IOM UN MIGRATION

IOM ALBANIA

INFOSHEET

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OVERVIEW

Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – the UN Migration Agency, is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefits of all and does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.

The International Organization for Migration has been operationally present in Albania since 1992, while Albania became an IOM member state in 1993. Since then, IOM has become one of the main international partners of the Government of Albania (GoA), supporting its continuous progress and efforts in migration governance in line with Albania's priorities of European Union integration. IOM is a member of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Albania since 2007. IOM actively contributes to the implementation of the GoA-UN Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, a framework that guides the work of the GoA and the UNCT and their partnerships and aligns the support, funds and programmes of 17 UN agencies including IOM, to Albania's development priorities. IOM is part of the work for the development of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Albania.

On 19 September 2016 IOM joined the UN during the summit for Refugees and Migrants, as the "UN migration agency".

MIGRATION POLICY, RESEARCH AND LEGISLATION

MIGRATION POLICY

IOM works with migrants and governments to respond to contemporary migration challenges. Having 70 years of worldwide operational experience, IOM is uniquely positioned to build on its grassroots experience and provide guidance on migration policy. IOM provides information, advice and support to further stakeholders efforts to develop effective national, regional and global migration management policies and strategies.

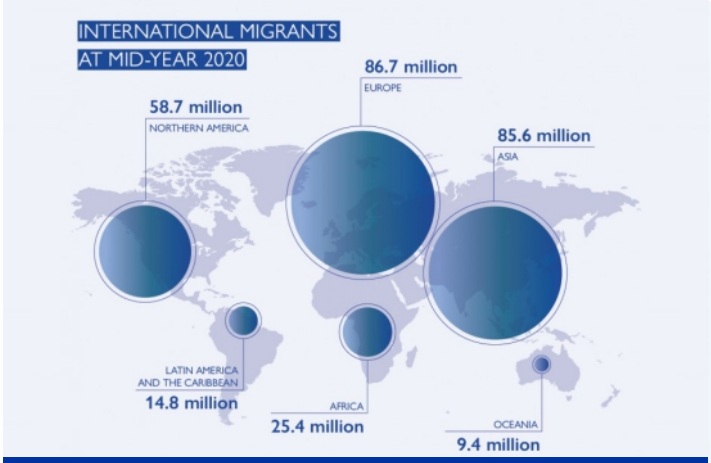
In pursuit of its commitment to support the GoA efforts to develop and implement new migration governance policies, IOM supported the development of the National Strategy on Migration Governance and its Action Plan (2019-2022), in line with the Migration Governance Framework (MiGoF) - a strategic framework developed by IOM and endorsed by all IOM member states (including Albania) in 2015. The strategy addresses the specific objectives defined by the GoA in the National Strategy for Development and Integration as well as supports the efforts of the GoA to achieve the SDG Target 10.7 to facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Support is being provided for the implementation of the Strategy across several objectives, including the coordination and monitoring mechanism.

In 2010, in fulfilment of the country's aspirations to attain visa liberalization, support has been extended to the GoA to formulate the National Strategy on the Reintegration of the Returned Albanian Citizens and its Action Plan (2010-2015). Before that, IOM supported the GoA to develop and implement the first National Strategy on Migration and its Action Plan (2005 – 2010), through financial of the European Union. In line with the National Action Plan on Migration, assistance was provided in 2007 to develop and implement the National Action Plan on Remittances. Strategic support to the government is spread across various areas of engagement and sector strategies, such as counter trafficking, diaspora engagement, labour migration and integrated border management.

One of IOM's strategic priorities in the area of migration policy is to contribute to increased dialogue between migration stakeholders at bilateral, regional and global levels.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS ON ALBANIA'S NATIONAL STRATEGY ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND ITS ACTION PLAN (2019 - 2022) © IOM 2018

THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development
#Forgrn



SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, POPULATION DEVISION (2020). INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK 2020.

MIGRATION RESEARCH

IOM conducts research designed to guide and inform migration policy and practice. The organization provides a unique space for consultation between researchers and policy makers. Research results are disseminated through numerous publications worldwide.

