

# Eurasia Partnership Foundation



## Knowledge of and Attitudes towards the EU in Georgia: Trends and Variations 2009 - 2015

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Kingdom of the Netherlands

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## Executive Summary

Four waves of survey were conducted within the framework of Eurasia Partnership Foundation's (EPF) European Integration program in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015. These surveys aimed to study Georgian population's knowledge of and attitudes towards the European Union. The results of the surveys provide valuable information on changes observed in the attitudes, expectations and hopes of the population of Georgia towards the EU during the last seven years. In 2013 and 2015, the survey also covered the regions where ethnic minorities are settled compactly. As a result, the findings give us an opportunity to draw interesting comparisons and assess attitudes of the population in dynamics.

Key findings of the 2015 survey are:

- The Georgian population associates the EU with democracy. A vast majority of citizens agree that the EU is a source for peace and security in Europe, and that it is a democratic union that promotes democracy in countries outside the EU.
- The Georgian population is now better aware of the EU than it was in 2009. However, the population's knowledge of a number of issues is still very limited such as, knowledge about specific EU institutions, agreements reached between Georgia and the EU and specific EU projects implemented in Georgia. Important to note, there are disparities between the levels of knowledge reported by various groups of the population. The differences in knowledge between Tbilisi residents and ethnic minorities are especially striking.
- The majority of the Georgian population believes that they do not receive sufficient information about the EU. At the same time, almost half the respondents state that they would like to receive more information about the EU. Notably, the share of ethnic minorities saying they would like to receive more information about the EU has increased by almost 20% since 2013.
- Personal experience of living in or merely travelling to EU countries is still extremely limited among the Georgian population.
- The majority of the Georgian population believes that, compared with the USA and Russia, the EU can better assist Georgia. However, a large segment of ethnic minorities disagrees with this view.
- The majority of Georgian population believes that Georgia needs the EU's assistance. However, the population believes that EU support primarily benefits high-ranking public officials and it questions the consistent efficiency of the spending of this assistance.
- The direct support of the Georgian population for the EU integration has decreased from 78% to 62% since 2013, which may be connected to following developments:
  - The population has become better aware of the requirements for joining the EU and of Georgia's readiness to meet these requirements, which has led to a more realistic assessment of the prospects for the country's European integration.
  - The population is not informed about the EU sufficiently that increases the fear that EU integration threatens Georgian traditions.

- The share of those who say that Georgia will never accede to the EU rose by 8% between 2009 and 2015. The reason of such a belief, reported in 2015 by 11% of the population, may be objective, suggesting that this segment of the population has better overall understanding of the requirements for EU membership, as well as differences in opinions among the EU member states on that matter.
- Territorial conflicts are named most commonly (43%) as the factor impeding Georgia's accession to the EU, distantly followed by political instability, an underdeveloped economy and problems with Russia.
- The overall attitude towards the EU is still highly positive and support for the country's European integration is extremely strong in Georgia. In spite of a decrease in the share of EU supporters, one may say that the 2015 indicators show a far better understanding and realistic assessment of the topic than in previous years.
- Even though 56% of the Georgian population agrees with Zurab Zhvania's famous statement "I am Georgian, and therefore I am European," European identity does not represent even a somewhat significant, let alone key, element of the population's self-identification. In 2015, the share of those who, while answering the corresponding question, said that they consider themselves (as) only Europeans, did not make up even 1%. First and foremost, the population of Georgia identifies themselves as representatives of their nation(s).
- The share of Georgian speakers who think that the government should be like a parent rather than an employee hired by the citizens, has remained unchanged since 2009. However, the corresponding share of ethnic minorities has decreased between 2013 and 2015.

## Foreword

EPF operates with the belief that societies function best when people take responsibility for their own social and economic prosperity. Toward this end, the Foundation employs an evidence-based and demand-driven approach, mobilizing communities and interest groups around specific issue areas to contribute to or create a demand for positive changes. EPF also believes that substantive and sustainable transformation cannot be effected without issue-based partnerships where diverse groups of stakeholders come together toward achieving common goals. It is in part due to these considerations that EPF has been studying the Georgian public's knowledge and perception of the European Union, analyzing trends and identifying avenues for action. While Georgia's European integration has always been a foreign policy priority for the Governments of Georgia, for EPF the country's European integration agenda is also a roadmap toward improved standards and practices on the domestic level.

With signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, which also includes the setting up of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), the Georgian Government has taken on the obligation to effect positive changes in all aspects of public life, spanning from justice sector reforms to economic recovery and growth. Thus, the implementation of the Agreement should bring concrete benefits to the people of Georgia, including improved food safety and consumer protection, better business opportunities for the small- and medium-sized enterprises, enhanced accountability of public officials, and better functioning of the justice system. However, for these benefits to be reaped, the GoG must make the necessary effort and the public must be better informed about the European integration agenda, to demand the needed level of performance. The present report provides a bird's-eye view of how the country's ethnic minority and ethnic majority populations' knowledge and opinions of Georgia's European integration and how it has changed over the past seven years. It provides valuable information for all stakeholders – Georgian public authorities, the EU and its member states, the international community, civil society actors – to assess the effectiveness of their interventions thus far and devise evidence-based action plans for the future. The report findings highlight that the successful convergence to European values, standards, and practices will require constant information sharing and public outreach, as well as meaningful cooperation among all stakeholders.

## Introduction

Four waves of surveys were conducted in 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015 within the framework of Eurasia Partnership Foundation's European Integration program, to study Georgian population's knowledge of and attitudes towards the European Union. These surveys represent a valuable source of information concerning the changes in the assessments, expectations and hopes of the Georgian population towards the EU over the past seven years.

Georgian population's enthusiasm regarding the EU, measured in these surveys, has been a significant factor in the development of Georgia-EU relations. However, the results of the 2009 survey revealed that this enthusiasm did not rest on a deep knowledge of the EU and its institutions but was rather a reflection of the population's hopes and expectations.

These hopes have been met to a certain extent by signing of the Association Agreement (AA) between Georgia and the EU on 27 June, 2014, signifying a new legal framework for the relationship between the two parties. The basic articles of the AA entered into force in September 2014. Consequently, the 2015 survey was conducted in a new legal context. Its findings are expected to show whether or not this significant event has led to any attitudinal or expectancy changes on the part of the population.<sup>1</sup>

The questionnaires used in each of the four survey waves were as identical as possible to allow for the comparison of results.<sup>2</sup> The 2009 and 2011 surveys were conducted in Georgian only, hence representatives of ethnic minorities living in settlements where the majority of the population are not Georgian speakers were not sampled. To study the views of ethnic minorities, the so-called "minority stratum"<sup>3</sup> was added to the sample of the Georgian-speaking population in the 2013 and 2015 surveys. Consequently, the findings present the dynamic of the opinions of the Georgian-speaking population of Georgia from 2009 to 2015, and the dynamic of the opinions of the representatives of ethnic minorities from 2013 to 2015.

