
Research Study into Brain Gain:

Reversing Brain Drain
with the Albanian
Scientific Diaspora

March 2018



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Research Study into Brain Gain: Reversing Brain Drain with the Albanian Scientific Diaspora

MARCH 2018



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

The report is an independent publication commissioned by UNDP. The views, analysis and policy recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, UNDP, its Executive Board or its Member States.

RESEARCH TEAM:

*Ilir Gëdeshi
Center for Economic and Social Studies, Tirana*

*Russell King
School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, UK*

UNDP EXPERT PANEL REVIEW:

*Eno Ngjela, UNDP Albania
Eni Kristo, UNDP Albania*

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. ALBANIAN MIGRATION	10
2.1 Example 1—Remittances from Albanian emigration	
2.2 Example 2—Savings of Albanian emigrants	
2.3 Example 3—Return of emigrants	
3. ALBANIAN BRAIN DRAIN	20
4. THE ALBANIAN SCIENTIFIC DIASPORA	28
4.1 Methodology	
4.2 Quantitative techniques	
4.3 Qualitative techniques	
5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ALBANIAN SCIENTIFIC DIASPORA	34
6. SOCIAL CAPITAL OF THE ALBANIAN SCIENTIFIC DIASPORA	40
7. ROLE OF THE SCIENTIFIC DIASPORA	46
7.1 Alternatives for cooperation	
7.2 Return to the home country	
7.3 Creating social and economic conditions	
7.4 Diaspora options	
7.5 Obstacles	
7.6 Forms of cooperation	
7.7 Cooperation with universities and scientific institutions in Kosovo and other Western Balkan countries	
8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY	62

Abbreviations

CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEI	Central European Initiative
CESS	Center for Economic and Social Studies
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INSTAT	Albanian National Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States of America
WB	World Bank

Acknowledgments

Our most sincere thanks go to the many people who helped us to realise this study. First and foremost, our special thanks go to the hundreds of representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora, and to Albanian students who study abroad, for their time and commitment during the survey and interview process, with their helpful comments and encouragement in our work. We hope that this study will contribute to fostering cooperation between the Albanian scientific diaspora and the universities and research institutions in Albania which, in turn, would contribute to the economic and social development of Albania.

We are grateful to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its financial support and cooperation in the realisation of this study. We would also like to show our gratitude to Eno Ngjela, UNDP Programme Officer for his extensive support and insightful comments during various phases of the study.

In addition, we are grateful to the team who worked together with the Center for Economic and Social Studies for their assistance in the realisation of this study: Prof. Anila Papparisto, Dr Enri Hide and Dr Arber Gjeta. Thanks, too, to Eriselda Danaj, Etleva Bushati, Elton Bullaj, Naxhi Mamani, Stela Suloti, Xhuljeta Qirinxihi, Irena Nikaj, Bresena Dema, Brunilda Zenelaga and Nadire Xhaxho, who greatly assisted our study by collecting the quantitative and qualitative data without which this study would not have been possible. We would also like to thank Mr Gentjan Suli and Mr Iain Wilson for their assistance in providing the translation and editing of the study in English and their useful suggestions. Our grateful thanks are also extended to Jenny Money, for her valuable assistance in arranging the rich bibliography used in this study.

The Authors

1. Introduction

Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon which affects most of the countries in the world. Some have histories mainly of immigration, others are predominantly emigration countries and yet others experience both emigration and immigration, either simultaneously or at different phases of their history. A recurring symptom of many small and relatively poor countries is the loss of their most talented and highly educated individuals, in what is commonly termed ‘brain drain’. Albania, in the Western Balkans and on the southeastern periphery of Europe, is a case in point and is the subject of this report. Through literature review and a range of surveys to collect primary data, we map and analyse the distribution and characteristics of Albania’s ‘scientific diaspora’ – its university students who are studying abroad and its PhD-holders who are currently living and working abroad. In particular, we explore their likelihood of returning to Albania, and other possible development-inducing activities and roles which do not necessarily involve a definitive return.

The study is organised as follows. The next section (part 2) is an overview of Albanian migration, one of the largest-scale emigrations, in relative terms, of any European country in recent decades. Section 3 is on the Albanian brain drain in which, yet again, Albania comes close to the top of world rankings on the emigration of tertiary-educated persons. In Section 4 we develop the notion of the Albanian scientific diaspora, which has evolved as a result of the brain drain and includes both the settlement abroad of students, graduates and PhD-holders and the children of emigrants who study in the host country. Several methods are used in this report to explore the size and characteristics of the scientific diaspora:

1. An online survey of Albanian PhDs who are living abroad: this includes both PhD-holders who are working abroad, mainly in universities and research institutes, and individuals currently undertaking research for their PhD (a total of 725 respondents).
2. An online survey of undergraduate and taught postgraduate students studying at universities abroad (303 respondents).
3. A small survey conducted with the human resource departments of Albanian public universities to assess the brain drain of lecturers, professors and researchers.
4. Qualitative interviews conducted with several groups of respondents, either

In all of these analyses of survey and interview data, we mix tabulations of responses with quotes from interviews and emails



face-to-face or via Skype: with PhDs living abroad, with Albanian scientific diaspora representatives, with the parents of students studying abroad and with the heads of academic and research institutions in Albania.

