



Drivers for Internationalization in Georgian Higher Education

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Georgia: location and neighbours

Background

Reverse in internationalization policy in many Western European countries that have previously embraced it:

- the introduction of **fees** for non-EU students (France),
- the introduction of **national language** as a mandatory requirement for students enrolled in English language programs (Austria, Denmark, and currently discussed in the Netherlands)
- the **decrease in funding** for national agencies promoting national universities abroad (under consideration in the Netherlands).
- measures affecting international students as expected as result of **Brexit**

Georgian context

- **Reform minded-government** with Education ministers interested in internationalization
 - Researchers questioning the depth of reforms
- Country joined the **Bologna Process** in 2005
- There are 62 state recognized (authorized) HEIs in Georgia (17 state universities and 27 private)
- In June 2019, the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) Committee approved the application for inclusion of the **Georgian National Center for Education Quality**
- Programs for **Internationalization at Home** for top Georgian universities
- Introduction of **foreign language** programs

Increase in number of mobilities (EU funded International credit mobility)

Students and staff moving to Europe

2018: 1.109

2017: 825

2016: 984

2015: 695

Total: 3613

Students and staff moving to Georgia

2018: 699

2017: 516

2016: 568

2015: 190

Total: 1973

Scholarship programs

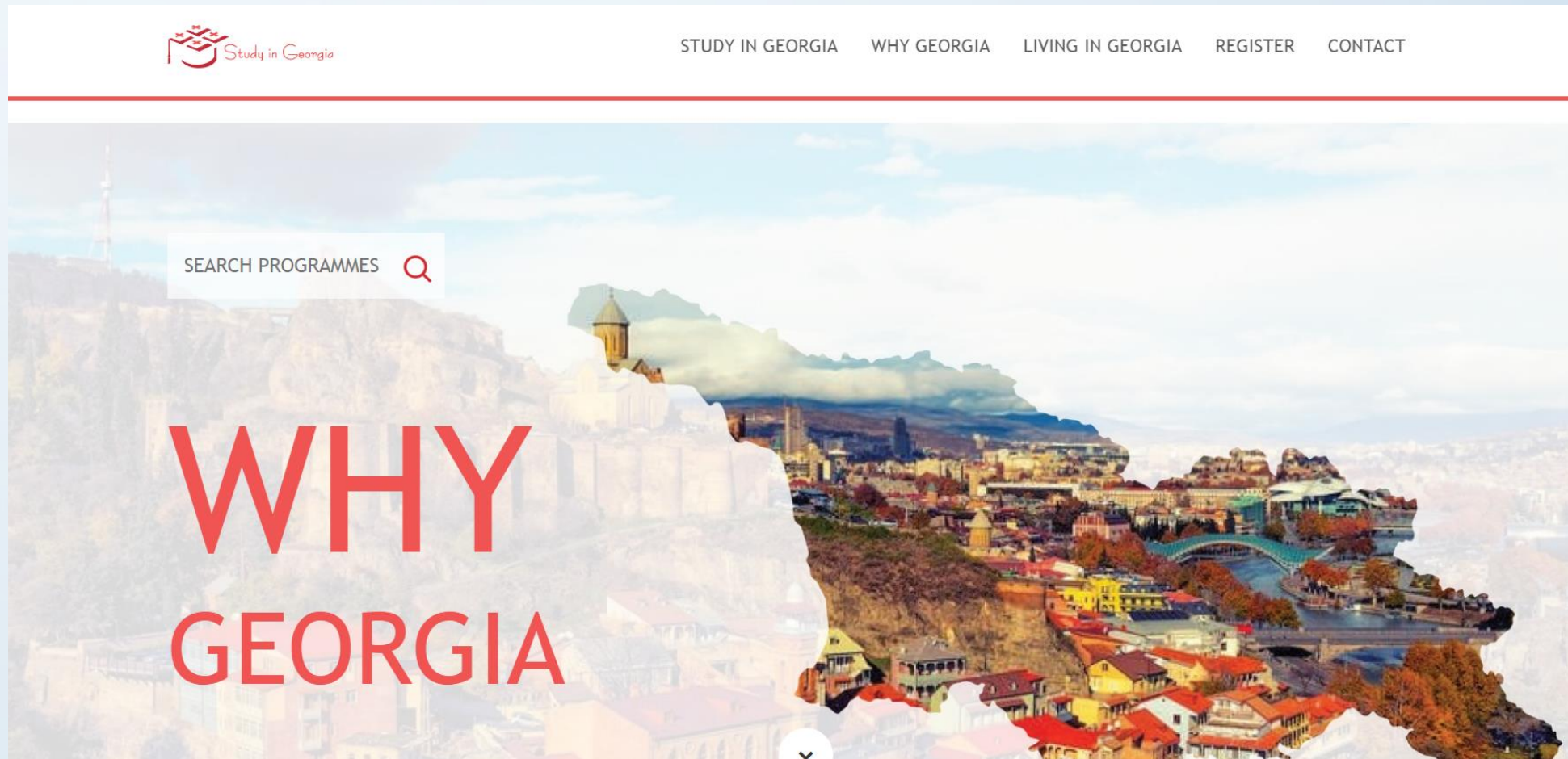


WHAT WE DO

LEPL International Education Center
Use your knowledge. Benefit your country!

The International Education Center was founded in 2014 and from 2014-2018 it has given 650 study grants to Georgian citizens desiring to study abroad. A portion of them has already concluded their foreign studies, returned to Georgia, and will continue to realize this acquired knowledge in their own country.

