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Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe

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Abbreviations

ADHS	Albania Demographic and Health Survey
ALSMS	Albanian Living Standards Measurement Survey
BoA	Bank of Albania
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoA	Government of Albania
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISTAT	Italian Statistics Office
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoLSAEO	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
NE	<i>Ndihma Ekonomike</i> / Economic Aid
NES	National Employment Service
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
SII	Albania Social Insurance Institute
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	The World Bank

1. Socio-Economic and Political Overview

Albania was proclaimed independent after almost five centuries of Ottoman rule on the 28th of November 1912. After the Second World War, Albania became a Communist state driven by isolationist policies until the end of 1990. Differently from other countries of Central and Eastern Europe which initiated liberal reforms in the 60's, this model was based on the absolute rule of social property and a centralized and planned economy driven by government's autarchic economic policies. In December 1990, after the start of a student movement, the political pluralism and an open market economy were installed, marking the start of social and economic reforms. In April 2009 the Stabilization and Association Agreement of Albania with the European Union entered into force and immediately after Albania formally applied for membership in the EU.

During the period 1945-1989, the population growth in Albania was the quickest in Europe with an increase from 1,1 million in 1945 to 3,2 million in 1989 (INSTAT, 2002a). At the end of this period, the average age was 25 while the population had more education years than other countries with similar income per person (WB, 2010). Almost 66% of the population lived in rural areas. In 2011 the population of Albania was 2.8 million, representing an 11.1% decline from the 1989 population (INSTAT, 2011a). Although the fertility rate of 2.1 is high, the decline in population during transition is due to the migration of Albanians since 1991.

The population of Albania is ethnically homogeneous. According to the 1989 Census, ethnic Albanians represented 98% of the population while other ethnic groups such as Greeks, Aromanians, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Roma constituted about 2% in total (Statistical Yearbook, INSTAT, 1991). Independent sources state that these groups in Albania represent about 5% of the population (Bërxolli, 2005).

At the beginning of the post-socialist transition period, Albania emerged as the poorest country in Europe, with one third of its population under 15 years old, and very few job opportunities and future prospects. GDP fell dramatically – by 10% in 1990, 28% in 1991, 7.2% 1992 – and only reached the level of 1989 again at the end of 90's (INSTAT, 2002a). By 1992, inflation rose to triple digits. The liberal economic reforms, with shock therapy elements, were accompanied by a drastic fall in industrial production (over 40% in 1991, - 60% in 1992), which continued until the beginning of 1995 and was followed by a long-term stagnation period. Agricultural production also went through a quick decline due to the spontaneous dismantlement of the former agricultural cooperatives and reforms that led to a highly fragmented agricultural sector. All this was accompanied by massive unemployment which was 26% in 1992 and 22.6% according to the 2001 Census (INSTAT, 2002a). The real wage experienced sharp declines in the beginning and in the end of the 1990s. Consequently transition increased poverty and social inequality. Caroline van Rijckeghen (1994) of IMF showed that during the period 1991-1993 the urban population that lived at the margins of poverty increased from 6 to 25-30%. A World Bank study (2003) of the early 2000 showed that 26% of the population or close to 780.000 persons fell below the poverty line. Extreme poverty amounted to about 150.000 persons, or 4.7% of the population, who were unable to meet basic food requirement. In the end of the 90's, 149.000 households or around 20% of the families lived on 'economic aid' (INSTAT, 2003) and the Albanians could not still see "light in the end of the tunnel of transition" (UNDP, 1998).

Starting from the end of the 1990s, macroeconomic reforms led to growth, poverty reduction and moderate inflation. Economic growth rates between 1998 and 2008 reached an average of over 7% per year (INSTAT, 2009b) and then started to drop as a consequence of the global economic crisis. This helped to reduce the absolute poverty level that fell to 12% of the population by 2008 (WB, 2010). Despite progress in poverty reduction, health and education sectors are constrained by limited resource allocation, inadequate structure of services, weak capacities of service providers, and inadequate quality reflected in poor client satisfaction. Construction, transport and services are the largest contributors to Albania's rapid GDP growth,

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while agricultural production has a subsistence character and continues to be hampered by the small size of private landholdings¹, lack of infrastructure and lack of economic incentives. Only 28% of farms sell their production on the market and only 9% of the crops harvested are sold by farmers (WB, 2007).

The Albanian labour market has changed dramatically during the transition period. Almost 83% of the labour force works in the private economic sector. The main employment sector by 2008 was private agriculture with 43.2% (INSTAT, 2010a), although agriculture's contribution to GDP in 2008 was 18% (WB, 2010). Private non-agricultural sector employment in 2009 amounted to 55.9% of the workforce. Employment in the services sector constituted 21.5% of the employment accompanied by trade (10.8 %), industry (10%) and construction (9.9%). There is a strong gender connotation to the different sectors with the private-agricultural sector in 2009 employing mainly women (56.2%), while the private non-agricultural sector employing mainly men (72.2%). While registered unemployment in 2009 was stated to be at around 13.8% of the labour force (INSTAT, 2011e), a part of the labour force works in the informal sector that is believed to generate 30 to 60 % of the GDP (OECD, 2004).

2. Main international and internal migration trends and patterns

2.1 Migration – a historical background

International migration has been an historical constant for Albanians starting from the mass out-migration of the 15th century following the death of Scanderbeg – Albania's national hero, and the ensuing invasion of the country by the Ottomans. 200,000 Albanians or one-quarter of the country's then total population migrated within a short period of time (1468-1506), primarily in the direction of Italy, Greece and the Dalmatian Coast (Tirta, 1999; Çaro, 2011).

For centuries, up until the end of World War II, a general lack of resources and economic opportunities led to extreme poverty for many Albanians. This was the primary push factor for a regular process of out-migration, in combination with periodic wars and other conflicts, as well as difficulties in conserving an ethno-national identity within the "Albanian region".

Both forced and voluntary (economic) migration processes have coexisted within the Albanian migration experience for many centuries. As a result, Albanian Diasporas were developed in many countries of destination and have played an important role in the economic, social and political life of the country. During the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, Albanian Diasporas were established in cities such as Istanbul, Bucharest, Cairo, Sofia, and Athens. At the beginning of the 20th century, Albanians started to migrate to the USA and other more distant countries, such as Argentina and Australia. By the mid-1940s, 60,000 Albanians, originating mainly from southern Albania, were living in the USA (Vullnetari, 2007).

During the socialist regime (1945-1990), international migration from Albania was rather non-existent, as it was illegal and severely punishable. Internal migration as we know it today was non-existent too. From the 1950's the movement of people was strictly regulated by the government. During this period, one can observe two phases with regard to Albanian migration. The first includes the period 1950-1960 where internal migration of population from the rural to the urban areas relates to the rapid industrialization of the country. This process - in parallel with the expansion of the existing urban centres - led to the establishment of 41 new urban centres that were built around mines or other factories, mainly located in the north and in the mountainous areas of the country (Bërxfholi, 2000). The government also paid attention to

¹ The average household cultivates only 0.8 ha, much of it split into many plots.

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building schools and health centres. Qualified people i.e. teachers, engineers, doctors and nurses, were assigned to work in these supposedly difficult areas. This brought the quick increase of the urban population from 20.5% of the total population in 1944 to 30.9% in 1960. The second phase that starts in the 60s is connected with the slowing down of industrial development and with the need for strengthening the agricultural sector. The government followed the policy of rural retention and minimal urbanization (Vullnetari, 2007).

Consequently, massive migration of Albanians starting from 1990 which is defined by King (2005) as an 'artificial intermezzo' has had historical precedents. The collapse of the socialist system, the immediate opening of the country and the radical and chaotic transformation of the economy were accompanied, as we will further observe, by massive migration of people in search of a better future either abroad or elsewhere in Albania.

2.2 Main international migration trends – post 1990

During the last two decades, the phenomenon of migration has been at the very core of the political, economic and social changes occurring in Albania. By the end of 2011, about 1.4 million people or about one third of the Albanian population was estimated to be living abroad, mainly in Greece and Italy (WB, 2011). Smaller numbers are spread throughout different European countries (UK, Germany, etc) as well as USA, Canada and Australia. While, more than 20% of the population migrated internally (WB, 2007), no other country of Central and Eastern Europe has been similarly affected by international and internal migration, and within such a short timeframe. Migration has turned Albania into '*a country on the move*', as characterized by Carletto et al., (2006) or into a '*sort of laboratory for studying new migratory processes*', according to a description by Russell King (2005).

Albania's migration started in a spontaneous way immediately after the opening of the borders and is characterized by a very high intensity. During the first decade, the Albanian migration peaked three times as a result of a combination of economic factors and some endogenous and exogenous shocks. In absence of year-on-year data, the results of a survey conducted with 2,474 long-term migrants at Albania's border crossings during the period December 2009-January 2010 (Gedeshi, 2010) are utilized.

The *first peak* is noted between 1991-1994 (Figure 3), primarily associated with the collapse of the socialist system and border openings after a long period of political self-isolation, and economic reforms, which, like in most other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, brought a severe crisis marked by rapid and drastic decreases in GDP, mass unemployment, hyperinflation, and privatisation that resulted in a rapid de-industrialization of the country. Together, these elements constituted what is known as a "transition crisis" (Ditter, 2008). The survey showed that almost 20% of the interviewed people already migrated during this first peak of migration (Gedeshi, 2010). At that time, migration had a massive character as people desperate enough to leave Albania went for mountain border crossing in the harsh winter or by taking over the Durres harbour by the thousands and forcing the anchored ships to sail towards Italy in the most inhumane conditions.

The *second peak* is linked to the collapse of the "pyramid savings schemes" during late 1996 and early 1997. Two-thirds of Albanian families lost most of their savings (Jarvis, 2000), triggering large-scale political and social unrest. Almost 16% of the surveyed migrants in the study above migrated during this period.

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The *third peak* is marked by an exogenous shock due to the crisis in Kosovo^{2*} in March 1999. At that time almost half a million Kosovars, to avoid the ethnic cleansing of Milosevic, crossed the border into Albania (Barjaba and King, 2005; Carletto et al., 2006). Consequently, the reforms and reconstruction attempts started in 1998 slowed markedly, leading to the migration of 30% of all migrants interviewed in the above mentioned survey. Overall, according to the same survey about 65% of Albanians migrated in the decade prior to 2000.

Based on the data of the ALSMS, Azzari and Carletto (2009), state that 2000 marks a turning point for the Albanian migration, when its fluxes and intensity start to slow down. This decline in migration can be attributed on one hand to the continuing improvement in the socio-economic situation of Albania and on the other to a strengthening of migration control mechanisms and legislation in Greece and Italy. King et al. (2011) observe that these changes in Albanian migration are not simply numerical ones, but also relate to the *type* of migration. Despite the fact that illegal migration, although with a slower pace has continued, its main feature has been the family reunion of women and children with their men now legalized in the country of migration. This has been accompanied also by the feminization of the migration fluxes. Seasonal migration mainly for conducting seasonal agriculture work has continued, but it has been organized by working visas (Karafolas, 2010). Meanwhile, the global financial crisis of late 2008 and the ongoing economic slowdown have further dampened migration flows, primarily as a result of reduced employment opportunities in primary countries of destination.

Until the end of the 1990's, official data on the number of Albanian migrants were missing. The first official data were published in 2000 from the Department of Emigration within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) that estimated that in 1999 around 800,000 Albanians were living abroad (Barjaba, 2000). The results of the population census of 2001 showed that 628,000 people - calculated by the census residual method – had migrated abroad during the period 1989-2001 (INSTAT, 2002a). Later these data were re-assessed and the figure of migrants between two censuses (1989-2001³) was reported to be between 680.000 and 719.090 people (Galanxhi, 2005). In 2005, the Albanian government, in the frame of the preparation of the National Migration Strategy, estimated that a little more than 1 million people had migrated (GoA, 2005).

In *Greece*, the first official data on Albanian migrants were based on the regularisation programmes of 1998 and 2001. The 1998 regularisation programme showed that at least 241,561 Albanian migrants lived in Greece. However, there was a large number of Albanian migrants that did not apply for regularisation (Fakiolas, 2003). The second regularisation programme of 2001 did not categorize applicants according to their nationality, but Barjaba and King (2005) estimated that at least 500,000 legal and illegal Albanian migrants lived in Greece. Another source of data is the 2001 Greek census, which enumerated 443,550 Albanians (Vullnetari, 2007). Analysing these data, Baldwin-Edwards (2004) stated that the number should have been higher as many ethnic-Greek Albanians might have been counted as Greeks by the enumerators. By uniting the migrants that benefited from the regularizations, those who were given Greek citizenship after 2007, the undocumented Albanians and those who were given the *homogeneous* card in 2002, Nikas and Aspasios (2011) estimate that more than 600,000 Albanians lived in Greece.

Data about Albanians in *Italy* come from various sources, such as periodic regularizations (1995, 1998, 2002), the 'permits to stay' database held by the Ministry of the Interior, and the municipal population register which reports annually demographic statistics to the Italian

² * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

³ Which effectively means the period 1990-2001 as there was almost no emigration during the decades of communist rule.

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national statistics agency (ISTAT). Data show that the number of Albanians in Italy has seen a progressive increase from 24,886 on 31 December 1991 to 483,219 people on 1 January 2011 (ISTAT, 2011). Ambrosetti et al. (2010), observe that while at the beginning of the 90's the tendency was to migrate for employment – mainly from young men, at the end of the 90's following the regularisation programs the family reunion became the main migration drive. This brought a change in the structure of migrant population and the feminisation of migratory flows. Therefore, the percentage of Albanian migrant women in Italy expanded from 14.1% in 1992 to 46.3% in 2010 (Figure 4).

Apart from Greece and Italy, more than 50,000 Albanians have migrated to the UK (Vathi, 2010), 113,661 in US (according to the 2000 US Census⁴), 14,935 in Canada (according to the 2001 Canadian Census⁵) and 9,971 in Germany⁶ in 2008, etc. All these different sources suggest that the overall number of Albanian migrants in the world varies between 1.2 - 1.4 million people. Furthermore, the latest World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook (2011) estimates that the number of Albanian migrants abroad in 2010 was 1.44 million people or 45% of the Albanian population, ranking Albania in the ninth place of the worldwide classification. These data are approximated also with the estimates on the number of migrants that are generated by the results of the Albanian censuses. On the other hand based on the preliminary findings of the 2011 Census, Barjaba and Beqja (2012) estimated that at least 470,000 Albanians have migrated during the period 2001-2011. This migrant stock has increased also as a result of the natural increase especially during the years 2000' and as a consequence of family unification in the migration country and due to the young age of migrants.

Studies show that there are a series of factors that define the direction of Albanians' international migration. Several authors (Konica, 1999; Germenji and Swinnen, 2004; de Zwager et al., 2005) emphasize that one of the main criteria is geographical vicinity. This vicinity and the rather easy access to illegal border crossing enabled Albanians to travel to relatively wealthy neighbours such as Greece and Italy. Information and support from networks of family and friends have also influenced not only the direction, but also the probability of surviving the new environment in the host country. Culture and familiarity with the language, has also had a large influence on the choice of migration's country by Albanians. Indeed, migrating to neighbouring countries gave migrants the possibility to maintain strong links to their home communities by visiting home on a regular basis. De Zwager et al. (2010) showed that 56% of Albanian migrants in Greece visit their home country on average 1-2 times a year, whereas 34% of them visit 3-4 times. Regarding Albanians in Italy, 89% appear to visit their home country 1-2 times a year.

Albanian migration is believed to have been commonly achieved in several phases. Many migrants have migrated internally before doing so internationally. Others have initially migrated for a short time to Greece to be able to finance the long-term migration to a further country. Therefore, many migrants have seen Greece "as a transit country, or as a first step before migrating somewhere else" (Labrianidis and Lyberaki, 2001) or, in the words of Russell King (2005) "the key to open the gate". The trend has been to migrate from countries with lower income towards those with higher income. A European Training Foundation study (ETF, 2007) showed that 21% of the returnees that migrated to the UK, 13% of those that migrated in Italy and 9% of those that migrated in Germany have initially migrated to Greece.

The potential migration is still considered to be high. The ETF (2007) study showed that in 2007 nearly 44% of the population between the ages 18-40 years wished to migrate from Albania.

⁴ US Census Bureau (2000) <http://www.census.gov>.

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

⁶ See: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2008: 334.

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This potential migration is higher for men than women and is more accentuated for young age-groups and in rural and poorer areas of Albania.

Finally, there were fears that the visa liberalisation by the EU for Albanians established in December 2010 would result in an increase in volume of Albanian migration towards EU member states. However, more than one year into the new visa regime, only a small number of Albanian migrants (about 830 persons⁷) have requested asylum in EU countries.

2.3 Return migration

The return migration is a recent phenomenon in Albania, which is developed in parallel with the migration of Albanians towards increasingly more distant destinations. The return of the migrants is a dynamic and growing process (Figure 6). The ETF study (2007) shows that almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the returnees have returned to Albania after 2001, when the socio-economic and political situation started to improve.

The return-migration to Albania ranges from voluntary to forced return. Until the mid-90's the most common form of return has been the forced one, mainly from Greece and Italy. According to Reyneri (2001), there were over 1.4 million forced returns during the period 1990-1998. This figure must be carefully interpreted because many Albanians tended to return to Greece even on the same day, hence the same person may have been deported several times. On the other hand, assisted voluntary return or pay-to-go and other non-coercive programmes, mainly from UK⁸, Belgium and Germany (organised by government immigration and border control agencies and often run on their behalf by the International Organization for Migration – IOM), has also been another form of return⁹.

During the mid-1990s, another form of return migration was encountered in Albania – the individual voluntary return. People that had migrated during 1991-1992 to Greece and Italy started to return. While the collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997 and the regional instability of the late 90's interrupted this trend (King et al., 2003), this is a phenomenon that is currently taking place. In 2007, according to the Albanian Border and Migration Police there were 68,243 migrants that returned (Table 1).

Based on the experience of other countries, Lambrianidis and Kazazi (2006) state that Albanian migration is not a “no return process”. Starting from 2000, there were signs of a new return wave, mainly from Italy and Greece (Lambrianidis and Kazazi, 2006; Lambrianidis and Hatziprokopiou, 2005) into Albania. Some authors (Gedeshi et al., 2003; de Zwager et al., 2005; de Zwager et al., 2010), surveying large numbers of migrants concluded that there is high return potential amongst long-term migrants, particularly from Greece and Italy, which is expected to take place over the coming years. They state that this return will be accompanied by financial, social and human capital. The above mentioned study (de Zwager, 2010) showed that the higher the remittance value, the higher is the desire to return. Indeed, in 2009 this return potential was estimated to be around 49% and this is strongly related to the accomplishment of savings objectives (de Zwager et al., 2010: 51).

⁸ From 2002, over 400 Albanian migrants in United Kingdom have benefited from the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Program (VARRP) run by IOM Albania (http://www.iomtirana.org.al/index.php?page=practice_areas (last accessed 25 September 2011).

⁹ For a critical analysis of the efficiency and sustainability of assisted returns at large, see: Black, R., Collyer, M., Sommerville, W.: “Pay to Go Schemes and other Non-coercive Return Programs: Is scale Possible”. Migration Policy Institute, April 2011 at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/pay-to-goprograms.pdf> (last accessed, 24 September 2011).

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The aforementioned ETF study indicates four main reasons for return. The first one was forced return by the authorities of the migration countries with around 24% of the migrants in the sample belonging to this group. The second reason for return for around 10% of the migrants was the failure to become integrated in the labour market of destination countries. Other migrants (one third) return for family or psychological reasons. Lastly there are successful migrants, who return after they have realized their initial plans for “starting a business” or “having saved enough money”. The percentage of the successful migrant in this sample was really small (7.7 %).

An IOM survey (IOM, 2008) found out that the return is seen as a natural progression by 40% of the respondents, 30% of interviewees are neutral whereas 14% consider it as a positive step, 12% consider it as a failure. Those migrants that return choose to live in Tirana (42%), other large cities (28%) and in another country (15%). There is a correlation between age and the place of residence after return: the younger the age-group the greater the attraction towards Tirana as well as other countries.

2.4 Main internal migration trends

Alongside international migration, since 1990 Albania has experienced also internal migration that has developed with the same intensity, mainly from mountainous and north-east areas of the country toward the coastal region and the main urban centres (Figure 7). Carletto et al. (2004), observe that internal migration peaked during the period 1990-1993 and 1996-1998, as a reaction to two internal economic shocks, the drastic economic reforms and the collapse of the pyramidal schemes. From the end of the 90s, internal migration notes normal trends, with about 20.000 persons per year, as a consequence of the economic situation (WB, 2007). The main pushing factors of internal migration are linked to the economic situation especially to persisting poverty, low income prospects, poor access to public utilities, unemployment and insufficient agricultural land (Carletto et al., 2006).

Despite the fact that internal and international migration developed in parallel, Zezza et al. (2005), based on the findings of 2002 ALSMS, observe that poverty is asymmetrically correlated with the internal and international migration. According to them the poverty plays a push role for internal migration and acts as an obstacle for international migration. Consequently, internal migration prevails mainly in the poor mountainous areas of North Albania, while international migration is mostly present in the richer areas of Central and South Albania.