Section 5 of the study describes the characteristics of the Albanian scientific diaspora, based mainly on the PhD survey, for instance by year of departure, destination country, subject of study and current employment. In Section 6 we study the scientific diaspora's social capital – in other words, their personal and professional links to Albania and their participation in various networks and associations. This is followed in Section 7 by an empirically driven analysis of the scientific diaspora's actual and potential role in contributing to Albania's scientific, professional and economic development, either by returning to the home country or by collaborating at a distance. Particular stress is laid here on the obstacles to the scientific diaspora's role in discharging a positive impetus for the benefit of Albania. In all of these analyses of survey and interview data, we mix tabulations of responses with quotes from interviews and emails. The report is concluded (Section 8) by a brief summing-up and some recommendations.

2. Albanian Migration

Nearly three decades after the beginning of the post-socialist transition, international migration, and its economic, political and social consequences, remains an important issue in Albania. Presently, more than 1.4 m Albanian citizens,¹ equivalent to nearly half the current population of the country, have emigrated, mostly to Italy and Greece and, to a lesser extent, to the United States, United Kingdom and Germany.² Official data from the censuses of 2001 and 2011 show that more than 600,000 Albanians emigrated between 1990 and 2001, while some 481,000 migrated during the next intercensal decade, 2001–2011.³ The population size of the Albanian immigrants in host countries has increased, due in part also to natural growth, especially since 2000, as a result of the family joining process and the young age of the migrants.

Albania ranks among the top countries in the world for the scale (as a percentage of the current population) and intensity of international migration. In its periodic publication *Migration and Remittances Factbook*, the World Bank places Albania among the top 20 countries in the world (9th place in the 2011⁴ and 17th place in the 2016 publications⁵).⁶ A closer look at these rankings shows that most of the countries ranking above Albania in 2011 had a smaller population size (less than 1 million)⁷ and a long-standing history of migration (Figure 1).

While the Albanian migration has been a dynamic process throughout almost three decades, its intensity has varied. It was very high in the 1990s, the first decade, with three peaks of migration. The very large numbers and high intensity, the illegal nature, dominance of young males, concentration upon neighbouring countries (Greece and Italy), and the economic reasons for it are some of its main features.⁸

The second decade of the Albanian migration was characterised by a maturation of the cycle. The process of the legalisation of Albanian immigrants in the main host countries, which started at the end of the 1990s, was followed by family unification, integration and improvement of the immigrants' economic and social status. The flows continued, but—as a result of greater economic stability in Albania—at a lower intensity, without extreme episodes, and were mainly legal.⁹

1. World Bank (2011) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*. Washington DC: World Bank

2. INSTAT (2014) *Migration in Albania*. Tirana: INSTAT

3. INSTAT (2004) *Migration in Albania. Population and Housing Census 2001*. Tirana: INSTAT; INSTAT (2012) *Population and Housing Census 2011*. Tirana: INSTAT

4. World Bank (2011) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*. Washington DC: World Bank

5. World Bank (2016a) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank

6. In the latest publication of the World Bank (2016a) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank, some Western Balkan countries, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia rank above Albania. However for those countries, part of the international migration may be also considered as internal migration within the former Yugoslavia

7. The population of these countries ranges from 30,000 (Monaco) to 800,000 (Guyana) residents. The West Bank and Gaza, with 4 million residents, is an exception. It also has a long-standing migration history

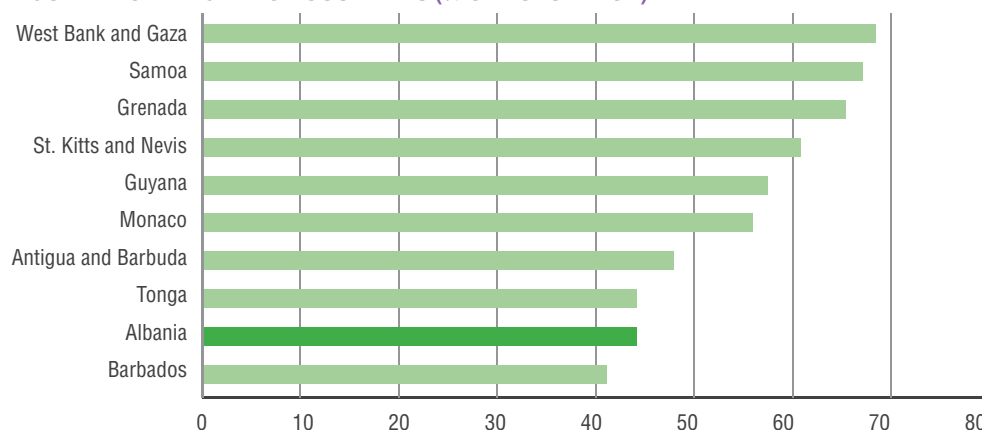
8. Barjaba K., King R. (2005) Introducing and theorising Albanian migration, in: King R., Mai N., Schwandner-Sievers S. (eds) *The New Albanian Migration*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1–28

9. King R., Uruçi E., Vullnetari J. (2011) Albanian migration and its effects in comparative perspective, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 13(3): 269–286

The population size of the Albanian immigrants in host countries has increased, due in part also to natural growth, especially since 2000, as a result of the family joining process and the young age of the migrants



FIGURE 1. TOP EMIGRATION COUNTRIES (% OF POPULATION)



Source: World Bank (2011) Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011. Washington DC: World Bank.