The first chapter of this report, Georgia and the EU, discusses the population's level of knowledge about the EU and the changes observed in this respect during the period from 2009 to 2015. In particular, the report discusses population's general attitudes toward the EU and prospects for European Integration, and how the population assesses sources of information about the EU and to what extent is it satisfied with the information it received about the Union. It is also interesting to see the population's opinions about EU's support for Georgia and, specifically, how efficiently is this support being used.

The second chapter examines whether the values reported by the population of Georgia are getting closer to the European values – be it values related to democratization or the readiness to accept differences.

Based on the findings of this report, recommendations have been developed for the main actors engaged in the process of European integration: the government of Georgia, the EU, nongovernmental and international organizations operating in Georgia and the mass media. The recommendations focus on the ways of raising awareness of the EU among the Georgian population, improving attitudes towards the EU and enhancing democratic values in Georgian society.

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<sup>1</sup> One should, of course, take into account the impact of other external and internal political developments on the views expressed in the survey.

<sup>2</sup> The 2015 questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3. Questionnaires used for earlier waves of the survey are available at <http://www.caucasusbarometer.org/en/downloads/>, in the EU Survey section.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with representative of this stratum were conducted in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. For detailed information, see Appendix 1 (Survey Methodology).

# 1. Georgia and the EU

## Knowledge about the EU

Like the surveys conducted in 2009-2013, one of the main objectives of the 2015 survey was to find out Georgian population's level of awareness of the EU. Many EU-related issues, including Georgia's accession to the EU, have been much discussed in Georgia over the last decade. Although these discussions largely presented positive views about the EU, the previous waves of the surveys also demonstrated that the Georgian population's knowledge of the EU was superficial. However, since 2009, a slow but steady decrease has been seen in the share of incorrect answers to the question of whether or not Georgia is an EU member state. According to the 2015 survey results, only 5% of Georgia's population believes that it is. Equally important is that the share of those who reported not knowing whether or not Georgia is an EU member dropped to 12% in 2015. In 2009, both these indicators were almost twice as high. When looking at the results in a regional context,<sup>4</sup> the differences are observed not only by settlement type (capital / other urban settlements / rural settlements), but also by ethnic group. In 2015, 13% of ethnic minorities believed that Georgia is an EU member state, compared to 27% who did not know the answer to this question. While 89% of the Tbilisi population provided the correct answer to this question, the corresponding share among ethnic minorities was 65%.<sup>5</sup>

Among EU-related issues, Georgia's EU membership is the only topic about which the population demonstrates a certain level of knowledge. This should not come as a surprise, bearing in mind that accession to the EU has been long discussed as one of the main strategic goals of Georgia's foreign policy. The Georgian population is much less knowledgeable about other EU-related issues. For example, half of the population do not know the number of EU member states, as compared with 27% who do know. At the same time, the majority (68%) knows that Russia is not an EU member state.

The largest segment of the Georgian population - almost half - believes that the EU, first and foremost, represents an international organization. A fourth of the population thinks that the EU, first and foremost, is a political union. This is followed by the view that the EU, first and foremost, represents an economic union (16%). Some 19% find it difficult to answer this question. In this regard, the difference between Tbilisi residents and those of other settlements is striking. While only 8% of Tbilisi residents found it difficult to answer this questions, the corresponding share of people living in urban and rural settlements, as well as in ethnic minority settlements, ranges between 21% and 31%.

The Georgian population knows very little about specific EU institutions, agreements reached with the EU and concrete projects implemented in Georgia. For example, 53% are not aware of the activity of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia (versus 16% of those who are aware). A worrying development is the constant deterioration of knowledge about EUMM since 2009, even though its mandate was extended for another two years in December 2014 and some 18.3 million euros were allocated to fund the mission's operations in 2015.<sup>6</sup>

While 63% have heard about the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, only 28% among them know that this agreement does not grant the right to Georgian citizens to work in EU countries. In May 2015, 46%

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<sup>4</sup> In case of all cross-tabulations presented in this report, correlations between the variables is statistically significant.

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that the level of Georgian citizens' knowledge about Georgia's membership in the Council of Europe is worse. In 2015, only 32% of respondents correctly answered the question of whether Georgia is currently a Council of Europe member.

<sup>6</sup> For comparison, the annual EU assistance earmarked for Georgia in 2014 comprised 65.5 million euros ([http://eap-csf.eu/assets/files/WG1\\_EU%20Budget%20support\\_last\\_en.pdf](http://eap-csf.eu/assets/files/WG1_EU%20Budget%20support_last_en.pdf), pg. 25).

correctly answered that the AA was partially enacted as opposed to 5% of those who said it was fully enacted; 31% thought it was not enacted either partially or completely.

33% of those who say that have heard about the AA expect political closeness and tight economic integration with the EU most of all and 23% of the surveyed expect accession to the EU; fewer people expect the restoration of territorial integrity (13%), NATO membership (9%) and improvement of relations with Russia (5%).

The questionnaire offered seven statements on the EU.<sup>7</sup> The level of disagreement or agreement with those statements give an idea about the level of knowledge and, based on this knowledge, the attitudes of the Georgian population towards the EU. However, it must be noted that 20% found it difficult to rate the statements.

The overwhelming majority of the population agrees with the statements that the EU is a source of peace and security in Europe; that it is a democratic union; and, that it supports the development of democracy in non-member countries. There is no doubt that **the majority of the Georgian population associates the EU with democracy.**

At the same time, almost half (45%) agree with the statement that the EU threatens Georgian traditions, including 19% who fully agree with this statement and 26% who agree more than disagree with it. The last seven years has seen a stable increase in the share of the Georgian-speaking population who believes that the EU threatens Georgian traditions. The leap between the rates of 2013 and 2015 is especially notable – the proportion of Georgian-speakers who believe that the EU threatens Georgian traditions increased from 31% to 45%. Those who agree with this view are equally represented across different settlements, ages, genders and economic standings. The segment of population that considers the EU a threat against Georgian traditions also entertains less trust in the EU.

