaires in the Embassy of Georgia to the State of Israel (2005-2008) and later - Deputy Director of Consular Department. At different times Mr. Konstantinidi served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of Cyprus (2009 -2012), to the Commonwealth of Australia (2012-2017) and Ambassador at Large (2018 – 2020 Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign affairs).

Prior to joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Mr. Vladimer Konstantinidi worked for different public institutions in Georgia, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tax Revenue and the Parliament of Georgia. Deputy Minister Konstantinidi graduated from Tbilisi State University with a degree in Law. He is currently an Associate Professor at the Open University of Tbilisi.

Renate Held, *Regional Director, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Liaison Office for UN Agencies and other International Organizations - Vienna, Austria.*



Ms. Held has assumed functions as IOM Regional Director for IOM's Regional Office covering South -Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia on 01 July 2020. She held the same function from 2011 to 2015. She was previously posted at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva as Director for Migration Management. Previous IOM functions included serving as Regional Representative for the Andean States in Lima, Peru, Regional Representative for the EU Member States and the Baltic States in Brussels, Belgium and as IOM Inspector General, responsible for oversight, project rapid assessment, audit, evaluation and investigation at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva. Ms.

Held also carried out various functions in the IOM country office in Bonn, Germany and participated in IOM operations in Turkey, Northern Iraq, Tanzania, Mozambique and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ms. Held holds a Master's degree in Social Science from Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms University, Bonn and a Diploma in Business Administration from the Commercial College of Siegburg, Germany. She speaks English, French, German and Spanish.



Milko Berner, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Bulgaria



Mr. Milko Berner is responsible for the international cooperation and is a Chair of Working Parties within the National Council on Migration, Borders, Asylum and Integration. He has completed courses and training programmes in Germany, Switzerland, The Hague, United Kingdom, the USA and France. Deputy Minister Berner has wide experience in multinational and multicultural environment and practical experience in preparation, logistic support and conducting of missions in war zones and post-conflict zones. He was a team leader of missions in Syria, Libya and Afghanistan. Additional related experience includes conducting negotiations between opposing parties in conditions of war conflict and project management. Deputy Minister Berner has various publications in his domain of education and work. He is a holder of the Award for Valiant Service in 2002 and the OPCW Nobel Peace Prize certificate recognising personal contribution to the organization. He is fluent in English and Russian.

Iulia Costin, General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development from the Republic of Moldova



With more than 20 years of experience in macroeconomic and regional development assistance Mrs. Iulia Costin has a valuable background in designing and implementing instruments supporting innovative SME performance. As General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development, her top priority is the private sector competitiveness and economic smart transformation initiatives. Throughout her career has performed as a remarkable leader, expert in the SME sector, project manager, collaborating with world-class institutions such as: the EU, World Bank, OIM, USAID, UN family, OSCE, OECD etc., in the endeavour of shaping a strong national entrepreneurial culture. Mrs. Iulia Costin has also a strong experience in implementing a unique programme in Central and Eastern Europe for attracting remittances into national economy with special accent on regional development - Programme for Attracting Remittances in Economy "PARE 1+1" that aims at mobilising human and financial resources of migrant workers and their first-degree relatives in the sustainable economic development of the Republic of Moldova, by stimulating establishment and development of small and medium enterprises. Moreover, the programme explores the valuable resource consisting of the existing large flows of remittance and promotes their investment in private sector. Participation in the Programme consists of four stages: informational support for migrants, entrepreneurial training and consultancy, business co-financing and post-funding support.

Taras Kachka, Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture – Trade Representative of Ukraine



Mr. Taras Kachka was appointed as the Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture – Trade Representative of Ukraine on 6 September 2019. Mr. Kachka is responsible for development and implementation of the national policy on economic and social cooperation between Ukraine and the EU, policy on integration of the national economy into the global economy and cooperation with WTO. Mr. Kachka is an expert in international law with extensive experience in the private sector, international environment and government. He was a member of Ukrainian negotiating team for Ukraine – EU Association Agreement. Previously, he worked as a Deputy Executive Director and a Strategic Advisor at the International Renaissance Foundation (2016-2019). In 2014-2015, he was Vice President for Strategic Development at the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. He started his career as a public servant in 2001 at the Ministry of Justice taking the office of the First Deputy Director of the State Department for Legal Approximation. He also served as Director for Foreign Economic Relations at the Ministry of Agricultural Policy and Food. Mr. Kachka is a lawyer; he graduated from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv with a Master's degree in International Law and the National School of Public Administration in Warsaw, Poland.



