

Migration Profile

2016

Republic of Albania

This document presents the 2016 Migration Profile of the Republic of Albania. It is drafted and published based on paragraph 4 article 141 of Law no. 108/2013 "On aliens", amended. Information collected and data analysis to prepare this Profile is provided by official sources. The Migration Profile approved by order of Minister of Internal Affairs is published on the official website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Albanian State Police. All rights reserved.

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This analytical report is a follow-up of the process initiated in 2007 by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for the drafting of the first Migration Profile, followed by Migration Profile 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2014 prepared by the Albanian Government with the assistance of international bodies including IOM, ICMPD etc.

The abridged version of the Migration Profile, with a limited number of pages that clearly show the fields of interest, aiming at the key priorities and problems, updated on annual basis, is an essential tool for the policy-makers, various public institutions, non-governmental organisations, academia and interested stakeholders.

In this context, we express herein our special thanks for completing data, making a comparison with the contemporary international contexts and full compliance of its structure with the standards defined in the legal and sub-legal acts which govern this activity, and also making a comparison with the international requirements for the drafting and publication of the migration profile, by the representatives of the contributing institutions:

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

State Police Directorate
General Directorate for Border and Migration
Asylum Directorate
Anti-trafficking Directorate

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND YOUTH

Directorate of Employment and Migration Policies
National Employment Service

INSTAT

BANK OF ALBANIA

NATIONAL BUSINESS CENTRE

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1. General Country Information

1.1. Surface area, population, bordering countries and borderline



Official designation	Albania
Capital	Tirana
Surface area	28,748 km ²
Population	4 329326(registered according to the NCRO) 2 876 101(Average population 2016, according to INSTAT)
Language:	Albanian is the official language of Albania. Other languages, including Greek, Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian, apart from Albanian, are spoken in the territories inhabited by the minorities.
Border and bordering countries:	Total length: 1079 km (land: 717 km; sea: 362 km); Border countries: Montenegro 151 km, Kosovo 112 km, Macedonia 172 km, Greece 282 km)

1.2. Country characteristics

Albania is a parliamentary republic with three independent branches - legislative (Parliament), executive (government) and judiciary (courts). Albania has a territorial division into 12 regions and Tirana is the capital city.

Even though at governmental level there is no coordinating structure or leader structure for migration, the administrative competences in the area of migration are intertwined and distributed among the governmental structures and other state bodies, whose rights and obligations are stated in the Albanian Constitution and various legal and sub-legal acts.

Ministry of the Internal Affairs has the main responsibility in the area of migration and asylum. The most important authorities, under the supervision of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, are: Border and Migration Department in the General Directorate of State Police and the Asylum Directorate.

The responsibilities of authorities in charge of treatment of aliens are stated in the law 108/2013 "On aliens", amended. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth covers aspects of migration for employment purposes and integration of aliens. Relations with the Albanian communities abroad are on the focus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the consular service and the diaspora sector.

Migration, as a critical global, European, regional and national problem, is a very important aspect of relations of the Republic of Albania with the neighbouring countries, EU Member States and other countries and it is a serious challenge in the context of efforts of Albania for European Union membership. Generally, Albania is still considered a country of origin for economic emigrants, transit and destination country for economic immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. Migration in the Albanian context is characterised more by international emigration of the local population and less by immigration of aliens in the country. Upon the start of the new millennium, migration patterns and attitude of Albanians towards them have changed because of stringent policies of the host countries and intensification by Albania of the fight against irregular migration.

During 2016, Albanian emigrants leaving the country outnumbered immigrants entering the country. The net migration rate marked an increase from -7.2 persons per one thousand inhabitants in 2015 to -3.3 persons per one thousand inhabitants in 2016. The net migration (difference between immigrants and emigrants) experienced a shrinking because of the decrease of the number of emigrants from 41 thousand to 33 thousand and the increase of the number of immigrants from 21 thousand to 23 thousand during 2015-2016. This increase is mostly attributed to the decrease of the flow of emigrants.

Albanian communities abroad currently consist of five main groups:

- i) economic emigrants;
- ii) family members of economic emigrants;
- iii) students;
- iv) asylum-seekers and refugees;
- v) unaccompanied minors.

The biggest groups of this community consist of economic emigrants, family members of economic emigrants and students.

2. Overall migration flows and migrant stock

2.1. Migration flows

After the nineties, Albania was dominated by migrant flows which may be considered intensive, irregular and evolving because of the combined action of economic and political push factors. Throughout the period, a consistent migrant flow of Albanians to Greece, Italy and other EU countries, USA and Canada is observed.

Albania still has a high migration potential favoured by cultural, linguistic and geographical vicinity, low emigration cost to neighbouring countries including Italy and Greece as well as legal opportunities for family unification in the main host countries of emigrants.

Among the main factors of emigration of Albanian citizens, those of economic nature, including unemployment and poverty, are the prevailing ones.

Unemployment, especially among the youth, feeds into the migration flows. The Albanian labour market during 2016 was characterised by a decrease of the level of unemployment compared to the previous year. Unemployment by the end of 2016 was around 15.2%. During 2016, the population of the age group 15-29 continues to have the biggest impact on the unemployment rate, even though such indicator for this age group, fell by 4.3 percentage point compared to the previous year. The unemployment rate for this age group in 2016 reached 28.9% (29.7% for males and 27.8% for females) from 33.2 % (32.3% for males and 34.7% for females) in 2015. The unemployment rate for the population of the age group 30-64 decreased to 11.8% from 12.5% in 2015. Young people of the age group 15-29 who are neither employed nor attending studies or any training constitute 30.0% of the unemployed youth in 2016.¹

Referring to the official data collected by the Albanian diplomatic representations abroad, the number of Albanian citizens emigrating abroad is as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2. 1. List of 20 countries of highest number of Albanian emigrants - year 2016

no.	State	Albanian nationals
1	Italy	467 687
2	Greece	354 456
3	U.S.A.	250 000
4	United Kingdom	50 000
5	Germany	48 538
6	Canada	28 270
7	Australia	25 000
8	Turkey	6 000
9	France	5 588
10	Belgium	5 000
11	Sweden	4 100
12	Austria	4 000

¹Source: Instat, 2017.11

13	Netherlands	2 569
14	Montenegro	2 060
15	Kosovo	2 000
16	United Arab Emirates	2 000
17	Switzerland	1 581
18	Spain	1 300
19	Romania	1 000
20	Norway	956

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tirana, 2017

According to the National Civil Register, the population of Albania during 2016 was 4 329 326 inhabitants. According to INSTAT data, the average population in 2016 was 2 876 101 inhabitants. The difference between the data of the National Register of the Civil Registration Office and the average population in 2016 may be considered, indirectly, as an indicator of the number of Albanian citizens who live abroad. Around 1. 4 million Albanian citizens were staying outside the territory of Albania, or otherwise 1/3 of the country's population.

Figure 2.1. Dynamics of migration, 2012-2016 (*net migration = immigrants – emigrants*)



Source: INSTAT, 2017

Migration flows of aliens in Albania are low compared to the resident or migrant population. During the last decade, the total number of aliens residing in Albania has remained approximately at 0.3% of the local population and the origin of legal immigrants does not indicate any significant changes. The table presents data on aliens residing in Albania compared to the resident and migrant

population.

Table 2. 2. Migration flows, 2015-2016

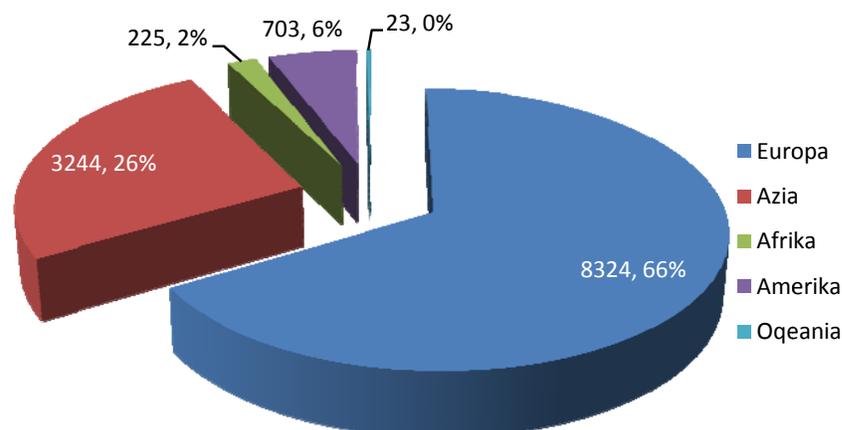
	2015	2016
Annual average population in Albania	2,880,703	2,876,101
Registered immigrants	10563	12519

Source: INSTAT, General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017 (processed data)

2.2. Migrant stock

On 1 January 2017, the number of aliens residing in Albania was 12519 or around 0.4 % of the population. In 2016, aliens from European countries occupied 66%, while 5.6 % came from America (North & South), 26 % from Asia, 1.8% from Africa and the number of immigrants from other states was insignificant.

