



The Country of Return Information Project functions as a network of NGO's for the collection and transfer of specific information on reintegration possibilities for potential returnees and their counsellors. All questions you may have on reintegration possibilities and on which you don't find the answer in this country sheet, can be directed to the helpdesk "Country of Return Information".
E-mail: return@vluchtelingenwerk.be

COUNTRY SHEET

ARMENIA

**AUGUST
2007**

The Country of Return Information Project runs until the end of 2007 and is funded by the European Community. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided. Sole responsibility for its content lies with the author.



DISCLAIMER

This Country Sheet is for informational purposes only and no rights can be derived from its contents.

The CRI-partners will do their utmost to include accurate, corroborated, transparent and up-to-date information, but make no warrants as to its accuracy or completeness. Consequently, the CRI-partners do not accept responsibility in any way for the information in this Country Sheet and accept no liability for damages of any kind arising from using the information in this Country Sheet.

The information in this Country Sheet has been retrieved in collaboration with local partners.

This Country Sheet contains links to websites that are created and maintained by other organizations. The CRI-project does not take any responsibility for the content of these websites.

The CRI-partners are the partners who participate fully in the CRI-project: Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, Caritas International Belgium, Consiglio Italiano Per I Rifugiati, Coordination et Initiatives pour les Réfugiés et Étrangers and Hungarian Helsinki Committee.

Further information can be obtained at return@vluchtelingenwerk.be.

The Country Sheet Armenia is a product of the CRI project.

CRI-country sheets are prepared mainly on the basis of publicly available information, completed with data gathered by local partners in the specific countries, and will be updated periodically.

Our local partners in Armenia are:

- Armenian Caritas: a Gyumri based NGO active in the field of humanitarian aid as in the sense of health care, educational care and social care to elderly, orphans, vulnerable individuals (women) and families.
- Mission Armenia: a network organisation present in several communities with its main office in Yerevan. They have a broad experience in assisting refugees through social and health services, training and consulting, community building by integrating refugees, soliciting and advocacy services.

ARMENIA.....	1
1 Access to Territory (from country of asylum to return area).....	5
1.1 Documentation.....	5
1.1.1 Travel documents needed for returnees.....	5
1.1.2 Documents needed in the country of return.....	6
1.1.3 How to obtain necessary documents (conditions, processing time).....	9
1.1.4 Price of necessary documents.....	16
1.1.5 Common problems related to documents.	17
1.2 Travel to country of origin (means, approximate prices, duration, luggage limits, contacts, etc.).....	18
1.2.1 By air.....	18
1.2.2 By land (if relevant).....	20
1.3 Entry procedure (proceeding authority, interrogation, control, detention, bribes, etc.).....	20
1.3.1 By air.....	21
1.3.2 By land (if relevant).....	22
1.4 Impacts of former acts and statuses upon entry.....	22
1.4.1 Impacts of former refugee or subsidiary protection status.....	22
1.4.2 Impacts of former unsuccessful asylum claim.....	23
1.4.3 Impacts of former illegal exit from country of origin.....	23
1.4.4 Impacts of crime committed outside the country of origin (risk of double jeopardy).....	23
1.5 Customs regulation (how the relevant regulation can be obtained).....	23
1.6 Access to return area.....	23
1.6.1 Limitations on internal travel.....	23
1.6.2 Territories impossible or dangerous to approach (landmines, natural degradation, etc.).....	24
1.6.3 Means of domestic travel (contact and practical information, price list, etc.).....	24
2 Physical Security.....	25
2.1 On-going armed conflict.....	25
2.2 Regions with high-security risk.....	25
2.3 Crime.....	25
2.3.1 Regions with an extremely high level of crime (threatening physical security).....	25
2.3.2 Risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking.....	25
2.3.3 Risk of becoming a victim of forced prostitution.....	26
2.3.4 Effectiveness of protection (capacities, proficiency, corruption, etc).....	27
3 Social Security and Reintegration.....	27
3.1 Regions with no reintegration and return opportunities (e.g. natural disasters, famine, etc.).....	27
3.2 Housing and accommodation.....	28
3.2.1 Property restitution and or/compensation (in former zones of conflict or disaster).....	28
3.2.2 Housing programmes by return areas.....	29
3.2.3 Opportunities of building a house.....	30
3.2.4 Opportunities of buying real estate.....	32
3.2.5 Opportunities of renting a house or apartment.....	33

3.2.6	Other middle- term accommodation possibilities (shelters, NGOs, church, etc.)	34
3.2.7	Available temporary shelters	34
3.3	Livelihood - basic "survival"	34
3.3.1	Employment.....	35
3.3.2	Contact information relevant to the issue of recognition of degrees obtained elsewhere.....	40
3.3.3	Education and retraining programmes (access to them, costs).....	41
3.3.4	Starting a new business	44
3.3.5	Social Security.....	48
3.3.6	Charity organizations with a general scope (services, contact information)	51
3.3.7	Useful data to calculate the cost of living (price of petrol, basic food, etc.)	51
3.4	Health.....	51
3.4.1	General health situation by regions (epidemics, etc.).....	51
3.4.2	Drinking water and sanitation by region; heating system (if relevant)	52
3.4.3	Health care system (including psychological care)	53

1 Access to Territory (from country of asylum to return area)

1.1 Documentation

In the Republic of Armenia (RA) a person can have the legal status¹ of:

- **Citizen of the Armenian Republic**- person who has Armenian citizenship.²
- **Dual citizen of the Republic of Armenia**- "A person who holds the citizenship of other countries in addition to RA Citizenship shall be deemed dual citizen of the Republic of Armenia".³
- **Foreign Citizen**- a person who possesses the citizenship of another country.
- **Refugee** - A person outside the country of his nationality or country of permanent residence owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership to a particular social group or political opinion and unable or unwilling to return to that country.
- **Asylum seeker** - A person submitting an application for asylum outside the country of his citizenship or of his permanent residence and decision on granting him any residence status in that country has not been taken yet.
- **Stateless person** - A person who does not possess citizenship of any state or who does not enjoy the auspices and protection of any state.

1.1.1 Travel documents needed for returnees

The documents required for arriving to the Republic of Armenia (RA) include:

- **For RA citizens** - A valid passport of RA citizen or a certificate of repatriation if the first one is not available
- **For refugees** having acquired refugee status in RA - Valid refugee passport of RA or a certificate of repatriation if the first one is not available and travel document
- **For foreigners**- Armenian entry visa and passport or internationally adopted other identity card.
- Airplane (in most cases), train or bus ticket to come to RA.

(For more details about the ways and conditions to enter RA see 1.2 and 1.3)

¹ The Parliament has already adopted the changes on RA Citizenship Act, which gives opportunity for "dual citizenship", but it still is not realized. (as of July, 2007).

² Nagorno-Karabagh (the native Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabagh is Artsakh) is not an administrative part of RA and is not recognized by any nation. It does not have formal diplomatic relations in the traditional sense. Until the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict is solved, local people also benefit from Armenian passport. Legislature adopted in Armenian Republic concerning the citizens of RA refers to them as well. For more details about the uncertain status of Nagorno-Karabagh, see: International Crisis Group, Europe Report n°158, *Armenia: internal instability ahead*, 18 October 2004.

³ National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Act No. 16 on citizenship of the Republic of Armenia of November 6, 1995 (amended 26 February 2007, by Act No. 75-N) Section 13¹ (2) <http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/perspectives/dualcitizenship-final-eng.pdf>, accessed in July 2007.

It gives millions of ethnic Armenians around the world the chance to obtain Armenian citizenship without abandoning their current nationality.

Additional information can be found in article of Emil Danielyan, "Armenia allows dual citizenship amid controversy", 26 February 2007,

<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav022607.shtml>, accessed in July 2007.

In case they lose their passports, RA citizens and RA refugees can acquire a return passport through RA Embassies, consulates and diplomatic representatives in respective countries and in case of their absence through the diplomatic representatives located in a neighbouring country and authorized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenian Republic.

In case the passport expires, it can be extended through RA Embassies, consulates and diplomatic representatives in respective countries and in case of their absence through the diplomatic representatives located in a neighbouring country and authorized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenian Republic.⁴

1.1.2 Documents needed in the country of return

❖ Principal documents that identify the personality in the territory of RA

- A valid passport of a RA citizen (for RA citizens 16 years old and over),
- A RA refugee passport (for people 16 years old and over having a refugee status in RA),
- Residence card^a for foreign citizens (as well as their passports) and stateless persons,
- Asylum seeker certificate (for people 14 years old and over having a Asylum seeker status in RA).

Above documents are required in the following situations:

- for RA entry/ exit (except such documents as residence card and asylum seeker certificate),
- to enter educational institutions,
- for job admission,
- to receive pensions and benefits,
- to conclude bargains, appealing to court,
- to make use of services provided by polyclinics and hospitals.

❖ Birth Certificate (for children under 16 (refugee children included), for asylum seeker children under 14)

It is required in the following situations:

- for receiving pension, benefits;
- for entering to kindergartens and schools;
- for receiving services provided by polyclinics and hospitals, etc.;
- for getting a passport;
- in other cases upon request.

❖ Military card (for 18-year-old Armenian male citizens)

It is required in the following situations:

- for job admission,

² RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armenian Embassies, Consulates And Representations, [Hhttp://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/H](http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/H), accessed in July 2007.

- for entering educational institutions,
- for receiving a driving license,
- for RA entry/exit,
- in other cases upon request.

❖ Social security card

In accordance with established procedure, it is issued to RA citizens, people having a refugee or asylum seeker status, and to foreigners and stateless persons.

It is required in the following situations:

- for job admission,
- for receiving benefits,
- for payment of taxes and duties,
- for opening bank accounts,
- in other cases upon request.

❖ Property Certificate

In accordance with established procedure, it is issued to RA citizens, people having a refugee or asylum seeker status, and to foreigners and stateless persons.

It is required in the following situations:

- for ratifying one's right for land, real estate and movable property;
- for selling, donating or bequeathing property or land;
- in other cases upon request.

Comment: " Foreign citizens and persons without citizenship shall not have the right to own land, except in cases prescribed by law".⁵

❖ Family Social Passport

In accordance with established procedure, it is issued to RA citizens, people having a refugee or asylum seeker status, and to foreigners and stateless persons.

It is required in the following situations:

- for making use of poverty family benefit projects (more detailed see 3.3.5.3),
- for maintaining certain advantages when receiving social and medical services (more detailed see 3.3.5),
- in other cases upon request

⁵ National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Legislation, HBasis of Structures of State and Local AuthoritiesH, Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (with amendments), Section 31(4), H<http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=engH>, accessed in July 2007.

❖ Disability Grade Reference

In accordance with established procedure, it is issued to RA citizens, people having a refugee or asylum seeker status, and to foreigners and stateless persons.

It is required in the following situations:

- for receiving invalidity pension,
- for maintaining certain advantages when receiving social and medical services (more detailed see 3.3.5),
- for receiving free prosthetic-orthopaedic appurtenances,
- for receiving medicaments requiring special permission,
- in other cases upon request.

❖ Pension Card

In accordance with established procedure, it is issued to RA citizens, people having a refugee or asylum seeker status, and to foreigners and stateless persons.

It is required in the following situations:

- for receiving age, invalidity, loss of breadwinner and other types of pensions foreseen by the law;
- in other cases upon request.

❖ Work Record Book

In accordance with established procedure, it is issued to RA citizens, people having a refugee or asylum seeker status, and to foreigners and stateless persons.

It is required in the following situations:

- for job admission,
- for pension appointment,
- in other cases upon request.

❖ Driving License

In accordance with established procedure, it is issued to RA citizens, people having a refugee or asylum seeker status, and to foreigners and stateless persons.

It is required in the following situations:

- for relevant job admission (if required),
- for driving in RA territory and abroad,
- in other cases upon request.

Comment: Documents such as a diploma, school-leaving certificate, marriage certificate, birth certificate, death certificate, driving license, medical card if issued in other

countries outside RA through respective bodies are valid in RA as well. These may required in translated (Armenian) versions certified by notary offices.

1.1.3 How to obtain necessary documents (conditions, processing time)

The Government Decree No. 1459 of 14 October 2004 on approving the list of state importance documents requiring special protection gives the list of documents and government bodies by which these documents should be issued.

In the Republic of Armenia (RA) the giving, changing, and using conditions of documents are regulated by appropriate normative acts.

Here are the receiving processes of some important documents:

❖ RA entry visa for foreigners

The Act No. 1075 adopted on May 25, 1994 on status of foreign citizens in the Republic of Armenia regulates the entry to RA and exit from RA, the types of resident status of foreign citizens in Armenia, rules for its granting, duties of foreign citizens, and the legal status of the foreign citizens who enjoy resident status in RA.

Abroad, the entry visa is given by **the diplomatic representatives and consulates of RA**⁶, and in RA it is given by **respective bodies of RA Police**.

❖ RA citizen passport

The Decree No. 821 on approving passport system charter in RA and description of RA citizen passport adopted on December 25, 1998 by RA Government regulates the procedure of giving and changing of RA passport as well as other issues relating to RA passport.

According to this decree the passport of the RA citizen is the principal identity card for RA citizen in RA and abroad. Those 16 and over with **the citizenship of RA** must have RA passports. RA citizens under 16 should have RA passports in case of exit/entry RA.

In Armenia, RA citizens 16 and over should receive or change the passports and prolong the passport validity time at **RA Police Department Passport Offices** according to their permanent, temporary or factual residence, and for RA citizens under 16 through **Visa Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**.

Abroad, the RA passports are issued, changed or prolonged through **RA representatives or consulates**.

To receive RA passport RA citizens should present:

- Passport application,
- Birth certificate or RA passport for those under 16,
- Two 35x45 mm colour photos,
- Certified agreement of parents or lawful representatives (for citizens under 16) certified by a notary,
- Other identity cards if incapable to present required documents mentioned in point "b",
- Military attached paper or military card (for conscription).

⁶ RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armenian Embassies, Consulates And Representations, [Hhttp://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/H](http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/H), accessed in July 2007.

The RA passport is issued for 10 years. The passport validity date can be prolonged in 5 years. Expired passports are invalid and should be changed according to the established procedure.

RA passport is valid abroad for 5 years. In case of loss, RA citizens should, within 10 days, inform RA Police in Armenia or RA diplomatic representatives and consulates if abroad.

Taking into account the physical developments of the person, the passports of RA citizens should be changed at the ages of 1, 3, 7, 12 and 16.

RA citizen registration

The registration of RA citizens, as well as appropriate information about the citizen's residence place in the passport, is made according to their permanent, temporary or factual residence by RA Police Department Passport Offices.

❖ RA Refugee passport (identity card) and travel document

RA Government Decree No. 695 on the procedures for issuance of a refugee identity card and travel document in the RA and their samples, adopted on November 11, 1999 regulates the procedures for giving, replacing and using the Refugee ID's and travel documents.⁷

The refugee identification card (ID) is a document that identifies a person in the RA territory.

Refugee travel document is a document that identifies a refugee in a foreign country.

Refugee ID's card and travel documents are granted in the manner prescribed by RA legislation to foreign citizens and stateless persons 16 and over who have acquired a refugee status⁸. Refugee ID card is granted or changed by RA Police Department Passport Offices according to permanent, temporary or factual residence.

To receive a Refugee ID card the following documents should be presented:

- The decision of Migration Agency of Ministry of Territorial Administration⁹ on granting a refugee status to the person; and the refugee family card (certificate)¹⁰ for those who were forcibly displaced to the Republic of Armenia during 1988-1992;
- Passport;
- Birth certificate (for people under 16);
- Two 35x45mm colour photos;
- Any other documents of identification if the refugee can't present the documents mentioned under "b" and "c" sub points of this section.

Expiry date - The ID is granted for 3 years. The ID can be prolonged for another 2 years.

