

International Dialogue on Migration

“Strengthening international cooperation on and governance of migration towards the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018”

18–19 April 2017

New York

Panel 3- Reaching a-whole-of-government approach to migration: national and local perspective

Thank you Madame Moderator,

As of today, Albania still remains predominantly a country of emigration. In 2015, the stock of international migrants residing in Albania was just over 57,600 compared to over 1.12 million of Albanian emigrants residing abroad, most of whom in Greece and Italy.

Being a country that has one of the world’s highest emigration rates, relative to its population, with the above-mentioned stock of emigrants accounting for nearly 39 per cent of the total population of the country in 2015, the Albanian Government has adapted policies that respond to the needs of the migration flows abroad.

With the progress that the country has achieved, Albania is gradually becoming a country of destination for immigrants, mainly for employment purposes, but also for studies. This new reality has brought us to develop policies that guarantee safe, orderly and regular migration to Albania.

Because of the cross-cutting nature of migration, the migration policies and related responsibilities are shared among various national governmental institutions.

At executive level, migration is mainly in the focus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for several aspects of migration management, such as:

- the prevention of and fight against irregular migration, and the treatment of foreigners entering, transiting and staying in Albania;
- implementation of readmission agreements with other countries;
- fight against trafficking and smuggling of persons;
- work with unaccompanied minors, specifically ensuring that requirements for leaving the territory of Albania are met and coordinating the reception of those that have returned.

The Ministry of Interior Affairs is responsible as well for addressing large-scale migratory movements. With the technical support of IOM in Albania, a Contingency Plan is already available since September 2015. This plan includes an operational plan covering preparedness and response activities as well as related needs and gaps analysis, and related coordination with relevant authorities is in place.

The next institution, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for:

- drafting and implementation of visa policy and negotiation of necessary acts of international cooperation in the field of migration;
- supporting Albanian emigrants abroad and protecting their rights;
- undertaking mapping and supporting the organization of the ACA, with a view of engaging into development of Albania.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania with the technical assistance of IOM developed an ACA engagement policy, through adopting a “whole of government” approach regarding the migration.

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth is responsible for:

- labour migration policies and their implementation;
- vocational education and training policies;
- social support to vulnerable categories of migrants;
- as well as youth policies.

Due to the new realities, the legislative and policy framework regulating migration to and from Albania is rapidly changing. During the last decade the Albanian Government have constantly undertaken actions to approximate the national legislation to the EU Acquis.

From the policy perspective, the most significant has been the National Strategy on Migration (NSM), approved in 2004 in accordance with the principles established under the Agreement on Stabilization and Association with the EU.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015-2020 that includes the implementation of the SDG-s, approved in May 2016, foresees a specific section on Migration Management with its principles and objectives clearly identified.

Albania places a great importance to the regional cooperation for the migration issues and the country is playing an active role in regional cooperation.

Migration is a priority issue for all countries in the Western Balkans, with many of them facing similar challenges and opportunities.

Therefore, there is a lot of scope for cooperation and experience exchange on migration matters, and migration is on the agenda of a variety of regional organizations and mechanisms focusing on economic cooperation, border management, trade cooperation, investments etc., that Albania is a member of.

The importance of migration in the regional context has grown since the period of increased mixed migration flows along the Western Balkan route in 2015.

The country is part of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

With the support of IOM, at regional level was implemented the project on "Setting up of a regional Mechanism to support negotiations with Source, Transit and Destination Countries with the aim to reduce irregular migration.

The project initiated constructive dialogue with source, other transit countries and countries of destination on ways and means to reduce irregular migration to and through the Western Balkans. It also attempted to develop practical cooperation mechanisms to support the return of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants to their countries of origin. Government representatives from Western Europe (destination countries) attended meetings foreseen in the project agenda. The project was implemented by MARRI for a period of a year. Countries involved in the project: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia & Montenegro.

Dear colleagues,

As previously mentioned, the new dynamics requests in the migration field, request for new approaches in facing the challenges.

Developing a new Migration Governance Policy, which would reflect the complexity of the current migration situation in Albania and encompasses its various components such as emigration, immigration, transit, return and reintegration, as well as migration and development, in line with the 2030 Agenda and with the National Strategy for Development and Integration is for about to be developed.

A Migration Governance Assessment was completed recently with the support of IOM, in compliance with the Migration Governance Framework.

The new Migration Governance Policy aims to improve the Policy Framework for Migration Governance in line with the European and international standards and strengthened management structures and coordination to ensure better response to migration challenges.

The vision of the new Migration Governance Policy is to “Establish an effective migration governance system in Albania” and to achieve the strategic objectives as follows:

- Promote safe and regular channels for migration in Albania to prevent irregular migration;
 - Enhance the development impact of migration;
 - Enhance sustainability of return migration through the support of reintegration of returning migrants;
 - Advance implementation of immigration policies, in order to ensure the equal treatment of citizens of other countries and their integration in Albania, in compliance with international standards;
 - Consolidate migration policy, legal framework, management structures and coordination, in order to ensure better response to migration challenges.
- The objectives of the new Migration Governance Policy for Albania match the vision of the Global Compact on Migration.
 - The development of the new Migration Governance Policy comes at the right time, contemporarily with the process of the Global Compact on Migration, from which it may benefit and to which it may hopefully contribute.

Thank you,