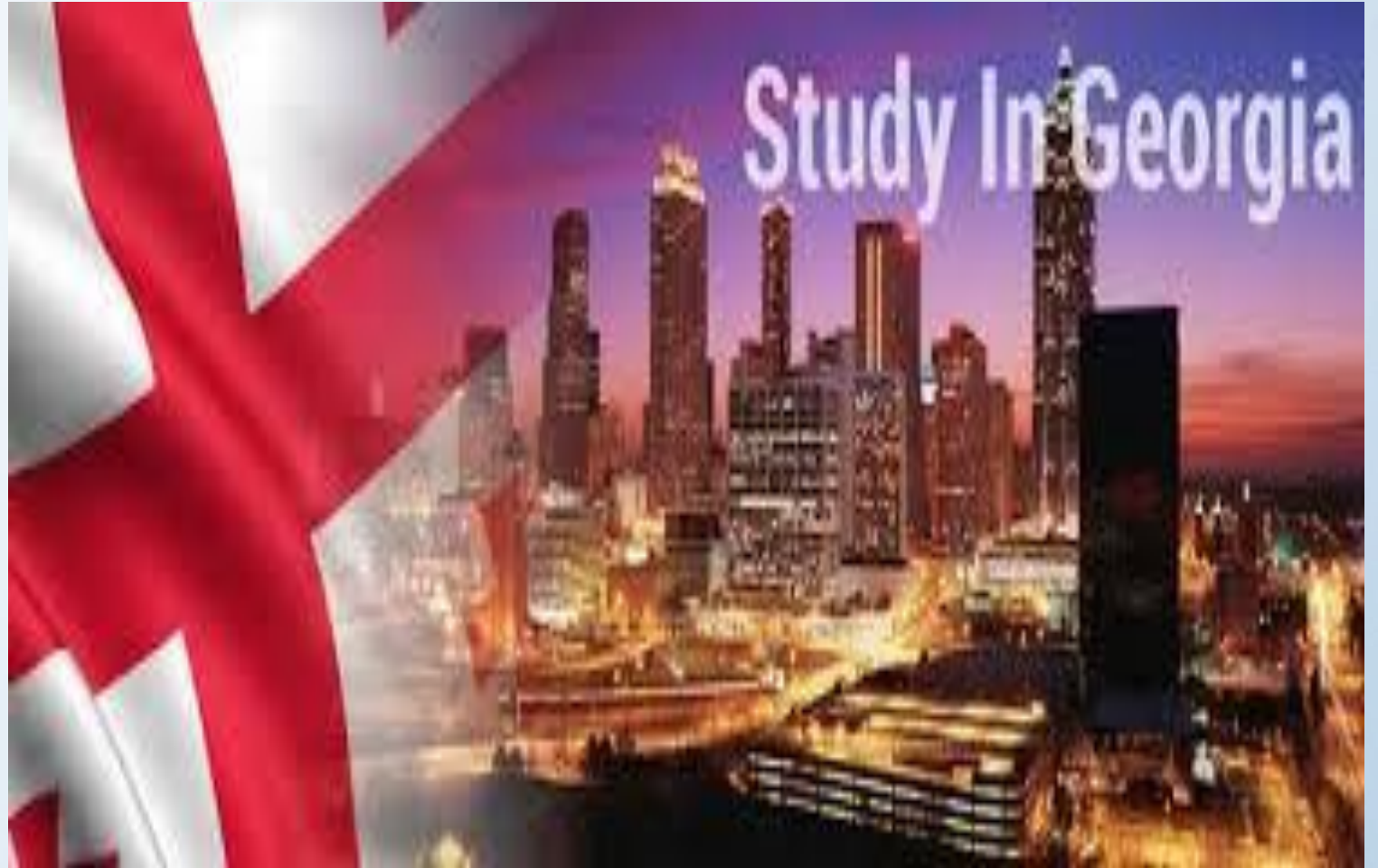
Efforts to recruit foreign students



Foreign students in Georgia

Rank	Country	# of Students	Rank	Country	# of Students
1	India	6820	11	Sri Lanka	168
2	Azerbaijan	1475	12	Syria	141
3	Iran	546	13	Yemen	100
4	Iraq	544	14	Sudan	88
5	Israel	532	15	Pakistan	82
6	Nigeria	523	16	Lebanon	74
7	Russia	403	17	Great Britain	71
8	Egypt	363	18	USA	65
9	Jordan	210	19	Kazakhstan	51
10	Turkey	206	20	Ukraine	42

Study in Georgia?



Data collection

-Document and web-site analysis

-Interviews conducted in English between 2018-2019 were conducted with 19 higher education professionals

- A former Deputy Minister,
- the Rector of one of Georgia's largest universities from the capital,
- the Deputy Rector from one of the largest universities outside the capital (in the Adjara region),
- a high ranking leader from San Diego University Georgia,
- a Head of Department from the Ministry of Education,
- a high ranking official from the International Education Center
- two senior staff members from International Offices in two universities,
- an official from the GIZ-Georgia
- ten faculty at all levels of seniority in four of the largest universities.

Findings: drivers for internationalization

- Higher education is viewed as a tool for pursuing a **political agenda**
- Higher education is as an **export product** that could bring income to the country
- Internationalization **raises quality** and this benefits local students
- The desire to restore **past cosmopolitan traditions** in the country and in higher education
- The desire for **professional development** of faculty
- A **sense of duty** towards students
- Internationalization brings **funding** for research

Challenges to internationalization

- **Visa and immigration** regulations have become inflexible and often clash with Georgia's commitments to EU
- **Rigid salary scales** at public universities and the low salaries available for junior professors
- **Low pensions** available for faculty
- **Insufficient coordination** between ministries dealing with internationalization
- **Lack of incentives** for faculty and staff in engaging in internationalization (aside from research)

Conclusions

- **Political will** seems to be the strongest driver for internationalization
 - A case for selected, targeted internationalization in Georgia, omitting their powerful former partners
- A strong support for adhering to European Standards and Guidelines with the aim of **accessing EU funding**
- A desire for improving quality and also gathering recognition for reforms with the aim of attracting **international students**
- Focus on **internationalization of research** and IaH