The third decade was characterised by a renewed greater intensity and diversification of the international migration flows, which took on new features. These flows peaked in 2015 when around 66,000 Albanians sought asylum in EU countries (primarily in Germany)¹⁰ to decrease later on with fewer applications accepted.¹¹

10. Eurostat Newsrelease (2016) Asylum in the EU member states: record number of over 1.2 million first-time asylum seekers registered in 2015, *Eurostat Newsrelease* 44/2016, 4 March

11. According to EASO data, 31,553 persons applied for asylum in 2016 and 11,400 in the first six months of 2017

Such high migration flows are an expression of the high migration potential of the Albanian population, a potential that has increased in recent years. The Gallup World Poll which, since 2005, has been conducting nationally representative surveys in more than 160 countries, finds that in the Albanian population the desire to emigrate is very high, with the country positioned in third place (Table 1). Moreover, when comparing the period 2013–2016 with that of 2010–2012, the potential for emigration from Albania vis-à-vis other countries showed the greatest increase (20 percentage points): potential migration from 2013–2016 is estimated at 56 percent, compared with 36 percent from 2010–2012.¹²

TABLE 1. DESIRE TO MIGRATE: PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL ADULT POPULATION WHO DESIRE TO EMIGRATE, IN DECREASING ORDER FOR YEARS 2013–2016

Country	Desire to migrate		Difference
	2010–2012	2013–2016	
Sierra Leone	51	62	11*
Haiti	53	56	3
Albania	36	56	20*
Liberia	53	54	1
Congo (Kinshasa)	37	50	13*
Dominican Republic	49	50	1
Honduras	41	48	7*
Armenia	40	47	7*
Syria	32	46	14*
El Salvador	34	46	12*
Ghana	40	45	5
Nigeria	41	43	2
Jamaica	43	40	-3
Congo (Brazzaville)	38	39	1
Togo	41	39	-2
Sudan	29	37	8
Guinea	33	36	3
Bosnia-Herzegovina	20	36	16*
Puerto Rico	n/a	35	n/a
Moldova	32	35	3

Source: Esipova N., Ray J., Pugliese A. (2017) Number of potential migrants worldwide tops 700 million, *Gallup News*, 8 June, <http://news.gallup.com/poll/211883/number-potential-migrants-worldwide-tops-700-million.aspx> (last accessed 26 February 2018); authors' calculations.

* Significant change

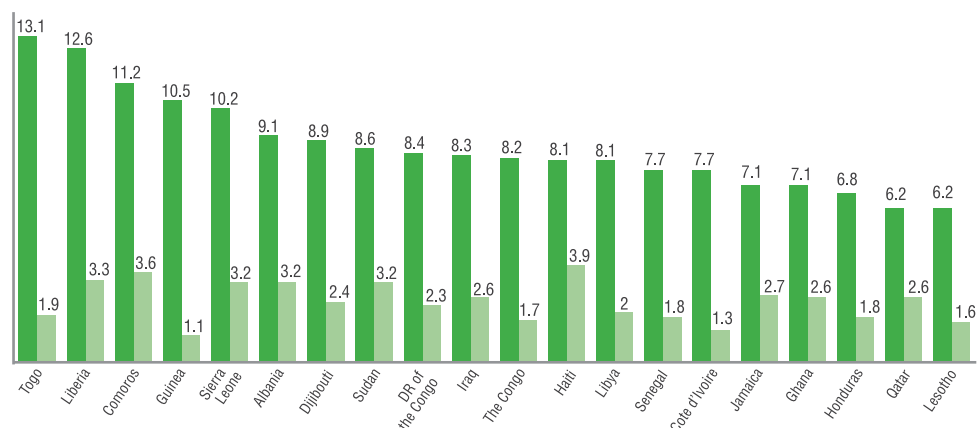
The desire to migrate is an indicator of people's general dissatisfaction with

12. Esipova N., Ray J., Pugliese A. (2017) Number of potential migrants worldwide tops 700 million, 8 June, *Gallup News*, 8 June, <http://news.gallup.com/poll/211883/number-potential-migrants-worldwide-tops-700-million.aspx> (last accessed 26 February 2018)

conditions in their country,¹³ but generally produces large numbers that are far above the real levels of migration. For this reason, Laczko *et al.* (2017) provide two other indicators that are closer to the real levels of migration: *planning to migrate in the next 12 months* and *migration preparation* (through, e.g., saving money for the trip, or learning the language of their desired destination).¹⁴ The figures show that these indicators are also high for Albania, with planning to migrate at 9.1 percent and preparing to migrate at 3.2 percent of the adult population. Figure 2 shows that Albania ranks sixth among the top 20 origin countries with the highest percentage of adults planning and preparing to migrate (on this diagram, ‘planning’ is the left-hand column and ‘preparing’ the right-hand column, for each country). We note that the top countries are mainly in West and East Africa, as well as three Caribbean countries and two Middle Eastern countries.

