

# Migration in Albania: A Country Profile 2008



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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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# **Migration in Albania:**

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# **A Country Profile**

October 2008



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IOM International Organization for Migration



# CONTENTS

<b>List of tables .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Acronym list .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Executive Summary: General Assessment of Migration Issues.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1. Immigrants .....</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1. Number of immigrants .....	13
1.2. Status of immigrants .....	13
1.3. Main countries of origin of immigrants .....	14
<b>2. Emigrants .....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1. Number of emigrants .....	15
2.2. Status of emigrants.....	15
2.3. Main countries of destination .....	16
2.4. Male/female emigration.....	17
2.5. Main sectors of activity .....	18
<b>3. Remittances .....</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1. Quantitative aspects of remittances .....	19
3.2. Qualitative aspects of remittances .....	20
3.3. Number of families depending on remittances .....	21
<b>4. Migrant communities/diasporas.....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1. Description of the relationship between the diasporas and the country of origin .....	23
4.2. Migrant communities/diasporas' organizations .....	23
<b>5. Irregular migration .....</b>	<b>27</b>
5.1. Figures and information on irregular movements.....	27
5.2. Figures and information on return migration flows .....	29
5.3. Figures and information on trafficking .....	30
<b>6. Assessment and analysis of migration issues .....</b>	<b>33</b>
6.1. Government institutions responsible for migration policy .....	33
6.2. International legal framework in place relevant to migration .....	34
6.3. Migration policies in place .....	35
6.4. The scale of brain drain and policies to address it .....	39
6.5. Policies to address irregular migration .....	40
6.6. Policies to address trafficking in human beings.....	40
6.7. Refugees and asylum seekers in the country and relevant policies in place.....	41
6.8. Projects and programmes on migration and development .....	43
6.9. Other important migration actors within the country .....	44

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Estimates of migrant stocks in Albania by country of origin, 2005...	14
Table 2. Main countries of destination for Albanian emigrants.....	16
Table 3. Estimates of stocks of Albanian emigrants abroad by country of destination, 2005.....	17
Table 4. Amount of incoming migrant remittances in million USD.....	19
Table 5. Remittances as a percentage of GDP .....	19
Table 6. Albanian nationals apprehended within the EU-25 (2003-2005).....	27
Table 7. Apprehensions of Albanian nationals by country of destination in 2003 .....	27
Table 8. Irregular migrants detected within Albania .....	27
Table 9. Third-country nationals refused entry to Albania .....	28
Table 10. Irregular migrants readmitted from other countries to Albania .....	29

# ACRONYM LIST

BSEC	Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CESS	Centre for Economic and Social Studies
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
ICMPD	International Center for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSTAT	National Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MOLSAEO	Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
MTO	Money transfer operator
NAP	National Action Plan on Migration
NES	National Employment Service
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSM	National Strategy on Migration
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RCP	Regional Consultative Process
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
WGCC	Working Group on Combating Crime





# FOREWORD

International migration is a prominent feature of globalization and one of the defining issues of this century. Increasingly, migration entails economic, social, demographic, cultural, security and environmental effects on both sending and receiving societies. The task of formulating effective and coherent approaches for the management of international migration poses formidable challenges and frequently has led to regional initiatives such as Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs).<sup>1</sup> These initiatives – which address a wide range of migration issues including migration and development, integration of migrants, smuggling of and trafficking in persons, irregular migration and so on – often reflect the different migration agendas of governments even though the challenges they face may be similar in nature.

Within this context and considering its proactive role in various RCPs, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 2006. One of the main aims of this agreement is to enhance cooperation in addressing irregular migration and combating trafficking in persons in the Black Sea region, an area that experiences significant migration challenges as a transit, origin, and destination hub for migrants. Consequently, in 2007, IOM launched the “Black Sea Consultative Process on Migration Management”, a joint project with the BSEC’s Working Group on Combating Crime (WGCC) (Particularly its Organized Forms).

The project aimed to contribute to effective migration management in the Black Sea region as well as combating irregular migration through strengthened regional cooperation and capacity building of relevant authorities in all twelve member states of the BSEC.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, IOM has drafted national **Migration Profiles** for those countries where such documents did not exist, and has reviewed and updated existing Profiles.<sup>3</sup>

Why country Migration Profiles? A concept and tool promoted by the European Commission (EC), the Profiles are an evidence-based approach to assess the migration situation in a country. IOM has adopted and further developed this

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Consultative Processes bring together representatives of states, international organizations and, in some cases, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for informal and non-binding dialogue and information exchange on migration-related issues of common interest and concern.

<sup>2</sup> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> Within the framework of the Slovenian presidency of the EU, IOM prepared Migration Profiles for the Western Balkan Countries including BSEC members Albania, Serbia and Turkey.

concept and has since implemented it in various regions such as the Balkans, Western and Central Africa, and Latin America. The intention is to contribute towards greater coherence of national migration policies and enhanced regional cooperation. This requires appropriate compilation of internationally comparable data among other features such as national coordination and cooperation among involved authorities and pursuit of an active international cooperation at bilateral, regional and global levels. The Profiles, using a common template, allow for comparability despite data limitations<sup>4</sup> and different national contexts.

Furthermore, to ensure the legitimacy and recognized value of the Profiles, the BSEC member states and the BSEC WGCC provided substantial feedback on the Profiles. Drafted in IOM's office in Budapest and coordinated with IOM's Research Unit at IOM Headquarters in Geneva and the respective IOM office in each of the BSEC countries – to ensure high-quality – the Profiles also offer a set of policy recommendations for effective migration management in the region. These were thoroughly discussed during an expert meeting of the BSEC's WGCC in Istanbul on 10 September 2008. Subsequently, the recommendations were approved by the BSEC's Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs that convened in Tirana on 23 October 2008.

This set of Profiles is the result of intensive cooperation between many individuals within IOM and among IOM and other stakeholders. The input of the following people is highly appreciated: Christine Aghazarm and Verónica Escudero, Research Unit in IOM Geneva, as authors of the regional overview and for their extensive review of all the Profiles, Frank Laczko, head of the Research and Publications in IOM Geneva, for his supervision throughout the project, IOM staff in IOM offices in all the BSEC countries, and the dedicated finance and administrative colleagues in IOM Budapest. Special thanks to IOM's 1035 Facility who funded this project. Moreover, particular gratitude is warmly given to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Organization as the associate organization in this project, especially the Permanent International Secretariat who kindly arranged the meetings related to the implementation of the project. Not least, IOM gratefully acknowledges the support of the BSEC Member States in the production of the Profiles, above all for their input to their specific country profile and the endorsement of the regional migration policy recommendations.

Argentina Szabados, Regional Representative  
Alin Chindea, Project Coordinator  
International Organization for Migration  
Mission with Regional Functions for Central and South-Eastern Europe

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<sup>4</sup> For a discussion on the quality and limitations migration data, see the regional overview.



Albania – Basic facts	
Population (2005)	3,154,000
Total Area	28,748 sq. km
GDP per Capita PPP	USD 4,978
Human Development Index (HDI) Rank	68 of 177
Net Migration Rate	-6.5 migrants/1,000 population
Sources: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division's World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision Population Database; UN Development Programme Human Development Report, 2007/2008.	



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF MIGRATION ISSUES

Migration is one of the most important social and economic phenomena affecting Albania in the last decade. Since 1990, almost a quarter of the Albanian population has left the country along with a large urban to rural migration. The most important factor triggering Albanian migration was the collapse of the socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. Having been denied the right to emigrate and due to political instability and economic decline, many Albanians opted to emigrate. In the run-up to the first democratic elections of 1991, approximately 20,000 Albanians crossed the Adriatic Sea by boat to Italy.<sup>1</sup> Another phase of mass emigration took place in 1996-1997 following the 1996 elections, the collapse of the so-called “pyramid schemes”<sup>2</sup> in which Albanians lost almost 1.2 billion US dollars worth of savings (roughly half of the country’s GDP), and the subsequent breakdown of law and order.<sup>3</sup> In 1999, more than half a million of Kosovo Albanian refugees arrived in Albania. Since 2000, the political situation in the country has stabilized with a steady outflow of migrants nevertheless continuing.

