

**Voluntary Review Report on**

Kakavija, there are already premises and dedicated adjusted spaces, in accordance with the specificities of these categories.

In the Border Police stations of Kapshtica and Kakavija there are special premises/facilities dedicated to vulnerable groups. These facilities, and other accommodation premises serve for accommodation during 10 hours which coincides with the deadline for screening of irregular immigrants. The Government of Albania has demonstrated a lot of responsibility in increasing capacities for registration and temporary accommodation of migrants, and the relevant training and development and planning for emergencies. These capacities reach up to 500 beds, depending on accommodation of migrants. In addition, in this aspect in the course of 2021 there was an update of the National Contingency Plan.

In August 2021, Albania started temporarily hosting evacuees/refugees from Afghanistan. Following a Council of Ministers decision adopted on 25 August 2021 under the asylum law as of end September close to 1150 were granted protection for one year pending security screening.

They are hosted in open facilities in various locations in Albania, with the understanding that they would further be resettled in the United States under a specific visa regime. While child protection system still faces challenges to fully respond to the needs of migrant, foreign, unaccompanied and/or separated or stateless children – UNICEF is supporting to keep children

The Technical Committee for Migration (TCM) was established in 2020, while the Steering Group for Migration of the National Strategy for Migration and the Action Plan was introduced in March 2021.

The Technical Secretariat for Migration (TSM) is in charge of coordinating monitoring activities of all leading agencies, by collecting quarterly reports to ensure harmonization, identification of gaps, and analyses of the trend for National Strategy on Migration (NSM) implementation. The unit has introduced an agenda with dates on which reports should be submitted and provides technical assistance for the central points, while clarifying and methodological aspect. In addition, the Technical Secretariat for Migration is in charge of integrating inputs coming from the leading agencies into a biannual progress report regarding implementation of the National Strategy on Migration (NSM









**Objective 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration**

Albania has a sustainable legal framework for the protection of Albanian emigrants in the countries of destination and immigrants in Albania. Information is provided throughout all migration stages, through and towards Albania, while informing Albanian emigrants about their rights, obligations, and penalties involved in case of violation of Schengen rules. Awareness raising activities are organized in all regions of Albania, supported by IOM and Albanian consular services in all EU member countries and countries of the Schengen area. Returning migrants are informed at the border crossing point about the existing re-integration services in the country, and are assisted with transportation, food and necessary drugs.

With regard to work permits, the online platform found in E-Albania provides information about the documentation and procedures for obtaining work permits. Return migrants may obtain information services about employment opportunities from the re



**Objective 4: Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and accurate information**

Introduction of online services and simplification of procedures have facilitated the process for obtaining single permits and employment permits. The Ministry of Interior is working towards the distribution of biometric IDs for all foreign citizens legally residing in Albania. Foreign citizens with valid residence permits in the Republic of Albania may apply to be equipped with a biometric ID card. This ID card has the same features as any ID card issued to Albanian citizens. The card identification number (NID) enables 20,000 foreigners with residence permits in Albania to register with e-Albania, while giving them access to online services provided by the Albanian government.

The new law no 79 of 24.06.2021, “On foreigners” cancelled law no 108/2013 “On foreigners”. The changes and amendments to this law have allowed for its fine-tuning and harmonization with Directives, Rulings and Regulations of the Council of Europe. The law is based on the principle of a child’s best interest, the principle of the right to family life, principle of non-return, principle of due process, and non-discrimination principle. Despite the broad guarantees that law provides it is still concerning other procedural rights of children in these processes, especially clearer guidance and standards for interviewing children, that should be developed.<sup>2</sup>

Law no. 79/2021 has suffered changes with regard to the work permit which is now being referred to with a new term, which is the single permit, and which provides for all types of single permits, the procedures for acquiring a single permit, and the appeal procedures. Furthermore, the single permit is also provided to special categories, with regard to new terms related to foreigners, such as “*Au pair*”, foreigners as key personnel, grounds for the permit, issuing of permits with 5 years deadline for United States citizens, EU citizens and citizens of the Republic of Kosovo when they apply for the first time and meet the generic criteria of this Law.