**Thus, in the past seven years, the Georgian population’s level of knowledge of the EU has shown a slow but steady increase, although Georgian population’s knowledge about the key EU institutions, agreements with the EU, and certain projects implemented in Georgia is still superficial. There is a striking difference between the knowledge of Tbilisi residents and that of population outside the capital. Moreover, a worrying development is that the share of the Georgian-speaking population which thinks that the EU threatens Georgian traditions increased by 15 percent from 2013 to 2015. This proves that this group’s knowledge of the EU is still very limited and they have an incorrect understanding of the aims and interests of the EU.**

## Sources of Information

According to the 2015 survey, the majority of the Georgian population thinks that they do not receive enough information about the EU. 70% indicate that they have received “no information at all” on the EU from the EU Delegation to Georgia. The same holds true for other organizations as well. For example, 74% say that they do not receive any information on the EU from the NATO and EU Information Center, while equally as many say they do not receive information from embassies and international organizations either. 73% say they do not receive information on the EU from Georgian public entities while 74% say they do

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<sup>7</sup> These statements were: (1) The EU supports the development of democracy in non-member countries; (2) The EU is a source for peace and security in Europe; (3) The EU threatens Georgian traditions; (4) The EU is a democratic union; (5)

The EU is a new form of empire; (6) The EU supports the economic development of non-member countries; (7) The EU is ready to accept any European state as its next member. Using a 4-point scale, respondents evaluated their level of agreement or disagreement with each of the above statements.



not get information from Georgian NGOs. As many as 77% say they do not receive information on the EU from information booklets produced by various organizations. Regarding the traditional media, 68% of the population declares that they do not receive information on the EU from print media and 72% say the same with regard to radio. Even though TV is the main source of information for the population of Georgia, only 15% say that they have received “a lot of information” from television, while another 13% has received a certain amount of information from this source. However, 22% declare that they have received “no information at all” on the EU from television. Corresponding indicators are much higher among representatives of ethnic minorities (40%).

Almost half (49%) say they would like to receive more information about the EU. It is worth noting that there is almost no difference on this issue between supporters of various political factions. Yet another interesting point is that the share of those willing to receive more information about the EU is higher than average in the capital (where the level of knowledge about the EU is also the highest) and among ethnic minorities. An important point to consider is that the share of ethnic minorities willing to learn more about the EU has increased by almost 20% since 2013 (from 32% to 50%).

However, when people willing to learn more about the EU were asked to specify what kind of information they would like to get about the EU and through which sources, only a third of the group (less than 20% of the entire population) were able to specify particular issues. Most of all, the population would like to receive more information about three areas:

- (1) Georgia-EU trade relations,
- (2) The EU’s role in conflict resolution, and
- (3) Social protection in the EU.

It is indicative that 79% of this group would like to receive more information about the EU from television. The second most common answer here is social networks, with 16% of this group naming these as a source of information.

It should not be a surprise that 49% of those who want to learn more about the EU show a higher trust in the EU as well.<sup>8</sup>

The number of people who have personal experience living in or even travelling to EU countries is still minimal within the Georgian population. Only 3% have lived in an EU country for at least three months since 1993; the share of those with a family member who has lived in an EU country for at least three months since 1993 is double this amount. The overall experience of travelling to EU countries is also insignificant as only 9% of respondents or members of their families have travelled to these countries since 1993. In the absence of personal experience and with sources of information which lack diversity, one may assume that the population’s knowledge of the EU is often not based on reliable sources.

**It is obvious that the population does not receive sufficient information about the EU. However, the segment of the population that wants to learn more about the EU does not exceed 20%. No wonder it is this very group that is one of the staunchest supporters of the EU in Georgia. An important development in this area is that the percentage of ethnic minorities that makes up this group has increased notably in the past two years.**

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<sup>8</sup> The population’s trust towards the main social and political institutions (including the EU) is discussed in detail in the second section (Political Values).

## EU support for Georgia

There is a mixed attitude towards EU support of Georgia. Although the majority of the population (72%) say that EU support is important for Georgia, as opposed to the less than 2% who believe that Georgia does not need any assistance from the EU, the share of those who think that this support is not totally altruistic is higher. Some widespread opinions include: “The EU wants stability in its neighborhood” (70%); “The EU is interested in the stability of Georgia in order to use the territory to transport oil and gas to Europe” (57%); or “The EU wants to reduce the flow of migrants to its own territory” (51%). Some 44% of the population agrees with the statement that “The EU wants to influence Georgia,” whereas 17% disagree.

Almost a third (31%) were unable to answer the question about the forms of support the EU provides to Georgia. The responses provided by those who did answer this question once again prove that the population knows very little about the types of support the EU provides to Georgia. The largest group (26%) thinks that the EU currently provides humanitarian aid to Georgia. A relatively smaller number of people believe that the EU invests in Georgia’s economy (18%); assists in solving social problems (13%) and in restoring territorial integrity (12%). Some 13% of the population, however, declares that the EU does not currently provide any kind of support to Georgia. At the same time, the population thinks that Georgia currently needs two types of assistance to come from the EU: assistance which contributes to economic development (investing in Georgia’s economy and opening the EU market to Georgian products) and assistance restoring territorial integrity / improving relations with Russia.

Of only that 56%, who are somewhat informed about EU support and can specify certain types of EU assistance, the amount of those who think that the spending of EU aid in Georgia is pointless is almost three times as many (61%, up from 38% in 2013) as those who think that it is purposeful (21%). Moreover, the most widespread opinion is that EU support benefits Georgian politicians and officials the most (36%) and not, for example, pensioners (5%).

Nevertheless, 33% of the population name the EU as the entity that “can currently best support Georgia”, compared with 24% who name Russia and 17% who name the USA. The general distribution of the responses to this question is actually similar to what it was in 2013; however, it is worth noting that the 2015 survey shows a narrowing of the gap between the responses of Georgian speakers and ethnic minorities. Namely, in 2015, ethnic minorities named Russia twice as often and named the EU 1.9 times as rarely as Georgian speakers. In 2013, ethnic minorities named Russia 3.4 times as often as and the EU 2.7 times as rarely as Georgians.

The 2015 survey results show a doubling of those who positively assess the EU role in the 2008 August war (36%) as opposed to 19% who believe this role was negative.

**The majority of Georgia’s population believes that the country needs the assistance provided by the EU – and this is regardless of the fact that, on the one hand, the population is not fully informed of the types of assistance and, on the other hand, it believes that it is public officials who most profit from this assistance. Another important point is that it is the EU, not the USA or Russia, that is viewed as the entity which can best assist Georgia. It must be noted, however, that a large segment of ethnic minorities disagree with this view.**

## European Integration

The population does not view EU accession as one of the most pressing issues facing Georgia. According to recent public opinion polls, these issues are the ones, which primarily affect economic conditions, with unemployment named most frequently. Issues that are related to economic condition are distantly followed by the restoration of territorial integrity. Neither EU nor NATO membership is named as a pressing issue by even one-tenth of the Georgian population (9% in both cases).