Being one of the poorest countries in Europe, with 25.4 per cent of the population living below the poverty line, migration in Albania is an important livelihood coping strategy.<sup>4</sup> In addition, it is one of the emigration countries where remittances constitute the largest source of foreign exchange and even surpass the value of both foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA) to Albania.<sup>5</sup>

The primary destination countries for Albanian migrants are neighbouring Greece and Italy due to their geographical and cultural proximity as well as the extensive exposure of Albanian society to their cultural influences (such as Ital-

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<sup>1</sup> Russell K., and J. Vullnetari (2003) *Migration and Development in Albania*, Working Paper No. C5, Sussex Centre for Migration Research.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on Albanian pyramid schemes, consult Jarvis, C. (2000) *The Rise and Fall of Albania’s Pyramid Schemes*, Finance and Development, March 2000, Vol. 37(1), International Monetary Fund, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2000/03/jarvis.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Russell K., and J. Vullnetari (2003) *Migration and Development in Albania*, Working Paper No. C5, Sussex Centre for Migration Research.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank Development Indicators Database, latest data available from 2002.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, data for 2005. The amount of remittances to Albania in 2005 was almost five times as high as the net value of foreign direct investments (FDI) and four times as much as the official development assistance (ODA) received by Albania. Remittances in 2005 were 1,290 million US dollars as compared to FDI net inflows and ODA in 2005 of 262 million and 318 million US dollars, respectively (World Bank, 2005).

ian TV). Next to Greece and Italy are the United States and the United Kingdom. Greece is a preferred destination for Albanians from the south and south east, areas populated mainly by Albanian Orthodox Christians and ethnic Greeks. Meanwhile, Italy is the most preferred destination for Albanians from the central and western areas. The massive emigration of Albanians affects a considerable part of the economically active section of the population, the majority being male. Family reunification has been the main reason for emigration of women from Albania, reflecting the patriarchal family model. Albanian emigrants also tend to be better educated compared to those who do not migrate.

Much of Albanian migration is circular in character, economically driven, and located in the low-skilled and informal economy sectors (male Albanian emigrants are mainly engaged in construction or agriculture, whereas women are employed in domestic work).

# 1. IMMIGRANTS

## 1.1. Number of immigrants

Stocks:

Data from UNPD, based on Albanian population census of 2001	82,668 (2005) <sup>6</sup>
As percentage of total population.....	2.6% (2005) <sup>7</sup>
Gender ratio.....	50.8% female (2005) <sup>8</sup>

Flows:

Residence permits issued in 2006 .....	3,006 (2006) <sup>9</sup>
--	---------------------------

## 1.2. Status of immigrants

Refugees/asylum seekers	92 (56 refugees, 36 asylum seekers) (2006, UNHCR) <sup>10</sup>
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Labour migrants	
Work permits issued .....	2083 (2006) <sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2005) *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision*. The number of international migrants generally represents the number of persons born in a country other than that in which they live. UNPD bases its data on the latest census, in case of Albania from 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Interior, Border and Migration Department, Albania (2006).

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR (2006) *Statistical Yearbook: 2006 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons*.

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Albania, January 2008.

### 1.3. Main countries of origin of immigrants

Table 1. Estimates of migrant stocks in Albania by country of origin, 2005<sup>12</sup>

Country	No.
Greece	74,941
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	5,991
Czech Republic	997
Serbia and Montenegro	128
Israel	93
Italy	68
Russian Federation	46
Other countries	404
Total	82,668

Source: World Bank, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008*. Data taken from Ratha and Shaw (2007) Bilateral Estimates of Migrants Stocks Database, *South-South Migration and Remittances*, World Bank Working Paper No. 102, <http://go.worldbank.org/ON5YV3Y480>



## 2. EMIGRANTS

### 2.1. Number of emigrants ..... 860,485 (2005)<sup>13</sup>

As percentage of total population.....27.5% (2005)<sup>14</sup>

Gender ratio.....25% female (2001)<sup>15</sup>

### 2.2. Status of emigrants

Refugees/asylum seekers

..... 14,080 recognized refugees (2006)<sup>16</sup>

..... 2,258 pending asylum claimants (2006) <sup>17</sup>

Emigration rate of tertiary educated..... 20%<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008) *Migration and Remittances Factbook*.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Albanian Statistical Institute (INSTAT) (2002) *Population Census of 2001*.

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR (2006) *Statistical Yearbook Country Data Sheet*.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008). *Migration and Remittances Factbook*, after Docquier and Marfouk (2004) and Docquier and Bhargava (2006).

## 2.3. Main countries of destination

Table 2. Main countries of destination for Albanian emigrants

Country	No.	Year	Source
Greece	318,766	2007	Residence permits issued in Greece as of 13 December 2007, Ministry of Interior, Greece, 2007 <sup>1</sup>
Italy	375,947	2006	Foreign population resident in Italy, Italian Statistical Office (ISTAT) <sup>2</sup>
United States	113,661	2000	Stocks of Albanian nationals, US Census <sup>3</sup>
United Kingdom	50,000	2005	Stocks of Albanian emigrants, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Employment and Equal Opportunities, Albania <sup>4</sup>
Canada	14,935	2001	Stocks of Albanian nationals, Canadian Census <sup>5</sup>
Germany	11,630	2002	Stocks of foreign population by nationality, Federal Statistical Office <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Interior, Greece, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> ISTAT (Italian Statistical Office) (2007) *Popolazione straniera residente per area geografica e principali paesi di cittadinanza, al 1 Gennaio 2007*.

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau (2000) <http://www.census.gov>

<sup>4</sup> De Zwager, N., I. Gedeshi, E. Germeji, and C. Nikas (2005) *Competing for Remittances*, IOM Tirana.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada (2001) <http://www.statcan.ca>

<sup>6</sup> Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2002) <http://www.destatis.de>

Table 3. Estimates of stocks of Albanian emigrants abroad by country of destination, 2005.<sup>19</sup>

Country	No.
Greece	350,265
Italy	257,961
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	91,891
United States	44,053
Germany	16,257
Canada	6,707
Turkey	3,495
France	2,940
United Kingdom	2,572
Austria	2,257
Switzerland	1,589
Other countries	80,498
Total	860,485

Source: World Bank, 2007.

Please note that the figures in the above tables may vary due to methodological differences in calculating migrant stocks. For exact definitions of the calculations and methodologies used, please refer to the original sources (in footnotes).

## 2.4. Male/female emigration

The participation of Albanian women in migration has increased in recent years, in particular as a result of family reunification. This is an important change from the previously male-dominated pattern of Albanian contemporary migration. Statistics of regularizations and the censuses in Greece and Italy, the two main destinations for Albanian migrants since the 1990s, show that while women accounted for around 20 per cent of total Albanian migrants in the early and mid-1990s, their share was approximately 40 per cent by 2000-2001.<sup>20</sup> Data from the 2001 Census in Greece supports this information showing a total male migrant rate for Greece of 59 per cent.

<sup>19</sup> World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008*. Data taken from Ratha and Shaw (2007) Bilateral Estimates of Migrants Stocks Database, *South-South Migration and Remittances*, World Bank Working Paper No. 102, <http://go.worldbank.org/ON5YV3Y480>

<sup>20</sup> Russell K., and J. Vullnetar (2003) *Migration and Development in Albania*, Working Paper No. C5, Sussex Centre for Migration Research.

The main migration path for female Albanian migrants remains family reunification followed by migration for study purposes. Migration for work purposes through legal channels is rare, and mostly concerns professional and highly qualified women, frequently from middle- and high-income families.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.5. Main sectors of activity**

In 2005, male Albanian migrants in Greece were employed mainly in construction (49%) and agriculture (21%), while in Italy, the primary sectors of male Albanian employment were construction (43%), manufacturing (19%), and services (16%). In both countries, women were primarily employed in the domestic sector. In the United Kingdom, construction and services were the two main sectors of occupation for men (33% and 32%, respectively), while women were principally employed in the services sector (66%).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Russell K., and J. Vullnetari *Migration and Development in Albania*, Working Paper No. C5, , J., Sussex Centre for Migration Research.