Data on potential migration are also provided by other sources. For example, the number of Albanian citizens applying for the US visa lottery has been constantly increasing since the beginning of the decade. In 2011, around 87,000 Albanians applied for the US lottery, in 2013 around 123,000, while in 2015 the figure was as high as 199,000.¹⁵ In the meantime, the number of Albanian citizens learning and obtaining a certificate in the German language (in preparation for migration) is increasing rapidly. According to data from the Goethe Institute in Tirana, the number of those taking a test for obtaining such a certificate tripled in 2017, compared to 2013.¹⁶

FIGURE 2. TOP 20 COUNTRIES BY PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS PLANNING AND PREPARING TO MIGRATE



Source: Laczko F., Tjaden J., Auer D. (2017) Measuring global migration potential, 2010–2015, Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, 9, July.

13. Laczko F., Tjaden J., Auer D. (2017) Measuring global migration potential, 2010–2015, *Global Migration Data Analysis Centre*, 9, July
 14. Laczko F., Tjaden J., Auer D. (2017) Measuring global migration potential, 2010–2015, *Global Migration Data Analysis Centre*, 9, July
 15. Diversity Visa Program, DV 2013–2015: Number of entries received during each online registration period by country of chargeability DV online registration period; each year through the Department of State, Electronic Diversity Visa website, www.dvlottery.state.gov
 16. Interview with Ms. Alketa Kuka, Head of the Language Department, Goethe Institute, Tirana

The revival of real migration, entirely predictable, whose causes should be sought in the nature and trends of the economy, shows that such flows continue to be high in the third decade of Albanian emigration. Economic factors are undoubtedly the main drivers of the emigration of Albanians during the last three decades. Studies have shown that high levels of unemployment and under-employment, low wages, poverty, limited social protection and the low level of provision of social services are the main motives to migrate for three-quarters of Albanian migrants.¹⁷ In addition, the desire for personal freedom, education and the pursuit of a professional career, as well as a lack of safety and violence, are among other drivers of emigration.

The global economic crisis that started in the second half of 2008 took its toll on the Albanian economy.¹⁸ The first consequence was a reduction in the pace of economic growth and an increase in unemployment. According to World Bank data, the average GDP growth of Albania fell to 2.5 percent during 2009–2015, from 6.1 percent in 2000–2008.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the official unemployment rate rose to 17.1 percent in 2015 (33.2% for those of age 15–29 years) from 13.0 percent in 2008.²⁰ In addition, the global economic crisis reduced by more than one-third the remittances sent home by Albanian emigrants; these had been one of the main contributors to mitigating the situation of poverty in many Albanian households. Whereas in 2007, remittances peaked at EUR 952 million, accounting for 12.3 percent of GDP, in 2015 they fell to EUR 597 million, or 5.8 percent of GDP.²¹ This, in turn, contributed to an increase in the incidence of poverty in Albanian households, a phenomenon that had been almost halved in the period 2000–2008.²² In the meantime, the seasonal and long-term international emigration, primarily to Greece and Italy, that had been a key mechanism for Albanian households to cope with poverty in the first two decades, could no longer play such a role. The high levels of unemployment among Albanian emigrants in the two main host countries (24.7% in Greece and 12.1% in Italy in 2010) slowed down new migration flows.²³ Therefore, a new paradoxical situation arose. While, on the one hand, the Albanian emigration drivers increased, on the other, the traditional channels of the emigration decreased. Subsequently, the migration potential of the Albanian population, under the effect of the global economic crisis, in the absence of internal solutions and given the people's perception of their future, was upward.

The question then arises as to why, after around a quarter of a century of international

17. Gëdeshi I., de Zwager N. (2012) Effects of the global crisis on migration and remittances in Albania, in: Sirkeci I., Cohen J.H., Ratha D. (eds) *Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond*. Washington DC: The World Bank 2012, 237–254; European Training Foundation (2007) *The Contribution of Human Resources Development to Migration Policy in Albania*. Turin: ETF

18. Gëdeshi I., de Zwager N. (2012) Effects of the global crisis on migration and remittances in Albania, in: Sirkeci I., Cohen J.H., Ratha D. (eds) *Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond*. Washington DC: The World Bank 2012, 237–254