Michael Newson, Senior Labour and Human Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office for South - Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia



Since January 2017, Mr. Michael Newson has worked in IOM's Regional Office in Vienna as the Senior Regional Thematic Specialist for Labour Mobility and Human Development (LHD) for the South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia Region with the IOM. He is responsible for providing technical support, policy expertise, capacity building, and training to governments, IOM officials, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the region. Michael previously held the position of Regional Thematic Specialist for LHD for the Middle East and North Africa Region working from the Regional Office in Cairo from 2012 to 2016. He has also worked with IOM in Bogota in 2007 and Mauritius in 2008 and 2009, where his work focused on the development and implementation of labour migration programmes. From 2009 to 2011, Michael worked as Senior Policy Advisor in the Labour Market and Immigration Division for the Government of British Columbia, Canada, where he focused on policy issues relating to both temporary foreign workers and permanent economic immigration streams. Michael holds a BA in Philosophy & English Literature from the University of British Columbia, an MA in Social & Political Philosophy from York University (Toronto), and an MBA from the Warwick Business School.

Mako Abashidze, Founder Director, British Georgian Chamber of Commerce



Ms. Mako Abashidze was born in Georgia to two highly artistic parents. Her mother was a piano player and her father was a famous ballet dancer and choreographer. She graduated from Tbilisi State University 1991 with a BA/MPhil in Psychology and worked as a researcher for the Institute of Psychology in Georgia. In 1993, Ms. Abashidze moved to London and has held positions with various UK companies since then, mainly dealing with the CIS market. She co-founded The British Georgian Chamber of Commerce with Lord Cromwell in 2007. The main objective of BGCC is to advise companies in Georgia and the UK on the business and financial markets in each respective country, in order to establish contacts and facilitate business between each country. Ms. Abashidze is closely working with the Government of Georgia and Britain; The British Georgian Chamber of Commerce became an instrumental body in bilateral trade and cultural and social relations between Britain and Georgia. In 2015, during the official visit of David Lidington State Minister of Europe officially opened the BGCC representative desk in Georgia, Tbilisi and highlighted the importance. Since 2007, the BGCC hosted an annual joint Economic Forum with the EBRD - "Georgia - Updates". BGCC works very closely with the Georgian National Wine Agency to promote the Georgian Natural Wine in UK. Georgian Wines are now in famous Hedonism Wine Shop, various top end restaurants, at the Ritz London. Ms. Abashidze is very actively involved in many Charity organizations in UK and in Georgia.

Zenon Poticzny, President of Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, Vice President of Ukrainian World Congress



Mr. Poticzny holds Master's in engineering and MBA from University of Toronto. Zhoda invests in selected unlisted European ventures and has projects related to oil and gas in Ukraine and wineries in Croatia. In Ukraine the company works with Ukrnafta and Chornomornaftogas. Mr. Poticzny has written several publications related to oil sands and bitumen extraction processes. In 2019 he was re-elected as President of Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce. CUCC is recognized by all levels of government in Canada and Ukraine, by the business community in both countries and by the public in general as the facilitator agency of choice for establishing, maintaining, and monitoring bilateral business relations, trade, and investment opportunities between Canada and Ukraine. Presently, CUCC jointly with Conference Board of Canada is managing a CAD 13.6-million CUTIS project, sponsored by Canadian government. In 2009 Mr. Poticzny has been awarded the Order of Merit, Class III, from President of Ukraine. Presently, he is also VP of Operations in Ukrainian World Congress and a Board member of Kyiv-Mohyla Foundation of Canada.



Violina Donu, Diaspora Relations Bureau, Government of the Republic of Moldova



Ms. Violina Donu is the main consultant within Diaspora Relations Bureau, State Chancellery of Republic of Moldova. She is working on monitoring diaspora dynamics and establishing partnership relations with diaspora associations; cooperation with specialized national and abroad institutions in order to develop studies and analysis of the phenomenon of migration and human mobility; monitoring the actions implemented by the central and local public authorities in the field of diaspora state policy. Ms. Donu has prior work experience in international projects on developing diaspora entrepreneurship. Her education background includes a Master’s degree in political sciences. She is currently pursuing PhD on Diaspora state policy of the Republic of Moldova.