<sup>22</sup> De Zwager, N., I. Gedeshi, E. Germenji, and C. Nikas (2005) *Competing for Remittances*, IOM Tirana.

## 3. REMITTANCES

### 3.1. Quantitative aspects of remittances

Table 4. Amount of incoming migrant remittances in million USD

Year	World Bank <sup>1</sup>	National Bank of Albania <sup>2</sup>
2003	889	778
2004	1,161	1028
2005	1,290	1161
2006	1,359	n/a
2007	1,481 (estimate)	n/a

Table 5. Remittances as a percentage of GDP

Year	World Bank <sup>3</sup>	National Bank of Albania <sup>4</sup>
2003	14.5	13
2004	15.4	13.7
2005	15.4	14
2006	14.9	No data

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008) *Migration and Remittances Factbook*.

The World Bank calculates remittances as follows: Migrant remittances are defined as the sum of workers' remittances, compensation of employees, and migrants' transfers. Workers' remittances, as defined in the IMF Balance of Payments manual, are current private transfers from migrant workers who are considered residents of the host country to recipients in their country of origin. If the migrants live in the host country for a year or longer, they are considered residents, regardless of their immigration status. If the migrants have lived in the host country for less than a year, their entire income in the host country should be classified as compensation of employees (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDECPROSPECTS/Resources/476882-1157133580628/FactbookDataNotes.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> Bank of Albania (2004) *Presentation to IMF*, June 2006, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/bop/2006/luxgrp/pdf/albani.pdf>. The Bank calculates remittances as the difference between foreign currency coming in and foreign currency going out. This calculation does not exclude the possibility that income from suspicious activities, such as trafficking, is also taken into account.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, Development Prospects Group (2008) *Migration and Remittances Factbook*; own calculations based on World Bank data.

<sup>4</sup> Bank of Albania (2004) *Presentation to IMF*, June 2006, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/bop/2006/luxgrp/pdf/albani.pdf>

Remittances received in Albania by host country (remittance providers):  
Greece (60%), Italy (30%), followed by United States, Germany, and other European states.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2. Qualitative aspects of remittances

In 2005, the amount of remittances to Albania was almost five times as high as the net value of FDI and four times as much as the ODA received by Albania.<sup>24</sup>

Albanian emigrants mainly send remittances through informal channels (77.4%), primarily by hand, and less by formal ones (22.6%), with the banking system as the least preferred formal channel.<sup>25</sup> Due to geographical vicinity, Albanians residing in Greece or Italy travel at an average of two to three times a year to Albania and bring the money with them. An emigrant households' survey undertaken by IOM in Albania in 2005 showed that 13.6 per cent of Albanian emigrants expressed their preference for sending their remittances through money transfer operators (MTOs).<sup>26</sup> The advantages of MTOs over commercial banks include faster transfer services and no requirement for a bank account for the sender. MTOs are especially beneficial in Albania where recipient migrant households lack easy access to the banking sector. The IOM survey showed that emigrant households in the country are hardly familiar with the banking system, with only 45.3 per cent of them maintaining a bank account. When only emigrant households residing in the rural areas are considered, the percentage is even lower.<sup>27</sup>

Overall, the factors that seem to limit the formal transfer of migrant remittances to Albania are the difficulties in accessing banking services by migrant senders in the host country, the relatively slow speed of bank transfers, little trust in the Albanian banking services among senders and recipients of remittances, high transfer fees, and the strength of the informal money exchange market in Albania.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> World Bank (2006) *Italy-Albania Remittance Corridor*.

<sup>24</sup> FDI net inflows and ODA in 2005 were 262 million and 318 million US dollars, respectively (World Bank, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> World Bank (2006) *Italy-Albania Remittance Corridor*.

<sup>26</sup> De Zwager, N., I. Gedeshi, E. Germenji, and C. Nikas (2005) *Competing for Remittances*, IOM Tirana.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.3. Number of families depending on remittances

About 68.6 per cent of emigrants send remittances back to Albania. The most common recipients are the parents of the sender, then spouse and children, followed by extended family. Financing the family's daily needs is the primary use of remittances, followed by construction, upgrading and furnishing homes, and investment in real estate.

According to the results of the Living Standard Measuring Survey (LSMS) in 2002, remittances from emigrants represented 13 per cent of the average household income, while for recipient households, they represented 47 per cent of the household income. The average size of monthly remittances was 13,600 Lek or USD 95 (IMF, 2005).<sup>29</sup>

On the recipient side, according to a recent household survey conducted by the National Bank of Albania, 189,736, or around 26 per cent of households in Albania, receive remittances from migrants abroad.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> National Bank of Albania (2007) *Nationwide Remittance Beneficiaries Survey*.





## 4. MIGRANT COMMUNITIES/DIASPORAS

### 4.1. Description of the relationship between the diasporas and the country of origin

Under the responsibility of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the National Institute of Diaspora is the government entity in charge of the policies related to the Albanian diaspora. In particular, the Institute deals with the following tasks:

- protection of the rights and interests of Albanian communities abroad;
- elaboration of policies for the promotion of both the old and new Albanian diasporas;
- definition of programmes on relations and cooperation between Albania and Albanian communities abroad;
- surveys on the dynamics and development of Albanian communities abroad;
- encouragement and support for the establishment of specific groups/associations of Albanian migrants, on the basis of common interests, professions, or geographical locations;
- support for the establishment of Albanian cultural centres in receiving countries with a major Albanian community; and
- drafting of policies on teaching the mother tongue to the children in diaspora.

Director: Mr. Flamur Gashi  
Email: fgashi@mfa.gov.al  
Tel: +355 4 232882

### 4.2. Migrant communities/diasporas' organizations

(Please note the lists below do not purport to be exhaustive or representative. IOM does not take responsibility for the accuracy of the contact details.)

#### International

- Alb-Shkenca Forum, for scholars from diaspora  
E-mail: alb-shkenca@alb-net.com  
<http://www.alb-shkenca.org/>

- Albstudent (International Network of the Students' Associations) <http://www.albstudent.net/>  
Albanians - Today (News and Information)  
<http://www.alb-net.com/mailman/listinfo/albanians-today>

### Greece<sup>31</sup>

- Albanian Migrants' Cultural Club  
121 Irakleous St, 176 72 Kallithea  
Tel.: 210-9571224
- Forum of Albanian Migrants in Greece  
35 Valtetsiou St, 106 81 Exarheia  
Tel.: 210 381 3928
- Albanian Association of Thessaloniki  
Tel.: 2310 556349
- Albanian Cultural Association 'AETOS'  
Tel.: 6942 992866
- Albanian Migrant Writers' Club 'DRITA'  
Tel.: 210 958 2538
- Albanian Migrants Association 'VELAZERIMI'  
Tel.: 210 271 9271
- Albanian Newspaper Gazetta e Athines  
3 Polytechniou St.  
Tel.: 210 524 3987
- Greek Albanian Friendship Association – Socrates  
Kapodstriou 38, Athens  
E-mail: [elassocrates@diavatirio.net](mailto:elassocrates@diavatirio.net)  
<http://www.diavatirio.net>

### Italy<sup>32</sup>

- Le Pagine Gialle Albanesi (a directory of Albanian businesses and organizations in Italy)  
<http://www.paginegiallealbanesi.it/>
- The League of Albanian Associations in Italy  
<http://www.legalbanese.com/>
- Egnatia – Albanian Association in Emilia - Romania  
<http://www.egnatia.org/>

<sup>31</sup> More information can be obtained through the Albanian Embassy in Athens, address available at [www.mfa.gov.al](http://www.mfa.gov.al)

<sup>32</sup> More information can be obtained through the Albanian Embassy in Rome as well as the General Consulate in Milan and Bari, both addresses available at [www.mfa.gov.al](http://www.mfa.gov.al)