However, when the question is formulated differently (“If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of Georgia’s membership of the EU, would you personally vote for or against it?”) it becomes obvious that the majority of the population supports EU membership. In 2015, 61% of the population supports Georgia’s membership in the EU compared to 11% of the population who opposes Georgia’s membership in the EU. During the period between 2009 and 2013 the share of the population, which would vote for Georgia’s membership in the EU remained stable, ranging between 78% and 80% as opposed to 2% that would vote against Georgia’s membership in the EU. The results of the 2015 survey, however, show a decrease in this share to 61%. At the same time, the share of those who would not vote for EU membership increased from 2% (in 2009) to 11 % (in 2015).

A very important point is that this change is not connected to the ethnic minority response. In fact, this response was almost the same in 2013 and 2015. In 2015, 35% of ethnic minorities said that they would vote for Georgia’s membership in the EU as opposed to 9% who would not. In 2013, these indicators stood at 38% and 9%, respectively. The drop in support for Georgia’s membership in the EU is caused by a change in the position of the Georgian-speaking population. The share of supporters fell from 89% (in 2013) to 77% (in 2015) in Tbilisi; from 80% (in 2013) to 62% (in 2015) in other Georgian-speaking cities, and; from 80% (in 2013) to 57% (in 2015) in other Georgian-speaking villages.

In the 2015 survey, those who say they would support Georgia’s accession to the EU most commonly name the improvement of their economic condition as the reason for this support (44%). The second and the third most common answers are “Georgia would be better protected from foreign threats” (23%) and “Georgia would have a better chance at achieving territorial integrity” (18%). It is interesting that the possibility of visa-free travel to Europe is named by only 9% of EU membership supporters.

When considering the main reason for voting against Georgia’s membership in the EU, one should take into account that the results for this question are less representative because only 11% answered it. The most frequently named reasons are that EU membership would: harm Georgian culture and traditions (42% of opponents); hinder the establishment of good neighborly relations with Russia (35%); lessen the chances of restoring Georgia’s territorial integrity (31%), and; restrict Georgia’s independence (30%). Interestingly, a slight majority (55%) of those who believe that the EU membership would harm Georgian culture and traditions, still declare that they would vote for Georgia’s membership in the EU if there were to be such a referendum tomorrow.

Another interesting and important point is that only 56% of the population believes that the majority of Georgia’s citizens support Georgia’s accession to the EU. This number is smaller than the actual share of EU accession supporters and, furthermore, it has decreased since 2009 when as many as 67% of the population believed so. Representatives of ethnic minorities say more often than average that the majority of Georgia’s citizens do not support Georgia’s accession to the EU.

Regardless of whether or not support for Georgia’s accession to the EU has enhanced, skepticism towards the prospect of EU membership has intensified since 2013, with the share of those who think Georgia will never become an EU member rising from 3% to 11%. This change might, however, result not from negative attitudes towards Europe but from a better understanding of the requirements for EU membership, on the one hand, and a more thorough realization of the problems existing in Georgia, on the other. **Table 1** shows the changes in responses to this question over the period 2009 to 2015.

Table 1

**In your opinion, when Georgia will become an EU member state?**

	2009	2011	2013, All	2013, only minorities	2015, all	2015, only minorities
In 5 years or less	30	33	33	21	17	18
In 6-10 years	20	19	15	11	13	19
In more than 10 years	10	9	7	4	15	10
Never	1	2	3	3	11	9
Don't know	38	37	42	61	38	43
Refuse to answer	1	-	-	1	-	1

The population thinks that Georgia is equally unprepared for EU membership in such areas as: the development of democratic institutions (47% believe that Georgia is not ready for EU accession in this area<sup>9</sup>); the protection of human rights (48%); the rule of law (50%) and, especially; the competitive market economy (53%). Among the barriers to Georgia becoming an EU member state, the most commonly named is territorial conflicts (43%), distantly followed by political instability (28%), an underdeveloped economy (21%), and Russia (17%).

The population is overly optimistic in their expectations of change in various areas if Georgia were to become an EU member. The majority of the population expects improvements in the 17 areas listed under the corresponding question (number of available jobs, level of freedom of speech, affordability of healthcare, level of corruption, etc.). People believe that, as a result of Georgia's accession to the EU, the level of poverty will decrease (51%)<sup>10</sup> and the number of available jobs will increase (57%).<sup>11</sup> Pensions will also increase (57%), as will the level of Georgia's security (57%) and the quality of education (59%).<sup>12</sup> Although around one-third of the population thinks that prices of main products of consumption will rise (33%), far more people believe that the level of income will also rise (53%).

Negative expectations clearly prevail over positive ones when it comes to predicting respect for Georgian traditions. Some 16% of the population thinks that, with the accession of Georgia to the EU, respect for these traditions will increase, but twice as many (28%) expect the opposite (while 34% believe that nothing will change in this regard). Of those 17 issues about which this question was asked "Respect for Georgian traditions" is the only one where negative expectations exceed positive ones. However, it should also be noted that these assessments highly changed after 2013 (see **Table 2**).

Table 2

<sup>9</sup> The sum of answers "definitely not" and "rather no than yes."

<sup>10</sup> The sum of answers "will decrease significantly" and "will decrease."

<sup>11</sup> The sum of answers "will significantly increase" and "will increase."

<sup>12</sup> Around a fourth of the population does not know.

**In your opinion, how will the (level of?) respect for Georgian traditions change if Georgia becomes an EU member? (%)**

	2009	2011	2013	2015
Will decrease significantly / Will decrease	20	17	14	28
Will not change	31	29	31	34
Will increase significantly / Will increase	22	25	30	16
Don't know	27	26	24	21
Refuse to answer	1	4	1	1

If Georgia becomes an EU member this will, in the population's opinion, benefit businessmen and politicians (68% and 66%, respectively) as well as students, the qualified workforce and the unemployed (59%, 56% and 51%, respectively) the most. On the other hand, pensioners and the unqualified workforce will be disadvantaged if Georgia becomes an EU member (45% and 38%, respectively). Almost 20% did not know; this share increases to 30%, on average, in the case of ethnic minorities.