19. World Bank (2015) *Country Partnership Framework for Albania 2015–2019*. Washington DC: World Bank

20. INSTAT (2010) *Labour Market 2008*. Tirana: INSTAT; INSTAT (2016a) *Labour Market 2015*. Tirana: INSTAT

21. According to data provided by the **Bank of Albania**

22. According to World Bank data from 2002–2008, poverty in Albania was halved to 12.4 percent but, in 2012, rose again to 14.3 percent. See: World Bank (2016b) *South-East Europe Regular Economic Report, Resilient Growth and Rising Risks*, 10

23. Arslan C., Dumont J-C., Kone Z., Moulan Y., Ozden C., Parsons Ch., Xenogiani T. (2014) *A New Profile of Migrants in the Aftermath of the Recent Economic Crisis*. Paris: OECD Publishing, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper No. 160, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxt2t3nnpj5-en>

emigration, do Albanians continue and desire to leave their country? Within the scope of emigration, there follow three examples, related to remittances, savings and the return of migrants. These examples show that Albania has been unable to take advantage of the opportunities from international migration, explaining the large continuing migratory potential. Furthermore, these examples also emphasise missed opportunities, because this may happen again in the future with the potential developmental capacities of the Albanian scientific diaspora.

2.1 EXAMPLE 1

REMITTANCES FROM ALBANIAN EMIGRATION

Remittances from Albanian emigration are a clear example of an opportunity that has not been tapped into adequately for the economic and social development of the country. Until 2007, when remittances were trending upwards, the World Bank listed Albania among the top 20 countries in the world for the size of remittances vis-à-vis the country's GDP.²⁴ During 1991–2007, remittances represented a variable 10–22 percent of GDP (the size of a typical economic sector), higher than exports, net foreign direct investment and the official development aid received by Albania, and covered a large part of the trade deficit. Remittances have played a significant role in the reduction in poverty of many households in the country, representing a major factor that distinguishes poor from non-poor households.²⁵ It has also been a key factor influencing one of the peculiarities of the Albanian economy during the transition: *extroversion*, meaning that internal consumption greatly exceeds the capacity of national production to meet the needs of the population.²⁶ In the meantime, from the perspective of the impact of remittances on economic development, studies show that only a small share of that source (9–12%) was invested in the economy,²⁷ mainly in micro-enterprises in the services sector.

Consequently, in the context of unfavourable socio-economic conditions, this monetary value injected into the Albanian economy from migration has until now been insufficient to increase domestic production. It has been mainly used for the import of consumption goods, rather than for investment in domestic production. Due to a shortage of investments that could potentially generate more employment opportunities, part of the younger generation is obliged, in turn, to also emigrate. In this case, emigration recycles emigration.

24. Mansoor A., Quillin B. (eds) (2006) *Migration and Remittances. Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Washington DC: World Bank

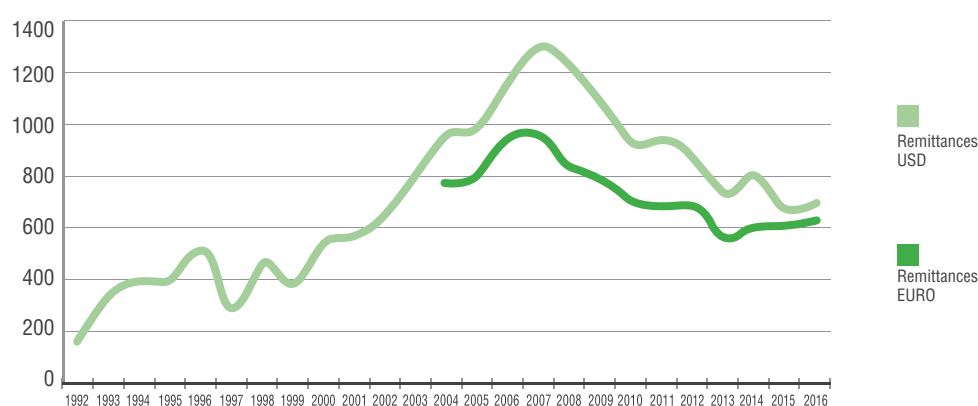
25. De Soto H., Gordon P., Gëdeshi I., Sinoimeri Z. (2002) *Poverty in Albania. A Qualitative Assessment*. Washington DC: The World Bank

26. Samson I. (1996) *Albania Experience Among Transition Trajectories*. Grenoble: University Pierre Mèndes France, Working Paper

27. de Zwager N., Gedeshi I., Germenji E., Nikas C. (2005) *Competing for Remittances*. Tirana: International Organization for Migration; European Training Foundation (2007) *The Contribution of Human Resources Development to Migration Policy in Albania*. Turin: ETF; de Zwager N., Gressmann W., Gëdeshi I. (2010) *Market Analysis: Albania – Maximising the Development-Impact of Migration-Related Financial Flows and Investment to Albania*. Vienna, IASCI, http://cessalbania.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Albania_Market_Analaysys.pdf (last accessed 26 February 2018)

Since the end of the 1990s, different researchers have warned that Albanian emigrant remittances, which had experienced a rapid increase, would decrease as a result of the maturation of the migration cycle.²⁸ Other researchers pointed out that a sudden decline in remittances due to the economic downturn in Greece as the main destination country for Albanian emigrants would have negative effects on the Albanian economy.²⁹ Starting in 2008, the maturation of the remittances cycle and the effects of the global economic crisis led to a drastic decline in the flow of remittances into Albania (Figure 3), the social and economic consequences of which are noted in many areas.