Figure 2.2. Aliens registered in Albania by continent of origin on 1 January 2017



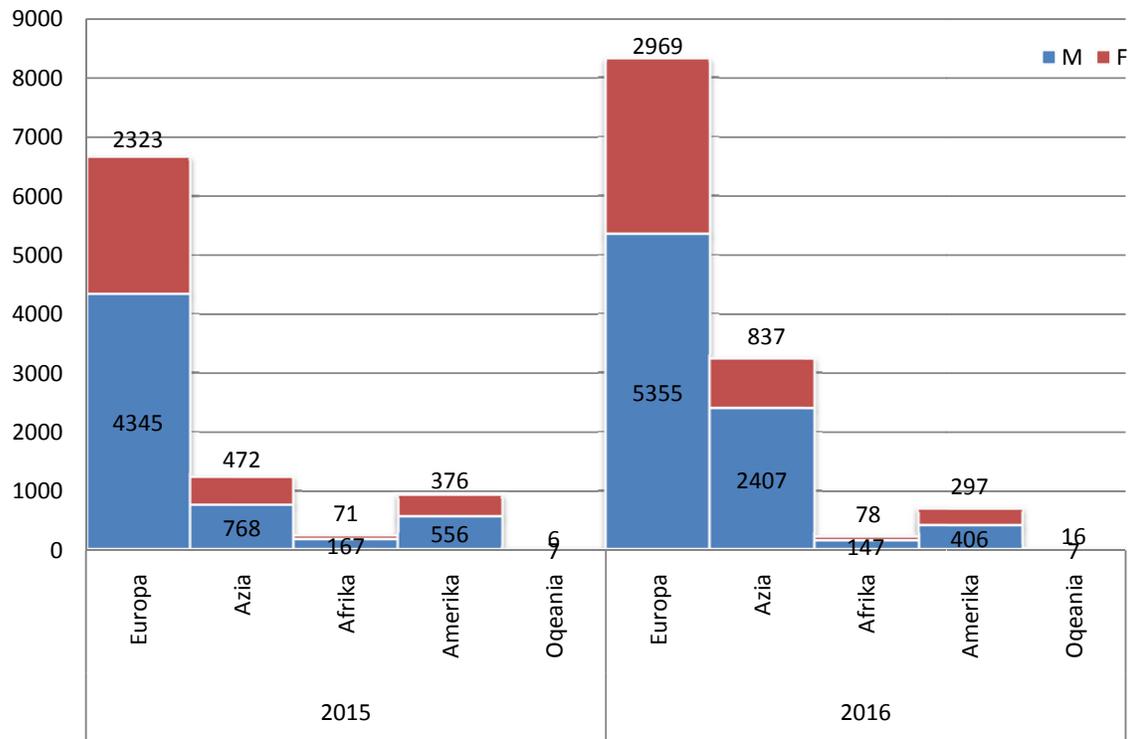
Source: FER-TIMS System in the Directorate of State Police, Tirana, 2017

Migration flow of citizens from the countries of the region bordering Albania (Kosovo- Macedonia- Montenegro- Serbia) is dominated mainly by ethnic Albanian citizens. Out of the total number of European immigrants in 2016, 22 % (1854) were Italian, 47 % (3954) Turkish, 9% (719) Kosovo and some 22% from other European countries. Almost 70% of Asian immigrants were asylum-seekers from Iran, 10% from China (331 persons), 6 % from Syria (184) and 3% from India (101). Immigrants from the U.S.A constituted 63 % of the American immigrants (441 persons), whereas immigrants from African countries amounted to approximately 2 % (223 persons) of the total number of immigrants (12519) in 2016.

Referring to the country of origin and gender of aliens, the figure below shows the immigrant stock

living in Albania in 2016 compared to 2015.

Figure 2.3. Aliens resident in Albania by origin and gender, 2015- 2016



Source: FER-TIMS System in the General Directorate of State Police, Tirana, 2017.

3. Regular migration focused on migration for employment

3.1. State responsible authorities

Ministry of the Internal Affairs through the structures including the State Police (Border and Migration Department), Directorate for Asylum etc is the main responsible authority for the management of migration and its integration. The Border and Migration Department under the State Police, as the authority responsible for the treatment of aliens who enter, transit or stay in the territory of the Republic of Albania, organised at national and local level, is responsible for the control of aliens and taking of decisions in relation to the visa application procedures by the aliens who intent to enter the Republic of Albania; border control by applying the conditions and criteria of entry, stay and transit in the Republic of Albania; provision of aliens with residence permits or extended stay etc.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the drafting and implementation of visa policy and negotiation of necessary acts of international cooperation in the field of migration; supporting the Albanian emigrants abroad and protecting their rights, organising the Albanian diaspora etc.

Directorate of Consular Affairs in the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** is the structure responsible for the treatment of aliens, drafting of policies of their entry and stay in the RoA. This directorate drafts the policies of the consular service activity, monitors and directs this activity.

Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth through its Directorates and the National Employment Service, performs its activity in line with the respective legislation in the field of development and monitoring of state policies for emigration concerning employment, education and vocational training, social standards, pensions, family, children and youth policies etc. This institution is responsible for permitting aliens to be employed at any time, including the professions.

3.2. Legal framework

Albanian migration policy is stated in the Constitution, as a framework guaranteeing rights and freedoms of aliens, regulated by the legislation in force, subordinate legal acts and respective orders and instructions. The institutions responsible for the handling of various aspects of migration in the Republic of Albania are responsible for implementation of special migration policies, component part of the overall migration policy according to the definitions in the legal and subordinate legal acts which govern migration policy in the Republic of Albania.

The change of the migration provisions during the last years in the spirit of the EU legislation aims at building a new platform of migration policies, for more partnership in global migration management. Thus, the Albanian legal framework (Law 108/2013 "On aliens" amended and the normative acts in implementing the law) has gone through several improvements as regards procedures for the travel documents, visas, employment, stay, family reunification etc.). During 2016, it was adopted Law no.74 dated 14.07.2016 "On some addenda and amendments to the law no. 108/2013 "On aliens", and the Joint Instruction no. 264 dated 11.01.2016 on cooperation of structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Intelligence Service on the visa issuing procedure for aliens.

Migration management is handled in a special section of the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2025 (NSDI). NSDI observes that despite the progress in the effective management of migration in Albania, after the implementation of the first National Strategy on Migration (2005-2010) and the Strategy on Reintegration of Albanian Returnees (2010-2015), several challenges need to be addressed: (i) prevention of irregular migration from the country, abuse with the visa-free regime in the EU Schengen area; (ii) sustainable return of Albanians through provisions of support for reintegration; (iii) impact of migration development must be strengthened, inter alia through promotion of human and financial investment of Albanians who are abroad; (iv) strengthening of structures of migration management and immigration policy and their implementation based on solid facts and in line with international standards including the securing of human rights of all the emigrants.

NSDI vision consists in the creation of an effective system of migration governance in Albania, through the attainment of the following strategic objectives:

1. promote safe and regular routes of migration in Albania to prevent irregular migration, so as to streamline 70% of migration from Albania through regular bilateral agreements;
2. increase the impact of emigration development by creating favouring legal and institutional mechanisms;
3. increase sustainability of return migration by supporting reintegration of returned emigrants;
4. implement, at an advanced level, the migration policy, to ensure equal treatment of third-country nationals and their integration in Albania, in line with the international standards;
5. consolidate the migration policy, the legal framework, the management and coordination structures, to ensure a better response to migration challenges.

The National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020 approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 818 dated 26.11.2014 has the overall objective to promote quality jobs and opportunities for skills for all Albanian males and females throughout the life. The National Strategy for Employment and Skills is focused on four strategic priorities: promotion of decent employment opportunities through effective labour market policies, provision of qualitative education and vocational training for the youth and adults, promotion of social inclusion and territorial cohesion and strengthening of governance of labour market and qualification system. The Strategy consists of several measures and activities which aim at management of regular migration for employment of Albanian citizens abroad, return migration, as well as immigration for employment of aliens in the Republic of Albania. In this regard, the National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020 and its action plan aim to:

- a) build information and counselling capacities for regular emigration for employment
- b) improve infrastructure for provision of services to emigrants
- c) strengthen private employment agencies
- ç) increase cooperation with other countries for the management of emigration for employment through bilateral employment agreements
- d) recognize professional qualification and training acquired abroad, as well as
- e) approximate on constant basis the legislation on labour immigration with that of the European Union.

