Managing Migration for the Benefit of All

International Organization for Migration in Albania

Overview

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

The International Organization for Migration has been operationally present in Albania since 1992, although Albania became an IOM member state in 1993. Since then, IOM has become one of the main international partners of the Government of Albania, supporting its continuous progress and efforts in migration management in line with Albania’s priorities of European Union integration. IOM is a member of the UN Country Team in Albania and actively contributes to the implementation of the Government of Albania-United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016, which aligns the support, funds and programmes of 19 UN agencies including IOM, to Albania’s development priorities.

Migration Policy and Research

IOM has supported the Albanian Government to develop the first Country Strategy on Migration (2005-2010) and to implement its Action Plan, through financial and technical support of the European Union. In line with the National Action Plan on Migration, assistance was provided in 2007 to elaborate and implement the National Action Plan on Remittances (2007-2010). In fulfilment of the country’s aspirations to attain visa liberalisation, support has been extended to the Government of Albania to formulate the National Strategy on the Reintegration of the Returned Albanian Citizens and its Action Plan (2010-2015). Expert advice and capacity strengthening activities for Migration Counters across the country are on-going, to ensure that Albanian migrants as well as immigrants are provided with adequate services and their rights are being protected. IOM in Albania is committed to continuing to assist the Government of Albania’s efforts to develop and implement new migration management policies. IOM will continue to support research on the impact of migration in Albania with the aim of proposing future programmatic actions in the area of migration and development to the Government of Albania.

Migrant Assistance

IOM promotes concerted efforts among government, civil society and other actors for building an effective integrated system of prevention of trafficking in persons, protection assistance and reintegration of victims of
trafficking (VoTs) and unaccompanied minors in Albania. Direct assistance and transfer of know-how are key elements of IOM’s contribution to the country’s counter-trafficking efforts. Since 1999, the Organization has assisted more than 700 VoTs with return, rehabilitation and reintegration support, in partnership with the Anti-trafficking National Co-ordinator, the Anti-trafficking and Border Police, the State Social Services, the National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters, as well as a number of government and non-governmental service providers.

IOM in Albania also works on awareness-raising, identification of vulnerable migrants and addressing their needs, while supporting a concerted approach among all those involved in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings. IOM is committed to supporting the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the National Referral Mechanism and international and national standards of assistance to victims of trafficking and their protection. Capacity-building support to the Albanian National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters will continue in order to strengthen local service delivery to VoTs. In addition, IOM will support the on-going efforts of the civil society to establish local protection mechanisms for vulnerable categories of migrants, such as unaccompanied children from Roma community. Sustainable reintegration assistance to VoTs as well as a long-term monitoring of the effectiveness of the assistance provided to VoT returnees will continue in the near future, too.

**Labour Migration and Human Development**

In partnership with both the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and the National Employment Service structures, IOM facilitates the provision of advice, information and referral services to prospective migrants, immigrants and returnees on regular migration for labour and study purposes, on reintegration opportunities in Albania, as well as immigration issues. A national network of Migration Counters (Sportele Migracioni) has been established and strengthened with IOM support, to increase access to regular migration information, modalities and opportunities. The Organization supports also the government’s efforts to implement the bilateral labour agreement with Italy, through the provision of technical assistance to both Albanian and Italian administrations for the identification, registration and training of candidate migrant workers in Albania. IOM will continue its efforts to enhance the Albanian Government’s capacity to inform, assist and protect Albanian migrants abroad and upon return, therefore attaining more sustainable and informed migration processes, ultimately benefiting the country’s development. IOM strongly supports and promotes the nexus between migration and development in Albania through the reintegration of returning migrants, employment generation and investment in rural areas, addressing socio-economic pressures in regions vulnerable to high rates of economically motivated migration.
**Immigration and Border Management**

Technical support is provided to the Albanian border authorities for the implementation of the Integrated Border Management Strategy. In line with the provisions of the Strategy for Integrated Border Management (2007-2013), IOM will continue to promote further cooperation with the neighboring countries in preventing and fighting irregular migration of Albanian citizens and third-country nationals in line with the existing bilateral agreements and regional initiatives, in particular, in the areas of information exchange, readmission agreements, assisted voluntary return and reintegration of returnees, reception facilities for irregular third-country nationals, interpretation and language analysis.

**Managing Migration for the Benefit of All**

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with partners in the international community to:

- Assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management;
- Advance understanding of migration issues;
- Encourage social and economic development through migration; and
- Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

1993 – Albania becomes a Member State of the International Organization for Migration.
1999-2004 – IOM supports the opening of Reception and Reintegration Centres for Albanian VoTs, irregular migrants stranded in Albania and third-country national VoTs.
2001-2013 – IOM provides support at policy level with drafting National Strategies to combat trafficking of human beings and action plans.
March 2006 – IOM signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Albanian Government and stakeholders on the Handover of Pre-screening System of Irregular Foreigners and Asylum Seekers in Albania.
November 2006 – IOM, in close co-operation with the Anti-trafficking National Co-ordinator and UNODC, establishes the first toll-free National Helpline offering services on safe migration and counter-trafficking.
February 2007-July 2009 IOM supports the implementation of the National Action Plan on Migration.
June 2007-July 2009 IOM supports the elaboration and implementation of the National Action Plan on Remittances.
2008 – IOM consolidates the approach established earlier to facilitate potential Albanian migrants’ access to informed migration within a national network of Sportele Migracioni.

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

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

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


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

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

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