Vitaliy Milentyev, President of Alberta Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, Partner and Portfolio Manager at Cornerstone Investment Counsel, Supervisory Board Member at the National Depository of Ukraine



Mr Vitaliy Milentyev has been actively involved with Ukrainian-Canadian business community in Alberta through Alberta Ukraine Chamber of Commerce/ CUDA since 2010. AUCC/CUDA’s objective is promotion of bi-lateral trade and investment. Over the years he also served on the boards of several community organizations: Ukrainian-Canadian Congress, Ukrainian Research and Development Centre at the Grant McEwan University, Rotary Club of Edmonton, Synergy Network, etc. In September of 2020, Vitaliy was invited to the Supervisory Board of the National Depository of Ukraine. He chairs the Committee on Risk Management and Internal Audit. His total tenure in the investment industry is over 18 years, both in Canada, UK and Ukraine. Working mostly in Canadian and US portfolio management for institutional and high-net-worth clients, Vitaliy had spent some time (2005-2008) in Ukraine, building brokerage division for ING Bank (Netherlands). Presently Vitaliy is part of the partnership group – Cornerstone Investment Counsel, that manages in excess of CAD 250 million of clients’ assets. Vitaliy was born and raised in Odesa, Ukraine. He is a CFA Charterholder since 2006, obtained his Master’s Degree in Finance at the Odessa State Economic University (1999) and Master’s In Economics from the University of Manitoba (2001).

Sandra Pralong, State Adviser to the President of Romania for the relation with Romanians abroad, Government of Romania.



Sandra Pralong, Ph.D., is a former UN executive, counsellor to a previous Romanian President, international foundation executive and international media executive (Newsweek) in New York, as well as professor at the Universities of Bucharest and at the University of Niamey (Niger). Also, she is the author of several books, trainer, and coach. With established credentials in diaspora engagement, values-based leadership and communications, human rights advocacy, civil society development and overseas development assistance (ODA), she has a Ph.D. in Political Science (*Magna cum Laude* from the Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris, France), an MA in Business Management (from HEC, Lausanne, Switzerland), an MALD in International Relations (from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Boston, USA), an M.Phil. in Political Philosophy (from Columbia University, NY, USA) and a Master Degree in Cognitive Sciences (from the University of Bucharest).



Marius Bostan, *RePatriot Project, Private sector organization*



Mr. Marius Bostan holds extensive managerial experience as a Minister of Communication and Information Society, member of the board of directors of several companies, funds and non-profit organizations, as well as an investor. He has been the promoter of development projects supported via municipal bonds in Romania which have generated relevant savings to local budgets. Currently, Mr. Bostan is the initiator, architect, moderator, and lecturer of numerous initiatives on development of private business and consolidation of business environment. He leads the process of elaborating an AI Strategy for Romania and coordinates a series of debates about Smart Cities. He is the founder of the Romanian Business Leaders - RePatriot Project which aims at bringing Romanians back home. He has also been involved in implementing programmes initiated for the public administration by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and the European Commission. Mr. Bostan is a founding member of the [National Foundation of Young Managers](#), and service as an ambassador of the [Romanian Business Leaders Foundation](#). Having a degree in mathematics, with a specialisation in informatics (Bucharest University), Mr. Bostan has attended post-university programmes in management from the National School of Administrative and Politic Studies as well as specialized programmes in UK, Italy, the Netherlands, and Germany. He is married and father of three children.

Hristo Simeonov, *Secretary of the National Council of Labour Migration, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria*



Mr. Hristo Simeonov works in the field of migration, integration and freedom of movement within EU since 2007. He is Head of Department in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) and Secretary of the National Council on Labour Migration and Labour Mobility. He served as the Chair of the High-Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2018. Mr. Simeonov is the National contact point of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and represented Bulgaria on the 11th GFMD in Marrakesh. He also represented Bulgaria on different formal and informal ministerial conferences on migration and integration of the Council of Europe, European Union and others. He has experience on working on projects in different countries like Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, China, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and others. On national level he is Head of the Working group on Freedom of Movement of Persons and represents MLSP in different national formats in the area of citizenship and trafficking of human beings.

Mariam Keburia, *Attaché, Department of Relation with Diaspora, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia*



Dr. Mariam Keburia's involvement with Migration and Development dates back to 2012, when she held the position of an Adviser to The State Minister for Diaspora Issues. Since then, Mariam has participated in Diaspora policy implementation and contributed to different programmes promoting Georgian Diaspora engagement for development. Prior to joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she served as the head of International Relations Office at the National Science Foundation of Georgia, where, among other duties, she participated in Georgian scientific diaspora programme administration. Mariam holds Master's degree from Malmo University in Leadership for Sustainability and PhD from Tbilisi State University in Philology.



Natia Kvitsiani, National Programme Officer, IOM Georgia



Dr. Natia Kvitsiani works at the International Organization for Migration Mission in Georgia and is responsible for the activities in the field of Labour Mobility and Human Development. During 1995-1996 she worked at the IOM Emergency Mission in Chechnya. In 2008-2009 she temporarily moved to the IOM Office in Ghana, where she worked on migration and development related issues. In 1997 she received the Fulbright scholarship for postdoctoral studies in migration, at the George Washington University, Washington DC. Dr. Kvitsiani holds PhD in Georgian History and Ethnology and prior to joining IOM worked as a senior researcher at the Tbilisi State

Institute of Ethnology.