The 2015 survey saw a decrease in the share of positive answers to the question "What is your general perception of the EU?" In 2009 and 2011, half of the population's general perception of the EU was positive (and 36%-38% was neutral), while in 2015, positive perception decreased to 40%, 41% of the population stays neutral. An insignificant change has been observed in the responses of ethnic minorities to this question over the past two years: in 2013 some 34% of them were positive, versus 32% in 2015. During the same years, the neutral perception dropped from 35% to 28% and the negative perception went up from 8% to 15%.

According to the 2015 survey results, more than half of the population thinks that Georgia should have its closest political and economic cooperation with Russia (54% and 56%, respectively) though not with the Eurasian Union (4% in both cases). Corresponding indicators with regard to the EU stand at 49% (the closest political cooperation) and 43% (the closest economic cooperation); however, it should be noted that the difference observed in 2015 is insignificant. This difference is within the margin of error and does not provide the grounds to conclude that the Georgian population clearly prefers Russia as its most desirable political and economic partner.

If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of Georgia's membership in the Eurasian Union, 27% of the population would vote for and only 38% would vote against.<sup>13</sup> This question was asked only in the 2015. Therefore, there is no possibility to observe the dynamic. Interestingly, representatives of ethnic minorities and the Georgian-speaking rural population equally show a relatively high support for Eurasian Union membership (34% and 33%, respectively). As it was expected, the share of the population who would vote against Georgia's accession to the Eurasian Union is the highest in Tbilisi (53%).

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<sup>13</sup> Some 12% would not take part in the referendum, whilst 21% did not know.

A very high positive correlation is seen among the answers to the questions of whether the population would support Georgia's accession to the Eurasian Union, on the one hand, and to the EU, on the other hand.<sup>14</sup> Some 53% of those who would vote for Georgia's accession to the Eurasian Union would also vote for Georgia's accession to the EU. An additional study is required to explain this finding; so far, however, it is obvious that, on the one hand, almost one-fourth of the Georgian population lacks clear priorities regarding which union they would like to see Georgia join and, on the other hand, when it comes to Georgia's membership in the EU, NATO or the Eurasian Union, **support for EU membership is clearly in the lead.**

In the context of assessing attitudes towards European integration, one cannot miss the point that the widely spread opinion about Georgians identifying themselves as Europeans seems exaggerated. The results of all four survey waves prove that this opinion does not correspond to the population's perception of their identity. Although 56% say that they agree with Zurab Zhvania's famous statement "I am Georgian, and therefore I am European", European identity does not represent even a somewhat significant, let alone key element of Georgian national self-identification. In 2015, the share of those who, in response to the corresponding question, say that they identify themselves as only European did not make up even 1%. Those who identify themselves as both – a representative of their nation and European – comprise 15% and this percentage largely varies by types of settlement: in Tbilisi it is 24%, in Georgian-speaking settlements (both urban and rural) it stands at 14%, whereas in case of ethnic minorities it is a mere 4%. The majority believes that they are representatives of their own nations alone. However, here as well, results significantly differ by settlement with 56% seen in the capital city, 77% in Georgian-speaking settlements (both urban and rural) and 47% in case of ethnic minorities.

Compared to the 2013 results, the 2015 survey showed a somewhat notable change in the responses of ethnic minorities. In particular, the share of those who perceive themselves as representatives of their nation alone increased from 35% to 47%, thus becoming the most common response in 2015. The share of ethnic minorities who identify themselves as "only Caucasians" has dropped sharply (from 46% to 7%); at the same time, the share of those who identify themselves as both representatives of their nation **and** Caucasian has increased (from 10% to 35%). Consequently, according to the 2015 survey results, the identification with one's own nation prevails in all subgroups and it is especially strong among the Georgian-speaking urban and rural population. Some 24% of Tbilisi residents identify themselves as representatives of their nation and European while 17% identify themselves as representatives of their nation and Caucasian. However, Tbilisi residents also most frequently identify themselves as representatives of their nation (56%).

Thus, the most important findings of this survey concern the nature and dynamic of attitudes towards European integration and. Since 2013, direct support of European integration on the part of the Georgian population decreased from 78% to 62%, that is, the support which is measured by the question: "If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of Georgia's membership of the EU, would you personally vote for or against it?" This support dropped from 83% to 64% among the Georgian-speaking population whereas in the case of ethnic minorities, the observed change – the drop from 38% to 35% - is within the margin of error. **This finding may be explained by two different reasons. On the one hand, the population has come to better understand the requirements for accession to the EU (and to what extent Georgia meets these requirements) and this has led to a more realistic assessment of the prospects for European integration which translated into a less optimistic assessment of the prospects for EU membership. On the other hand, the fear that the EU threatens Georgian traditions and values has further intensified and it is very likely that this has also translated into a decrease of EU supporters.**

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<sup>14</sup> The correlation is even higher between the answers to the questions whether the population supports Georgia's accession to NATO, on the one hand, and to the EU, on the other. This report does not highlight this finding because supporters of Georgia's NATO and EU membership are not viewed as people with different geopolitical orientation.

At the same time, it must be noted that the attitude towards the EU in Georgia is still overly positive and the support for European integration extremely strong. Despite the decrease in the percentage indicator, one may say that **the 2015 indicators show a far better understanding and realistic assessment of the topic as compared to previous years.** The results of the survey suggest that the most serious risk to a successful European integration process is the increase of that segment of the population which perceives the EU as a certain threat, harming Georgian culture and traditions. A thorough study of the underlying reasons behind this perceived threat is of utmost importance.

## 2. Values of the Georgian Population and Changes in them Over Time

The process of changing values is one of the slowest and therefore no rapid and radical changes are expected in Georgia. The 2013 survey results suggested a strengthening of liberal values in Georgian society, which, back then, was explained as “a slow progress towards European values.” The 2015 survey, however, shows that the situation has not taken a clearly optimistic turn.

### Political Values

Compared with 2009, the population expresses less interest in the domestic and foreign policies of Georgia. The 2015 survey saw a 10% drop in the share of those who say they are “very” or “quite” interested in Georgia’s domestic policy and a 14% drop of those who say they are “very” or “quite” interested in Georgia’s foreign policy.