IOM's research activities encompass several migration management topics, including migration trends and data, international migration law, migration and development, health and migration, counter-trafficking, labour migration, remittances, irregular migration, migrant smuggling, integration, and return migration. In 2020, in cooperation with INSTAT and financial support of GIZ, was finalized the Household Migration Survey (HMS). The HMS is the first of this kind in Albania; it was conducted in the entire country, with the participation of more than 20 thousand households and more than 74 thousand respondents.

The work on migration data and statistics will continue in 2021 and 2022, focusing on data collection and analysis as well as migration impact to the labour market and ethical recruitment.

Global Compact FOR Migration

MIGRATION LAW

Dissemination and understanding both within IOM and amongst IOM counterparts of the international legal standards that govern migration and provide protection of the rights of individuals involved in migration are key objectives of the organization.

Recognition of the rights of migrants and the need for promotion and protection of these rights in the exercise of state sovereignty has been present in IOM's constituent documents since the Organization's foundation.

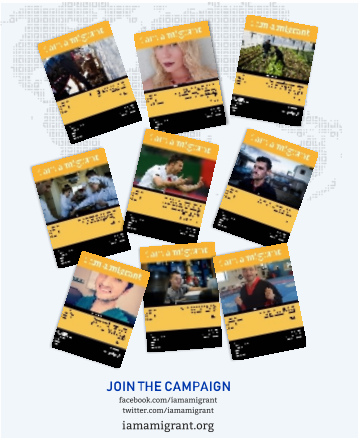
IOM in Albania continuously supports the improvement of national legislation on migration in several areas. In 2020 IOM supported the inter-institutional working group for the development of the new law "On aliens". Before this, support was provided in 2018 for the review of the Law "On aliens" and the Law "On Emigration of Albanian Citizens for Employment Purposes".

In order to create a common understanding of migration terms, IOM has prepared a "Glossary on Migration, designed for all those dealing with migration issues at international level.

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION AND UN NETWORK ON MIGRATION

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is the first, inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Albania accepted without any reservation the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. In close coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator, actions are underway for the establishment of the UN Network on Migration (UNNM) in Albania.

The United Nations established the Network on Migration to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to Member States. In carrying out its mandate, the Network will prioritize the rights and well-being of migrants and their communities of destination, origin, and transit. It will place emphasis on those issues where a common UN system approach would add value and from which results and impact can be readily gauged. In all its actions the Network will respect the principles of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and be guided, inter alia, by the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. IOM is the UNNM Coordinator.



MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

IOM strongly supports migration management in Albania through actions in several areas, as well as promotes the link between migration and development of Albania.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

IOM Albania implements Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes for Albanian nationals returning from the West European countries mainly such as the UK, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Hungary, Finland and Switzerland. IOM Tirana provides reception and reintegration assistance for the returnees in compliance with the above programmes' procedural requirements. As of 2015, IOM Albania has assisted over 3,700 Albanian nationals returning home.

COUNTER HUMAN TRAFFICKING

IOM promotes concerted efforts among government, civil society and other actors to build an effective integrated system of prevention of trafficking in persons, protection assistance and reintegration of victims of trafficking (VoTs) and unaccompanied minors in Albania. Direct assistance and transfer of know-how are key elements of IOM's contribution to the country's counter-trafficking efforts. IOM as a member of the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of VoT/PVOTs is committed to supporting the implementation of the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and National Action Plan, the National Referral Mechanism, the achievement of international standards and further improvement of national standards of assistance to VoTs and their protection. Capacity building aims to strengthen local service delivery to VoTs, as well as establish local protection mechanisms for vulnerable categories of migrants, such as unaccompanied children.

PREVENTION OF UNSAFE MIGRATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

IOM Albania continuously supports Government of Albania, in line with recommendations for EU accessions and implementation of the country migration policy, to implement prevention activities for unsafe migration from Albania towards EU member states. The aim of these interventions is to support information dissemination and awareness-raising on visa-free regime movement, risks and consequences of unsafe migration, as well as encouraging youth to benefit from sustainable self-development opportunities, which increase their employability as a secure path for a better future and promote the use of regular migration channels. Through awareness raising campaigns, direct contribution is made to influencing the change of behavior of the groups with high potential to migrate irregularly as well as key "enablers" in Albania.