There are three main sources for the assessment of internal migration in Albania: a) general population and housing census (1989, 2001 and some preliminary results of 2011); b) civil registry records (at the commune and municipality level); and c) data from the 2002, 2005 and 2008 ALSMS. Data may differ due to different data collection and reporting methodologies but nonetheless they support the main argument that Albania has experienced a considerable internal migration during post-socialist transition.

Based on civil registry records, Bërxoli (2005) estimated that during the period 1992-2000, about 1.3 million people or around 40% of the country's population have migrated internally. Out of them, 36% migrated towards urban centres and 64% migrated towards rural areas including here the peri-urban areas of Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra and Korça. Based on the 2001 Census, INSTAT (2004) estimates that during the period 1989-2001 252,700 persons or about 8.2% of the population migrated between regions. While Carletto et al. (2004), based on ALSMS 2002 findings estimated that during 1989-2001 about 355,000 persons migrated from one district to another. Based on the data of the 2005 ALSMS, WB (2007) estimated that 450,000 person or over 20% of the adult population had migrated internally during the period 1990-2005.

One of the main consequences of this migration, on one hand is the depopulation of some areas that has been accompanied with the abandonment of the agricultural land and that of

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rural communities. This has created economic and ecological problems such as the collapse of agriculture and the degradation of land (Bërçolli et al., 2005). On the other hand, there is a quick and chaotic growth of the urban areas. Census data show that the share of urban population increased from 35.8% in 1989 to 42.1% in 2001. In 2011, for the first time ever, the share of urban population in Albania resulted higher (53.7%) than the rural population (INSTAT, 2011a), (Figure 19). Tirana is the city that has seen the largest population growth what explains also the building boom during the two last decades. In 2011 its population was estimated to be 421,286 persons, from 238,057 in 1989 (INSTAT, 2011a).

It is worth mentioning here that there is an interaction between internal and international migration in Albania. Studies show that in many occasions international migration is preceded by internal migration (Vullnetari, 2007). For instance, in the south-eastern border region of Korça, many people migrated from the mountainous areas towards the plain ones prior to their migration to Greece (Gedeshi and Sabates-Wheeler, 2006). Based on the 2005 ALSMS data, Hagen-Zanker and Azzari (2010) show that for the individuals who have migrated both internally and internationally, internal migration anticipated the international one by two years on average. In other occasions, short or long term migration to Greece and Italy has contributed to finance the internal migration of families from a rural location to an urban area. Furthermore, it has been emphasized (de Zwager et al., 2010) that 25% of Albanian migrants that wish to return do not plan to return to their places of origin, preferring rather Tirana and surroundings. The main reason for this preference is the perception of greater employment and investment opportunities, developed social services, as well as better prospects for their children. Consequently, further population pressures on Tirana and area can be expected.

2.5 Main characteristics of migrants

The profile of Albanian international migrants shows that they are predominantly young and more educated than the overall population of Albania (Carletto et al., 2004; de Zwager et al., 2005; WB, 2007). The survey with 2,474 migrants showed that their average age at the time of departure was 27.3 years, which had climbed to 35.5 by the time of the interview (Gedeshi, 2010). In terms of education, 47% of long term migrants during the period 1990-2002 had completed high school or university studies compared to 31% of the non-migrating population (WB, 2010).

While migration to distant countries mostly takes place on a family basis, Albania's model of migration towards Greece, Italy and other EU countries is predominantly male-led, with family reunification taking place once the male migrant becomes regularized and gains a sense of security in the destination country. This model is different than in other countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, where migrants prefer to migrate as a family unit from the earliest stages (perhaps partially as a result of forced displacement), and Moldova, where the model of migration can be either male or female-led, depending on the region of migration (EU or CIS) (de Zwager et al., 2010).

Amnesties and other forms of status regularization in Greece and Italy, mainly during 1995-2002, stabilized the Albanian migrants in these countries. Empirical data show that 96% of married Albanian migrants in Italy and 90% of those in Greece have realised family reunification (Vullnetari, 2007). The average size of migrant households is 3.2 persons, usually consisting of husband, wife and one or two children. A small fraction of migrants, mainly in Greece, include their parents in their migration household, thereby creating an extended household. Children go to school, and financing their education constitutes one of the main objectives for saving for many migrant families.

Most of the migrants (94%) speak fluently or well the language of their destination country, showing a high level of integration. Migrants have gradually improved their socio-economic

status (ETF, 2007), and today it is possible to describe a 'maturation of the process of migration' (de Zwager et al., 2005; Nikas and Aspasios, 2011).

The main sectors of employment (Figure 8) of Albanian migrants are construction (35%), services (21%), manufacture/industry (17%), domestic help (15%) and agriculture (10%). There exists a job sector division by gender among the migrants. Men mainly work in construction (49%), services (19%) and manufacture/industry (18%). Women work mainly in domestic help (53%), as well as in services (26%) and manufacture/industry (13%) (Gedeshi, 2010). Distinctions exist amongst sectors of employment for those that migrate to Greece and Italy, UK and Germany. Compared to Greece, there is a larger share of migrants in Italy and other EU countries that work in manufacturing and services, while a lower percentage works in agriculture.

Another distinctive feature is that 56% of the migrants in Italy and 59% of those in UK and Germany say that they work as qualified workers, against 43% in Greece. These distinctions can be largely explained by the characteristics of the economy of the host country. Greece for instance, has had a higher demand for unqualified work in construction, agriculture and services (Lambrianidis and Lyberaki, 2004). It is worth noting, that empirical data from this survey indicate that about 8% of Albanian migrants have created businesses in their host country, mainly in construction (43%) and services (29%).

The profile of the internal migrant is different from that of the international one. Hagen-Zanker and Azzari (2010) when comparing the peri-urban migrant population with rural non-migrant ones found out that internal migrants are younger and relatively more educated than the rural non-migrant population. The proportion of women migrants is high, which is related to the migration of the entire family. Most of the males work in the informal sector and are employed as casual workers and do low-paid work, while the economic activity of women is low. Internal migrant households are resident of informal areas that are not regulated and do not possess the necessary infrastructure while the level of social services provision is low.

3. Nation-wide labour market and social development trends under the influence of migration

3.1. Economic and labour market developments

The transition towards a market economy has been accompanied by very high unemployment especially in the 1990s as a consequence of the drastic economic reforms. In 1992, the unemployment rate reached 26.5%, in 1994 it was 18% and in the second quarter of 2011 the registered unemployment rate was 13.26% (INSTAT, 2011e). Meanwhile, in rural areas underemployment has been quite high. An INSTAT study (2005) showed that due to the modernization of agriculture and the abandonment of non-productive lands, at least 250,000 persons can leave agriculture. While UN projections¹⁰ predicted that the working age population (15-64 years old) in Albania would increase by nearly 5% during the period 2005-2015 and will represent about 67% of the total population in 2015. Therefore, the first impact of migration is the reduction of unemployment and underemployment pressures in the labour market. Within the conditions of stagnant labour market where 80% of unemployed persons are long term unemployed, migration has also created an alternative for many educated youth. During 1990-2002, 47% of the long-term migrants had completed secondary education or higher compared to 31% who did so among the non-migrant population (WB, 2006).

¹⁰ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>.

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Albania's National Strategy for Development and Integration states that the labour force in Albania was 15% lower in 2001 than in 1989 as a result of emigration. During this time the workforce lost more than 25% of women and 5% of men. While about 20% of the population has been out of the country for more than a decade, the Albanian Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS) results show that more than half of Albanian households (52%) have at least one former member (member in 1990 or later) who has migrated within or outside Albania. One in five households (21%) have at least one former member who has moved within the country, while around two in five (42%) have at least one former member who has left the country or emigrated. 12% of the Albanian households have former members who have migrated both within and outside the country (ADHS, 2008-2009: 248).

Albania's economy is mainly characterised by a large percentage (94%) of micro and small enterprises and high degree of informality. According to ETF (ETF, 2007: 14) women who migrate from rural areas do not have the appropriate level of skills for the limited number of formal jobs and the gender gap in terms of labour force participation is extremely pronounced in Albania (74% for men as opposed to 52% for women) across all age groups.

On the other hand, Albanian migration has contributed to the private sector growth through opening new jobs mainly in sectors of trade and services fuelled by remittances. These include bars, grocery shops, restaurants, hotels, and retail trade. De Zwager et al. (2010) estimate that 10% of remittances (or 12% according to the ALSMS 2002) are used for investment. Furthermore, remittances have contributed towards the dynamic growth of the construction sector. During the period 1999-2008 the construction sector grew on an annual average of 19% while its share in the total GDP has doubled from 6% in 1999 to 12% in 2008.

The return migration is a process that has intensified since 2000 and has been accompanied by the creation of small and medium enterprises with a family character, mainly in the services sector. Meanwhile, about 3.5% of returning migrants have returned into employers creating enterprises in sectors such as hotels or restaurants, manufacturing, agriculture and trade (ETF, 2007). Lambianidis and Hatziprokopiou (2005) observe that the returned migrants have increased labour market activity for women with migration experience in Albania both in the wage sector, and in entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Analysing a survey carried out with 1000 households in all the districts of Albania in summer 1996, Konica and Filer (2009: 75-98) showed that there are differences between men and women with regard to the impact of migration on the labour force participation in Albania. The findings show that the existence of migrants from the household or the amount of remittances received does not significantly affect men's labour force participation but it does appear to make women significantly less likely to work. They argue that migrants' higher earnings abroad contribute to the development of household-owned businesses in Albania. In particular, members of households with returned migrants in Albania are more likely to be employed in a household business.

It is interesting to mention the impact of migration on Albania's agricultural sector. It has been argued (McCarthy et al., 2009) that increased international migration leads to a reduction in household labor allocated to agricultural activities and crop diversity. While this has no impact on agricultural income, it does however lead to higher total incomes. The bottom line here is that international migration does not strengthen household agricultural production but instead facilitates the transition away from agriculture (ibid.). Indeed, some authors (Kilic et al., 2007) link the length of the period spent abroad with the probability of the household investing in its own non-farm business upon the migrant's return.

Migration is used by Albanian households as a mechanism to diversify economic activities in the face of risk and obtain liquidity and capital in the presence of credit and insurance market failures (Azzari and Carletto, 2008). Agricultural, migration and human capital assets have a differential impact across livelihood choices, and this impact varies by gender and age (ibid.).

Furthermore, the impact is noticed by the reduced probability of choosing any labour activity. It has been suggested (ibid.) that for men it is the own previous migration experience that leads to lower participation in labour activities, for women it is the migration of other members to Italy (whether temporary or permanent) that acts as a disincentive to labour participation. Authors mention that in the case of men this is due to the fact that those with previous migration experience are likely to be in Albania planning a future migration episode, and therefore decide (and can afford) not to work. While, in the case of women both an income effect (via the remittances) and a reallocation of time and occupations at the household level may be responsible for the lower level of labour participation of those with migration assets.

3.2. Brain drain

Brain drain is one of the most discussed issues of the Albanian migration. An OECD report on international migration (2005) estimates that by 2000, 9% of 389,264 legal Albanian migrants belonging to the age group of 25 years old or above that lived in OECD countries, excluding Italy, had completed at least tertiary education. This figure was higher than the country's average. During the post-socialist transition large numbers of engineers, veterinary doctors, economic specialists, teachers, doctors¹¹, artists and researchers migrated from Albania causing a large erosion of human resources. De Soto et al. (2002), observe that one of the main factors that contributed to the deterioration of education and health services in the country, especially in the remote and rural areas, is the internal and international migration of medical and education personnel. In the absence of data and detailed studies for these groups, a small segment of brain drain is analysed – the migration of academic staff and researchers, for which Horvat (2004) defines Albania as one of the countries with “the largest brain drain in the world”.

During the period 1991-2008 more than 40.6% of academics and scientific workers have migrated abroad (Gedeshi, 2008; WB, 2010). This migration included the most dynamic and selected part of the academic and research staff in Albania. The data show that state universities and research institutions of Tirana especially those related to the natural sciences, engineering, nuclear physics and arts were the most affected. Therefore, from the Polytechnic University of Tirana, the brain-drain was estimated to be 58.2%, from the Institute of Nuclear Physics about 76% and from the Academy of Arts 60%. Most of them were males (59.4%), young (about 47% of them were aged 25-34 at the moment of migration) and differently from the massive migration waves, they migrated legally with their families (71%). Migrants had an average of 8 years of working experience in research institutions/universities and 43% of them, in particular during the 1980s and 1990s, were educated and trained in the universities of Western Europe or the US (WB, 2010).

The brain drain from universities and research institutions in Albania has been in decline after 2000, due to the improvement of the economic and social situation in Albania, age structure changes in the universities and research institutions of the country and the increasing difficulty to migrate to Western Europe.

Despite the fall of the brain drain curve in the universities and research institutions, this still continues, as many of Albania's brightest students now succeed in studying elsewhere in Western Europe and the US (King, 2005). The Albanian Ministry of Education and Science (2009) estimates that for the academic years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 there were respectively 15,244 and 17,429 young Albanians studying abroad¹². The majority of them study in Italy –

¹¹ The World Bank Migration and Remittances Fact Book 2011 refers to the figure of 1% of trained physicians that have left the country.

¹² In 2001 around 6,300 Albanian students have studied in OECD member countries, while in 2004 this number amounted to 13,100 students (OECD, 2007).

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about 9,552 Albanian students were estimated to be studying there during the academic year 2004-2005 (Chaloff, 2008).

In 2008, the main host countries for the Albanian lecturers and researchers (Figure 10) were the USA (29.2%), Canada (17.8%), Italy (12.4%), Greece (9.9%), France (9.4%), Germany (7.2 %), UK (2.9%) and Austria (2.2%). The destinations to which people have moved have changed from year to year. Early in the 1990s, Albanian professionals were mainly concentrated in Greece, Italy, France and Germany. In the mid-1990s, the migration intensity toward these countries decreased to a considerable degree, and was directed more and more towards the US and Canada. Migration to the US intensified in the period 1994-95 and currently, the US is the top destination for Albanian professionals. Furthermore, migration to Canada started to increase notably in the period 1997-99 (Figure 11). Other migrants with a PhD moved from Europe to the US and Canada. The amplification of these tendencies suggests that brain drain from Albania is acquiring more and more the features of a long-term or permanent migration, simultaneously accompanied by the departure of financial capital.

Due to the migration of academics and researchers, the universities and research institutions of the country have lost in the period 1991-2008 at least 6,221 months of training courses to institutions abroad (Gedeshi, 2008). This figure is twice the number of training months that Albanian higher education institutes were allocated during the same period through the TEMPUS 1 and 2 Projects. In addition, nearly 66% of Albanians known to have completed a doctoral degree in Western Europe or the US since 1990 have either migrated from Albania or never returned after their graduation (UNDP, 2006).

Migration of highly skilled personnel meant that Albanian universities and research institutes are becoming less competitive with a drop in standards (WB, 2010). The scale of the brain drain and especially the desire to migrate amongst the young scientific personnel in universities and research institutions has negatively affected the long-term motivation for conducting research. While engagement in research fields results only in the long term, the brain drain encourages people to think in the short-term. In many research institutions, research 'memory' is wasting away, and no means remain for the transmission of experience and knowledge from one generation to the other (Gedeshi, 2008).

When analysing the migration of highly skilled Albanians, it is important to recognize that a significant proportion of them undergo occupational deskilling when they migrate. Former engineers, economists, teachers or artists are often employed as gardeners, cleaners, baby sitters, housekeepers, painters or decorators (ETF, 2007). According to Glytsos (2006), the brain drain from Albania does not become a brain gain for the receiving countries, but rather a brain waste. This is the case with 74% of the educated Albanians in Greece, 67% in Italy, 58% in Austria and 70% in the US (Barjaba, 2004).

3.3. Remittances

Remittances are one of the most researched aspects of post-1990 migration in Albania. Based on estimations provided by the Central Bank of Albania, the yearly flow of remittances, including those sent through formal and informal channels, has noticeably increased in parallel with the rising number of migrants (Figure 12). Remittances of the Albanian migrants culminated in 2007 reaching the amount of 1,305 million USD (equal to 952 million Euros¹³), from 150 million USD in 1992 (increasing by 870% over 18 years) which represented about 12.5% of the GDP (BoA, 2012, p.143). Then, they start to fall mainly as a consequence of the financial and economic

¹³ Based on the European Central Bank reference exchange rate for 2007: 1 Euro = 1.3705 USD, http://sdw.ecb.europa.eu/quickview.do?SERIES_KEY=120.EXR.A.USD.EUR.SP00.A, last checked on 22 May 2012.

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crisis reaching 915 million USD in 2010 (equal to 690 million Euros¹⁴). As a percentage of GDP, the remittance contribution has declined from around 22% in 1993 to less than 9% in 2010 (Figure 13). They were higher than exports, net foreign direct investment and the official development aid received by Albania, and covered almost one third of the trade deficit (Figure 14). Remittances are the main foreign financial source and one of the main factors that have determined the extroversion of the Albanian economy (Samson, 1996). As a percentage of the GDP, the WB (2011) ranks Albania among the 20 leading remittance receiving countries in the world and among the first countries in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union (Table 3).

The influence of remittances within the country's economy can be observed in the micro, macro, and meso levels or said differently in relation to poverty, macro-economic stabilization and social and economic development of the country.

In the micro aspect, the most important role that remittances have played so far is related to the economic survival and poverty alleviation for many Albanian families, especially during the first years of the post-socialist transition. De Soto et al. (2002) through a qualitative assessment of poverty conducted in 2001 in 10 regions of Albania, showed that remittances constitute one of the main factors that made the distinction between the 'poor' and 'non poor' family. A WB study (2007), showed the existence of a large difference in consumption and poverty between households with migrants and those without. The study stated that without the large inflows of remittances the living conditions would almost certainly be worse. Moreover, 2002 ALSMS data showed that contribution of remittances in reducing the poverty gap was double compared to that of public transfers (WB, 2003).

In the macro aspect, remittances have had a large positive impact on the macro-economic stability of Albania. They helped to finance the large and increasing trade deficit of the country that amounts to more than 20% of GDP per year. Meanwhile, confining the need for social transfers, remittances have also helped in fiscal consolidation. Remittances have strengthened the Albanian currency (Lek) against foreign ones (Muco et al., 1999; de Zwager et al., 2005), impeding so the competitiveness of Albanian producers.

Regarding economic and social development, the analysis of the use of remittances in Albania shows that they continue to be used primarily to support basic daily needs (food, clothing, etc.) of receiving households, and thereafter to improve living conditions (buying furniture, home equipment, etc.), and lastly to expand or build a new house. A part of remittances are also used to organise important households' social events (such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc.), while a small component might be deposited in the bank system or, more likely, saved in cash at home (De Soto et al., 2002; Gedeshi, 2002; de Zwager et al., 2005; Vullnetari, 2007). Only small parts of remittances are used to invest in economic activities (10%, see Table 4), mainly in micro-enterprises within the service sector (de Zwager et al., 2010). The use of remittances shows that they are mostly used for consumption and non-productive investment, such as housing. Consequently, they have improved the living conditions of many families in Albania but have had a limited role in sustainable job creation. Based on these features of the use of remittances, de Zwager et al. (2005) concluded that "migration creates pressure for more migration".

Starting from the end of the 1990s and based on empirical data, researchers had predicted that remittance flows related to Albanian migration - although steadily increasing at the time - would begin to decline over the medium term (Civici et al., 1999; Gedeshi, 2002; Gedeshi and Mara, 2003; de Zwager et al., 2005). This prognosis was based on effects associated with the maturation of the Albanian migration cycle, mainly as a result of family reunion in the host

¹⁴ Ibid: 1 Euro = 1.3257 USD.

country. A UNDP study showed that migrants that have immediate family in Albania remit almost twice more than those that have only their parents (Gedeshi and Mara, 2003). Almost all the studies and the experience of other countries show that a 'remittance economy' – if we borrow the expression of Skeldon (2006) – cannot continue in eternity. In 2005, Nikas and King (2005) warned that an economic crisis in Greece, as one of the main destinations of Albanian migration, would lead to a rapid decrease in remittance values, and thereby transmit negative consequences to the Albanian economy (see developments below).

3.4. Potential Economic Role of Albanian Migration

The new Albanian Diaspora is becoming an important element of the country's economic and social development. Gedeshi (2010) argued that remittances are only a small part of the wealth produced during the past two decades of Albanian migration. In the destination countries, migrants accumulate large financial, human and social capital and their high return potential can create a new impetus for economic and social development. However, the author concludes that it is a precondition that "suitable local conditions and migrant/saver-specific incentives [must] exist, or can be created" (ibid).

Albanian migrants own large financial capital in the form of savings in the host countries' banks. It has been pointed out (de Zwager et al., 2010) that Albanian migrant households in 2008 had an estimated average annual income of EUR 27,660, of which 6% is remitted and 31% is saved in the place of migration. Albanian long-term migrants migrate with the goal of reaching a savings objective that they could not achieve at home. Relatively low consumption levels combined with low remittance rates are clearly reflected in a high savings-to-remittance factor of 5.1:1 (ibid.). In 2008, their annual savings were estimated to be around 3,437 million Euros or 5.1 times higher than remittances. One of the most important savings objectives is believed to be investing in a business. The use of migrant savings for investment purposes would not only boost the flow of remittances that are now in a decreasing trend, but would also improve the quality of their use (remittances are currently used mainly for consumption).

