



# Return Migration and Reintegration in ALBANIA

2013



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2013



IOM Development Fund  
DEVELOPING CAPACITIES IN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT



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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The survey on “Return Migration and Reintegration in Albania, 2013” is the outcome of a fruitful cooperation between the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) and the Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

This survey which analyzes the main characteristics of the return migration and reintegration of the returned migrants is the first of its kind in Albania. INSTAT and IOM have conducted this in-depth study to achieve a more comprehensive picture on the phenomenon of return migration in the wake of the economic and financial crisis of 2009. INSTAT and IOM joined their efforts to undertake a national survey not only to better measure the return migration phenomenon in Albania but also to orient the services provided for the returnees’ reintegration.

This study aims at enlightening the various factors that affect their reintegration in Albania. The study conducted through a national level survey in September-October 2013 suggests that the return migration phenomenon has assumed significant size, particularly after 2009; therefore, the resolving of the problems and the emigrants’ reintegration are the challenges of the Albanian society. Hence, the civil society, the policy makers, the international organizations, the local and national administrative structures, the academic and university community will get hereby a useful tool to understand the problems of migration by contributing to an efficient approach for the reintegration of emigrants into the society.

Special thanks and appreciation goes to the initiators of this study, the Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and INSTAT team who made their contribution to this study.

Gjergji FILIPI, PhD

Director General of INSTAT



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>BCP</b>     | Border Crossing Point                                      |
| <b>DCM</b>     | Decision of Council of Ministers                           |
| <b>EC</b>      | European Commission  |
| <b>EU</b>      | European Union   |
| <b>IOM</b>     | International Organization for Migration                   |
| <b>INSTAT</b>  | Institute of Statistics                                    |
| <b>LEO</b>     | Local Employment Office                                    |
| <b>MC</b>      | Migration Counter  |
| <b>MoFA</b>    | Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                |
| <b>MoIA</b>    | Ministry of Internal Affairs                               |
| <b>MoLSEAO</b> | Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities |
| <b>MoSWY</b>   | Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth                       |
| <b>NAPM</b>    | National Action Plan on Migration                          |
| <b>NES</b>     | National Employment Service                                |
| <b>NPO</b>     | Non-profit Organization                                    |
| <b>NSM</b>     | National Strategy on Migration                             |
| <b>UK</b>      | United Kingdom   |
| <b>UN</b>      | United Nations   |
| <b>US</b>      | United States of America                                   |



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Emigration was one of the major reasons for the decline in the population in Albania between the 2001 and the 2011 censuses. Given that Albanian emigrants have not systematically registered when leaving the country, and because there have been few incentives to register their departure with the local authorities, the use of “indirect methods” was the possible way to produce an estimate of the individuals who have emigrated between 2001 and 2011. Emigration has been a common phenomenon in Albania. Men rather than women were more likely to migrate. And yet the gender difference for the last inter-censal period (2001-2011) is not overwhelming. According to INSTAT’s indirect estimations during this period about 481.000 Albanians left the country of which 243.000 were males. According to OECD data, Italy and Greece were the most preferred destination countries for Albanian emigrants, followed by the United States (USA), the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany. 47 per cent of Albanian emigrants live in Italy, followed by Greece with 43 per cent of Albanian emigrants. The United States follow as a distant third country of destination.

On the return side, Census data revealed that about 139.827 Albanians returned to the country during 2001-2011, the majority of who were males. The returnees tend to be relatively young, and of working age. In numerical terms, employment and family-related reasons dominated among the reasons of return; lack of employment was primarily the dominant reason for males and family-related reasons were the predominant cause of return for females. While some of these individuals return to Albania permanently, for many of them return is of a temporary nature (Maroukis and Gemi 2013). Hence, the return migration captured in the census is a snap-shot of on-going circular migration (INSTAT, 2014).

This report provides an overview of return migration in Albania as of 2013 and the dynamic of reintegration. The report was prepared on the findings of a national survey undertaken by the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as on secondary data found in archival records and official documents. The national survey represents the first research effort to size return migration to Albania in the aftermath of the 2009 world financial crisis, and to analyze the impact of the crisis on returns to Albania. The report sheds light on the heterogeneity characterizing the categories of returnees while analysing their respective needs in Albania, and the various factors shaping returnees’ patterns of reintegration. The last Population and Housing Census were used as the frame for building a representative sample (about 2000 individuals) of the survey for the whole country. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection on the situation of the individuals before leaving Albania, on the experience abroad and on the post return conditions. A specific output of the survey was the elaboration of a profile of returnees to Albania.

In terms of return, the survey found that a total of 133.544 Albanian migrants of the age group 18 years old and above have returned to Albania in the period 2009-2013, of whom 98.414 were males and 35.130 females. There is a significant difference in returnees’ rates according to gender, where men are over represented compared to women, 73.7 per cent and 26.3 per cent respectively. An increasing trend of returns was also observed as of 2009, with most of the returns taking place during 2012 and 2013 (53.4 per cent). The returns, predominantly of a voluntary nature (94 per cent), were noted to have taken place from Greece (70.8 per cent), followed by returns from Italy (23.7 per cent) and other countries such as United Kingdom (UK), Germany, etc. It can, therefore, be argued that return to Albania is primarily due to the 2009 world financial crisis that hit the labour market in the main destination countries of Albanian migrants. Yet, the survey could not indicate whether the crisis has had any impact on the labour mobility of Albanian migrants. There has been some limited evidence to indicate that the lack of reintegration opportunities in Albania may serve as a push factor for the re-emigration of returnees.

The survey findings revealed that the main reasons for emigration were lack of employment at home and better job opportunities abroad, along with the prospect of better income. No significant gender difference was noted when examining the reasons for emigration, other than family reunification which seems to have been a key reason for the emigration of 43 per cent of female migrants reached by the survey. On the return side, the main reasons included loss of job in the country of immigration, melancholy and longing for the family and the country, as well as problems faced by the family left behind in Albania. Other reasons for return included better job opportunities in Albania, investment plans and health-related issues. Again, no substantial gender difference was observed on the reasons of return. These findings are also confirmed by the analysis of the data collected by Migration Counters between July 2010 and July 2012 as well as findings from other research work undertaken by IOM.



The majority of emigrants (60.3 per cent) have returned to their common place of residence before migration. However, the survey also found out that return migration was associated with the internal migration of the population, too. The trend seems to be that returnees settle in the prefectures with a high socio-economic development where they can fulfil their life plans, with Tirana being the most preferred region, followed by Vlorë, Elbasan, Fier and Korçë (in the case of returnees from Greece), and Shkoder, Lezhë, Durrës and Dibër (for those returned from Italy).

The permanent employment situation for most returnees did not change much after return when compared to that prior to migration (from 11.7 per cent prior to migration to 11 per cent at the time of the survey). On the other hand, the self-employment situation has changed from 7.4 per cent prior to migration to 21.6 per cent at the time of the survey, which indicates that returnees are eager to invest their knowledge, skills and financial capital gained abroad in income-generating activities. An increase in employment in the agricultural sector (from 14.6 per cent to 30.7 per cent) was observed after migration, which can also serve as an indicator of the trend of investments in agriculture. Overall, the investment rate of returnees in Albania after return was only 8 per cent. These investments were made primarily in the retail trade, hotels and restaurant industry and agriculture. For most investments, returnees relied on their own savings (99 per cent), sometimes on bank loans (15 per cent) and on the support of parents or relatives (9 per cent).

The survey also examined the tendency of returnees to remain in the country of origin or to re-migrate. It found out that finances are a key indicator influencing the decision making process of the migrant. Before migrating abroad, the financial situation of the migrants was either not good or very bad, but it improved dramatically during their stay abroad. However, upon return to Albania, the majority of returnees do not experience any change in their financial situation when compared to the situation abroad (41.3 per cent). On the other hand, the financial situation has worsened for 38.8 per cent improved for 20 per cent. A considerable percentage (32.6 per cent) of returnees intends to re-emigrate because of difficulties encountered in ensuring sufficient income to support their families.

The existence of services is also an important factor influencing the decision whether to remain in Albania or re-migrate. The survey found that very few returnees received assistance upon return to Albania, and when they did so, they relied mostly on private service providers. The majority of returnees (60.3 per cent) reported that lack of adequate services and an inadequate health system (56.2 per cent) are two key problems faced by them upon return to Albania.

The survey found that the majority of returnees are not aware of Migration Counters or the services provided by them so as to support the reintegration of returnees back home. This finding indicates that more work needs to be done by Migration Counters to reach returnees.

On the basis of the survey findings and the evidence found in various academic books, the report recommends the following: i) to further continue research work in the area of return migration in Albania so to collect evidence on its trends and to assess its impact on the returnees themselves, their families and communities where they settle; ii) to further explore the mobility of labour migrants from Albania toward neighbouring countries and within Albania upon return; iii) to further explore the impact of return on the labour market in Albania, as well as the impact of the employability on the decision to remain in Albania or fall back on the option of re-migrating; iv) to improve the reintegration services delivered to returnees (support to business start up, services related to employability and investment in the agricultural sector, etc).

The report is structured in 5 chapters; i) the first chapter introduces the reader to the study objectives and definitions applied; ii) the second chapter provides a review of theoretical background on return migration and reintegration as part of the return cycle. It emphasizes the importance of exploring the paths of successful reintegration as a way of ensuring that return migration potential for development is maximized to the benefit of the returnee and the community where s/he settles. iii) the third chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology of the survey including the use of quantitative research methods, sampling frames and units, the questionnaire used as well as the methods for data interpretation and analysis; iv) the fourth chapter presents the main findings resulting from the field survey; v) the last chapter provides in brief the overall conclusions of the study and some specific recommendations on how various stakeholders can ensure the successful reintegration of returnees to Albania.



# 1

## INTRODUCTION



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SURVEY

Two decades after the en-mass migration of its citizens to Western European countries, migration flows from Albania have decreased due to increasing stability and economic progress in the country. According to the 2011 Population and Housing Census, 4.9 per cent of the Albanian population, or 139.827 people that resided abroad, returned home after 2001 (INSTAT, 2012). The world financial crisis has particularly reduced the migrants' work opportunities in Greece after 2010, the main destination country for Albanian migrants, leading to their return to Albania. In an effort to better examine return migration to Albania after the 2009 financial turmoil that affected most of the destination countries for Albanian migrants, the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) joined efforts to undertake a national survey to better size return migration to Albania, and to guide the provision of services in support of reintegration of returnees. The survey aims to shed light on the various factors shaping returnees' patterns of reintegration in Albania. It intends to highlight the heterogeneity characterizing the categories of returnees while analysing their respective needs in Albania.

Due to the difficulties encountered in reaching return migrants as a target group in constant movement, the survey relied on the database of the 2011 Housing and Population CENSUS so as to put together a representative sample for the whole country. Therefore, the findings of the survey as further illustrated in the report are representative of the whole returnee population in Albania for the 2009-2013 period.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

The specific objectives of the survey are:

- To profile return migration to Albania, push and pull factors, characteristics of returning migrants;
- To collect information on migrants' experiences and perceptions of reintegration in Albania;
- To formulate several recommendations for further research on return migration as well as the provision of services that facilitate the reintegration of returnees.

## STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE REPORT

This report aims to shed light on the various factors shaping returnees' patterns of reintegration in Albania. For this reason, the report applies a number of definitions that shape the analysis in the literature review chapter and in particular the analysis of the field survey data. A full list of definitions applied can be found in Annex 1, however some key definitions used are as follows:

### ◆ return migration:

*The movement of a person returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country. This return may or may not be voluntary. Return migration includes voluntary repatriation. Any person returning to his/her country of origin, in the course of the last five years, after having been an international migrant (whether short-term or long-term) in another country. Return may be permanent or temporary. It may be independently decided by the migrant or forced by unfavourable circumstances.<sup>1</sup>*

### ◆ returnee:

*Any person returning to his/her country of origin, after having been an international migrant (for a minimum of one year) in another country. Return may be permanent or temporary. It may be independently decided by the migrant or forced by unexpected circumstances.*

### ◆ reintegration

*Re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>(1)</sup> IOM:2011, Glossary on Migration, second edition, pg 86

<sup>(2)</sup> *ibid*







# 2

## **FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW**



## RETURN MIGRATION OVERVIEW

The literature review presented in this chapter provides a synthetic theoretical and evidence-based answer to the following questions: a) why do migrants return and what motivates and influences the return process; b) what are the challenges of re-integration and the factors that influence successful re-integration; and finally c) what is the response that the country of origin can put in place in order to facilitate re-integration of return migrants?

Since the 1960s, return migration has been subject to contrasting approaches from different disciplines and schools of thought. A variety of empirical inquiries regarding this issue have attempted to explain the manifold factors shaping migrants' patterns of return and reintegration in their country of origin. The definitions of return migration vary also according to the theoretical approaches. Some scholars and practitioners have defined return in terms of time and space, and therefore distinguished between temporary and permanent return (Agunias, 2006). Others, such as IOM (2011) have based their definition on return migration on the form of return (voluntary or involuntary) and time spent abroad (at least a year). In the last two decades, return has been narrowly defined in the current lexicon of governmental and intergovernmental agencies as the "act of leaving the territory of a destination country". In the European Union (EU), for example, this vision of return has been presented as an "integral part" of the instruments geared towards dealing with irregular migration in an effort to protect the integrity of immigration and asylum systems in most of the member states (European Council, 2002; European Commission, 2005).

Reasons for return vary from macro-scale economic or political events to individual migrant perspectives. Russell King (2000) portrays return migration as a process initiated by various factors and leading to a variety of effects. He further states that cause factors can be: a) economic (unemployment/end of contract, more/better jobs, desire to invest savings); b) social (racial hostility/difficulty in integration, homesickness, desire for enhanced status); c) family/life cycle (retirement, parental ties, marriage, children's education); or political (government policy at sending and receiving ends). Depending on the context, some factors may be more relevant than others.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING RE-INTEGRATION

Beyond the variety of definitions applied, the common factor in all theoretical approaches and definitions used for return migration remains the interest of all those concerned to maximize the potential of return migration to the benefit of the migrant, his/her family and of the community of return. This perspective becomes more evident when examining return migration theories, such as the neo-classical one, the new economics of labour migration' theory, structuralism, transnationalism and the social network theory. These theories examine various aspects, such as the motives of the returnee, the perspectives of returnees on the return and the role of the country of origin in the so called "successful return". The latter is often defined by some scholars (e.g Black et al., 2004) as sustainable return. According to them, 'it is helpful to consider three standpoints from which sustainability may be considered. First, return can be seen as sustainable in relation to the situation of each individual returnee, and also in relation to the home society as a whole. Second, 'sustainability' for individuals can be considered from the 'subjective' advantage point of the returnees, as well as in terms of the objective measurement of their situation. Third, sustainability can be measured in relation to the physical location of desired location of migrants after return, but also in relation to socio-economic and political-security considerations. The success of reintegration is also often measured through sustainable return.

On the other hand, general consensus exists among scholars and practitioners in the area of return migration, in that the successful reintegration has two interrelated dimensions: the *first dimension* relating to personal success, entailing social and economic security for the migrant as an individual (including family members) in the local community of the country of origin. The *second dimension* relates to the contribution of return to the economic and social development of the community of return and to the country of origin. Return migration can be a real stimulus to the development of local communities where returnees settle. Migrants may invest their savings on productive activities, utilize their skills and know how gained in migration, and hence can generate employment for their family members and their communities. Migrants may give a new impetus to the labour market development and technology advancement in the countries of origin. However, King R. quoting Ghosh (2000) calls our attention to a useful distinction between the economic welfare of the individual returning migrant or family and the aggregate contribution that return migration makes to the country, region and community of origin. According to him, the number of returnees, duration of absence from the country, destination of the return, social class, and nature of the training received abroad, along with the way the return is organized, may adversely influence reintegration home.