- P. I. A. T. (Association for the Promotion of Integration of Albanians in Trentino)  
<http://www.apiat.tk>
- Cultural Association "New Albanian Generation" in Genoa  
Email: [albandaci@hotmail.com](mailto:albandaci@hotmail.com)
- Association Italian-Albanian Friendship Onlus of Rimini  
E-mail: [italbarimini@libero.it](mailto:italbarimini@libero.it)  
<http://digilander.libero.it/italbarimini/>
- Socio-Cultural Albanian Association "DEA" in Pisa  
<http://www.dea-associazione.com>
- Albanian Cultural Centre "Madre Teresa"  
Via XX Settembre, 81/a - 14100 Asti  
Tel.: 0141 324134
- Vatra – Association of Albanian intellectuals in Genoa  
E-mail: [vatra@interfree.it](mailto:vatra@interfree.it)

A full list is available at <http://www.arbitalia.it/cultura/associazioni/associazioni.htm>

### **United States**

- Albanian American Civic League  
<http://www.aacl.com>
- Albanian-American National Organisation  
<http://www.aano.org/>
- Albanian-American Women Association  
<http://www.aawomq.org>
- Frosina Information Network (Boston-based)  
<http://www.frosina.org>
- National Albanian American Council  
<http://www.naac.org>

### **United Kingdom<sup>33</sup>**

- Anglo-Albanian Association  
Tel.: 02086740800
- Midlands Ethnic Albanian Foundation (MEAF)  
<http://www.meaf.org.uk>
- Albanian Community "FAIK KONICA"  
E-mail: [bashkshqipfk@yahoo.com](mailto:bashkshqipfk@yahoo.com)

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<sup>33</sup> List compiled by the Albanian embassy in the United Kingdom, <http://www.albanianembassy.co.uk/page9.html>

- "DITURIA"  
<http://www.dituria.ik.com>
- Albanian Youth Centre  
<http://www.albanianyouthaction.org.uk>
- Shoqata Artistiko-Kulturore "EDITH DURHAM"  
<http://www.edithdurham.com>
- Shoqata "SKËNDERBEU" (SCANDERBEG ASSOCIATION)  
E-mail: [albengskenderbeu@hotmail.com](mailto:albengskenderbeu@hotmail.com)
- Shoqata "ARDHMËRIA"  
<http://www.ardhmeria.co.uk>

In the framework of an existing project aimed at enhancing the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration (NSM), IOM Tirana is currently providing technical support to the Institute of Diaspora to create and update a database reflecting all the Albanian associations abroad, as well Albanian media, newspapers, artists, etc.

## 5. IRREGULAR MIGRATION

### 5.1. Figures and information on irregular movements

Outflows:

Table 6. Albanian nationals apprehended within the EU-25 (2003-2005)<sup>34</sup>

Year	No.
2003	41,789
2004	36,965
2005	52,365

Source: European Commission, 2006.

Table 7. Apprehensions of Albanian nationals by country of destination in 2003<sup>35</sup>

Country	No.
Greece	34,882
Italy	4,086
Slovenia	139

Source: European Commission, 2003.

Inflows:

Table 8. Irregular migrants detected within Albania<sup>36</sup>

Year	No.
2005	82
2006	16

Source: Ministry of Interior, Albania.

<sup>34</sup> European Commission (2006) *Second Annual Report on the Development of a Common Policy on Illegal Immigration, Smuggling and Trafficking of Human Beings, External Border Controls, and the Return of Illegal Residents*.

<sup>35</sup> European Commission (2003) *Annual Report on Asylum and Migration*, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/doc\\_centre/asylum/statistics/doc\\_annual\\_report\\_2003\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/asylum/statistics/doc_annual_report_2003_en.htm)

<sup>36</sup> Data below relate to the IOM response to the DG JLS request for “information and analyses of the main migratory flows that can be detected in the eastern and southeastern regions neighbouring the EU with a view to identifying the main routes used to enter the EU illegally and the main countries of origin,” 15 February 2007.

Table 9. Third-country nationals refused entry to Albania<sup>37</sup>

Year	No. of third-country nationals refused entry to Albania
2003	448
2004	94
2005	510
2006	2884

Source: Ministry of Interior, Border and Migration, Department at State Police, Albania.

Since 1990, Albanian migration to Greece has followed three main routes: the two main road crossings at Kakavi (leading to Ioannina) and Bilisht (leading to Kastoria and Florina), and the short sea link from Sarandë to Corfu. A fourth route goes via the southern part of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Thessaloniki.<sup>38</sup>

Following the approval by the Albanian Parliament of the law on the ban of boats in the Adriatic and Ionian Sea in July 2006, the irregular migration route is now oriented towards the green border.

The main irregular migration routes are:

- Albania – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – Greece and destination to other Western European Countries
- Albania – Montenegro – Serbia – Slovenia – Italy
- Albania – Kosovo Province – Croatia – Slovenia and destination to other western European countries
- Albania – Greece – Italy

Foreign citizens apprehended at the Albanian borders are mostly Chinese, Indian, Turkish, and Pakistani nationals. The majority have been refused entry at Nene Tereza Airport, Rinas.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Russell K., and J. Vullnetari (2003) *Migration and Development in Albania*, Working Paper No. C5, p. 37, Sussex Centre for Migration Research.

## 5.2. Figures and information on return migration flows

Forced return to Albania:

Table 10. Irregular migrants readmitted from other countries to Albania<sup>39</sup>

Year	No. of Albanians	No. of Foreigners
2003	34,533	35
2004	18,012	101
2005	56,043	no data available
2006	58,347	35
2007	48,464	no data available yet

Source: Ministry of Interior, Albania.

In 2006, the Department for Border and Migration within the Albanian Ministry of Interior (MoI) registered 42,254 cases of forcibly removed persons (with agreement on readmission or return) and 15,879 without a formal agreement in place with the sending country.<sup>40</sup> In 2007, 58,769 cases of forcibly removed persons were registered (with an agreement on readmission or return) and 3,657 without a formal agreement in place with the sending country.<sup>41</sup>

Voluntary Return to Albania:

Between 2002 and 2007, 4,313 individuals returned to Albania through IOM-assisted voluntary return programmes with the largest groups returning from the United Kingdom (2,946), Bosnia and Herzegovina (465), and Belgium (317).<sup>42</sup> Large numbers of Albanians also return spontaneously due to the circular character of the Albanian migration to neighbouring countries.

A survey of 324 Albanian returnees from Greece and Italy conducted in early 2002 showed that a substantial number of emigrants use the money they earned abroad to establish small business in Albania. The local economy, in this sense, has benefited from the returnees' investment as well as from the knowledge transfer through their training and experience. A large proportion of returnees became employers (67.1% of men and 25.8% of women), and 27.2 per cent found employment immediately. Some 56.5 per cent would consider emigrating again if necessary and 11.4 per cent had already attempted to do so. The majority of respondents had planned their return to Albania from the start, while 36.7 per

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Interior, Albania.

<sup>40</sup> MoI Albania (2006) *Analysis of the Work Carried Out by the Border and Migration Department during 2006 and Tasks for the Future*.

<sup>41</sup> MoI Albania (2007) *Achievements of the Ministry of Interior during the period 2005–2007*.