The prescribed manners of travel document acquisition:

RA Police Department Passport Offices grant the refugee travel document for 1 year according to the applicants' permanent, temporary or factual residence. Validity date can

⁷ Ministry of Territorial Administration of RA, Migration Agency, Decree No. 695 of the RA Government on the procedures for issuance of a refugee identity card and travel document in the RA and their samples, [Hhttp://www.dmr.am/ADMR/ORENSD%7E1/decres.htm](http://www.dmr.am/ADMR/ORENSD%7E1/decres.htm), accessed in July 2007

⁸ Ministry of Territorial Administration of RA, Migration Agency, Refugee Act No. 288 adopted on March 3, 1999 by the RA National Assembly, <http://www.dmr.am/ADMR/ORENSD%7E1/PAXORLRIV.HTM>, accessed in July 2007

⁹ about the functioning of RA Migration Agency: <http://www.dmr.am/ADMR/INDEX.HTML>

¹⁰ Those refugees who were forcibly displaced to the Republic of Armenia during 1988-1992 from Azerbaijan had received "refugee family cards" that certified their refugee status. Nowadays these "refugee family cards" are not issued any more.

be prolonged for another year by **diplomatic representatives and consulates**, if the person hasn't lost refugee status. The document is granted within a month after receiving the application.

Documentations to be presented include:

- An application for leaving Armenia temporarily,
- Refugee certificate,
- Two 35x45mm colour photos,
- A receipt certifying that the state due was paid.

For each child travelling with a refugee the following documents should be presented:

- Birth certificate,
- Two 35x45mm colour photos.

❖ **Social Cards**

"Social card¹¹ is a document provided to a citizen, which guarantees the exercise of social security rights of that citizen".¹²

❖ **Certificate for Asylum-seekers**

The prescribed manner of granting, changing and using RA temporary asylum certificate is qualified by Government Decree No. 12, 2002 January 9 on approving the manner of temporary asylum certificate granting and certificate description in RA.

Temporary asylum certificate is the identification document of a person having received temporary asylum in RA.

The certificate is being granted by the **Migration Agency of Ministry of Territorial Administration.**

Required documentations:

- application for receiving a certificate,
- the decree of granting temporary asylum in RA by Migration agency
- passport,
- Two 35x45mm colour photos,
- If the documents listed under "c" sub point are not available, any other ID documents.

Terms: The certificate is granted for one year and can be prolonged.

(About the **political asylum** see the Act No. 229 on political asylum, adopted on September 26, 2001¹³).

❖ **Residence card**

RA Government Decree of September 23, 1994, No. 459 on ensuring the enforcement the Act of the status of foreign citizens in the Republic of Armenia states the procedure of receiving residence card for foreign citizens in RA. This order regulates the details

¹¹ RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Question and answer, Explanations on the social security cards, [Hhttp://www.mss.am/eng/faq/faqsoccard.htm](http://www.mss.am/eng/faq/faqsoccard.htm), and social insurance sector, [Hhttp://www.mss.am/eng/volort/socaphimn.htm](http://www.mss.am/eng/volort/socaphimn.htm), accessed in July 2007

¹² National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Legislation, HLegislation on Social Security and Social Insurance, Act No. 1 on social security cards, adopted on September 24, 2003, Section 3 (1), [Hhttp://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=eng](http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=eng), accessed in July 2007

¹³ Ministry of Territorial Administration of RA, Migration Agency, Act No. 229 on political asylum, <http://www.dmr.am/ADMR/ORENSD%7E1/Apastan.htm>, accessed in July 2007

concerning issuing and prolonging of RA entry visas for foreign citizens, their resident status and formation of relevant documents, their registration and business activity.

Comment: The Act No. 1075 on the status of foreign citizens in the RA, adopted by RA General Assembly on May 25, 1994 states that this Act shall also apply to the **stateless persons** who stay in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, unless otherwise provided for in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia (Section 4). Consequently, the points of the mentioned decree are applicable for **stateless persons** as well.

❖ **Military Card**

The military Card is given to those who have served in the military and citizens who are not fit for military service¹⁴.

According to Section 11 (1) of the Military Service Act No. 250 issued on September 16, 1998, **18 to 27-year-old male draftees** (who are fit for military service in peaceful conditions) should be drafted for **compulsory military service**.

Military registration: According to this Act (Section 5) pre-draftees (16-18 years old), draftees (18-27 years old) and citizens who are in reserve should pass military registration. Military registration is done by the military territorial commissariat¹⁵ of the place they are registered (for those who are not registered by the commissariat their factual residence).

The military registration of conscripts who live abroad (more than a month) is done by diplomatic and consulate bodies.

The following points are withdrawn from military registration:

- a. Citizens who are exempt from compulsory military service on the basis defined by "a" sub point of first part of the section 12 of this Act;
- b. Persons, whose citizenship was ceased by the order prescribed by this Law;
- c. Reserved citizens, who are over of the defined age.

The basis of compulsory military service exemption (according to Section 12):

a) citizens whose health situation don't fit for military service as decided by the republican conscript commission;

b) those citizens, whose father/mother or brother/sister died in RA defense or armed forces or other troops while concluding their official responsibilities and he is the only son of the family;

c) any citizen according to government decree;

d) the citizen who has served in the compulsory military forces of any other country before acquiring RA citizenship;

e) the citizen who has a scientific degree if he is engaged in professional, scientific or pedagogical activity.

The law defines the basis of getting deferment conditioned with marital status, education, health situations, etc.

Section 327 of RA Criminal Code (Act No. 248, entered into force January 12, 1999)¹⁶ defines the punishments for evasion from the regular or alternative military service¹⁷, training exercises or conscription.

¹⁴ In their card there is written a special notice "not fit for military service"

¹⁵ These bodies, as well as the republican conscript commission, is functioning under the RA Ministry of Defense

¹⁶ National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Legislation, HPenal Law, Criminal Action and Criminal Penitentiary LegislationH, RA Criminal Code, Section 327 Evasion from regular military service or training exercises, H<http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=engH>, accessed in July 2007.

¹⁷ Armenia Quaker Report 2005, *The Right to Conscientious Objection in Europe*, Quaker Council for European Affairs, 2005 H<http://www.wri-irg.org/co/rtba/armenia.htmH>, accessed in July 2007.

As the evasion of military service is criminally punished it has a negative impact on draftee-age male representatives returning to RA from abroad.

Taking into account this fact, the Parliament of RA adopted an Act which gives an opportunity to young Armenian men to return to their motherland on condition that they pay a fee: Act No. 8 on citizens who failed to complete compulsory military service through violation of the established procedure¹⁸ (adopted on December 17, 2003, effective in March 2004). This Act defines the rates of paid fees¹⁹.

Alternative military service

The Act No. 6 on alternative service entered into force on July 1, 2004 is not applied retroactively. Consequently, applications that are made by conscripts who have been called up before July 2004 are not taken into consideration.²⁰

Furthermore, it seems that young men (conscientious objectors) who chose the alternative civilian service are exposed to ill-treatments.

In their defense, a young man stated that they had willingly accepted work in a psychiatric hospital after being assured that the work under the new Alternative Service Act was civilian. However, they were required to wear military-style uniforms, subjected to regular checks by the military police, prohibited from practicing their religion, and forbidden to leave the premises.²¹

❖ Certificate on Property

Certificate on registration of the Ownership (Use) Right to the Real Estate is issued immediately after the state registration of rights to the real estate (according to the Act No. 295 of April 14, 1999 on state registration on rights to the property²², Section 25). This Act regulates the state registration of rights to property in **Real Estate State Register Agencies** (Note: in most documents they are mentioned, called as Cadastre), the activity of the system implementing the state registration, what kind of properties should be registered, what kind of rights to property should be registered, etc.

"All persons and organizations shall be informed about the registered rights to the real property regardless of their actual awareness of the respective rights. Any references to other documents on rights to the property that are not registered, except for the registration pages of the State Unified Registry, as well as the respective rights shall not be deemed recognized or registered".²³

¹⁸ National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Legislation, HLegislation on DefenceH, Act on Hcitizens who failed to complete compulsory military service through violation of the established procedureH, H<http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=eng>H, accessed in July 2007.

¹⁹ The rates of fees are given according to the minimum wage, currently (July 2007) the minimum wage is 1 000 AMD or (2.13 EUR). The mentioned fee should be paid for every call-up period starting from the moment of not reporting for conscription for compulsory military service. There are two call-up periods in a year- spring and autumn call-up.

²⁰ Armenia Quaker Report 2005, op. cit., page 4.

²¹ Jehova Witnesses, Office of Public Information, 3 November 2005,

Hhttp://www.jw-media.org/region/europe/armenia/english/releases/conscientious_obj/arm_e051103.htmH, accessed in July 2007.

²² National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Legislation, HHousing LegislationH, the Act on Hstate registration of rights to the propertyH,

H<http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=eng>H, accessed in July 2007

²³ Ibid., Section 14 (1)

One of the objectives of state registration is “state recognition, guarantee and protection of rights to the property”.²⁴ It means that only after state registration of the right on property in Real Estate Register Agencies the right to a given property is bestowed.

Moreover, “no particular right to the property shall be registered, if the right of ownership (use) to such property is not registered”.²⁵ It means that someone can sell, give as a mortgage or do other deals related with property only after having registered ownership right.

(The issues related with property are very important for returnees who have left any real estate in Armenia. For more details see 3.2)

❖ Birth certificate

According to Act No. 9 on civilian residence acts, adopted in August 12, 2004 *Civilian Residence Acts are those activities of citizens or cases, which emerge, change and cease their rights and duties as well as characterize their legal situation. The following civilian residence acts should be registered: birth, marriage, divorce, adoption, paternity definition, change of name, death.*²⁶

State registration's changes, amendments and corrections, invalidation, restoration of lost registrations of RA Civilian Residence Acts in a defined order are implemented by Civil Act Registration Offices of Ministry of Justice of RA.

Comment: “The state registry of civilian residence acts of RA citizens residing abroad is done by consulate offices of their countries in the manner prescribed by this Act”.²⁷

RA birth should be registered in a defined order, after which a birth certificate is issued.

Birth state registration is done by the Civil Act Register Office of a child's or his/her parents' birthplace.

Written statement of child's birth should be presented to Civil Act Register Office no later than a year after the child's birth.

Other documents to be presented:

- a. special form given from a medical organization where the child was born;
- b. parents' passports;
- c. the parents' marriage certificate;

Validity date: State birth registration and birth certificate disposition is done by Civil Act Register Office on the day of documentation presentation.

❖ Family Social Passport

The family poverty benefit system is the biggest project of social support field, which is based on family vulnerability level assessment; not the person, but the family is concerned as a subject for social support.

Due to the RA Government Decree No. 110, declared on December 1, 2006 on approving family benefit and lump sum assistance appointment and payment order the benefit is specified to those families, who are registered in the family poverty system and have higher scores than the maximum poverty magnitude score²⁸.

The order of getting enlisted in a family benefit system and acquiring family social passport:

²⁴ Ibid., Section 4 (a)

²⁵ Ibid., Section 23 (5)

²⁶ RA Act on civilian residence acts, Section 3

²⁷ Ibid., Section 4 (2)

²⁸ For the years 2006 and 2007 this maximal poverty magnitude score is 33.00.

For family benefit appointment one of the adult members of the family presents an application and other necessary documents to **Social Service Territorial Agency**²⁹ (hereinafter referred to SSTA) of their temporary, permanent and factual residence.

Necessary documents needed by the SSTA:

1. reference about family composition;
2. application (apartment conditions, family incomes, etc.);
3. reference about employment of family members from their office, (in case of unemployment the reference is given from **Employment Service Territorial Centre**³⁰)
4. passport of adult members of the family and birth certificates of members under 16;
5. other documents if required (disability card, pension card and so on).

Terms: For reviewing vulnerability it's required to present the required documents to SSTA once a year. Within 25 days, SSTA issues the family social passport with the family vulnerability score indicating which benefit is appointed or not.

Fore additional details about the Family Benefit System see point 3.3.5.3

❖ **Certificate about disability group (disability grade or invalidity group)**

A person is considered to be disabled, if he/she possesses health failures limiting his/her activities, and has a need for social protection. RA Government Decree No. 254, issued on March 13, 2003 on approving the order of implementation of social-medical expertise and making amendment in Government Decree No. 684 of 03 November, 1998 defines the procedure of recognizing disability.

Procedure of disability definition

Disability is defined by **medico-social examination committees** (hereinafter referred to MSEC) which are considered to be medico-social examination agency's territorial offices.³¹ The examination can be carried out in the hospitals, at home or a distant place (in a defined order).

MSEC examines the person and a decision is made on his disability. They give a disability grade to a person defined as **disabled I, II and III**; if the child is under 18 he is given a status of a **disabled child**. They also give a **reference which certifies the disability grade**. Those disabled and disabled children receive **disability pension** in a defined order.

The following documents should be presented to the territorial offices of medico-social examination committees:

1. written application;
2. "form 88" given from healthcare body (special reference form about person's health situation);
3. passports for adults, or birth certificates for children under 16;
4. social security card;
5. work-book (if required);
6. other medical documents about person's health situation.

Those who don't have permanent residence and aren't RA citizens can pass the medic-social examination with a permit of Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of RA.

²⁹ Social Service Territorial Agencies are functioning under the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues

³⁰ Employment Service Territorial Centres are functioning under the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues

³¹ The agency and the comities are functioning under the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues

Terms: MSEC is obliged to make a decision on a person's disability within a month.

According to RA Government Decree No. 780, June 13, 2003, on approving the classifiers used during the medico-social examination and standards for disability grade definition, disability grade is appointed:

a. with terms:

1 year for disabled persons in groups II and III; 2 years for disabled persons in group I or disabled children.

When the appointed terms expire the disabled person applies to MSEC for double examination with all medical and other necessary documents of the first year. After the double examination he/she is either defined as a disabled or not.

b. termless

Termless disability group is appointed to those who are over the specified pension age as well as to those who have unrecoverable activity limitations.

❖ **Work Book**

According to the RA Labour Code (Act No. 124, entered into force on June 21, 2005) for signing work contract the employer should require from the employee the Work Book, except in cases of the employee's first job or multiple places of work³² (the Work Book is kept in the main work place of employee).

The Work Book is the main document containing relevant information about the employee. The employer fills in the Work Book in a defined order and keeps it.

Terms: When the employee resigns, it is given back to him.

1.1.4 Price of necessary documents

The RA State Duties Act No. 186, adopted in December 27, 1997 defines compulsory fees for services or actions defined by this law determined by the implementation of state bodies' activities.

The rates of state duties are defined towards the value of property eligible to assessment or the base duty defined by this Act. The base duty is 1,000 AMD³³ or 2.13 EUR.³⁴

In RA the state duty is paid:

a) For notarial acts done by a notary officer³⁵:

-for those contracts that according to law need to be certified by notary officers 500-5,000 AMD (1.07 to 10.67 EUR),

-To certify the authenticity of every page of translated documents/papers- 500 AMD (1.07 EUR).

b) To register the state residence acts, to give double certificates and other things related with state residence acts³⁶:

³² RA Labour Code, Section 89 (1) (2)

³³ RA State Duties Act, Section 8

³⁴ National currency of RA is Armenian dram or shortly AMD, for the AMD exchange rates see http://coinmill.com/AMD_EUR.html

On 13 of July 2007, the exchange rate was 468.8 AMD for 1 EUR.

³⁵ RA State Duties Act, Section 11 (1-10,18)

³⁶ Ibid., Section 12 (1-3,9)

-To register marriage, including issuing the certificate-1, 000 AMD (2.13 EUR),
-to register divorce, including issuing the certificate 10,000 AMD (21.33 EUR),
-to register birth, including issuing the certificate 100 AMD (0.21 EUR),
-to give references concerning the presence or absence of civil residence act registration 2,000 AMD (4.27 EUR).

c) **To acquire RA citizenship and to change RA citizenship³⁷:**

- To acquire RA citizenship 1,000 AMD (2.13 EUR),
- To change RA citizenship 25,000 AMD (53.33 EUR).

d) **For certain documents, services or actions (that have legal significance) given to persons³⁸:**

- To issue RA citizen passport 1,000 AMD (2.13 EUR),
-to register RA citizens or to notice in RA passports concerning the residence 1,000 AMD (2.13 EUR),
- to give notice concerning the validity of passports in foreign countries, for every year of validity 1,000 AMD (2.13 EUR).

e) **For services or actions implemented by RA consulates³⁹:**

-To give RA certificate of repatriation, if the passport is lost through passport holder's fault it will cost 32,000 AMD (68.26 EUR) (this is the rate for Western Europe countries). In other cases (the passport is lost not through passport holder's fault) this certificate is issued for free.

f) **To register for the right of property⁴⁰:**

Depending on the kind of real estate right the fee is 1,000- 20,000 AMD⁴¹ (2.13 to 42.5 EUR).

g) **For many other services and acts defined by law⁴²:**

Such documents as social card, Family Social Passport, disability grade⁴³, pension card, military card are issued for free.