The IOM definition of reintegration calls our attention for assessing the social, economic and the cultural impact of



reintegration by looking at the conditions in the country of origin. *Cultural reintegration* is seen as the process of reintegration of the returnee to the values, way of living, language, moral principles, and traditions of the country of origin's society and *economic reintegration*, as the reinsertion into the economic system of the country of origin, aiming the use of know-how gained in migration to promote the economic and social development of the country of origin. *Social reintegration* entails the development of a personal network and on the other hand the development of civil society structures such as associations, etc (IOM, 2011).

Having considered all of the above, the 'three-stage approach' on return migration developed from of Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2008) represents a comprehensive conceptual model for analysing return migration and reintegration. This approach views return migration as part of the migration cycle; all stages of the migration cycle influence the willingness and preparedness of the migrant to return, consequently the success of his/her reintegration. In Cassarino's view,

*[....."this gradual broadening of the return migration spectrum has not only led to a growing complexity in the reasons for return, but also diversity in the methods of reintegration and in the patterns of mobilization of resources necessary for their resettlement in their homeland. These patterns are most certainly reflective of the returnees' migration experiences in their former country of immigration. They are also shaped by the post-return social, economic, institutional and political conditions at home. Such considerations are important if one wants to understand how and why returnees' patterns of reintegration differ from one another. Moreover, they are crucial to understand the prerequisites to strengthening the linkage between return migration and development...]* Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2008)

The 'three-stage approach' is therefore structured along three main migratory stages: Stage 1) situation before leaving the country of origin; Stage 2) experience of migration lived in the main country of immigration; Stage 3: return to the country of origin – Post-return conditions. In other words, this approach makes it possible: i) to understand the extent to which the experience of migration, as well as the social and institutional context at home, have had an impact on patterns of reintegration; ii) to analyse why and how the human, social and financial capital of the interviewee has changed over time; iii) to compare diachronically the various factors which have motivated and shaped the migratory stages.

Cassarinos' model also represents the theoretical approach applied in this study which allows for a better understanding of the migration experience, of the factors which have motivated and shaped the migratory stages, of the social and institutional context at home and their impact on patterns of reintegration. Reintegration of returnees is considered as part of the return cycle even though return itself can be temporary in nature, depending on the migrant decision to settle (or not) back in the country of origin and the respective length of stay upon return. Return preparedness is about having the ability and the opportunity to gather the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure one's return home. Return preparedness, is thus, a policy option for policy-makers both from host and origin countries to adequately respond to return migration flows.

## RETURN MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ALBANIA

Although return migration has emerged as part of the modern migration phenomena since the late 1990s, reliable data on the trend of return migration have been largely lacking. In 2004, the Sussex University Center for Migration Research undertook the first research project aimed at defining, measuring and influencing sustainable return in the Western Balkans. The project provided some useful recommendations on how to prepare the reintegration process for returning migrants in these countries that could serve as a useful source for respective governments to build on platforms of successful reintegration policies and programmatic interventions. However, the project could not go as far as to size return migration in these countries.

In an effort to better explore the links between migration, education and training systems and labour markets in 2007, the European Training Foundation undertook a pilot study in Albania. The study revealed that migration will continue to play a role in Albania in the short term, and males would be more prone (46.9%) to migrate than females (40.9%). The majority of potential migrants would also view migration as a process leading to better work opportunities upon their return to Albania. The study also indicated that very few returning migrants (1.6%) were aware of any government support programmes intended to facilitate return. The findings of the ETF survey suggested that return migration is a potential gain that has so far not been fully utilized in Albania and recommended to offer effective reintegration programmes for potential returning migrants, including better reception and advice for investment opportunities and access to business support and credits for entrepreneurship.

In 2008, the IOM Tirana study "*Identification of the areas most affected by emigration and return migration in Albania: profiling of returning migrants*", elaborated the first profile of returning migrants in Albania. The study found that return migration in Albania has many features and it includes both voluntary and involuntary dimensions, therefore and

experiences of return are considered along a continuum ranging from positive to negative ones. The study revealed that that 66 per cent of those who faced unemployment in destination countries stated that they would consider permanent return, if there was secure employment in Albania. Other important conditions for permanent return would be for family reasons (23%) and acceptable living conditions (14%). The unemployment and lack of institutional support in destination countries were identified as strong predictors of permanent return. The study focused also on the issue of *re-integration difficulties and services*; 60 per cent of the participants described integration as difficult, while 24% found the opposite. The study also attempted to identify the prevalence of assistance received prior to or following return. An overwhelming 83% of the sample stated that they did not receive any form of assistance upon return. Additionally, the study looked at the type of assistance received and variations across forms of return (i.e. voluntary, regular, forced, etc.). It showed that the primary forms of assistance across all forms of return were, transportation of belongings, receiving support in job-seeking efforts, facilitating social reintegration, and professional training. When return was voluntary and assisted by non-governmental and international organizations, the primary source of support was in re-integration, primarily assistance in educational and vocational arenas. The survey also found that the majority of responses (55%) indicate that employment opportunities should be allocated to enable smooth return and reintegration processes. Financial incentives (25%) were also perceived as important, as well as professional training programs (6%). These findings reflect the primary reasons that lead to migration in the first place, which tend to be economic and occupational in nature.

Other relevant sources regarding the dimension of return migration in Albania are provided a recent study conducted by Eda Gemi in 2013 entitled "*Albanian irregular migration to Greece: a new typology of crisis*". As the title clearly suggests, recent return migration flows in this study were seen from the irregularity point of view and the chosen case-study was Greece. Quoting the sources of the Hellenic Ministry of Interior, Gemi notes that around 130,000 to 140,000 Albanian migrant workers lost their permission of stay in Greece because of the financial crisis, as they were not able to secure the required number of social security stamps (the so called IKA). Nevertheless, she points out "it is extremely difficult to assess whether all of them settled in Albania, eventually returned again to Greece or migrated to other countries with more robust economies (ELIAMEP, 2013).

The 2011 Population Census provided a clearer overview of return migration in between 2001 and 2011. An INSTAT publication on "Migration in Albania" issued in 2014 argued that returns have been on the rise every year, in particular after 2008 (INSTAT, 2011). Registered returnees are mostly males (around 2/3 of the total) and the most common age is 30-34 years. Considering the number of returnees by country, census data showed that the increase in returns is largely caused by Albanians coming back from Greece, followed by those coming back from Italy. Returns from other countries, such as the UK, USA, Germany and Turkey are to a lesser extent. As far as return reasons go, they are related to work and family concerns, which are the two dominant factors for both men and women.

Having analysed the specific studies and surveys on return migration in Albania over the last years, one concludes that a systematic study on return migration, including all the three-stages of return (Cassarino, 2004) is needed in order to better profile the return migrants and to shape tailor-made services for a smooth and sustainable return. In addition, the dynamic of return migration from Greece requires a more in-depth analysis so as to better understand the impact of the crisis on the mobility of Albanian labour migrants.

## REINTEGRATION PATHS IN ALBANIA

As of 2010, the Government of Albania has made continuous efforts to develop and implement a policy framework on return migration and reintegration. The Reintegration Strategy for Returning Albanian Citizens (2010-2015) and its Action Plan was approved in 2010. The overall aim of the strategy is to ensure a sustainable return for Albanian migrants through support to the reintegration process in the country, despite the form of return, voluntary or involuntary. The strategy also foresees that provision of specific services should be provided to certain vulnerable categories of returnees, in compliance with other existing policy provisions (such as the Anti-Trafficking Strategy), legal provisions (such as for those for victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, Roma, migrants with economic problems, etc) or through tailor-made projects/programmes designed by and implemented with the support of different donors (Qeveria Shqiptare, 2010).

The core element of the reintegration mechanism is to be found in the Migration Counters located at 36 regional and local employment offices throughout the country, which assess the reintegration needs of returning migrants and refer them to existing public services, such as health, education employment and so forth. The establishment of such mechanism illustrates the efforts of the country to consolidate institutions that deliver services and social support and to increase the overall access of the population to public services. Yet, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which



the institutionalization of reintegration support to returnees has achieved its aim. In an effort to profile the returnees and assess their needs, Grazhdani (2013) provides an analysis of the Migration Counters based on statistics collected over a two-year period: July 2010, which is when the units started operating, and July 2012<sup>3</sup>. A profile of returnees was, therefore, elaborated indicating that the majority of returns were from Greece (86%). The majority of returnees have returned with their families (74%) and 79.1% of them intended to stay long-term in Albania. The main reasons for return included lack of employment in the destination country (88%), followed by lack of documentation and the desire to invest at home (SHKP, 2013). A total of 1.752 returnees were registered as unemployed job seekers in 2012 against 912 that were registered in 2011, and at least 15 % of returnees were granted economic assistance. The majority of returned emigrants had some work experience in sectors such as construction, agriculture, services, domestic services, tourism, mechanic and electrical services, etc. As a result, they sought employment in these very same sectors, as they felt they had sufficient knowledge and skills.

The registration at Migration Counters is conducted on a voluntary basis. An interview is conducted by the Migration Specialist at the Counter to assess the needs of the returnee, in particular immediate needs so as to be able to refer the returnee to other available public services. Returnees expect Migration Counters to deliver a wide range of public services which is not possible because of the various components that reintegration entails that require the intervention of various service providers (employment services, health services, education services, etc). It is also important to highlight that in terms of employment services Migration Counters largely fail to assist returnees in rural areas. According to national statistics, returnees in rural areas are considered to have employment simply because their family owns a plot of land. Once they are considered as self-employed in agriculture, they cannot claim unemployment benefits or economic assistance. Neither can they benefit from other job brokering services, unless they state they are no longer living in rural areas. As part of career guidance services, returnees are also referred to vocational training (16% of the returnees for 2012). A good part of returnees require support to access health services (32.29 % during 2012) and often turn to Migration Counters to get registered as unemployed job seekers in order to secure free access to health services. Other referral services with a more visible impact on community and country development are the orientation to business start-up and growth (3% of returnees during 2012).

<sup>(3)</sup> It must be highlighted that before 2010 Migration Counters were established through the support of IOM in a few selected Regional Employment Offices, however with limited functions.



# 3

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE FIELD SURVEY**





## A THREE-STAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey was conducted through a structured questionnaire. In line with the objectives of the survey, the contents of the questionnaire were geared towards collecting the amount of necessary information on the following issues:

- ◆ Socio-economic conditions and socio-demographic characteristics of returnees prior to departure from Albania, during migration and upon return;
- ◆ Reasons for leaving the country and for returning to Albania;
- ◆ Experiences of integration in the last country of emigration and their influence on the decision to return to Albania;
- ◆ Process of return to Albania and prospect of stay; Links with the last country of immigration;
- ◆ Reintegration support and returnee reintegration experiences in Albania.

The questionnaire extensively applied the Cassarino' model, consisting in a three-stage approach to migration, developed and applied by the Robert Schuman Center<sup>4</sup>. The model was adjusted to optimize its efficacy in its application in the field in Albania, as well as to facilitate the electronic data entry and verification. Additional questions were also introduced by INSTAT and IOM to collect more specific information on the process of reintegration of returnees in Albania. The questionnaire comprised of close-ended questions as well as the open-ended questions, particularly regarding the occupations and field of economic activity. The modality "other" was also introduced for some of the questions to gather additional information as necessary.

Multiple-choice entries were included in various questions; with the dual structure (Yes/No answers) being the most often used one. This configuration was chosen in order to facilitate the ensuing data processing. In addition, this enabled proper recording of some complex issues, such as the family composition, the occupational class and sectors and the types of investments. On various occasions the interviewees were asked to classify responses by order of priority their replies, particularly regarding the return motivations. Filter questions were used in the questionnaire to highlight the variety of the migratory experiences and the manifold patterns of reintegration. The Eurostat nomenclature of country codes was used and the occupational ISCO codes have been simplified for the purposes of the survey.

In view of the relatively small sample size, accuracy is very important. Estimates in some subgroups are relatively inaccurate with big coefficients of variation. Supposing that the design effect for small proportions is close to  $deff = 1$ , in calculating coefficients of variation we can use formulas for simple random sampling.

Similar conclusions can be used in calculating estimates for the population. In publishing estimates the following criteria for accuracy were taken into consideration:

- Estimates with the coefficient of variation  $CV < 0.10$  are published without limitation.
- Estimates with  $0.10 < CV < 0.15$  are stated in single parentheses
- Estimates with  $0.15 < CV < 0.30$  are stated in double parentheses
- Estimates with accuracy less than  $CV < 0.30$  are not published

<sup>(4)</sup> Source: RDP, MIREM © EUI, <http://rsc.eui.eu/RDP/>



The questionnaire was structured along three main migratory stages:

| Stage 1  | Stage 2  | Stage 3  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Situation before leaving the country of origin</b>  | <b>Experience of migration lived in the main country of immigration</b>  | <b>Return to the country of origin – Post-return conditions</b>  |
| Demographic and social characteristics;<br>Reasons for leaving Albania;<br>Social and financial conditions before leaving Albania;<br>Composition of the household before leaving (if any);<br>Education and skills before leaving;<br>Professional situation. | Experience of migration;<br>Reasons for having lived in the country(ies) of immigration;<br>Duration of the experience lived abroad;<br>Social and financial conditions in the immigration country (ies);<br>Composition of the household (if any);<br>Education and skills acquired abroad;<br>Professional and financial situation;<br>Relationships with the local institutions abroad and the receiving society;<br>Links/contacts with Albania. | Return journey;<br>Reasons and factors motivating return;<br>Expected duration of the return;<br>Social and financial conditions after return;<br>Composition of the household after return;<br>Education and skills acquired after return;<br>Professional and financial status after return;<br>Relationships with the local institutions and the society in Albania after return;<br>Links with the former immigration country (ies);<br>Post-return projects and sustainability of return. |

As Cassarino (2012) points out, these three stages allow the factors inherent in the returnees' migratory experience, as well as those that are external to it to be identified, while viewing return as a changing process, whether it is permanent or temporary. Therefore, approach makes it possible:

- To understand the extent to which the experience of migration, as well as the social and institutional context at home, have had an impact on patterns of reintegration;
- To analyse why and how the human, social and financial capital of the interviewee has changed over time;
- To compare diachronically the various factors which have motivated and shaped the migratory stages.

## PREPARATION OF THE SURVEY

Data collection was conducted from 16 September to 14 October 2013 using a nationally representative sample of almost 2000 individuals. The survey was based on the face to face method of interviewing and was conducted through CAPI technology (computer assisted personal interviewing). Using CAPI dramatically reduces the time lag between data collection and data analysis, because manual coding of the responses recorded with pen and paper is no longer necessary and data validation is done at the time of data collection. The testing phase was necessary to optimize the administration of the questionnaire in order to minimize all the logical and physical errors that program may contain. The standard program for data collection was developed in CSProX and data processing using SPSS 17. After all data processing steps were completed, the survey results were tabulated using SPSS 17 package. The tabulations were then thoroughly checked for consistency of data, titles, inputs, concepts, as well as the figures there in.

## SAMPLING FRAME AND SAMPLING UNITS

### Sample Design

The study consisted in a cross-sectional population-based household survey conducted at a national level across each of the 12 prefectures in Albania. A stratified sample designed was used for selecting the individual for sampling. The primary sampling units (PSUs) selected at the first stage are the enumeration areas (EAs), which are small operational areas defined on maps for the 2011 Census enumeration. To control coverage errors, which make the sample less representative, the sampling frame must be of an optimum quality during all the stages of selections. At the first stage, the EA must cover all the areas inhabited by the population under study, without omission or duplication. The boundaries of the EA must be clearly defined and subject to easy identification in the field. SAS software was used at this stage to systematically select the sample of (EAs) with probability proportion to size (PPS) within each prefecture. The second stage of selection dealt with household lists from the selected EAs. The list of households enumerated in the 2011 Census for each sample EA was used as the sampling with equal probability. The third stage of selection was the individual selection in the pre-selected household. The advantages of this two-stage selection procedure are:

1. The selection procedure is simple to implement and reduces possible non-sampling errors in the selection process.
2. It is easy to locate the selected individuals, reducing non-sampling errors and non-response.
3. The interviewers interview only the individuals in the pre-selected households. No replacement of household was permitted, preventing survey bias.