Karinée Khojayan, Project Coordinator, IOM Armenia



Dr. Karinée Khojayan is Programme Coordinator at the UN Migration Agency and Adjunct Professor at the Yerevan State University. Previously she held different positions at International Organization for Migration, mostly focusing on development-oriented projects. Dr. Khojayan holds a PhD degree in Political Science since 2012. She is the author of a number of scientific articles, publications, monography. Dr. Khojayan has been a keynote speaker at a number of conferences and forums. She attended several professional development programmes at Humboldt University of Berlin, European Academy of Diplomacy, etc. The main areas of her professional interests are issues of

emerging transformation of global paradigm of development, diaspora studies, security studies and foreign policy analysis.

Gayatri Kanth, Project Manager, International Organization of Employers



Ms Gayatri Kanth works as Project Manager at the International Organization of Employers, IOE, based in Geneva, Switzerland. Before joining IOE, Gayatri worked as Acting Deputy Executive Director for the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation, AITIC, Geneva. She also has experience of working in various organizations at national and international levels, including the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Parliament of India; Ministry of Health, Government of India; Inter-Parliamentary Union; International Labour Organization; International Organization of Migration, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and Federation of Indian Chambers of

Commerce and Industries.

Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet, State Secretariat for Migration, Government of Switzerland



Ms. Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet is a policy advisor for South Caucasus in the International cooperation directorate at the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration. She holds a M.A. in Public Management and Policy combined with further postgraduate studies in international relations and in business. She worked at the International Organization for Migration Headquarters in Geneva in the Labour and Human Development Division. During this period, she also wrote a master thesis about the integration of migrants in the Swiss labour market.

Abigaëlle has professional experiences both in public and private sector.



Cristina Robu, Department for Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania



Ms. Cristina Robu leads the Reintegration Unit of the Department for Romanians Abroad, with responsibility for the elaboration of studies and guides regarding repatriation and social integration and the coordination of projects that aim to facilitate the social insertion and reinsertion as well as the reinsertion into the Romanian labour market of the returnees. Previously, she was director of the Strategy, Public Policies and Communication Directorate within the Ministry for Romanians Abroad.

She was responsible for the development of the Ministry for Romanians Abroad's strategy and plan of actions and the elaboration of public policies in the benefit of Romanians abroad. She also served as counsellor within the same ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to that, she worked as Credit analyst and Credit administrator in the banking sector.



10.4 Presentations and Speaker's Notes- List of Supplementary Materials

All materials are on the IOM Georgia Shared Drive [Link](#)

Keynote Address – Kingsley Aikins (see Appendix section 10.4.1)

High-level Panel on Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development

Vladimer Konstantinidi, Georgia (Speaker's Notes)

Milko Berner, Bulgaria (Speaker's Notes)

Iulia Costin, the Republic of Moldova (Speaker's Notes)

Taras Kochka (No Speaker's Notes Available)

Thematic Session I: Facilitating Diaspora Investment & Job Creation

Setting the Scene: Introduction of Different Models of Leveraging Remittances and Diaspora

Investment – Michael Newson (PowerPoint Presentation)

Diaspora Perspective – Zenon Poticzny (PowerPoint Presentation)

Diaspora Perspective – Vitaliy Milentyev (PowerPoint Presentation)

Moldovan State Policy on Stimulating Diaspora Engagement for Local Development Projects and Investments: Good Practices and Challenges – Violina Donu (Notes and PowerPoint)

Diaspora perspective – Maka Abashidze (PowerPoint Presentation)

Thematic Session II: Facilitating Return Migration to Meet Labour Market Needs

Setting the Context – Michael Newson (PowerPoint)

Diaspora Development Capital – Sandra Pralong (PowerPoint Presentation)

Repatriot Project, Romania – Marius Bostan (Speaker's Notes)

Engaging Bulgarian Diaspora – Hristo Simeonov (PowerPoint Presentation)

Facilitated Discussion

State and Diaspora in the context of COVID-19 – Vladimer Konstantinidi (Speaker's Notes)

Thematic Session III: Engaging Diaspora to Support Trade, Professional Networks & Business Development

Presentation of the Diaspora Forum Event and Methodology Used to Identify Diaspora, and Other Stakeholders - Mariam Keburia (Speaker's Notes)