Among those 17 social institutions and political unions toward which the trust of Georgian population was assessed,<sup>15</sup> the undisputed leader is the religious institution which enjoys the trust of 84% of the population (the sum of the responses “fully trust” and “trust”). However, the redistribution between “fully trust” and “trust” has drastically changed since 2009: while until 2013, the absolute majority of the Georgian population “fully trusted” religious institutions (in 2009 the corresponding indicator stood at 69%, and in 2011 – 74%), in 2013 and, especially, in 2015, an approximately equal percentage of the population chooses these answers: namely, in 2015, 44% “fully trust” and 40% “trust” religious institutions. A vast majority of the population trusts the army (77%<sup>16</sup>) and the healthcare system (62%),<sup>17</sup> and 55% trusts the Georgian police. As regards other social institutions and political unions, they are trusted by a third of the Georgian population, at best.<sup>18</sup>

In 2015, some 34% of the population stated that they trust the EU (including only 3% who fully trust the EU), whereas this share in 2009 stood at 54% (including 25% who fully trusted the EU). The share of those who say they do not trust the EU has notably increased between 2013 and 2015 (from 5% to 20%). It should also be noted, however, that the share of those who fully distrust the EU remains small (4% in 2014). It is also worth noting that representatives of ethnic minorities, as compared to the Georgian-speaking population, express less distrust towards the EU (10% and 21% respectively<sup>19</sup>), although they also find it difficult to answer almost twice as frequently as the Georgian-speaking population.

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<sup>15</sup> These institutions and unions were: Georgia’s healthcare system, banks, the army, courts, NGOs, parliament, the prime minister, political parties, the president, police, media, local government, religious institutions, the ombudsman, the EU, the UN.

<sup>16</sup> The sum of responses “fully trust” and “trust.”

<sup>17</sup> A relatively higher trust expressed towards the healthcare system in 2015 is unexpected and very different from other shares as well as the results of other similar surveys.

<sup>18</sup> A higher share – 39% – says they trust the President of Georgia.

<sup>19</sup> The sum of responses “fully distrust” and “distrust.”

The trust indicator in social and political institutions suggests not only quite a significant lack of trust in these institutions but also a continuous decrease in this trust over time. A striking point is also that **society holds the least trust for those social institutions which, potentially, ensure the democratic development of society** (for example, NGOs, parliament, political parties, mass media, local self-government) while the trust in law enforcement bodies and religious institutions is stable.

Nor can the perceptions of the political system by the majority of the Georgian population be considered democratic yet. The share of those who agree with the statement that “People are like children; the government should take care of them like a parent” (51%<sup>20</sup>) still exceeds the share of those who agree with the opposite statement that “The government is like an employee; the people should be the bosses who control the government” (42%).<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, the share of those who believe that the government is an employee has not increased among the Georgian-speaking population since 2009. At the same time, although ethnic minorities, in general, are more prone than Georgians to say that “people are like children,” the changes observed over the past two years show that the perceptions of this group are undergoing rapid change, which indicates a strengthening of democratic values in this segment of the population: in 2015, some 62% of ethnic minorities agreed with the first statement and 27% agreed with the second statement whereas the corresponding indicators in 2013 were 75% and 14%, respectively.

In the opinion of the Georgian population, being a “good citizen” means, first and foremost, supporting people who are worse off than themselves (96%) and keeping traditions (94%), followed by working as volunteer which is defined as doing a job beneficial for society without remuneration (85%). One should note that these opinions have remained virtually unchanged since 2009 and it is also worth noting that ethnic minorities also fully share the opinion of the rest of the population about these values.

As regards other traits such as, for example, the expectation that a “good citizen” should participate in protest actions or be critical towards the government, there is still a disparity of opinions among society. According to the 2015 survey, some 67% of the population believes that good citizens should be critical towards the government whereas 26% think this is not an important trait. Similarly, 60% of the population thinks a good citizen should be critical of the opposition compared with 30% who think it is unimportant. However, when it comes to activities, participation in protest actions, for example, equal shares of the population think that it is important (44%) and unimportant (45%) for a good citizen.

In terms of political parties, no political party enjoys approval of more than 20% of the population, according to the 2015 survey results. However, it is interesting to see how people perceive political parties and their proximity with European values. Namely, 47% of the population believes that the United National Movement shares European values, 34% note the same with respect to Our Georgia – Free Democrats. The Republican Party and the Georgian Dream have 26% and 24% respectively. It is noteworthy that compared to 2013, almost all parties are perceived by the population as less “pro-European.”

A high correlation is observed between a positive attitude towards a political party and the belief that this party shares European values. In other words, among the supporters of a particular political party, the percentage of those who believe that the party in question shares European values is higher than the percentage of those who believe it does not. This finding shows that the population sees the adherence to European values as a worthy trait of a political party.

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<sup>20</sup> Some 31% of population very strongly agree and 20% agree with this statement.

<sup>21</sup> Some 29% of population very strongly agree and 13% agree with this statement.



## Liberal Values

The results of the 2015 survey show that, in spite of a few exceptions, liberal values are shared by only a small segment of the Georgian population and that so-called broader society is not yet ready to tolerate different opinions or different behavior.

The most impressive exception is the attitude towards giving bribes. 84% believe in 2015 that this is never justified. However, there is a stark difference between the responses of the Georgian-speaking population and those of ethnic minorities. 15% of the representatives of ethnic minorities find it difficult to answer this question compared to 4% of Georgian speakers. While 86% of Georgian speakers says that giving a bribe is never justified, the corresponding indicator in case of ethnic minorities stands at 63% and shows an 11% decrease from the corresponding 2013 indicator. This finding is itself worrying and there is the need for a thorough study into it in order to find out why ethnic minorities think so.

During the period between 2009 and 2013, the position of the Georgian population on whether or not it is justified to give testimony to the police voluntarily if you are a witness to a crime remained almost unchanged. Although the majority of the Georgian population is not yet ready to show initiative in this regard and to voluntarily give testimony to the police, the share of those who think that this is always justified increased (from 30% to 42%) from 2013 to 2015. Although even half of the population does not consider it always justified for a person to voluntarily give testimony to the police, a 12% increase over two years is a significant change. An important point also is that both the ethnic majority and ethnic minorities think this way. There is a need to study into this finding as well to determine to what extent the population interacted with the police, whether this experience was positive or negative and how this experience affects the answers on these questions.

At the same time, the survey results show that the Georgian population is not open to the outer world, including different nationalities. The share of those who believe that business in Georgia should be owned by Georgians alone, regardless of the amount of money they invest in it, is almost equal to the share of those who think the opposite. To measure these attitudes an 11-point scale was used where code 0 corresponded to the attitude “Business in Georgia should be owned by those who invest the most money in its development, regardless of their citizenship” and code 10 to the position “Business in Georgia should be owned by Georgians alone, regardless of the amount of money invested by them in the development of the business.” 18% opted for the code 0 whereas 22% opted for the code 10.