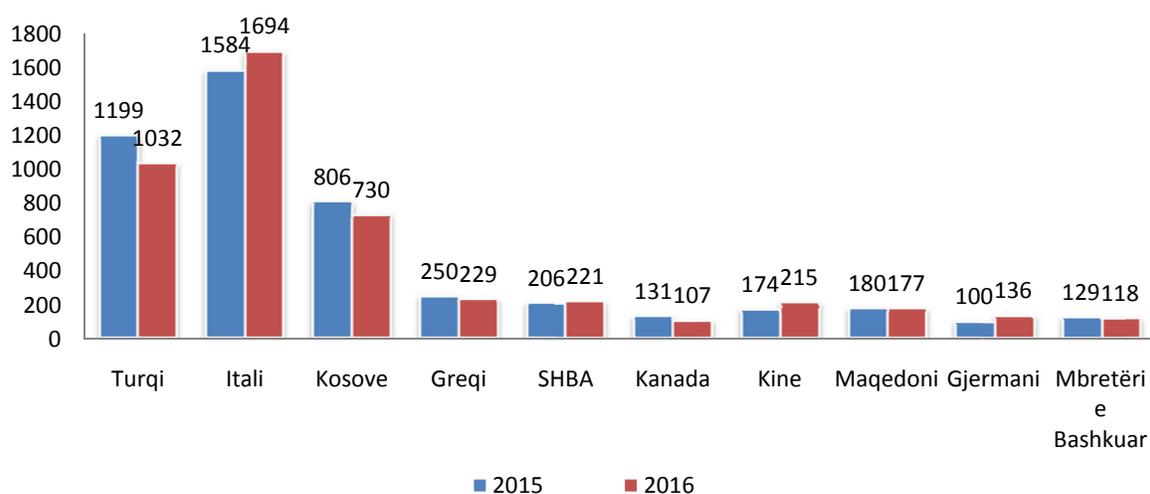
Migration policies and services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs include inter alia improvement and treatment of aliens in Albania by guaranteeing rights of aliens upon arrival to Albania and cooperation with other institutions dealing with aliens and facilitation of entry conditions of aliens in Albania through removal of seasonal visas and procedural improvement in visa issuing.

3.3. Statistics

The common grounds of residence permit application of aliens in Albania are employment, family reunification and study. The number of applications to obtain a residence permit in Albania in 2016 has remained the same even though the migrant stock has increased by 18 % compared to 2015.

During 2016, the total number of aliens residing in Albania has remained approximately at 0.4 % of the local population. Moreover, the number and origin of aliens who have applied for a residence permit have not changed significantly. In 2014, 75% were immigrants from European countries, 13% were from America, 10 % from Asia and the number of emigrants from other countries was insignificant, around 1-2%. In 2015, 75% of immigrants were of European origin, 16% Asian, 6% American and 2% African. In 2016, 57% were immigrants of European origin, 32% Asian, 5 % American and only 2% African. The figure presents the data on aliens who have applied for residence permit from the 10 main citizenships.

Figure 3.1. Aliens' application for residence permit by citizenship 2015-2016



Source: FER-TIMS System in the Directorate of State Police, Tirana, 2017.

Referring to data of the Electronic Register of Aliens, a prevalence of the Italian and Turkish citizens who come to Albania for employment purposes is observed. Therefore, among the European immigrants in 2016, there are approximately 21% Italian citizens, 13% Turkish citizens and 9% Kosovo citizens. Migration flows from Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia in 2016 continue to be dominated by those of Albanian nationality.

Table 3.1. Aliens residing in Albania by 10 main citizenships 2015, 2016

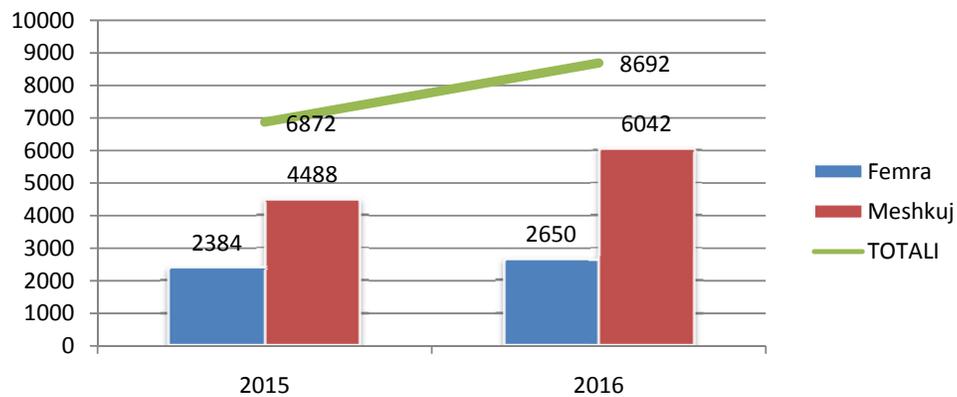
State	2015	2016
Turkey	1199	1032
Italy	1584	1694
Kosovo	806	730
Greece	250	229
U.S.A.	206	221
Canada	131	107

China	174	215
Macedonia	180	177
Germany	100	136
United Kingdom	129	118

Source: FER-TIMS System in the Directorate of State Police, Tirana, 2017.

According to the data of the Electronic Register of Aliens (ERA) 8692 aliens' applications for residence permits were processed in 2016. The following figure shows the dynamics of the applications for residence permits in Albania in 2015 and 2016 by gender where there is a prevalence of males 50% more than females.

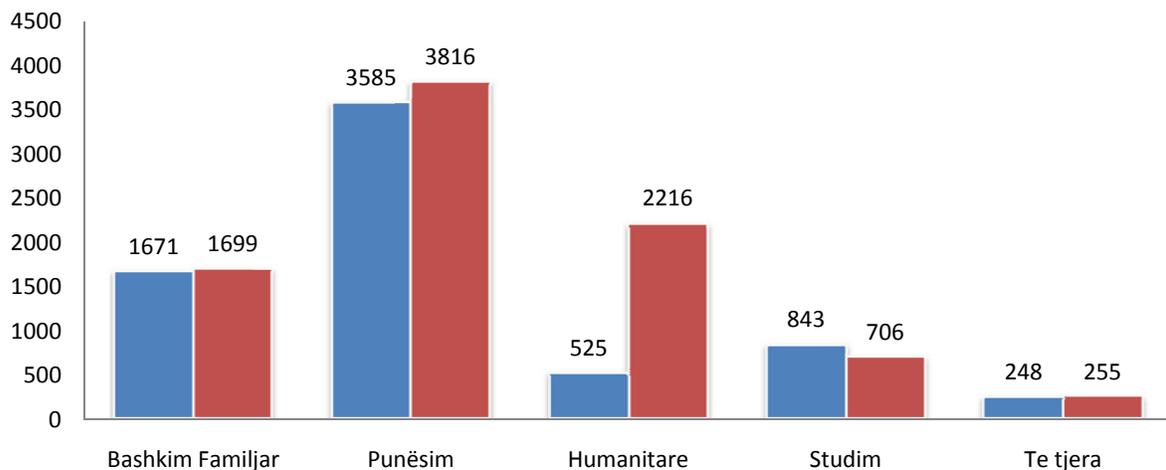
Figure 3.2. Aliens provided with a residence permit by gender (2015-2016).



Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

By reason of stay, the highest number of aliens are those residing in Albania for employment purposes, for a period of over 12 months, mainly males, settled in the capital city, Tirana. Data on aliens who applied for residence permit in the Republic of Albania by reason of stay during 2016, compared to 2015 is given in the following figure.

Figure 3.3. Aliens provided with a residence permit by reason, 2015, 2016



Source: Border and Migration Department, Tirana 2017

Concerning aliens coming to Albania for employment purposes, it is observed an increase of employment requests mainly by Italian citizens (1694 applications), Turkish citizens (1032 applications), Kosovo citizens (730 applications) etc, while the number of self-employed aliens in 2016 was 8% of the total number, with the Italian, Turkish and Syrian citizens ranked on top of the list.

Tirana is the region with the highest flow of aliens provided with work permits in 2016, accounting for some 73.4% of aliens who have applied for work permit in Albania.

According to the sources of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, the top position is pertains to the work permit applications for the category of employees, (1.300 in 2015, and 1540 work permits in 2016).

The second position ranks the applications of the self-employed persons (203 in 2015 and 284 in 2016). Referring to data of the General Directorate of National Employment Service, the issuing of work permits by the Regional Directorates is presented in the following table.

Table 3.2. Distribution of work permits issued to aliens by Employment Offices

Distribution of work permits	2015	2016
RDNES –Tirana	38%	39.2%
RDNES	27.1%	37.7%
RDNES- Lezhë	7.8%	0.1%
RDNES- Fier	6.3%	5.1%
RDNES - Shkodër	1.1%	1%
RDNES - Durres	5.9%	4.2%
RDNES - Elbasan	4.9%	2.3%
Total	1711	1825

Source: General Directorate of NES, Tirana, 2017

Sectors on highest demand for employment of aliens are:

- construction (32.3% in 2015 and 19.5% in 2016),
- services (15.7% in 2015 and 18.3% in 2016),
- trade (9% in 2015 and 8.3% in 2016).