1.1.5 Common problems related to documents.

1.1.5.1 Official circumlocution when receiving appropriate documents

The system of social security cards will deliver citizens from the duty to present variegated certificates while addressing any service of social security system, including any subjective interference in the mentioned process.⁴⁴ Although most of the people already have social cards this problem still exists.

³⁷ Ibid., Section 13,

³⁸ Ibid., Section 14 (1,4,7),

³⁹ Ibid., Section 15 (1) (g, h)

⁴⁰ Ibid., Section 16 (36)

⁴¹ For the service of land measuring of real estate there are other payments according to defined order.

⁴² For example for RA entry visa fees see [Hhttp://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/H](http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/H), (visa regulation)

⁴³ The issuing of this certificate itself is for free, but before receiving it, persons do legal or illegal payments to pass needed medical examinations in healthcare bodies

⁴⁴ RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Question and Answer, Explanations on the social security cards, (questions 4 and 5), [Hhttp://www.mss.am/eng/faq/faqsoccard.htmH](http://www.mss.am/eng/faq/faqsoccard.htmH), accessed in July 2007.

1.1.5.2 Corruption of state bodies⁴⁵

Despite the considerable progress that the government has made in setting up basic democratic and market institutions, and in taking initial steps to combat corruption, governing structures are still hampered by a weak public administration and inadequate regulatory framework. Recent household surveys confirm that the general public perceives government institutions as inaccessible, overly bureaucratic and lacking in transparency.

1.1.5.3 Lack of legal awareness among people⁴⁶

1.1.5.4 The bodies that issue appropriate documents are located far from peoples' residence

The problem is evident especially in rural villages, because the bodies usually are located in administrative centres which are difficult to reach due to financial reasons as well as distance. People who are elderly or disabled also have difficulties in getting the documents.⁴⁷

Every year the RA ombudsman makes reports which are made directly on citizens' complaints. An ombudsman investigates from what bodies the people are complaining the most because the same problems will probably arise to the returnees as well.⁴⁸ The contacts lists of all state bodies, private organizations, NGOs, and representatives of foreign companies functioning in the Republic of Armenia are outlined on <http://www.spyur.am/htmfix/yp.htm>. It may help returnees to plan ahead with essential addresses and telephone numbers. "Spyur" is a service that gives information for free by phone: (374-10) 51-99-99

1.2 *Travel to country of origin (means, approximate prices, duration, luggage limits, contacts, etc.)*

There are two possible ways to travel to Armenia: **by air and by land.**

1.2.1 By air

There are several airports in Armenia.⁴⁹ But **Yerevan Zvartnots International Airport is the main gateway to Armenia.** Hereinafter all information about air travel conditions is focused on "Zvartnots" airport (it is located 10 km from Yerevan, the capital of RA). Recently over 20 airlines have received licenses for flight operations and currently have both scheduled as well as non-scheduled flights.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ UN in Armenia, National Report 2005, Millennium Development goals: Nationalization and Progress. MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development. Page 26, first paragraph, [Hhttp://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf](http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf), accessed in July 2007

⁴⁶ Ibid., Page 26,

⁴⁷ Based on the experience of Mission Armenia NGO's social workers and lawyers

⁴⁸ RA Human Rights Defender, Annual Report of 2005, published in 14 April 2006, [Hhttp://www.ombuds.am/main/en/10/31/H](http://www.ombuds.am/main/en/10/31/H), accessed in July 2007

⁴⁹ The General Department of Civil Aviation, Airports, [Hhttp://www.aviation.am/eng/gorc/aeroport.htm](http://www.aviation.am/eng/gorc/aeroport.htm), accessed in July 2007

⁵⁰ The General Department of Civil Aviation, "Aircraft operators of RA", first paragraph, [Hhttp://www.aviation.am/eng/gorc/user.htm](http://www.aviation.am/eng/gorc/user.htm), accessed in July 2007

Direct flights from some European countries ⁵¹

Airlines	Flights	Frequency of flights
Austrian Airlines	Vienna (Austria)- Zvartnots	4 times a week
British Airways	London (Great Britain)- Zvartnots	4 times a week
Czech Airlines	Prague (Czech Republic)- Zvartnots	3 times a week
Lufthansa German Airlines	Munich (Germany)- Zvartnots	4 times a week
"Air France"	Paris (France)- Zvartnots	3 times a week
"Armavia" Armenian Airlines	Paris (France)- Zvartnots	Twice a week
"Armavia"	Amsterdam (Holland)- Zvartnots	Every Saturday
"Armavia"	Athens (Greece)- Zvartnots	Every Friday
"Armavia" ⁵²	Moscow (Russia), from DME (Domodedovo), VKO (Vnukovo) airports- Zvartnots	5 times a day
"Aeroflot" Russian Airlines	Moscow (Russia) from SVO (Sheremetyevo) airport- Zvartnots	Twice a day

Direct flights from other countries (through "Armavia" Airline or the airlines from these mentioned countries): Russian (over 20 cities), Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Syria and several other countries.

Transit or stop over flights: From other countries or cities that have no direct flights it is possible to reach Armenia with transit or stop over flights through mentioned direct flights.

For ticket prices, flight frequencies, and luggage limits contact Airlines' representative offices located in respective countries; because depending on the airline, passengers' age, and season the ticket prices, flight frequency, luggage limits and other flight conditions may vary.

Airline websites:

British Airways	www.britishairlines.com
Czech Airlines	www.czechairlines.com
"Armavia" Armenian Airlines	www.armavia.am (in Russian)
"Aeroflot" Russian Airlines	www.aeroflot.com
Austrian Airlines	www.austrianairlines.com
"Air France" Airlines Societe	www.airfrance.com
Lufthansa German Airlines	http://www.lufthansa.com

⁵¹ information is up to December 2006, see [Hwww.zvartnots.am](http://www.zvartnots.am) concerning flights' timetable, duration implemented through Zvartnots airport

⁵² twice a week, besides Zvartnots "Armavia" organizes flights Moscow- Gyumri (Armenia)- Moscow

1.2.2 By land (if relevant)

Currently, “both neighbour countries Turkey and Azerbaijan have imposed a blockade against Armenia and have closed their borders with Armenia. Two highway routes and one rail-link⁵³ are available through Georgia, which provide access to the Black Sea ports of Batumi and Poti. Additionally, there is one route south through Iran to the Persian Gulf”.⁵⁴ As the borders with Turkey are closed car routes through Georgia have crucial importance for Armenia. They link Armenia with the Russian Federation and other European countries. But political tension between Russia and Georgia (in the summer of 2006 Russian guards have closed the only overland border pass with Georgia, citing construction work) as well as the problems around Abkhazia and South-Ossetia have negatively affected Armenia. Consequently until the Russia- Georgia land border is opened air travel remains the only safe, suitable and accessible way for people coming to Armenia.⁵⁵

1.3 Entry procedure (proceeding authority, interrogation, control, detention, bribes, etc.)

According to the Act on state border No. 265, adopted on November 20, 2004, railways, automobile, air and other transportation is implemented in the crossing points defined by RA Government. At state border crossing points border guard troop passport-control points have begun to emerge.

At state border crossing points, RA Government defines customs control zones, where control is being implemented exceptionally by customs bodies.

Control: According to the above-mentioned Act, border control is a system of arrangements ensuring legal crossing of state borders. Border control in international communication roads is being implemented for:

- a) the purpose of defining and ensuring control in transit points applying optical observance equipments and special technical means;
- b) the purpose of stating a person's identity and his right to cross the border by means of proof of documentation;
- c) the purpose of observing airplanes, other flying objects and transport means crossing the state border;
- d) the purpose of observing transferred animals, cargo and other goods as well as for reviling persons trying to cross the state border illegally.

People, transport means, animals, cargo and other goods crossing the state border are subjects of border, sanitary-quarantine, veterinary, phyto-sanitary control and customs control.

According to Section 16 of RA State Border Act, in the threat of emergency or spreading of infectious diseases in the territory of RA or other foreign countries RA Government can temporarily limit or terminate communication and place under quarantine people, animals, and cargo crossing the state border as well as transfer of seeds, products of organic and vegetarian origin.

⁵³Armenian Tourism Development Agency, Travel and Transportation, Arriving by train [Hhttp://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=land&page=2H](http://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=land&page=2H), accessed in July, 2007

⁵⁴Armenian Tourism Development Agency, Travel and Transportation, Arriving by land [Hhttp://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=landH](http://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=landH), accessed in July, 2007

⁵⁵ Concerning Nagorno-Karabagh (NK): Currently to reach NK is possible only through Armenia (NK has two car roads linking with Armenia). With NK the roads are open and without any border checking.

Detention: While crossing the state border and checking a person's identification, the person is immediately arrested if the latter is found to be under criminal investigation or does any action defined as crime while passing the border.

Actions defined as criminal crimes are stated in Criminal Code of RA⁵⁶. They are:

1. RA citizens who have not passed their compulsory military service, Section 327, RA Criminal Code;
2. Illegal crossing of state border, Section 329, RA Criminal Code;
3. Smuggle of contraband, Section 215, RA Criminal Code; and etc.

Bribes: "According to trafficking victim's report, Russian and Armenian border guards were easily bribed or regularly worked with traffickers. Some prosecutors were also reportedly complicit in trafficking. There were persistent allegations that senior members of the prosecutor general's office were susceptible to outside influence. Some observers asserted that agreements have been made between corrupt court officials and traffickers. There were persistent reports that police employees and employees of the country's international airport assisted traffickers with transportation of victims to and through the country."⁵⁷

1.3.1 By air⁵⁸

RA Government Decree No. 200 adopted in March 24, 1998 on approving the order of state authorized bodies' function implementation on cross points of state border defines the functions of state authorized bodies in case of RA entry/exit of citizens by means of air or land transportation.

According to the mentioned Decree, in case of entry via air border service checks the passports of citizens arriving to RA; in case of foreign citizens it also checks the entry visa.

After the passport control check-up:

- a) RA citizens, as well as citizens of those countries which are in visa-free regime according to international treaties signed on behalf of RA, pass to customs control zone;
- b) Foreign citizens with entry visa not mentioned in "a" sub-point of this point pass to customs control zone;
- c) In case entry visa is absent, foreign citizens not mentioned in "a" sub-point of this point apply to Passport and Visa Department of Police in state border cross points for entry visa and pass into customs control zone.

Citizens entering **Customs control zone** fill out declaration forms designed by Customs Committee under RA Government and submit them to Customs personnel. During the Custom service check-up Custom officers can implement customs check of citizens, their luggage, personal belongings and other goods in a manner defined by RA legislation.

Comment: Citizens, who are under 18 and are specified as incapable RA legislation, if they are not accompanied by their parents or by lawful representatives defined by RA

⁵⁶ National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Legislation, HPenal Law, Criminal Action and Criminal Penitentiary LegislationH, RA Criminal Code

[Hhttp://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=engH](http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=engH), accessed in July 2007

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State; Armenia Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2005, done by Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor in 2006, Section 5: Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons; Trafficking in Persons; paragraph 10

[Hhttp://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61635.htmH](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61635.htmH), accessed in July 2007

⁵⁸ All issues related with border management system in "Zvartnots" airport [Hhttp://www.aitsystems.am/index_e.htmlH](http://www.aitsystems.am/index_e.htmlH)

*legislation, they should also present notarially certified agreements of parents or lawful representatives about the citizens' entry/exit*⁵⁹.

1.3.2 By land (if relevant)

In case of citizen entry by land transportation, state authorized bodies have the same functions as entry by air.

1.4 *Impacts of former acts and statuses upon entry*

1.4.1 Impacts of former refugee or subsidiary protection status

1. **Changing RA citizenship:** RA Constitution states the right of person to change citizenship (Section 30.1): Consequently, the changing of RA citizenship in a manner prescribed by RA legislation is not considered as punished act.

"Although the law provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, the right was restricted in practice due to repeated flaws in the conduct of elections"⁶⁰.

2. **Calling for account only those acts that are considered crimes/misdemeanours by RA Legislation.** According to principle of legitimacy (RA Criminal Code, Section 5), it is only the criminal law that decides whether the act is criminal and punishable. And as "RA citizen's request to acquire refugee status", or "the acquisition of refugee status in another country" does not mention any normative act as a criminal and punishable act, the person can't be punished for such act in RA.

But, if for example, the same RA citizen with refugee status in another country performs such action that can be considered as high treason (Criminal Code, Section 299): divulging a state secret (Criminal Code, Section 306); forgery and use of forged documents, stamps, seals (Criminal Code, Section 325) or other crime defined by RA legislature he/she can be called to criminal/administrative accounts for the mentioned articles.

3. **Everyone's equality before the law**⁶¹: According to Section 6 of the Criminal Code, the persons who committed a crime are equal before the law and are punished only for committed criminal acts, and are subject to criminal liability regardless of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, ethnic minority, birth, property, or other statuses.

Although it is considered that "there is societal discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and homosexuals in Armenia"⁶², there are no cases that someone of those mentioned groups was punished only for his/her belonging to that group.

⁵⁹ This regulation is based on Sections 29, 30, 32, 33 of RA Civil Code (Act No. 239, entered into force on January 01, 1999), according to what children under 18, persons specified as incapable or limited capable can make deals after written agreement of their parents or lawful representatives National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Legislation, HCivil LegislationH, Civil Code H<http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=subject&lang=engH>, accessed in July 2007

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State; Armenia Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006; done by Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in 2007; Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government, I paragraph, H<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78799.htmH>, accessed in July 2007

⁶¹ According to RA Constitution, Section 14.1 (1)

⁶² U.S. Department of State; Armenia Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006; done by Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in 2007; Section 5 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons; paragraph 1, H<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78799.htmH>, accessed in July 2007

1.4.2 Impacts of former unsuccessful asylum claim

Applying for refugee status as well as **the act of asylum claiming or acquiring the status of asylum seeker** (regardless the fact of upholding or dismissing the claim, the fact of person's forced or voluntary return) are **not regarded as punishable action** as such actions are not defined as a crime or misdemeanour by RA Legislation.

1.4.3 Impacts of former illegal exit from country of origin

1. **Person's right to leave/ return to RA:** Section 25 of RA Constitution outlines the **RA citizen's right to leave and return to Republic of Armenia**. These rights can be restricted only by laws. But in real life "Permission to depart the country may be denied to persons who possess state secrets, are subject to military service, are involved in pending court cases, or whose relatives have lodged financial claims against them. Men of military age who have not completed service requirements must overcome substantial bureaucratic obstacles to travel abroad, including excessive delays in processing and officials soliciting unofficial fees for exit stamps"⁶³.

2. **Illegal state border crossing:** Crossing the guarded state border of the Republic of Armenia without relevant documents or permits is punished (Section 329 Criminal Code).

1.4.4 Impacts of crime committed outside the country of origin (risk of double jeopardy)

1. **Exclusion of double punishment in RA for the same crime committed and punished outside RA:** RA Constitution (Section 22(7)) states that **no one shall be tried twice for the same act**. Therefore, after being punished outside Armenia the person shall not be punished again for the same act in Armenia.

2. **Legal significance of a person's conviction outside the RA:** According to RA Criminal Code, Section 17, the court ruling in a foreign country can be taken into account; provided the RA citizen was convicted for a crime committed outside the RA, and committed a repeated crime in the RA.

1.5 Customs regulation (how the relevant regulation can be obtained)

For any information (customs legislation, RA/foreign citizens travelling exemptions, vehicle import/export and so on) concerning customs regulation of the Republic of Armenia please see the official website of **State Customs Committee Under the RA Government** www.customs.am.