Many Albanian migrants have increased their human capital (new work practices and experiences, behaviour and mentality). The male migrants have passed from agriculture and construction in manufacturing and hotels restaurants, while the females from house cleaning into petty trade. As a trend, it can be observed that over a period of three to four years, migrants move from less to more qualified work in line with their education/qualification and level of integration. The ETF study of 2007 showed that almost 17% of the returnees (more in UK, Germany and Italy, than in Greece) have studied or have been trained in the migration country. The low-skilled migrants have improved their skills and increased their capabilities. In an analysis of returned migrants from Italy and Greece (Lambrianidis et al., 2005), it was noted that many migrants have also gained entrepreneurship capabilities.

Albanian migrants have created a rich social network in the country of origin as well as in their migration countries. They communicate with their families, relatives and friends back home through the use of telephone and computer/internet. They have access to Albanian media in their host countries and more than half of them visit Albania 1-2 times a year. De Zwager et al. (2010), state that through these communication channels and visits the Albanian migrants exchange information about economic and social conditions and transmit their new ideas, behaviour and practices. While these social remittances have turned Albanian migrants into agents of social and political change (Vullnetari, 2007), on the other hand, interviews show that many Albanian returnees have relatives and friends remaining abroad, or have friends and colleagues in the host countries. This form of social capital helps returnees develop or maintain commercial and economic relationships with their former host countries.

3.5 Economic potential of returned migrants

Return migration can be seen as a source for the socio-economic development of Albania through the capitals it brings in the country (Nicholson, 2004). Studies show that there is a strong positive relationship between return migration and entrepreneurship, depending on the migration period and country of migration (Lambrianidis and Hatziprokopiou, 2005; Lambrianidis and Kazazi, 2006; Kilic et al., 2007; WB, 2007). The ETF study (2007) showed that almost 51% of returnees created businesses and used their savings to buy equipment. In most of the cases, these are small businesses of low added value and often in the informal sector (WB, 2006), suggesting poor entrepreneurial skills on the part of returnees (WB, 2007). Most of these businesses belong to the service sector such as petty trade, hotels or restaurants, repairs, commerce and transport. Many of these businesses have a family character, provide employment for other household's members and are based on extremely hard work by the owner.

A relationship also exists between experiences in the migration country and the type of business they create in Albania. Some authors (Lambrianidis et al, 2005; Kilic et al, 2007), argue that the Albanian migrants "replicate businesses in which they work abroad". The data from ETF study (2007) partially confirm this thesis. Less than one third of returnees that have worked for a longer time in manufacturing, construction, transport, commerce, repairs and hotels or restaurants have replicated the business in Albania; hence one can observe at least a partial transfer of skills.

The rest of returnees are salaried workers and a high mobility is observed among them. They are involved mainly in the service sector (petty trade, hotels or restaurants, transport, commerce). These inter-sectorial movements show that a large part of them did not replicate the type of work they had as migrants. In this case, the country does not appear to benefit sufficiently from skills and experience accumulated abroad (ETF, 2007).

3.6 Impact of economic and financial crisis

The economic global crisis has affected almost all developed industrial countries and in particular those where Albanian migration has been concentrated. The question that ought to be raised and answered is how the economic global crisis influences the Albanian economy through the channels of international migration?

In a joint study by IOM and UNDP with the support of WB, Gedeshi (2010), based on the results of a survey conducted with 2,470 Albanian migrants at the border crossing who were queuing to have their passport checked, during the period December 2009-January 2010, shows that almost ¾ of the households of the Albanian international migrants were affected by the economic global crisis. The impact is reflected in a "decrease in working days or working hours" (46%), "loss of employment by a member of the family" (14%), "personal loss of employment" (9%) and "increase in prices and cost of living". Taken together, these factors resulted in a "lowering of household income" (54%) and contributed to the decline in their socio-economic status. The data further reveals that 58% of international migrants experienced a "deteriorated" financial situation compared to one year earlier, and 10% say that the current situation is "much worse".

These indicative findings, lead to the analysis that the short-term impact of the economic global crisis in Albania can be articulated in three main areas.

The first impact concerns the decrease in the amount of remittances that migrants send to Albania. The pace of remitting slowed during the second half of the previous decade and then

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declined sharply in 2008. The Bank of Albania¹⁵ estimated that remittances fell to Euro 833.3 million in 2008 (or Euro 118.4 million less than 2007), to Euro 781.3 million in 2009, to Euro 689.7 in 2010 and this tendency continued during the first nine months of 2011 (Euro 49.5 million less than first nine months of 2010). This decline is believed to be in part as a result of the global economic crisis, and in part due to the assumption that remittances will start to fall once settled migrant families start easing their ties with their country of origin.

Remittances constitute an important driver of Albania's domestic demand. Further and continued declines in the flux of remittances would lower the standard of living for many households, cause serious hardship for many, and negatively influence some macroeconomic indicators. Econometric estimates by the WB (2010) suggest that for the overall economy (excluding agriculture) a 10% decline in remittances would lead to a 3.6% reduction in domestic demand, as measured by the index of sales. Key contributors to Albania's GDP and most affected sectors are construction, services, and food. It is believed that declining inflows from workers abroad has resulted in sharp contractions, evidenced in Albania's construction sector over the previous years. In 2009, the growth of the construction sector almost stopped while in 2010 it dropped to - 21.7% of GDP, a trend that has continued to be observed also in the first months of 2011 (INSTAT, 2011b). This is reflected also in the fall of the GDP growth, although they remained positive throughout the period of the crisis. Furthermore, the quick fall of the remittances has weakened the Albanian currency versus the foreign ones. In 31 December 2008, 1 Euro was exchanged with 123.80 Lek, while in 30 December 2011 it was exchanged with 138.93 Lek¹⁶. Meanwhile, Panagiotou (2011) estimates that the fall of the pace of economic development can influence also Albania's EU prospects, since it can harden the fulfilment of the necessary structural reforms.

It is estimated that as much as 4% of poverty reduction has been lost because of the effects of the crisis in Albania (WB, 2011b). Meanwhile, the number of poor households in receipt of social assistance from the government grew from 93.4 thousands in 2008 to 96.8 thousands in 2009, 97.5 thousands in 2010 and to 98.5 thousands in November 2011¹⁷. This effectively stalled an accelerating decline in poverty experienced over the preceding decade, even though the country is one of the least affected by the crisis.

The second impact is the possible return migration as a result of deepening of the economic crisis in the host countries and mainly in Greece. The above mentioned survey (Gedeshi, 2010) shows that this process is seen by a small part of the Albanian migrants (11%) only as the last option. Despite the fact that no massive return is likely to happen, certain expected impacts can be articulated. The first is that returning migrants can put further pressure on already high and increasing unemployment rates in Albania. According to the survey (ibid.), 47% of those migrants that might decide to return as a direct consequence of the economic crisis would seek employment in Albania. A second scenario - perhaps more optimistic - is related to the transfer of accumulated savings and to the creation of new jobs by the migrants themselves, should they be prepared and wish to invest their financial, human, and social capitals in Albania. A third possible scenario is where a part of the family (parents, children, or women) return to Albania, which might then be accompanied by an increase of inward remittances to support the resulting increase in daily household expenses in Albania.

In the midterm an impact is observed in the reaching of migration objectives, particularly savings, which can lead to the restructuring of migration cycles. Saving behaviours of migrants constitute one of the major objectives of migration experience itself (de Zwager et al., 2010). The survey (Gedeshi, 2010) shows that average annual savings of Albanian migrant

¹⁵ Interview with an official of the Bank of Albania. February 2012.

¹⁶ Bank of Albania archive of exchange rates: http://www.bankofalbania.org/web/Exchange_Rates_2014_2.php

¹⁷ Interview with specialists from the MoLSAEO. February 2012.

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households has effectively decreased by 12% between 2008 and 2009. This delay in achieving primary savings objectives extends the term of the migration cycle.

It is also interesting to note that an increase (25-30%) in the number of divorce cases in the migrant families in Greece, reported in the southern region of Gjirokastra. Crisis injected financial difficulties such as inability to pay off loans are reportedly becoming serious issues in family affairs especially due to the fact that in one third of Albanian emigrants' families in Greece women's work is the only source of income¹⁸.

3.7 Social security

Despite the fact that there are only a few studies available, the issue of social security for international migrants has been increasingly acquiring attention in Albania. There are several reasons that call for the social insurance of international migrants. The first among them is that the stock of migrants actually represents about half of the population residing in Albania (WB, 2011). Although Albanians that migrated from the early 90s were characterized by the young age, after two decades it is not far the day when a considerable number of migrants will reach the retirement age. Moreover, the Albanian migrants, especially during the first decade of migration, were illegal and most of them that worked in the informal sector were not covered by social security. Regularizations in Greece (1998, 2001) and Italy (1995, 1998 and 2002) gave Albanian migrants social security, pay and employment conditions similar to other citizens. Nevertheless, many migrants continued to be illegal, to work mainly in the informal sector or to be unemployed. Recently, the economic crisis (especially in Greece) obliges many Albanian migrants to work in the informal sector.

In 1993 the voluntary scheme of (minimum) social contributions was created in Albania, aiming to address the lack of social insurance coverage of Albanian migrants' working abroad¹⁹ (ISSA, 2010) as well as informality of work within the country. Target groups of this social insurance scheme are unemployed and uninsured migrants in the host countries, migrant housewives, migrants in the last years of employment that do not fulfil the working years to have a partial or full old-age pension. Its beneficiaries can also be Albanian citizens residing in Albania. By means of this scheme one can benefit elderly pensions, as well as invalidity and family benefits. This scheme envisages 15 years of contributions as the minimum insurance period to be eligible for old age pension benefits, while the requirement for a full old age pension is 35 years of contribution period. The share of monthly contributions is 3,790 Lek (about 27 Euro) per month, while the size of the full pension is 11,117 Lek (about 79 Euro) per month. This scheme has been designed to give the possibility to all citizens, migrants and non-migrants to contribute for completing the necessary working seniority and contributions in order to benefit from the pension²⁰.

For the disabled that need care, the scheme provides also a supplement for the care giver amounting by 15% of their pension as well as full disability pensions after fulfilling the minimal years of work seniority or contributions (15 years). Disabled also benefit from a child benefit supplement, when they care for children under 18 or under 25 years old, when enrolled in

¹⁸ Shqip Daily Newspaper: "Greek Crisis increases the divorce rate among Albanian emigrants in Greece" by Engjell Serjani: 22/02/2012.

¹⁹ The lack of coverage being partly due to the absence of bilateral social security agreements with the main destination countries of Albanian migration.

²⁰ Pensions in Albania are distributed via the Post Office network. Pensions can also be wired to a bank account in Albania. However, people prefer cash and they usually collect the pension themselves or have it delivered at their residence. Albanians that live abroad usually authorize a relative to collect it on their behalf or receive in an accumulated form whenever they are present in the country.

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higher education²¹. If an insured person in Albania dies, his/her children under the category explained above, benefit from a family pension.

The Albanian government aims to create agencies abroad, mainly in Greece and Italy, to enable migrants to contribute from their host country to the voluntary social protection scheme without having to travel home. Information to promote contributions to the voluntary public insurance scheme has been made available in the Albanian consular services in Italy and Greece. In Italy, there are offices established, called "Patronate" and are under the supervision of the Italian authorities. These offices serve as a communication channel with the Albanian Social Insurance Institute (SII) for verifying the seniority at work and the years of contributions of the interested Albanian migrants.

The Italian partners in this initiative have also committed to open an office in Tirana, in order to facilitate better the exchange of information and verification of the contribution years in the voluntary scheme. Moreover, three information desks in cities that result to have the highest number of Albanian emigrants have been established, namely Milan, Florence and Savona, with the intention to expand also in other parts of Italy. In the beginning of 2012, SII and representatives from the Italian "Patronate" have started to train the specialists that are employed in these information desks on Albanian social security schemes, the rights of the Albanian emigrants and especially on the voluntary scheme²².

In 2005, the SII signed an agreement with the American Bank of Albania (now known as Intesa Sanpaolo Bank Albania)²³, which has a branch in Athens, to collect contributions of social insurance from the Albanian migrants in Greece without needing to come to Albania (Migravalue, 2008). In February 2011, the SII has signed an agreement with the same bank for facilitating the depositing of voluntary contributions of the Albanians migrants in Italy. While, only during last year SII has received about new 250 requests for applications from the Albanian emigrants leaving in Italy. The requests arrive to the SII email and the answer is given again electronically and also via mail. For SII this document replaces the work document (*libreza e punës*) and it is valid for the cases of benefits provided by the Albanian social insurance legislation.

The data on the number of migrants involved in this scheme are important. Until 2005, the current place of residence of contributors was not collected and consequently it was hard to define the number of migrants. In 2004, the *National Strategy on Migration* estimated that 70% of workers enrolled in the voluntary contribution scheme were migrants (GoA, 2005). In 2005, a new application form was developed, in which the place of actual residence must be indicated. In 2009, the department of statistics of SII estimated that the number of insured persons in the Scheme of Voluntary Insurance was 12,556 migrants (ISSA, 2010), (see Table 2).

The Albanian government has entered into negotiations with several countries to enable the recognition of social contributions of migrants. A bilateral agreement has been signed with Turkey²⁴ in the framework of a regional project of the Council of Europe for coordinating the social and health insurance schemes and there have been negotiations for improvement in implementing the agreement. Bilateral agreements are being discussed with Italy, Greece, the UK and Canada²⁵. These agreements will make Albanian migrants in these countries eligible for pension provided they have completed the necessary years of work and have paid the

²¹ http://www.isssh.gov.al/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121%3Aemigrantet&catid=106%3Aemigrante&Itemid=85 (last accessed on 27.02.2012).

²² Ibid.

²³ The American Bank of Albania has been acquired by the Intesa Sanpaolo Group and together with the former Italian Albanian Bank since 2008 known as the Intesa Sanpaolo Bank Albania.

²⁴ Signed on 15.07.1998, ratified on 15.05.2003 and entered into force on 01.02.2005.

²⁵ It is not fixed yet when the cooperation protocols shall enter into force.

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necessary contributions. During the previous regime, there have been agreements with countries from the former communist block such as Bulgaria (1952) and Romania (1961). The renewal of these agreements is also in process. Procedures with Italy and Greece have started but for now negotiations have stopped as both destination countries have replied that they had to postpone the request from Albania on bilateral social protection agreements to a more suitable moment due to the impact of global financial crises. Also Belgium and Hungary have agreed to start negotiations although the number of Albanian migrants there is not high.

Returning migrants are automatically covered by the healthcare system in Albania which is a residence based scheme offering general medical services. In cases when the returned migrant is unemployed however, he/she has to be registered at the offices of the national employment service as unemployed jobseeker in order to be automatically covered in the scheme of Health Care Insurance Institute (HCII). Also, depending on the specific case, the returned migrant enters in the social protection scheme, more precisely meaning 1) if he/she applies for unemployment benefit with the basic criteria having worked for at least 12 months, being insured; 2) if the criteria is not met than he/she can benefit from *ndihma ekonomike* (NE - economic aid).

As a rule **family members left behind** by migrants also benefit from automatic coverage in the health care system on basis of their residence in Albania. In case they are inactive (children, pensioners, disabled, unemployed or receiving social assistance) their contributions to the health insurance system are paid by the State.

Migration flows had a large impact on the settlement pattern of the population, as many people left their villages in large parts of the country to move to cities or outside Albania. This poses real problems in terms of decisions on economic assistance (*ndihma ekonomike*) that is allocated by the state budget based on the reported needs of local government units and it is administered at the local level. Sometimes, richer local government units may also contribute with their own resources since the real coverage is always lower than the needs.

In civil registry offices, part of the population that migrated internally has not been cleared from the communes of their origin, even when they live in a different commune. Residency is one criterion for receiving *ndihma ekonomike* and these individuals might not benefit from it or might benefit from it in more than one unit. According to the criteria for the distribution of *ndihma ekonomike*, households with one or more emigrant members are automatically excluded from the scheme. Excluded are also those households in possession of land. This constitutes a problem for the internal migrant households that although may be in possession of land in their area of origin, do not report it when applying for economic assistance in their new settlement. Therefore, the scheme is believed to have a few problems caused by false reporting, a deficient monitoring system and abuse of authority and corruptive practises. Currently, the scheme is being revised with the assistance of the World Bank.

3.8 Poverty and Social Exclusion

Poverty is widely believed to be a push factor for migration. The study of ETF (2007) showed that 36.7% of the potential migrants state poverty as the main push factor for migration. This percentage is higher in North East Albania and in the rural areas compared to the urban ones and in small cities compared to larger ones. In 2002, the WB (2003) estimated that 25.4% of the population or close to 780.000 persons fell below the poverty line²⁶. Meanwhile extreme poverty

²⁶ The poverty rate is the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line of Lek 4,891 per capita per month in 2002 prices (INSTAT 2009a). The poverty headcount is calculated on nationally representative,

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amounted to about 150.000 persons, or 4.7% of the population. This poverty level due to the quick economic growth has been reduced during the 2000s reaching 18.5% in 2005 and 12.4% in 2008 (INSTAT, 2009a). Meanwhile, extreme poverty dropped to 3.5% in 2005 and to 1.2% in 2008. Poverty in mountainous areas has increased from 25.6% in 2005 to 26.6% in 2008 and is more visible in the rural areas (INSTAT, 2009a).

The Albanian state provides full and partial economic aid to 98,500 families to reduce poverty and social exclusion. The number of families that benefit economic aid is higher in the regions of Kukës and Dibër, where there are respectively 66.5% and 44% of the families benefit economic aid (Shahollari, 2011).

Roma and Egyptians are the poorest groups in Albania. De Soto et al. (2005) show that the level of poverty is twice higher compared to Albanians. The Roma and Egyptian families fall into two extremes: very poor and poor families, which together represent 80% of all families, and relatively prosperous or well-off families, which represent 5% of all families. A study of UNDP (2012), based on a wide survey of Roma and Egyptian families showed that this level did not decrease. National and international support has focused on improving the overall situation of Roma in Albania and a national strategy is in place. Central and local governments have become more active and actions are focusing in improving their living conditions and access to education and health services. Certain measures include for instance free text books and school lunches for Roma children²⁷. In addition, the population and housing census that took place in 2011 paid particular attention to the registration of Roma.

Migration, through remittances, has been the main coping mechanism reducing poverty levels and improving living standards in Albania. A World Bank study (2007) based on the 2005 ALSMS data shows that there is a clear difference of individual consumption between the households that enjoy additional revenues from remittances and those without. A supplementary year of temporary migration is accompanied by an increase in consumption of 5%. Regarding families with long-term migrants this data is 50% higher.

Until now there has not been in Albania any empirical research on the impact of migration on inequality. Several studies however, shed light on certain aspects of the phenomenon. De Soto et al. (2002) observe that migration is one of the factors that distinguish a non-poor family from a poor one. In an IOM commissioned study, (De Zwager et al., 2005) 1004 migrant's households were surveyed and 89% of them resulted to have received remittances representing 43% of the migrant's household budget. In cases when the relatives of migrants were asked to express their thoughts regarding migration and remittances, the conclusions were very interesting. Only 3.7% of them stated that their financial situation had not improved. This number can be compared with that of the families that did not receive remittances in which case about 59% of them reported that they did not have improvement of their financial situation (ibid). Therefore, the risk of increasing household income inequality due to migrant remittances may be present in Albania.

Migration and remittances have an impact on regional inequality too. Black et al. (2005) emphasize that poorer people from rural areas move internally or to Greece, while the better off living in urban and coastal areas are more able to access better-remunerated migration opportunities to Italy and beyond. As a result remittances have a higher proportion of total

household level expenditure and is based on an actual consumption data. For more information on the methodology please see: World Bank: Albania Poverty Assessment, 2003.

²⁷ Measure to be initially piloted in Tirana, Durrës, Fier and Elbasan. Deputy Minister of MES Nora Malaj: National Conference on Roma Empowerment 31 March 2011, http://www.balkanweb.com/bw_lajme_kryesore.php?IDNotizia=58975&IDCategoria=1 last accessed 16 February 2012.

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income in urban areas (16%) than in rural areas (11%) that highlights the regional inequality in Albania.

Migration and remittances affect the inequality between ethnic groups also. Roma and Egyptians – due to their poverty and scarce financial capital, have lower migration intensity or less income in their host country. As a result they send less remittances compared to other ethnic groups (De Soto et al., 2005).

It has been noted also (King and Vullnetari, 2004) that both ends of the remittances end – the sender and the receiver, are dominated by men. Therefore, migration contributes only slightly towards the reduction of inequality between both genders (Black et al., 2005).