By citizenship, non-EUMS citizens rank on top:

- Turkish (51.8% in 2015 and 31.6% in 2016)
- Chinese (10.9% in 2015 and 10.7% in 2016)
- Macedonian (4.6% in 2015 and 6.7% in 2016).

Table 3.3. Issue of work permits, by countries in 2015 and 2016

	2015		2016
	WP	%	WP%
Turkey	888	51.8	65936.1
China	188	10.9	19710.7
Canada	95	5.5	904.9

India	57	3.3	723.9
Serbia	45	2.6	351.9
Egypt	44	2.57	351.9
Total	1711		1825

Source: General Directorate of NES, Tirana, 2017

Aliens provided with a Work Permit are mostly males. Aliens, males consist of 89.5% of the total number of aliens employed in Albania in 2015, compared to 88% in 2016.

During January - December 2016, 1834 aliens are provided with the Employment Declaration Certificate (EDC) of which:

By gender: 423 females and 1411 males are provided with EDC;

By citizenship: On top position are the citizens from Italy (790 EDC), Kosovo (211 EDC), Greece - (135 EDC).

By sectors: 333 aliens are provided with EDC in the field of other service activities; 123 aliens are provided with EDC in the sector of wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles; 180 aliens are provided with EDC in the construction sector; 301 aliens are provided with EDC as volunteers and religious missionaries;

During January - December 2016, 228 aliens are provided with the Employment Registration Certificate (ERC) of which:

By gender: 45 females and 183 males are provided with ERC.

By citizenship: On top position are the citizens from Turkey (72 ERC); China(36 ERC), Canada (9 ERC) and Korea (12 ERC);

By professional status: 95 ERCs are issued to the volunteers and religious missionaries; 39 ERCs are issued to the technicians and 21 ERCs are issued to the managers.

During 2016, 228 aliens are exempt from the obligation to be provided with a work permit, compared to 274 aliens in 2015.

Most of exemptions in 216 are made for residents in Tirana (53.9%), Elbasan (20.1%), Rrëshen (6.1%) and Lezha (3.5%).²

Foreign employees without work permit, according to statistical indicators of inspections, constitute 4% in 2013, 1% in 2014, 0.8% in 2015 and 1.8% in 2016.

² Directorate of Employment and Migration Policies, MSWY, Tirana 2017

4. Irregular Migration in the country

4.1. Responsible authorities

Ministry of Internal Affairs through the structures including the State Police (Border and Migration Department, department against Organised Crime and Serious Crimes), Asylum Directorate, Anti-trafficking Directorate etc has the main responsibility in the areas of irregular migration. The Border and Migration Department through its central and local structures is responsible for prevention and fight against irregular migration through integrated border management; control of regularity of stay of aliens in the territory and taking of measures of voluntary removal, expulsion, detention of irregular aliens in the territory and their return to the country of origin or transit country from where they come; implementation of Readmission Agreements with other countries; reception, interviewing of citizens returned in the border, and their information on the possibilities of reintegration in the country; regional and broader cooperation in the field of exchange of statistical data on illegal migration and early warning; screening of irregular aliens in the border or inland and their referral to the respective mechanism; identification and treatment of victims/potential victims of trafficking in persons in implementing the National Referral Mechanism and Standard Operating Procedures for identification, referral and assistance to potential victims of trafficking; including the unaccompanied minors as regards the fight against trafficking and smuggling of persons.

The Border and Migration Department in order to conduct effective control and manage irregular migration, cooperates and interacts with the Asylum Directorate in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, that deals with cases of asylum, refugees in Albania. This directorate is the decision-making authority responsible for asylum and refugees, a responsible structure in the respective ministry for asylum and refugees. It is responsible for the handling of applications, processing, examining of hearings and collecting other data necessary for the completion of documentation for each asylum application.

The Anti-trafficking Directorate deals only with the monitoring, coordination, promotion and orientation of the activity of central/local structures in issues of prevention and fight against trafficking in persons, in the framework of implementation of the National Strategy of Fight Against Trafficking in Persons.

4.2. Legal framework

The Albanian legal framework (Law 108/2013 "On aliens", amended and the acts implementing the law) has marked a lot of improvements even with regard to the procedures for the treatment of irregular aliens including fight against illegal migration, as well as unaccompanied minors, illegal entry, stay, employment, fictitious marriages, carriers' responsibilities etc.

Law on asylum no. 121/2014, which is partially aligned with several Directives of the Council and the European Parliament provides for the conditions and procedures for granting and cancelling asylum, supplementary protection and temporary protection in the Republic of Albania, rights and obligations of asylum-seekers, refugees and persons under temporary and supplementary protection, rights to family reunification and also definition of conditions for integration of refugees and persons under supplementary protection in the Republic of Albania.

One of the migration policies of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, is the National Strategy of

Integrated Border Management 2014-2020 and the Strategy and the Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2014-2017.

The National Strategy of Integrated Border Management 2014-2020 adopted by DCM no. 119 dated 05.03.2014 is designed for coordination and cooperation among all authorities and agencies involved in border security and trade facilitation, to improve effective and productive systems of integrated border management, aiming at reaching the goal of open, but controlled and secure borders. The Strategy and the Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2014-2017 is based on four pillars: i) criminal prosecution, ii) protection of victims from trafficking, iii) prevention, iv) coordination of work among institutions.

4.3. Statistics

During 2016, a decrease in the number of aliens, apprehended while attempting to transit illegally through Albania was observed. Number of citizens apprehended during this year (915) was 55 % lower than the number of aliens apprehended the previous year (2047). In 2015, some 25.4 % of them were apprehended inland, while 74.6 % in the vicinity of the state border and BCP. In 2016, some 25.4% of citizens were apprehended inland, while 74.6% in the vicinity of the state border.

During 2016, 663 irregular immigrants, aliens, were apprehended while attempting to enter illegally through the green border with Greece. Compared to 2015, with 1629, it results that there is a decrease by 966 of the number of irregular immigrants.

Irregular immigrants, aliens, who have transited through the territory of Albania are mainly those citizens who are located in the part of Ioannina and Igoumenitsa, Greece. Irregular immigrants, aliens, who are apprehended by the border and migration police have declared that their aim was to transit through the country and reach the final destination in EUMS.

They declared before the local border and migration authorities their intent to transit through the Balkan countries (Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia) as their final destination were EU countries and possibly Germany.

Table 4.1. Irregular aliens by country of detection, 2015 - 2016

Irregular aliens	2015	2016
in the border area	1527	663
Inland	520	252
Total	2047	915

Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

Concerning the origin of aliens apprehended in an attempt to cross the border illegally, the relatively highest number corresponds to those coming from Syria (310), Afghanistan (273), Iran - Iraq (135), Morocco (76), Pakistan (22) and Congo (20), while in 2016 considerable decrease especially of citizens from Somalia, Eritrea, Guinea, etc is observed.

Table 4.2. Third-country nationals by citizenship, 2015 -2016

Citizenship/Year	2015	2016
Algeria	-	9
Syria	1354	310

Morocco	66	76
Afghanistan	-	273
Palestine	29	21
Tunisia	-	-
Pakistan	-	22
Congo	46	20
Guinea	58	-
Somalia	118	14
Sudan	31	4
Eritrea	171	5
Nigeria	-	2
India	-	3
Comoros	-	5
Iran – Iraq	70	135
Ghana	52	-
Other	52	38

Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

Number of foreign citizens who have been refused entry by BCPs (land, air, sea) and by year 2012-2016, is given in the table.

Table 4.3. Aliens refused entry by type of BCP, 2015- 2016

Border/Year	2015	2016
Land	290	273
Air	327	162
Sea	12	2
Total	629	437

Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

Referring to the data in the following table, the reasons for refusal consist in the missing travel and vehicle documentation, invalid documents, missing visa, exceeding the time limits of stay, lack of financial means as well as failure to justify the purpose of travel.

Table 4.4. Aliens refused entry by reason, 2015-2016

Reason of refusal/Year	2015	2016
Invalid documentation, missing visa	129	164
Failure to justify the purpose	311	25
Exceeding the time limits of stay	17	-
System notification	10	5
Lack of financial means	6	172
Other	156	71
Total	629	437

Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

Albanian and foreign citizens who are returned by the police service of other countries in the border

undergo special reception procedures, interviewing and then screening. One of the purposes of the selection process is even the assessment of the vulnerabilities and needs or indicators of the trafficking in human beings. Referring to data administered by the Anti-trafficking Directorate in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. 4 female foreign citizens were identified in 2015 as potential victims of trafficking, and they are: 1 from the Philippine, 1 from Kosovo and 2 from the United Kingdom.