1.6 Access to return area

1.6.1 Limitations on internal travel

1.6.1.1 Administrative restrictions

Republic of Armenia is a **Unitary Republic**. Consequently there are **no administrative restrictions** between its administrative subdivisions (Marzes)⁶⁴.

⁶³ U.S. Department of State; Armenia Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006; done by Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in 2007; Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, d. Freedom of Movement Within The Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation, III paragraph, [Hhttp://www.state.gov/q/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78799.htm](http://www.state.gov/q/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78799.htm)H, accessed in July 2007

⁶⁴ Wikipedia encyclopedia Administrative divisions of Armenia, [Hhttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_Armenia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_Armenia)H, accessed in July 2007

1.6.1.2 Practical obstacles

a. Inconvenient movement for disabled people.

Currently there are very few social facilities modified for the disabled, regardless of the volume of activities conducted in that direction in recent years. Modified means of transportation are not available at all.⁶⁵

b. The alienation of rural communities located near borders and in high mountain regions. The absence of adequately renovated rural community roads and low quality of relevant healthcare facilities, pre-schools, and special schools as well as some other important infrastructures in rural areas make health, education and other services physically inaccessible for this rural population.⁶⁶

1.6.2 Territories impossible or dangerous to approach (landmines, natural degradation, etc.)

Landmines: The Landmine Impact Survey in Armenia was conducted in Armenia by the UNDP Armenia De-Mining Project with technical assistance provided by the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA) during February - August 2005. The LIS identified 60 impacted communities in five regions of Armenia, 102 Suspected Hazardous Areas and 14 recent victims. The total area of suspected contamination in Armenia was identified to be 321,677,110 square meters, while 68,737 people were identified as impacted by the landmines and / or UXOs⁶⁷. There were twenty UXO spots found and 78 communities were sampled, no false negatives were identified.

The collected data show the following:

1. Five out of eleven regions of Armenia have landmine and / or UXO contamination, and contamination occurs only in the regions where Armenia borders Azerbaijan;
2. Contamination occurs in the border areas, particularly in areas where military actions were conducted or in the areas which are located in close proximity to battle fields;
3. The Syunik and Tavoush regions appear to be the most contaminated compared to the other regions of Armenia.⁶⁸

Besides the above mentioned areas with landmines there are no territories dangerous or impossible to approach.

1.6.3 Means of domestic travel (contact and practical information, price list, etc.)

There are following means of travel:

1. buses⁶⁹,

⁶⁵ RA Government, "Armenia social trends'07"; Vulnerable population in the regions of RA, page 114; point 4 "Ensuring physical access for the disabled"; 2005, [Hhttp://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ast-07-eng.pdf](http://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ast-07-eng.pdf), accessed in July 2007

⁶⁶ Ibid., page 45

⁶⁷ Unexploded ordnance

⁶⁸ UNDP, Armenia, 2005 Publications, Landmine Impact Survey, Executive summary, summary of conclusions, I and II paragraphs, page 8, 2005, [Hhttp://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/liseng.pdf](http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/liseng.pdf), accessed in July 2007

⁶⁹ Armenian Tourism Development Agency, Travel and Transportation, Getting around in Yerevan, (information about means of transport in Yerevan, price list and so on) [Hhttp://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=yerevan&page=1H](http://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=yerevan&page=1H) and Getting around in regions (information about means of transport in regions (Marzes), price list and so on) [Hhttp://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=region&page=1H](http://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/?section=region&page=1H). accessed in July 2007

2. minibuses (the most usable means of transport in Armenia)⁷⁰,
3. taxi service,
4. electro transport (metro, trolleybuses) only in Yerevan city,
5. train.

2 Physical Security

2.1 On-going armed conflict

No agreement has ever been signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabagh status since Armenia still occupies in Nagorno-Karabagh 14% of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory. The conflict is today in a deadlock, but *"on the ground, the situation remains volatile, with regular exchanges of fire."*⁷¹

2.2 Regions with high-security risk

The Nagorno-Karabagh region does not have particular security problems, although the border areas remain dangerous because of landmines. The volatility of the cease-fire and sporadic fights are a source of danger. Shahumyan and Getashen regions, resided by Armenians, located in Azerbaijan near Nagorno-Karabagh currently are under Azerbaijan's army control and are not accessible by Armenians or returnees.

2.3 Crime

2.3.1 Regions with an extremely high level of crime (threatening physical security)

Armenia's serious crime record is not higher than in other CIS⁷² republics, but it has experienced a 100 per cent increase for the first time in 2006, with 60 per cent of crimes involving fire weapons. There is a risk of being the collateral victim of feuds between gangs and mafias, and contract killings are common.⁷³

2.3.2 Risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking

From 2002 to 2004, Armenia was placed by the US Department of State on the "Tier 3"⁷⁴ list of countries not complying with the minimal standard for the elimination of trafficking. It moved in 2004 to the "Tier 2" list.

Please, note that such kind of information is changeable and all these details change from time to time.

⁷⁰ Armenian Tourism Development Agency, Travel and Transportation, Getting around in Yerevan, Minibus Schedule

[Hhttp://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/index.php?page=3§ion=region&scroll=0&out=10&filter_region=&filter_city=&keywordH=](http://www.armeniainfo.am/travel/index.php?page=3§ion=region&scroll=0&out=10&filter_region=&filter_city=&keywordH=), accessed in July 2007

⁷¹ Armenia Internal Instability Ahead, Europe Report n° 158 of 18 October 2004, International Crisis Group. [Hhttp://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3076H](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3076H), accessed in July 2007

⁷² Commonwealth of Independent States, a modern-day political entity consisting of 11 former Soviet Union Republics

⁷³ Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Armenians injured to spiralling crime, By Tatul Hakobian in Yerevan (CRS n° 354, 25 august 2006),

[Hhttp://www.iwpr.net/?s=f&o=323361&p=crs&l=EN&apc_state=henacrsarmenia%20crime_2_____publish_date_1_10_compactH](http://www.iwpr.net/?s=f&o=323361&p=crs&l=EN&apc_state=henacrsarmenia%20crime_2_____publish_date_1_10_compactH), accessed in July 2007

⁷⁴ The US State Department places each of the countries into one of the three lists, described as tiers, mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA). This placement is based on the extent of a government's actions to combat trafficking.

"The Government of Armenia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Armenia is placed on Tier 2 Watch List in 2004 because of its failure to show evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking over the past year. Specifically, the government failed to disseminate or implement any elements of its January 2004 National Action Plan. The government should take proactive steps to officially distribute, publicly support, and implement this plan as soon as possible. Notably, trafficking-related prosecutions and convictions increased; however, reluctance to apply the new anti-trafficking statute produced insufficient penalties. The government adopted an anti-corruption program and created a task force in 2004; however, it failed to take any measures beyond issuing a rhetorical pledge to address trafficking-related complicity".⁷⁵

For the situation during 2006 see <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78799.htm>, "Armenia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for the year 2006", released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; US State Department; published on March 6, 2007; Section 5: Trafficking in Persons.

There is a growing cooperation between Armenian and Russian police to fight trafficking networks. However "*The sentences handed down ranged from substantial fines and correctional labour to one year imprisonment.*"⁷⁶

2.3.3 Risk of becoming a victim of forced prostitution

According to the general prosecutor's office, at least 80 women were victims of trafficking in 2004. Trafficking organizations typically recruited victims with the promise of high paying work in another country. Once in the country of destination, victims were deprived of their travel documents, locked in hotel rooms, and told that they must "repay" their expenses. There were reports of women encouraged to become recruiters for trafficking rings with a promise of keeping a percentage of their "earnings." Prostitutes, orphans, the homeless, and those in difficult financial situations were at particular risk of being trafficked.⁷⁷ More information can be found at:

<http://www.gvnet.com/humantrafficking/Armenia.htm>

<http://www.bu.edu/globalbeat/ARMENIA/index.html>

Case: United Arab Emirates: <http://www.bu.edu/globalbeat/ARMENIA/arpine.html>

Children in Orphanages and Special Schools in Armenia: Potential Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation

http://www.osce.org/documents/oy/2006/09/20415_en.pdf

Trafficking and Labour Exploitation of Armenian Migrants. A Sociological Survey: http://www.osce.org/documents/oy/2006/09/20414_en.pdf

More detailed about Tiers assessments: US State Department, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Trafficking in Persons Interim Assessment, Tier Process, The Tiers, February 1, 2006 <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/rpt/60487.htm>, accessed in July 2007

⁷⁵ "Trafficking in Persons Report", Released by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, ARMENIA (Tier 2 - Watch List), second paragraph, 3 June 2005, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46613.htm#armenia>, accessed in July 2007

⁷⁶ idem

⁷⁷ <http://www.gvnet.com/humantrafficking/Armenia.htm>

2.3.4 Effectiveness of protection (capacities, proficiency, corruption, etc)

2.3.4.1 Police forces

Indications in 2004 of a decrease in the use of torture and ill-treatment in penitentiaries proved to be overly optimistic as new cases were discovered in the Nubarashen penitentiary in 2005. Police misconduct was also commonplace during operations to disperse opposition rallies: police used excessive force and brutally beat demonstrators, arrested them in a manner that amounted to kidnapping and held them at police stations for questioning without legitimate grounds.⁷⁸

2.3.4.2 Judiciary

As in previous years, the courts failed to effectively provide human rights protection and ensure the supremacy of law. The American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) conducted an independent study in 2004 to assess the situation of the Armenian judicial system. Its report published in December 2004 was highly critical of the performance of the Armenian judiciary and courts. The situation did not improve in the course of 2005.

3 Social Security and Reintegration

3.1 *Regions with no reintegration and return opportunities (e.g. natural disasters, famine, etc.)*

Natural disasters: From the point of natural disasters in Armenia there are no special regions without any return possibility. The whole territory of Armenia is under the risk of several disasters: earthquake, flood, drought, winter and spring frosts, hail, and strong winds. Every year they make considerable damage to agriculture.

Famine: The second target of MDG 1 (Millennium Development Goals, national report 2005⁷⁹) is about the reduction of hunger among the population in Armenia. This is an issue that is closely connected with poverty and refers to Armenia in general.

Regions/communities with less reintegration opportunities: There are some regions/communities that in comparison with others have less reintegration possibilities due to many factors (geographic location, lack of community infrastructures and so on):

- a. Marzes (administrative regions) in comparison with Yerevan;
- b. Rural areas in comparison with cities;
- c. The disaster (earthquake in 1988) zone, near-border⁸⁰ and high mountain communities.

⁷⁸ International Helsinki Federation Report on Armenia, 2006 [Hhttp://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewdocument.php?doc_id=6834H](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewdocument.php?doc_id=6834H), accessed in July 2007

⁷⁹ UN in Armenia, National Report 2005, Millennium Development goals: Nationalization and Progress, MDG Goal 1, target 2, page 23, [Hhttp://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf](http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf), accessed in July, 2007

Vulnerable social groups: Integration or reintegration possibilities depend also on the vulnerability of some social groups in need. They have less possibility to reintegrate due to their vulnerability.

3.2 Housing and accommodation

3.2.1 Property restitution and or/compensation (in former zones of conflict or disaster)

In December 1988 northern regions of Armenia suffered a devastating earthquake. 25,000 people died and about 100,000 households remained without shelter. Many countries lent a helping hand to rebuild the ruined towns and villages. Armenia was one of the Republics of USSR and was governed from Moscow.

Soviet Government promised to build houses and recover the zone in three years and compensate the losses. All the former Soviet Republics were mobilized to recover the disaster zone. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union the constructors from different Soviet Republics left, and as a result there are many incomplete buildings in the disaster zone and the temporary houses are still standing.

As most of the population in the regions of Shirak and Lori had lost their houses, the Soviet Government provided them with temporary shelters (domics)⁸¹, which were brought from different Soviet Republics and abroad.

Special commissions measured the losses and registered the remaining property of the population. People who had lost their houses or any other property received financial contribution depending on the number of household members.

The houses of the population were restituted in accordance with their losses.

Until 1991-1992 new apartments were built and distributed in the disaster zone. The population who had lost their houses was categorized according to certain criteria.

The construction of the houses continued during 1992-1999, but the process was protracted.

In 1998 World Bank's Armenia Municipal Development Project included funding for the Government of Armenia to commission a study to develop a "New Housing Strategy for the Earthquake Zone."

The Urban Institute conducted an in-depth analysis and developed a fundamentally new approach to address the remaining government obligation to compensate families. The goal was to provide permanent housing to the remaining displaced population while recovering the original city centres. The essence of the Strategy dealt principally with alternatives to new housing construction.

The new idea introduced in the Strategy was redistribution through the market of the existing surplus housing stock (vacant and/or underutilized). This was to be achieved through a housing voucher program known as *House Purchase Certificates (HPC)*⁸².

The goal of the Program was to provide permanent and adequate housing by issuing at least 6,000 HPCs to households in the Shirak and Lori regions who were affected by the

⁸⁰ UNDP Armenia 2006 Publications, survey "Integrated Community Development Project Plans" about 20 near-border communities <http://www.undp.am/?page=2006PublicationsH>, accessed in July 2007

⁸¹ Russian word for temporary shelter

⁸² The USAID Armenia Earthquake Zone Recovery Program, www.urbaninstitute.am/index.html, accessed in august 2007.

earthquake. The provision of permanent shelters in urban areas will allow for the removal and destruction of temporary shelters, clearing areas for redevelopment and other uses.

In April 2000, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Government of Armenia began piloting the HPC program in Gyumri and then, in September 2001, expanded the program to three other cities, Stepanavan, Spitak and Vanadzor. By the end of January 2004, more than 4,000 families in temporary shelters had already found a permanent home using a HPC. Some local NGOs were also involved in this project providing support in finding houses.

Housing problems in the disaster zone were alleviated by some international organizations and benefactors, such as Huntsman Village Project in Gyumri, Lincy Foundation buildings in Gyumri and Vanadzor, etc.

3.2.2 Housing programmes by return areas

Housing needs of the population are regulated according to the Constitution of Armenia (Section 31). Government of Armenia undertakes all the measures to provide the housing rights of the citizens of Armenia.

The housing projects are regulated according to the Decrees of RA Government.

- According to the Decree No. 116 from December 22, 1995 Government of Armenia regulated the house distribution in the houses damaged because of earthquakes and reinforced by state means.
- According to the Decree No. 432 from June 10, 1999 Government of Armenia regulated out of order distribution of the houses in the disaster zone.
- According to the Decree No. 309 from February 24, 2005, Government of Armenia launched the housing project to provide houses through housing certificates financed by state budget 2005.
- According to the Decree No. 656 from May 18, 2006 Government of Armenia regulated provision of houses through housing certificates financed by state budget 2006.
- According to the Decree No. 747 from May 20, 2004 Government of Armenia accepted the project for the provision of houses for people deported from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992.

The responsibility for the implementation of housing projects through the Housing certificates lies on the RA Ministry of Urban Development.

The responsibility for the implementation of housing projects for refugees lies on the Migration Agency.

The general housing situation is not regulated by laws in Armenia, and at the moment there are only projects for disaster zones, mainly Gyumri and refugees.⁸³

According to the Decree No. 656 from May 18, 2006, Government of Armenia provides House purchasing Certificates to

- those citizens of Gyumri who are registered according to the norms under the Decree No. 432 (June 10, 1999) and have not received houses by March 1, 2004. The citizens are registered in the City Hall housing departments. A special housing committee checks the living conditions and follows up the procedure of house provision.

⁸³ The laws and decisions regulating housing projects are in Armenian language in the website of [Hwww.arlis.am](http://www.arlis.am)H (in Armenian).

- refugees in Kotayk Marz who are forcibly deported from Azerbaijan in 1988-1992 and registered by Department of Migration and Refugees⁸⁴ before August 1, 2003 and included in the list of Kotayk marzpet (head of Marz). They receive these certificates according to the norms of the project approved in the *Decree No. 747 of the Government of Armenia from May 20, 2004*.
- Some refugees living in Yerevan Moldovakan 70/1 hostel in Nor Nork. The families will be selected by the chief of Migration Agency by drawing of lots.