FIGURE 3. REMITTANCE FLOWS INTO ALBANIA, 1992-2016



Source: Bank of Albania (2017).

28. Civici A., Gëdeshi I., Shehi D. (1999) Roli i remitancave në ekonominë shqiptare, *Ekonomia dhe Tranzicioni* [Role of Remittances in the Albanian Economy, *Economy and Transition*], 2; Gëdeshi I. (2002) The role of remittances from Albanian emigrants and their influence in the country's economy, *Eastern European Economics*, 40(5): 49–72; Gëdeshi I., Mara H., Preni X. (2003) *The Encouragement of Social-Economic Development in Relation to the Growth of the Role of the Remittances*. Tirana: CESS; de Zwager N., Gëdeshi I., Gërmenji E., Nikas C. (2005) *Competing for Remittances*. Tirana: International Organization for Migration

29. Nikas C., King R. (2005) Economic growth through remittances: lessons from the Greek experience of the 1960s applicable to the Albanian case, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 7(2): 235–258

2.2 EXAMPLE 2

SAVINGS OF ALBANIAN EMIGRANTS

The Albanian migration is characterised by a high level of savings from income. In 2008, a study undertaken by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) found that the annual savings of Albanian immigrants in host countries amounted to around EUR 3.4 billion, or 5.1 times higher than their annual remittances³⁰ (Table 2). Due to the migration cycle maturation, the annual savings to remittances ratio for Albania was higher than for some other countries with high migration flows (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, and Romania). The study showed that if suitable local conditions and specific incentives can be created, these savings could be used for investments in the economy, creating a new impetus for economic and social development in Albania. The authors presupposed that if 10 percent of the migrants' annual savings were invested in the home country, they would not only increase the remittances by around 50 percent—shifting the downward trend upward again—but would also change their quality. Instead, the global economic crisis and high unemployment among Albanian emigrants led to a reduction in savings³¹ and this opportunity (in the absence of adequate policies) has not been utilised.

TABLE 2. MIGRANTS' INCOME (EUROS), SAVINGS AND REVENUES (M, MILLION)

	Albania	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Kosovo	Moldova	Romania
	2008	2009	2008	2009	2010
HH income monthly	2,305	2,864	3,841	1,176	1,896
HH expenditures monthly	1,457	1,999	2,210	489	965
HH savings monthly	848	865	1,631	688	931
HH income annually	27,660	34,368	46,092	14,112	22,752
Annual gross HH savings	10,180	10,383	19,572	8,256	11,172
Annual remittance values	1,673	1,874	2,946	3,678	2,157
Annual HH savings abroad	8,507	8,508	16,310	4,578	9,015
Annual savings abroad	3,437 m	4,660 m	2,535 m	559 m	11,981 m
Annual remittance	676 m	1,033 m	456 m	448 m	2,867 m
Savings to remittance ratio	5.1	4.5	5.5	1.25	4.2

Source: de Zwager N., Gressmann W., Gëdeshi I. (2010) *Market Analysis: Albania—Maximising the Development-Impact of Migration-Related Financial Flows and Investment to Albania*. Vienna, IASCI, http://cessalbania.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Albania_Market_Analaysys.pdf (last accessed 26 February 2018).

30. de Zwager N., Gressmann W., Gëdeshi I. (2010) *Market Analysis: Albania—Maximising the Development-Impact of Migration-Related Financial Flows and Investment to Albania*. Vienna, IASCI, http://cessalbania.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Albania_Market_Analaysys.pdf (last accessed 26 February 2018)

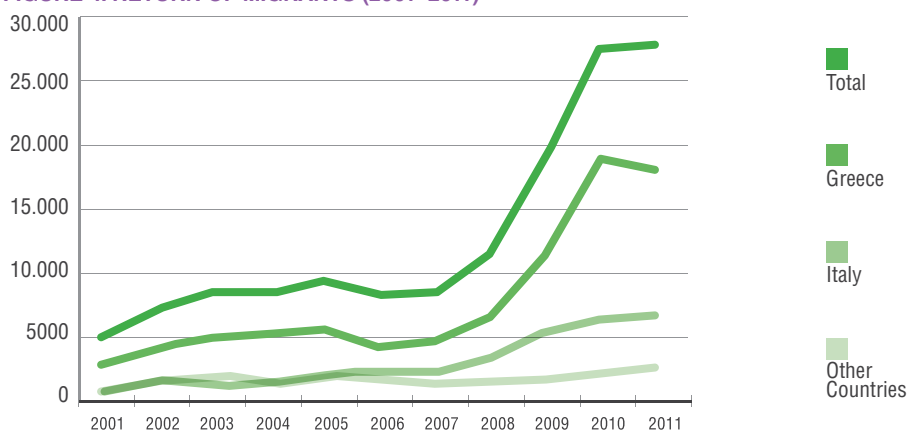
31. Gëdeshi I., de Zwager N. (2012) Effects of the global crisis on migration and remittances in Albania, in: Sirkeci I., Cohen J.H., Ratha D. (eds) *Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond*. Washington DC: The World Bank, 237–254

2.3 EXAMPLE 3

RETURN OF EMIGRANTS

The return of emigrants is potentially very important for the economic growth of Albania, as returnees could bring back financial capital, foreign work experience and new ideas. The process of the return of Albanian emigrants began at the beginning of the 2000s³² but, from 2008, the curve sloped significantly upwards as a result of the global economic crisis (Figure 4). A joint IOM–UNDP–WB study showed that, as a result of the global economic crisis, around 12 percent of Albanian emigrants, mainly in Greece and Italy, might return to their home country.³³ The study provided some scenarios, both optimistic and pessimistic, related to the consequences upon their return, and called on creating the premises for investment of capital and employment of migrants.

FIGURE 4. RETURN OF MIGRANTS (2001–2011)



Source: INSTAT (2012) *Population and Housing Census 2011*. Tirana: INSTAT.

A joint study undertaken by INSTAT and IOM³⁴ showed that during the period 2009–2013, 133,544 Albanian emigrants aged 18 years and above returned to Albania, driven mainly by the loss of their jobs in Greece and Italy. The return flow culminated in the two years 2012 and 2013, when 53.4 percent of the total returned. At the time of the survey in 2014, almost 34 percent of the returned migrants were employed, 20 percent were self-employed, and 46 percent were unemployed.

32. European Training Foundation (2007) *The Contribution of Human Resources Development to Migration Policy in Albania*. Turin: ETF

33. Gëdeshi I. (2010) *Global Crisis and Migration—Monitoring a Key Transmission Channel for the Albanian Economy*. Tirana: IOM, UNDP, WB

34. INSTAT, IOM (2014) *Return Migration and Reintegration in Albania*. Tirana: INSTAT/IOM

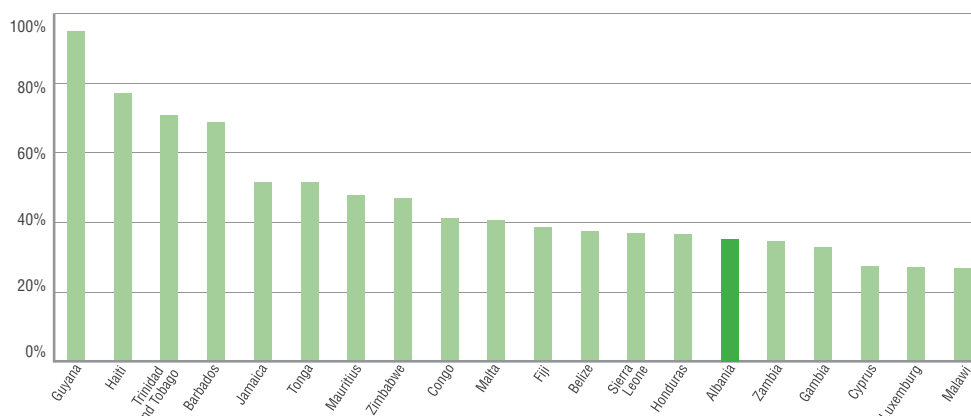
The study also found that only 7 percent invested their financial capital, mainly in services and agriculture. More than half of the returnees reported a lack of quality services and an inappropriate health system. Subsequently, due to unemployment, insufficient income and lack of quality services, almost one-third of the returned migrants wished to re-emigrate.³⁵ The high levels of unemployment and the lack of investments by the migrants, in the absence of appropriate socio-economic conditions, resulted in their capital not being used for the development of their home country.

35. INSTAT, IOM (2014) *Return Migration and Reintegration in Albania*. Tirana: INSTAT/IOM

3. Albanian Brain Drain

Such levels of mass migration expose another even more worrying phenomenon that is often overlooked: the brain drain. First noted in the 1960s, when a large number of scientists and engineers emigrated from Western Europe to the US, this concept means the migration of educated persons and professionals from one country to another.³⁶ In its publication *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*³⁷ the World Bank ranks Albania among the top countries in the world (15th place) with regard to tertiary-educated persons as a proportion of the total (Figure 5). In 2010 and 2011, according to the same source, some 31.3 percent of Albanian tertiary-educated people were thought to be emigrants. Once again, we note from Figure 5 that many of the other countries listed have smaller populations than Albania; loss of highly educated people is often an intrinsic problem of small-scale economies because of the ‘truncated’ nature of the labour market, with limited opportunities in highly specialised sectors. Also, of the total number of Albanian immigrants in OECD countries, the World Bank estimated that 9.9 percent had obtained tertiary education.³⁸ The share of migrants from Albania with tertiary education was well above the share of those in the general population, bringing important implications for economic growth.³⁹

FIGURE 5. TOP COUNTRIES FOR TERTIARY-EDUCATED EMIGRANTS, 2010–2011 (MIGRATION RATE, % OF TOTAL)



Source: World Bank (2016a) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank.