Another question was about land ownership by foreigners in Georgia and the responses to this question were more striking: 49%<sup>22</sup> strongly support the view that “Land in Georgia should be owner by Georgians alone, regardless of how they use that land” and 21%<sup>23</sup> believe that “Land in Georgia should be owned by those who can use it in a more profitable way, regardless of their citizenship.” The Georgian population attaches a significant symbolic value to the land and they feel danger if the land is owned by “others” (other nationalities). Whether Georgian landowners are capable of using it in a profitable way is of secondary importance for the population.

The views of ethnic minorities on this issue are more liberal than those of Georgians. Almost equal shares of ethnic minorities agree with both statements: in total 43% opted for codes 0, 1 or 2 (“Land in Georgia should be owned by Georgians alone, regardless of how they use that land”) and 38% opted for the codes 8, 9 and 10 (“Land in Georgia should be owned by those who can use it in a more profitable way, regardless

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<sup>22</sup> The sum of first three codes of 11-point scale.

<sup>23</sup> The sum of last three codes of 11-point scale.

of their citizenship”). These results suggest that nationalistic and liberal views are spread more equally among ethnic minorities.<sup>24</sup>

As anticipated, attitudes toward statements on the sexual liberty of women are overly conservative. 69% think it is never justified for a woman to have a sexual relationship before marriage and 57% think the same about a woman giving birth to a child without being married. Although the results of the 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015 surveys show some change, it is within the margin of error and therefore, one cannot observe a clear dynamic over the past few years. The attitudes of ethnic minorities are more conservative than those of ethnic Georgians.

Standards differ when it comes to men. Up to 35% of the population thinks it is never justified for a man to have a sexual relationship before marriage, compared with 29% who think it is always justified. Ethnic minorities, however, entertain stricter attitudes towards men too with 54% of them thinking that it is never justified for a man to have a sexual relationship before marriage as opposed to 14% who think it is always justified. While the attitudes of Georgians have remained virtually unchanged since 2013, those of ethnic minorities have become more liberal: the share of ethnic minorities saying that a sexual relationship before marriage for men is never justified decreased from 71% in 2013 to 54% in 2014 whereas the share of ethnic minorities saying that a sexual relationship before marriage for men is always justified increased from 3% (in 2013) to 14% (in 2015).

### 3. Recommendations

The results of the survey allow for the singling out of those issues which may be improved and for the drawing up of recommendations on the ways of how to improve the population’s attitudes or the situation. The recommendations provided below are based on the most important findings of the survey and are intended for the government of Georgia, the EU, nongovernmental organizations operating in Georgia and representatives of mass media (both journalists and editors)<sup>25</sup> as well as representatives of academic institutions both in Georgia and EU countries. We believe that the highest effect can be achieved through the maximally coordinated cooperation of these actors for the improvement of the situation in these areas.

#### Issue 1:

#### **Uneven level of knowledge about the EU among the population, and large gaps of knowledge of Tbilisi population and representatives of ethnic minorities.**

In this regard, it is recommended:

- (a) That more attention is paid to the coverage of EU-related topics through traditional media (first and foremost, television) rather than the Internet alone (which is often not available in the regions). Of course, this does not mean alleviating efforts to spread information via the Internet – the online sources must be maintained as an important source of information, but efforts should be enhanced to inform those segments of the population who do not use the Internet. More informational and educational TV programs should be produced about the EU, its aims and its role in a joint effort of all actors. Journalists and representatives of nongovernmental organizations should play a crucial role in ensuring that this information is prepared in language comprehensible for an ordinary citizen.

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<sup>24</sup> An arithmetic average of this scale is 3.51 for Georgians and 4.74 for ethnic minorities.

<sup>25</sup> This target groups shall be hereafter referred to as “mass media.”

- (b) That information about the EU is prepared not only in Georgian but also in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages. In this regard, the role of Georgian Public Broadcaster, which has the obligation to do that, will be crucial. It is also important to maximally support the further development of regional TV broadcasting and coverage of EU activities in the regions, including the EU-related projects implemented by NGOs in the regions.
- (c) That the EU organizes more events in the regions, especially in communities populated by ethnic minorities and/or in schools of such communities. Information and visual materials for such events should be produced not only in Georgian but also in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages.
- (d) That a thorough study is conducted into the reasons behind this lack of knowledge about the EU (or lack of interest towards such knowledge) among various segments of the population.

Issue 2:

**The population believes that Georgian high-rank officials benefit more from EU assistance provided to Georgia, and knows very little or nothing about EU assistance to regular people.**

In this regard, it is recommended:

- (a) To carry out a strict and coordinated control over the distribution of the EU assistance so as to prevent any abuse of this assistance by public officials. It will be appropriate for this control to be carried out by representatives of both the public and civil sectors.
- (b) To make documents concerning the spending of EU support public, thereby informing the society about the actual beneficiaries of this assistance. Media outlets may produce reports and/or programs recounting “personal stories” of ordinary people about the role of assistance through an EU-funded project in their lives. It is important to cover the stories of project beneficiaries in various sectors, concerning, for example, the education sphere, the healthcare sector, civic engagement, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.
- (c) To focus the information campaign on the existing or planned EU assistance for ordinary citizens of Georgia – be they farmers, students, nurses or any other.

Issue 3:

**The fear that the EU will harm Georgian culture and traditions has intensified among Georgian society, which seems to largely contribute to the decrease in the number of supporters of Georgia’s EU membership.**

In this regard, it is recommended:

- (a) To carry out a comprehensive study into the nature of this fear and its causes. Namely, how “Georgian traditions” are understood, as well as the reasons that have contributed to the intensification of this fear since 2013 and ways of relieving or eliminating it.
- (b) To plan and implement a coordinated information campaign that will clearly but subtly underline the lack of grounds for such fears. This campaign should emphasize one of the major values of the EU - respect for diversity and national traditions.

Issue 4:

**The trust of the Georgian population towards basic social and political institutions has been decreasing. The population demonstrates the least trust in those social institutions, which, potentially, ensure the democratic development of society.**

In this regard, it is recommended to increase the efficiency of governmental and nongovernmental organizations operating in the country in order to boost the population's trust in these institutions. One of first steps in this direction may be a thorough study into the reasons of such distrust among the population.

Issue 5:

**Since 2009, the perception of the government as a “parent” rather than as a governing institution hired by and accountable to the people, has not become weaker among the Georgian-speaking population.**

In this regard, it is recommended:

- a) To pay more attention to the civil education of various groups of the population, specifically, about the role and functions of the state, with the active involvement of nongovernmental organizations in this process.
- b) To maximize the coverage of cases when citizens put forward demands to government representatives and/or hold them accountable as employees hired by the people. Obviously, rhetoric on the government “serving people” alone is not efficient; people should regularly see that government representatives really serve them.