<sup>42</sup> IOM AVR Database.

cent returned after achieving their initial aims. Other reasons for return were family (19.4%), psychological reasons (13%), or the desire to go home (7.7%). These data reflect the circular nature of Albanian migration with both return and further re-emigration integrated into their plans.<sup>43</sup>

### 5.3. Figures and information on trafficking

Albania is a country of origin for women and girls trafficked both abroad and internally for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. It is no longer considered a major country of transit, and it is not a significant country of destination. Albanian victims are trafficked to Greece and Italy, with many trafficked onward to the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Norway, Germany, and the Netherlands.<sup>44</sup> In 2006, the most common form of trafficking in Albania was trafficking of children and women for the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation in the West, mostly in Greece, Italy, and other European Union (EU) countries. Internal trafficking, primarily of children for forced labour or other forced services including begging, has been observed in 2006.<sup>45</sup>

The total number of Albanian victims identified and assisted between 2000 and 2004 was 1,750.<sup>46</sup> Minors accounted for a significant percentage of assisted Albanian victims abroad (21.1% in 2003 and 23.6% in 2004). Minors constituted 100 per cent of the reported victims of trafficking for labour, begging, and delinquency in 2003, and 93.2 per cent in 2004. Roman and Egyptian minorities are highly represented among all types of Albanian victims. Mentally and physically disabled victims represent as much as one-third of Albanian victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Most Albanian victims were trafficked by somebody known to them and families were at times complicit in trafficking (particularly in cases of trafficking for labour, begging, and delinquency). The transportation route is mainly illegal and with false or no documents. In 2003, 33.7 per cent of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation were re-trafficked.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Labrianidis L., and B. Kazazi (2006) "Albanian return migrants from Greece and Italy, their impact upon spatial disparities within Albania", *European Urban and Regional Studies* 13(1): 59-74, SAGE Publications; Nicholson, B. (2001) "From migrant to micro-entrepreneur", *South-East Europe Review* 4(3): 39-41; Kanellopoulos, C., and M. Gregou (2006) *Greek Contribution to the EMN Research Study III: Return*, Centre for Planning and Economic Research, Greek National Point for the European Migration Network.

<sup>44</sup> US Department of State (2007) *Trafficking in Persons Report 2007*.

<sup>45</sup> Deputy Minister, National Anti trafficking Coordinator, Ministry of Interior of Albania (2007) *Report on the Implementation of Albania's National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings January- December 2006*.

<sup>46</sup> Surtees, R. (2005) *Second Annual Report on Victims of Trafficking in South-Eastern Europe*, Regional Clearing Point

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



Between 1999 and 2007, IOM assisted 307 Albanian victims trafficked internally and to the EU member states. The majority of the victims assisted were young (75% were younger than 24), single, of poor economic background, and were usually recruited by personal contact with a male recruiter. Main countries outside of Albania where victims were identified were Greece, Italy, and Serbia (Province of Kosovo).<sup>48</sup>

In 2006, the police referred 51 new cases of trafficking to the General Prosecutor's Office, which investigated 65 people on charges related to trafficking. Forty-three cases were referred to the Serious Crimes Court, with 62 prosecutions and 57 convictions for trafficking. Some police officers, customs officials, and border police were allegedly involved in the facilitation of trafficking.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> IOM database of assisted VOTs.

<sup>49</sup> US Department of State (2007) *Trafficking in Persons Report*



## 6. ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION ISSUES

### 6.1. Government institutions responsible for migration policy

The **Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MOLSAEO)** (<http://www.mpcs.gov.al>), including the **National Employment Service (NES)**, the State Social Service, and other relevant structures, is responsible for labour migration policies in Albania, for both nationals and foreign citizens, as well as for negotiation of seasonal work agreements with other countries. Within this Ministry, the **Directorate for Migration Policies** is the responsible entity in Albania for migration management and for migration policy. The NES is the main entity responsible for employment policy at the national level, with the regional offices dealing with regional concerns. The regional offices are also responsible for collecting demands for migration for employment purposes from Albanian citizens.

The **Ministry of Interior (MoI)** (<http://www.moi.gov.al>) represents one of the key actors in the field of migration in the country. In particular, the **Department of Border and Migration** within the State Police is responsible for border control and prevention and interdiction of illegal activities carried out through the state borders. In addition, it oversees the facilitation of legal movement of persons, goods, and vehicles, timely processing of foreigners' documents, and collection and analysis of data processed at state borders. It is also responsible for the implementation of readmission agreements between Albania and other countries. During 2007, MoI, in cooperation with other government and non-government actors, developed the National Strategy on Integrated Border Management and its corresponding Action Plan.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)** (<http://www.mfa.gov.al/english/>) is another key actor in the field of migration management in Albania. Under the responsibility of the Ministry, the **National Institute of Diaspora** is the government entity in charge of the policies related to Albanian diasporas. In addition, the Ministry is responsible for coordinating bilateral negotiations between Albania and other countries at the political level.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Note that the MFA had a more limited role during the negotiations with the EU, which were lead and coordinated by the Ministry of Integration due to the leading role of this ministry in the negotiations for the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Community.

The **National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT)** (<http://www.instat.gov.al/>) is tasked with the creation of the National Registry on Migration.<sup>51</sup>

## **6.2. International legal framework in place relevant to migration**

### **International Treaties Ratified by Albania**

- C97 Migration for Employment Convention 1949, ratified on 2 March 2005
- Convention on the Status of Refugees 1951, ratified on 18 August 1992
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965, ratified on 10 June 1994
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966, ratified on 4 January 1992
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, ratified on 4 January 1992
- C143 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975, ratified on 12 September 2006
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, acceded to on 11 May 1994
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984, ratified on 10 June 1994
- Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, ratified on 28 March 1992
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, ratified on 5 June 2007
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations (UN) Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000, ratified on 21 August 2002
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000, ratified on 21 August 2002

### **Council of Europe Conventions**

- European Convention on Human Rights, ratified on 2 October 1996
- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005, ratified on 6 February 2007

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<sup>51</sup> Government of Albania (2005) Response to an IOM Questionnaire for the Workshop on Labour Migration in February 2005, Zagreb.

## Bilateral Labour Agreements

Bilateral labour agreements on seasonal employment have been signed with Germany (1991), Greece (1996), and Italy (1997).<sup>52</sup>

## Readmission Agreements

Readmission agreements are in place with the European Community (2005, came into force on 1 May 2006), the United Kingdom (2005), Croatia (2005), Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania (2002),<sup>53</sup> and Switzerland.

## 6.3. Migration policies in place

The policy framework for migration management in Albania is outlined by the following policy documents:

- a) Action Plan for the Implementation of Association and Stabilization Agreement

On 12 June 2006, Albania signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, which represents an important step forward on Albania's relationship with the EU. The country now faces the challenge of successfully implementing its SAA, which requires a very ambitious political, administrative, and economic reform. The Albanian government has placed EU integration high on its agenda and set a list of priorities also in the area of Justice and Home Affairs; these are reflected in the Action Plan for the Implementation of Association and Stabilization Agreement.<sup>54</sup> These priorities (for the period 2006–2009) stress the need to improve administrative and financial capacities for the implementation of legislation on asylum and migration, and in particular, for the implementation of the *national strategies and corresponding action plans*.<sup>55</sup> In this context, the full implementation of the NSM and its Action Plan remains a paramount objective.

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<sup>52</sup> Government of Albania (2005) Response to an IOM Questionnaire for the Workshop on Labour Migration in February 2005, Zagreb.

<sup>53</sup> International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) (2005) Yearbook on Illegal Migration, Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Central and Eastern Europe, Vienna.

<sup>54</sup> Subchapter 3.24, Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs; Section 3.24.3, Border Management; and Section 3.24.4, Migration Policies.

<sup>55</sup> 1. Implementation of the National Strategy on Migration, 2. Ratification and progressive implementation of the international conventions in the field of migration.

## b) The National Strategy on Migration (NSM)

The NSM and the corresponding National Action Plan on Migration (NAP) have been developed in 2004-2005 with assistance from the European Community and IOM.<sup>56</sup>

The aim of the NSM is to provide Albania with a more comprehensive policy on migration from one that has mainly reacted to combat irregular flows to a more holistic policy based on the management of migration. The NAP represents one of the very first attempts to concretize the idea of linking migration management and the development of the country of origin in line with the orientations of the common immigration policy of the EU. The emphasis is centred on managing emigration flows as an immediate priority rather than on the development of an immigration policy since Albania will certainly remain a country of emigration for a certain period of time. Nevertheless, the strategy incorporates immigration in the parts devoted to the legal and institutional framework on the basis of the previous report, “Analysis of Albanian Immigration Legislation and Practice as Compared to EU and International Standards Gap Analysis on Migration Management”, compiled by IOM.