The agreement for free access in the labour



irregular/illegal migration is one of the pre-requisites in the context of the process for EU accession. The law “On foreigners” aims at improving the scope rights of foreigners, in terms of offering protection to migrants and their family members, refugees, asylum-seekers, while ensuring access to integration programs and services for foreign citizens. Steps forward have been taken with regard to formulation and adoption of bylaws in line with the Law “On foreigners



- Regional project for “Prevention and fight against trafficking of human beings in the countries of the Western Balkans”, funded

all forms of exploitation. For purposes of clarification and facilitation in the implementation of Standard Action Procedures for the protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking were organized training sessions with staff of responsible structures assigned for the identification and protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking.

In addition, law no. 79/2021 “On foreigners” provides that the responsible local authority on border and migration gives priority to the execution of volunteer return of victims of trafficking of human beings who wish to return voluntarily in their countries of origin.

The establishment of 4 Mobile Units (Tirana, Shkodra, Kukës and Dibra) has played an important role in the identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking. All 4 Mobile Units were supported by the Human Trafficking project led by UNICEF Albania that increased local capacities for the identification of PV/VoTs at community level and managed to identify 95 PV/VoTs during 2021. The achieved results reiterate the need to establish and maintain similar identification mechanism

However, successful reintegration remains difficult because core protection, care and social services from the state are insufficient. Specialized and reintegration services for victims should be provided and the work on case management should be further strengthened.<sup>4</sup>

Foreign victims and potential victims of trafficking are provided with the same services, of same quality as Albanian victims and potential victims of trafficking within the same centres (shelters). Other services for foreign victims and potential victims of trafficking include: helping them apply and equip them with temporary resident visa; equipping them with papers ensuring their return to their country of origin; registration of children in the civil status registration offices when children are born in Albania, etc.

For purposes of community awareness raising, the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with partner organizations and state institutions during October organizes the "The Month against Trafficking in Persons" campaign. Awareness raising activities for the prevention of trafficking in persons are organized in 12 regions of the country.

"Transforming the national response to trafficking of human beings within and from Albania" project implemented by UNICEF Albania, enhanced the role of Regional Anti-trafficking Committees (KRAT) in 4 regions of Albania, and engaged with them directly and frequently on







operation and command. Currently, Albania's Contingency Plan is up-to-date and operational, pending approval by the Council of Ministers.

Following the dynamic of mix migratory flows that affect both the region, and our country, and based on EU recommendations, for purposes of prevention and management of illegal migration, the managing border and migration authorities have compiled draft re-admission agreements with some countries of origin, such as: Afghanistan, Irak, Pakistan, India, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, Tunis. The draft re-admission protocol with the Greek counterparts has been under review/negotiation since July 2020.

Since 2020, 200 new police personnel have been added to the Border and Migration Police, bringing the number to a total of 1,838 police officers. In the course of 2021, 75 new staff were added to the Border and Migration police ranks. Training sessions and joint trainings were organized with the managing officials of border police and frontline police officers.

The structures of border and migration police (both at the border and in the territory) strictly follow provisions in line with law no. 79/2021 "On foreigners", and the standardized operating procedures related to the identification process (reference to Order of DPPSH no. 172, of 08.02.2018). During this process, following their classification as: either asylum-seekers, potential victims of trafficking, illegal migrant, or unaccompanied minor there is the process of identification and registration of foreign citizens and administrative measures stipulated under the above-mentioned legislation. In line with DCM no 111, of 06.03.2019, "On procedures and rules for child repatriation" cases of foreign unaccompanied minors are referred to, at the Child Protection Unit of the relevant municipality.

During processing of visa applications for foreign citizens, the consular officers in the diplomatic missions base themselves in the legislation for foreigners in the Republic of Albania. Following receipt of online applications, the consular offices conduct the necessary appropriate verifications for each application singularly. The consular offices make assessment of the documents put online for each case.

The data filed by visa applicants for the territory of the Republic of Albania are processed and saved under TIMS, which is accessible by all competent authorities in charge with handling visa applications, in line with the legislation on foreigners in the Republic of Albania.

In addition, in line with the legislation, the consular offices of the Republic of Albania that handle visa applications of foreign citizens, on a case by case bases may ask for additional documentation. If during administering visa applications of foreign citizens, the consular services observe that the visa applicant has submitted forged documentation, they enjoy the right to refuse the visa, without any further procedures with competent structures. Currently, visa applications are processed by the E-Visa system which is accessible by all structures involved in the process of visa issuance.

Regarding enforcement of rights to public services for foreign residents in Albania there are now available information packages regarding different services, from different institutions, classified according to the most important life events. The information package for foreigners in Albania



principle of due process; with the view of continuous improvement of the migration legislation, aiming at further approximation of migration legislation with relevant EU directives identified during the Screening process of Chapter 24 on “Justice, Freedom and Security”. 8

**Objective 14: Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle**

Albania currently has 72 consular officers in all diplomatic and consular missions. To ensure a gender-sensitive approach,



periodically to the regional education offices, in January and in June. Children returnees are admitted in schools, even when they are in possession of incomplete documentation. In the course of 2019-2020 academic





information from the cultural and language perspective about how to prevent being infected and infecting others;

Public health institutions have already been briefed to take into account health risks related to



involvement and inclusion, and contribution of Albanian communities outside the country, and for



regulation of consumer protection in the field of payments will help improve market efficiency and security, and consequently will support efficiency and safety of remittances placed in the Albanian market. The Bank of Albania, as of December 2019 has introduced the appropriate regulatory framework for opening current accounts online which will help migrants open accounts and manage their funds through internet payment services.

The Bank of Albania (BoA) is pursuing its work for diversifying legal channels for the transfer of remittances, which facilitates financial involvement of the population, increases savings and promotes productive investments that contribute to the sustainable development. Promoting e-payments, to increase financial involvement of the population, including migrants and their families has been part of the focus of the work of the Bank of Albania, based on the projections of the National Strategy for the market for small transactions, 2018-2023. One of the objectives of this Strategy is the introduction of a modern national market, at the same safe and efficient based on a safe and efficient infrastructure which will contribute to the fast, cheaper and safer transfer of remittances;

The Bank of Albania has published "Pandemic and the Remittances" (February 2021). In this publication one may find articles, such as: (i) Accumulation of assets and debt of households in the host countries of the remittances: Evidence from the Survey on assets possession by Albanian households; (ii) the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on remittances in Albania; (iii) a statistical and empirical overview on remittances flow. The goal of the study of the Bank of Albania (2020) "Remittances and their impact on poverty in Albania" was to make an assessment of the impact of remittances in overcoming poverty in Albania, based on data and evidence from the Income and Living conditions in Albania Survey developed by the Bank of Albania in the course of 2019. The survey demonstrated that 23% of the Albanian households benefit from remittances, which is different for different household groups, and for different regions;

The survey on Income and living conditions is published every two years, with important contribution in understanding behaviour of households individually, but also of the household economy as a whole. Respondents include 2,500 Albanian households and are asked about their financial income and investments, and household income and expenses;

### **Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration**

Readmission from third countries is challenged by the need for rapid and effective identification and referral in the asylum system or closed centers, and return to the transit country.

The competent structure in charge of return/readmission is the Unit in the Border and Migration Department. At the same time, this Unit/sector is in charge of identification and securing documentation for the conduct of the process for return/readmission. In this process, the Department for Border and Migration cooperates with a number of institutions such as: Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the State Agency



can no longer be part of the scheme, may opt for insurance according to volunteer insurance/pensions schemes.

Special attention has been paid to strengthening regional cooperation, with special emphases to exchange of information with migration services and diplomatic missions in Tirana of neighbouring countries affected by migration flows, and with foreign liaison officers accredited in our country, in particular with those of potential countries of destination.