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

Technical support is continuously provided to the Albanian border authorities for the implementation of the Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategy as well as for the contingency planning and strengthening capacities on the management of mixed migration flows. IOM promotes cooperation with the neighboring countries in preventing and fighting irregular migration of Albanian citizens and third country nationals in line with the existing bilateral agreements and regional initiatives, in particular, in the areas of information processing and exchange, assisted voluntary return, Advance Passenger Information systems, country of origin analysis, readmission agreements, reception facilities for irregular third-country nationals, interpretation and language analysis.

IOM contributes to concerted efforts in the Western Balkans to counter the smuggling and trafficking of migrants along the route. A Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre for irregular migrants was established in Gërhot, Gjirokastër, in 2017, with the capacity of 60 people. In 2019, another Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre for irregular migrants was established in Kapshtica, Korçë, with the same capacity. Recent support is being provided for facilitating the uninterrupted performance of border controls by supporting the beneficiary countries' response to the COVID-19 pandemic at Points of Entry (PoE). This includes provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and support in the development of dedicated tools and procedures to border police agencies. Through this intervention, additional capacities for the registration and temporary accommodation of 18 migrants were established in the Kakavija BCP, in Gjirokastra.

LABOUR AND MIGRATION

The Organization supports the government's efforts to manage labour mobility through technical assistance for the implementation of labour agreements, as well as assessing and advising on the role of labour market actors, with a view on enhancing recruitment standards and migrants' rights protection.

In partnership with the relevant institutions, IOM facilitates the provision of advice, information and referral services to prospective migrants, immigrants and returnees on regular migration for labour and study purposes, on reintegration opportunities in Albania, as well as immigration issues. A national network of Migration Counters (Sportele Migracioni) has been established and strengthened with IOM support since 2005, to increase access to regular migration information, modalities and opportunities.

IOM support includes assessments and studies on the impact of COVID-19 to labour migration dynamics, impact of migration on the available labour resources and the volume and structure of the national labour force and consequent needs for labour force training. Ethical recruitment practices for migrant workers will be promoted in cooperation with the private sector.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Migration is increasingly recognized as a significant factor for sustainable development. As the UN Migration Agency, IOM helps governments and the international community to harness the development potential of migration for both migrants and societies. The objective of IOM's migration and development programmes is multidimensional and multifaceted, requiring an in-depth consideration by Albanian government and other stakeholders mainly in three areas:

1. diaspora remittances, trade, and investment
2. capacity building (transfer of skills, knowledge, and technology)
3. advocacy and involvement in development policy making and implementation process

contributing to a better understanding of the links between international migration and development and to contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The diaspora entails great potential for Albania's development and the challenge for the stakeholders is to create an environment that encourages and supports diaspora engagement to the development of the home country. IOM actions in this area aim to contribute to enhancing the engagement of Albanian diaspora to the social and economic development of Albania. Relevant actions include technical assistance and capacity building to diaspora institutions, facilitating the engagement of the Albanian diaspora through know-how and skills transfer as well as through investment.

IOM DEVELOPMENT FUND

Since 2001, the IOM Development Fund (IDF) has provided a unique global resource aimed at supporting developing Member States in their efforts to strengthen their migration management capacity. With over 600 projects implemented in more than 115 countries worldwide, the Fund has successfully addressed the capacity building needs of eligible Member States by providing essential "seed funding" for innovative projects.

Projects supported through the Fund in Albania include the areas of counter-trafficking, enhancement of inter-governmental dialogue and cooperation, migration and development, policy and legal framework development, preventing and combating violent extremism, research and assessment and training activities. Key policy documents were developed in Albania through the support from IDF, such as the "Policy Document on Engaging with Albanian Communities Abroad" and the "National Strategy on Migration and its Action Plan (2019-2022) Support is currently being provided through IDF for the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration and Action Plan. Through the Fund, IOM supported the CCVE /Government of Albania with line ministries action plans costed and M&E system prepared. Support provided for development of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) reintegration action plan for Albania accompanied by a protocol outlining each sector responsibilities.

CANADA VISA APPLICATION CENTRE

Under a public-private sector partnership, the new Canada Visa Application Centre (CVAC) for Residents of Albania (CVAC) opened and operated by the Mission in Tirana, since June 2013. VFS Global manages the (CVAC in Albania operated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Tirana, Albania. CVAC is the exclusive service provider for the Government of Canada, authorized to accept applications in all temporary resident categories (visitor visas, study and work permits) and travel document applications from Canada's permanent residents in Albania.

OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCIES

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

IOM uses its extensive expertize and experience in this area both to provide support to States as well as the individuals and communities affected by crisis, and to actively contribute to the efforts to effectively address related challenges.

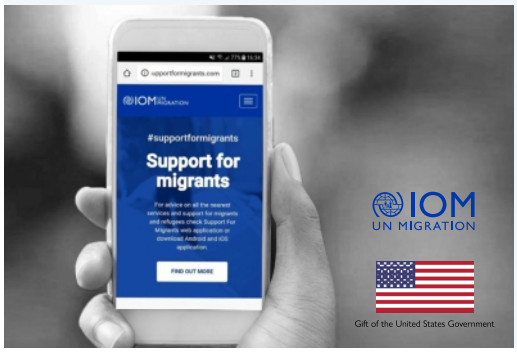
Albania has not been affected by the massive mix migration movements as its neighbor countries in the Western Balkans region. However, it remains an alternative route with very high potential to be used by migrants trying to transit through the Western Balkans countries to reach the European Union.

IOM supported the Government of Albania for the development of a contingency plan on massive influx of migrants in 2015, when the Balkans Route through Greece and North Macedonia was activated. As regards the response, the relevant structures are supported with infrastructure to improve processing of mixed migration flows as well as trainings on migration crisis management, in line with the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), a tool developed by IOM in 2012, with the aim to enhance the understanding of complex mobility patterns related to crises, increase the level of preparedness and enable a more effective operational response to crises.

All migrants may find themselves in a vulnerable situation, including trafficking in persons, and can have protection needs that must be addressed. IOM works in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to protect and assist migrants in a situation of vulnerability and to take actions to support implementation of protection mechanisms in line with international human rights standards during the pandemic situation. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic IOM contributed to the improvement of reception facilities in Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centres for irregular migrants in Albania Kapshtica, Korçë, and Gërhot, Gjirokastër. Interventions improved reception conditions for children, women and girls VoTs / PVoTs and migrants in vulnerable situation.

RESETTLEMENT AND MOVEMENT

IOM facilitates movement operations and pre-departure services, in liaison with concerned authorities in resettlement countries. IOM carries out "fitness to travel" health assessments, when requested; facilitates and provides logistical support for visa processing; offers transportation services as well as other services related to refugee resettlement, in compliance with the agreements signed with immigration services in the respective resettlement countries. In specific cases, IOM is responsible for Pre-departure orientation (PDO) sessions prior to the movement. Additionally, IOM mission in Albania assists with voluntary returns of third country nationals to their countries of origin. The process entails AVRR outreach sessions conducted by field counselors in border crossing points in Korce, Gjirokaster and Shkoder and also in Tirana region, followed by an initial pre-screening interview for the applicant and, in case of eligibility, flight arrangements for the irregularly stranded migrants in the territory of the Republic of Albania. In case of lack of travel documents, IOM helps the returning migrants with the facilitation of their issuance in coordination with diplomatic missions of their respective countries of origin.



PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM / COUNTERING OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE/CVE)

IOM contributes to the efforts of civil society, central and local authorities in the Western Balkans (WB) to prevent radicalization, recruitment and inspiration of individuals to violent extremist ideologies and groups in coordination with relevant ministries and national coordinators for PVE/CVE), to reinforce and support the implementation of the broader strategies for PVE/CVE and to complement existing and planned actions in the WBs. In Albania IOM coordinates and closely works with the Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism with a formalized cooperation through Memorandum of Understanding signed.

IOM is an active player in the area of reintegration, resocialization and rehabilitation of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (RFTF) and their families from conflict zones. The set of ongoing and planned interventions aim to support the host governments and institutions, receiving communities, and returnees in the complex issues surrounding RFTF returns. The provision of reception and humanitarian assistance to returnees in different countries is an important milestone in IOM's work in the area of reintegration of RFTF in WB. IOM has supported and participated in an inter-disciplinary coordination group responsible for providing an organized reception and return to the communities of origin.

IOM REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN ALBANIA

February 2021 — IOM supports State Minister for Diaspora to develop the Communications Strategy and its Action Plan

IOM provides technical support to the GoA for reviewing and costing of the Contingency Plan on Migration and Refugee Crisis. — **February 2021**

January 2021 — IOM supports GoA in the EU approximation process through the Diaspora Engagement Fellowship mechanism.