The NAP covers the following main domains: addressing the root causes of migration; protection of the rights of Albanian emigrants abroad; improvement of consular services by Albanian embassies and consulates; and provision of support to Albanian communities abroad. It also envisions several measures aimed at enhancing migrant mobility, especially with the neighbouring countries. It provides the details for each of the 66 measures agreed upon and all the necessary elements for implementation (objective, activities required and possible pre-conditions, politically responsible body and implementing body, necessary human and financial resources, deadline, and possible benchmarks).

The findings of an assessment for the implementation of the NSM carried out by the European Institute of Tirana in 2006 indicated that not all government officials in the ministries dealing with migration issues were aware of its content.<sup>57</sup> This is mainly due to the lack of a central unit responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the NSM. To address this gap, the Albanian Council of Ministers<sup>58</sup> recently decided to assign the MOLSAEO to coordinate and monitor the implementation.

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<sup>56</sup> Copy is available for download at <http://www.iomtirana.org.al>

<sup>57</sup> European Institute of Tirana (2006) *Report on the Implementation of National Action Plan on Migration*.

<sup>58</sup> Decision No. 425, 11 July 2007.

Currently, IOM Tirana is involved in a project that supports the Government of Albania in the process of implementing the Strategy and Action Plan, particularly on measures related to addressing the root causes of migration, the successful return and reintegration of Albanian migrants, the promotion of the link between emigration and development, and the elaboration of an appropriate legal and institutional framework for emigration and immigration.

#### c) Readmission Agreement with the European Community

Faced with huge emigration pressures, Albania signed its first bilateral readmission agreement with Italy in 1998. Since then, Albania has signed ten readmission agreements and is in the process of signing seven more. Albania is the first country<sup>59</sup> in Europe to have negotiated and signed a readmission agreement with the European Community for the return of its own citizens and third-country nationals, as part of the negotiations for its SAA agreement with the EU (the agreement replaces previously signed bilateral agreements with individual EU member states).<sup>60</sup>

The Albanian government has acknowledged the importance that a successful implementation of the readmission agreement with the EU will bring to the SAA process; however, the challenges faced by the Albanian administration in implementing it cannot be overlooked.<sup>61</sup> Besides the need for proper resources and facilities, the issue of return and sustainable reintegration of Albanian citizens should be addressed. Moreover, adequate return procedures and readmission agreements with countries of origin must be put in place to address the issue of the return of irregular migrants from third countries who had previously transited through Albania. This issue will require particular attention in 2008, with the entry into force of the clause of third-country nationals.

#### d) Visa Facilitation Agreement with the European Community

Following the signing of the readmission agreement, Albania negotiated and signed a Visa Facilitation Agreement with the European Community, which has been in force since 1 January 2008. This agreement is meant to facilitate the visa application and entry into the EU territory of certain categories of Albanian citizens covered by this agreement; a procedure which so far has been lengthy and has required considerable supporting documentation, causing long backlogs

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<sup>59</sup> Other agreements include Sri Lanka, Macao Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, and Russian Federation.

<sup>60</sup> IOM (2006) *Return and Readmission to Albania*.

<sup>61</sup> Article 81 of the SAA states that Albania should fully implement the EC-Albania Readmission Agreement.

and inevitable frustrations on the part of both applicants and consular offices. In this regard, it is very important to assess Albania's progress in attaining visa facilitation as a prerequisite to the liberalization arrangements, as well as to analyze the different criteria that Albania needs to meet toward liberalization (in the fields of border management, organized crime, visa security, information system, migration, and asylum).

#### e) Border Management<sup>62</sup>

According to the 2007 Progress Report of the EC, there has been some progress with the issue of visa management. A centralized IT system to administer visas is being installed. In terms of document security, technical specifications for new micro-chipped biometric passports and ID cards in line with EU standards have been approved and the production of more secure passports has been initiated.

In 2006, Albania has made some progress in border management, particularly in improving immigration checks and controls at border crossing points (BCPs). New equipment and logistics support have increased the efficiency of green border surveillance. Cooperation between the Border Police Directorate with counterparts in neighbouring countries has improved. The police and its border control structures have been much more active in preventing the smuggling of commodities through green borders, as well reducing irregular migration to Greece.

The Border and Migration Department has revised its border management policy according to the EU guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans but the strategy has not yet been adopted. Considerable efforts are also still required to bring all Albanian BCPs at par with European standards.

#### f) Other Policy Documents

The NSM makes several provisions on return and reintegration of Albanian migrants, similar to those specified in other policy documents, such as the National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking, the draft National Strategy for the Fight against Child Trafficking, the National Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training, and their respective action plans. The Action Plan on Free Movement also contains provisions on the return of Albanian nationals, which

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<sup>62</sup> EC (2007) *Albania 2007 Progress Report*.



relate mainly to implementation of readmission procedures, including the need for training police personnel in readmission issues.

The Law on Foreigners has been drafted by a working group composed of different entities. The new draft law includes provisions on the pre-screening and handling of irregular migrants in the territory of Albania as well as provisions on detention and removal in case of irregularity. At the time of writing, the draft law is under review by the Government of Albania.

## **6.4. The scale of brain drain and policies to address it**

According to the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) survey of more than 40 research institutions and ten public universities in Albania, which was carried out in 2005/2006 in the context of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Brain Gain Programme, more than 50 per cent of the lecturers and research workers in Albania emigrated from the country during the period 1991–2005.<sup>63</sup> In 2005, the main host countries for the Albanian lecturers and researchers were the United States (26.3%), Canada (18.4%), Italy (13.7%), Greece (12.9%), France (9.7%), Germany (6.3%), United Kingdom (2.9%), and Austria (2.6%).<sup>64</sup>

It is estimated that every year, from 2,000 to 4,000 Albanian students leave the country to attend universities abroad, mainly in Italy, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece, and the United States. In Italian universities alone, some 12,000 Albanian students are enrolled. A survey undertaken by CESS and the Soros Foundation in 2004 with 181 Albanian Ph.D. holders and Ph.D. candidates abroad revealed that only 56 per cent of them were willing to return to Albania.<sup>65</sup>

At present, there are no policies in place to promote the short-term return of expatriate academics to Albanian institutions where they originally trained or worked. The new law on higher education grants local universities the opportunity to determine the policies to engage academics from abroad in the Master's and Ph.D. programmes of state universities in Albania.

(See Section 8 for the description of the UNDP Brain Gain Programme).

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<sup>63</sup> Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) - Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization and Poverty (2006) *From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Mobilizing Albania's Skilled Diaspora*, UNDP Policy Paper.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

## 6.5. Policies to address irregular migration

The NSM and the corresponding NAP make specific references to the fight against irregular migration. The National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development (2001) and the Strategy on Rural Development (2003) make direct references to emigration and addressing its root causes, such as poverty.<sup>66</sup>

Albania has signed a readmission agreement with the EU, which entered into force in 2006. Readmission agreements are currently being negotiated with Austria and Slovenia, with countries in the region, and with countries of origin of migrants transiting through Albania, such as Turkey and Moldova.

In 2006, Albania made some progress in border management. Progress has been made in improving immigration checks and controls at BCPs. New equipment and logistics support have increased the efficiency of green border surveillance. The police and its border control structures have been much more active in reducing the irregular migration to Greece. The Border and Migration Department has revised its border management policy according to the EU guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans but the strategy has not yet been adopted. Albania has good cross-border police cooperation with its neighbouring countries: Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) have jointly drafted an agreement on border police cooperation in 2007; a joint border patrol agreement with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was ratified; and an agreement on information exchange was signed with Italy.<sup>67</sup>

The National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking and the draft National Strategy for the Fight against Child Trafficking deal with issues of trafficking in human beings as a form of irregular migration (see below).

## 6.6. Policies to address trafficking in human beings

The National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2005-2007 was adopted in July 2005. It includes the National Strategy for the Fight against Child Trafficking and the Protection of Child Victims of Trafficking and the Cooperation Agreement to Establish a National Referral Mechanism for the Enhanced Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking.