4. Labour market and social development trends in net migration loss / gain regions

4.1 Identification of net migration loss / gain regions

During the two last decades Albania has been a country on a continuous move where internal and international migration and return of migrants have lived together, have interacted and have intertwined with each other. As previously shown, internal migration is mainly a feature of the poor and mountainous areas of Northern Albania towards Tirana and Durrës, while international migration is dominant in the south of the country towards Greece and in the Coastal areas towards Italy. As a consequence of these migratory processes, the Albanian population is diminished numerically, redistributed and mostly concentrated in some regions as well as it is urbanized.

Preliminary findings of the 2011 Census show that during the period 1989-2011 the population of Albania has shrank by 11%, from 3,2 million persons in 1989 down to 2,8 million in 2011 (INSTAT, 2011a). The main factor that has influenced this fall is international migration that encompasses the youngest, most dynamic and most educated part of the Albanian population. For a country that until recently had seen a rapid demographic increase (one of the highest and most rapid in Europe) this beyond any doubts, constitutes a rather shocking fact and one that generates long term economic and social consequences. Due to international migration some regions of the country such as Gjirokastra (-52%), Vlora (-30%) and Korca (-29%) have lost considerable part of the human potential. The Region of Berat (-37 %) and to a lesser extent that of Shkodra (-24%) have lost population due to international and internal migration. Other regions such as Tirana (+70%) and Durrës (+21%), have compensated the losses from international migration with the highest fluxes of internal migration. On the other hand, Fier (-18%), Elbasan (-17%) and Lezha (-18%) have recuperated their losses from international migration through internal migration fluxes.

While internal migration, although present in all the country's regions, has mainly followed the direction from North – Northeast Albania towards the Tirana-Durres axis. Consequently, the population of the Regions of Kukës (-42%) and Dibër (-40%) has declined significantly. In the two regions Tirana and Durrës currently resides almost 36% of the country's population from 21% in 1989 (Table 11). Internal migration fluxes to Tirana and Durrës relate to employment opportunities and a better future for their children. Moreover, 50% of the economic enterprises (INSTAT, 2012)²⁸, most of the foreign direct investments; public administration and trade activities as well as services of the country are concentrated in the Tiranë - Durrës axis.

As a result of this movement, urban population from 35.5% in 1989 increased to 42.2% in 2001 and to 53.5% in 2011. Some cities like Tirana and Durres almost doubled their population during

²⁸ Press Conference of the Director of INSTAT on 27 Janar 2012, Balkanweb.

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the last two decades.²⁹ The concentration of the population has made Tirana the city with the highest population density in Albania, with more than 600 inhabitants per square kilometre. Moreover, Tirana is characterized by a loss of green spaces and open areas to other non-productive activities, with air and noise pollution.

Meanwhile, another interesting phenomenon is the establishment of illegal settlements in the proximity of urban areas – the largest and most notable being the area of Bathore in northern Tirana and the area of Keneta in the south of the coastal city of Durres. Both these areas during the communist regime were considered as agricultural land. Following the collapse of state authority and the reigning chaos, people moved to these areas and started to build houses without proper permits and moreover on a land that was not theirs. Twenty years from then, these areas that often are wrongly perceived as shanty towns offer a totally different picture with large concrete based construction houses fuelled by remittances. Urbanisation is already taking place but this phenomenon created several and outstanding challenges in terms of property rights and claims as well as access to basic services and infrastructure. Indeed, the World Bank (WB, 2007: 99) maintains that informal settlements in peri-urban and urban areas are causing serious primary urban issues, most notably: (a) severely limited access to infrastructure and possible social exclusion, and (b) fiscal burden to the municipalities.

Kamza, which Berxholli (2008) defines as a “laboratory for studying internal migration” is an interesting example to illustrate this phenomenon. The municipality of Kamza situated about 7 km north of the city of Tirana was until the early 90’s an agricultural state owned farm with about 6,000 inhabitants (Caro, 2011). Migration towards Kamza started with the post-communist transition. Aliaj (2002) explains the migrants set up in Kamza with the proximity to Tirana, low land prices and through the availability of free spaces that were occupied by force. This internal migration has been developed in phases. First the head of the household migrated, occupied a place to settle and started building a barrack. Then, another household member arrived to take care of the settlement and when the house (or a part of it) was finished the whole family migrated from the countryside followed by cousins, friends and neighbours (Caro, 2011). Due to this migration the population of Kamza increased by 11 times and reached 67,000 inhabitants in 2011 (INSTAT, 2011a) making Kamza the sixth largest municipality in Albania.

This internal migration was accompanied by a severe and chaotic urbanization. Within these settlements, basic infrastructure and basic social services were also missing. There is a lack of adequate roads, power, water supply and sewage systems. There are also few proper education and health services, nor entertainment and leisure activities. An Oxfam report commissioned by UNDP (2005) indicated that in Kamza only 10% of the workforce is formally employed, 45% is informally and/or seasonally employed and the rest has no work opportunities. Some social issues that have accompanied this migration hotspot are child illiteracy, high rates of drop outs and street work.

Hagen-Zanker and Azzarri (2010), in a rather interesting study based on the data of 2005 ALSMS, compared the situation of migrant peri-urban households in Tirana that migrated from rural areas with the rural non-migrant households. They conclude that most peri-urban migrant households are worse off on several well-being indicators compared to rural non-migrant households. The first question that crosses one’s mind is: Why migration in rural areas towards the peri-urban ones still continues? Authors explain that despite the worsening off in short term in well-being, migrants in peri-urban areas expect improved conditions in the medium term. This is confirmed also by the fact that the incomes of early migrants are higher than those of the recent ones and the income of their households increase with 9% for every year they spend in the peri-urban areas of Tirana.

²⁹ Therefore, the population of Tirana from 238 thousands in 1989 reached to 341 thousands in 2001 and to 421 thousands in 2011 despite international migration.

4.2 Labour market development in net migration loss / gain regions

Internal and international migration has brought important developments in the structure of the labour market in Albania. During the initial years of post-socialist transition, employment and unemployment were related to the pace of economic reconstruction and the creation of new jobs. However, population movements have also played an important role.

In 2009, the region of Tirana contributed with 37.9% to the country's GDP whereas the share of the regions of Dibra and Kukës were 3% and 2.3% respectively (INSTAT, 2009b). Understandably, Tirana represents the most important share of the labour market in the country, representing almost one fourth of employment in Albania in 2006 (INSTAT, 2007). The large majority of employment is concentrated in trade and services. On the other hand, the level of construction in Tirana is up to 10 times higher compared to other regions in Albania (Municipality of Tirana, 2006). Tirana being the most developed part of the country acquires the greatest share of private business and investment opportunities. All these features make Tirana the centre of internal migration. While Tirana has not experienced the same loss of human resources and capital like other regions, it is mostly hit by the brain drain that is of a magnitude far bigger compared to the rest of Albania. The UNDP (2006) study showed that brain drain from universities and research institutes of Tirana was at least twice higher compared to those of local universities.

Unemployment in Tirana based on the Labour Force Survey is estimated to be 20.1% in 2007 and 13.8% in 2008, which is a little higher than the national average (respectively 13.5% and 13.1%) (INSTAT, 2009a). This can be explained also by the lack of absorption of internal migration from other areas, especially rural ones.

Internal migration brought to Tirana a young and un-qualified working force, capable to do everything in short term and without social protection. This provided flexibility and dynamism to the labour market. The informal sector is the main entry point into the urban economy for migrant families in Tirana as its labour market provides sufficient opportunities. However, in terms of employment, although in Tirana peri-urban migrants seem to be able to earn higher wages, their employment is mainly temporary so income is not stable. Azzari et al. (2008) also notes a discrepancy between income and consumption which can be explained with the assumption that migrants are financially helping their families back home. Indeed, data from the 2008 ALSMS show an increase of remittances from the families in Albania which is related also to the internal migration.

Meanwhile unemployment in Kukës (7%) and Dibër (6.1%) is visibly lower than the average of the country (INSTAT, 2009a). This is related to the high pace of internal migration. Internal migrants being younger and more educated have caused an increase in age and the lowering of education level of the labour force in these two regions.

4.3 Poverty and social exclusion in net migration loss / gain regions

Betti et al. (2010), by combining the 2001 Census with the 2002 and 2008 ALSMS survey data, show that Albania has a considerable heterogeneity of poverty rates across administrative units. Internal and international migration contributes in the reduction and distribution of poverty. Two phenomena are observed in net migration loss/gain regions.

The first is that poverty, although in decline seems to be persistent mainly in the mountainous areas of North Albania. The two regions Dibër and Kukës which have the largest population losses due to internal and partially international migration feature also the highest levels of poverty, respectively 37.37% and 33.41% in 2008 (Betti et al., 2010). In 2011, the number of the households receiving economic aid was 11,993 in the region of Kukës and 14,494 in the region

of Dibra, representing 26.5% of the total of households receiving economic aid in Albania³⁰. Studies show that while during the recent years the flow of international migrants has declined in all the other parts of Albania; it has continued to rise for the mountainous areas. Almost 74% of international migrants from the mountainous areas (versus 65% that is the country's average) send remittances while their size is twice higher than that sent by migrants in the Central areas (WB, 2007). Consequently, more and larger remittances are flowing into the poor and mountainous areas compared to other richer areas of the country.

Meanwhile, internal migration, as we will also observe below, seems to be exporting poverty into other areas of the country. Moreover, it is also accompanied by a deterioration of social services. Many doctors, nurses, dentists, opticians, and pharmacists have left or are looking to leave rural areas and villages as conditions in urban areas are perceived to be better, and most seek to earn a higher income by either switching to a new career or establishing a practice in an area with wealthier patients. Medical graduates often do not return back to their home towns and do not go to work in rural areas (De Soto et al., 2002). As a result in the region of Kukës there is a doctor for about 2,500 inhabitants and in the region of Dibra there is a doctor for about 3,500 inhabitants³¹. The same impact is also seen in the education sector where teaching standards deteriorated in rural areas as a result of migration of qualified teachers. In the region of Kukës, during the academic year 2011-2012, 50.4% of the teachers of 9 years primary schools have completed only secondary education and consequently do not possess the necessary qualifications³².

Gedeshi and Sabat-Wheeler (2006) in another study for the migration in the rural area of Korca provide another argument for the deterioration of social services. They show that in mountainous villages, due to internal and international migration, the number of the remaining families is so small that actually has brought the degradation of public services such as schools, the healthcare centres, the infrastructure etc. This is explained with the interruption, shrinking investments for these services and by the constrained closure of these institutions due to the low number of population that resides in these villages. This is what pushes the remaining households to migrate.

The second phenomenon is that internal migration has created "poverty pockets" in the peri-urban areas as well as within the large urban centres. A publication of UNDP (2005) estimated that 80% of internal migrant families live under conditions of severe poverty. In our example, in the Municipality of Kamza, the population of which increased 11 times during the period 1989-2011, there were 1,894 households that received "economic aid" in 2011. This material poverty is accompanied by the lack of social services. The health service is very limited and the capacity of health centres is not in compliance with the number of inhabitants. In the Municipality of Kamza there is only one healthcare centre with 19 doctors or 1 doctor per 3,542 inhabitants³³. The school system is incapable to face the increasing number of the pupils that has led to increasing number of pupils per class and as a result many schools function on shifts.

5. Impact of migration on vulnerable groups

5.1. Women

Migration is on one hand the only option for economic survival and improvement of living conditions of certain poor families. But, on the other hand, its social cost is very high. Migration

³⁰ The data are taken from the Directorate of Social Services in the MoLSAEO.

³¹ According to an interview with an official of the Ministry of Health.

³² Data from the Regional Education Directorate of Kukës.

³³ According to interviews with an official of the Ministry of Health.

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has created some sharp social problems that were unknown before transition. The separation of families due to migration is affecting all generations – children, parents, and grandparents. It is often associated with heavy negative consequences such as abandonment of the elderly, children and a quick growth of divorce cases³⁴. Women are believed to feel much greater psychological stress due to the migration of men in their household. Most of them are obliged to take on their shoulders the children's upbringing and education (De Soto, 2002).

Albania's Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS) published in 2010 and the World Bank poverty assessment (2007) are the most resourceful papers that have dealt with the impact of migration on households. They are both based on national surveys undertaken by the Institute of Statistics. According to the ADHS migration has impacted the household structure with 3% of all migrants having left behind a wife or husband in their household of origin. This phenomenon is mainly noticed for migrants, with 5% of males and 2% of females living abroad having left behind their wife or husband. Indeed, at the beginning of the 1990s, the large scale of irregular migration resulted in men that left behind high numbers of women with children. After the regularisation programmes in Italy and Greece in the late 1990s, most migrants completed family reunification or returned. Therefore, there are currently only a small percentage of households that are single female households due to the migration of the men.

Studies show that wives of working migrant husbands are most likely to work in home production to replace the lack of manpower arising from the absence of the husband, in particular in subsistence agriculture (Iara, 2009). Indeed, the majority combine motherhood and the role of homemaker with agricultural work, whether it is tending to vegetable plots, livestock or apple orchards. Ambrossetti et al. (2010) state that especially in the rural areas, where the patriarchal authority is still strong, women shall be conformed also towards a series of traditional rules which are even stronger due to the absence of the husband.

Migration as a dynamic phenomenon is changing the gender rapports inside and outside Albania. Ambrossetti et al. (2010) observe that migration is an emancipating process for Albanian women and that in Italy they contribute towards family incomes and send remittances to support their parents in Albania. Other studies show that after their return to the motherland many of them work in the family businesses or like paid employees (ETF, 2007).

From a gender prospective, according to the UN-INSTRAW and UNDP study (UN-INSTRAW/UNDP, 2010), remittances play a positive role because they increase the possibility that young women will attend higher education and thus increase their chances of being more independent and mobile than those who do not. The study shows that in the nuclear households women manage remittances which is something that strengthens their position. In extended households this process is mainly done by fathers (40%) of migrants. King and Vullnetari (2009), based on in-depth interviews with Albanian migrants (mainly from North Albania where patriarchal relations are strong) observe that the men are those that generally control the remittances in both sides of the chain. This means that remittances are sent by the migrant's son to fathers who control and decide on their use on behalf of the wider family.

5.2 Children

According to the aforementioned ADHS, one out of nine internal migrants (11 percent) or international migrants (12%) has left behind children. 8% of internal migrants and 7% of international migrants have left two or more children behind. The phenomenon of migrants

³⁴ According to an interview with Mr. Gëzim Tushi, Official at the State Social Services in Tirana, international migration is maybe the second reason for the quickly growing of the divorces in Albania. In 2011, the divorce figures in Albania amounted to 6,100 and there is one divorce in 3-4 marriages.

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leaving children behind is more common in rural areas than in urban areas, especially for international migrants. 15% of rural households care for children of international migrants compared with 7% of urban households.

The legalisation of irregular migrants and family reunions has led to a lower number of children left behind compared to the 90's. However, a 2009 UNICEF study shows that the number continues to be large with a vast majority of families with children behind have the father that has migrated (98.5%) whereas for 1.2% of them both parents have migrated. These children are mostly concentrated in rural areas and in the central and coastal regions of Albania. The study showed that remittances and the improving of their living conditions cannot compensate the negative consequences of family separation and the psychological and emotional stress.

Migrants that are usually undocumented, unskilled and have low incomes face great difficulties in the first years of migration. This makes their children particularly vulnerable as they are usually left under the care of their grandparents. The psychological stress of the children that are away from their parents and the responsibility of the grandparents to take care about them is present everywhere. Meanwhile, for many other grandparents, usually originating from the low and marginalized population groups, the growth of their grandchildren poses a great economic burden. Difficulties of the children left behind are more accentuated for Roma and Egyptian families. Studies show that children live with their grandparents who often due to poverty and deprivation cannot fulfil the children's economic, health, education and social needs (De Soto et al., 2005; Gedeshi and Gjokuta, 2008).

According to the World Bank 2007 Poverty Assessment (World Bank, 2007), there is evidence that migration has a negative impact on the children's' school enrolment rates, especially for female and children of secondary education age in rural areas. Exposure to information and migration networks increases the likelihood of migration of children in the future, making migration and school enrolment competing forces. Where employment opportunities are higher for low skill jobs which are obtainable through mostly illegal immigration, especially towards Greece, the children's incentives to enrol in school would be reduced. The effect would be stronger for children from households with migrants abroad who can count on networks and reduce the cost of migration.

5.3 Elderly

Qualitative research show that in some cases the return of migrants is motivated also by the obligation to take care of their elderly and/or sick parents (King and Vullnetari, 2006; Gedeshi and Gjokuta, 2008). In many Albanian families it is a tradition that the parents should live together with one of their sons, usually the youngest. In other cases, migrants take care of their families from distance (long distance care) by sending remittances and gifts and by long distance participation in decisions about health and wellbeing of elderly left behind.

Many other migrants do not possess legal resident status in the destination countries: many entered clandestinely, remain undocumented, and work in the black economy. The status of the illegal migrant makes it difficult for them to come and go, since they can be caught by the police or border authorities. In this case they cannot go to visit, help and take care of their aged parents in difficult periods for them such as illness or depression. This situation is made even more difficult by the fact that the pensions are low³⁵ and the quality of the health service has

³⁵ The minimum pension in Albania amounts to about 13,000 lekë (93 Euro), the average pension is about 15,000 lekë (107 Euro) and the maximal one about 22,000 lekë (157 Euro).

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deteriorated during the transition³⁶. Consequently, many pensioners have insufficient access to basic health services (UNDP, 2005; Gedeshi and Gjokuta, 2008).

This situation is harder for Roma migrants, whose incomes from migration are much lower. Meanwhile, many of their parents in Albania live in miserable conditions and do not benefit pensions since during the transition, being long term unemployed or working in the informal sector they did not contribute to the social security scheme.

Furthermore, a scarcity of specialized institutions that can take care for the third generation is observed. In Albania there are only six functional public institutions with a capacity of 400 places and 10 private ones with a capacity of about 300 places³⁷. An increasing demand has been noted on the use of old people's homes and the State Social Services in Tirana could only accommodate up to 50% of applications in 2008 (Gedeshi and Gjokuta, 2008). This increase is directly linked to the impact of migration and this situation has found the state services unprepared and unable to offer the necessary services.

Consequently, this strengthens the sense of depression, social abandonment and loneliness many older people feel (King and Vullnetari, 2006), creating the phenomenon of socially isolated 'orphan pensioners' (De Soto et al., 2002). The 2005, National Human Development Report for Albania (UNDP, 2005) confirmed that elderly people living alone and at high risk of social abandonment are one of the most vulnerable social groups in Albania.

5.4 Migration of ethnic groups in Albania – Roma and Egyptians

The migration of ethnic groups in Albania is an interesting issue that has also been addressed by researchers (Vullnetari, 2007). The World Bank study on poverty divides the ethnic groups in two categories: those living better than the ethnic Albanians and those living worse. The Roma and Egyptians belong to the second one (De Soto et al., 2002).

The fall of communism marked a turning point in Roma's and Egyptians' population status in Albania. The collapse of nearly all state-owned enterprises during the transition period led to mass unemployment as well as to rising illiteracy rates and deteriorating health care, infrastructure, and housing conditions. While these transition effects were felt throughout the population, the impact on the Roma and Egyptians was fiercer as they were mainly engaged in low skilled agricultural and industrial work. Furthermore, issues of access, extreme poverty and discrimination came to surface.

Studies show that the level of poverty among Roma and Egyptians is twice higher compared to that of ethnic Albanians' and that this situation has worsened (De Soto et al., 2005). Many families live in very poor conditions. The majority of the Roma live in old housing (38.4%) or shacks (20.8%). About 39% of Roma and 20% of Egyptian families do not have running water in their homes. Furthermore, 43% of Roma and 11% of Egyptians report to not have sewage in their dwelling (UNDP, 2012). They also face difficulties obtaining state assistance and other forms of social assistance. One of the main causes of poverty and social exclusion is lack of employment. Almost 50.3% of the Roma and 57.6% of Egyptians are unemployed and their unemployment is a long term one (UNDP, 2012). Due to the lack of employment in the formal sector they work in the informal one mainly in metal scrap collection, casual works and begging. When income from formal or informal work is insufficient to meet daily needs, Roma and

³⁶ According to a study of Open Data (a project financed by Soros Foundation) in Albania the number of doctors, nurses and hospital beds for 1000 inhabitants has decreased since 1989. In 2007, Albania had 1.15 doctors per 1000 inhabitants from 1.35 in 2000. Also in 2007 there were 2.93 beds per 1000 inhabitants compared to 3.4 in 2000 (Gazeta Shqiptarja, 10/2/2012).

³⁷ Interview with Mr. Gëzim Tushi, State Social Services in Tirana.

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Egyptians try to migrate abroad. Economic factors such as unemployment, low incomes, improvement of living standards, absence of social assistance and debts are the main pushing factors of the international migration process and represent more than 4/5 of its causes (UNDP, 2012). Although migration is a key coping mechanism for poverty not everyone has been able to migrate and only those who have sufficient financial, social and human capitals are able to go.

Roma and Egyptian communities migrate more to Greece (89% for Roma and 64% for Egyptians respectively) and less to Italy (7% for Roma and 33% for Egyptians respectively), where issues like child migration and child labour became present. UNDP (2012) study showed that the Roma and Egyptian migrants are mainly young (64% of the Roma and 51% of the Egyptians belonging to the group age 17-40 years old), most of them are males and they are relatively better educated compared to the rest.