IOM Albania launches Connect Albania Programme, a new investment boosting mechanism that engages Albanian Diaspora as Development Agents to attract foreign investments in AlbaniaK — **December 2020**

September – December 2020 — IOM supports the working group for the development of the new law "On aliens".

IOM, in collaboration with Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CESPI) finalize the research "Mapping and Profile for Albanian Diaspora in Italy and an overview of Albanian Diaspora in France and Belgium" — **April 2020**

July 2020 — IOM in Collaboration with University of Florence finalize the guidelines for Albania's 5 cultural monuments in five villages ("case studies") of Albania: the three villages of Përmet - Bënja, Leusë, Kosinë, the mountain village of Razëm (Shkodra) and the coastal village of Zvërnec (Vlorë) as part of the Fellowship Project.

IOM, in collaboration with INSTAT, finalizes the Household Migration Survey. — **June 2020**

October 2019 — IOM supports the Government for the establishment of the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre for irregular migrants, located in Kapshtica, Korçë and Kakavija, Gjirokastër.

IOM supports the GoA for development of the National Strategy on Migration Governance (2019-2022) and its Action Plan. — **December 2018**

September 2018 — Migration Governance Snapshot for the Republic of Albania is published.

IOM supports GoA for the costing of the Action plan for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons 2018-2020 — **September 2018**

April-August 2018 — Migration Governance Indicators assessment is carried out in Albania

IOM supports the Government for the establishment of the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre for irregular migrants, located in Gërhot, Gjirokastër. — **June 2017**

October 2016 — IOM signs the Government of Albania-United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2017-2022.

IOM joins the UN during the summit for Refugees and Migrants, as the "UN migration agency". — **19 September 2016**

July 2014 September 2015 — IOM undertakes an in-depth assessment of the protection system for minors in Albania.

September 2015 — IOM provides technical support to the GoA for elaborating the Contingency Plan on Migration and Refugee Crisis.

October 2014 — IOM, in collaboration with INSTAT, launches the 1st National Report on Return and Reintegration in Albania.

June 2013 — Under a public-private sector partnership, the new Canada Visa Application Centre for Residents of Albania (CVAC) is opened and operated by the IOM Mission in Tirana.

June 2012 — IOM signs the new Cooperation Agreement for the Functioning of the National Referral Mechanism for Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Persons.

October 2011 — IOM signs the Government of Albania-United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016.

2011 — IOM supports the implementation of the bilateral labour agreement with Italy.

2010 — IOM supports the elaboration of the National Strategy for the Reintegration of Returned Albanian Citizens.

2009-2011 — IOM supports the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator to establish Standard Operating Procedures for Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking and Potential Victims of Trafficking.

2008 — IOM consolidates the approach established earlier to facilitate potential Albanian migrants' access to informed migration within a national network of Migration Counters (Sportele Migracioni).

June 2007-July 2009 — IOM supports the elaboration and implementation of the National Action Plan on Remittances.

February 2007 July 2009 — IOM supports the implementation of the National Action Plan on Migration.

November 2006 — IOM, in close co-operation with the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and UNODC, establishes the first toll-free National Helpline offering services on safe migration and counter-trafficking.

March 2006 — IOM signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Albanian Government and stakeholders on the Handover of Pre-screening System of Irregular Foreigners and Asylum Seekers in Albania.

July 2005 — The Albanian government approves the Cooperation Agreement on the National Referral Mechanism for Enhancing Identification of, and rendering assistance to, Victims of Trafficking initiated by IOM and the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator.

May 2005 — The Albanian Council of Ministers approves the National Strategy on Migration and National Action Plan on Migration (2005-2010) drafted with IOM's support.

2001-2013 — IOM provides support at policy level with drafting National Strategies to Combat Trafficking of Human Beings and its action plans.

May 2015 — IOM enhances capacities of the Albanian public institutions to collect and analyze data on migration.

1999-2004 — IOM supports the opening of Reception and Reintegration Centres for Albanian VoTs, irregular migrants stranded in Albania and third-country national VoTs.

1993 — Albania becomes a Member State of the International Organization for Migration.

1992 — IOM opens its Mission in Albania.