When developing the sample selection criteria, special attention was paid to define the study population and its characteristics. Based upon pre-established criteria an individual was considered eligible to be surveyed if he/she was

4. An Albanian citizen, who had migrated abroad and returned to Albania either voluntary or involuntary;
5. 18 years old and above.

The goal was to generate a sample of households that would allow for the production of statistically reliable estimates of the nature and extent of return migration to Albania and reintegration needs of returnees at the national level, and would allow for urban versus rural comparisons.

### Sample Size

The sample size for a particular survey is determined by the accuracy required for the survey estimates for each domain, as well as by the resource and operational constraints. The accuracy of the survey results depends on both the sampling error, which can be measured through variance estimation, and the non-sampling error from all other sources, such as response and other measurement errors, coding and data entry errors. It is important to emphasize that INSTAT recognizes that the sample size of a particular survey is determined by the accuracy required for the national level estimates, as well influenced by logistical issues related to the organization and size of the teams, and the workload for survey administration and data collection. Considering all of these factors, calculations suggested that a sample size of 2000 individuals would give sufficient power to meet the study objectives. When multi-stage sampling is used, the design effect mostly measures the impact of the level of clustering on the sampling efficiency. The design effect depends on the number of sample individuals selected in each stratum. The sample size for a particular prefecture (urban and rural) was allocated proportionally to the number of migrants in each prefecture.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample EA-s and individuals by prefecture urban rural for RMS. The total sample size at the national level is 250 EAs.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Sample EAs and Individual by Prefecture and urban rural

| Prefecture   | Sample EA-s |            |            | Sample Individuals |            |             |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
|              | Urban       | Rural      | Total      | Urban              | Rural      | Total       |
| Berat        | 6           | 8          | 14         | 48                 | 64         | 112         |
| Dibër        | 2           | 7          | 9          | 16                 | 56         | 72          |
| Durrës       | 15          | 5          | 20         | 120                | 40         | 160         |
| Elbasan      | 10          | 16         | 26         | 80                 | 128        | 208         |
| Fier         | 12          | 22         | 34         | 96                 | 176        | 272         |
| Gjirokastrë  | 3           | 5          | 8          | 24                 | 40         | 64          |
| Korçë        | 10          | 13         | 23         | 80                 | 104        | 184         |
| Kukës        | 0           | 4          | 4          | 0                  | 32         | 32          |
| Lezhë        | 6           | 6          | 12         | 48                 | 48         | 96          |
| Shkodër      | 6           | 9          | 15         | 48                 | 72         | 120         |
| Tiranë       | 40          | 17         | 57         | 320                | 136        | 456         |
| Vlorë        | 16          | 12         | 28         | 128                | 96         | 224         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>126</b>  | <b>124</b> | <b>250</b> | <b>1008</b>        | <b>992</b> | <b>2000</b> |

## DATA CAPITALIZATION AND ANALYSIS

A common set of cross-tabulations was employed by all the partners with a view to capitalize on the field data while referring to a number of dependent and independent variables. These cross-tabulations allow a comparative analysis of the following topics:

- ◆ Reasons and factors motivating or determining the departure for abroad, and the post-return conditions;
- ◆ The type and length of the experience of migration;
- ◆ The impact of the experience of migration on the patterns of professional reintegration of the returnees in their country of origin and on the welfare of their households;
- ◆ The returnees' projects before and after return;
- ◆ The skills acquired abroad and in the country of origin;
- ◆ The financial resources of the returnees and their patterns of reintegration at home;
- ◆ The returnees' links with their former country or countries of immigration;
- ◆ The assistance which the interviewees may have benefited from when returning to their country of origin;
- ◆ The types of investments made by the interviewees in their former country or countries of immigration and their country of origin;
- ◆ The returnees' perception of their institutional environment.

The numerous variables contained in the questionnaire allow a thorough analysis of the patterns of reintegration. Two different basic categories have been considered:

- ◆ Migrants who decided to return on their own initiative to their country of origin and those who were forced to do so. The upcoming chapters are structured around the following six thematic areas:
  - Socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewed returnees;
  - Socio-professional situations and skills;
  - Resources: Social and financial capital;
  - Migratory experiences abroad;
  - Return and patterns of reintegration;
  - Post-return conditions and perspectives.



# 4

## FINDINGS FROM FIELD SURVEY



## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### Returnees' distribution by age and sex

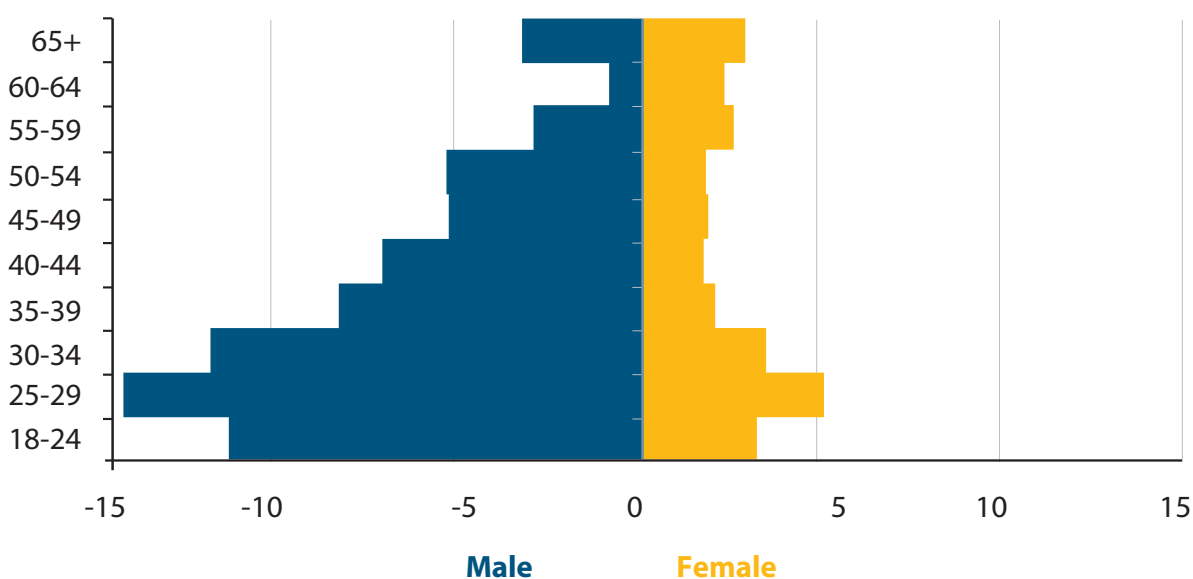
The survey found out that a total of 133,544 Albanian citizens of the age segment 18- above returned to Albania in the period 2009-2013.

**Table 2.** Albanian returnees by age group

| Age group    | Total          |
|--------------|----------------|
| 18-24        | 19.987         |
| 25-29        | 26.428         |
| 30-34        | 20.970         |
| 35-39        | 14.247         |
| 40-44        | 12.090         |
| 45-49        | 9.817          |
| 50-54        | 9.792          |
| 55-59        | 7.524          |
| 60-64        | 4.342          |
| 65+          | 8.347          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>133.544</b> |

The figure below shows a preponderant proportion of returnees coming back to Albania at the early stages of their lifecycles, when they are relatively young. The most common age to return to Albania is between the age of 25 and 29. The percentage of returnees of retirement age is not high (about 6%), despite the assumption that Albanians work abroad until retirement age and then return back to Albania. Given that many migrant workers emigrate in their twenties and thirties, it may simply be too early to find such return migration for retirement – those who were in their twenties and thirties in 1989 are only now approaching retirement age.

**Figure 1.** Albanian returnees by age group and sex, (%)





With regard to gender, there seems to be a significant difference among returnees' rates, where men are overrepresented compared to women, 73.7% and 26.3% respectively. The age distribution pattern both for men and women, however, is strikingly similar.

Given that more generally men are more likely to move for employment reasons (INSTAT, 2014) it is not surprising that the proportion of returnees in the age group 25 to 45 is more pronounced for men. By contrast, the distribution for women is somewhat flatter given that women are more likely to move for family reasons. Despite the various reasons for migration the peak for women is also at about the same age as it is for men (INSTAT, 2014).

## MARITAL STATUS OF RETURNEES

The data on civil status demonstrates that over 30% of all returnees continued to be single during the migration journey and after return to Albania. Conversely, the percentage of migrants who got married abroad is higher than those who got married upon return to Albania (11.8% against 6.6%).

**Table 3.** Evolution of the Albanian returnees' marital status during the migration itinerary, (%)

| Civil Status              |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Single                    | 30,0  |
| Married before emigration | 47,5  |
| Married during emigration | 11,8  |
| Married after emigration  | 6,6   |
| Other status              | 4,1   |
| Total                     | 100,0 |

## TYPE OF RETURN AND LAST COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

More than 94% of returnees decided to return voluntarily (of their own free will), while less than 6% of them were forced to return. When analysed across age, it appears that the returnees, who were forced return by circumstances to leave the host country, were younger than those who decided to return on their free will.

**Table 4.** Albanian returnees by type of return and mean age, (%)

|                                | Percentage | Mean age |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------|
| Voluntary return               | 94,3       | 38,6     |
| Forced return by circumstances | 5,7        | 34,2     |
| Total                          | 100        | 38,3     |

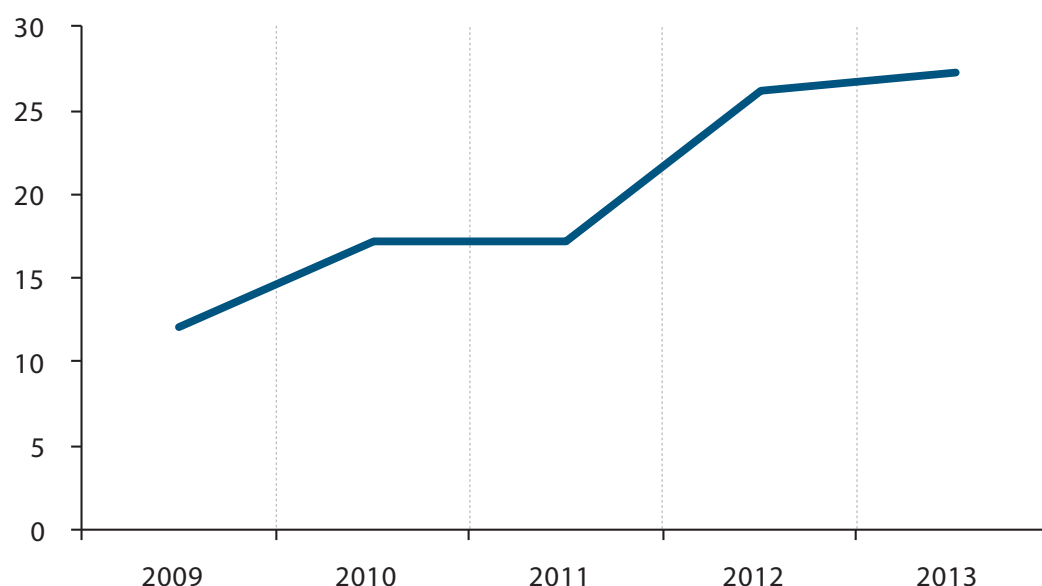
Greece has been the last destination country for the majority of returns (70.8%) followed by Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany, while returns from other countries were at low levels and were grouped under the 'Other' category of 2.4 per cent.



**Table 5.** Returnees by last country of emigration, (%)

|         | Percentage | MEAN_YEAR |
|---------|------------|-----------|
| Greece  | 70,8       | 7,0       |
| Italy   | 23,7       | 4,3       |
| England | 1,6        | 4,1       |
| Germany | 1,1        | 6,0       |
| USA     | 0,6        | 4,2       |
| Other   | 2,2        | 4,1       |
| Total   | 100,0      | 6,2       |

The returns have been on the rise as of 2011. If this finding is analyzed together with the findings on the country of return, it is evident that the rise in the number is because of the returns from Greece which have happened mostly because of the financial crises in this country and its negative impact in the labour market.

**Figure 2.** Returnees by year of return, (%)

## FAMILY COMPOSITION BEFORE LEAVING FOR ABROAD, IN THE HOST COUNTRY AND AFTER RETURN

Data related to the household composition shows that most of the Albanians' (42.8%) before migrating used to live in 'extended households' (with parents and/or brothers and sisters and others) about; this is related with the fact that more than a half of the Albanian returnees declared that their marital status before migrating was 'single'. These types of households were numerous before migrating while they experienced a decline in the last country of emigration and even more after return 40.6% and 32% respectively.

On the other hand, the households with 'nuclear descending' (namely, a household including a couple with or without children, lone mother/father with children), accounted for more than 31.4% of the total households before migration. The percentage increased to 37.1% in the host country and after return it reached 45.9%. These results led to the conclusion that a shift from an 'extended household' to a 'nuclear household' has happened after return.



**Table 6.** Household composition of Albanian returnees' before leaving for abroad, in the last country of emigration and after return, (%)

| Household composition                     | Before migrating | In the last country of emigration | After return |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Alone                                     | 2,3              | 15,2                              | 3,6          |
| With spouse                               | 10,3             | 7,6                               | 11,0         |
| With children                             | 1,4              | 2,7                               | 1,3          |
| With spouse and children                  | 19,8             | 26,9                              | 33,7         |
| With spouse, children and others          | 7,2              | 5,1                               | 13,4         |
| With parent                               | 15,9             | 2,6                               | 12,0         |
| With brother and sister                   | 0,7              | 5,2                               | 0,3          |
| With parents, sisters and brothers        | 27,0             | 3,8                               | 13,3         |
| With parents, sister, brothers and others | 6,6              | 0,6                               | 4,3          |
| With other family members or friends      | 1,2              | 26,0                              | 0,8          |
| Other composition                         | 7,6              | 4,4                               | 6,5          |

## HOUSING SITUATION

As far as housing is concerned, the data collected show that just before leaving Albania most migrants lived in individual houses 82% and about 15% in apartments. Only a small proportion of the households under survey lived in an institution 0.6%. The situation differed a lot during migration; most of the Albanian migrants abroad were living in apartments rather than in individual house, 62% and 36% respectively.

**Table 7.** Housing situation of Albanian returnees' before emigrating and in the last country of emigration, (%)

| Housing situation | Before migrating | Last Country of Emigration |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Individual house  | 82,3             | 36,2                       |
| Apartment         | 14,9             | 62,4                       |
| An institution    | 0,6              | 0,8                        |
| Other             | 2,2              | 0,7                        |
| Total             | 100              | 100                        |

The accommodation status in the last country of emigration showed in the table 7 shows a growth in the number of owners. The owners' rate shifted upwards from 4% at the time of their arrival in the last country of emigration to over 6% just before returning to Albania.

On the contrary, the proportion of migrants who were renting a house slightly decreased before leaving the last country of emigration compared with the situation on their arrival, 86% and 87% respectively.