Their migration is both short-term and long term. Actually short term international migration is mostly oriented towards Greece and Kosovo*. There is a distinction between those that migrate in search of work in Greece and those migrating to Kosovo*. Roma/Egyptians that migrate to Greece originate mainly from South Albania and possess a certain degree of human, financial, and social capital. They migrate legally with working visas and are mainly employed in harvesting or planting agricultural products. Regarding migration to Kosovo*, the Roma families that go there originate mainly from Central Albania, and do not dispose the above mentioned capitals. Short term migration diversifies the sources of incomes and can diminish extreme poverty but however it is incapable to get Roma and Egyptian families outside the poverty cycle.

What began immediately after the fall of communism, as a short-term, sporadic phenomenon involving predominantly men, evolved into an annual, often organized process that encompasses entire families and communities. Despite the lack of official data, the phenomenon of long term migration is widespread in some Roma settlements of South Albania where 30 to 50% of the families have migrated (UNDP, 2012). Social capital of Roma in Greece played an important role in providing a job, housing, and safety (Mavrommatis, 2004).

Mavrommatis (2004) observes that the Albanian Roma that migrated to Greece in 1991-1993, in difference from the Greek Roma that are mostly illiterate, had completed at least the primary 8 years education cycle. They were initially employed by the Greek Roma and worked in construction or as aides in their trade activities. Progressively they were integrated in the Greek society and economy and started working for the non-Roma entrepreneurs or creating their own businesses. Moreover, they left the Roma settlements and started identifying themselves as Albanian migrants.

Almost 47% of Roma and 80% of Egyptian migrant households say that they received remittances from their relatives through formal and informal channels. The share of remittances is generally low and the largest part of them is used to fulfil the daily consumption needs (food, clothes) (UNDP, 2012). International migration among Roma and Egyptians is known to have led to divorce issues, weakening of cultural traditions and low educational attainment levels as well as child illiteracy.

Potential international migration trends of Roma and Egyptians seems to be lower. The UNDP survey with 2,400 Roma households in 2011 (UNDP 2012) showed that 30.9% of the Roma and 21.5 percent% of the Egyptians of the group age 18-40 years old want to migrate from Albania. By constructing an indicator to measure the 'propensity to migrate' that is based on the capability to finance the trip abroad, the information that they have on the country of migration, the possession of the relevant documents and on whether they plan to migrate within the next 6 months or one year, the study showed that only 9.5 percent% of the Roma and 3.3 percent% of the Egyptians can migrate in the near future (ibid.). This is explained on one hand by the low human, social and financial capital Roma and Egyptian households' possess.

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Roma's internal migration, due to unemployment and poverty is even more problematic. Due to limited opportunities, many Roma select migration in other cities, where competition is lower. In their new settlements Roma live in camps composed by tents or huts and where any type of infrastructure is missing. Almost 92% of the children 7-18 years old do not go to school and the households have no access to healthcare centers and to other social services (Gedeshi and Jorgoni, 2011). This has created extreme poverty pockets also in other cities of the country

In many of the new settlements, the Roma live in camps, consisting of tents or huts located mainly on the rivers banks. The size of the camp varies according to the area. In Tirana (Shkoza, Farka, etc.) and Shkodra camps are large and consist of 20 to 50 tents/huts. In Kukës, Peshkopi, Shupenza, Beltoja, Vrion, etc. they consist of 10 to 20 tents/huts, while in Fushë Ali, Qafë e Vishës, Ersekë, etc from 2 to 5 tents. In some other settlements, such as Saranda and Milot, the Roma have put up their tents in former abandoned warehouses, paying rent to their owners. In small settlements the Roma are often members of a family or a tribe. In Beltoja, Halim, a Roma from Kulla, says: "Here we are one blood. I have eight children here. I have also my son-in-law. I have a big family here". While in the big settlements the Roma families come from different areas of Albania. All live primarily with the income from collection and sale of metal and plastic items and cans, while women and young children beg. (Gedeshi and Jorgoni, 2011)

5.5 Migration of other ethnic groups in Albania

The afore mentioned World Bank study found out that ethnic groups which are part of those with an economic level above the average level of Albanians have seen the transition rather well off. Their migration to the country of origin has helped them to improve their standard of living (De Soto et al., 2002). The easiness in obtaining entrance visas, the language and family links in their country of origin, have made the Greek, Macedonian and Montenegrin population groups enjoy more advantages from migration.

When the transition started, the largest part of ethnic Greeks residing in Albania, - which according to Bërxoli (2005) were estimated to be about 89.000 persons in 2001, - migrated legally to Greece, together with their families. Differently from Albanians, their entry and stay in Greece has been facilitated administratively (Vullnetari, 2007). Their main employment sources are apparently agriculture, construction and services. Those migrants, who have left their aged parents in the country of birth, usually send them remittances to fulfil the daily subsistence needs.

The **Aromanians** or Vlachs ethnical group are mostly situated in South and Central Albania (Barjaba, 1995). There are no official data on their exact number but Bërxoli (2005) estimated that their population in 2001 amounted to 139.000 persons. Other scholars (Winnifrieth, 1995; Schwandner-Sievers, 1999) state that within the Albanian territory, in the beginning of post-communist transition, there were about 200.000 ethnic Aromanians. They migrate legally, both in short-term and long-term, mainly to Greece. Since the beginning of the transition, due to their ethnicity and Orthodox religion³⁸, they could benefit from easier access to visas and official work permits in Greece what was very difficult for ethnic Albanians (Schwandner-Sievers, 1999). Most of them work in agriculture, construction and services.

The **Macedonian minority** lives in nine villages at the Coast of Prespa Lake in the Korca region in south-east Albania. According to the 1989 Census, the population of these villages was estimated to be about 4,600 inhabitants (Berxholi, 2005). They migrate mainly in Macedonia due to their knowledge of the language, the double citizenship (Albanian and Macedonian), their equipment with Macedonian passport and geographical vicinity. The migration to Macedonia affects mainly the men and has a short-term nature. Many of them go back and forth daily or weekly (Zoto, 2001). Besides this, a limited number of ethnic Macedonian migrates to Greece,

³⁸ According to Schwandner-Sievers (1999) religion, as a criterion of classification, automatically places all the Albanian Aromanians into the "Greek minority".

where they work in agriculture and construction. Incomes earned from employment in Greece are higher than those from employment in Macedonia. Their remittances constitute the major source of their household budgets and are mostly used to meet daily subsistence needs. A portion of these incomes is used for the extension of the existing houses or the construction of new ones, to buy different equipment or furniture, or undertake any other investment, like the procurement of tractors, vehicles, etc. (De Soto et al., 2002).

Differently from the Macedonian minority, the largest part of the **Montenegrin ethnic minority** one, definitively moved to Montenegro in the first years of transition (De Soto et al., 2002; Bërxfholi, 2005).

6. Policy responses

6.1.1 Social Inclusion agenda

Migrants often find themselves out of the focus of attention of government structures especially in the cases of short-term or temporary migration as well as those that have moved from the rural areas towards the urban ones. Accompanying issues and problems deal with eligibility for economic assistance, entitlement to pensions, unemployment, and access to basic services but as well as with changes in lifestyle and family structures. All these challenges are dealt with in through a series of sector and cross cutting strategies.

The cross cutting strategy on Social Inclusion is the government's main strategy document that outlines policies and measures against poverty and social exclusion in the country. More than a strategy it is an umbrella document that building on sectoral strategies relating to Social Protection, Social Insurance, Basic Education, Health, Gender Equality and Prevention of Domestic Violence, People with Disabilities, and for improving the Living Conditions of the Roma Community. As such it is not directly costed and it lacks also a proper monitoring and evaluation framework. The Social Inclusion Strategy tackles three main priorities including the income generation opportunities of individuals through facilitating labour market participation of particular groups, access to services (social care, education, health, justice, housing, transport, telecommunications, water and sanitation) and assistance to vulnerable groups.

In a critical review of the strategy UNDP³⁹ identified some problems with this sub-strategy approach. Groups covered in each sub-strategy overlap, at least to a certain extent, insofar as, for example, Roma children with disabilities fall into three of the groups. Secondly, as sectoral strategies have their own dynamics, timeframes and purposes that do not always align with each other or with the social inclusion strategy as a whole. The strategy while taking into account the changes that the phenomenon of migration has brought about to the demographic, social and economic structure of the country and the challenges it has therefore posed, its policy responses, actions and measures do not directly address the migration challenges, What it does it looks at poverty and social inclusion through the lenses of vulnerable groups and does not address the roots of vulnerability and exclusion. The social impact of migration is also not explicitly addressed and therefore any relevant responses are also missing. As the strategy's lifespan is due to finish in 2013, the next strategy will need to broaden the scope of its approach look at vulnerability and exclusion from the root causes that will eventually include the social impact of migration and related issues. In addition, institutional arrangements and accountability mechanisms need to be better defined as government structures are considered still not able to

³⁹ UNDP, National Human Development Report for Albania 2010: Capacity Development for EU Integration.

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respond adequately to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups due to limited financial and human resources as well as inefficient institutional capacities⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ European Commission, Social Inclusion and Social Protection in Albania, Executive Summary, Directorate general for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Brussels, 2008, p. 5.

6.1.2 National Strategy for Migration

An increasing policy attention towards migration was noted in Albania during this decade. This led to the approval of the National Strategy for Migration which was prepared in 2004 with the intention to bring the migration management and the country's development in line with the EU integration processes. A National Plan of Action for Migration that consists of 66 concrete measures that the Albanian government and other partners had to undertake was also formulated⁴¹. The strategy and the action plan had a lifespan until 2010.

The aim of this strategy was to provide Albania with a comprehensive policy on migration, from one that has reacted mainly against irregular flows, to a more holistic policy based on the management of migration through development. The Strategy and the Action Plan represent the first attempt by Albania and is believed to be one of the most advanced policy documents in the region, making a direct link between management of migration and development. The document emphasises the creation of an adequate environment for potential migrants to stay and work at home and for actual emigrants to return and invest their money in the country. In more detail, the plan was built around certain pillars including the fight against illegal migration, addressing the reasons behind migration, return migration, the link between migration and development – protecting the rights of migrants, the potential capital of migrants abroad, remittances and their orientation towards business development, community mobilization of Albanians abroad, visa policies and consular services as well as addressing brain drain.

The strategy has paid attention to the institutional arrangements and responsibilities and provided a referencing document with regard to a series of measures. However, monitoring reports and data on how the action plan of the strategy has been implemented are missing – this being an endemic flaw of the implementation of sectoral strategies in Albania. According to the MOLSAEO⁴², the new national strategy of migration 2013-2018 will be prepared during 2012. The new strategy is expected to fulfil the obligations from the SAA, the recommendations of the European Commission as well as international conventions in the field of migration.

Albania has also signed the Convention on Migrant Workers in 2007 and has completed the internal regulatory and legislative measures for its implementation that aims to offer better protection to Albanian international migrants. In an attempt to regularize migration of workers towards the EU countries, the government Albania has concluded three bilateral labour agreements with Germany (1991), Greece (1995) and Italy (1997). MOLSAEO acknowledges that the expansion of legal ways for the regular migration of Albanian citizens for employment purposes in the EU countries is a priority. It is currently negotiating a new similar arrangement with France that it hopes to sign in 2012⁴³. While these agreements serve as a legal opportunity for seasonal work there are no clear data on how many have actually benefited. This modality has often been used also for illegal Albanian emigrants in these countries in search of legal employment status.

It is worth mentioning the role of the Institute of Diaspora – a body within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that aims to serve as a main focal point for the Albanian Diaspora. According to the Migration Strategy, the institute encourages the exchange of all possible contacts and information about the Diaspora and Albania and to identify Albanian students and specialists that follow their studies abroad. The Institute is charged with the establishment of the registry of Albanian citizens abroad and is tasked also to promote their national identity, language and

⁴¹ Please refer to the website of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities for the National Employment Strategy and its Action Plan among other social strategies: <http://www.mpcs.gov.al/migracioni/strategji-dhe-plani-kompetar-i-veprimit> (in Albanian).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Minister Spiro Ksera: Analysis of 2011 and objectives for 2012, 10/01/2012, <http://mpcs.gov.al/component/content/article/707?task=view>, last accessed 30/01/2012.

culture. However, until now it has not been able to deliver any tangible results due to a variety of reasons including lack of resources, its existence under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while it is the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities that is in charge of migration policies and management. Recent pledges by the government aiming to establish the National Council of Diaspora testify for the importance of that the government attaches to nurturing the relations with the Diaspora and at the same time perhaps acknowledge the limitations of the work of the Institute. Therefore, the political will has to be matched with stronger investment and clear targets for these commitments to be productive and meaningful.

6.2 Encouragement of return migration and support of integration of returnees

6.2.1 Strategy on the Reintegration of Returned Albanians

A new Strategy on the Reintegration of Returned Albanian citizens (2010-2015), approved in 2010 as part of the roadmap towards the visa liberalisation process, foresees information and referral services to be provided to returning Albanian migrants. Migration Counters (MC) are the central unit of the reintegration mechanism and are operational in all 12 Regional Directorates and 24 Local Employment Offices under the National Employment Service. MCs serve as focal points at local level to collect detailed information on returned Albanian citizens to assess their needs, provide them with information according to these needs and to address them to the institutions offering relevant services. Reintegration assistance of the Migration Counters consists in (i) interviewing returned Albanian citizens who voluntarily approach the Counters; (ii) providing information on public and private services that match their need assessment (if any); (iii) referring them to any public and private services or specific projects provided by civil society. The Civil Registry offices, Regional Education Directorates (RED) and Education Offices (EO) are also involved in the reintegration of returned Albanian citizens. In addition, the strategy envisages support to the reintegration of returned Albanian citizens with provision of information on local housing programmes in the short and long run.

The reintegration assistance mechanism is activated upon the arrival of returnees in Albania (Table 11). The information about the MCs has been made visible in each border crossing point through billboards, posters, etc. Besides this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs distributes information on reintegration support for returning Albanian citizens to the Albanian embassies and consulates abroad, so that returning migrants receive this information prior to returning to Albania.

In addition, on the basis of identified needs returning migrants can also be referred to the National Social Service for psycho-social assistance, public vocational training centres; education institutions for the education of children or equivalency of diplomas, municipality administration for shelter needs, relevant health care institutions, business promotion institutions, chambers of commerce, banking system as well as relevant structures of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Consumer Protection in the case of returnees from rural areas who will benefit from agricultural subsidy schemes.

Most of the emigrants that show up at the Migration Counters have earned a profession from their destination country and wish to start up their own business in Albania. They are mainly interested in obtaining more information about the labour market of the region where they wish to become self-employed. Despite a perceived lack of trust in the local employment services where ¾ of returning (unemployed) migrants choose not to register (IOM, 2008), in 2010, at the National Employment Service (NES) there were about 650 returned emigrants registered as jobseekers. Some of them have been employed with the help of the employment services, only 10% in jobs like nurse, construction worker and waiter. Their age is relatively young (over 52% of them belong to the age group 25-40) while their education is relatively low (over 42% of them have only 9 years of education – currently corresponding to the primary level education). NES is

paying particular attention to their training for enabling them to integrate faster in the labour market and in 2010 about 133 returned migrants have been trained (NES, 2011).

6.2.2 Brain Gain Programme

As far as brain drain is concerned evidence shows that the government is finally paying attention to this issue. A Brain Gain Programme launched by the government has been operational since 2006 with support from the UNDP and has provided incentive packages for 137 highly qualified people (from which 62 have completed their PhD) from abroad to return and work in academia and in mid to senior positions in public administration. These incentive packages include advantages in recruitment in public administration and financial bonuses for academic titles⁴⁴. The project has cooperated with the largest network of Albanian researchers (Albshkenca) and has created and aims also to expand a database for the students and academics abroad, which actually contains detailed contact information for about 530 persons. The financial value of these activities for the period 2006-2011 was about 1.4. million USD (Brain Gain Programme, 2012⁴⁵).

In addition, following the liberalization of the university system, there are now 56 public and private universities that have created an increasing demand for Albanian academics. Many of them, seduced also by the higher salaries offered in comparison to public universities, work as professors with a completed PhD in Western countries. However, this number is small compared to the stock of Albanian migrants that possess a PhD. In 2008, the University of Tirana accepted by means of competition 400 new lecturers but less than 5% of them had completed a PhD degree abroad (WB, 2010).

The Brain Gain Programme has brought a novelty with regard to the enforcement of the migratory policies that aim the qualitative return and cooperation of the scientific Diaspora with the research institutions of Albania. This responds also to the wish of the Albanian researchers/academics that work in the industrialized countries, 97% of which state their willingness to cooperate with the research institutions and universities in Albania (WB, 2010). However, in order for this programme not to remain only a pilot one, it requires extra financial resources. On the other hand proper socio-economic conditions have to be created and that cannot be achieved within short and/or medium terms.

The UNDP study (2006) by means of a survey with PhD holders in universities in Western Europe and the US showed the conditions that should be created in Albania, to make possible a 'brain gain' process. The study pointed out that the return of highly skilled migrants requires an economic and political stability of the country and a reduced level of corruption, reforms in the universities and research institutes, as well as investment in education and research activities. The respondents were keen to emphasize that these institutions shall be managed by individuals selected according to professional rather than political criteria, individuals that appreciate and motivate the research work and maintain the gender equality at all the levels.

⁴⁴ The incentive grant amounts to about 5,700 Euro for those that have a PhD and to 4,285 Euro for those that have completed a master degree abroad. While the soft credit for buying houses includes a government subsidy that covers 4% of the interest for a credit up to 35,700 Euro.

⁴⁵ Brain Gain Programme (2012), Action Plan 2012-2013, www.braingain.gov.al.

7. Key challenges and policy suggestions

7.1 Key challenges of the social impact of emigration and internal migration

Albania's migrations both internal and international have played a key role in the poverty alleviation in the country. Without migration, the economic and social situation of Albanians would have offered a very different picture. Remittances fuelled greater household consumption and boosted certain sectors of the economy such as construction. Apart from the financial capital, social and human capitals are some of the benefits of international migration. Migrants can bring home not just remittances but also new skills and trades as well as social networking that benefit for the home country in the long run.

1. Migration brought about certain new social phenomena for the Albanian households. Divorce, girls migrating to escape domestic violence, children and elderly people left behind were some of the migration related social features of Albania's post-communist reality. In particular women have carried the burden of the social impact of migration by supporting the family in the absence of migrant husbands.
2. Children left behind by migrants are not yet considered as a vulnerable group in Albania. Currently there is no social policy or any other strategy for their protection. Furthermore, actual social assistance legislation do not support children left behind with economic difficulties. The National Agency for the Protection of the Rights of Children established in 2011 has a potential role in this respect. The Ministry of Labour supported by the World Bank is in the process of reforming the economic assistance scheme through a pilot points based project aided by the creation of an electronic registry. The new scheme will aim to better target the groups in need and greater assistance to the families. The revision that will also aim to guarantee the protection of children from poverty and social exclusion ought to pay appropriate attention to the issue of children left behind.
3. The situation with the elderly people left behind as a result of migration is also a challenge that needs to be singled out. During the socialist years, the state offered a generally acceptable and wide care for this category of people. In addition, family ties offered a good safety net for elderly people in need. With the fall of the regime and the advent of internal and external migration, the first state instrument collapsed and is only slowly recovering, whereas the social and family safety net has weakened considerably causing serious vulnerability issues for this category of people.
4. The lack of social security coverage of Albanian migrants can also be identified as a challenge. Although this captures also the informal workers in the country, the identification of functional mechanisms of social security for Albanian migrants is still something that is pending and requires proper attention.
5. Related to the above, a lack of structures and expertise at community level to tackle emotional problems of families and offer services for vulnerable people left behind is also observed. Capacities at the local level including education, employment and housing services ought to be strengthened to better respond to the needs of returned migrants and implement the obligations that stem from the national strategy on the reintegration of returned Albanian migrants.
6. There is an information gap on children, elderly and other vulnerable groups left behind. In this respect, studies for vulnerable groups related to migrant families could be beneficial to better respond to their needs. There is an opportunity in terms of data collection as the Albanian population census took place in October 2011. The census data due in mid-2012, will provide updated statistics on the number of internal and international migrants, social

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and economic issues of their families as well as other characteristics that will serve for research and policy purposes.

7. Diaspora has the potential of playing a greater role in the development of the country. Unfortunately, despite greater attention being paid by the government and political parties to the Albanian communities abroad, no systematic approach has been articulated in trying to channel the support for the Diaspora and to facilitate its involvement in the country's development to date.
8. In terms of remittances, there is a general consensus that they have reached their peak and will most likely play a decreasing role in the Albanian economy. Additional sources of growth and incentives for investments have to be discussed and articulated in order to ensure the return to the sustained rates of growth.
9. Studies have shown that Albania has suffered by an extensive drain of qualified professionals affecting across the sectors. In addition, large numbers of Albanian students choose to study abroad with a great likelihood of developing a career in the country of their studies depriving the country's labour force from their potential.