In 2008 the refugees from Yerevan who are still living in temporary shelters without normal living conditions will also receive House Purchase Certificates.

Decree No. 656 from May 18, 2006 is the latest decision made by the Government of Armenia for house provision of refugees and in the disaster zone.

The responsibility for distribution of HPC lies on the Ministry of Urban Development. The Minister of Urban Development should act according to the Decree No. 309 from February 24, 2005, which determines the regulations and eligibility criteria for House Purchase Certificate Distribution.

Practical steps of applying for housing.

If the refugee is not provided with a shelter, hostel or a house, the first step is to apply to Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration. He has to prove his status of refugee. His documents will be checked according to the data base⁸⁵ existing in the Migration Agency and after that he can be registered as a beneficiary and included in the registration list.⁸⁶

Address of Migration Agency:

www. dmr.am
 375033, Yerevan, H. Kochar 4
 tel: (374-10) 22-58-65; (374-10) 22-56-64
 fax: (371-10) 22-58-24
 E-mail migration@dolphin.am

There are other ways for solving housing problems for refugees, but the lack of state funds does not allow the implementation of all these projects:

- Repairing of half-built houses
- building cottages
- Privatization of houses in the hostels
- Allocation of state buildings for that purpose
- Provision of living conditions by the buyers of the state buildings

3.2.3 Opportunities of building a house

⁸⁴ This department is now renamed as Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration

⁸⁵ UNHCR has financed the Migration Agency for making data base, which includes the list of beneficiaries, their place of residence, type of residence etc.

⁸⁶ Information is provided by officials from Division for Asylum Seekers and Division for dealing with refugee issues of the Migration Agency

3.2.3.1 Conditions of obtaining land property⁸⁷

The people's right to the land derives from such deals as privatization of state or community lands, inheritance, sale/purchase, donations and so on. But the most widespread way to obtain real estate is sale/purchase transaction.⁸⁸

Necessary documents for buying land property (or another real estate):⁸⁹

- a. valid identity card such as passport
- b. certificate of property ownership
- c. reference of respective Real Estate Register, confirming absence of debt⁹⁰
- d. notarially certified contract of purchase
- e. notarially certified agreement of persons having some rights to this land or real estate (family members, third person)

After the transaction necessary documents submitted to the Real Estate State Register Local Offices are accepted with the application of the new holder to register his/her right of ownership. Local offices verify the conformity of submitted documents to the legislature of RA. If they correspond to the Legislature, the ownership right is registered, if not, documents must be returned to the applicant with corresponding remarks.⁹¹

Restrictions: *According to RA Civil Code persons specified as incapable by RA legislation as well as children under 18 can not (in this case obtain land property) require state registration or notary's certification⁹².*

According to Section 31(4), of RA Constitution, only RA citizens can be land holders.

3.2.3.2 Relevant approximate prices (land, building materials, etc.)

Land prices: In the capital Yerevan⁹³ and its surrounding settlements land prices are higher than in Marzes⁹⁴. In general, land prices have a tendency to increase annually.

Several costs when registering the land property in Real Estate Registers:⁹⁵

⁸⁷ There are several types of lands specified by RA Land Code, so all information in point 3.2.3 concerns to lands having dwelling significance

⁸⁸ "Akcern" Magazine, N 3, article "Real Estate Market of Armenia in Figures", page 7, 2005, [Hhttp://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html](http://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html), accessed in July 2007

⁸⁹ "Akcern" real estate Corporation, article "Armenian Legislation. Comments to some real estate problems", [Hhttp://realakcern.am/eng/templ/legal.html](http://realakcern.am/eng/templ/legal.html), accessed in July, 2007.

⁹⁰ Without this reference notaries don't certify the contract of sale/purchase

⁹¹ "Akcern" Magazine N 3, 2005, article "Real Property Rights and State Registration", points 16-18, page 6, [Hhttp://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html](http://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html), accessed in July 2007

⁹² RA Civil Code, Sections 29-32

⁹³ "Akcern" Magazine, N 3, 2005, "Land-lots for building up" (land prices in Yerevan proposed by "Akcern" real estate corporation) pages 129-130, [Hhttp://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html](http://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html), accessed in July 2007

⁹⁴ State Register Agency under RA Government, Annual analysis "The Real estate market in Armenia for 2006". According to this report, land the market prices for 1,000 sq.m. were: Aragatsotn Marz- 45,000- 3,612,000 AMD, Ararat Marz- 113,000 -9,030,000 AMD, Armavir Marz- 81,000- 4,515,000 AMD, Gegharqunik Marz- 45,000- 903,000 AMD, Lori Marz- 45,000- 2,348,000 AMD, Kotayk Marz- 136,000- 9,030,000 AMD, Shirak Marz- 41,000- 1,535,000 AMD, Syunik Marz 68,000 - 632,000 AMD, Vayots Dzor Marz- 68,000- 1,129,000 AMD, Tavush Marz- 45,000- 1 354,000 AMD

⁹⁵ According to RA Act on state duty No. 186, December 27, 1997 and the Order No. 89 adopted by Real Estate Register Agency under RA Government on certifying the price list of the provision of information concerning state registration, property and the rights and restrictions on property, February 12.2002

- a. To certify notarially the contract of land purchase transaction: 5,000 AMD or 10.67 EUR⁹⁶ State Duty (excluding the service payment)
- b. For reference given from Real Estate Register Office: 7,000 AMD or 14.93 EUR
- c. For land measuring: 100 sq.m. land- 300 AMD or 0.7 EUR
- d. Cameral works: 1,000 AMD or 2.13 EUR
- e. Appraisal of land: for every unit of land 350 AMD or 0.8 EUR
- f. To register the right ownership to the land: 10,000 AMD or 21.33 EUR State Register Payment (excluding State Duty)⁹⁷

Building materials: For building materials' prices see the official website of RA National Statistical Service⁹⁸, there are given the average market prices for the year 2006.

Before building a house one must have an appropriate permission. The new built house also should be registered as a real estate (as well as every change made in constructions) in Real Estate Registers. There are also payments related with building appraisal, measuring, and state registration, etc.

3.2.3.3 Available credits, subsidies and other forms of help

Credits: In Armenia it is possible to get credits in order to obtain land through banks or credit organizations.⁹⁹

3.2.4 Opportunities of buying real estate

3.2.4.1 Legal conditions

Conditions to buy real estate are the same as in case of buying land property (see point 3.2.3.1).

3.2.4.2 Eventual obstacles for certain groups (e.g. single women, minorities, etc.)

The only restrictions are for children under 18, and the persons specified as incapable according to RA Legislature. Even if a child under 18 inherits a real estate he/she can use the right of ownership only after turning 18. Until then, the real estate is disposed by the parents or lawful representatives.

3.2.4.3 Relevant approximate prices

As in case of obtaining land, the prices of apartments or houses in the capital Yerevan are higher than in Marzes¹⁰⁰. As a whole the prices of real estate increase every year.

⁹⁶ On 13 of July 2007, the exchange rate was 468.8 AMD for 1 EUR.

⁹⁷ In reality, usually people are obligated to pay more for cadastre and notary services than it is anticipated by law.

⁹⁸ National Statistical Service of RA, Report on sample surveys of price statistics construction price index freight transport tariff index, annex 2, "Tables of average prices for construction materials", http://www.armstat.am/Publications/2007/PR_R_06/index.html, accessed in July 2007

⁹⁹ Banks of Armenia, Mortgage, <http://banks.am/eng/index.php?sub=hyphotech>, accessed in 2007

¹⁰⁰ "Akcern" Magazine, N 3, 2005, "Dynamic shifts of average market cost of one square meter of the room space in multi- room buildings in cities of Armenia in US dollars, page 8.

Several costs when registering the house/apartment in Real Estate Registers:¹⁰¹

- a. To certify notarially the contract of purchase: 5,000 AMD or 10.67 EUR (excluding the service payment)
- b. For reference of Real Estate Register: 7,000 AMD or 14.93 EUR
- c. For building measurement- for 100 sq.m. of building: 2,000 AMD or 4.3 EUR
- d. building site examination: depending on space 2,500- 60,000 AMD or 5.4 EUR- 128 EUR
- e. Cameral works: 1,000 AMD or 2.13 EUR
- f. Appraisal of building: for every building unit- 350 AMD or 0.8 EUR
- g. To register the right ownership to the real estate: 10,000 AMD or 21.33 EUR State Register Payment (excluding State Duty)¹⁰²

3.2.4.4 Available credits and subsidies

Credits: In Armenia it is possible to get credits to obtain a house/ apartments given by banks or credit organizations.¹⁰³

3.2.5 Opportunities of renting a house or apartment

See:

http://www.armeniapedia.org/index.php?title=Buying_Real_Estate#Apartment_Location.2FPrices

3.2.5.1 Eventual obstacles for certain groups (e.g. single women, minorities, etc.)

According to RA Legislature the only restrictions are for children under 18, and the persons specified as incapable according to RA Legislature. But since most people in Armenia usually do not make written contracts on apartment rent, even a 17 year old child (for example a student) practically can rent a house.

3.2.5.2 Relevant approximate prices

In Yerevan for renting an apartment the monthly price starts from 36,000 AMD or 76.8 EUR, in other cities the prices start from 15,000 (32 EUR) or 20,000 AMD (43 EUR)¹⁰⁴.

3.2.5.3 Available subsidies

There are no special subsidies for renting a house or apartment in Armenia.

In the mentioned same magazine there are also the prices of typical apartments' prices in Yerevan in 2005, proposed by "Akcern" real estate corporation", pages 119-127, [Hhttp://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html](http://realakcern.am/eng/company/magazine.html), accessed in July 2007

¹⁰¹ According to Act on state duty No. 186, December 27, 1997 and the Order No. 89 adopted by Real Estate Register Agency under RA Government on certifying the price list of the provision of information concerning state registration, property and the rights and restrictions on property, February 12.2002

¹⁰² In reality, usually people are obligated to pay more for cadastre and notary services than it is anticipated by law

¹⁰³ Banks of Armenia, Mortgage, [Hhttp://banks.am/eng/index.php?sub=hyphotec](http://banks.am/eng/index.php?sub=hyphotec), accessed in 2007

¹⁰⁴ On 13 of July 2007, the exchange rate was 468.8 AMD for 1 EUR

3.2.6 Other middle- term accommodation possibilities (shelters, NGOs, church, etc.)

For homeless people: There is a temporary shelter¹⁰⁵ attached to the Elderly House N 1. It is operational since 2006 and is under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs control. The shelter is for people who are over 18, without shelter and are in difficult life situations. In this shelter people receive social, psychological, medical and legal assistance. They are provided with three meals a day and also receive personal hygiene supplies as well as clothing. People can stay there no more than 2 months and this shelter can house up to 30 persons.

For trafficking victims: "There is a safe, confidential shelter. It is a small, two-floor, furnished facility providing medical, psychological, employment and legal counselling, as well as reintegration services for victims of trafficking. The Rehabilitation and Assistance Center offers victims a safe place in which to recover. It can house 8 to 10 victims and it organizes various social activities".¹⁰⁶ Local NGO "Democracy Today" works in close partnership with the Armenian UMCOR staff on this shelter.

Hostels: Hostels also can be a temporary solution. Many refugee families forcibly moved during 1988-1992 from Azerbaijan have sheltered in different hostels until their housing problem is solved. Nowadays hostels are occupied by homeless families, earthquake-prone area residents as well.

3.2.7 Available temporary shelters

There are no temporary shelters where someone can stay for several days. It is possible only renting a house/ apartment or staying in hotels.

3.3 Livelihood - basic "survival"

Prior to its independence, Armenia was one of the most industrialized Republics of the former Soviet Union. With the decline of the socialist regime, however, the Armenian economy fell into stagnation and virtually collapsed.

Armenia plunged into a period of deep economic and social crisis resulting in the mass impoverishment of the country's population.

The drop in the real incomes and living standards was directly linked to four factors:

1. rapid and steep decline in the volume of production,
2. removal of subsidies for basic commodities and price liberalization,
3. unprecedented cutbacks in social expenditures,
4. very high unemployment rates.

During the first decade of independence, approximately 370,000 jobs were lost and as much as one quarter of the country's population left Armenia in search of jobs and better living conditions. The largest losses were in the industrial sector, where privatization through vouchers without sufficient post-privatization rehabilitation programmes resulted in long and compulsory administrative leaves for approximately 200,000 workers. Wages

¹⁰⁵ This shelter is functioning under the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Address: Yerevan, HaghTanak district, street 2, house 45, tel: (374-10) 72-10-70

¹⁰⁶ United Methodist Committee on Relief in Armenia, project "Capacity Building Support and Victims Assistance", activity 3: Victims assistance [Hhttp://www.umcor.am/traffick.htm](http://www.umcor.am/traffick.htm), accessed in July, 2007

Address: 14, Karapet Ulnetsu Street, Yerevan, Armenia, Tel: +(374-10) 24-81-41, (374-10) 28-29-77

for the workers who retained their jobs were extremely low that the majority of industrial personnel were classified as underemployed in accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards. By the mid-1990s, the real unemployment rate, including hidden unemployment and underemployment, had reached 40 percent of the economically active population, one of the highest recorded in any industrial country.

The impact of economic decline, combined with market reform and shock therapy was so deep that until 2003 almost half of the country's population was still poor and one of every seven residents was unable to meet basic survival needs. The most vulnerable situation was created for the elderly and refugees settled in the remote villages, the disabled, female-headed families, and population in the disaster zone. Pensions, unemployment benefits and even the salaries were inadequate to cover the minimum subsistence basket for these groups. Most of the population was dependant from the amount of the money being sent to them from their relatives from abroad.

3.3.1 Employment

Employment and labour in Armenia is regulated by the Constitution of Armenia, Act on employment,¹⁰⁷ International treaties and different legal acts.

Despite of the growth of GDP during the last few years, the labour situation in Armenia is still tense due to the large disparity between labour supply and demand.

During the last few years, Armenia's labour market has demonstrated an increase in hidden unemployment and hidden employment. This may be ascribed to employers engaged in unregistered operations (especially in the private sector), the unregistered employees, as well as the unregistered self-employed. The "hidden unemployment" includes the invisible underemployed, and a part of landowner farmers who lack the capacity to cultivate the land but are not registered as unemployed.

In 2005, the Armenian Statistics Service tried to carry out a study to reveal the employment rate among people aged between 15 and 70.

The study showed that those who are employed secretly count for only 22.9 percent of the total number of the employed people. The number of the people who have jobs based on unwritten contracts was only 16.2 percent and constituted only 25.4 percent of the total number of the employed. The number of self-employed was only 6.7 percent of the total number of the employed.¹⁰⁸

Regretfully, today employment does not guarantee a livelihood. Of the employed in Armenia, 17% are considered extremely poor. The wage in Armenia does not fulfil its reproductive and stimulating functions, and neither does it reflect the new working relations within organizations, thus contributing to the aggravation of social tension.

Employment has been reduced in state sector and increased in private ones. In industrial sector it has reduced and in services it has increased. It is impossible to exhibit the entire picture, since the growth of services took place in the shadow economy, i.e. owing to illegal employment.

¹⁰⁷All the laws and decisions are presented in www.arlis.am (the source is in Armenian)

¹⁰⁸ Actual Unemployment Rate Still High In Armenia, By Mher Ohanian, Yerkir.am, May 26, 2006 <http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/archive/54553.html>, accessed in July, 2007

3.3.1.1 Unemployment

According to the Employment Act of the Republic of Armenia, a person having no job, seeking it and being ready to work, with at least 1-year experience, and registered in the employment service, is deemed unemployed.

In the transition period the living standard of population (over 30% of population is under the line of poverty), the population's purchasing power has sharply declined. Average real income per capita has reduced nearly 5 times.

According to the results of surveys in the employment centres one fourth of the total number of the unemployed, having met the requirements of the International Labour Organization, are registered as that. In fact, only one out of four unemployed people has applied with a hope to find a job.

As of December 31, 2006 the unemployment rate was 7.2 percent in Armenia compared with 7.7 percent at the beginning of last year. As of January 1, 2007, 102,172 citizens were registered at the unemployment centres, 84,571 of whom are unemployed. Women consist some 70 percent of the entire unemployed population with the figure rising up to 80 percent in Yerevan. Last year, 8,268 people found jobs and another 10,250 found temporary employment. People who found jobs were mostly from the age of 30 to 50.¹⁰⁹

The unemployment level is higher in the disaster zone than in the urban areas. The ratio of women in the total number of the unemployed continues to remain high. The analysis of the age distribution of the unemployed shows an increasing ratio of the 31-50 age group, which indicates a need to develop a system of professional and vocational training services.

This is the generation educated during the Soviet system and in this transition period they have difficulties in entering the labour market. Very often they have high and professional education but they cannot endure the competition of the labour market. There is no demand for their knowledge and practical skills.

The labour market in Armenia now demands skills of foreign language and computer which is not affordable for many of them. There are many organizations and companies that provide these trainings, but they are on the private base. Many people cannot afford these courses because of high prices.

Other organizations, like NGOs or foundations also organize computer, language courses, training or retraining projects, but these services are for special categories of people, according to projects.

The requirements for getting a good job are very strict. Most of the people, even graduates from high Institutions cannot fulfill the requirements.

It is impossible to exhibit the whole picture of employment, as in many spheres—trade, services, construction—people perform informal jobs.

¹⁰⁹ Armenian Information Portal Panorama.am, Unemployment makes up 7.2 percent in Armenia according to official records, 16 January 2007, [Hhttp://www.panorama.am/en/economy/2007/01/16/arutyunyanH](http://www.panorama.am/en/economy/2007/01/16/arutyunyanH), accessed in July 2007

3.3.1.2 Labour market programmes

Since 1999 the employment policy of Armenia began displaying some features characteristic of a proactive policy: the employment strategy component of the 1999 - 2001 social sector development programme prioritizes the promotion of economic activity and the creation of a corresponding favourable environment.

At the same time, activities envisaged by the program have been implemented inefficiently or have not been implemented at all.

State Employment programs are regulated according to the Employment Act. Among the State projects we can mention

- unemployment benefits,
- vocational trainings for the unemployed
- trainings for the disabled
- financial assistance to those who are sent to work in other places
- supports in looking for and finding jobs,
- training and retraining of the unemployed
- financial assistance to the unemployed to be involved in entrepreneurial work
- public works

These programs are implemented by the Employment State Services and funded from the resources of the State Social Insurance Fund and State Budget.

An unemployed person registered in the unemployment centre is entitled in the Employment State Services to receive unemployment benefit, financial assistance, to participate in free training courses and vocational trainings.

Unemployment benefit is received by those unemployed who are registered in the Employment Agencies (see 3.3.5.1).

RA State Employment Agency has 51 regional branches.

The Republican State Employment Service Agency is in Yerevan, K. Ulnetsu 68.

Person in charge is Sona Haroutyunyan, Tel (374-10) 28-06-55.

3.3.1.3. Labour conditions (minimum/average salary, working hours, security, etc)

The labour legislative framework in the Republic of Armenia is contained in the Constitution, as well as the Labour Code (LC) and other legal acts in the social and economic field.

The basic tasks of the State in the economic, social and cultural spheres are, first and foremost, to enhance employment and the improvement of working conditions for the population.

The freedom to choose a profession is guaranteed, as well as the right to working conditions that are in compliance with safety and hygiene requirements (Section 32 of the Constitution). Forced labour is prohibited.

A worker retains the right to social security whether he/she is of old age, disabled, lost the main wage earner, unemployed or other cases prescribed by the law (Section 37 of the Constitution).

Pay issues

Each individual has the right to fair remuneration and the amount should not be less than the minimum wage set by law (Section 32 (1) of the Constitution).

As mentioned above, wage issues are dealt with in separate enactments such as the Employment Wages Act No. 226, 2001, the Act No. 409 on remuneration of civil servants, 2002, and the Minimum Wage Act No. 66, 2004.

Chapter 19 of the LC is devoted to wage issues, while Chapter 20 deals with financial guarantees and compensations.

Wages are paid in the currency of the Republic of Armenia (Dram). The rate of minimum, monthly and hourly pay is established by law of the Republic of Armenia (Section 179 of the LC), and the wage indexation (Section 182 of the LC).

Minimum salary in the Republic of Armenia is 20,000 AMD or 42.66 EUR since January 1, 2007¹¹⁰.

Particular wage conditions are provided for overtime work or night work, work carried out in hazardous conditions, during public holidays and rest days, idle time and part-time work (Sections 183 to 189 of the LC).

The employer is permitted to make deductions from the worker's salary in case of defective production or failure to meet required quotas (Sections 190 to 191 of the LC). Additional grounds for wage deductions are also listed in Section 213 of the LC. However, the total deductions cannot exceed 50 per cent of the monthly wage of the worker concerned (Section 214 of the LC).

Section 192 of the LC indicates that wages are to be paid at least once a month. The employer is obliged to provide the worker with a written statement detailing information on wages paid and deductions made (Section 193 of the LC).

In addition, in the event of delaying payment of wages to the worker, the employer is to be held liable to penalties as established by law (Section 198 of the LC)¹¹¹.

Hours of work

Chapter 17 (Sections 137 to 149) of the LC deals with working time.

Section 139 of the LC provides that the normal duration of the working time should not exceed 40 hours a week, or eight hours per day.

The maximum duration, including overtime work carried out at the request of the employer, should never exceed 48 hours per week and 12 hours per day.

A reduced duration of working time concerns, in particular, young workers (see below) and night workers (Section 140 of the LC).

Overtime is strictly regulated, namely some limitations are introduced for young and disabled workers, workers with family responsibilities, or work in hazardous conditions (Section 144 of the LC). Overtime should not exceed four hours during two consecutive working days and 120 hours per year (Section 146 of the LC).

Section 148 of the LC regulates night work. This is defined as work performed between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

3.3.1.4 Accessibility of short term / occasional jobs

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia organizes the program of "paid public works" which enables to lessen the tension in the labour market and provide temporary employment for unemployed people. These jobs are in the domain of social

¹¹⁰ On 13 of July 2007, the exchange rate was 468.8 AMD for 1 EUR

¹¹¹ National Labour Law Profile: Republic of Armenia, Contributed by Angelika Muller, Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration Branch, ILO. Last update, August 2006
[Hhttp://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/national/armenia.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/national/armenia.htm), accessed in July, 2007

infrastructures, area improvement, tidying monuments and architectural structures, sanitary cleaning etc. Remuneration for one working day should amount to 1,500 AMD or 3.2 EUR.

Besides the government some International organizations and NGOs implement programmes trying to establish short-time jobs for the unemployed. Among these projects UN WFP offers two projects for the unemployed: Food for Work and Food for Training. For implementing these projects WFP cooperates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. People registered in the Employment Centres of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are offered short-time job opportunities or trainings and instead receive food from WFP.

In order to receive detailed information about these projects the unemployed can inquire the UNWFP office in Yerevan.

Address:

14 Petros Adamyan St, Yerevan 375010, Armenia

Tel:+(374-10) 58-05-38

Fax:+(374-10) 54-27-41

E-mail:

WFP.Yerevan@wfp.org

or

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

3.3.1.5 Lack (high demand) in specific professions

As it was mentioned, the rate of unemployment is very high in Armenia.

But still there are some specialties in the labour market of Armenia, which are of high demand. Among these are the qualified construction workers: welders, plasterers, etc. The labour market nowadays demands knowledge of English language and computer skills. There are a lot of private organizations offering this kind of services.

According to Sona Harutyunian, there is a lack of specialized and qualified workers in the Armenian labour market. Harutyunian says people still turn down physical labour opportunities even though it pays 3 times more than the unemployment pension. There are also teachers who became "victims" of the optimization of the Armenian education system, says the chief of the State Employment Service Sona Harutyunyan. Those sacked have been offered jobs in villages. However Sona Harutyunyan says there are just 50 vacancies in the regions and as many as 7,000 teachers in search of jobs. Those who will agree to go to the country will get a one time \$1,500 compensation + \$900 more for moving and other expenses. Preference will be given to teachers who can teach more than two school subjects.¹¹²

The information about available job opportunities and vacancies are usually published in the republican and local newspapers, announced by TV, and on the Career Center website (www.careercenter.am).

3.3.1.6 Practical and contact information (employment agencies, newspapers. etc)

¹¹² ArmNews, the Armenian labour market, 16 January 2007

[Hhttp://www.armnewstv.am/index.php?vid=663&year=2007&month=01&day=16H](http://www.armnewstv.am/index.php?vid=663&year=2007&month=01&day=16H), accessed in July, 2007

With all the questions related to the work and employment sphere, citizens of Armenia can apply to RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (LSI), Department of Work and Employment (Tel: (374-10) 56-53-54).

This department develops the state policy of the work employment and remuneration. They give explanation to the citizens and others concerned on the legal acts regulating in the spheres of remuneration, work and employment.

There are also distinct subdivisions within the Ministry rendering direct assistance to the citizens:

1. RA State Labour Inspection
2. RA State Employment Agency
3. RA Medical-Social Examination Agency.
4. **RA State Employment Agency** has 51 regional branches and deals with the issues of work-seeker citizens rendering them the following services:
 - provision of consultations on the vocational orientation and information on vacancies to work-seekers
 - registration of work-seekers, including disabled ones,
 - mediations on job placement
 - reimbursement of expenses of an employee moving to another workplace
 - development and implementation of development programmes towards requalification and qualification raising of unemployed people
 - vocational trainings for the disabled, restoration of working capabilities and support for job placement
 - organization of paid social works
 - assignment of unemployed benefit
 - assignment of monetary assistance to the work-seeker unemployed
 - provision of respective services and consultations to citizens concerning the assignment of social cards for them

RA State Employment Agency is located in Yerevan, 68, K.Ulnetsi str. (tel: (374-10)26-05-40; fax: (374-10) 22-65-15)

Information on employment agencies can be found on "Spyur", which is an informative directory of Armenia (<http://www.spyur.am/htmlfix/spyure.htm>).

RA LSI Ministry is located at Government House 3, third floor, Republic Square, Yerevan, 375010.

3.3.2 Contact information relevant to the issue of recognition of degrees obtained elsewhere

"The diplomas and certificates are recognized in Armenia by the departments the Ministry of Education. Three departments are involved in this procedure: secondary education department, department of higher education and the department of International Relations. It depends on which institution the citizen has graduated from and in what country."

In order to have the answer for each specific case it is necessary to write an official letter to the Minister indicating the country and graduated institution.

See also the link:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/ArmenianationalReport.doc>

Information about the recognition of degrees:

BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2005-2007

3.3.3 Education and retraining programmes (access to them, costs)

Education in Armenia has traditionally been highly rated. Today as well, the most important national issue is considered to be the maintenance and development of education system, insuring its compatibility in the international environment. This can be proved by the laws and decrees issued after the Armenian independence.

Section 39 of RA Constitution claims that all RA citizens have the right to education; the secondary education in public schools is free; and every citizen has the right to get higher or other professional education on competitive basis.

On April 14, 1999, the National Assembly adopted Act No. 297 on education, which gave a definite direction to the development of reforming system based on the constitution principles. However, depending on education priorities, it is adjusted and amended from time to time.

In May 2000, RA Government Decree set and approved the national standards for general education, according to which the education quality in national school is controlled.

The “National Plan for Education Development 2001 - 2005” was approved by the parliament in June 2001, the main goal of which is to ensure progressive education development, for it is the decisive factor for statehood enforcement and socio-economic development of the society.

Management of Educational Institutions is realized by the Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Armenia

RA Ministry of Education and Science: develops the education development plan and the state education standards and controls their implementation; ensures the development and publication of general education curriculum and subject syllabi, provides textbooks and handbooks; provides state license and accreditation to education institutions; develops model charters for the state education institutions; approves the accreditation procedures for the pedagogical and managing staff in the education institutions; develops the list of specialization in universities; develops the state order state paid for general, middle professional and higher professional education; approves the entrance examination guidelines and controls their implementation in state and licensed private middle and higher educational institutions; approves the procedures of student knowledge assessment in general; approves the honorary degrees and titles granted by the scientific councils of the licensed higher education institutions; develops the models of state graduation documentation at all the graduation levels; defines the guidelines for defining adequacy and acknowledgement of the foreign education graduation documentation; ensures the creation of development plans for the state education institutions and their implementation and supervision; gives its consent for the appointment and resignation of the Marz and community education department heads.

The district and community administration of education is implemented by the local self-governing bodies in the face of the Marz education departments. The assignment and resignation of their managers is agreed with the Ministry. These authorities ensure the enforcement of state education policy in Marz or community; they keep register for the pre-school and the school-aged children and ensure their enrolment in the education institutions. Besides, the Marz education departments are responsible for the construction of educational institution buildings and facilities, their utilization, maintenance.

3.3.3.1 By Government

The education sphere is mainly regulated by the Education Act of April 14, 1999.

Two main programs according to this Act are

- **general secondary education,**
- **professional education.**

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia the General Secondary Education is compulsory and free of charge.

General secondary education includes:

Preschool education, for children from 2 to 6. This education is realized in the kindergartens. The kindergartens are under the authority of communities. Act on preschool education No. 236, adopted on November 15, 2005, regulates this sphere.

Secondary Education in the republic contains 3 levels. Duration of study in secondary schools is 12 years.

- Primary School (1-4 grades).
- Basic School (5-9 grades).
- High school (10-12 grades).

Secondary education is realized in the secondary schools. Secondary education is compulsory and lasts up to 16 years. Graduates of the high school obtain certificate of complete secondary education, which is called Attestat/Certificate of maturity "Hasunutian Vkeyakan" and can continue their study in the Higher educational institutions. This obligatory requirement for secondary education does not apply to children with special educational needs. The special general education is regulated by the Act on special education.

Special general education: Orphanages and special schools implement general and special education programs to ensure the education of children deprived of family care and children with special educational needs.

Out of school education: The aim of out of school education is to create conditions for developing the students' interest, ensure their psychological, aesthetic, physical development and provide environmental and practical knowledge by organizing their leisure time (Section 20, Act on education). The out of school education system includes creative and aesthetic youth centres, music and art schools, clubs and tourist camps for young naturalists, technologists, environmentalists and sports schools and resort camps, etc.

Professional Education includes:

- preliminary professional/vocational,
- middle level professional/vocational,
- higher professional,
- post-graduate.

The aim of **preliminary professional** education (or vocational education) is to train the students for jobs demanding primary professional qualification, on the basis of general education.

The technical professional education is provided on the basis of basic or secondary general education in technical colleges. The education period is from 1 to 3 years accordingly.

The aim of **middle level professional** education is to train the students with middle professional qualification, on the basis of general secondary education, also to provide deeper and expanded professional knowledge.

Middle professional education is performed in middle professional education institutions: college and vocational schools.

The sphere of professional education is regulated by the Act No. 164 on preliminary professional/vocational / and middle level professional education, adopted by the National Assembly on July 8, 2005.

"Arats" Agency publishes a directory "The colleges of Armenia" which includes detailed information about the number of acting state and non-state colleges, gymnasiums, specialized and medical schools in Armenia.

The **higher and post graduate education** sphere is regulated by the Education Act, and the Act No. 62 on higher and postgraduate professional education, adopted by the National Assembly on December 14, 2004.

Higher and post-graduate education is performed in three levels in both state and non-state education institutions, stationary and distant education forms, for paid and non-paid students:

First level (baccalaureate) includes 4-year study in institutions (Universities). Upon completion of the 4-year institution Bachelor's degree—"Bakalavri kochum"—is awarded. The "Diplom" is awarded if it is a 5-year institution.

Second level (magistracy) includes 2 additional years of study. It can be either a one-year or a 2-year program. In both cases the student is awarded the Master's degree ("Magistrosi kochum")

Third level ("aspirantura")- post-graduate studentship continues for 2 years. Students acquire necessary knowledge in order to conduct scientific research work. After completion of this level and defending the dissertation the students are awarded the "Candidate of Science" degree or "Gitutiunneri Teknatsu".

After aspirantura and getting the Candidate of Science degree the researchers can pursue their doctoral studies in one of the research institutions of the Academy of Science of Armenia. The dissertation is defended in front of the Highest Attestation Commission, an independent body comprised of Doctors, academicians and professors in the field.

For the higher education the following types of institutions are operational:

- University
- Institute
- Academy
- Conservatory

Entrance to the higher institutions is on competition basis. The entrants can get information about the acting State and Private higher educational institutions from the entrant's directory. This directory is published by "ARATS" agency. The directory is updating and publishing annually. It includes information about Armenian as well as Russian Federation Institutions of higher education. The directory includes additional information about

- Present auxiliary courses and colleges of the IHE
- Payment allowances and privileges
- Post graduate courses
- Scientific and social student-organizations

Information about the Armenian Educational Institutions can be provided by ARATS Agency:
1000 Tichina str., 375065,
Yerevan
Armenia Tel: (374-10) 27-59-05
E-mail: aratsagency@yahoo.com

Detailed Information about different educational Institutions, training and re-training programs is available on www.spyur.am.

3.3.3.2 By private firms

As it was mentioned above, all educational institutions of Armenia are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Besides state educational institutions, there are private institutions in all levels:

- Schools;
- Colleges and gymnasiums , vocational schools;
- Higher educational institutions.

Their activities are regulated with the same legal acts and norms as the state institutions. All institutions offering education in Armenia would require a license. The system provides equal opportunities for state and public institutions.

According to the Act on education (Sections 41-44), "Issuing Licenses to the Educational Institution," "State Accreditation", a "State governing authorized body of Education" conducts Licensing and Accreditation.

The "Licensing and Accreditation Service" was established on June 7, 2000. The Licensing and Accreditation Service is a structural unit of the Ministry of Education and Science and all licensing and accreditation decisions are made by the Minister.

The licensing of educational institutions, as well as the organization of accreditation of professions and the provision of the conclusion/recommendations are carried out by the Licensing and Accreditation Service based on the Government Decree No. 344 issued on 23 June, 2000.

Private educational institutions announce about the services they provide in the republican and local newspapers, and they are mostly registered in the site of "Spyur" directory.¹¹³

3.3.3.3 By international organizations or NGOs

www.spyur.am provides information on different educational institutions and programmes.

3.3.4 Starting a new business

3.3.4.1 Legal conditions (registration, corporate forms, minimum capital, etc)

¹¹³ "Spyur" Company Register of Armenia, [Hwww.spyur.am](http://www.spyur.am)H

The Armenian government has recognized the need to create a more inviting business environment. The President announced important reforms of the tax and customs administration for 2005. Realization of those reforms will be crucial to improving Armenia's business environment. The government also has ongoing programs to strengthen the financial intermediation role of the banking sector, improve governance in the administration of public services, and minimize corruption and interference by state authorities.

Small and Medium Entrepreneurship sphere is considered as one of the priority directions for development of Armenian economy. The Government of Armenia performs steps towards the development of SME sphere, particularly towards the direction for creating state support system for SME.

Armenia's parliament adopted the Act No. 121 on state support of small and medium entrepreneurship in December 5, 2000.

In compliance with this Act, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are classified according to the number of employees as follows:

- commercial organization and individual entrepreneurs with average number of employees not more than 5 persons are considered as a micro company
- commercial organization and individual entrepreneurs with an average number of employees are considered as a small company that meets the following criteria:
 - industry and other productive spheres-not more than 50 employees
 - construction and power engineering sphere not more than 25 employees
 - science and education sphere not more than 25 employees
 - transport, trade and services sphere not more than 15 employees
- commercial organization and individual entrepreneurs with average number of employees considered as medium company that meets the following criteria:
 - industry and other productive spheres-not more than 100 employees
 - construction and power engineering sphere not more than 50 employees
 - science and education sphere not more than 50 employees
 - transport, trade and services sphere not more than 30 employees

In order to start a business in Armenia, an entrepreneur should register a commercial entity or individual entrepreneur/sole proprietor.

SOLE PROPRIETORS (SP)

A Sole Proprietor is a physical person who has the right to conduct an economic activity. A SP is fully responsible for his activities including liabilities and debts. This means that personal assets may be used to settle claims. Here are the business registration steps:

1. You need to pay the State duty of 3,000 AMD or 6.4 EUR¹¹⁴ at any bank and direct the payment to the account number for SP 900005160750. Do this before going to the State Registrar's office in order to save a step in the process.
2. Complete and submit the registration application at the State Registrar's office. You will need a photocopy of both the photo page of your passport, one 3x4 cm. photo, receipt for payment of State duty from the bank.
3. The State Registrar will accept or reject your application within two business days.
4. If accepted, collect your registration certificate from the State Registrar's office.
5. Complete and submit tax registration forms at the local tax office. You will need some form of identification such as a passport. You may request to become a simplified

¹¹⁴ On 13 of July 2007, the exchange rate was 468.8 AMD for 1 EUR

taxpayer at this time. Before registering with the Tax Service, you must determine whether to become a simplified or regular taxpayer.

6. You must complete and submit social security registration at your local Social security Fund office. You must do this within thirty days of registering with the State Registrar or you will face fines.

7. If you need a seal to conduct your business, you must obtain permission from the police, at 5 Ervand Kochar St., Yerevan. and a receipt for paying the State duty for requesting permission to order seal (6,000 AMD or 12.8 EUR), which can be paid at any bank to account number 900005016473. Permission is typically issued within one day.

8. Many economic activities require a license. If you do need a license, then you must determine what type of license (simple or compound) is required, and which agency issues the license. To apply for a simple license, submit a written request to the Ministry of Finance and Economy at 1 Melik Adamyan Str., Yerevan.

9. Those companies that plan on exporting or importing are required to register with customs.

LEGAL ENTITY (LE)

If you plan to register your business as a legal entity then the director of the company must perform all the actions. To send someone else, notarized permission must be given to the representative. LE has no personal liability for legal or financial claims against the company.

1. You must pay state duties:

a) 5,000 AMD or 10.67 EUR for registering your company name. Direct the payment to account number 900005016200, and in order to save a step later.

b) 12,000 AMD or 25.6 EUR to the State Registrar's office for registering the company. Direct the payment to account number 900005160719. It is a good idea to verify these account numbers in case they may have changed.

2. Go to the local Registrar's office to register your company name. Be sure to bring the receipt for the 5,000 AMD or 10.67 EUR of State duties.

3. Take an application form, sample charter, sample of the minutes from a Founder's meeting deciding to create a legal entity and visit State Registrar's office.

4. Hold a Founder's meeting where a formal decision is made to establish a legal entity. The minutes of this meeting must be written and signed by the Chairman and Secretary. All Founders (or their proxies) must be present.

5. Develop a charter for your legal entity using the sample from the State Registrar.

6. You will need to open a temporary bank account. The amount required to deposit depends on the company type. The bank will provide you with a notice that you have a temporary account that must be included in your application package.

7. Submit the completed application package to the local State Registrar's office. Sign the application.

8. Your application will be accepted or rejected within a maximum of five business days. If rejected, you should receive a written notification within 5 days.

9. If approved, collect the registration certificate at the State Registrar's office.

10. Before registering with the Tax Service, you must determine whether to become a simplified or regular taxpayer.

11. Complete and submit tax registration forms at the local tax office. You will need to submit a copy of your company registration certificate and a copy of your charter.

12. Collect your Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) - an eight-digit number used for taxpayer identification. It should be available within one or two days of submitting the tax registration forms.
13. Complete and submit social security registration at your Social Security Fund office. You must do this within thirty days of registering with the State Registrar or you will face fines.
14. If you need a seal to conduct your business, you must obtain permission from the police, at 5 Ervand Kochar St., Yerevan. and receipt for paying the State duty for requesting permission to order seal (6,000 AMD or 12.8 EUR), which can be paid at any bank to account number 900005016473. Permission is typically issued within one day.
15. If you have obtained permission from the police, you may order your seal. This can only be done at 5 Ervand Kochar Str., Yerevan.
16. Many economic activities require a license. If you do need a license, then you must determine what type of license (simple or compound) is required, and which agency is licensor.
17. To apply for a simple license, submit a written request to the Ministry of Finance and Economy at 1 Melik Adamyanyan Str., Yerevan.
18. The application can be rejected within three days after submission.

Those companies that plan on exporting or importing are required to register with customs.

For more information: contact the Small & Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Center (SME DNC).

SME DNC

5 Mher Mkrtchyan Street,
Yerevan 375010

Tel: (374-10) 54-16-48

Fax: (374-10) 54-16-42

E-mail: info@smednc.am

www.smednc.am

3.3.4.2 Credits and Subsidies and access to them (interest rates, creditors, etc)

In order to start a business in Armenia an entrepreneur usually needs to take credits from banks or credit organizations.

There are some sources (banks and credit organizations) financing SME business in Armenia.

Anelik Bank (www.anelik.am)

Ardshininvestbank (office @ ashib.am)

Armenian Development BAnk (www.armdb.com)

ITB international Commercial BAnk (itb@itb.am)

Inecobank (inecobank@inecobank.am)

Converse bank (www.conversebank.am)

ACBA Bank(www.acba.am)

Armeconombank (www.aeb.am)

Armsavingbank(www.asb.am)

Unibank (www.unibank.am)

Prometeybank(prometey@prometey.am)

Detailed information about the terms of giving credits can be obtained at the website of Central Bank of Armenia.

<http://www.cba.am/bankfincredmenu.asp?pref=1>
or www.banks.am

Credit organizations and micro credit funds

Besides banks, there are organizations and micro credit funds which are licensed to give credits:

Horizon Foundation
Small Enterprise Foundation (SEF) - World Vision
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Jinishian Memorial Program
ECLOF Armenia
FINCA - Armenia
Izmirlian - Eurasia Foundation
United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR)
International Organization of Migration (IOM)
"KAMURJ" Micro Enterprise Development Fund

(For detailed information see http://bsc.am/englhtml/sme_engl.htm.)

The approaches of banks and credit organizations do not essentially differ. During the discussion and decision on credit giving in different phases different documents are needed.

The documents include legal and pledge documents.

There are state, semi-state and international programs assisting the development of SMEs. They provide information, business consulting and different trainings.

3.3.5 Social Security

In 2003 the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)**¹¹⁵. This issue is a guideline for RA Government functioning in all spheres for further years with the aim of reducing the poverty. In 2005 the **PRSP progress report (2004-2005 first term)**¹¹⁶ was published concerning the development trends in Armenia and the implementation of PRSP. In the same year a report "**Human Poverty and pro-poor policies in Armenia**"¹¹⁷ was presented by the team of national experts. The periodical "**Armenian Social Trends**"¹¹⁸ periodically presents the social situation analysis and changes. The last publication of "**Armenian Social Trends 07**" was issued in 2005 relating to all vulnerable social groups for every region in Armenia. "**Statistical yearbook of**

¹¹⁵RA Government, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2003
http://www.prsp.am/new/pdf/prsp_en.pdf, accessed in July 2007

¹¹⁶ RA Government, PRSP progress report (2004-2005 first term), 2005
http://www.prsp.am/new/pdf/progress_report_2004-2005en.pdf, accessed in July 2007

¹¹⁷ UNDP, "Human Poverty and pro-poor policies in Armenia, 2005
<http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/propooreng.pdf>, accessed in July 2007

¹¹⁸ RA Government, "Armenian Social Trends", 2003-2005,
http://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ahrc_mshtakan_gorc.htm, accessed in July 2007

Armenia, 2006"¹¹⁹ is the most complete statistical publication of the National Statistical Service of RA, reflecting socio-economic situations of the country.

These are several widespread analytical issues concerning the social situation in Armenia.

Note: Although the RA Government's social policy approaches commonly remain the same, benefit and pension sizes mentioned in these issues and reports may change/may have changed.

All information mentioned below in points 3.3.5.1, 3.3.5.2, 3.3.5.3, 3.3.5.4 and 3.3.5.5 is up to July, 2007.

3.3.5.1 Unemployment benefit and access to it

This benefit is assigned to those who have the status of unemployed. The unemployment status may be granted to those unemployed work-seekers, who have reached the working age and don't receive any benefits assigned by the RA legislation, have at least one year of working experience and apply for the State Employment agency for registration¹²⁰.

The unemployment benefit can be assigned for no more than 12 months. The size of benefit is 60 % of defined minimum wage rate (20,000 AMD or 43 EUR¹²¹), nowadays it makes up 12,000 AMD (25.6 EUR) per month.

3.3.5.2 Sickness benefits and access to them

Temporary incapacity benefit: Hired employees making mandatory social contributions are entitled to temporary incapacity benefit in cases of incapacity or disease infection and industrial injuries. The allowance depends on the period of employment and varies from 80% to 100% (who have more than 8-year working record) of the salary¹²².

Disability (invalidity) pensions¹²³:

As it was mentioned in point 1.1.3, the persons having the status of disabled person are granted disability pension:

- a. Insurance-based disability pension
- b. Social disability pension (is assigned to persons who have no insurance/ no working record) for disabled children and for those disabled from childhood.

Payment size:

For disabled children and people in I disability group 140 % of basic pension- 5,950 AMD (12.7 EUR).

For II disability group 120 % of basic pension- 5,100 AMD (10.9 EUR).

For III disability group 100 % of basic pension- 4,250 AMD (9.07 EUR).

The basic pension is 4,250 AMD (9.07 EUR).

¹¹⁹National Statistical Service of RA, Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2006, [Hhttp://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/indexeng.html](http://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/indexeng.html), accessed in July 2007

¹²⁰RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, QUESTION AND ANSWER, Explanations on the employment legislation, [Hhttp://www.mss.am/eng/faq/faqzbaxv.htm](http://www.mss.am/eng/faq/faqzbaxv.htm), questions and answers on employment legislature, accessed in July 2007

¹²¹ On 13 of July 2007, the exchange rate was 468.8 AMD for 1 EUR

¹²² RA Government, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2003, point 261(7.1.2.2.2), page 67, [Hhttp://www.prsp.am/new/pdf/prsp_en.pdf](http://www.prsp.am/new/pdf/prsp_en.pdf), accessed in July 2007

¹²³ RA Government, "Armenian Social Trends-07", 2005, article "Description of disability and the situation of the disabled", pages 113-117, [Hhttp://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ast-07-eng.pdf](http://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ast-07-eng.pdf), Armenian Social Trends 07, accessed in July 2007

Disabled people having a working record receive additional 230 AMD (0.5 EUR) for every working year.

Provision of prosthesis-orthopaedic items and life-facilitating means to disabled: Wheelchairs (for disabled children and for I disability group), hearing-aids (are provided to disabled persons and aged pensioners), walkers, canes, crutches and so on.

Free medical services and medicaments for the disabled: Those in I and II disability group receive medicaments for free and the disabled of III group pay only 50 percent of the cost for receiving medicaments.

In cases of positively passing of admission exams the priority should be given to persons with the status of 1st and 2nd disability groups and those with status of disabled child. The study costs of these mentioned disabled who study in state educational institutions are covered by State budget.

Recreational treatment: The disabled are entitled to free recreational treatment in sanatoria in a defined order.

3.3.5.3 Access to family allowances

Family poverty benefits¹²⁴ (how to apply see the point 1.1.3):

As it was already mentioned in point 1.1.3, families having higher score than the defined magnitude score (currently 33.00) are granted Family Benefit.

The basic family benefit-

For families that have no children under 18 they receive 7,500 AMD (16 EUR).

For families that have children under 18 they receive 7,000 AMD (14.93 EUR).

Most important factor of vulnerability is child/children in the family when assigning for the family benefit.

Depending the defined range of vulnerability

For every child under 18, the family receives additional 4,500- 5,500 AMD (9.6-11.73 EUR).

For every child under 18 the family (having 4 and more children) receives additional 5,500- 6,500 AMD (11.73-13.87 EUR).

For near-border and high mountainous settlements for every child the family receives additional 5,000- 6,000 AMD (10.67- 12.8 EUR).