95 victims/potential victims of trafficking were identified in 2016 and the Table 4.5 refers to their status, age group, gender and nationality.

Table 4.4.Victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking, 2016

Status	Victims of trafficking	33
	Potential victims of trafficking	62
Age	Adults	51
	Children	44
Gender	M	11
	F	84
Nationality	Albanian	87
	Aliens	8

Source: Anti-trafficking Directorate, Tirana, 2017

Referring to the data on aliens, 2 males and 6 females, are of the following countries: 2 Philippine, 2 Moldova, 1 Africa, 1 Kosovo, 1 America and 1 Macedonia.

5. Return, readmission and re-integration

5.1. Responsible authorities

The Ministry of Internal Affairs through the structure of Border and Migration Department in the State Police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the consular structure, are the main responsible authorities for the drafting of return/readmission policy in relation to aliens who stay illegally in Albania and also for implementing the bilateral and multilateral legal instruments (readmission agreement) in order to follow and perform the return/readmission procedures of citizens, voluntary return, which implementation is assisted by the International Organisation for Migration in Albania.

Implementation of return/readmission is supported by the liaison officers and the Albanian consular staff abroad who participate in the practices of cooperation with the authorities of the respective countries to support the return of persons. Because of refusal of the Albanian asylum-seekers in some EUMS, upon termination of the asylum-seeking process, returns from a deportation nature have been converted into a voluntary return. Bilateral talks anticipated the phenomenon of voluntary return mainly through special flights from EU member states including Germany, France, Great Britain, Sweden etc. Many flights of this nature are coordinated by Frontex (European Border Management and Coast Guard Agency).

The re-integration process includes many institutions at central and local level dealing with implementation of policies for re-integration of repatriated persons. The central institutions involved in the implementation of reintegration policies are: Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Health.

Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth is responsible for the reintegration of returned Albanian citizens, specifically for:

- inclusion of the category of Albanian returnees who have economic problems in the special group of unemployed job-seekers who benefit from the employment promotion programme;
- identification of existing needs for the vocational training of Albanian returnees;
- provision of free of charge training in the regional directorates of public vocational training of Albanian returnees who have economic problems;
- establishment and making functional of the Migration Counters in all the Local Employment Offices;
- coordinating work for the implementation of policies in the field of reintegration of returned emigrants, as well as
- in cooperation with the State Social Service and the local government units, responding to the needs for provision of social care services as well as supporting the filling in of the application for provision of economic aid to the returned emigrants.

The Ministry of Education and Sports is responsible for contributing to integration of aliens and Albanian returnees in the field of education, culture and science.

5.2. Legal framework

Voluntary return continues to be a priority of Albania when it comes to addressing illegal migration by ensuring effective and sustainable return. In accordance with the Return Directive, the return policy in Albania supports voluntary return of persons who are subject of the obligation to leave the territory of Albania. Sustainable return, readmission and re-integration policy of returnees; removal, expulsion, detention policy; policy of protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of immigrants and personal data protection; repressive measures and appeal policy; immigrants' integration policy etc are stated in the legal framework for aliens (Law 108/2013 "On aliens", amended by law 74/2016 and sublegal acts implementing the law). During 2015, the Instruction of the Minister of the Internal Affairs no. 293 dated 04.06.2016 on the treatment of aliens staying irregularly in the territory of the Republic of Albania was approved.

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth through its directorates and National Employment Service, performs its activity in line with the respective legislation, in the field of development and monitoring of state policies for emigration and related issues: employment, education and vocational training and labour immigration, labour relations etc.

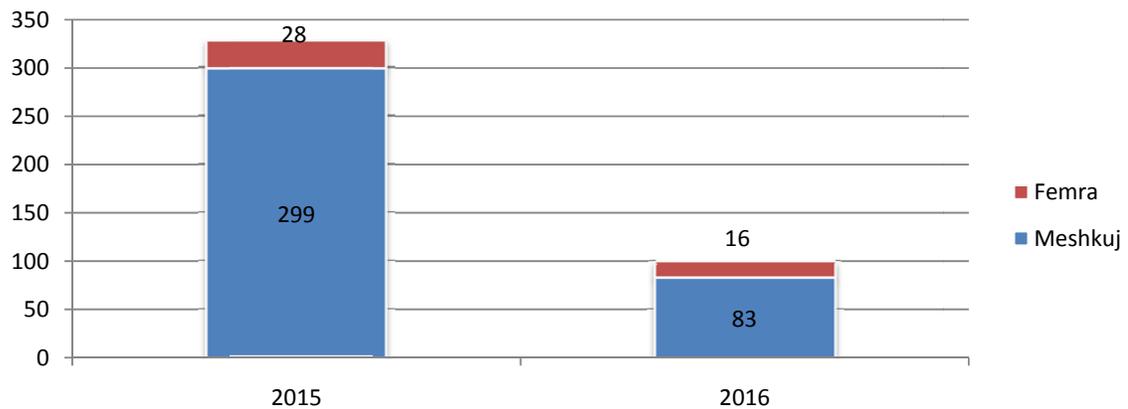
As of 2010, Migration Counters (MC) have been operating under the National Employment Service and they are set up in all the Local Employment Offices. Migration Counters are an important part of the mechanism of support for reintegration. These structures serve as key contact points at local level to collect detailed data for the Albanian returnees who approach them voluntarily. Migration Counters perform the following functions: i) interviewing Albanian citizens, returnees who approach the counters voluntarily; ii) giving information on public and private services in line with the identified needs (where appropriate); iii) referring to the public and private services (where relevant) as well as specific projects of civil society in line with their needs. Migration policy is included even in the National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates actions with the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for implementation of bilateral and multilateral readmission agreements.

5.3. Statistics

In 2016, out of a total of 915 aliens apprehended or found in irregular situation, 96 persons are removed through readmission procedures, mainly to Greece. The returned/readmitted citizens were from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco etc. Mostly, it has been applied the procedure of voluntary removal of third-country nationals inland and at the border, but sometimes they have been placed in the Closed Centre in Kareç, followed by the return procedures based on bilateral agreements between Albania and countries of origin/transit.

Figure 5.1. Third country nationals in the Closed Reception Centre, 2015 -2016



Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

Number of persons placed in the Closed Centre decreased respectively from 327 in 2015 to 99 in 2016. Such decrease is because of prevalence of treatment of aliens, who are bound by law to leave the territory of the Republic of Albania, by removal orders which are executed on voluntary basis.

By analysing the migration flows, voluntary return of Albanian citizens is a characteristic for migration flows in Albania. The negative impact of the economic crisis in some EUMS has influenced the return of emigrants, especially from Greece and Italy.

Intensification of return of Albanian emigrants during 2016 is mainly linked to the continuation of the economic crisis in the host country as well as return of irregular emigrants.

The typologies of returned Albanian emigrants during 2016 were:

- i) voluntary return of economic emigrants;
- ii) return of economic emigrants because of crisis in the main host countries, Greece and Italy;
- iii) return of minors, accompanied or not by their parents;
- iv) return of irregular migrants;
- v) return of asylum-seekers who have not been granted asylum.

The table below shows the number of Albanian citizens returned from EU countries during the last years, by age group.

Table 5.1. Albanian returnees by age group during 2012-2016

Year	Total	Male		Female	
		Total	under 18 years of age	Total	under 18 years of age
2015	25134	23592	260	1542	37
2016	21681	18443	978	2259	222

Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

Thus, around 85 % of returned emigrants in 2016 were males compared to 15% females, whereas in 2015 males constituted 94% of returnees. In addition, the number of returnees in 2016 decreased 14% compared to 2015 and this refers to the decrease of the number of Albanians who intend to stay irregularly in the EUMS.

A significant increase of returnees, unaccompanied minors is observed in 2016. The table below shows the main countries of return of the Albanian unaccompanied minors.

Table 5.2. Main countries returning unaccompanied minors, 2015-2016

Year	2015	2016
Greece	10	331
France	54	94
Great Britain	1	60
Switzerland	0	28
Sweden	16	45
Germany	19	280
Brussels	5	4
Norway	4	-
Total	120	948

Source: TIMS System in the Directorate of State Police, Tirana, 2017

During 2016, unlike 2015, the number of requests for return of unaccompanied minors or separated minors in EU countries increased. This is observed in the following table (5.3) which shows that in 2016, the geography and the number of returning countries has increased.

In order to address these critical problems and with the good intent to minimise this uncommon phenomenon of unaccompanied or separated minors, several meetings are organised with representatives of Migration Agencies of countries including Germany, France, Sweden, Belgium, Greece, Italy etc. Cooperation in this area is focused on obtaining information from the requesting countries and enabling safe return/readmission of unaccompanied or separated minors to their families or their surrender to the state entity which is entrusted by the law with their reception. Cooperation of the border and migration police structures with the state social service, as the main state entity of social treatment of children, is at very satisfactory level.