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<sup>66</sup> Government of Albania [2005]: *National Strategy on Migration*. <http://www.iomtirana.org.al>

<sup>67</sup> EC (2007) *Albania 2007 Progress Report*.

The National Action Plan seeks to address the poor cooperation between police and prosecution; the insufficient action against police, prosecutors, judges, and other officials complicit in trafficking; and the need for greater government involvement, as opposed to non-governmental organization (NGO) -led initiatives in the areas of protection and prevention. It is structured under the following headings: Investigation and Prosecution, Support and Protection of Victims and Witnesses, Prevention of Trafficking and Re-Trafficking, and Coordinating Framework. An Anti-Trafficking Unit has been established under the supervision of the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator within the MoI.

At the end of 2007, the Strategy concluded its period of implementation and the Office of the National Coordinator for Anti-Trafficking is working on the renewal of the National Referral Mechanism Agreement as well as on the new Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Trafficking 2008-2010.

In 2007, the EC reported that there has been some progress seen in Albania in the fight against trafficking in human beings. The penal code was amended to criminalize trafficking in human beings and a nationwide help line for trafficking victims was opened. Albania ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The MOLSAEO implemented a micro-loan programme for female victims of trafficking. In many areas, however, improvements have not taken place: the planned victim case-tracking database is not yet operational and many victims are not willing to testify against their traffickers as the witness protection system is still weak (for instance, in 2006, only 20 out of 227 suspected or identified victims of trafficking chose to testify).<sup>68</sup>

In the same year, standards of assistance to victims of trafficking were developed and put in place by service providers under the leadership of the MOLSAEO. Albania ratified a bilateral agreement with Greece to assist with the return of child trafficking victims.<sup>69</sup>

## **6.7. Refugees and asylum seekers in the country and relevant policies in place**

The number of persons seeking asylum in Albania is not highly significant (222 in 2002, 36 in 2006). Albanian law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with its obligations under the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol. The government has established

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> US Department of State (2007) *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

a system for providing protection to refugees. Under the law, requests for asylum must be made within ten days of arrival in the country and the decision for granting asylum status must be given within 51 days of the initial request. In 2005, there were 25 asylum applications, of which ten applicants were granted refugee status.<sup>70</sup> In 2006, 21 asylum seekers requested refugee status and 9 were granted it.<sup>71</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), through the government-run national reception centre for asylum seekers (Babrru Reception Centre), provided social and legal services, health care coverage, insurance, and limited training support for the small refugee community and coordinated further assistance through a network of NGOs.<sup>72</sup> In 2006, 36 refugees and asylum seekers were accommodated at the Babrru Centre.<sup>73</sup> Another 50 refugees and asylum seekers living in private accommodation also received medical, legal, and social assistance, including subsistence allowance. All asylum seekers and refugee children attended primary school. No cases of refoulement were reported.<sup>74</sup>

The pre-screening programme, which was implemented by the UNHCR in cooperation with IOM, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the MoI, was officially handed over to the government in March 2006. The pre-screening system is an operational tool to identify and channel asylum seekers, irregular migrants, and victims of trafficking into appropriate systems and procedures. By the end of this joint project, over 2,000 border guards, police officers, and government officials had been trained, 11 transit reception centres at major border crossings had been rehabilitated, and eight vehicles and computer equipment had been provided to the authorities.

According to the EC, there has been limited progress on the planned review and amendment of the legal framework for asylum. The judicial aspects of asylum remain. The limited capacity of the Directorate for Nationality and Refugees delays decision making and the expertise of the staff running new asylum centres remains weak.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Republic of Albania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008) *Letter 1881 to the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in response to the draft document "Migration in Albania: a Country Profile"*. Unpublished.

<sup>71</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania (2008) Note to the Permanent Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation with reference to the current document.

<sup>72</sup> US Department of State (2006) Human Rights Report.

<sup>73</sup> Data provided by the UNHCR office in Tirana, August 2007.

<sup>74</sup> UNHCR (2006) Global Report 2006 – *South-Eastern Europe Sub-regional Overview*.

<sup>75</sup> EC (2007) *Albania 2007 Progress Report*.

## 6.8. Projects and programmes on migration and development

Measure 38 of the NAP (see Section 6.3) calls for the elaboration of the National Action Plan on Remittances to promote formal channelling of migrant remittances to Albania and the use of remittances for investment purposes. To support the implementation of this measure, IOM conducted research on possible policies, actions, and initiatives that could be carried out by the Albanian government and other actors to enhance the positive effects of remittances, in particular their function as a development and poverty alleviation tool. The study, **Competing for Remittances**, was completed in July 2005.<sup>76</sup>

Following the recommendations of the said IOM study, IOM and the International Labour Organization (ILO) implemented a joint project on **Enhancing the Impact of Migrant Remittances in Albania: Creating an Integrated Migrant Remittance System** (1 Oct 2006 – June 2007). Its objective was to strengthen the institutional and technical capabilities of the Albanian government, international organizations, NGOs, and local government offices to enhance the economic, social, and political impact of labour migrants' remittances in line with the NSM (Measure 38). The project was carried out with technical support and funding from the Italian MFA.

The main result of the project was the elaboration of the **National Action Plan on Remittances**. The Action Plan contains eight specific measures aimed at enhancing the social and economic impact of migrant remittances in Albania. They range from expanding and improving remittance data collection and research, to expanding banking services linked to remittances, to enhancing migrants' knowledge of and access to remittance transfer options, savings, and investment, and to enhancing the capacity of Albanian government and migrant communities to collaborate on trans-national development initiatives.

The National Action Plan on Remittances represents the combined efforts of 24 institutions, comprising of government agencies, private banks, local development agencies operating in the financial market in Albania, and international organizations invited to participate at an Interagency Working Group (IWG). The Action Plan was approved by the Albanian Council of Ministers in November 2007.

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<sup>76</sup> The study report can be accessed at <http://www.iomtirana.org.al>

The **Brain Gain Programme** (<http://www.braingain.gov.al>), which started in September 2006, supports the creation of the necessary incentives and national policy mechanisms to effectively engage the Albanian diasporas in the scientific, administrative, and economic development of the country. The project seeks to reverse Albania's "brain drain" and supports the government in the preparation of a policy framework to address the issue. An online database is established to match the demand of Albania's academic institutions, public administration, and private sector with the expertise offered by the Albanian diasporas. Changes have been made in the laws and regulations related to employment in public administration favouring returnees both financially, with rewards for the degrees earned outside the country, and in entrance exams. A detailed report indicating the capacity gaps in public administration and ways of filling these positions with diaspora and emigrant expertise is also completed.

The Brain Gain Programme will launch its intervention in February aiming to bring back both Ph.D. and Master's degree holders to improve teaching and research in state-sponsored universities in Albania.

It is implemented by the Council of Ministers, and its main government partners are the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, the MoI's Department of Public Administration, the Diaspora Institute of the MFA, and the Ministry of Education through UNDP funding.

Other partners include IOM, Alb-Student Organization, and Albanian Student Association Network.

IOM will partner with UNDP and Albanian universities to implement a component aiming at virtual return and short consultancies by expatriate Albanians.

## **6.9. Other important migration actors within the country**

### **International actors**

The **British Embassy in Albania** supports British policy in South East Europe by encouraging Albania's integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures and its role in regional cooperation. In this regard, it works closely with IOM and national authorities to curb irregular migration flow and prevent trafficking in human beings.

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Tel: + 355 4 234973/4/5, Fax: + 355 4 247697  
<http://www.uk.al>

**Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo (Italian Development Cooperation)** (<http://www.italcoopalbania.org>) remains the largest bilateral donor to Albania with priorities focusing on supporting Albania's accession to the EU, socio-economic development, and overall stability. Funded projects focus on infrastructure rehabilitation, improvement of basic services and social and health conditions, strengthening of institutions, and development of the private sector.

**Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)** (<http://www.coopi.org>) is an Italian NGO founded in 1965 carrying out development programmes and emergency interventions in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Balkans.

The **Delegation of the European Commission in Albania** supports the efforts of the Albanian government in the process of establishing and implementing an effective migration, asylum, return, and readmission system in compliance with EU and international standards.

Rruga e Durrësit, 127/1, Laprake, Tirana  
Tel.: + 355 4 228 320, Fax: + 355 4 270 679

**Dorcas Aid International** (<http://www.dorcas.net>) is a Christian relief and development organization that implements projects for shelter/reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure.

The **International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)** ([http://www.icmc.net/e/programmes\\_operations/present\\_programmes/counter\\_trafficking\\_albania.htm](http://www.icmc.net/e/programmes_operations/present_programmes/counter_trafficking_albania.htm)) operated the first shelter for victims of trafficking in Albania and provided protection and assistance services to women between 1999 and 2002. ICMC continues to cooperate with NGOs and inter-governmental and governmental agencies that address issues of trafficking in human beings in Albania. In 2002, ICMC, with the British Embassy, implemented a pilot activity, in collaboration with the anti-trafficking unit of the Durrës Police, for rehabilitating a police unit and conducting information sharing sessions for anti-trafficking police officers.

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** office in Albania aims to foster the use of migrant remittances for productive investment for poverty reduction and conducts activities aimed at reducing child labour, including child trafficking, through its International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). In the framework of the ILO/MIGRANT Project, ILO has provided comments on the new Albanian law on emigration, and developed a country-specific training manual on labour immigration policy and management. A direct action

consisting of providing victims of trafficking with vocational training and employment opportunities and micro-credits will also be implemented.<sup>77</sup>

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The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** (<http://www.iom-tirana.org.al>) works closely with Albanian counterparts and international partners to achieve tangible results at every stage of the migration process. The National Strategy for Migration and its Action Plan is one of the strategic tools produced by the Albanian government in collaboration with IOM and with the technical and financial assistance of the EU to provide efficient and long-term tools to manage migration. In the framework of the re-admission agreement between Albania and the EU, IOM is committed to assisting the Albanian government to enhance institutional and operational capacity, boost dialogue with its neighbours, and strengthen border cooperation. IOM in Albania promotes regular migration and helps channel remittances for local development.

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**International Social Service (ISS)** (<http://www.iss-ssi.org>) is an international NGO dedicated to helping individuals and families with personal or social problems resulting from migration and international movement.

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** (<http://www.osce.org/albania>) provides assistance to Albanian authorities and civil society on promoting democratization, rule of law, and human rights, and on consolidating democratic institutions conforming with OSCE principles, standards, and commitments. It works in the fields of legislative and judicial reform, property reform, electoral reform, regional administrative reform, parliamentary capacity building, anti-trafficking and anti-corruption, media development, promotion of good governance, development of civil society, and police assistance.

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<sup>77</sup> ILO (2006) *Albania Decent Work Country Programme 2006-2007*.



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Tel.: +355 4 23 59 93, Fax: +355 4 23 59 94

**Save the Children UK** (<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk>) aims to combat trafficking in Albania through prevention, protection, and reintegration. It provides protection and support to trafficked women and girls in the form of accommodation, food, psychosocial counselling, social and medical care, and legal advice. Vocational training and job placements to help women and girls reintegrate into mainstream society are also provided.

The **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)** (<http://www.sida.org>) aims to reduce poverty by supporting reforms designed to bring Albania economically and politically closer to the EU. SIDA’s most important tasks are the development of an efficient and democratic public administration, including its decentralization to the local and regional levels, developing a reliable legal system, and promoting greater respect for human rights. Swedish support also goes to health, natural resource management, and gender issues.

The **Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC)** (<http://www.sdc.admin.ch/>; <http://www.swisscooperation-albania.ch/>) primarily seeks to fight poverty through participatory programmes and create sustainable improvements in peoples’ lives by involving them in the process. Its main intentions are to improve access to education and basic health care, to promote environmental health, to encourage economic and governmental autonomy, and to improve equity in labour.

The **United Nations** in Albania (<http://www.un.org.al>) is a significant partner of the Albanian government in addressing migration issues. It carries out its mandate through its various offices.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** in Albania (<http://www.undp.org.al>) supports the country’s aspirations for EU integration and contributes to national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To address the capacity gaps in institutions and the public sector, UNDP and the Albanian government are working together to develop the necessary incentives and mechanisms for reversing the “brain drain” and engaging the diasporas in the country’s development.

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Tel.: +355 4 233148, 233149, 233122  
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The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** in Albania (<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/country?iso=alb>) cooperates with the Albanian government in protecting and assisting asylum seekers and refugees. This includes monitoring the refugee status determination procedure conducted by the government, searching for durable solutions for recognized refugees, and providing them with temporary accommodation through the National Reception Centre.

The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** in Albania (<http://www.unicef.org/albania/>) supports the government and other civil society institutions in developing the structures needed to fulfill the rights of every child through social policy, advocacy, and information, and in ensuring children's health and development and protection against child trafficking, substance abuse and violence, and HIV/AIDS.

The **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** (<http://albania.usaid.gov/>) is also one of the important migration actors in the country.

Migration-related programmes supported by the USAID include the **Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking (CAAHT)** (<http://www.caaht.com/>) implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc., which is galvanizing the efforts of local government and civil society representatives to lead their communities in practical steps to decrease trafficking of Albania's citizens and provide life-changing opportunities to victims and those at risk. Another USAID-supported endeavour is the **International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP)**, which has been assisting the Albanian government since 1998 in developing its capacity to provide professional law enforcement services based on best policing practices, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. ICITAP offers support to the MoI and the Albanian State Police. This assistance comprises of projects in border management and anti-trafficking, combating organized crime, police accountability and human resource management, academy and training development, and information management systems, including the total integration management system.

## Local Actors

The **Albanian Association of Girls and Women (AAGW)** (<http://www.aagw.org>) is founded and run by former victims of trafficking. The organization assists the members to recover and reintegrate through raising funds and implementing projects in vocational training and income generation.

The **All Together against Child Trafficking (Se Bashku Kunder Trafikimit Te Femijeve) (BKTF)** is a coalition of international organizations and NGOs. It works toward preventing child trafficking in Albania, and contributes legal expertise and general advice.

Blv “Zhan D’Ark” Kulla5, Kt 3, Ap 9, Tirana  
Tel.: +355 4 269307  
<http://www.bktf-coalition.org/index2.html>

The **Centre for Legal Initiative for Women**, a project of the Women Jurists’ Association, provides legal support to victims of trafficking and violence, raises awareness on the causes and negative effects of trafficking in human beings, and trains local law enforcement officials in Albania.

Tel: +355 4 259795

**Different and Equal (DandE)**, which is based in Tirana, provides long-term direct reintegration services to victims of trafficking. DandE’s “hands on” reintegration, residential, and outreach services enable young women who have suffered the devastating consequences of trafficking to recover their sense of dignity and re-establish normal, happy lives.

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The **Hope for the Future Association** provides reintegration assistance to returning migrants since 1999. Its services consist of employment support in private companies, vocational training, language courses, computer and driving license courses, and social services. A total of 1,138 individuals have benefited from Hope projects from 1999 to 2006.

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E-mail: [shprese@shprese.org](mailto:shprese@shprese.org)  
[http:// www.shprese.org](http://www.shprese.org)

**Tjeter Vizion (Another Vision)**, an organization based in Elbasan, runs a residential centre and a community day care, and secures apartments for minors in difficulty, including trafficking victims. Its mission is to protect the rights of victims of human trafficking and to raise awareness on disadvantaged groups in Albania.

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**Vatra Psychosocial Centre (“The Hearth”)** is an NGO working to combat trafficking in women for sexual exploitation through a wide range of activities such as raising public awareness and conducting research on the social status of women in Albania and trafficking in human beings. It also provides services such as counselling for trafficked women at the Hear Psycho-Social Centre.

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