7.2 Policies to be taken by different actors

Central government

1. As the national migration strategy was completed by the end of 2010, a new strategy is being prepared together with a renewed and budgeted action plan. Implementation measures should be taken and the government ownership should be ensured by monitoring its results. In this respect, a better coordination and concerted monitoring of the strategy should take place so it becomes a real development tool and not just a document where certain administrative measures are reported as progress. The new strategy should be well linked with the updated National Strategy for Development and Integration 2013-2020) as well as the government's Medium Term Budget Framework. It should also have a proper baseline and well defined indicators agreed through a consultative process where relevant government units can find their clear obligations for their work related to migration and then be held accountable for the results.
2. On the other hand, the new Social Inclusion Strategy that will also be formulated, apart from the vulnerable groups or those at risk should also pay attention to the root causes of vulnerability or risk. In this respect, the analysis and definition of measures to address the social impacts of migration would provide the strategy with a broader angle and provide a tool to address some issues related to people left behind including children, elderly or the spatial dimension of the impact of migration.
3. Two decades after the first migration wave, the government should pursue with more determination the completion of social contribution recognition agreements with Greece and Italy and other countries where there are large numbers of Albanian migrants. Many of them are and will be soon reaching retirement age and their social contributions of their work in Albania should not go unrecognised.
4. The monitoring of returned migrant services can be drawn as a priority policy measure. The re-integration strategy was part of the visa liberalisation roadmap and was prepared in a hurry in order to meet the technical criteria set by the EU. Due attention needs to be paid to its implementation in terms of active labour market measures for returned migrants, self-employment schemes and VET curricula in order to better facilitate their re-integration.
5. Policy attention needs to be paid to the issue of migrant savings. In light of declining remittances, the release of the savings potential would provide the Albanian economy with

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an extra injection that can be channelled for productive and employment purposes. This could be in the form of certain fiscal interventions in the frame of the proposed recent financial amnesty that is being discussed in the country.

6. The “brain gain” approach should be expanded by creating the economic, social and career conditions of public and academic institutions aiming to maximize the return of highly qualified people from abroad. Virtual return and cooperation among academic institutions linked by Albanian highly qualified graduates from abroad will also serve as an impetus to upgrade the quality of teaching and research in the country. At the same time, actions should be taken in order to attract back students that complete their studies abroad. Incentives can include tax relief and favourable mortgage rates for a certain period of time.
7. With Albania in line of being granted “Candidate Country” status by the EU (provided the conducive political situation), the government will sooner or later be exposed to greater multitude of EU funding. Some of this funding could be better aligned to support migration issues. This can be done as part of the overall support to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and its dependent institutions like the National Employment Service or other main government institutions such as the Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy in charge of SME development that can be dedicated to return migrants as well as the VET sector. EU funding can also pay particular attention to extending the support to civil society organizations in their efforts in offering a variety of social services to return migrants complementing the work of state institutions.
8. The role of the Institute of Diaspora at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to be elevated with proper capacities and funds so it can better perform its main task of nurturing the relations of Albania’s Diaspora with the home country. The institute must be more than just a cultural promotion agency. Its links with the Albanian missions abroad should produce proper data on migrants, students and updated information that can be used for various policy purposes such as brain gain or actions such as economic diplomacy.
9. The newly established Albanian Investment Development Agency (that replaced ALBINVEST) can be properly geared towards attracting investments from Diaspora as well as returning migrants. Business start-up packages, legal information, as well as specialised advice on channelling the potential investments should also be available for Albanians abroad that are thinking to invest in their home country.
10. Close monitoring to the utilisation of the visa free regime with EU Schengen countries will provide the government with better and updated trends of migration especially temporary migration. This can then be used for the revision of bilateral labour agreements and negotiating new ones.

Local government

11. Regional planning and programming should also take into consideration migration issues. Local authorities must see return migration as an opportunity for development making use of human and financial capitals and not merely as a social issue. Vertical and horizontal coordination should also be accompanied with a capacity development for local authorities to better deal with issues related to dealing with return migration such as health and social care and education but also with targeted employment and training opportunities responding to specific regional economic potentials and labour market needs. The transfer of knowledge and know how can also be institutionalized by aligning the qualification frameworks with EU countries so migrants that acquire licenses, qualifications and vocational training abroad can formally utilize their skills in Albania.

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12. Local governments should pay more attention in providing targeted social services and care facilities for vulnerable groups affected by migration. Care homes for instance have to be supported and provide full support and care for elderly people. Public private partnerships have to be explored with this regard.
13. Conditional cash transfers for children's school attendance with a particular focus on secondary and female education can be applied. While this is a generic measure that supports vulnerable groups such as Roma children in some municipalities, it can be extended for children that look after household subsistence farming while fathers are away in migration. It can also be offered to children that due to internal migration are engaged in money earning activities to support their families make their ends meet.

International organisations

As one of the major challenges identified above is the often lack of data on particular vulnerable groups and those affected by migration, support to migration statistics would be a useful contribution by international organisations. There is already experience in this field and this can be extended to support also the improvement of administrative data collection. In addition, the 2011 census will provide a wealth of data in this regard and international organisations can partner with civil society organisations in studying and analysing in detail the disaggregated findings that would be valuable for the articulation of various targeted interventions.

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9. Annex: Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Map of Albania, Regions



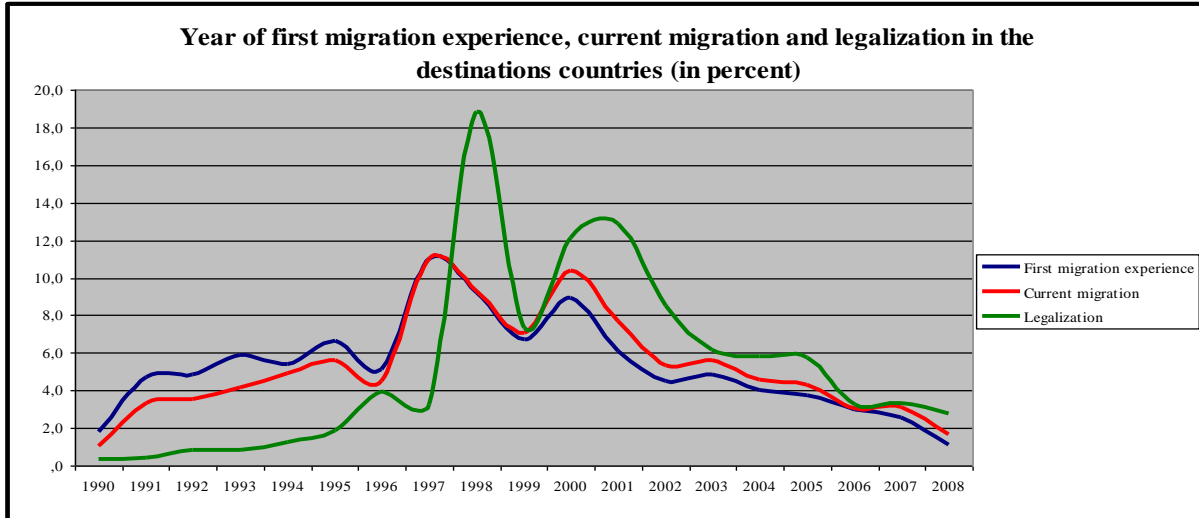
Figure 2: Map of minorities in Albania

Index: Montenegrin minority 
Greek minority 
Macedonian minority 



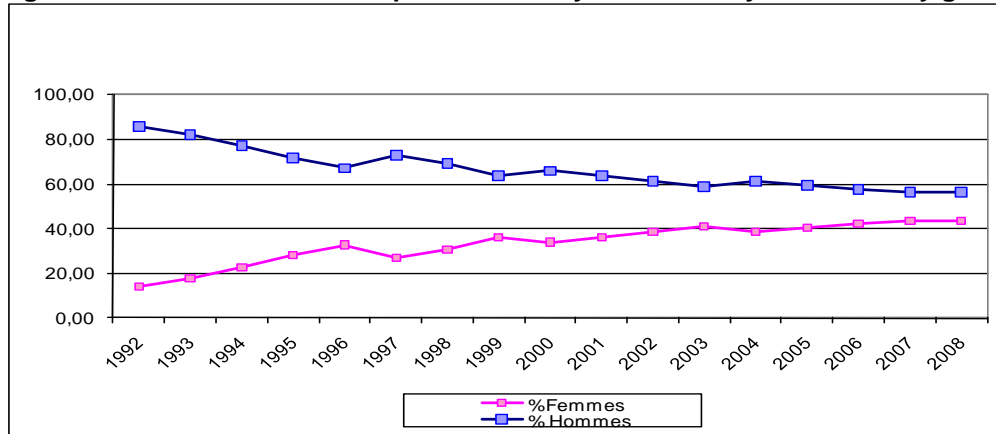
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Figure 3: First migratory experience and year of migration in current host country



Source: CESS Migrant Questionnaire, 2009/2010

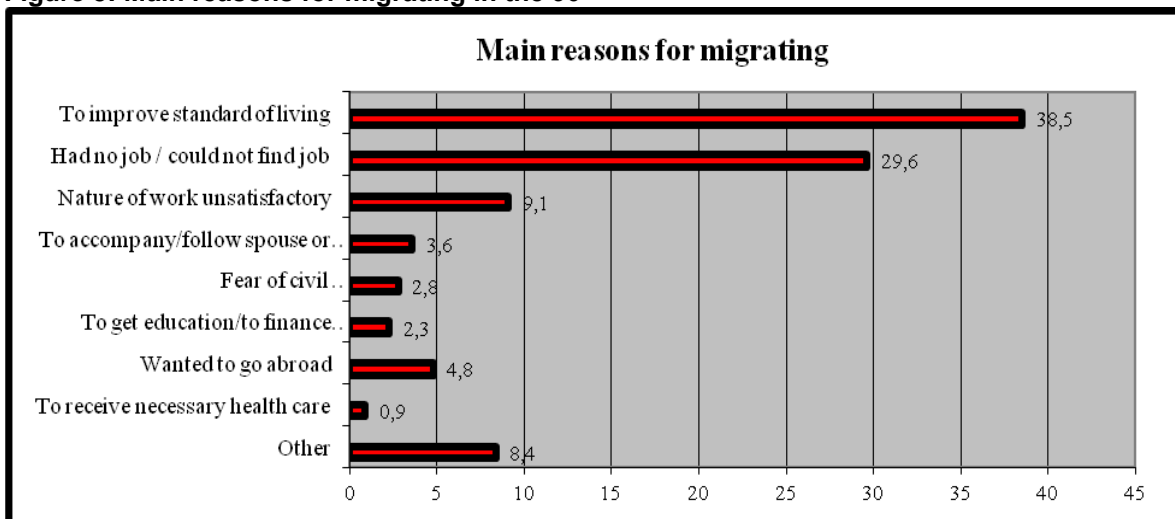
Figure 4: Resident Albanian Population in Italy on 1 January 1992-2008 by gender (%)



Source: ISTAT

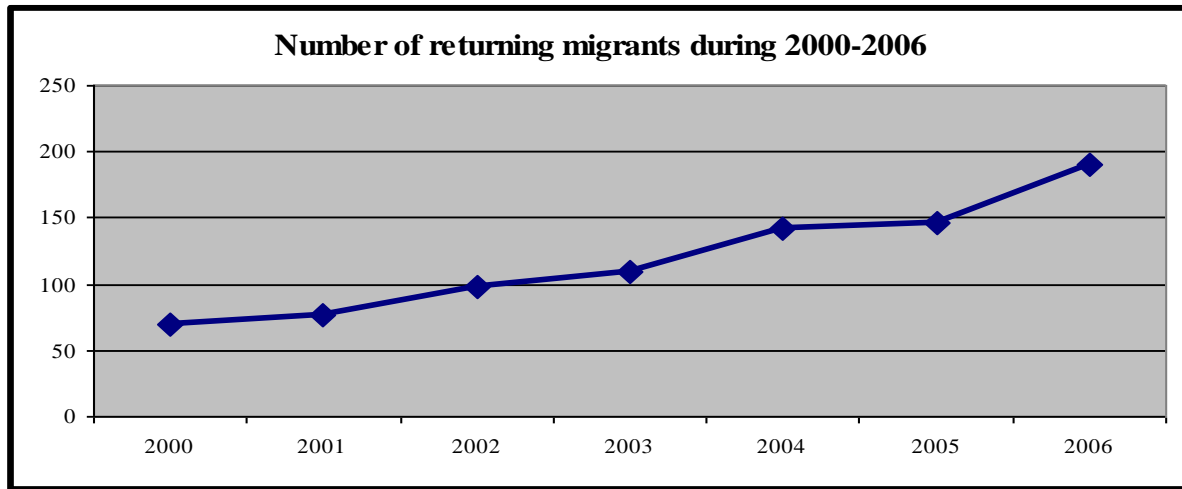
Pink colour: women, Blue colour: men

Figure 5: Main reasons for migrating in the 90'



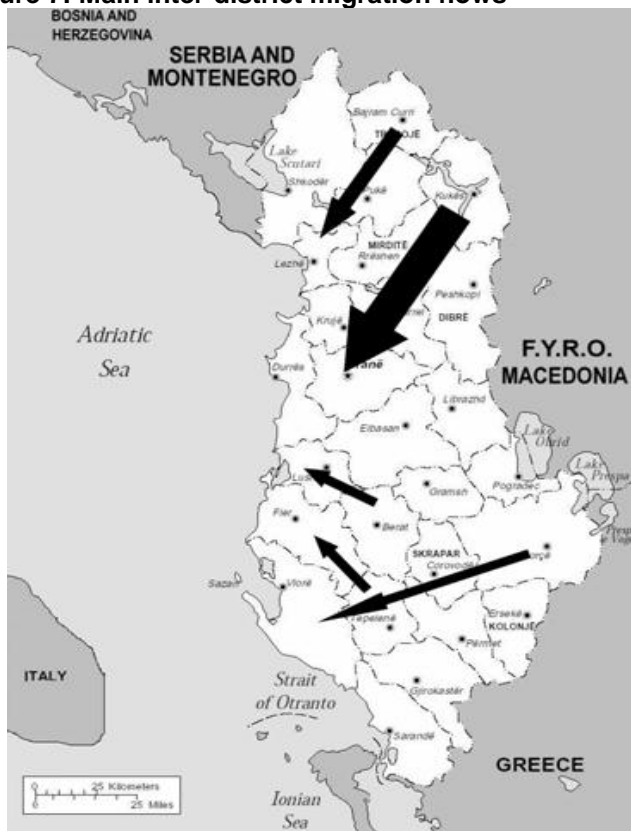
Source: CESS Migrant Questionnaire, 2006

Figure 6: Number of returnees during the period 2000-2006 (in hundreds)



Source: CESS' returned migrants survey, 2006

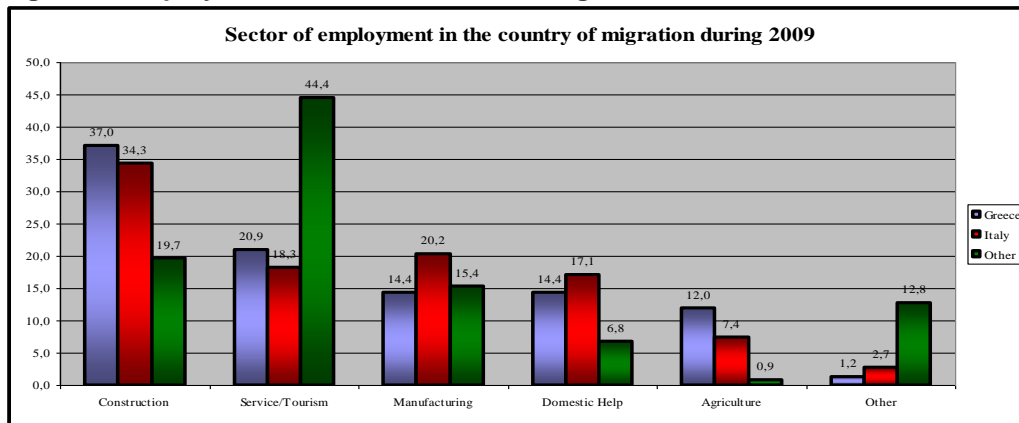
Figure 7: Main inter-district migration flows⁴⁶



Source: Hagen-Zanker J., Azzarri C., (2009), page 5 – Adapted from Zezza et al., 2005

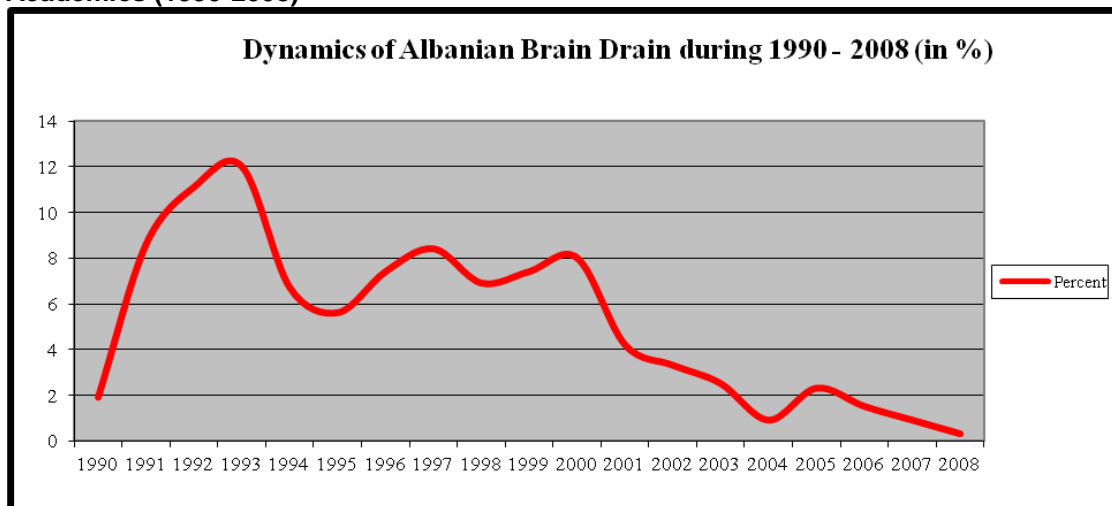
⁴⁶ Hagen-Zanker J., Azzarri C., (2009), *Are Internal Migrants in Albania Leaving for the Better?* ESA Working Paper No. 09-08.