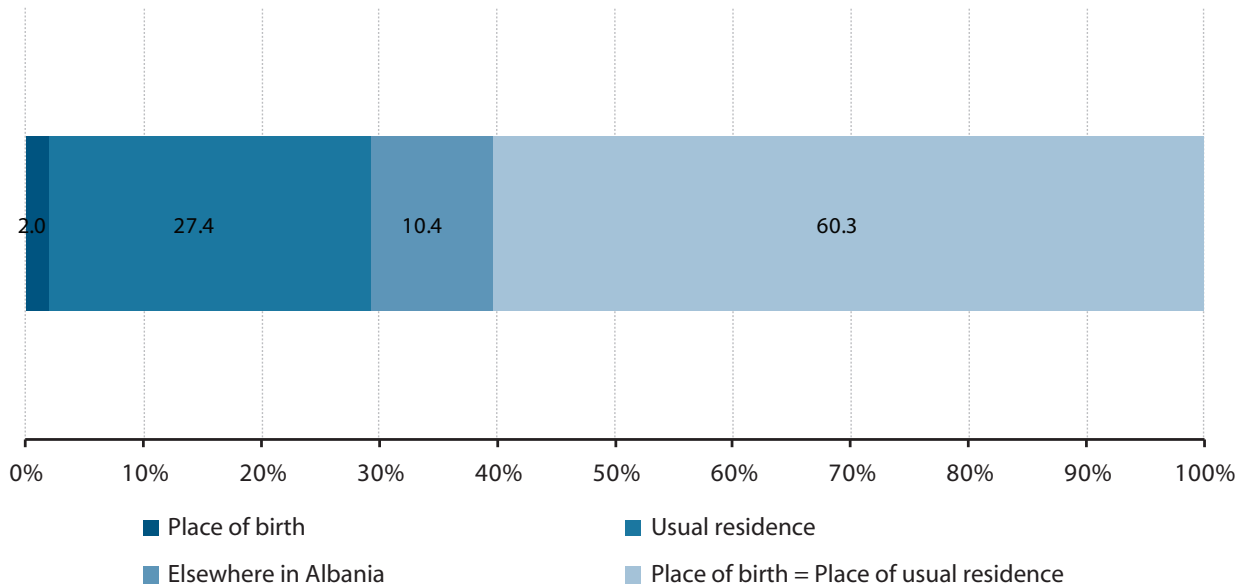
**Table 8.** Occupancy status in the last country of emigration, on their arrival and just before their return, (%)

| Type of occupancy | On arrival | Before returning |
|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| Owner             | 4,0        | 6,1              |
| Tenant            | 86,9       | 85,9             |
| Free housing      | 8,7        | 7,4              |
| Other             | 0,4        | 0,6              |
| Total             | 100,0      | 100,0            |

## RETURNEES PREFECTURE OF RESIDENCE BEFORE MIGRATING AND AFTER RETURN

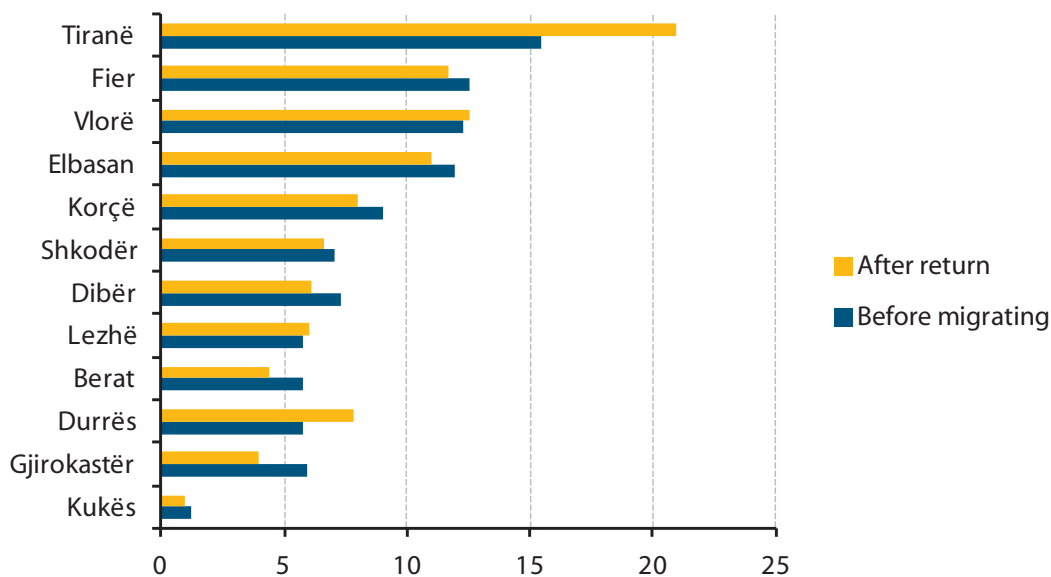
As evidenced in Figure 3 the majority of returnees settled in their place of birth or their place of usual residence. This finding can be explained by the presence of other family members, familiarity with the place and community, and hence easiness to readapt.

**Figure 3.** Returnees by place of return, (%)



The largest number of returnees have settled in Tirana, however not all prefectures are affected by return migration in the same way. As Figure 4 shows Tirana, Fier, Vlorë and Elbasan are the prefectures of origin of returnees (prefectures of residence of returnees before migrating) with the highest proportion (above 10%), while regarding the prefecture of destination (prefecture of residence after return) are Tirana, Durrës and Vlorë that experienced an increase in terms of the proportion of returnees settled in these prefectures.

**Figure 4.** Prefecture of residence before migrating and after return, (%)

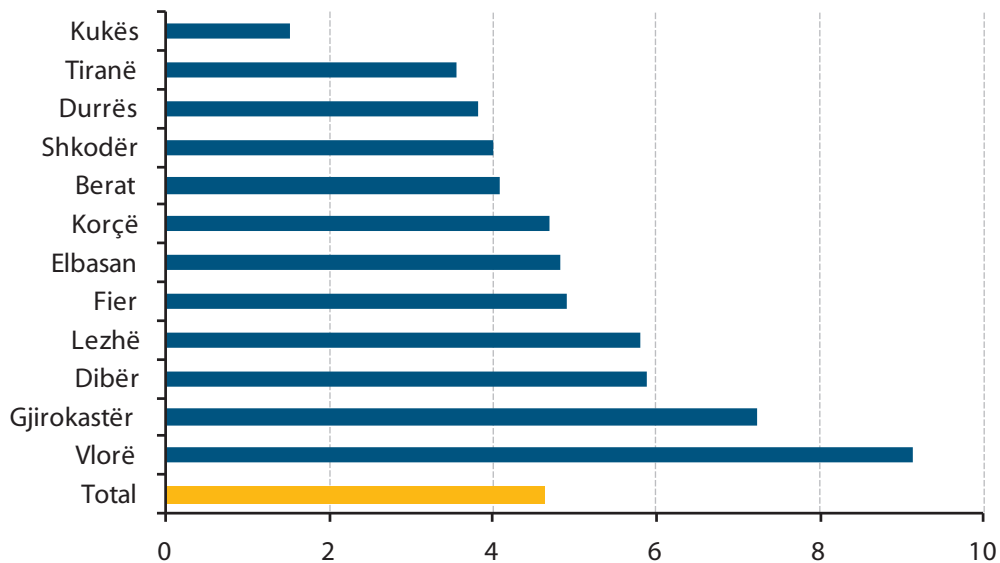




Such comparison between the usual place of residence and the residence upon return indicates that return migration is associated with the internal relocation of population as well. The tendency of the returnees is to settle in the prefectures with a high social-economic development where they can fulfil their life plans.

An interesting finding is the impact of return migration on the regions where returnees have settled. The rapport between migration and the resident population appears to be higher in Vlora, Gjirokastra, Dibra and Lezha. This finding can be used as an indicator for the provision of reintegration support services by public institutions in these regions so as to better address the challenges posed by return migration.

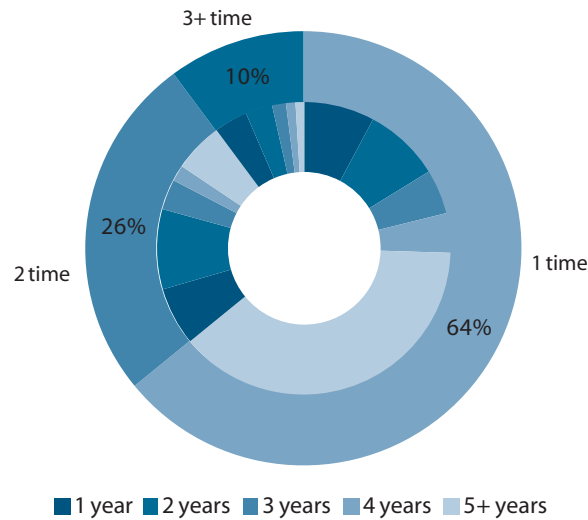
**Figure 5.** Return migration rate by prefecture, <sup>5</sup>(%)



## RETURNEES BY NUMBER OF YEARS LIVED ABROAD AND THEIR MOBILITY

Regarding migrants' mobility, the survey revealed that 64% of the total respondents left Albania only once to live abroad, while about 10% emigrated at least 3 times. As demonstrated in Figure 5, most of the migrants who have emigrated once have lived abroad for a period of 5 years or more (39%). Conversely, for those who have migrated three times or more, the duration of stay abroad varies between one and two years, 4% and 3% of the returnees respectively. The majority of Albanians returnees (45%) had a relatively long-term migration experience with duration of staying abroad 5 years or more which is clearly linked with those cases that had a low mobility. Those who had a high mobility rate (3+ times) were more likely to have a relatively short migration experience.

<sup>(5)</sup> Calculated based on 2013 resident population for each prefecture, INSTAT estimation

**Figure 6.** Returnees by number of years lived abroad and their mobility experience, (%)

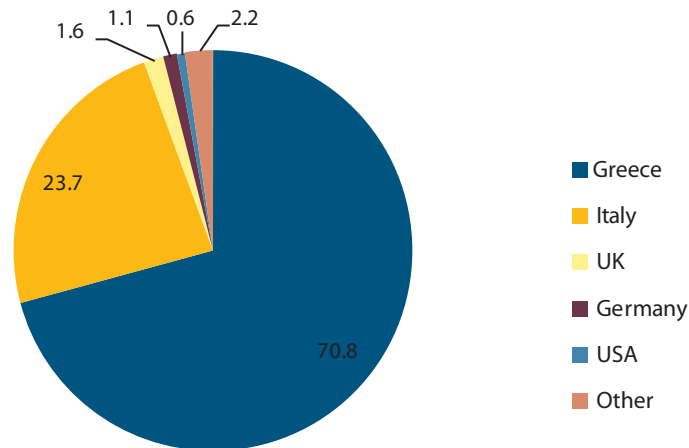
| Mobility | Number of year lived abroad |    |    |    |     |
|----------|-----------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
|          | 1                           | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5+  |
| 1        | 8%                          | 8% | 5% | 4% | 39% |
| 2        | 6%                          | 9% | 3% | 2% | 5%  |
| 3+       | 4%                          | 3% | 2% | 1% | 1%  |

## MAIN COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION FOR ALBANIAN EMIGRANTS AND AVERAGE DURATION OF STAY ABROAD

Evidence in Figure 7 shows the increase of return migration in years caused by the increase in the return from Greece. The proportion of Albanians returning from Italy has also been on the rise, however not as significant as the returns from Greece.



**Figure 7.** Countries of emigration and mean duration of stay, (%)



| Mean duration of stay (years) | Years |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Greece                        | 7,0   |
| Germany                       | 6,0   |
| Italy                         | 4,3   |
| USA                           | 4,2   |
| UK                            | 4,1   |
| Other                         | 4,1   |

The average rate of duration of stay abroad was over 6 years, while the longest duration of stay abroad was among returnees from Greece, (7 years).

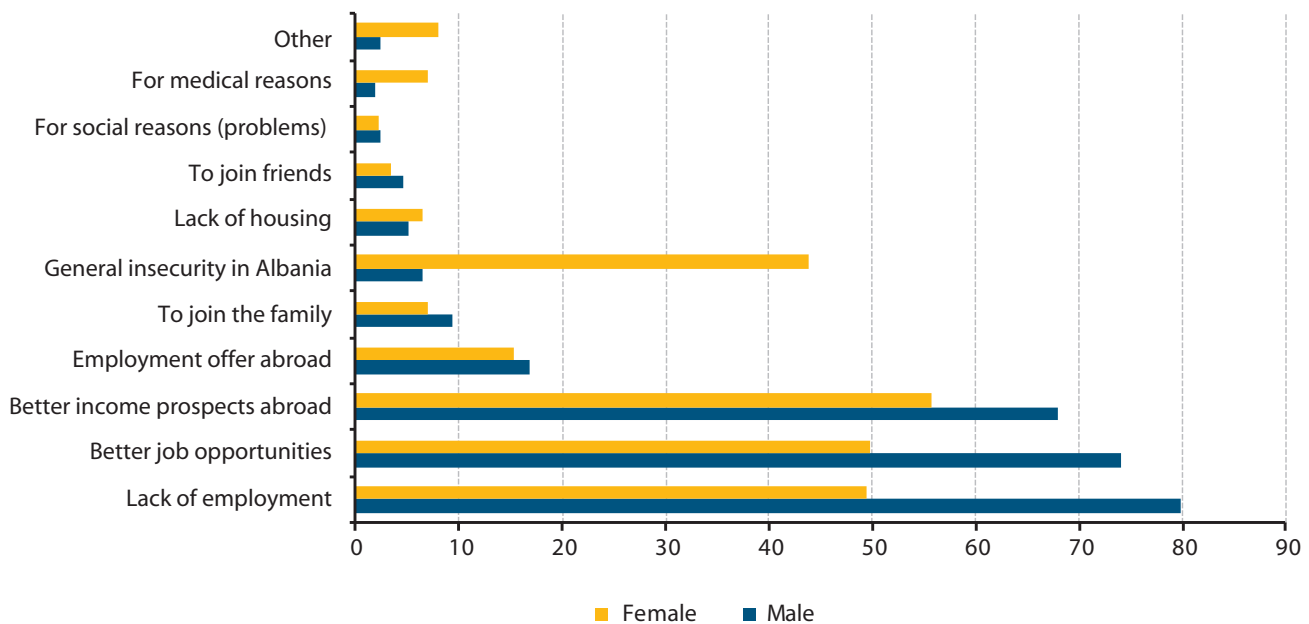
## MAIN REASONS FOR EMIGRATION

The three main pull factors for emigration were: Lack of employment (71.8%), followed by better job opportunities (67.7%) and better income prospects (64.7%). Even though not at a higher percentage, family reunification is a reason for migration for 16.3 % of the respondents and for 43.8 % of the females. The general insecurity in the country is also perceived by 8.8 % respondents as a push factor for emigration.

**Table 9.** Reasons for emigration (multi-tick)\*, (%)

| Reasons of emigration          | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Lack of employment             | 71,8       |
| Better job opportunities       | 67,7       |
| Better income prospects abroad | 64,7       |
| Employment offer abroad        | 16,5       |
| To join the family             | 16,3       |
| General insecurity in Albania  | 8,8        |
| Lack of housing                | 5,5        |
| To join friends                | 4,4        |
| Other                          | 3,8        |
| For medical reasons            | 3,2        |
| For social reasons (problems)  | 2,3        |

\*more than one answer could be given to the respective questions

**Figure 8.** Reasons of emigration by sex, (%)

## EVOLVEMENT OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SITUATION DURING THE MIGRATION CYCLE

The majority of migrants 58.8 % were unemployed before undertaking the migration project; 11.7 % them had a permanent employment, 7.4 % were self-employed and 11.8 % were students. A small proportion of 3.7 % were retired by the time they decided to migrate.

The occupational situation changed significantly upon arrival in the country of destination. The proportion of unemployment dropped from 58.8 % to 27%, which a significant decrease. 55 per cent of the respondents were wage earners in the destination country, which is almost five times higher compared to the situation before migrating. This finding reinforces the fact that the main motive of migration has been the improvement of the economic situation of the migrant through employment. On the contrary, the number of those who were self-employed dropped from 7.4 % to 3.5% respectively. The same trend was experienced for students as well, with a drop from 11.8 % before migration to 6% upon arrival in the destination country.

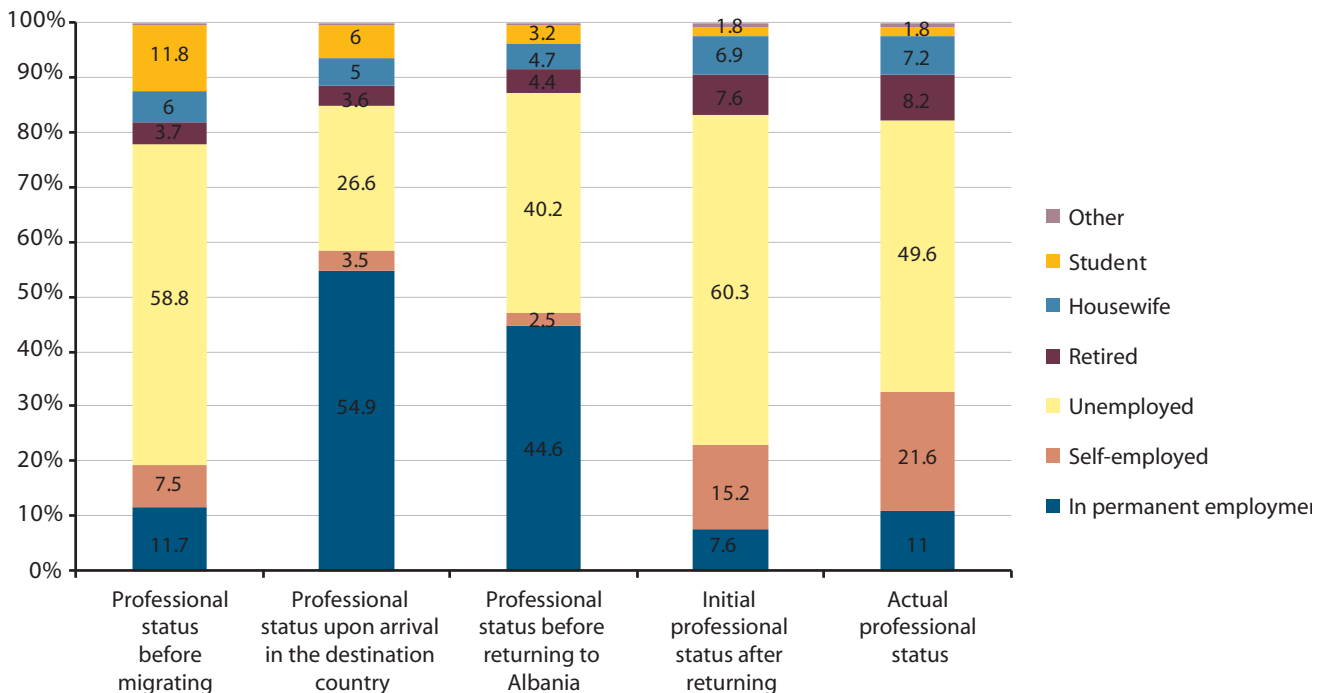
An interesting finding is the change in the employment situation before returning to Albania when compared with the one at the arrival in the destination country. From 55% on permanent employment upon arrival in the destination country, the percentage dropped to 44.6% before return to Albania. The percentage of unemployed immigrant also increased from 26.6% to 40.2% just prior to leaving the destination country. This finding may partially explain the reason of return to Albania, the increase of unemployment.

Upon return to Albania, the permanent employment situation dropped significantly from 44.6 % to 7.6 %, to face a slight increase of 2.8 % by the time of the survey. Likewise the percentage of unemployed increased from 40.2 % to 60.3 % and decreased by the time of the survey at the level of 49.6 %. Such decrease of unemployment is dedicated to the fact that the percentage of self-employed at the time of return increased at the level of 15.1 % and at the time of survey it reached 21.6 %.

In an effort to make a general comparison on the professional situation and skills of migrants prior to migration and after return, one may observe that the permanent employment situation has not changed much (from 11.7% prior to migration to 11% at the time of the survey). On the contrary, the self-employment situation has changed from 7.4 per cent before migration to 21.6 per cent at the time of the survey, which shows that returnees are eager to invest their knowledge, skills and financial capital gained abroad in income-generating activities. Unemployment has also decreased even though not at very significant levels (from 58.8% to 49.6%). Overall, an increase in retirement is observed: from 3.7% to 8.1% which also partially explains the reasons for return, as the returnees would most likely prefer to spend their elderly years in their country of origin. The percentage of students has also dropped from 11.8 % to 1.8% which reflects a normal decrease as those who complete the studies become part of the labour force.

**Table 10.** Evolvement of the occupational situation during the migration cycle, (%)

| Reasons for immigration | Professional status before migrating | Professional status upon arrival in the destination country | Professional status before returning to Albania | Initial professional status after returning | Actual professional status |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| In permanent employment | 11,7                                 | 54,9  | 44,6  | 7,6   | 11                         |
| Self-employed           | 7,5                                  | 3,5   | 2,5   | 15,2  | 21,6                       |
| Unemployed              | 58,8                                 | 26,6  | 40,2  | 60,3  | 49,6                       |
| Retired                 | 3,7                                  | 3,6   | 4,4   | 7,6   | 8,2                        |
| Housewife               | 6                                    | 5   | 4,7   | 6,9   | 7,2                        |
| Student                 | 11,8                                 | 6   | 3,2   | 1,8   | 1,8                        |
| Other                   | 0,5                                  | 0,4   | 0,4   | 0,6   | 0,6                        |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>100</b>                           | <b>100</b>  | <b>100</b>                                      | <b>100</b>                                  | <b>100</b>                 |

**Figure 9.** Evolution of employment status, (%)

The impact of emigration and return migration on the occupational/employment status has been different among men and women.

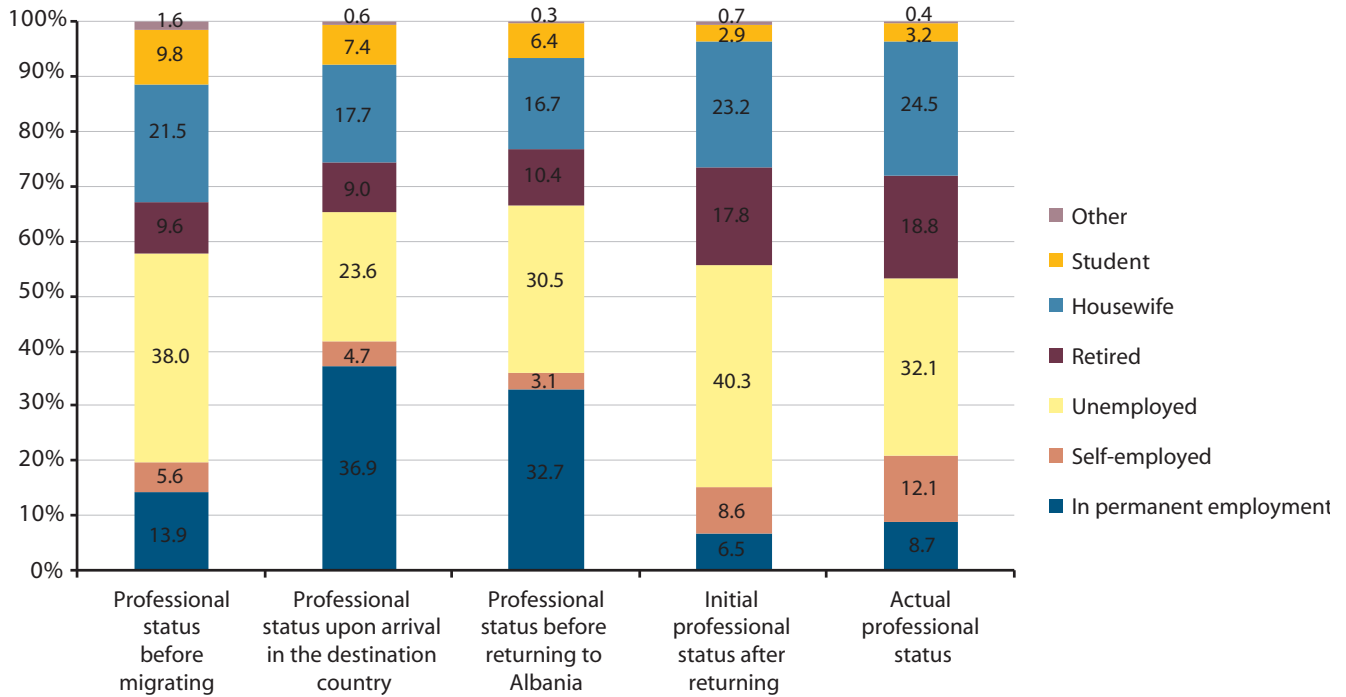
The majority of migrants, both men and women were unemployed before undertaking the migration project, but the proportion of unemployment among men was more pronounced compared to women, 66.3 % and 38% respectively; this considerable gap among men and women is also related to the fact that a higher proportion of women declared that were housewife (21.5%) before migrating.

The occupational situation changed upon arrival to the country of destination for both men and women. The proportion of unemployment dropped for both, but with more than half among men compared to the situation before migrating. 61 per cent of the men and 37 per cent of women were wage earners in the destination country, which has increased considerably compared with the situation before migrating.

Before returning to Albania the proportion of migrants in permanent employment decreased for both, but it was more pronounced among men. After returning to Albania, the permanent employment situation dropped significantly for both in 6.5 per cent for women and 8% for men, while a slight improvement is noticed at the time of the survey.



**Figure 10.** Evolution of employment status, female, (%)



**Figure 11.** Evolution of employment status, male, (%)

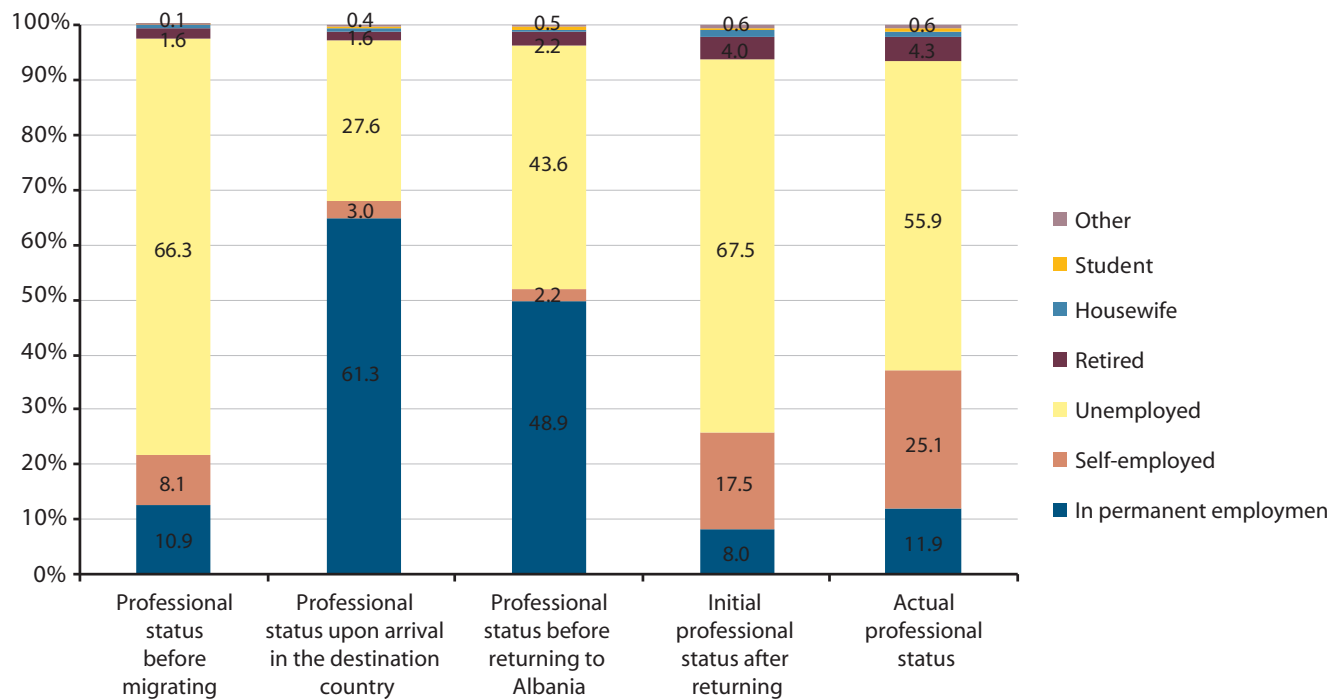




Table 11 combines the status of employment of returnees at two particular junctures: in the last country of emigration and in Albania after return, disaggregated by period of work found and searching for a job. Among the employed returnees, the vast majority found a job in less than three months in both cases, in the last country of emigration and in origin country, 64.2% and 57.9% respectively. While concerning the unemployed returnees, they were more likely to search for a job abroad (64.9%) than in origin country (47.9%).

**Table 11.** Returnees by occupational status and job search period, (%)

|            |  | In the last country of emigration | In origin country |
|------------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Employed   | Before my going/return                             | 9.4                               | 12.6              |
|            | Less than three months after emigrating/ my return | 64.2                              | 57.9              |
|            | More than three months after emigrating/my return  | 26.4                              | 29.5              |
|            | <b>Total</b>                                       | 100                               | 100               |
| Unemployed | Yes  | 64.9                              | 47.9              |
|            | No   | 35.1                              | 52.1              |
|            | <b>Total</b>                                       | 100                               | 100               |

## EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR DURING MIGRATION AND AFTER RETURN

When these findings are interpreted alongside the ones on the distribution of employment per sector, as presented below, then it becomes evident that the deterioration of employment conditions in main destination countries (Greece and Italy) has had an impact on the increase of returns to Albania.

Some interesting findings can be generated from the analysis of employment by sector in the destination country and in Albania after return. An increase from 14.6 per cent to 30.7 per cent of employment in the agriculture sector is observed after migration, which can be an indicator that returnees are investing their savings on developing agriculture activities in their communities of origin, considering that the majority of migrants and returnees come from rural areas. Their employment primarily in the construction sector abroad (44.3%) can be explained also by the availability of jobs in this sector as well as the fact that it required low-skilled workers. Upon return to Albania, employment in the construction sector drops at the level of 22.6 per cent.

Tourism is the only sector employment both abroad and in Albania has remained steady at 12% and 11.3% respectively. Retail trade concerns 10.6% of the returnees that were employed at the time of the survey, moreover this sector of industry showed a big increase compared with the situation in the last country of emigration, in which its value marked 2.9%.

**Table 12.** Employment by sectors of the industry, (%)

| Sectors of industry  | LCE   | Origin country After return |
|--|-------|-----------------------------|
| Agriculture, hunting and related service activities  | 14.6  | 30.7                        |
| Construction   | 44.3  | 22.6                        |
| Sale, maintenance and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; retail sale of automotive fuel | 1.8   | 2.6                         |
| Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles; repair of personal and household goods | 2.9   | 10.6                        |
| Hotels and restaurants   | 12.0  | 11.3                        |
| Land transport; transport via pipelines  | 3.0   | 4.8                         |
| Other business activities  | 2.2   | 6.1                         |
| Other sectors of industry  | 19.0  | 6.6                         |
| Not valid  | 0.2   | 4.6                         |
| <b>Total</b>   | 100.0 | 100.0                       |

## EDUCATION LEVEL

Almost half of returnees (49.1%) had completed secondary education before leaving; (37.0%) had completed high school; 4.9% of the returnees had completed primary education and only 1.6% of respondents had failed to complete any level of education whatsoever. Only 3% of the returnees had completed university studies and/or postgraduate studies before migrating.