Supporting Engagement of Georgian Diaspora in the SME Development and Investment

Opportunities in Georgia - Natia Kvitsiani (PowerPoint Presentation)

Armenian Diaspora as a Driving Force for Development - Karinée Khojayan (PowerPoint Presentation)

Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development - Gayatri Kanth (Speaker's Notes)

Country Presentations & Facilitated Discussion

Introductory Remarks - George Jashi (PowerPoint Presentation)

Swiss Interdepartmental Structure for International Cooperation on Migration- Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet (Speaker's Notes and PDF of PowerPoint Presentation)

Development and Implementation of the Government Strategic Approach to Migration - Hristo Simenov (PowerPoint Presentation)

Overview of the structure of the Romanian diaspora, programmes and policies to facilitate reintegration - Cristina Robu (Speaker's Notes)

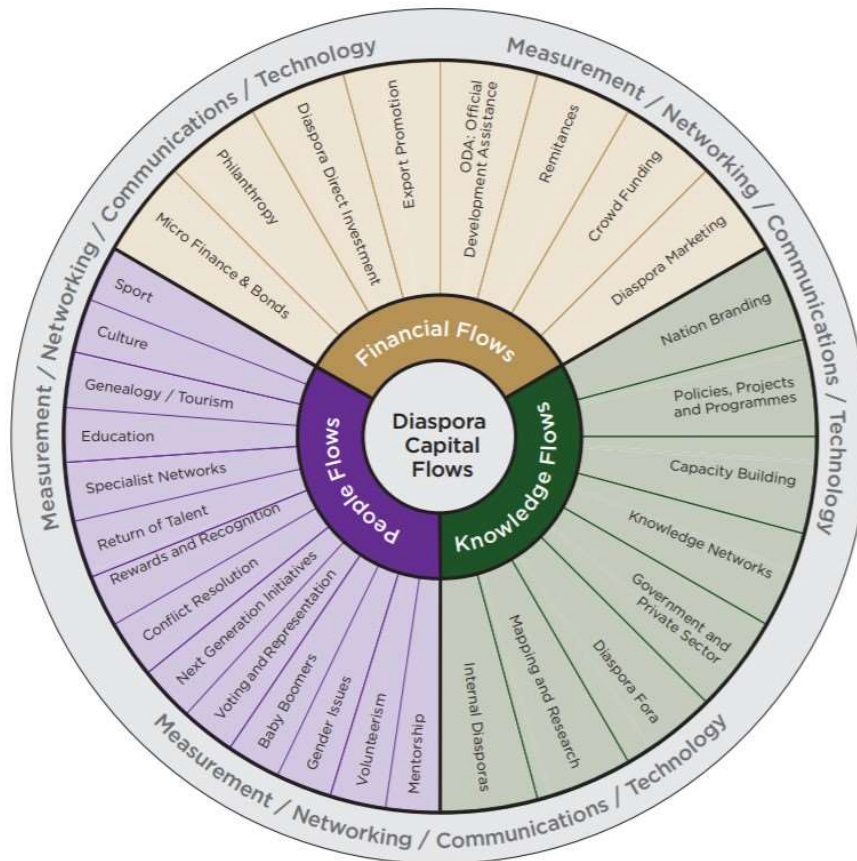
Concluding Remarks

Sanja Celebic Lukovac (Speaker's Notes)



10.4.1 Diaspora Capital Wheel (Kingsley Aikins- Keynote Address)

Diaspora Capital refers to the overseas resources available to a country, region, city, organization or location and is made up of people, networks, finance, ideas, attitudes and concerns for their places of origin, ancestry or affinity.





10.5 Media Releases for the Event

Regional Migration Governance Conference Gathers Senior Governments Officials and Global Experts to Discuss Diaspora Engagement and Private Sector Development

November 26, 2020

On 24-25 November, IOM Georgia, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and the Secretariat of the State Commission for Migration Issues (SCMI) of the Government of Georgia organized a two-day high level regional conference gathering senior government officials from Georgia, Armenia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and Switzerland as well as experts, diaspora and civil society representatives from Ireland, Canada, Bulgaria and the UK. Over the two days, participants discussed nexus between migration and development, exchanging best practices and sharing information on diaspora outreach and engagement to benefit country economic development.

The conference titled “Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development” highlighted specific examples of diaspora engagement, institutional structures and networks established to manage and implement migration policies as well as ensure successful diaspora relations. The conference took place online and was organized within the framework of the project “Enhancing Migrants’ Rights and Good Governance in Armenia and Georgia (EMERGE)” funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.

“The global COVID 19 pandemic has had an overreaching impact on all aspects of our present as well as our future life. It keeps pushing us to rethink the way we operate and do things. It also keeps offering new opportunities. In this particular moment, we also wanted to use this opportunity to reflect on migration management potentials and explore how diaspora involvement can help us address the immediate consequences of this global crisis, and moreover, and help us in shaping up our “new normal” in a longer term,” said IOM Georgia Chief of Mission, Sanja Celebic Lukovac, who welcomed the conference participants jointly with Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Marko Soldic, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Norway in Georgia and Renate Held, IOM Regional Director for South -Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and provided introductory remarks.

“Migration in the South Caucuses and the Black Sea region is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. The countries represented at this meeting today face a common set of opportunities and challenges regarding migration governance. These impact – and are impacted by – social and economic development across the region. They require evidence-based policies and programming to best leverage the development potential of migration,” noted Renate Held, IOM Regional Director, South -Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Bulgaria, Milko Berner, Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, Taras Kachka and General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development, Government of Moldova, Iulia Costin, participated in a High-level panel on Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development moderated by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Vladimer Konstantinidi. At the end of the conference, Mr. Konstantinidi also provided concluding remarks and stressed that “this conference highlighted that exploring nexus between migration and development has now gained even more importance than ever before. In the context of current global pandemic, while experiencing health damages and economic downturns, we need our diaspora professionals to engage in social and economic recovery. This is where we need to enhance linkages between our diaspora professionals and private sector representatives.”

The highlight of the event was the keynote speech delivered by Mr. Kingsley Aikins from the Networking Institute in Ireland. Mr. Aikins spoke about the importance of Diaspora engagement and the challenges and opportunities presented to the world by COVID 19: “We are fortunate that diaspora engagement is a non-competitive industry. Accordingly, we should connect and collaborate extensively and share experiences and lessons. I am a member of an association called CASE- Copy And Steal Everything and so I encourage and participate in the maximum amount of collaboration and sharing between countries.”



The conference report will be disseminated in December. The Secretariat of the SCMI of Georgia and the governments of the participants countries, plan to present the regional conference highlights at the upcoming Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) to take place in early 2021.

IOM Georgia (2020). 'Regional Migration Governance Conference Gathers Senior Governments Officials and Global Experts to Discuss Diaspora Engagement and Private Sector Development.' IOM Georgia Web site [accessed on 11/30/2020 <https://georgia.iom.int/news/regional-migration-governance-conference-gathers-senior-governments-officials-and-global>]

IOM Rethinks Diaspora Engagement in “New Normal” Reality

11/27/20

Tbilisi –The global COVID-19 pandemic continues to reshape global migration, and how communities interact across tightened borders. This is especially true in the Black Sea region, which has long been a fulcrum of migration in the Southern Caucasus and further afield. Fittingly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Georgia hosted a high-level online conference on Diaspora engagement this week.

“The pandemic keeps pushing us to rethink the way we operate and do things. It also keeps offering new opportunities,” noted Sanja Celebic-Lukovac, IOM’s Chief of Mission in Georgia in her opening remarks. “We – IOM and our partners – are using this particular moment to reflect on the new potential for migration management. Most of all, we are exploring how diaspora involvement can help us address not just the present consequences of this global crisis, but also in shaping our ‘new normal’ for the years to come,” said IOM’s Celebic-Lukovac.

The two-day conference, which IOM hosted alongside the Georgian Foreign Ministry and the State Commission for Migration, brought together senior officials from many of the countries bordering the Black Sea, as well as experts from Western Europe and Canada.

“Migration in the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region is a complex and dynamic phenomenon,” noted IOM Regional Director Renate Held, joining the event by video-link from Vienna. She added: “The countries represented at this meeting today face a common set of opportunities and challenges regarding migration governance. They require evidence-based policies and programming to leverage the development potential of migration.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Vladimer Konstantinidi, affirmed “now more than ever we need our diaspora professionals to engage in social and economic recovery. This is where we need to enhance linkages between our diaspora professionals and private sector representatives.” The conference, entitled “Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development”, was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. It highlighted specific examples of diaspora engagement, as well as structures and networks established to manage migration policies and to ensure successful diaspora relations.

The conference report will be disseminated in December and presented at the Global Forum on Migration and Development in early 2021.

For further information please contact Joe Lowry on +436603776404, Email:jlowry@iom.int

Lowry, J (2020) 'IOM Rethinks Diaspora Engagement in the “New Normal” Reality' [accessed on 12/07/2020 <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-rethinks-diaspora-engagement-new-normal-reality>]



10.6 List of Conference Participants

Regional Conference

Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development

24-25 November 2020

Online

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Governments:	52
UN Entities:	30
Inter-governmental Organizations:	2
Non-Governmental Organizations:	11
Other Entities:	10
Consultants	2
Academia and Research Entities:	5
Panelists:	4
Total number of participants:	116



COUNTRIES

Norway

Mr. Marko Soldic, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Norway in Georgia
Kerstin Agneta Wahlberg, Norway Counsellor for Development Cooperation in Ukraine

Switzerland

Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet, State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)

Bulgaria

Milko Berner, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs

Hristo Simeonov, Secretary of the National Council of Labour Migration, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria

Ivanka Slavcheva, Chief expert, State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad

Atanaska Todorova Chief Expert, Labour Market Department, Confederation Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria

The Republic of Moldova

Violina Donu, Diaspora Relations Bureau (BRD)

Iulia Costin, General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development (ODIMM)

Olga Popa, Head of Fundraising and International Relations Department, ODIMM

Romania

Sandra Pralong, Romanian Presidency Administration

Cristina Robu, Department for Romanians Abroad, Government of Romania

Dana Bucin, Honorary Consul of Romania to Connecticut, USA

Ukraine

Zenon Poticzny, the Ukrainian World Congress

Olga Pilipchuk, Head of Expert Group on Labour Migration, Ministry of Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture

Andrii Slabinskii, Director of the Office of the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Ministry of Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture

Ilya Dovzhenko, Head of International Cooperation Department, State Employment Service of Ukraine (SES)

Daria Gaidai (Advisor to VPM), Office of the Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine

Maksym Sokolyuk, State Migration Service

Dariia Andriunina, State Expert of the Expert Group on Labour Migration Issues, Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture

Olena Lobchenko, State Expert of the Expert Group on Labour Migration Directorate for Labour Market Development and Employment, Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture



Podust Kateryna, Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine
Roman Krygan, Deputy Director, State Employment Center
Yaroslava Zhurba, Head of the International Cooperation Sector, State Employment Center
Olena Malynovska, Migration Expert, National Institute of Strategic Studies
Kuzik Tetyana, Central Coordination Council of Ukrainian Unions in Italy
Vitaliy Milentyev, the President of the Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce
Natalia Nemyliwska, the Ukrainian World Congress, Director, Economic Prosperity and Investment Committee (EPIC)

Georgia

Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mukhran Gulaghashvili, Head of Diaspora Relations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mariam Keburia, Attaché, Department of Relation with Diaspora (Diaspora Programmes Division), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sandro Ghambashidze, the Information Technologies Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Giorgi Tabatadze, Head of Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ana Siashvili, Department of International Economic Relations, Division for the Promotion of Foreign Investment and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nia Ponia, 2nd Secretary, Analysis and Planning Division, Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rezo Chkheidze, Deputy Head of Political Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
David Abesadze, Deputy Head of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mariam Mamestsarashvili, Head of the Division for Diaspora Programmes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Giorgi Bunturi, Head of Labour Migration Issues Department, Ministry of IDPs, Labour, Health and Social Affairs
Nino Veltauri, Head of LEPL State Employment Support Agency, Ministry of IDPs, Labour, Health and Social Affairs
Tsisnami Sabadze, Head of Economic Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
Shorena Tsitsagi, Senior specialist, Strategic Development Department, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Tamar Sartania, Project Management Division of International Relations Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Dali Bregvadze, Head of Unit for Combatting Illegal Migration, Migration Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Keti Sarajishvili, Head of Interagency Council on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Ministry of Justice



Giorgi Tinikashvili, Head of Structural Unit, Legal Department, Ministry of Finance

Mariana Jalaghonia, Chief Specialist, Population Census and Demography Statistics Dept,
National Statistics Office

Mariam Latsabidze, Deputy Head of Legal Dept, State Security Service of Georgia
George Jashi, Secretary General of the State Commission for Migration Issues (SCMI)

Temur Goginovi, Expert in Analytical Issues, SCMI Secretariat

Gvantsa Abesadze, Secretary for Legal Support, SCMI Secretariat

Nino Sanikidze, Expert for Research and Development, SCMI Secretariat

UN ENTITIES

The International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Renate Held, IOM Regional Director for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Michael Newson, Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia,
Liaison Office for UN Agencies & Other International Organizations based in Vienna

Stefanie Allemann, Senior Regional Policy Advisor, Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe,
Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Joanne Irvine, Programme Officer (LHD, DMM), Migration and Sustainable Development Unit, DMM

Sacha Kam Chan, Senior Regional Migrant Protection and Assistance Specialist, Regional Office for
South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Barbara Sidoti, GFMD, Mayors' Mechanism Focal Point, Multilateral Processes Division (MPD),
Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships

Amr Taha, Senior Regional Liaison & Policy Officer, Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe,
Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Ionela Timofte, Regional Labour Mobility and Human Development Assistant, Regional Office for
South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Ilona Terminasyan, IOM Armenia Head of Mission

Aleksey Petrosyan, IOM Armenia Project Coordinator

Vladimir Gjorgjiev, IOM Azerbaijan Chief of Mission

Radoslav Stamenkov, IOM Bulgaria Head of Mission

Ivan Radulov, IOM Bulgaria Programme Coordinator

Lars Johann Lonback, IOM Republic of Moldova Chief of Mission

Ghenadie Cretu, IOM Republic of Moldova Migration and Development Programme Coordinator

Vitalie Varzari, IOM Republic of Moldova Sr. Project Assistant

Emma Edstrom, Intern IOM Republic of Moldova

Mircea Mocanu, IOM Romania Head of Office

Simona Boanca, IOM Romania Project Coordinator

Anh Nguyen, IOM Ukraine Chief of Mission



Teuta Grazhdani, IOM Ukraine Project Manager
Ali Chabuk, IOM Ukraine Senior Livelihood Specialist
Katya Ardanyan, IOM Ukraine Programme Officer
Alexander Gelovski, Assistant, IOM Bulgaria
Sanja Celebic Lukovac, IOM Georgia Chief of Mission
Maja Wiebler, IOM Georgia Project Manager
Ana Kakushadze, IOM Georgia National Programme Officer
Maia Tserediani, IOM Georgia Sr. Project Assistant
Natia Kvitsiani, IOM Georgia Programme Coordinator

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

Tea Kvirikashvili, Programme Manager, UNHCR

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

European Union

Jurate Juodsnukyte, Programme Officer - Labour Market, Migration, Gender, European Delegation to Georgia

Barbara Rotovnik, EUDEL Borders and Migration Sector Manager

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International Organization of Employers (IOE)

Gayatri Kanth, IOE Project Manager

Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG)

Maya Komakhidze, Researcher, PMCG

Giorgi Khishtovani, PMCG

Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Lasha Enukidze, Team Leader Georgia / Migration Governance Adviser, GIZ

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Magda Sabadello, Associate Project Officer

Ketevan Gorgoshidze, Project Officer

Zurab Korganashvili, Programme Manager, Resident Representative

NGO Migration Centre

Giorgi Gogishvili, NGO Migration Centre Director

NGO Civil Development Agency (CIDA)

Salome Zurabishvili, NGO CIDA Executive Director

NGO Innovation and Reforms Centre (IRC)

Keti Gomelauri, PAR Projects Team Leader, IRC



OTHER ENTITIES

The Networking Institute, Ireland

Kingsley Aikins, Chief Executive Officer

KITE – Keep in Touch Education

Maria Gallo, Founder and Managing Director

LEPL Enterprise Georgia

Mikheil Khidureli, CEO, Enterprise Georgia

Georgian Diaspora Representative

Mako Abashidze, Diaspora Representative

AID Rom

Dana Gavril, Project Coordinator, AIDRom

Repatriot Project

Marius Bostan, Repatriot Project

Gabriel Aftenie, Repatriot Project

Rares Dinu, Repatriot Project

RomBel

Carmen Solomie, President of RomBel

Europe without Barriers

Iryna Sushko Executive Director, Europe without Barriers

CONSULTANTS

Maria Vremis, Free-Lancer, Consultant

Rodica Rusu, Free-Lancer, Consultant

ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH ENTITIES

University of Maastricht (GOVERNANCE), the Netherlands

Michaela Vanore, Research Fellow

New Bulgarian University

Anna Krasteva, Professor

State University of the Republic of Moldova

Mariana Latco, Senior Lecturer

Pridnestrovian State University, the Republic of Moldova

Alla Ostavnaia, Senior Lecturer of the Department of Sociology and Social Technologies, Research Fellow at the Scientific Research Laboratory "Sociology", Pridnestrovian State University

Ladyss-CNRS, France

Dorina Rosca, Researcher



PANELISTS

High-level panel on Diaspora Engagement to Promote Private Sector Development

Vladimer Konstantinidi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Milko Berner, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Bulgaria

Iulia Costin, General Director of the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector
Development, Government of the Republic of Moldova

[Taras Kachka](#), Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine



***Emigration and Diaspora Engagement to
Promote Private Sector Development
Conference
November 24-25, 2020
Report***



Photo: Members of IOM Georgia watching the proceedings from the EMERGE conference.

For more information on the EMERGE Project: <https://georgia.iom.int/emerge>

Report prepared by:
Dr Maria Gallo
[KITE- Keep in Touch Education](#)
December 2020