Table 5.3. Return of unaccompanied minors from EU countries based on readmission procedure during 2015 - 2016

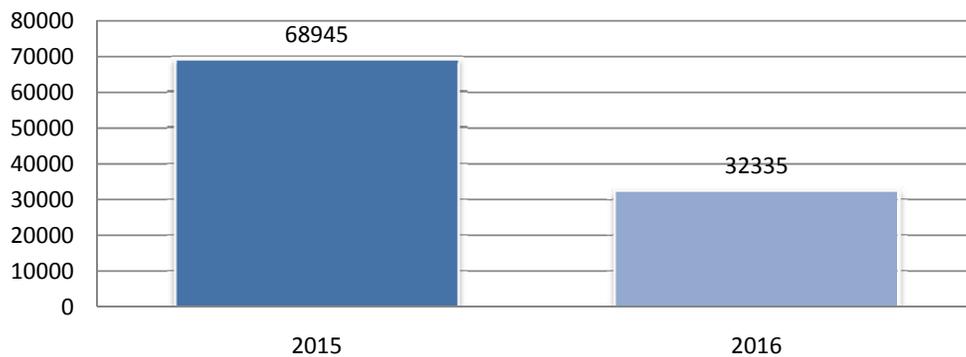
State	Requests	readmitted	Requests	readmitted
	2015		2016	
France	55	24	71	47
Germany	19	13	81	58
Sweden	26	12	27	24
Belgium	5	4	5	5
Norway	4	4	6	6
Greece	10	9	7	7

England	1	1	4	4
Italy	-	-	17	10
Total	120	68	218	161

Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017

A decrease in the flow of Albanian citizens applying for asylum in EUMS is observed during 2016 compared to 2015. The figure below presents the dynamics of requests for asylum in these countries during the period 2015-2016.

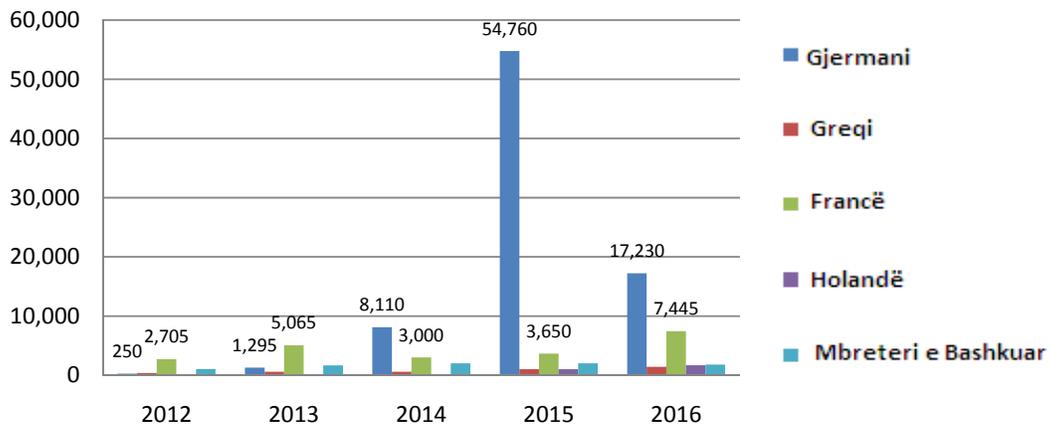
Figure 5.2. Albanian citizens requesting asylum in EU Member States, 2015-2016



Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017 (processed EUROSTAT data)

Main countries where Albanian citizens have applied for asylum are Germany, Greece, Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom. The main reasons for seeking asylum have been economic reasons, therefore the number of cases of refusal of asylum requests by EUMS is quite high.

Figure 5.2. Albanian citizens applying for asylum in 5 main countries, by years



Source: General Directorate for Border and Migration, Tirana 2017 (processed EUROSTAT data)

Referring to Figure 5.2, it has been observed a significant decrease of Albanians requesting asylum in EUMS, especially in Germany.

Some of the Albanian citizens returning from migration approach the Migration Counters (MC) located in all the regional and local employment offices.³⁶ MC are set up throughout the country. These structures were established in implementing the Strategy for Reintegration of Albanian Returnees 2010-2015 and its Action Plan. The Migration Counters interview the Albanian returnees who approach the counters, provide information on public and private services, in line with the identified needs and refer them to public and private services and specific projects of civil society, based on the needs of the Albanian returnees. Only some of the Albanian citizens returning from emigration approach the Migration Counters (MC).

The table shows the number of returnees, registered in the MC during the last years.

Table 5.3. Albanian returnees registered in the Migration Counters

Year	2015	2016
Albanian nationals	520	289

Source: National Employment Service. Tirana, 2017

289 Albanian citizens returned from emigration approached and were registered with the Migration Counters to receive services during the period January-December 2016.

The Albanian returnees approaching the Migration Counters during 2016 had the following characteristics:

- **By age:** The age group 25-40 stands on the top position with 134 registered returnees or 46% of the total, followed by the age group 40-55 with 117 registered returned emigrants or 40% of the total number.
- **By level of education:** The emigrants who have completed secondary level education stand on the top position with 155 Albanian emigrants or 54% of the total number and the emigrants who have completed up to nine-year education are ranked the second with 117 emigrants or 40% of the total number.
- **By country of emigration:** Most of the returnees come from Greece, 45% of the total number, followed by the returnees from Italy, 22%. The returnees from other EUMS and America are ranked on the third and fourth position.
- **By reasons of return:** 177 returned emigrants or 61% of the total number are returned because of unemployment, followed by the 36% of emigrants returned because of missing documentation and the emigrants who intend to invest in Albania.
- **By type of return:** In most cases, return is family and long-term one. 59% of those registered are returned with their family, whereas the remaining percentage is returned individually. 67% of the registered returnees are returned for a long-term period and 33% are returned temporarily.

- **By support for reintegration:** During 2016, 53% of the returnees are consulted for employment, 31% are instructed to the vocational training courses, 16% are supported with income and 22% of the returnees approaching the migration counters are provided with information and referral to medical services.

48 returned emigrants were trained in the vocational training courses provided by the Regional Directorate of Public Vocational Training during 2016. The vocational training courses preferred by the returned emigrants in 2016 include: aesthetics, plumbing, network installation and repair, air conditioning, solar panel installation, electrical services and hairdresser.

142 returned emigrants attended the active labour market programmes in 2016. 35 returned emigrants were employed upon Decision of the Council of Ministers no.48 "Employment promotion programme of unemployed job-seekers". 106 returned emigrants were employed upon Decision of the Council of Ministers no.47 "Employment promotion programme through in-service training" and 1 returned emigrant was employed upon Decision of the Council of Ministers no.873 "Newly graduated students' internship".

Returnees of school age are provided with facilities for involvement in the education system. Referring to the data of the Ministry of Education and Sports, in the beginning of the academic year 2015-2016, almost 801 students³ returned and were re-enrolled.

From the data submitted by RDE/EO concerning enrolment in the academic year 2015-2016, 1800 students who have completed undergraduate education were returned from abroad and registered to resume education in the homeland.

In addition to the instructions given in the beginning of each academic year concerning re-integration of returnees in education, the Ministry of Education and Sports recommends the taking of measures "for registration and treatment of students who return from emigration", to:

- register and treat the student returnees with priority, by facilitating their integration into school and community.
- draft a special action plan by the unit of the psycho-social service in the RDE/EO for the provision of services that help educational, social and personal development of students who return from emigration.
- provide free Albanian language courses to students returning from emigration.
- provide tailor-made treatment to students registered with educational institutions to fulfil obligations of the curricula during the period of their absence.

³Source: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2017

6. Integration

6.1. Responsible authorities

Ministry of the Internal Affairs has the overall responsibility in the field of migration and integration but there is no specialised institutional system in Albania for coordination of integration and citizenship.

Albanian citizenship is acquired upon decree of the President of the Republic, but the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the authority responsible for implementation of policies and procedures in issues related to citizenship of the Republic of Albania. In this framework, the structures of the State Police and the Citizenship Sector in the Legal Directorate and Approximation of Legislation in the Ministry of Internal Affairs receive the application, check, verify and decide whether to forward this application to the President for a decree.

It has been observed a lack of coordination among the structures dealing with the procedures of acquisition, re-acquisition and renouncement of the Albanian citizenship and those dealing with the stay of aliens in the Republic of Albania.

6.2. Legal framework

Integration support except for the persons who come from the Albanian speaking regions is necessary for emigrants from third countries who do not speak Albanian, beneficiaries of international protection (refugees and supplementary protection) as well as stateless persons. Aliens who in Albania (beneficiaries of international support, EU citizens, third country citizens) are entitled to a wide range of services, but these are fragmented, depending on the reason of stay. There is no complex programme of integration that applies to all the aliens.

The rules on acquisition of Albanian citizenship are governed through law no. 8389, dated 5.8.1998, "On Albanian citizenship" amended by law no. 8442, dated 21.1.1999 "On some amendments to law no.8389, dated 5.8.1998 "On Albanian citizenship". It is evident that the recent legal amendments were made in 1999.

In implementing the legal provisions that define the rules and criteria for acquisition, renouncement and re-acquisition of Albanian citizenship, several sub-legal acts have been issued to define the rules, the time limits, documents and authorities competent for the reviewing these requests

6.3. Statistics

Only a small number of aliens residing in Albania apply for Albanian citizenship. 281 foreign citizens have acquired citizenship in 2016. Comparison of data of 2012-2015 shows that following the increase in 2014, there is a significant decrease of applications for acquisition of Albanian citizenship by aliens in 2015 and 2016. The table below shows data on applications for Albanian citizenship during the last four years.

Table 6.1. Albanian citizenship applications 2015-2016

	2015	2016
Acquisition of citizenship	257	281
Granting of citizenship	3	-
Recognition of citizenship	20	13
Re-acquisition of citizenship	23	13

Source: Directorate of Legal Issues and Approximation, Tirana, 2017

7. Migration and development

7.1. Responsible authorities

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has the overall responsibility in the field of migration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for Albanian communities in the neighbouring countries as well as Diaspora abroad.

Given the fact that economic growth of the country is linked directly to the migration processes, several ministries including: Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth; Ministry of Education and Sports; etc according to their scope of activity draft the policies and strategies which directly or indirectly regulate the issues which concern migration and development.

7.2. Legal framework

The common aim of authorities responsible in the field of migration and development of the country is to create a favourable climate for the promotion and attraction of foreign investment and diaspora. In this context, remittances of emigrants are considered an integral component of the foreign direct investment. Moreover, one of the objectives of the Albanian government is development of free economic zones or technology and economic development zones.

The policy document for the involvement of Albanian communities abroad is an essential aspect of migration and development policy. This policy is developed based on the assessment that the Albanian government is making to the potential of the Albanian Communities Abroad (ACA) in the social, cultural, political and economic development of Albania. It represents an evident recognition of ACAs as important agents and development partners in the future of Albania.

This is a policy that intends to make possible the establishment of connections and relations of mutual benefit between Albania and its communities abroad. *Policy of Involvement of Albanian Communities Abroad* is the first formalisation of a policy framework for the establishment of a mutual benefit relationship between Albania and its communities abroad. The document announces the first summit of the Diaspora which was held by the Albanian Government in November 2016 with the participation of over 1000 participants from the Albanian communities in 40 countries of the world.

The policy document is focused on the four following components:

- Component 1 - Institutional Development
- Component 2 - Albanian Communities abroad and the Human Capital
- Component 3 - Albanian communities abroad and the Economic Development
- Component 4 - Support to the Albanian communities abroad

The Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship in the framework of development policies and Law no 55/2015 "on strategic investment" supports and contributes indirectly to the field of migration.

During 2016, the Albanian government intensified the efforts to promote involvement of the Albanian communities abroad in the development of Albania. To this end, the Policy Document of

Involvement of Albanian Communities Abroad was drafted with the technical and financial support of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The Action Plan of the Policy Document foresees several concrete measures for the implementation during a three-year period.

7.3. Statistics

Currently, the presence of foreign investment in Albania by origin is as follows:

- i. Investment from Greece occupies the top position with a stock of 1.23 billion EUR in the end of 2016, showing an increase of 2% compared to the previous year and focused on the banking sector and telecommunications.
- ii. investment from the Netherlands occupies the second position with a stock of 843 million EUR, showing an increase of 23% compared to the previous year and focused on energy and telecommunications;
- iii. Investment from Canada occupies the third position with a stock of 798 million EUR, but showing a decrease of 20% compared to the previous year and focused on oil extraction industry.
- iv. Investment from Italy occupies the fourth position with a stock of 561 million EUR, showing an increase of 3 % compared to the previous year and focused on the banking sector and industry.
- v. Investment from Turkey occupies the fifth position with a stock of 531 million EUR and showing an increase of 18% on annual basis and focused on telecommunications, banking sector and industry.
- vi. Investment from Austria occupies the sixth position with a stock of 424 million EUR, showing an increase of 10% compared to the previous year and focused on financial services (banking sector and insurance) and energy.

From the point of view of absorption of foreign direct investment, the following sectors are dominant:

- i. information and communication which have the highest stock of foreign direct investment, with 1.24 billion EUR by the end of 2016;
- ii. second most important sector includes the financial activities and insurance, which investment stock amounts to 941 million EUR;
- iii. third sector is electrical energy, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, with a stock amounting to 938 million EUR.

In 2016, the FDI flows reached 983 million EUR.

According to data of the Bank of Albania, Albania, in 2016, absorbed more FDI compared to the previous year, showing an increase of 10% from 890 million EUR in 2015 to 983 million EUR in 2016. Direct investment in 2016 constituted 9% of GDP⁴. Industry sector (production, processing and extraction industry) was the main sector absorbing investment amounting to 740 million EUR in the FDI flow. Some industries of employment intensity, including the shoe and textile industry have absorbed several projects but of modest capital amount. Other important sectors are transport and financial services and insurance sector. Switzerland ranks on top position in 2016 with an investment flow of 429 million EUR followed by the Netherlands with an amount of 148 million EUR, Canada 127 million EUR and Turkey 64 million EUR.

⁴Referring to the GDP figure foreseen by the Ministry of Finance

In the end of 2013, 3046 foreign-owned enterprises running economic activity in the Republic of Albania were found, whereas in 2014 there were found 3478 active enterprises. 2015 marked an increase compared to the two previous years, accounting for 4084 foreign enterprises. Concerning enterprises of shared ownership (Albanian - foreign), there were 1.608 active enterprises in 2013 and 1.767 enterprises in 2014. The end of 2015 accounts for 1855 active enterprises of foreign and shared ownership.

During 2013-2015, it is observed that in 64% of them the foreign party prevails over the Albanian party in the group of foreign and joint ventures.

The Albanian legislation⁵ provides that registration of subjects in the commercial register implies also their concurrent registration with the tax administration, central and local, social and health insurance scheme and labour inspectorate. In 2015, there were 2761 subjects of the category Employer, 2226 subjects of the category Self-employed with employees, 31921 subjects of the category sole self-employed and 53 subjects of the category self-employed with employees and unpaid family member.⁶The situation for 2016 is given in Table 7.1, by category of subjects:

Table 7.1. Commercial subjects by category, in 2016

Category of the Subject	2016
Self-employed without employees	2742
Self-employed with employees and unpaid family members	5
Self-employed with employees	309
Self-employed without employees and unpaid family members	202
Employer	451

Source: National Business Centre, Tirana 2017

In 2015, there were 1058 enterprises owned by foreign owners compared to 3500 enterprises in 2014. The difference shows the decreasing trend of investment by aliens. Table 7.2 shows the data of subjects under foreign ownership in 2016.

Table 7.2. Subjects of foreign ownership in Albania, in 2016

Ownership	Total
Subjects of foreign ownership	1203
Subjects of shared ownership	300

Source: National Business Centre, Tirana 2017

Enterprises of foreign owners or co-owners occupy around 4% of enterprises in the country on annual basis. 81.2% of foreign and shared ownership enterprises is focused in the region of Tirana, Durresi and Vlora, which are most attractive for the foreign investors.

Table 7.3. Subjects of foreign ownership, in 2016

⁵Law no. 9723, dated 03.05.2007, "On Business Registration", amended, article 59, paragraph 1.

⁶NBC- National Business Centre, established by law no. 131/2015 "On the National Business Centre" as a result of merger of the two institutions, National Licensing Centre and National Registration Centre

	Tirana	Durrës	Vlorë
Subjects of foreign and shared ownership	1240	214	87

Source: National Business Centre, Tirana 2017

Moreover, foreign investors in Albania operate mainly in activities listed in the Table.