There has been an increasing trend in the percentage of those who obtained a university/master's or PhD degree in the last country of emigration (5.4%). The analysis of this finding should however take into consideration the fact that the increase might be dedicated to the completion of the university students by those respondents who responded that at the time of migration they were students. An increase in the percentage of those who studied university degree/master in the host country (5.1%) compared with the situation before migrating (2.9%) was observed. The survey indicated that migrants who studied secondary or high school level in the destination country acquired further education, university or post graduate.

**Table 13.** Level of education of migrants before leaving abroad and during migration, (%)

|   | Before emigrating | In the last country of emigration |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>No education</b>                         | 1.6               | 0.9                               |
| <b>Primary school</b>                       | 4.9               | 3.8                               |
| <b>Secondary school</b>                     | 49.1              | 47.2                              |
| <b>High school</b>                          | 37.0              | 36.2                              |
| <b>Vocational school</b>                    | 4.3               | 6.2                               |
| <b>University studies/master</b>            | 2.9               | 5.1                               |
| <b>Post University studies (PhD, other)</b> | 0.1               | 0.3                               |
| <b>Other</b>                                | 0.1               | 0.3                               |
| <b>Total</b>                                | 100               | 100                               |

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The survey data revealed that returnees had very little access to vocational training in the main country of emigration (7.1%). It is worth noting that, upon return, the percentage of migrants who turned to vocational training decreased up to insignificant levels (0.7%).

**Table 14.** Professional training of returnees, (%)

| Professional training |        |              |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------|
|                       | In LCE | After return |
| <b>Yes</b>            | 7.1    | 0.7          |
| <b>No</b>             | 92.9   | 99.3         |
| <b>Total</b>          | 100.0  | 100.0        |

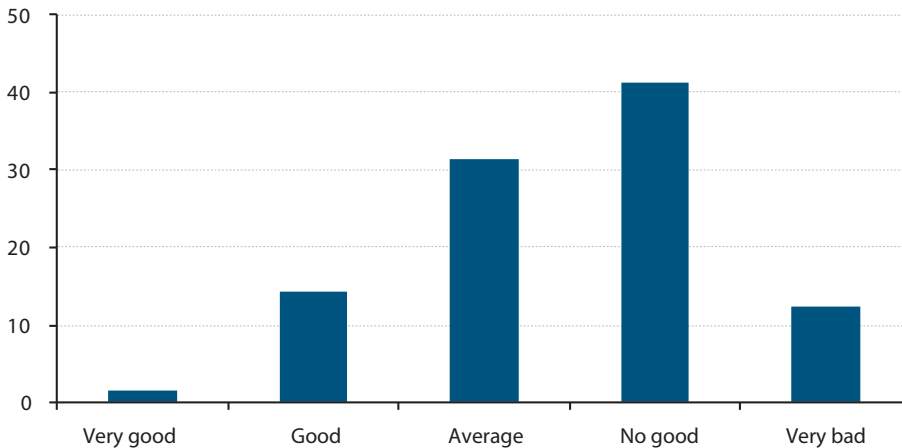


## THE RESOURCES OF RETURNEES: SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

### Financial situation before leaving for abroad, in the last country of emigration and upon return

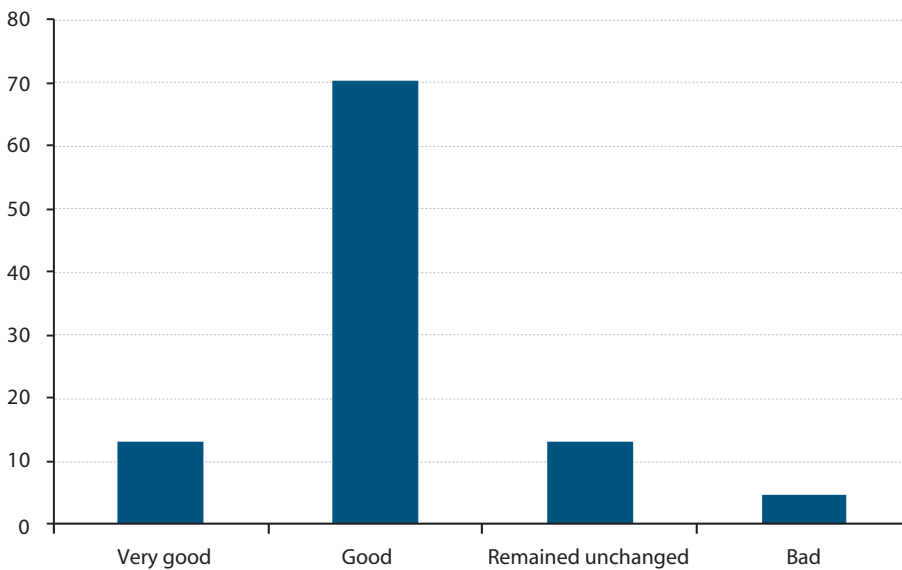
Finances are a key indicator of motivation behind the decision to migrate. Before moving abroad, 15.6% of the sample had a good or a very good financial situation while the vast majority of returnees (72%) declared that their financial situation was either not good or very bad.

**Figure 12.** Financial situation of returnees to Albania before leaving abroad, (%)



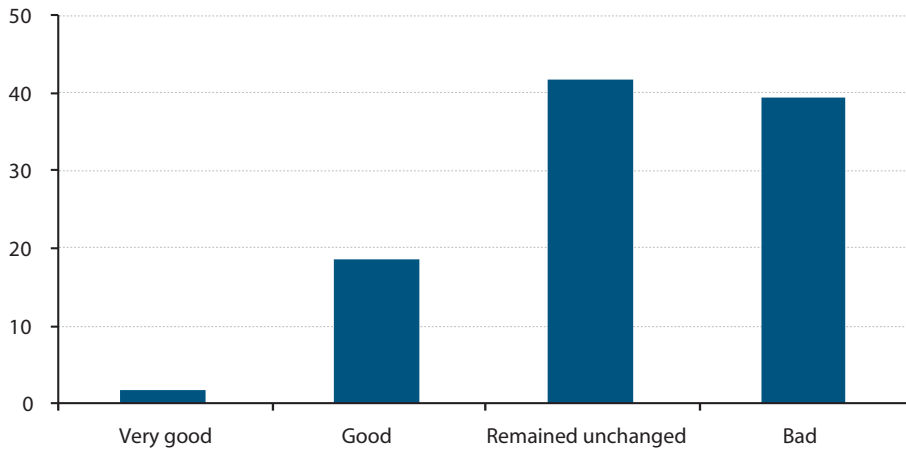
The financial situation improved significantly in the destination country with 83% of the respondents stating that they had either a good, or very good financial situation when living in the last country of emigration. However it must be noted that for nearly 17% of returnees the financial situation in the last country of destination remained unchanged, or worsened.

**Figure 13.** Financial situation in the last country of emigration, (%)



The financial situation of returnees changed significantly when compared to their situation when they lived abroad. The majority of returnees see their financial situation unchanged (41.3%). For 38.8% the financial situation has deteriorated upon return, while only 20% feel their financial situation has improved.

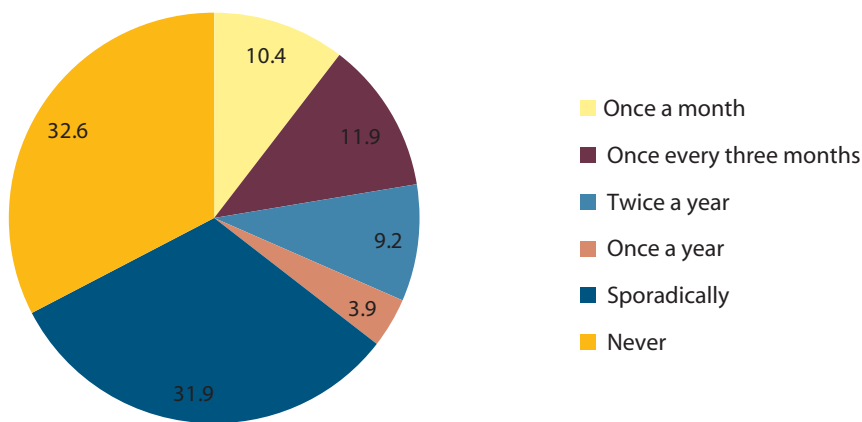
**Figure 14.** Financial situation of returnees after return compared with that abroad, (%)



### Frequency of remittances

During the last year of their stay abroad, nearly a third of returnees stated that they did not send remittances to family members, while the number of those who sent remittances sporadically to their family members was almost at the same extent. Returnees who sent remittances once a month and once every three months were 10.4% and 11.9% respectively.

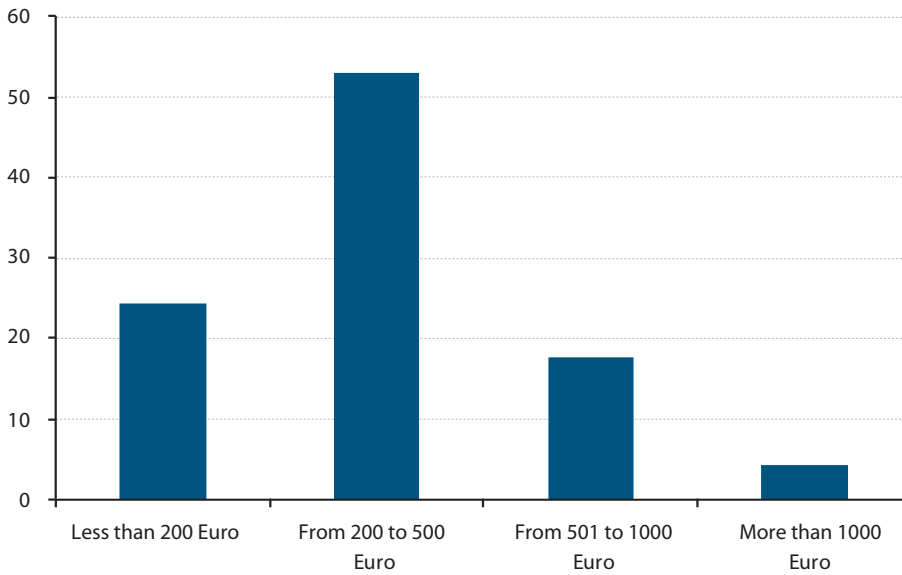
**Figure 15.** Frequency of remittances sent to family members during the year before return, (%)



Of the returnees who used to send remittances to their family members, 4.5% sent more than 1,000 euros and 24.5% less than 200 euros per annum. The average amount of remittances sent was 200-500 Euros, and 53.2% of returnees did so.



**Figure 16.** Amounts of remittances sent home a year before return, (%)



As the survey data show, Albanian migration is mainly undertaken for economic reasons. On the whole, migrants use their incomes to meet their own daily needs and the needs of their families, who either live with them or have remained in Albania. A part of this income is saved and/or invested in order to prepare for re-integration in the country of origin.

**Table 15.** Use of remittances (multi-tick)

| Use of remittances                  |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| To fulfil the needs of the family   | 97.9 |
| For schooling of children           | 22.7 |
| To build / buy a home               | 29.3 |
| To invest in an economic project    | 5.4  |
| To purchase land / farm property    | 4.3  |
| To modernize agricultural equipment | 2.1  |
| Other                               | 1.8  |

As shown in Table 14, over 97% of the respondents sent money for fulfilling the family needs, 22.7% to pay for children's schooling, 29.3% to build or buy a house while about 10 % of returnees sent remittances for investments: economic project or purchasing land/farm property. Only about 2% returnees sent money to modernize agriculture equipment. As it can be expected a very low proportion of returnees (1.8%) did not sent remittances during their migration experience.

## Investments

After their return to Albania the vast majority of returnees did not undertake any investment (92%). Only 8% invested in at least one project.

**Figure 17.** Investments projects carried out by returnees to Albania, (%)

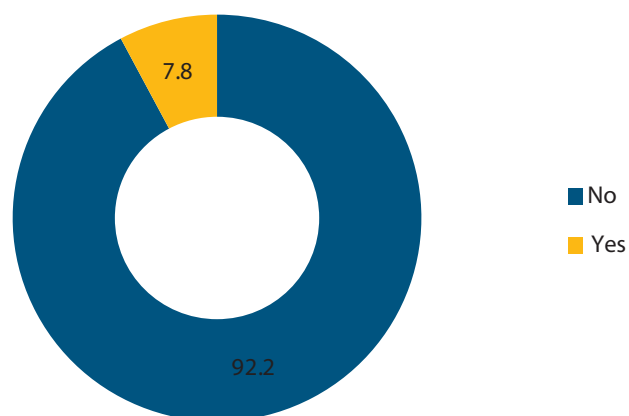


Table 16 explains the reasons why returnees did not invest in their home country. Three reasons are more evident:

1. Insufficient capital, which limited the availability of financial resources required to start a business;
2. No prior planning of carrying out any investment in Albania;
3. Lack of experience and training in investment;

The data demonstrates that administrative and institutional constraints, as well as an insufficient market are reasons that did not facilitate investments.

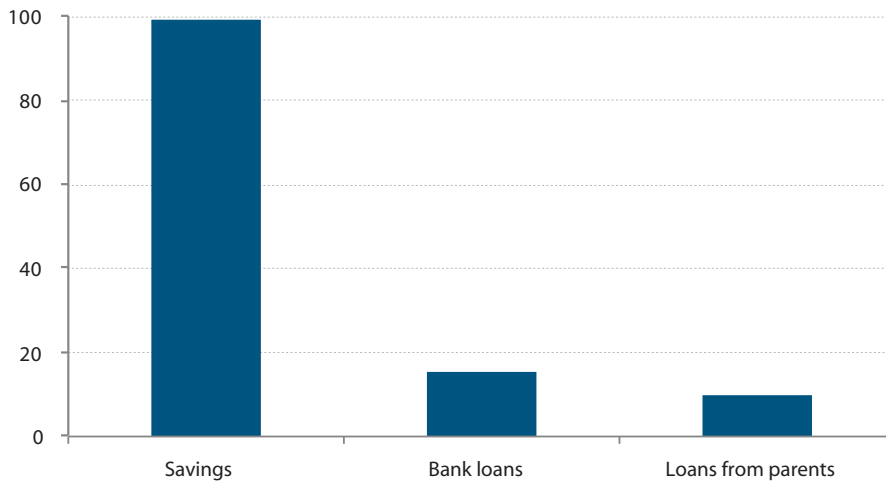
**Table 16.** Reasons for not carrying out any investments (multi-tick)

| Reasons for not carrying out any investment  |      |
|--|------|
| Insufficient capital                         | 81.2 |
| I did not think of making any plan           | 36.6 |
| Lack of experience and training              | 33.4 |
| Insufficient market                          | 29.7 |
| Administrative and institutional constraints | 27.6 |
| I did not want to                            | 16.9 |
| Health problems or family                    | 14.8 |
| Other  | 1.3  |

99 per cent of returnees used their own personal savings as main source of financial support for investment projects. In addition, returnees also made use of loans from parents (9%) and a combination of own personal savings and loans (15%).



**Figure 18.** Main sources of financial support for investment projects, (multi-tick)



Among those who invested back home, 61.5% had encountered problems during the course of their investment. Among the difficulties encountered, 52% of returnees who invested home declared unfair competition as the main difficulty, followed by insufficient capital (46%), lack of experience (40.0%), administrative constrains and managerial challenges (39%).

**Table 17.** Difficulties encountered by returnees who invested back home (multi-tick)

| Difficulties encountered by returnees who invested back home |      |
|--|------|
| Competition  | 52.0 |
| Insufficient capital   | 46.1 |
| Lack of experience   | 40.0 |
| Administrative constrain                                     | 39.3 |
| Managerial challenge   | 39.1 |

## MIGRATION EXPERIENCE BEFORE RETURN

### Relationships in the last country of destination

As far as contacts with family members and relations in the last country of destination are concerned, the most frequent answer given is 'sporadic'. In other words, very frequent telephone calls, letters and e-mail correspondence (at least once a week and sometimes once a month) are the most common answers. Finally, returnees with no contact at all with their last country of destination are more than 1/10 of the sample.