Figure 8: Employment sectors of Albanian migrants in host countries



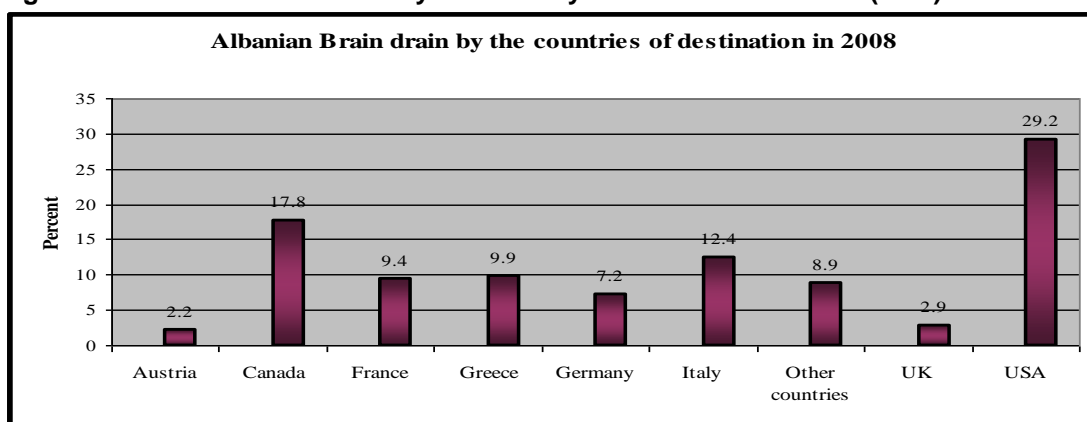
Source: CESS Migrant Questionnaire, 2009/2010

Figure 9: Dynamics of Albanian brain drain: share of Academics moving abroad as % of total Academics (1990-2008)



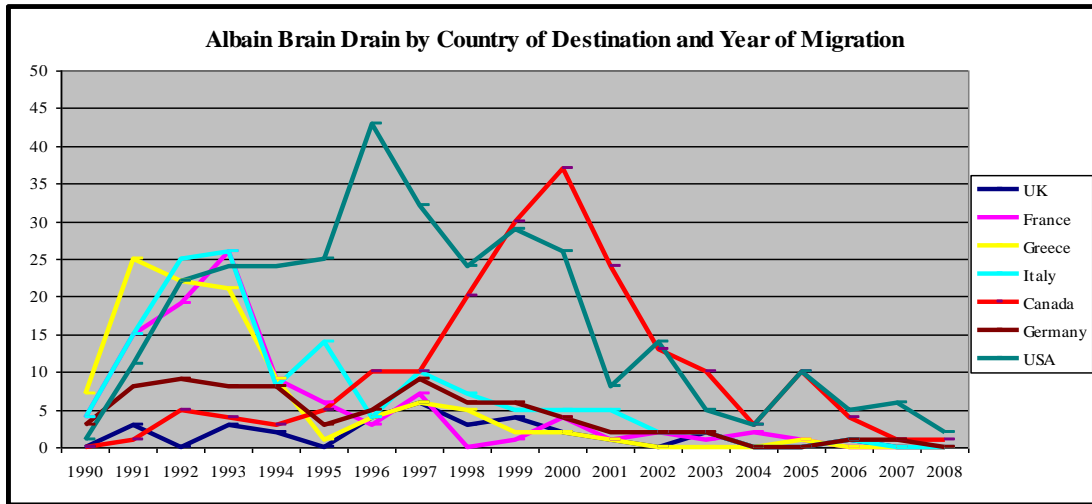
Source: CESS, 2008

Figure 10: Albanian brain drain by the country of destination in 2008 (in %)



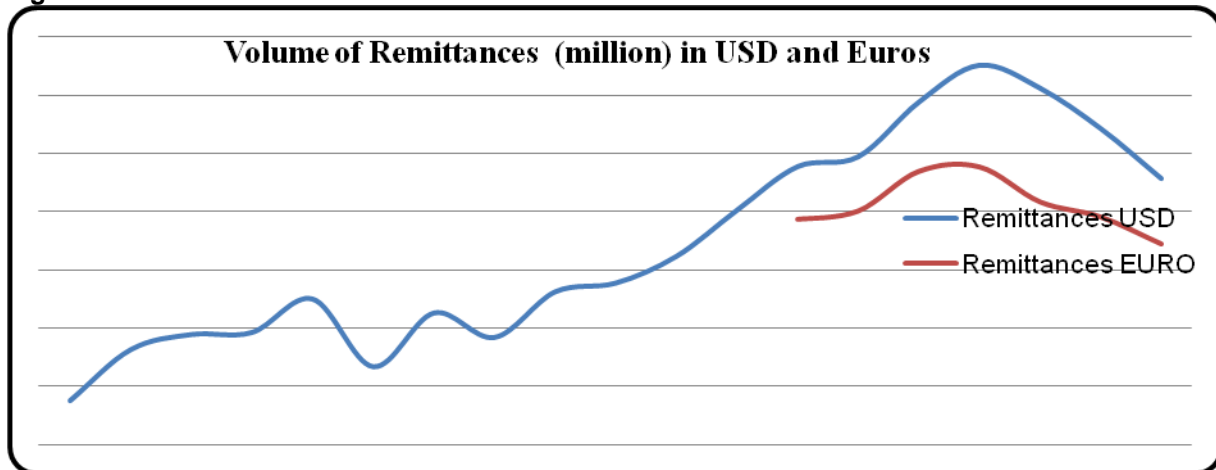
Source: CESS, 2008

Figure 11: Albanian Brain Drain by Country of Destination and Year of Migration (in %)



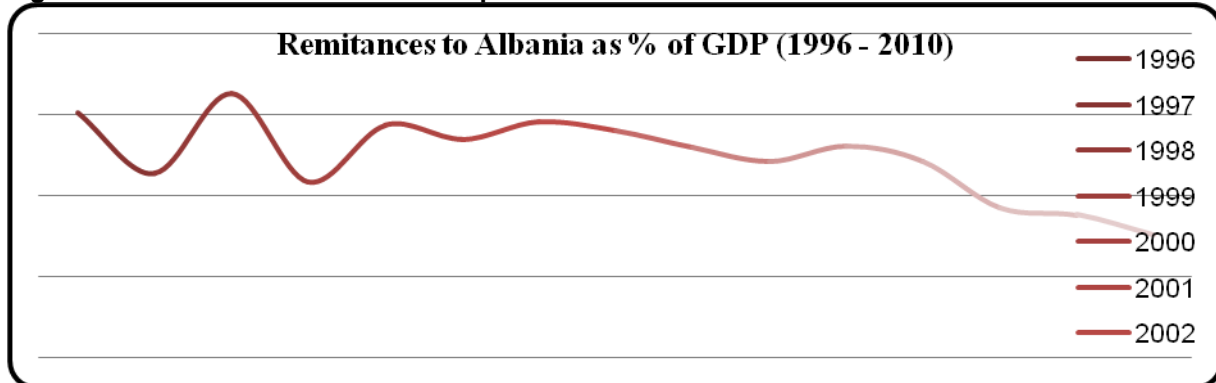
Source: CESS, 2008

Figure 12: Volume of remittances in USD and Euros



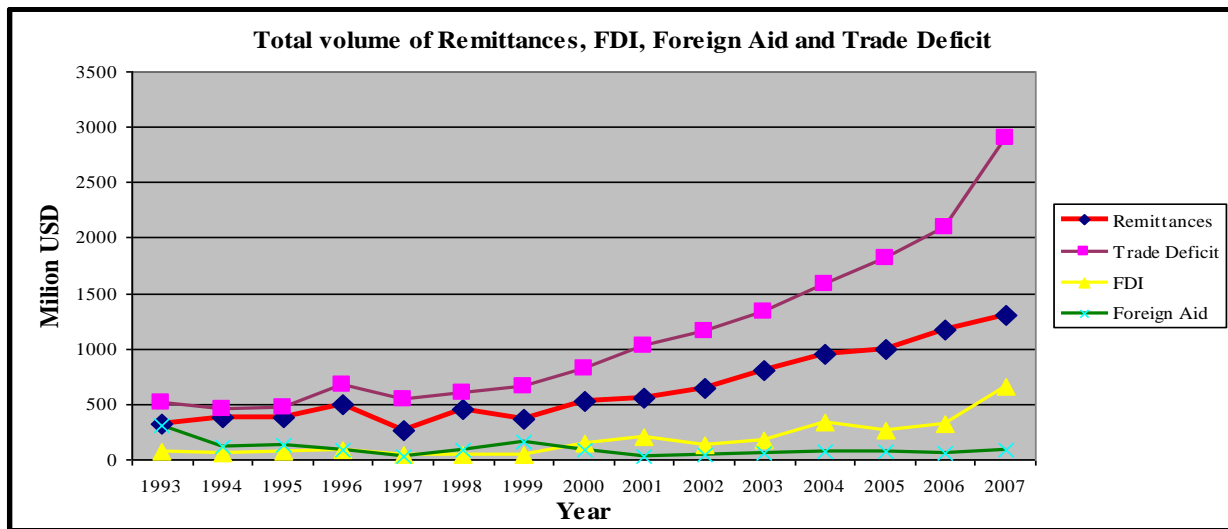
Source: Bank of Albania, 2012

Figure 13: Remittances to Albania as percent of GDP



Source: Gedeshi and de Zwager 2012

Figure 14: Total volume of remittances, FDI, Foreign Aid and trade deficit in Albania



Source: Gedeshi 2008

Figure 14: Regions most affected by Migration

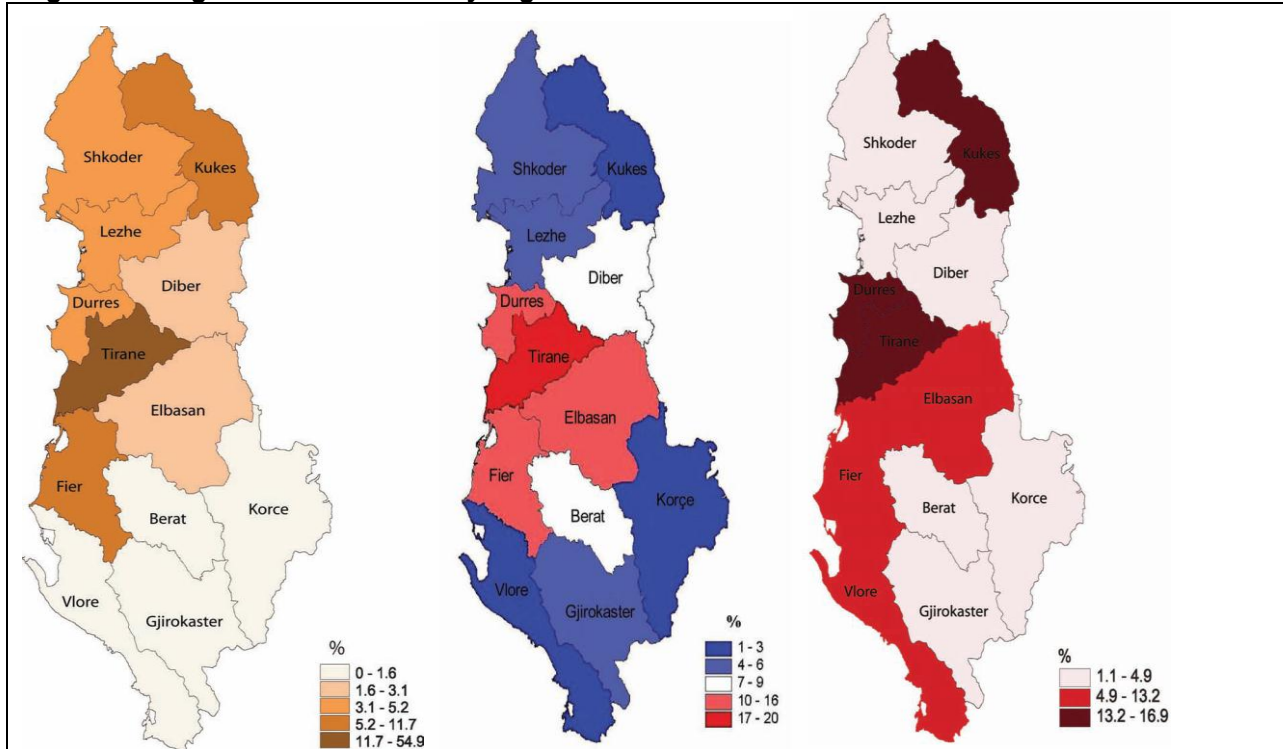


Figure 1.1

Figure 1.2

Figure 1.3

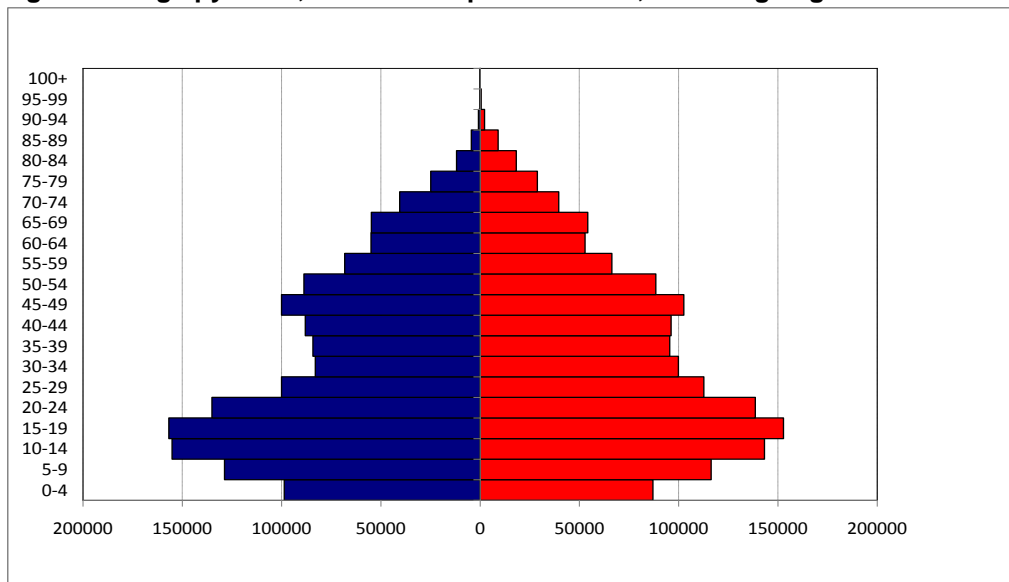
Figure 1.1: Regions most affected by Internal Migration

Figure 1.2: International Migration across Prefectures

Figure 1.3: Returned Migrants across Prefectures

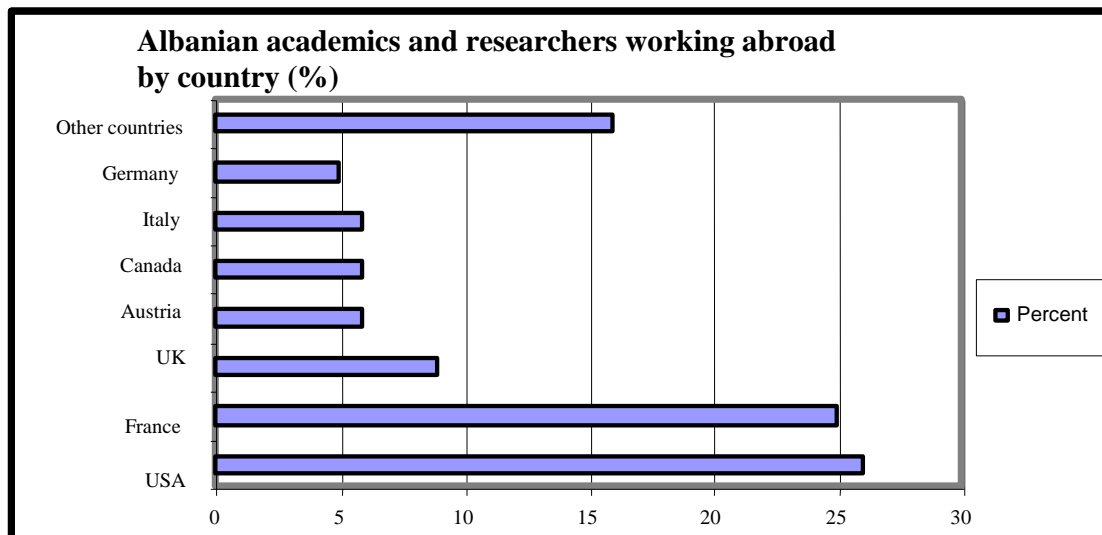
Source: International Organization for Migration, "Identification of the areas most affected by emigration and return migration in Albania: Profiling of returning migrants" December 2008.

Figure 15: Age pyramid, Albanian Population 2008, including migrants abroad



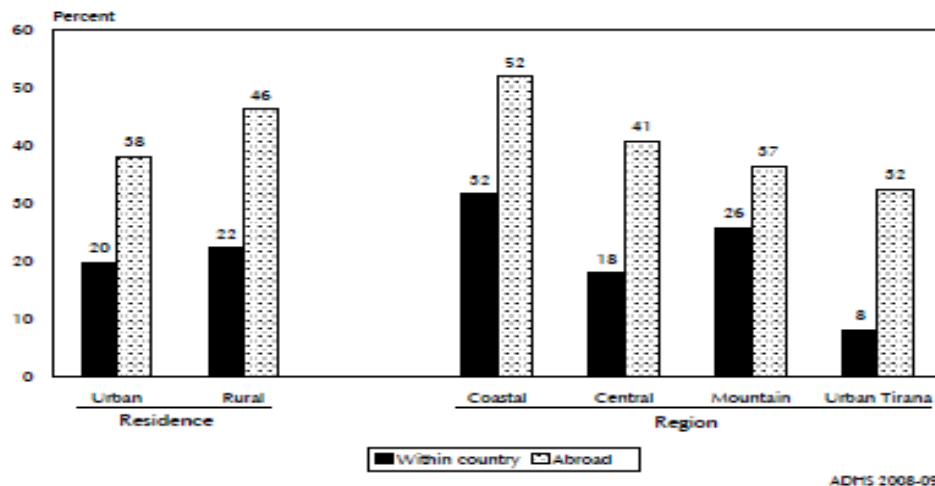
Source: Gedeshi, I., 2010, presentation on "Brain Drain. A Case Study from Albania"

Figure 17: Albanian academics and researchers working abroad by country



Source: CESS. Database of overseas graduates, 2004, Soros project

Figure 18: Percentage of Households with at least one former member who has migrated, by residence and region

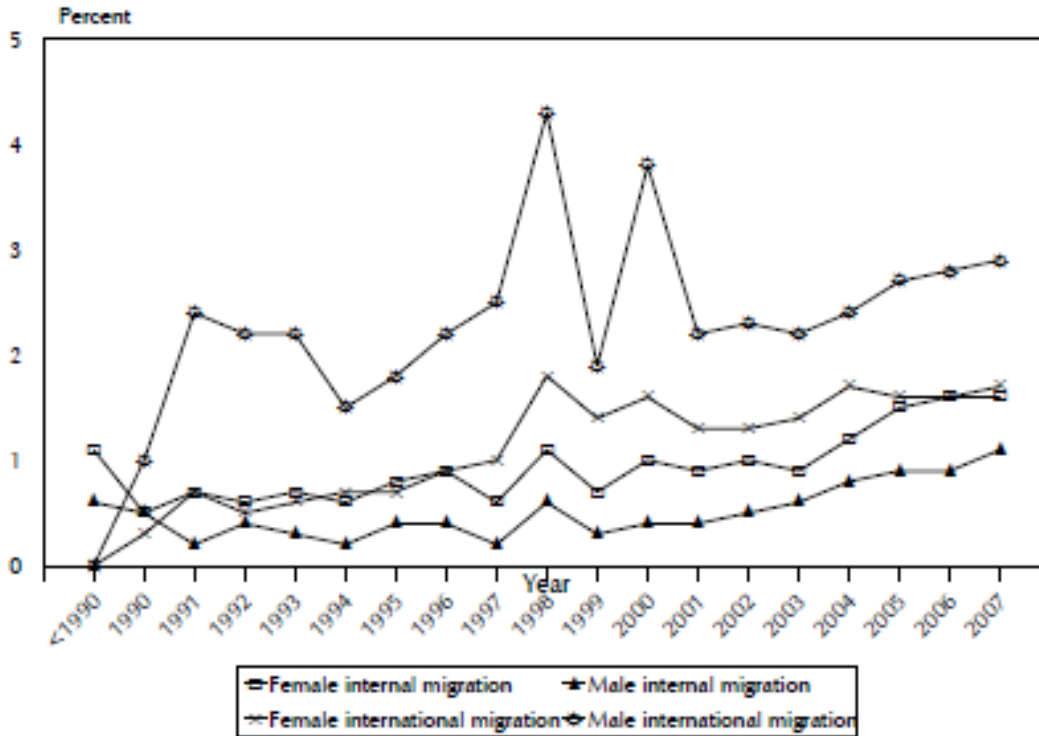


ADHS 2008-09

Source: INSTAT, Albania Demographic Health Survey 2008-09

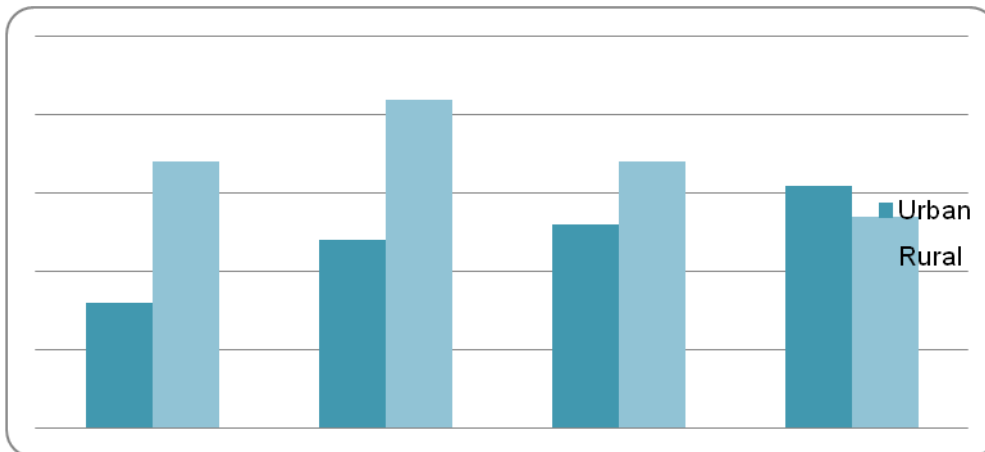
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Figure 18: Percent Distribution of Migrants by year they first migrated within or outside of Albania



Source: INSTAT, Albania Demographic Health Survey 2008-09

Figure 19: Urban and rural population in 1979, 1989, 2001 and 2011 censuses in millions



Source: Census 2011: Preliminary results: Population and Housing, INSTAT Albania

List of Tables

Table 1: Albanian Nationals Returned from EU Countries and Switzerland in 2007

Country	Number of Returned Migrants
Greece	64,060
Italy	1,848
UK	769
Switzerland	359
Croatia	319
Germany	269
France	234
Belgium	216
Slovenia	108
Netherlands	64
TOTAL	68,243

Source: Department of Border and Migration, Albanian State Police, 2008

Table 2: Number of persons insured in the Scheme of Voluntary Insurance

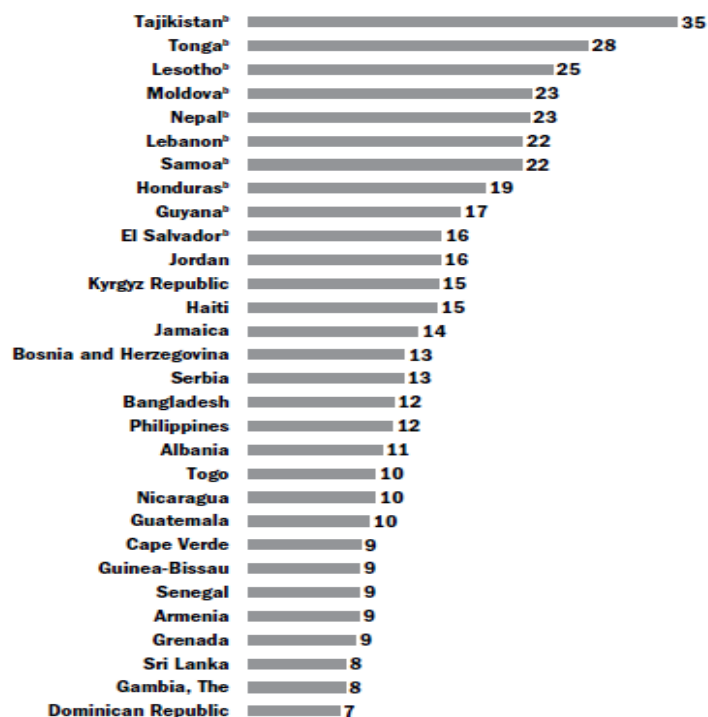
	Local	Migrants	Total
2005	5,295	9,623	14,918
2006	7,269	8,884	16,153
2007	8,954	9,546	18,500
2008	9,980	10,601	20,581
2009	11,044	12,556	23,600

Source: ISSA 2010

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Table 3: Top remittance receiving countries

Top Remittance-Receiving Countries^a, 2009
percentage of GDP



Source: World Bank, 2011, Migration and Remittances Fact book

Table 4: Portion of remittances that is invested according to different studies

	ALSMS, 2002	ETF Study, 2007	de Zwager et al., 2010
Investments	12%	11,8%	10%

Table 5: Inter-regional migration flows (1989-2001)

Inter-regional migration flows (1989-2001), number of persons and distribution in percent				
Region of departure	Region of arrival			
	North-East	Centre-Coast	South-East	Total
North-East		107,433	1,465	108,898
In %		98.7	1.3	100
Centre/Coast	2,491		11,721	14,212
In %	17.5		82.5	100.00
South-East	1,273	58,256		59,529
In %	2.1	97.9		100
Total	3,764	165,689	13,186	182,639

Source: INSTAT Census 2001.