Table 7.4. Subjects of foreign ownership, by type of activity in 2016

Title of the activity	2015	2016
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of vehicles and motorcycles	318	490
Information and communication		114
Construction	83	131
Administrative and support services		153
Accommodation and services		121
Professional, scientific and technical activities	124	214
Processing industry	108	191

Source: National Business Centre, Tirana 2017

Real GDP growth is one of the most important indicators of national accounts. During 2016, the Albanian economy marked a real growth by 3.37 % while in 2015, the economy growth was 2.23 % in real terms.⁷ GDP per capita in 2015 amounted to 496 thousand ALL. The impact of economic growth on the welfare system and consequently on the generation of migrant flows, is linked with the contribution of the branches of economy in the GDP and employment. During 2016⁸ the main contribution in the economic growth derived from services (46.8%), agriculture (20.1%), construction (9.2%) and industry (11.6%).⁹ Meanwhile, the contribution of sectors in employment has been disproportional, especially in the case of agriculture and services. Services attract a small share of formal workforce, while they are among the sectors of highest informality. Lack of jobs and informality in economy and labour market eventually feed migrant flows of Albanians.

The Albanian diaspora currently consists of five main groups: i) economic emigrants; ii) family members of economic emigrants; iii) students; iv) asylum-seekers and refugees; v) unaccompanied minors. The biggest groups of Diaspora consist of economic emigrants, family members of economic emigrants and students. Meanwhile, during 2016 the flow of asylum-seekers in EUMS was still persistent even though at very low pace, and mainly in Germany.

Albania is still highly dependent on remittances of emigrants. As of 2007, remittances reached the highest level, 952 million EUR and by 2013 remittances fell to reach the lowest amount of 547 million EUR and remittances are increasing relatively in the following years. The positive trend amounting to 616 million EUR continued even during 2016.¹⁰

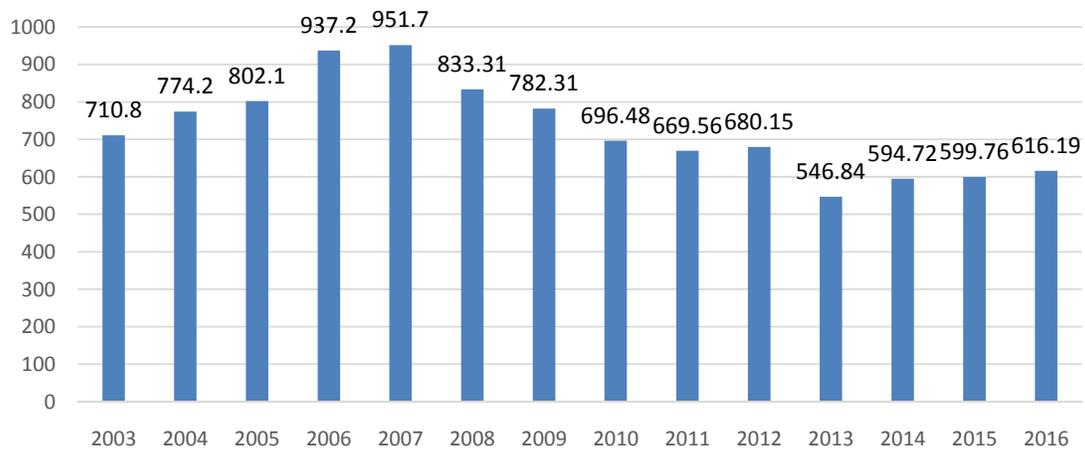
Figure 7.1. Dynamics of remittances of Albanian emigrants, 2003-2016

⁷INSTAT, Tirana, 2017

⁸2016 data are based on quarterly assessment

⁹INSTAT, Tirana, 2017

¹⁰Bank of Albania



Source: Bank of Albania 2017

Remittances decreased because of the crisis in reception countries, Greece and Italy and because of other reasons: costs of the migration process, ageing of the first generation of emigrants, increase of expenses for the second and third generation of emigrants, formalisation of migration projects, increase of costs of public services and living in host countries, modification of behaviour and individual and family projects, because of insecurity caused by the financial crisis etc.

8. Asylum and international protection

8.1. Responsible authorities

Ministry of the Internal Affairs has the main responsibility in the area of migration and asylum. General Directorate for Border and Migration is responsible for the screening of irregular aliens in the border and inland.

Asylum Directorate operates based on the law 121/2014 "On asylum in the Republic of Albania". The asylum-seeker, after the filing of the asylum request, is placed in the reception centre for asylum-seekers. The centre receives persons who have been refused asylum application, until the end of the appeal procedures or the time limit of appeal. The asylum-seeker has the right to stay in the reception centre during the duration of the procedure granting the refugee status. If the asylum-seeker has the possibility to stay outside the reception centre and afford minimum living conditions, the Asylum Directorate decides to remove the asylum-seeker from this centre;

8.2. Legal framework

The Republic of Albania, in order to harmonise the legislation with the EU Directive has drafted the law no. 121/2014 "On asylum in the Republic of Albania" which provides for the conditions and procedures for granting and cancelling refugee status, supplementary protection and temporary protection in the Republic of Albania, rights and obligations of asylum-seekers, refugees and persons under temporary and supplementary protection, right to family reunification and also definition of conditions for integration of refugees and persons under supplementary protection in the Republic of Albania.

Moreover, the law provides for the principle of non-refoulement according to which:

1. The Republic of Albania recognizes and respects the obligation of authorities not to return, extradite or remove from the territory those persons who have been granted or applied for the right to asylum or other forms of protection in these cases:
 - a) in a country where their life or freedom would be threatened on basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion;
 - b) in a state where there is reason to believe that an asylum seeker may be at risk to be subjected to torture or to inhuman and degrading punishment or any other treatment provided by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, interpreted by the European Court or in treaties / international conventions to which Albania is a party;
 - c) in a state where there is reason to believe that an asylum seeker may be subject to enforced disappearance;
 - d) in their country of origin, if foreigners were given a form of protection, in accordance with the provisions of this law;
 - e) in a third country, which may return or send the person to a country specified by the letters "a", "b" and "c", of this article.
2. The alien, whose application for asylum has been refused by the authority responsible for asylum and refugees, is not expelled or sent outside the Republic of Albania before exercising or

- giving legal opportunity for the exercise of procedural rights and guarantees stipulated by Law, except when the law provides otherwise.
3. There are only two exceptional cases where the asylum seeker can be refused:
 - a) when there are reasonable grounds to consider him as a danger to the national security of the Republic of Albania;
 - b) he has been convicted by a final decision for a crime punishable by a minimum of 7 years of imprisonment, constituting a threat to public order and security of the Republic of Albania.

National Commission for Asylum and Refugees

This law foresees even the administrative link of appeal against decisions of the directorate that constitutes an extra guarantee to the asylum-seekers and refugees. The law foresees that the National Commission for Asylum and Refugees is the only authority responsible for decision-making in case of appeals against decisions of the authority responsible for asylum and refugees.

In 2016, it was approved the DCM no. 206, dated 16.03.2016 "On establishment, composition, organisation and functioning of the National Commission for Asylum and Refugees" and the Commission was completed with staff.

Reception standards

Law no. 121/2014 "On asylum in the Republic of Albania" is partially approximated with the Council Directive 2003/9/EC dated 27 January 2003 laying down the minimum standards for the reception of asylum-seekers. In this context, it is being restructured the National Reception Centre for Asylum-Seekers to ensure better living conditions about accommodation, hygiene and enhance reception capacities.

8.3. Statistics

An increasing trend of applications for asylum by foreign citizens is observed during 2016 in Albania.

The dynamics of aliens with international protection, by citizenship, excluding citizens from Iran ASHRAF camp, is presented in the following Table:

Table 8.1. Foreign asylum-seekers by citizenship, 2015-2016

Citizenship/Year	2015	2016
Kosovo	1	1
Iraq	1	28
Ukraine	3	1
Eritrea	7	-
Iran	1	-
Sudan	4	-
Gambia	1	-
Turkey	-	2
Serbia	-	1
Somalia	1	-
Gabon	1	-

Cameroon	2	-
Macedonia	2	1
Afghanistan	3	64
Syria	79	127
Pakistan	-	4
Congo	-	3
Ghana	-	1
Tunisia	-	3
Guinea	-	2
Mali	-	1
Sudan	-	1
TOTAL	106	240

Source: *Asylum Directorate, Tirana, 2017*

The table shows data on decisions suspending applications by citizenship.

Table 8.2. Suspension decisions by citizenship, 2015-2016

Citizenship	2015	2016
Armenia	1	-
Cameroon	2	-
Gabon	1	-
Iran	1	-
Kosovo	1	-
Iraq	-	1
Ukraine	-	-
Eritrea	2	-
Sudan	-	-
Gambia	-	-
Lebanon	-	-
Serbia	-	1
Guinea	-	2
Azerbaijan	2	-
Afghanistan	1	13
Syria	2	6
TOTAL	13	23

Source: *Asylum Directorate, Tirana, 2017*

Contributing institutions:

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

State Police Directorate
General Directorate for Border and Migration
Asylum Directorate
Anti-trafficking Directorate

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND YOUTH

Directorate of Employment and Migration Policies
National Employment Service

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BANK OF ALBANIA

NATIONAL BUSINESS CENTRE

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