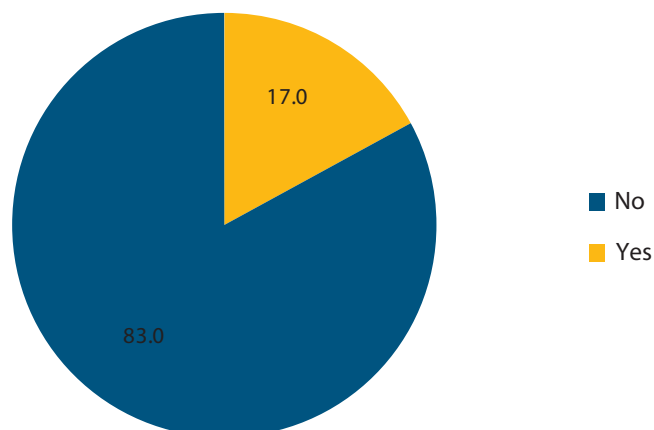
**Table 18.** Frequency of contacts with family members during the last year of stay abroad, (%)

| Contacts (telephone, letters, e-mail) with family members in Albania |       |
|--|-------|
| At least once a week   | 48.1  |
| A few times a month  | 26.2  |
| Once a month   | 5.2   |
| Several times a year   | 4.5   |
| Sporadically   | 14.1  |
| Never  | 1.9   |
| Total  | 100.0 |



During their stay abroad, the vast majority of Albanian migrants did not have contacts with Albanian diplomatic or consular authorities. 17 per cent did have contacts, the main reason being of an administrative nature.

**Figure 19.** Contact with the Albanian diplomatic or consular authorities while being abroad and reasons, (%)



| Reasons for contacting the diplomatic or consular authorities* |      |
|--|------|
| Administrative reasons   | 98.8 |
| For more information of Albania                                | 12.2 |
| For national holidays  | 6.0  |
| Other  | 1.5  |

\* more than one answer could be given to the respective question

### Contacts with family members residing in the origin country and visits to Albania

During their last year abroad, the majority of Albanian migrants travelled back home mainly sporadically and for family reasons. Business travel was not frequent, while travelling for holiday purposes was of an annual nature, and sporadically. Administrative reasons for travelling did not seem to have much importance for returnees.

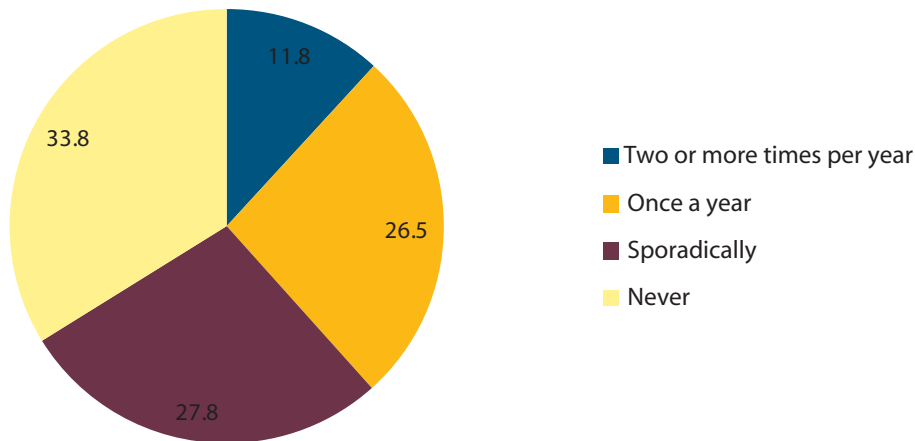
**Table 19.** Frequency of travelling back home during the last year of staying abroad, by reasons, (%)

|                        | Two or more times per year | Once a year | Sporadically |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Family                 | 14.9                       | 27.1        | 37.4         |
| Business               | 2.5                        | 1.1         | 2.6          |
| Holidays (religious)   | 9.2                        | 12.7        | 26.7         |
| Vacation               | 9.9                        | 17.4        | 23.9         |
| Administrative reasons | 3.7                        | 2.6         | 5.8          |



Figure 20 shows more in detail the frequency of travelling back in origin country during last year of their stay in destination country. It also shows how many returnees never travel backed home during last year of their stay in the country of destination, which appears to be quite high (33.8 % out of the total). Voyages with a frequency two or more times per year are relatively low compared with other options (11.8 % out of the total).

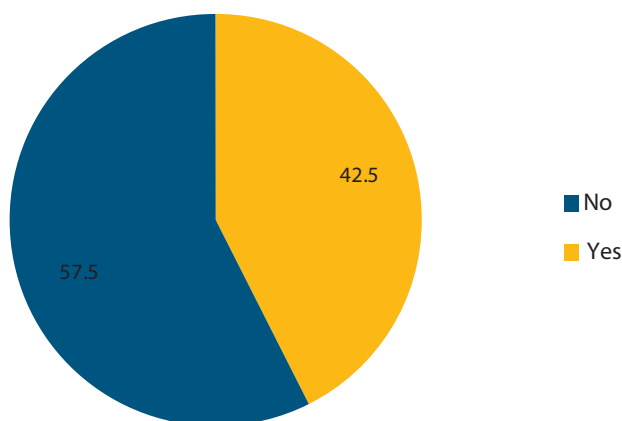
**Figure 20.** Frequency of travelling back home during the last year of staying abroad, (%)



### Main reasons of return

42.5% of Albanian migrants returned back to Albania along with other family members. 77% of them were accompanied by their spouse, while 19 per cent and 35 per cent were accompanied by their adult and minor children respectively.

**Figure 21.** Albanian migrants returning together with other family members, (%)



| Returnees returning together with*: |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Husband / wife                      | 77.8 |
| Adult children                      | 18.7 |
| Minor children                      | 35.4 |
| Brothers / Sisters                  | 13.0 |
| Parents                             | 14.2 |
| Other family members                | 3.9  |

\* more than one answer could be given to the respective question

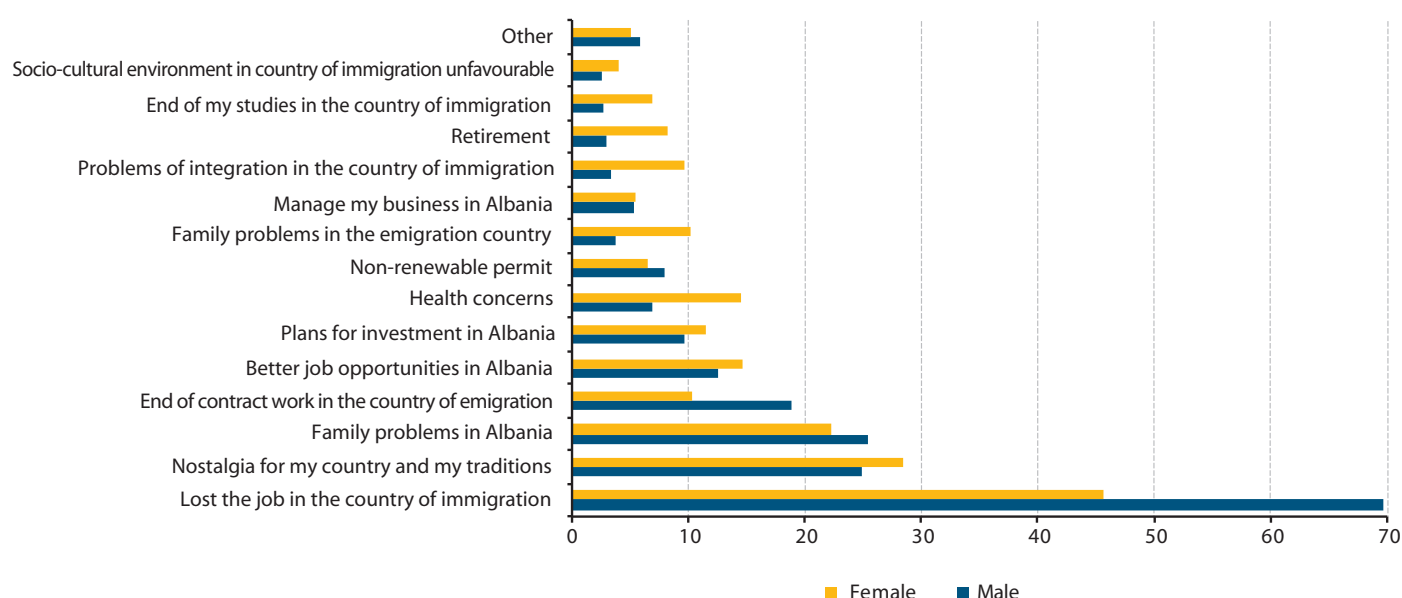
Table 20 shows the main reasons for return among those returnees who decided to return voluntarily. Since there may have been more than one reason, respondents were given a multiple-answer question. The most frequent answer has to do with the world economic and financial crisis which caused the loss of employment in the country of emigration for 63.2 % of returnees. Overall, 'problem' reasons prevail to 'opportunity' reasons. Only 10.2 % of the returnees came back with plans for investment in Albania, and 13.2 % hoped to find better job prospects. 5.4 % had already a business set-up and returned to managing it. An interesting fact is that emotional non-economic reasons, such as 'Nostalgia/longing for my country and my traditions', had an important ratio of 25.9 % of the answers.

**Table 20.** Reasons of return for those who decided to do so voluntarily (multi-tick)

| Reasons of return   |      |
|---|------|
| Lost the job in the country of immigration                        | 63.2 |
| Nostalgia for my country and my traditions                        | 25.9 |
| Family problems in Albania  | 24.6 |
| End of contract work in the country of emigration                 | 16.5 |
| Better job opportunities in Albania                               | 13.2 |
| Plans for investment in Albania                                   | 10.2 |
| Health concerns   | 9.0  |
| Non-renewable permit  | 7.6  |
| Family problems in the emigration country                         | 5.5  |
| Manage my business in Albania                                     | 5.4  |
| Problems of integration in the country of immigration             | 5.1  |
| Retirement  | 4.5  |
| End of my studies in the country of immigration                   | 3.9  |
| Socio-cultural environment in country of immigration unfavourable | 3.0  |
| Other   | 5.7  |

The graph below indicates the gender differences among reasons for return, a difference which is not significant for most of the reasons of return, other than in the case of employment which is predominantly a reason for return for males.

**Figure 22.** Reasons of return by sex, (%)





## RETURN TO ALBANIA AND PATTERNS OF RE-INTEGRATION

### Returnees perception of the experience abroad

Generally speaking, returnees perceived their experience abroad as an advantage. Men, however, were more likely to perceive it as such (78.5 %), rather than women (only 69.7 %).

**Table 21.** Returnees perception of the experience abroad by gender, (%)

|                       | Male  | Female | Total |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| <b>An advantage</b>   | 78.5  | 69.7   | 76.2  |
| <b>A disadvantage</b> | 0.5   | 1.5    | 0.8   |
| <b>Not important</b>  | 11.3  | 21.6   | 14.0  |
| <b>Do not know</b>    | 9.7   | 7.2    | 9.0   |
| <b>Total</b>          | 100.0 | 100.0  | 100.0 |

The experience abroad was perceived differently also from the perspective of age. The younger the returnees, the more likely they were to consider it an advantage. This trend did not seem to hold for those who considered disadvantageous migratory experiences: the biggest categories of unsatisfied returnees were the 18-29 and 40-49. On the other hand, the returnees without a clear opinion on the issue were, nonetheless, the younger category of 18-29.

**Table 22.** Returnees perception of the experience abroad by age group, (%)

|              | An advantage | A disadvantage | Not important | Do not know | Total |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------|
| <b>18-29</b> | 34.0         | 34.1           | 33.7          | 42.8        | 34.8  |
| <b>30-39</b> | 27.7         | 13.0           | 21.4          | 24.0        | 26.4  |
| <b>40-49</b> | 18.1         | 36.9           | 12.1          | 6.9         | 16.4  |
| <b>50-64</b> | 15.5         | 3.7            | 18.3          | 20.3        | 16.2  |
| <b>65+</b>   | 4.7          | 12.2           | 14.5          | 6.0         | 6.3   |
| <b>Total</b> | 100.0        | 100.0          | 100.0         | 100.0       | 100.0 |

## POST-RETURN CONDITIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

### Expected duration of stay in the country of origin

Most returnees (39.6 %) intend to stay in Albania permanently. Almost a third (27%), however, wishes to stay in the country as a temporary measure. As for those that wish to remain permanently in the country, the percentage of those who felt compelled/forced to return by way of circumstances (49 %) is higher than those returnees who returned voluntarily (39 %). This fact can be explained by the failure of the migratory experience which has more of an impact on forced return by circumstances than decided returnees. However, it is worth mentioning that returnees, who do not know whether they will stay in the country permanently or not, make up almost 1/3 of the total of both cases – those that decided for themselves and those who were forced to return by circumstance.

**Table 23.** Returnees by intention of stay in Albania, (%)

|              | Voluntary return | Forced return | Total        |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Permanently  | 39.1             | 48.5          | 39.6         |
| Temporarily  | 28.0             | 19.8          | 27.6         |
| I don't know | 32.9             | 31.7          | 32.8         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100.0</b>     | <b>100.0</b>  | <b>100.0</b> |

### Difficulties faced by returnees

The most relevant difficulty returnees faced upon return was insufficient financial resources/income. Once again, economic reasons prevail to social, administrative or political ones. However, 60.3 % of respondents point the finger on the lack of adequate services and an inadequate health system. These perceptions are related to the growing demand for the improvement of the welfare state in Albania, as an integral part of the quality of life which takes into consideration not only General Domestic Production but also socio-cultural indicators. Finally, only 32.1 % of the respondents consider the country to be unstable.

**Table 24.** Problems encountered after return in Albania (multi-tick)

| Problems encountered                      |      |
|---|------|
| Insufficient incomes                      | 72.1 |
| Lack of adequate services                 | 60.3 |
| Inadequate health system                  | 56.2 |
| Paperwork (bureaucracy)                   | 47.9 |
| Instability in the country                | 32.1 |
| Socio-economic reintegration difficulties | 15.0 |

### Re-integration services

Re-integration services constitute a fundamental element of the post-return experience of returnees. Most of them think that the services should be improved. However, there is a very consistent ratio of respondents who do not have knowledge (25.3 %) of the Migrant Counters or do not know that facilitator measures exist (18.5 %).

**Table 25.** Returnees' perception on measures taken to facilitate the return to Albania, (%)

| Measures to be taken    |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| They should be improved | 41.2         |
| I do not have knowledge | 25.3         |
| They do not exist       | 18.5         |
| They are adequate       | 15.0         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>100.0</b> |



As it can be deduced from Table 26 and 27 returnees received more services from private service providers than government service providers. The most common service received was medical support, followed by job placement support. The less frequent service received was the vocational training support. The evidenced gap between the latter and job placement is a clear indicator on the scarce relationship of professional competences and job offer in the labour market in Albania.

**Table 26.** Returnees that received support (multi-tick)

| Support received by returnees after return |      |
|--|------|
| Medical support                            | 58.5 |
| Job placement support                      | 37.9 |
| Housing support                            | 32.0 |
| Educational support                        | 20.3 |
| Vocational training support                | 12.0 |
| Other                                      | 30.2 |

**Table 27.** Type of provider of received support (multi-tick)

| Type of provider                      |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Public (government service providers) | 27.8 |
| Private service providers             | 40.6 |
| Other                                 | 44.1 |

Table 28 shows that only 26.5 % of the interviewees have contacted the Migration Counters in order to receive support (1314 persons). This clearly indicates the challenges Migration Counters still face. From this percentage, the majority of returnees have received direct support from Migration Counters for employment (58% of cases)<sup>6</sup> and for intermediation/referral to other public or private services (in 42% of the cases).

**Table 28.** The returnees' contacts with Migration Counters, (%)

| Contacts with 'Migration Counters' |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Yes                                | 26.5 |
| No                                 | 73.5 |
| Total                              | 100  |

The most important service provided from the Migration Counters was the job placement support (58 %).

**Table 29.** Type of support received from Migration Counters, (%)

| Type of support       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Job placement support | 58.0  |
| Other support         | 42.0  |
| Total                 | 100.0 |

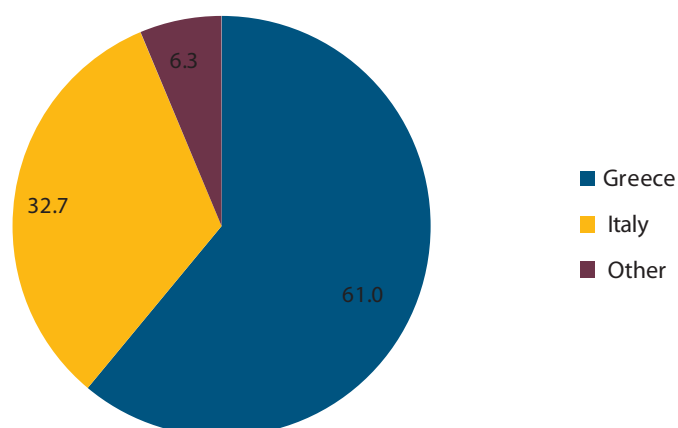
Table 30 shows that the overall information requested in the Migration Counters increased from 2009 to 2010, decreased in 2011 and sensibly increased on 2012 (the highest ratio). In 2013 the number of users decreased again but is still higher than pre-2012 numbers, which states for a growing efficiency of the services offered at the Migration Counters. Nevertheless, it is worth comparing these data with the ones collected by Migration Counters.

<sup>6</sup> In absolute terms 2826 persons received support from government providers.

**Table 30.** The returnees' information on Migration Counters by year of return, (%)

| Information on MC by year |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 2009                      | 14.5       |
| 2010                      | 17.1       |
| 2011                      | 10.2       |
| 2012                      | 33.3       |
| 2013                      | 24.9       |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>100</b> |

Returnees from Greece and Italy were the most frequent users of the Migration Counters. In absolute terms, returnees from Greece used Migration Counters more than returnees from Italy. However, if this was to be compared to the overall rates of returnees in general (Greece 61 %; Italy 32.7 %), then a higher incidence of returnees from Italy is noted in receiving proper information. This is probably due to the fact the means to impart information on the existence and purpose of Migration Counters was more efficient for this category of returnees. Nevertheless, this finding requires further analysis.

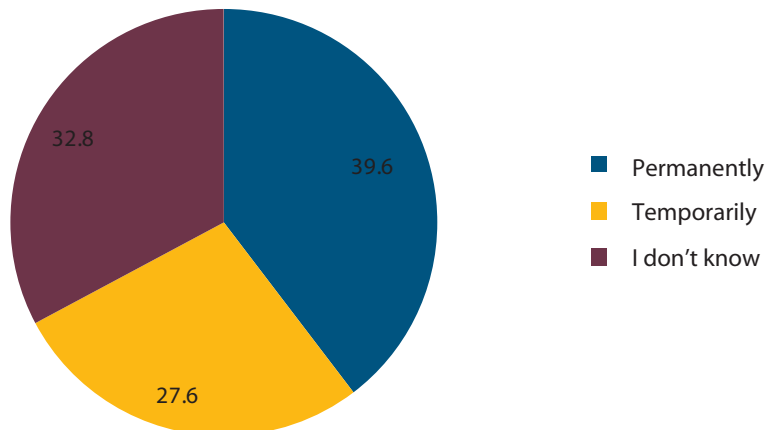
**Figure 23.** Information on MC by country of emigration, (%)

## Re-emigration

32.6% of returnees intend to re-emigrate. This is basically due to the problems evidenced above. The second most frequent answer is 'perhaps'. It seems that two factors are likely to influence the decision of the latter: the economic situation in the destination and origin countries. In absolute numbers, however, less than 2/3 of returnees have preferred to answer this question, confirming the general uncertainty of taking such a decision.



**Figure 24.** Returnees by intention of stay in Albania, (%)



The most common motivation for re-emigration is, in fact, related to the degree of integration of returnees to the last country of emigration. In previous paragraphs (5.5), only 5 % of respondents evidenced problems of integration in the host society. Table 31 clearly shows that 67.3 % of returnees want to re-emigrate in the immigration country they know better. Another important consideration is that push reasons for re-emigration (no job/no future in my country) are stronger than pull reasons (new employment opportunities). These data confirm once more that tailor-made re-integration services, along with an overall improved situation in the country could fairly impact the decision of returnees to re-emigrate.

**Table 31.** Motivations for re-emigration (multi-tick)

| Reason for re-emigration  |      |
|---|------|
| I already know the immigration country and want to live / stay longer | 67.3 |
| I do not find a job here  | 56.5 |
| I have no future in my country  | 48.3 |
| To renew my documents   | 33.5 |
| New employment opportunities abroad                                   | 32.3 |
| I do not fit in my country  | 13.5 |
| Other   | 14.3 |





# 5

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the main findings of the survey and the conclusions emerging from both the literature review and the field survey.

### *Dynamics of return*

- The survey re-confirms findings of other research work carried in past on the motives behind Albanian emigration. It found out that the three main push factors for emigration in the previous decade have been the following: lack of employment, better prospects of job opportunities abroad and better income prospects. In addition, family reunification and the perceived lack of security in the country also represent important push factors for the emigration of Albanians.
- Returns to Albania have increased as of 2009 with the majority of returns taking place from Greece and Italy. A total of 133,544 Albanian migrants have returned to Albania in the 2009-2013 period, of whom 98,414 were males and 35,130 females. This finding is indicative of the necessity to continue to study return migration in Albania in the coming years so as to be able to analyze the trends of return migration and their eventual impact on the returnees themselves, their families and communities where they settle, as well as the impact of return migration on institutional reintegration capacities.
- Most returns to Albania have been of a voluntary nature and have taken place from Greece and Italy due to the migrants losing their jobs in these countries, as a consequence of the financial crisis. Yet, the survey could not indicate whether the crises has had any impact on the labour mobility of Albanian migrants, other than producing some limited evidence which demonstrates that the lack of reintegration opportunities in Albania may serve as a push factor for returnees to re-migrate.. Hence, the dynamics of return and reintegration in Albania versus mobility of labour migrants from Albania toward neighbouring countries merits further research.
- The majority of returnees return to their place of residence before migration. However, return migration in Albania is also associated with the internal migration of population.. Returnees tend to settle in prefectures of a high socio-economic development where they can fulfil their life plans, with Tirana being the most preferred region. The returnees from Greece, apart from Tirana, settle primarily in Vlore, Elbasan, Fier and Korçë, while those from Italy settle primarily in Shkoder, Lezhë, Durrës and Dibër. The returnees from Greece are more prone to internal mobility after return. These findings indicate the need to examine more carefully the demographics of return migration.

### *Impact of return*

- The survey did not reveal any significant impact of emigration or return migration in the level of education of migrants, other than a decrease in the participation in vocational training after return. This finding can be partially explained by looking into the reasons of migration in the first place, which remain primarily, employment in the destination country and better financial opportunities, rather than pursuing further education.
- Even though the survey targeted the “adult” population of returnees (18 year olds and above), its findings revealed that the average age at the time of emigration was 30.7 years old and at the time of the survey 38.3 years old, thus returnees belong to the most active labour market force segment. It is, therefore, important to further explore the impact of return on the labour market in Albania, as well as the impact of one’s employability on the decision on whether to remain in Albania or to migrate once again. The survey found that at the time of the survey the permanent employment situation has not changed much from that prior to migration.. On the contrary, self-employment has changed, an indication that returnees are eager to invest their knowledge, skills and financial capital gained abroad in income-generating activities upon return. This is without a doubt an indication for reintegration service providers to improve business start-up related.
- After migration, the survey found that there is an increase in employment in the agricultural sector, an indicator that returnees are investing in income-generating activities in agriculture. This finding serves again as a “signal” for improving services related to employability and investment in the agricultural sector in order to maximize the development potential of return migration.
- In terms of investment upon return, only 8% of the returnees managed to carry out one investment project in Albania, especially in the retail trade, hotels, restaurant industry and agriculture. In most investment projects,



returnees relied primarily on their own savings, sometimes on bank loans and on the support of parents and/or relatives. The main reason why returnees fail to go through with an investment project is lack of sufficient capital. Therefore, the majority of returnees of this segment of the population ask for the facilitation of business administrative procedures and rebates/tax benefits so as to encourage investments on their part.

#### *Tendency of re-migration versus sustainability of return*

- In terms of tendency to remain in the country of origin or re-migrate, one has to consider that **finances** are a key indicator of motivation behind the decision making process of the migrant. The survey found that before migrating abroad, the financial situation of the migrants was either not good or very bad, but it improved dramatically during their stay abroad. However, upon return to Albania the majority of returnees see their financial situation unchanged. A considerable percentage (32.6%) of returnees intends to re-emigrate because of the difficulties in securing sufficient income for their families. Consequently, in order to better analyse returnee behaviour after return and their decision making with respect to permanent return or re-migration, it is important to look into the change, if any, of the financial situation of returnees in time, perhaps over the course of a year and more.
- The **existence of services** is also an important factor influencing the decision to remain in Albania or consider re-migrating. The survey found that very few returnees received assistance upon return to Albania, and when they did, they had to rely mostly on private service providers. The lack of adequate services and an inadequate health system are two key factors that heavily impact a returnee's decision to re-migrate. These findings reinforce the need for more efficient reintegration services in general and, in particular, those coming from public services, according to the needs of returnees

The survey found that the majority of returnees are not aware of Migration Counters or the services they offer in support of returnee reintegration back home. This finding clearly indicates the challenges Migration Counters still face in terms of reaching their target audience. Nevertheless, considering that Migration Counters have started operating in July 2010, this finding requires further analysis and monitoring of the situation of registration of returnees at Migration Counters in continuity.



# 6

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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# 7

## ANNEXES



## ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY

**Financial capital:** Funds and remittances acquired by the migrant.

**Forced return:** is the compulsory return of an individual to the country of origin, transit or third country, on the basis of an administrative or judicial act.

**Human capital:** Skills, know-how, training and new values acquired by the migrants allowing him/her to act differently

**Household:** refers to a group of persons who reside together in a housing unit, and who share a partially or fully joint economy.

**Main country of emigration/destination:** refers to the last country of immigration where the respondent lived before returning home.

**Permanent return:** refers to the return to the country of origin on a long-term basis.

**Post-return conditions:** Factors and circumstances exclusive to the migrant's post return experience in the country of origin, whether return is temporary or permanent.

**Pre-return conditions:** Factors and circumstances exclusive to the migrant's experience of migration, before returning home.

**Re-emigration:** When a returnee re-emigrates, he or she leaves for abroad again at least three months after returning to the country of origin.

**Reference person:** of the household is the member who generally undertakes the main decisions in that household and who is recognized as such by all other household members. In many cases, in a household consisting of a couple with unmarried children, the father will be recognized as the reference person.

**Reintegration:** Re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence.

- a) Reintegration (*cultural*): In the context of return migration, re-adoption on the part of the returning migrant of the values, way of living, language, moral principles, ideology, and traditions of the country of origin's society.
- b) Reintegration (*economic*): In the context of return migration, the process by which a migrant is reinserted into the economic system of his or her country of origin, and able to earn his or her own living. In developmental terms, economic reintegration also aims at using the know-how which was acquired in the foreign country to promote the economic and social development of the country of origin.
- c) Reintegration (*social*): In the context of return migration, the reinsertion of a migrant into the social structures of his or her country of origin. This includes on the one hand the development of a personal network (friends, relatives, neighbours) and on the other hand the development of civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations).

**Resource mobilization:** Process through which a migrant gathers resources, whether tangible or intangible, before and after return. This process is part and parcel of return preparation.

**Return migration:** The movement of a person returning to his or her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country. This return may or may not be voluntary. Return migration includes voluntary repatriation.

**Return preparation:** Process taking place in the framework of the return to the country of origin. There exist various levels of return preparation shaping the migrant's socio-professional reintegration and re-adaptation in the country of origin.

**Voluntary Return:** The assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or another third country based on the free will of the returnee.

**Usual residence<sup>7</sup>:** means the place where a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporarily absences for purposes of recreation, holidays, visits to friends or relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage. The following persons alone shall be considered to be usual residents of a specific geographical area:

<sup>7</sup> Commission regulation (EC) No 1201/2009



- a) *Those who have lived in their place of usual residence for a continuous period of at least 12 months before the reference time;*
- b) *Those who arrived in their place of usual residence during the 12 months before the reference time with the intention of staying there for at least one year*

## ANNEX 2. THE PROFILE OF RETURNEES

The majority of returnees (61%) were between the ages of **18 and 40 years old**. Of this segment:

- Returns are a predominant feature for males (77.7%) who left Albania after 2007 and decided to return to their homeland on their own initiative. The majority of these males (61.3%) returned to their place of birth/usual residence before migration.
- The average age of this segment (18-40 yo) was 22 years old at the time of emigration and 28 years old at the time of survey. They lived abroad for an average period of 5 years. 23% stayed in the main country of emigration for 2 years.
- The majority migrated to Greece (66%) due to its vicinity to Albania, easy access to the country and to employment opportunities and because of the presence of family/friends (16%).
- Half of the segment population migrated without official paperwork/documents, 40 per cent with official documents and 8.6 per cent with false documents. 70% were supported in their migration trip by their family members.
- The majority of migrants were single at the time of emigration (72%), and only 11 per cent had children. However, this ratio changed significantly during emigration and once they returned. 14% got married in the host country, of which 51% had children. 13.3% of migrants got married after return.
- The majority of migrants had completed either lower secondary school education (49.7%) or upper secondary (39%). 21 per cent could speak a foreign language relatively fluently. Only 13.3 per cent of migrants pursued further education abroad, and 7.8 per cent vocational training.
- In terms of employment, 65.6 per cent did not had a job before migrating, only 10 per cent were employed or self-employed, and 19% were students. A total of 46 per cent had a job or were self-employed in the last country of emigration before returning. 61 per cent of these had found employment during the first 3 months abroad. Upon arrival to Albania, only 23 per cent of returnees were employed or self-employed, while at the time of survey 33.5 per cent were employed, whilst 20.3 per cent were self-employed.
- The main reason why migrants return to Albania is the loss of job in the last country of destination, followed by nostalgia/longing for the country and traditions as well as family-related issues back in Albania.
- The majority of returnees note a deterioration of their financial situation after returning - 41 per cent versus the 38 per cent who declared that their financial situation has not changed.
- Only 7% of the segment population managed to carry out one investment project in Albania, especially in the retail trade, hotel and restaurant industry, and agriculture. For most investments, they resorted to self-financing in 99 per cent of the cases, while 18 per cent obtained bank loans and 12 per cent were given loans from parents or relatives.
- The social and economic situation in Albania has a direct impact on the decision on whether to stay in the country or re-migrate. Before travelling abroad, only 12 per cent of migrants stated that they intended to stay abroad permanently. 48 per cent said they would do so temporarily, whereas 40 per cent did not know at that time. Having returned, 31 per cent stated they intended to re-emigrate again and out of this, 47 per cent would return to the last country of emigration, with an additional 37 per cent being uncertain.
- The main reason of re-emigration is the difficulty in finding a job in over 70% of cases. Returnees (60%) also face a number of challenges in Albania such as: lack of adequate reintegration services and insufficient incomes. Less than 5 per cent of the segment population received assistance upon return to Albania. 4.3 per cent were aware of "Migration Counters" and their services.







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