For near-border and high mountainous settlements for every child the family (having 4 and more children) receives additional 6,000- 7,000 AMD (12.8-14.93 EUR).

Families that are registered in Family Poverty System but do not receive the family benefit (they have less but near 33.00 vulnerability score) can be assigned to one-time lump sum benefit of 7,500 AMD (16 EUR).

For enrolment in the first grade of the school: The family assigned to Family benefit receives 20,000 AMD (43 EUR) for every child going to class.

3.3.5.4 Other benefits in the social welfare system

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, pages 22-26,

Allowances connected with the birth of child:

-For the **childbirth** the family receives one-time benefit of 35,000 AMD (74.66 EUR) regardless of the vulnerability of the family.

The families, that are registered in family poverty system (regardless they receive or don't receive family benefit) for the third and for every next born child, receive 200,000 AMD (427 EUR).

- Pregnancy and delivery allowance (maternity benefits) **payable to employed women** for a period of 70 days preceding the delivery and 70 days thereafter. This allowance is equal to the average salary received during the three months preceding the leave. Monthly benefit of 3,000 AMD (6.4 EUR) is paid to people who are in partly paid vocation and take care of the children (until aged 2). If they return to their job or resign, the benefit is not paid.

Funeral benefit: Is given in case of death of the unemployed person (3X unemployment benefit), pensioner and disabled (25X basic pension, that is 106,250 AMD or 226.65 EUR), and person receiving Family poverty benefit (25,000 AMD or 53.33 EUR).

NOTE: Besides the disability pension there are other types of pensions.

3.3.5.5 Special benefits for returnees

There are no special benefits or privileges for returnees in Armenia.

3.3.6 Charity organizations with a general scope (services, contact information)

On the website of NGO centre http://www.ngoc.am/select_db.php?pageid=db there is a database of contact list of Armenian non-governmental organizations that provide services to different social groups.

3.3.7 Useful data to calculate the cost of living (price of petrol, basic food, etc.)

The "Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2006"¹²⁵ is the most complete statistical publication of the National Statistical Service of RA, reflecting socio-economic situation of the country. The yearbook covers statistical data on the social and economic situation of Armenia for 2001-2005. In the section "Prices and tariffs" one can find data on dynamics of prices (tariffs) in consumer and real sectors of economy as a whole and in separate segments, and also on average level of prices (tariffs) of the most important kinds of production, goods and services¹²⁶.

3.4 Health

3.4.1 General health situation by regions (epidemics, etc.)

¹²⁵ National Statistical Service of RA, Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2006, [Hhttp://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/indexeng.html](http://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/indexeng.html), accessed in July 2007

¹²⁶ National Statistical Service of RA, Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2006, Prices and Tariffs, point 323 "Average annual prices and tariffs for selected consumer goods and services", pages 438-441, [Hhttp://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/Taregirq_06_19.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/Taregirq_06_19.pdf), accessed in July 2007

According to the National Statistical Service of RA, "Yearbook 2006"¹²⁷, in 2005 number of registered diseases with the diagnosis set for the first time were (out of 1000 cases) respiratory organs diseases- 279.8, infection and parasitic diseases- 57.8 cases, nervous system disorders and organs of senses diseases- 58.5, psychic dysfunctions- 6.1, neoplasms- 7.0, blood circulation diseases- 35.2, digestive organs disorders- 38.0, urogenital diseases- 28.9, complication of pregnancy, child birth and post-natal period-15.2, skin infection and underskin fat diseases- 26.0, injuries and poisonings- 47.3 and so on.

Among the diseases caused by selected infectious diseases in 2005 there were (out of the whole population)- Acute intestinal infections- 4743 cases, Typhoid fever and paratyphoid fever A, B, C- 3, Salmonella infections- 293, Virus hepatitis-749, Scarlet fever- 370, whooping cough- 6, Measles- 2281 cases.

The leading causes of premature death (i.e. under age 65) in Armenia remains in order of magnitude, diseases of the circulatory system - heart disease, stroke and related conditions, external injuries and poisoning - including suicide and traffic accidents - and diseases of the respiratory and of the digestive system.¹²⁸

Three goals of "Millennium Development Goals" are devoted to healthcare. Armenia has taken responsibility to reduce child and maternal mortality, as well as to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, eliminate malaria and reduce tuberculosis by 2015.¹²⁹

3.4.2 Drinking water and sanitation by region; heating system (if relevant)

Drinking water access: "Comparative analysis by Marzes reveals that they are very different with regard to sources of drinking water, which indicates a vast differentiation of the quality of drinking water. Nearly all households, or 99.8 percent, in Yerevan have drinking water taps either inside or outside their dwelling, while the same cannot be said about Aragatsohn, Gegharkunik, Ararat and Armavir Marzes, where this indicator is less than 80 percent. In the mentioned Marzes, households without drinking water taps inside or outside their dwellings, mainly use common sources, which, in some cases, might be located at a few kilometres distance from the dwelling. In some settlements households purchase their drinking water from water tankers".¹³⁰

¹²⁷ National Statistical Service of RA, Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2006, "Public health", points 104-120, pages 138-157, [Hhttp://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/Taregirq_06_8.pdf](http://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Taregirq_06/Taregirq_06_8.pdf), accessed in July 2007

¹²⁸ World Health Organization, "Health Systems in Transition", Armenia (Health system review), Vol. 8 No. 6, done by European Observatory on Health Systems and Politics 2006, Page 9-13, point 1.4 Health status, [Hhttp://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf), accessed in July 2007

¹²⁹ UN in Armenia, National Report 2005, Millennium Development goals: Nationalization and Progress. MDG Goals 4, 5 and 6; pages 18-22, [Hhttp://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf](http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf), accessed in July 2007

¹³⁰ UNDP, "Human Poverty and pro-poor policies in Armenia" report 2005 (done by national experts according to the survey of 2003), article "Access to physical infrastructures from the viewpoint of pro-poor policies", point 1 "Access to drinking water", 3 and 4 paragraphs, page 95 [Hhttp://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/propooreng.pdf](http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/propooreng.pdf), accessed in July 2007

According to the Millennium Development Goals adopted by Armenia, 95 percent of the population will have access to drinking water by 2015.¹³¹

Sanitation: The proportion of the population with access to sanitation has not changed considerably since the 1990s and remains at around 70 percent. This issue is particularly relevant for rural areas which account for the majority of households without access to sanitation.¹³²

Heating system: "In Marzes with high proportion of urban residents and in Yerevan city, firewood and electricity are the preferable sources of heating. On average, around 58 percent of households in Marzes have mentioned firewood as the primary source of heating for their dwellings. This indicator is higher in Tavush, Syunik and Lori Marzes, correspondingly 98 percent, 80.1 percent and 74.6 percent, which is explained by the relatively larger forest areas, as well as larger proportion of urban residents in those marzes".

In Aragatsotn, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor Marzes, manure constituted a large proportion among source of heating, with 60.5 percent, 45.6 percent and 36.3 percent of households using it as fuel, which is the result of the prevalence of rural communities and spread of livestock production in those Marzes.

The proportion of households that used natural gas exceeded 10 percent only in a few Marzes (Shirak, Ararat, Armavir, Vayots Dzor and Yerevan) until 2003. It must be noted, however, that currently this indicator is higher in all Marzes, due to the large-scale gas supply operations in recent years.¹³³

Centralized heating was used by a small fraction of households, i.e. up to 8 percent, only in Yerevan, Kotayk, Shirak and Lori Marzes".¹³⁴

In the MDG framework, it is planned to foster public- private partnership to ensure access to natural gas supplies for all communities comprising 300 or more households. This target will also help to address the deforestation problem.¹³⁵

3.4.3 Health care system (including psychological care)

3.4.3.1 Health care infrastructure by regions (hospitals, equipment, etc.)

The health care system is divided into three administrative layers: *national* (republican), *regional* (Marz) and *municipal or community*. Following the decentralization and

¹³¹ UN in Armenia, National Report 2005, Millennium Development goals: Nationalization and Progress. MDG 7 "Ensure environmental sustainability", target 10, page 24, <http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf>, accessed in July 2007

¹³² Ibid., page 24,

¹³³ National Statistical Service of RA, Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2006, "Housing conditions of population", points 133 and 134, page 174 http://www.armstat.am/Arm/StatData/Tareqirg_06/Tareqirg_06_9.pdf, accessed in July 2007

¹³⁴ ¹³⁴ UNDP, "Human Poverty and pro-poor policies in Armenia" report 2005 (done by national experts according to the survey of 2003), article "Access to physical infrastructures from the viewpoint of pro-poor policies", point 2 "Access to heating", paragraphs 2-6, page 98, <http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/propooreng.pdf>, accessed in July 2007

¹³⁵ UN in Armenia, National Report 2005, Millennium Development goals: Nationalization and Progress, MDG 7 "Ensure environmental sustainability", target 11, third paragraph, page 24, <http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/mdgreporteng.pdf>, done by UN, accessed in July 2007

reconfiguration of public services after independence, with the exception of the state hygiene and anti-epidemic (SHAE) services and several tertiary care hospitals¹³⁶, operation and ownership of health services have been devolved to local governments (for primary health care) and provincial governments (for hospitals).¹³⁷

3.4.3.2 Eligibility criteria and access to health care services

Paid medical services, as a concept, were officially introduced in Armenia from 1997 to 2005. They were applied to medical care and services provided outside the framework of healthcare programs financed from the state budget. In 2006 the Government implemented very important changes in the healthcare system providing free ambulatory-polyclinics healthcare guaranteed by State.¹³⁸

The existing "state order" provision of free-of-charge health care thus remains more declarative than factual. The population, especially those in need and/or with the least means, meet with limited access to basic and specialized health care services. Nevertheless, Armenia is increasingly engaged in reforming the system from one that emphasizes the treatment of disease and response to epidemics towards a system that emphasizes prevention, family care and community participation. The shift towards a primary care orientation is noticeable, with gradually increased roles for health care workers to influence the determinants of health.

The **Basic Benefits Package (BBP)** currently covers a range of services including *inpatient care* (e.g. emergency care, intensive care, obstetric and gynaecological services, health services for certain vulnerable groups, dialysis, health care for selected conditions including Tuberculosis and Sexually transmitted infections); *ambulatory-outpatient care* (e.g. primary care, dispensary care, pre-/postnatal care, examination and treatment of individuals at (pre-)conscriptio age); *sanitary and epidemiological services* and other health services and programmes (e.g. certain expensive diagnostic tests).¹³⁹

All patients falling into a *socially vulnerable group*¹⁴⁰ are eligible to receive a comprehensive package of free outpatient and inpatient services. All other residents in Armenia must pay out of pocket, in full, at the point of use, for all care and pharmaceuticals that are not listed in the BBP. In 2004, the Government introduced co-payments for those populations not considered socially vulnerable, in the form of a one-off flat-rate fee for specifically defined medical care and services that are included in the BBP. However, this is restricted to Yerevan hospitals only and there are several exceptions for both; certain conditions (i.e. diseases and diagnoses that require hospital care and services as adopted by order of the Ministry of Health) and certain population groups, namely pensioners, vulnerable and special population groups as well as patients referred by the Ministry of Health, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or by the Marz governors.

According to surveys done in all Marzes, lack of access to health care was considered as one of the most difficult problems of vulnerable groups: such problems as "*demands for*

¹³⁶ [Hhttp://www.armenialinks.com/dir/armenia-hospitalsH](http://www.armenialinks.com/dir/armenia-hospitalsH)

<http://www.armenialinks.com/dir/armenia-clinics-medical-centers>

¹³⁷ World Health Organization, "Health Systems in Transition", Armenia (Health system review), Vol. 8 No. 6, done by European Observatory on Health Systems and Politics 2006, Point 2.2 Organizational overview, pages 18-20 (with figures 2.1 and 2.2); about equipment and staff see also the same report point 5 Physical and human resources, pages 89-95, [Hhttp://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf)H, accessed in July 2007

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Pages 15- 18,

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 32-39, 158-159,

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pages 33-34,

additional informal payments" in general, "shortage of health care facilities", "poor technical provisions", "quality of services", "short period of time during which the health care provider attached to the community is actually available" in rural areas".¹⁴¹

3.4.3.3 Cost of health care (costs of treatment¹⁴², medicaments, bribes for doctors)

Out-of-pocket payments now constitute a major source of revenue for the health care system in Armenia, at an estimated 65% of all health care expenditure. These payments can be divided into three categories: official (formal) co-payments charged for services that are only partly covered by the state budget; official (formal) direct user charges for the provision of services outside the state benefits package, and unofficial or informal payments, including gratuities provided on a voluntary basis or demanded by providers for services, over and above the official state payments and user fees.¹⁴³

Informal payments have now developed into an almost formalized system of fees, including barter goods and services in rural areas, for health care providers, auxiliary personnel and administrators. It is estimated that of the previously mentioned 65% of health care expenditure that is attributed to out of-pocket payments, approximately 93% is constituted by informal payments.

According to surveys, "Groups with privileges, which are often the same as vulnerable groups, are not able in practice, to use their privileges with regard to fees and drugs. As people with privileges have mentioned, they are subjected to indifference and poor treatment if they do not directly pay for fees, and consequently prefer to pay in order to properly use the services.

With regards to drugs, the problem is that often the most necessary and expensive drugs are not available at healthcare facilities, and these patients have to purchase them on their own".¹⁴⁴

From January 1, 2006, primary health care is now free for all patients and official staff salaries are increasing, although they are still low and 'under the table fees' are likely to remain a problem (MSF plans to monitor the impact of these changes on access to care in 2006).¹⁴⁵

3.4.3.4 Discrimination in the health care system (ethnic, religious, social, etc.)

The care of patients involves a commitment to and advocacy for the patients' right to health. In reality these rights are only partly met and there is a concern that certain segments of the population are particularly vulnerable. Thus, lack of awareness of entitlements to public services in health care makes patients more vulnerable to, amongst others, informal payments, denial of basic rights to free services, provision of state-funded

¹⁴¹ RA Government, "Armenian Social Trends 07", 2005, Point "Health care problems" page 29, and "Shortage of health care facilities" page 45, [Hhttp://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ahrc_mshtakan_gorc.htm](http://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ahrc_mshtakan_gorc.htm), accessed in July 2007

¹⁴² World Health Organization, "Health Systems in Transition", Armenia (Health system review), Vol. 8 No. 6, done by European Observatory on Health Systems and Politics 2006, Points 10.4 and 10.5, pages 163-175, [Hhttp://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf), accessed in July 2007

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pages 44-47,

¹⁴⁴ RA Government, "Armenian Social Trends 07", 2005, Point "Health care problems" page 29, http://www.gov.am/enversion/programms_9/ahrc/ahrc_mshtakan_gorc.htm, accessed in July 2007

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/>

services to non-beneficiaries.¹⁴⁶ However, in Armenia there is not any kind of ethnic, religious discrimination.

3.4.3.5 Services of non-state agents in health care (international, NGO, church)

There are numerous, mainly international, NGOs that currently operate or support health-related programmes and activities in Armenia. Some are broad based while others target specific populations and/or health problems.¹⁴⁷

3.4.3.6 Diseases which cannot be effectively treated in the country

An overview of diseases in Armenia is to be found at: <http://www.health.am/diseases>. Specifically for doctors and surgeons, there is the site <http://www.doctor.am>

3.4.3.7 Supply with standard medicines

Drugs prescribed in outpatient care are to be provided free of charge for the treatment of specific conditions including malaria, tuberculosis, mental illness, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, myocardial infarction and others. Also, selected population groups considered socially vulnerable are entitled to free medicines, including the disabled (first and second degree), disabled children under the age of 16, war veterans, orphans and children from families with four or more children under the age of 18, children under the age of three and others. Other selected groups are required to make co-payments but are granted reduced rates; for example, 50% of people with third degree disability and people involved in the clean-up activities following the Chernobyl accident.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ World Health Organization, "Health Systems in Transition", Armenia (Health system review), Vol. 8 No. 6, done by European Observatory on Health Systems and Politics 2006, Point 2.5 Patient rights and empowerment, Pages 39-40, [Hhttp://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89732.pdf), accessed in July 2007

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pages 26-27,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pages 116-121.