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Table 6: Migration and Absolute Poverty in 2005

	With permanent migration	Without permanent migration
Per-capita consumption	80 Euros	71 Euros
Absolute poverty headcount	11,8%	21,2%

Source: Social Protection and Social Inclusion Study, Albania using LSMS 2005 data

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Table 7: Characteristics of households with former members who have migrated by number of migrants, sex of migrants, children of migrants living in the household, according to residence and region, Albania 2008-09

Characteristic	Residence			Region			Total
	Urban	Rural	Coastal	Central	Mountain	Urban Tirana	
WITHIN ALBANIA							
Number of migrants							
1	65.8	58.4	61.5	63.2	53.8	68.1	61.8
2	24.1	22.5	24.6	20.5	25.5	26.2	23.2
3+	10.1	19.1	13.9	16.3	20.7	5.7	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sex of migrants							
Male	45.1	40.5	42.3	40.7	52.7	39.8	42.6
Female	70.6	78.7	74.4	77.4	72.0	70.2	75.0
Male and female	15.7	19.2	16.7	18.1	24.7	10.0	17.6
Children of migrant(s) living in the household							
At least one child	1.2	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.7	0.0	1.2
No children	98.8	98.8	98.4	99.2	98.3	100.0	98.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	767	912	748	643	177	111	1,679
OUTSIDE ALBANIA							
Number of migrants							
1	52.5	48.5	41.4	53.1	60.2	59.9	50.3
2	29.9	26.3	30.5	26.1	24.7	28.4	27.9
3+	17.6	25.2	28.1	20.8	15.1	11.7	21.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sex of migrants							
Male	74.2	88.7	84.4	83.6	89.6	68.0	82.3
Female	52.4	37.0	48.6	40.9	24.7	50.2	43.7
Male and female	26.5	25.7	33.1	24.5	14.3	18.2	26.0
Children of migrant(s) living in the household							
At least one child	7.1	14.4	12.7	10.8	19.9	3.5	11.2
No children	92.9	85.6	87.3	89.2	80.1	96.5	88.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	1,480	1,903	1,228	1,460	250	445	3,384
EITHER WITHIN OR OUTSIDE ALBANIA							
Number of migrants							
1	43.6	38.4	32.9	42.7	44.1	55.6	40.8
2	31.7	25.7	28.2	28.7	25.6	30.0	28.4
3+	24.6	35.9	38.9	28.6	30.2	14.4	30.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sex of migrants							
Male	71.4	83.8	79.4	79.5	83.8	65.9	78.1
Female	62.6	54.6	64.5	55.4	48.5	55.6	58.3
Male and female	34.0	38.4	43.9	34.9	32.3	21.5	36.4
Children of migrant(s) living in the household							
At least one child	6.1	12.7	10.9	9.4	15.6	3.0	9.7
No children	93.9	87.3	89.1	90.6	84.4	97.0	90.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	1,874	2,245	1,531	1,735	338	513	4,119

Source: INSTAT, Albania Demographic Health Survey 2008-09

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Table 8: Background characteristics of migrants at time of migration

Percent distribution of migrants by background characteristics, according to gender

Background characteristic	Within Albania			Outside Albania			Either within or outside Albania		
	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total
Age at time of migration									
<15	4.4	5.4	4.7	5.2	6.3	6.0	4.8	6.2	5.6
15-19	38.9	22.0	33.0	24.4	33.8	30.7	31.2	31.6	31.4
20-24	34.9	18.8	29.3	34.4	27.3	29.6	34.6	25.7	29.5
25-29	11.0	23.0	15.2	16.8	14.8	15.5	14.1	16.3	15.4
30-34	3.8	13.3	7.1	8.1	8.3	8.2	6.1	9.2	7.9
35-39	2.3	9.1	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.7	3.6	5.6	4.7
40-44	0.5	2.8	1.3	2.8	2.4	2.5	1.7	2.4	2.1
45-49	0.5	1.5	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.9	1.2	1.1
50+	0.7	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.6	0.9	1.2	0.7	0.9
Don't know	3.1	2.8	3.0	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.9	1.0	1.4
Residence at time of migration									
Urban	39.4	44.2	41.1	48.9	36.7	40.7	44.5	38.1	40.8
Rural	60.6	55.8	58.9	51.1	63.3	59.3	55.5	61.9	59.2
Region at time of migration									
Coastal	44.8	44.1	44.6	43.3	39.7	40.9	44.0	40.5	42.0
Central	38.6	37.2	38.1	39.3	42.7	41.6	39.0	41.7	40.5
Mountain	11.0	13.3	11.8	4.2	7.7	6.6	7.4	8.7	8.2
Urban Tirana	5.6	5.5	5.5	13.1	9.9	11.0	9.6	9.1	9.3
Relationship to current head of household									
Spouse/partner	0.4	1.3	0.7	1.6	5.2	4.0	1.1	4.5	3.0
Father/mother	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
Son/daughter	93.9	94.9	94.2	85.9	89.4	88.2	89.6	90.4	90.1
Brother/sister	2.1	1.6	2.0	1.9	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1
Son-in-law/daughter-in-law	0.7	0.0	0.5	6.4	0.2	2.2	3.7	0.2	1.7
Nephew/niece	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Other relative	2.2	1.7	2.0	3.2	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.5
Other non-relative	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2
Education									
No education/Primary 4-year	2.3	3.7	2.8	3.0	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6
Primary 8-year	46.7	34.1	42.3	41.2	52.8	49.0	43.8	49.3	47.0
Secondary, professional, technical	37.5	43.2	39.5	41.3	40.4	40.7	39.5	40.9	40.3
University+	13.1	18.9	15.2	14.0	4.3	7.5	13.6	7.0	9.8
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	20.9	20.0	20.6	14.8	20.6	18.7	17.6	20.5	19.3
Second	23.0	19.8	21.9	21.4	25.4	24.0	22.1	24.3	23.4
Middle	21.9	23.4	22.5	20.0	21.8	21.2	20.9	22.1	21.6
Fourth	22.2	20.8	21.7	22.6	19.4	20.5	22.4	19.7	20.8
Highest	12.0	15.9	13.3	21.2	12.9	15.6	16.9	13.4	14.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	1,799	966	2,765	2,057	4,223	6,280	3,856	5,189	9,045

Source: INSTAT, Albania Demographic Health Survey 2008-09

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Table 9: Destination of migrants - Distribution of internal migrants by destination district and distribution of international migrants by destination country, according to gender, in %

Destination	Females	Males	Total
WITHIN ALBANIA			
Destination district			
Berat	3.9	1.8	3.2
Durres	11.0	8.6	10.2
Elbasan	4.0	2.0	3.3
Fier	6.0	4.4	5.5
Gjirokastrer	3.9	2.1	3.2
Kavaja	2.1	2.5	2.2
Korca	4.7	2.8	4.0
Kruje	4.1	2.8	3.7
Kurbin	2.0	3.0	2.3
Librazhd	2.6	2.7	2.6
Lushnja	6.4	4.1	5.6
Saranda	1.8	3.5	2.4
Tirana	27.0	36.7	30.4
Vlora	6.8	11.6	8.4
Other district	13.8	11.6	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of internal migrants	1,799	966	2,765
OUTSIDE ALBANIA			
Destination country			
Europe	91.3	95.7	94.2
Greece	43.9	52.8	49.9
Italy	37.6	34.2	35.3
United Kingdom	3.7	4.9	4.5
Germany	1.8	1.6	1.7
Other Europe	4.3	2.3	2.9
Outside Europe	8.7	4.3	5.8
USA	6.6	3.0	4.2
Canada	1.4	0.8	1.0
Other	0.7	0.5	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of international migrants	2,057	4,223	6,280

Source: INSTAT, Albania Demographic Health Survey 2008-09

Table 10: Internal Migration; origin and destination prefectures - Percent distribution of internal migrants by destination prefecture, according to origin prefecture

Origin prefecture	Destination prefecture												Total	Number
	Berat	Diber	Durres	Elbasan	Fier	Gjirokastrer	Korca	Kukes	Lezha	Shkoder	Tirana	Vlora		
Berat	44.5	0.0	3.4	5.5	7.1	2.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.4	9.3	100.0	257
Diber	0.0	26.1	13.4	0.7	0.5	1.2	0.0	0.7	1.9	3.3	49.3	2.8	100.0	111
Durres	0.6	1.3	76.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.4	0.2	1.2	0.5	15.6	0.8	100.0	366
Elbasan	1.7	0.0	4.5	47.6	6.4	0.1	7.2	0.4	0.5	0.0	29.2	2.4	100.0	229
Fier	3.7	0.0	1.5	3.8	50.9	0.2	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.0	27.8	10.2	100.0	480
Gjirokastrer	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	4.9	57.3	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	28.2	6.1	100.0	263
Korca	0.6	0.0	2.4	7.2	1.0	0.7	60.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.4	0.4	100.0	248
Kukes	0.0	0.7	7.6	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	16.4	1.8	12.3	60.5	0.0	100.0	80
Lezha	0.0	0.8	15.0	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.7	50.8	9.8	19.3	1.5	100.0	144
Shkoder	(0.0)	(0.0)	(6.3)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(32.0)	(61.7)	(0.0)	(100.0)	42
Tirana	0.3	0.7	6.7	1.5	1.7	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.3	86.5	1.0	100.0	252
Vlora	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	6.2	1.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.3	70.6	100.0	292
Total	5.2	1.4	13.8	6.2	11.7	6.0	6.4	0.8	3.0	1.6	32.6	11.3	100.0	2,765

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases.

Source: INSTAT, Albania Demographic Health Survey 2008-09

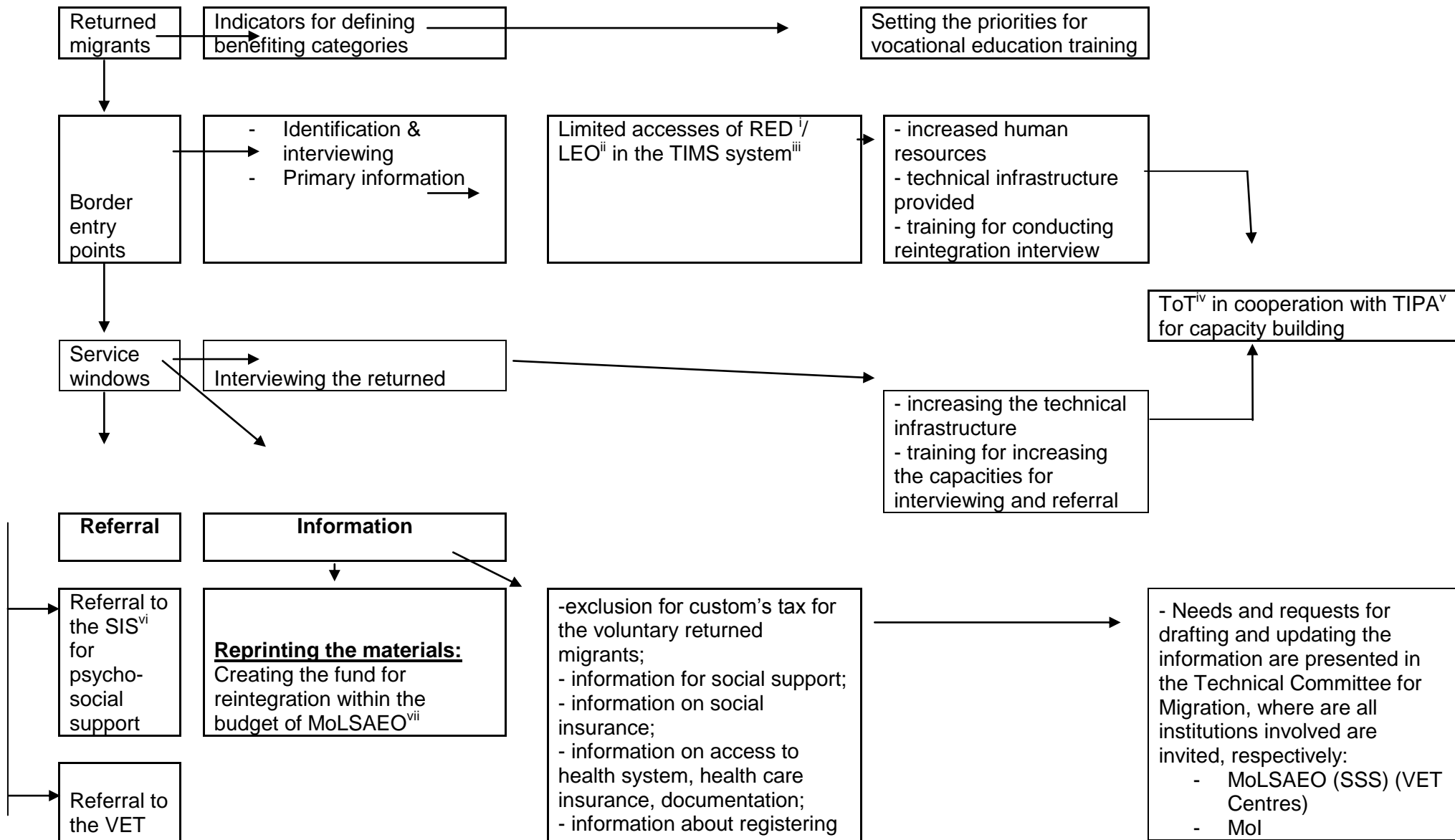
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Table 11: Resident population for Municipalities and Communes with more than 10,000 inhabitants

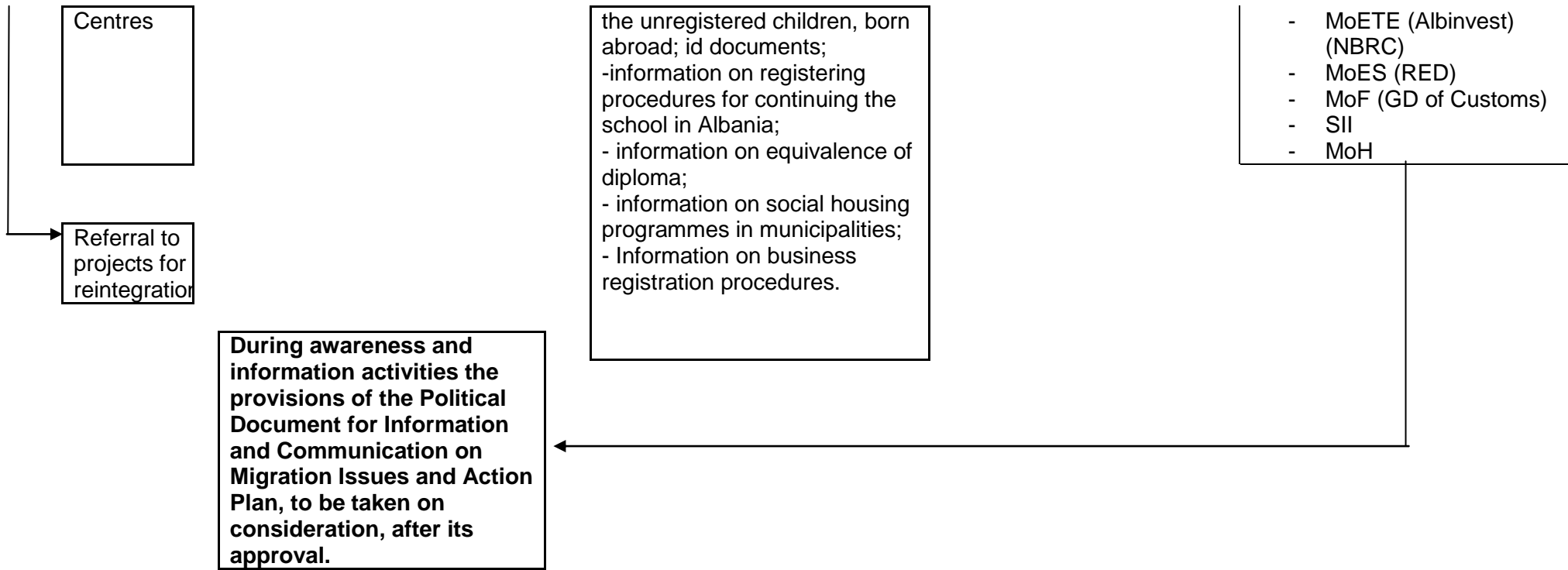
<i>Bashki./Komune Munic./Commune</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>Difference</i>
	<i>Persona/Persons</i>	<i>Persona/Persons</i>	
Tiranë	341,453	421,286	79,833
Durrës	98,792	115,550	16,758
Vlorë	77,652	79,948	2,296
Elbasan	86,148	79,948	-6,200
Shkodër	83,274	74,876	-8,398
Kamëz	44,443	67,301	22,858
Fier	56,164	57,198	1,034
Korçë	55,017	51,683	-3,334
Kashar	17,382	45,742	28,360
Paskuqan	21,055	37,313	16,258
Berat	44,040	36,467	-7,573
Lushnje	37,860	31,424	-6,436
Rrashbull	17,719	23,997	6,278
Farkë	7,100	22,713	15,613
Rrethinat	15,337	22,545	7,208
Dajt	8,486	20,935	12,449
Pogradec	23,762	20,912	-2,850
Kavajë	24,776	20,312	-4,464
Gjirokastër	20,601	19,570	-1,031
Fushë krujë	18,441	18,024	-417
Laç	19,424	17,588	-1,836
Sarandë	15,247	17,587	2,340
Kukës	17,157	16,765	-392
Sukth	13,093	16,516	3,423
Mamurras	17,676	15,884	-1,792
Patos	21,812	15,765	-6,047
Buçimas		15,701	15,701
Lezhë	14,420	15,644	1,224
Bushat	13,369	14,093	724
Peshkopi	14,017	13,227	-790
Kuçovë	18,038	12,602	-5,436
Shënkoll	8,894	12,289	3,395
Kodër thumanë	13,051	12,254	-797
Vorë	12,558	12,135	-423
Xhafzotaj	9,007	11,789	2,782
Cakran	14,799	11,677	-3,122
Krujë	13,075	11,642	-1,433
Burrel	12,123	10,895	-1,228
Pojan		10,720	10,720
Maqellarë	12,493	10,577	-1,916
Bradashesh	10,332	10,548	216
Katund i ri	10,942	10,209	-733
Tërbuf	11,983	10,192	-1,791
Otllak	12,288	10,128	-2,160

Source: Census 2011: Preliminary results: Population and Housing, INSTAT Albania

Table 11: The assistance mechanism for reintegration of returned migrants



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Source: National Strategy for Reintegration of Returning Migrants, GoA 2010

ⁱ Regional Employment Directorates

ⁱⁱ Regional Employment Offices

ⁱⁱⁱ TIMS system is a programme installed in all border entry points from 2010, as part of the border management control interventions

^{iv} Training of Trainers

^v Training Institute for Public Administration

^{vi} Social Insurance Service

^{vii} Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities