Kakha Kokhreidze is president of the Georgian Small and Medium Enterprises Association (GSMEA) based in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. Today, he is in Frankfurt to speak to a group of Georgians who live in Germany, but who are thinking about starting up businesses in Georgia. The Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) has invited them to a two-day seminar to support them in this. ‘Because of our Soviet past, we Georgians still struggle to show initiative or think outside the box. We need fresh input from abroad – like the knowledge and experience that you have gained in Germany. And we also need you to invest in our country,’ says Kokhreidze in a call to participants. Mobilising Georgians living abroad is one of the main tasks of the pilot project ‘Strengthening the Development Potential of the EU Mobility Partnership in Georgia through targeted Circular Migration and Diaspora Mobilisation’. CIM has been working with migrants and the diaspora for many years. It supports people from developing and emerging countries who have completed a vocational education or are working in Germany and who want to find a job or start up a business in their country of origin. On their return, they aim to use their expertise to contribute to their country’s development.

In 2009, Georgia entered into a mobility partnership with the European Union. A pilot project between Germany and Georgia is now working within this partnership to test ways of using labour migration more effectively to drive development in Georgia. Diaspora mobilisation and circular migration play a major part in this.

Pilot project Strengthening the Development Potential of the EU Mobility Partnership in Georgia through targeted Circular Migration and Diaspora Mobilisation

Project duration:
May 2013 to May 2016

Funded by:
European Union [EU]; German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [BMZ]

Implemented by:
Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM); Public Service Development Agency [PSDA]; Georgian Small and Medium Enterprises Association (GSMEA)

Key project activities:
- **Diaspora mobilisation**: Targeted support for up to 45 Georgians who, following their stay in Germany, want to return to Georgia to seek skilled work or become self-employed
- **Circular migration**: Placement of up to 40 skilled Georgians who want to work in the German hospitality or healthcare sector in order to develop their professional skills; including support upon return to Georgia
- **Policy advice** to Georgia’s State Commission on Migration Issues and other Georgian state institutions
- **Recommendations** on labour migration management in general and on the design of circular migration programmes in particular through analysing and documenting experiences and lessons learned in the project

In cooperation with

Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM)

Public Service Development Agency (PSDA)

Georgian Small and Medium Enterprises Association (GSMEA)
Looking at the hospitality sector in Georgia, it becomes obvious how much potential the country has. The South Caucasian nation has a long history of tourism. During the Soviet period, mainly Russians spent their holidays on the banks of the Black Sea, went hiking in the mountains or simply enjoyed Georgia’s southern charm. But when the Soviet Union collapsed, the tourism market ground to a halt. However, for a few years now, this small country on the border between Europe and Asia has been successfully revitalising its hospitality sector. According to figures from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Georgia shows the highest growth figures in the entire European region. Tourism is one of the most important areas of the country’s economy, but a lack of innovative business ideas and a skills shortage are major obstacles to the sector’s development. Many companies in the industry complain about difficulties in filling vacancies. They say that job applicants are under-qualified, lack professionalism and practical experience, and do not have the relevant foreign language skills. These are the issues the pilot project aims to address.

“In preparation of this pilot project, we carefully analysed and compared the needs of the Georgian and German labour markets. Based on the findings, it was decided to give Georgians in the hospitality and in healthcare sector the opportunity to temporarily work and train in Germany. At the same time, our goal is for these people to return to Georgia to leverage the knowledge they have gained abroad. It’s a circular migration approach,” explains Keti Gomelauri, Deputy Chair of Georgia’s Public Service Development Agency (PSDA), which, alongside GSMEA, is a key partner for CIM in this project. As migration policy advice is also part of the project, PSDA is supported by a new staff member: a German migration expert who provides advice on migration issues.

Before the participants of the pilot circular migration scheme leave Georgia, they prepare for their stay in Germany, for example, by taking part in language courses tailored to their professional needs. The aim is to prevent people trained in Georgia from travelling abroad only to end up in badly paid jobs for low-qualified workers, and unable to tap their full potential. Instead, the idea is to give them the opportunity to apply and develop their existing knowledge and skills in a foreign country.

Participants in the pilot scheme not only receive support before their departure, but also upon their return, for example in their search for skilled work. ‘We want everyone to benefit from this project: the migrants – who, during their time in Germany, gain valuable personal and professional experience; Germany – which has a particularly acute labour shortage in the healthcare sector; and Georgia – which will benefit from the knowledge brought back by migrants,’ says Gomelauri, summing up the pilot project’s overarching objective.

The Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) is the competence centre for global labour mobility in the German Government’s international cooperation work. It taps the potential that global migration offers for sustainable development. Jointly run by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the International Placement Services (ZAV) of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA), CIM brings together over 30 years’ expertise in development and labour market policy.

Further information:
@ www.cimonline.de
@ www.sda.gov.ge
@ www.gsmea.ge

Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) Dag-Hammerskjöld-Weg 5 65760 Eschborn P: +49 (0)6196-79-3543 E: migration-georgia@cimonline.de