



## Facts and figures

### Albanian migration

- Around 1 million Albanians—a quarter of the country's total population—are now living abroad, most of them in neighbouring Greece and Italy.
- Women accounted for around 20% of migrants in the mid-1990s and by 2000-01, for about 40%. Female migration to Greece increased rapidly through family reunification, especially following male migrants' regularisation programmes there starting from 1998.
- Of the 1,093,000 Albanian migrants abroad, 600,000 live in Greece. Albanians are the largest migrant population in Greece, making up 5% of the total Greek population.
- The Korçë region is known for large-scale emigration as it is the top sender of internal and international migrants. Most come from its mountainous villages which have lost as much as 30% of their population in the last 15 years.<sup>2</sup>

### Remittances

- Between 1992 and 2007, total annual sums of remittances rose from US\$ 200 millions to US\$ 1.48 billion. Today remittances represent about 22% of the country's GDP.
- The average household total amount of remittances sent per year by the survey respondents stands at more than €2,600 per household.
- More than half of the survey respondents receive remittances every three to six months, and most migrants visit their family members in Albania three times a year.
- Albanian migrant men, especially husbands and sons, continue to be the primary remitters from Greece (almost 99% of sample).
- Households administered by wives receive remittances twice as often as the other types of households—once a month and every two months.
- The smallest amount remitted at one time is €50 whilst the largest sum is €12,000, both of which are remitted primarily to parents, namely the mother. The average amount of remittances sent to wives is much higher than for other groups (around €3,200). The amounts of money sent to other relatives such as brothers, sisters and grandparents are amongst the lowest.
- 95% of remittances are spent on current household expenses such as food, clothing, rent, and services of water, electricity and telephone.
- Most of the businesses in Korçë have been set up with remittances, or following the return of the migrant from abroad. The majority of them are registered in the name of the husband.
- Of the 38 registered businesses in Pojan only seven were headed by women, and of the 29 registered in Zvezdë only five were headed by women. Both men and women worked in these businesses yet since the husband was registered as the only person working in the business, he was also the one who was insured through the compulsory premium system for self-employment; *de jure*, these women were employees who worked in the informal economy.

1. Carletto, G., Davis, B., Stampini, M. and Zezza, A. (2004) Internal Mobility and International Migration in Albania. Rome: FAO, ESA Working Paper 04-13, p. 27.

2. Korçë Municipality (2005) Local Action Plan for the Environment. Tirana: Regional Environmental Centre (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe, p. 15.

## Recommendations

- Employ gender as an integrative conceptual and analytical tool for the development of migration policies.
- Develop macro policies and strategies that address the gender effects of internal and international migration.
- Strengthen cooperation between institutions and local people.
- Strengthen the system of monitoring the implementation of key policies, such as the National Strategy on Migration and its accompanying National Action Plan on Remittances.
- Infrastructural and structural reforms are required in rural areas in order to better facilitate agricultural and entrepreneurial investments.
- Improvement of Greek migrant regulations to acknowledge Albanian migrants as contributors to Greek society.
- Grant the right and adequate access to permanent residence and citizenship after a determined time living in Greece. Allow migrant women access to these independently of their husbands.
- Develop an easier system for border movement in order to allow family members of migrants to visit their relatives in Greece.
- The Albanian government should firmly advocate on behalf of migrants' rights in destination countries in order to negotiate secure and accessible channels of regular migration.
- Projects including women and development need to take into consideration the gendered power dynamics of private and public spaces that, for example, result in women's limited participation in decision-making bodies.
- Increase local income-generating activities through channeling private investments from migrants (and others, especially foreign FDI) in the agro-business industry. Mechanisms should be in place in order to incorporate the present and future local farming and livestock capacity, thus optimising the use of remittances which have already been invested in this sector.
- Promote collective remittances through strategic local planning of public projects.
- Provide training opportunities to increase the business abilities and capacities of women, especially lower educated, Roma and Egyptian populations.