## Appendix 1. Survey Methodology

This survey of Georgian population's knowledge of and attitudes towards the European Union was conducted within the framework of European Integration program of Eurasia Partnership Foundation between 14 and 29 May, 2015. Similar surveys were conducted in 2009, 2011 and 2013;<sup>26</sup> all the four waves of surveys were conducted by CRRC-Georgia.

The sample design of the 2015 survey was similar to that used in the 2013 survey. Primary sampling units were voting precincts. Voting precincts in the Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti regions with at least 40% of registered voters being ethnic minorities were considered as precincts compactly populated by ethnic minorities.<sup>27</sup> A total of 770 respondents<sup>28</sup> were interviewed in those precincts, and the interviews were, as a rule, conducted in the native languages of the respondents.<sup>29</sup>

A total of 2,360 respondents were interviewed countrywide in 2015, in four strata: the above described ethnic minority stratum and three strata of Georgian-speaking population: capital, other urban settlements, and rural settlements.<sup>30</sup> Primary sampling units were randomly selected in each stratum, proportional to the population size. Households were selected using random route sampling, while the respondents in each sampled household were selected using Kish Table.<sup>31</sup> If the first interview attempt was not successful, the interviewers were returning for a second, and, if necessary, for a third time before recording non-response. The repeated visits were necessary to minimize sampling bias and avoid interviewing representatives of the demographic groups that spend more time at home (pensioners, the unemployed and so on).

Face-to-face computer assisted interviews (CATI) were conducted using tablet computers. The average non-response was 25%: 55% in the capital stratum, 23% in the other urban settlements, 17% in the rural settlements and 10% in the ethnic minorities' stratum.

The results of the survey are representative for adults (18 years old and older) living in Georgia, excluding the population living in occupied territories and on military bases.

The results presented in this report are based on weighted data. The average margin of error is +/-2.9%.

## Appendix 2. Ethnic Minorities

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<sup>26</sup> For the information about the methodology of previous waves of surveys, see 2013 report at [http://www.epfound.ge/files/eu\\_survey\\_report\\_2013\\_final\\_eng.pdf](http://www.epfound.ge/files/eu_survey_report_2013_final_eng.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Mainly ethnic Azerbaijanis and ethnic Armenians.

<sup>28</sup> Of these, 67% were Azerbaijanis and 32% - Armenians.

<sup>29</sup> 521 interviews were conducted in Azerbaijani, 240 in Armenian and nine in Georgian (seven respondents interviewed in this stratum happened to be ethnic Georgians). In the beginning of the interviews, each respondent chose its language.

<sup>30</sup> In each of these three strata, one interview was conducted in Armenian and the rest of the interviews – in Georgian. It should be noted that not all respondents interviewed in these three strata were ethnic Georgians: 14 ethnic Armenians, four Azerbaijanis, seven Russians and eight respondents of other ethnicities were interviewed in the capital; eight Armenians, three Russians and six representatives of other ethnicities were interviewed in other urban settlements; seven Armenians, two Azerbaijanis, nine Russians and 23 representatives of other ethnicities were interviewed in rural settlements. Through the report, these groups are referred to as “Georgian-speakers” strata, since all but three people in these strata chose to be interviewed in Georgian.

<sup>31</sup> Kish, Leslie (1949), "A Procedure for Objective Respondent Selection within the Household," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 44 (247): 380–387.

Similar to the 2013 survey, the 2015 survey specifically studied the views of representatives of Georgia's ethnic minorities about the EU. Based on the weighted data, the share of ethnic minorities was 10% in 2013 and 9% in 2015. In 2015, this stratum was composed of 67% of ethnic Azerbaijanis living in Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions and 32% of ethnic Armenians living in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions.<sup>32</sup> Azerbaijanis and Armenians are the largest ethnic minority groups in Georgia, often residing compactly.<sup>33</sup>

Representatives of these ethnic minority groups are poorly integrated into Georgian society. One of main reasons for this is a lack of knowledge of Georgian language: according to their own assessments, almost a third of ethnic minorities (32%) report having no basic knowledge of Georgian, while just 5% report speaking Georgian well. As regards the knowledge of Russian, 14% of ethnic minorities think that they speak Russian well (the respective share of Georgian-speakers is 26%). 79% of ethnic minorities report not knowing English, compared to 41% of Georgians who have at least some knowledge of English. This language barrier naturally makes communication between minority and majority communities difficult. It also somewhat explains the differences in opinion between these groups discussed in this report.

Apart from linguistic differences, another important difference between minority and majority communities is that of religious faith. The overwhelming majority of Georgian speakers (93%) are Orthodox Christian, while 28% of minorities follow the Armenian Apostolic Church and 66% are Muslim.

Compared to Georgian speakers, the share of ethnic minorities with higher education is much lower. 13% of Georgian speakers have a bachelor's degree and 21% have a master's degree. Corresponding figures are 10% and 3% for minorities. 20% of minorities did not complete secondary education, compared to 7% of Georgians.

In terms of employment, 25% of Georgian speakers report having full-time or part-time jobs (including seasonal employment) and an additional 10% are self-employed. Corresponding figures are 9% and 12% for ethnic minorities. There are more housewives among ethnic minorities (22%, compared to 12% among Georgian speakers) while the share of pensioners is equal (19% in case of Georgian speakers and 18% in case of ethnic minorities).

According to 58% of ethnic minorities, selling agricultural produce is one of the source of income for their families. The respective share is only 20% in case of Georgian speakers. Ethnic minorities also show a higher dependence on remittances sent to them by relatives from abroad, with 16% of them saying this is one of the sources of their family income, compared to only 6% of Georgian speakers.

In spite of these differences, representatives of these two groups evaluate the economic situation of their families in very similar ways. 37% of Georgian speakers and 38% of minorities say their income is hardly sufficient for their families. At the same time, 63% of Georgian speakers and 66% of minorities evaluate the economic statuses of their families as middle. Using a hypothetical 10-step "ladder" reflecting the economic situation of Georgia's families, with 1<sup>st</sup> step corresponding to the lowest economic status and 10<sup>th</sup> – to the highest, Georgian speakers and minorities similarly rate the current economic situation of their families – respectively, 3.97 and 3.82.

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<sup>32</sup> About 1% of the representatives of this group did not specify their ethnicity.

<sup>33</sup> Representatives of other ethnic minorities living in Georgia (for example, Russians, Jews) mainly reside among Georgians and are relatively better integrated. Their views were not studied specifically within this survey.