



# Albania

## General Information



### Population

2 377 128 ([World Bank 2024](#))  
2 363 314 ([STAT AL 2025](#))



### Immigration

46 377 ([UN Immigration Stock 2024](#))  
13 963 ([STAT AL 2022](#))



### Emigration

1 216 628 ([UN Emigration Stock 2024](#))  
46 460 ([STAT AL 2022](#))



### Working-age population

1 574 525 ([World Bank 2024](#))  
1 864 062 ([STAT AL 2023](#))



### Unemployment rate

10.7 % ([World Bank 2023](#))  
10.7 % ([STAT AL 2023](#))



### GDP

27 046 429 296.7 current prices USD ([World Bank 2024](#))  
2 517 821 000 000 EUR ([STAT AL 2024](#))



### Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

**Refugees**  
10 895 ([UNHCR 2025](#))

**Asylum Seekers**  
20 ([UNHCR 2025](#))  
104 ([STAT AL 2024](#))

**IDPs**  
0 ([UNHCR 2025](#))  
45 000 ([IDMC 2024](#))



### Citizenship

**By Birth**  
No ([GLOBALCIT 2024](#))

**By Descent**  
Yes ([GLOBALCIT 2024](#))



### Territory

28 748 km<sup>2</sup> ([CIA World Factbook](#))

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

# Migration Authorities

## Responsible Body

Ministry of Interior

### Line Ministries

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of State for Diaspora

Ministry of Health and Social Protection

### Agencies

Albanian State Police

Department of Border and Migration

Institute of Statistics

National Employment and Skills Agency

National Diaspora Agency

### Key Policy Documents

National Strategy on Migration and its Action Plan 2024-2030

National Integrated Border Management Strategy 2021-2027

National Strategy of Diaspora 2021-2025

Strategy against Organized Crime and Serious Crime 2021-2025 and its Action Plan 2021-2022

2021 Law on Aliens

2021 Law on Asylum

2020 Law on Citizenship

### Relevant Publications

Lessons learned from the 2015-2016 migration situation in the Western Balkan region

Highly-skilled Return Migrants to the Western Balkans

Albania Extended Migration Profile 2009

ICMPD Policy Brief, Germany's Western Balkans Regulation: Inspiration for facilitating refugee labour mobility? 2023

ICMPD Policy Brief, Policy Brief: Diasporas' Contribution to the Socio-Economic Development in the Western Balkans (ECONDIAS) 2023

ICMPD Study of the Diasporas' Contributions to the Socio-Economic Development in the Western Balkans, 2023

ICMPD, A Practitioner's Guide - Developing and Monitoring National Anti-Trafficking Response, 2021

ICMPD, Assessment on the needs, gaps and good practices - Developing, implementing and monitoring of the anti-trafficking strategic response in the MARRI Participants, 2021

Although Albania has experienced an increase in immigration in recent years, it remains primarily a country of emigration and transit. As of January 2025, the population of Albania – which has been declining since 2001 – stood at 2,363,314, 1.2% less than a year earlier. The decline continues to be driven by outward migration – persistent for over two decades – with an estimated net loss of 28,836 people in 2024, despite a positive natural balance in 2022-2024.

Albania's diverse diaspora, estimated at 1,216,628 people in 2024 (around 51% of its resident population), mostly resides in Europe (1,188,653), with the largest communities found in Southern Europe, particularly in Italy (45%) and Greece (39%).

Economic factors such as unemployment, living conditions, and wage gaps between Albania and the main destination countries remain the key drivers for emigration. Although the unemployment rate has fallen from 18.1% in 2014 to 10.3% in 2024, it remains comparatively high. The World Bank also reports a 9.8% average wage rise and poverty reduction to 17.3% in 2024, with growth across all economic sectors. The economic improvements notwithstanding, two in three residents of Albania of studying and working age consider leaving the country in search of better opportunities abroad.

At the end of 2024, Albanian nationals in the EU held over 839,000 valid residence permits (preliminary data) – down from 916,293 permits in 2021. Of these, nearly 50% were issued for family reunification and 29% for employment reasons. Italy, Greece and Germany are top three issuers for both categories in 2024, underscoring their continued importance as main destinations for Albanian nationals within the EU. Germany also issued the largest number of valid permits for refugee status (10,775) and France for subsidiary protection (5,108). As migration patterns evolve, the balance between valid residence permits and first residence permits has shifted over the past decade. Following a steady increase during the late 2010s and a post-pandemic peak in 2022, the number of first residence permits issued to Albanians in the EU declined from 79,178 in 2022 to 66,193 in 2024, which can indicate a gradual stabilisation of migration flows and transition to longer-term or permanent residence.

Despite the overall decline in the number of first residence permits, those issued for employment reasons have been hovering around 20,000 in 2022-2024, highlighting the continued importance of labour migration from Albania to the EU. Albanian workers are concentrated in construction, industry and transport. In Greece they are most active in agriculture (seasonal programmes), construction and manufacturing. Germany has become increasingly attractive under the Western Balkan Regulation, particularly for jobs in healthcare and IT. The Regulation, which was made permanent and expanded in 2024, allows Western Balkan nationals, including Albanians, to access the German labour market through simplified procedures.

The number of Albanian asylum seekers in EU Member States rose sharply between 2020 and 2022, from 6,980 to 13,150, likely reflecting post-pandemic socioeconomic pressures and limited domestic opportunities. A comparable trend occurred in the United Kingdom, where Albanian asylum applications surged by over 230% in 2022, reaching 17,340, compared to 5,147 the previous year, largely driven by small boat crossings, high detection rates, and a relatively high rate of approval of asylum claims, especially for vulnerable groups. By 2024, the numbers dropped to 7,230 in the EU in 2024 and to 2,752 in the UK, suggesting the impact of efforts of Albanian authorities to curb unfounded claims. Within the EU, France (2,225), Italy (1,880) and Germany (1,435) received the largest share of Albanian asylum applications in 2024.

The number of Albanian citizens illegally present in the EU continued to decline too, from 38,155 in 2022 to 33,250 in 2023, with most detected in Italy, Germany and Hungary. This downward trend was accompanied by a moderate decrease in returns, with 7,900 Albanian nationals returned in 2024, compared to 9,510 in 2022. The majority of 2024 returns were carried out by Greece, France and Germany. Most returnees were Albanian nationals whose asylum applications had been rejected, primarily in France and Germany. When it comes to returns from Greece, studies show that these are often linked to a broader set of factors, including forced repatriation by host authorities, difficulties integrating into the local labour market, family or psychological challenges, and the completion of initial goals such as saving money or starting a business.

Since 2020, Albania has experienced an increase in immigration. By the end of 2024, 21,940 foreigners held residence permits, up 2.2% from 2023 and 61.2% increase since 2020. The main countries of origin were Kosovo\*, Italy and Türkiye. Italian citizens migrated mainly for work, followed by education, which accounts for 17.7% of residence permits. Turkish nationals came primarily for work and family reunification. For citizens of Kosovo\*, family reunification was the main reason.

In contrast, the number of asylum seekers in Albania declined sharply. In 2024, only 104 asylum seekers were registered, a decrease of approximately 60%, compared to 261 in 2023. The main countries of origin were Afghanistan (27.9%), Syria (17.3%) and Pakistan (10.6%).

Due to its geographic location on the Western Balkan route, Albania continues to serve as a transit country by irregular migrants heading toward the EU, however detections have dropped considerably. In 2024, Albanian authorities identified 1,540 irregular migrants, a 77% decrease compared to 6,630 in 2023.

While irregular migration flows have decreased, human trafficking remains a persistent challenge. Albania is a country of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking, with Albanian women and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour both domestically and abroad, and foreign victims also identified within the country. In 2024, authorities identified 165 potential victims, up from 110 in 2022, with NGO-run mobile units playing a central role in detection. That year, the government increased funding for victim assistance provided through NGO-run shelters. In total, government-run and NGO-run specialized shelters supported 328 victims in 2023, compared with 93 in 2022. Preventive measures included re-establishing the anti-trafficking hotline in December 2023, conducting awareness campaigns, and updating the National Referral Mechanism.

Albania is party to various regional initiatives on migration and labour mobility. It has made the 'Agenda 2030' a national priority and

endorsed the Global Compact on Migration. In late 2021, the country adopted a new [Law on Foreigners](#), which brings Albania closer to international standards and EU legislation. In May 2024, it adopted the [National Migration Strategy](#) (2024-2030) and its [Action Plan](#) 2024-2026. The strategy reflects priorities outlined in the [EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans](#), including stronger border management, improved asylum procedures and reception capacity, measures against migrant smuggling, enhanced readmission and return cooperation, and gradual visa policy alignment.

In 2023, Italy and Albania signed a [Protocol](#) to build [two reception centres](#) in Albania, where Italy will process migrants arriving by sea, with the capacity of up to [36,000 migrants annually](#). Transfers of asylum seekers [under this scheme](#) have already began, in parallel with broader EU discussions on establishing return hubs in third countries.

Albania, a candidate for EU membership, saw [accession negotiations officially opened by the European Union](#) in mid-October 2024. Since then, negotiations have been launched in three key clusters: Fundamentals, Internal Market, and External Relations. In September 2023, the EU and Albania [signed](#) a new status agreement on operational cooperation in border management with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). Most recently, on 24 June 2025, Albania [joined](#) the European Migration Network as an observer country, following the signing an Administrative Agreement between the European Commission and the Albanian Ministry of Interior.

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