36. Mogue rou P. (2006) *The Brain Drain of PhDs from Europe to the United States: What We Would Like to Know*. Florence: European University Institute, RSCAS Working Paper 2006/11; Gaillard J., Gaillard A-M. (1998) Fuite des cerveaux, retours et diasporas, *Futuribles*, 228: 25–49

37. World Bank (2016a) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank

38. World Bank (2016a) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank

39. Atoyan R., Rahman J. (2017) *Western Balkans: Increasing Women’s Role in the Economy*. Washington DC: International Monetary Fund, IMF Working Paper; Arslan C., Dumont J-C., Kone Z., Moulan Y., Ozden C., Parsons Ch., Xenogiani T. (2014) *A New Profile of Migrants in the Aftermath of the Recent Economic Crisis*. Paris: OECD Publishing, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper No. 160, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxt2t3nnj5-en>

The brain drain from Albania will continue. Germany, however, has relaxed the doctor-recognition procedures. They accept them from all Balkan countries, though they first have to work in a rural area and undergo training



There are three large groups in the flow of the Albanian brain drain that have contributed to creating and expanding the Albanian scientific diaspora.

The *first group* comprises engineers, agronomists, teachers, geologists, economists, doctors and artists, among others, who began to emigrate in the early years of the post-socialist transition, driven mainly by economic factors—unemployment, poverty, the severity of the transition reforms—or uncertainties following the collapse of the corrupted pyramid financial schemes in 1997.⁴⁰ According to INSTAT, between the two censuses of 1989 and 2001, Albania lost 2.3 percent of its university graduates,⁴¹ although around 40,000 additional students completed their university studies during this period. Such erosion of human resources has had social and economic consequences for Albania. De Soto *et al.* (2002)⁴² observed that one of the main factors that contributed to deterioration in the education and health services in the country, especially in remote and rural areas, was the emigration of medical and education personnel. In the first decade of transition especially, this resembled a massive wave of migration, through which most personnel emigrated illegally, often taking jobs requiring little qualification, typically in the informal sector. Former engineers, economists, teachers and artists were often employed as gardeners,

40. Gëdeshi I., Mara H., Dhimitri R., Krisafi H. (1999) *Emigrimi i Elites Intelektuale nga Shqipëria gjatë Periudhës së Tranzicionit*. Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese "Luarasi"; Gëdeshi I., Gërmenji E. (2008) *Highly Skilled Migration from Albania: An Assessment of Current Trends and the Ways Ahead*. Brighton: DRC Migration, Globalisation and Development, Working Paper T25

41. INSTAT (2004) *Migration in Albania. Population and Housing Census 2001*. Tirana: INSTAT.

42. De Soto H., Gordon P., Gëdeshi I., Sinoimeri Z. (2002) *Poverty in Albania. A Qualitative Assessment*. Washington DC: The World Bank

cleaners, babysitters, housekeepers, painters and decorators.⁴³ According to Glytsos (2006), the brain drain from Albania did not become a brain gain for the recipient countries, but rather a brain waste.⁴⁴

This first type of emigration continued intensively during the second migration decade, followed by a feminisation of the process, due to family unification. According to OECD data, the emigration of tertiary-educated Albanians in 2010 and 2011 increased by 223% (256% for women) compared to 2000 and 2001. This increase was greater than the general 200% increase in overall Albanian emigrants over the period.⁴⁵

This form of brain emigration has now picked up again, with certain groups of mostly younger-age professionals—engineers, IT specialists, doctors and nurses—leaving the country, heading mainly to Germany.⁴⁶ One of our survey interviewees, Dorina, who has a PhD in medicine, shared her concern:

“The brain drain from Albania will continue. In the Netherlands, it is difficult to be accepted as a doctor, because you have to sit exams from the beginning. Germany, however, has relaxed the doctor-recognition procedures. They accept them from all Balkan countries, though they first have to work in a rural area and undergo training. Almost 30 percent of students that completed studies in the same year as me have gone to Germany. Each year, around 180 doctors graduate, and in the last 3–4 years around 30 percent have emigrated to Germany. This is, regrettably, a very high percentage, because there has been a six-year investment for these doctors, and they are the best ones. I say the best because they are able to learn the language, i.e. German, faster and do the job better.”

The *second group* consists of university lecturers, researchers and other professionals, mostly about 35 years of age, educated or qualified in EU countries or the US, who emigrated legally,⁴⁷ together with their families. This migration peaked twice, in 1991–1993 and 1997–2000,⁴⁸ and then subsequently abated (Figure 6). During the longer period, 1990–2008, 40.6 percent of university and research staff

43. European Training Foundation (2007) *The Contribution of Human Resources Development to Migration Policy in Albania*. Turin: ETF

44. Glytsos, N. (2006) *Is Brain Drain from Albania, Bulgaria and Greece Large Enough to Threaten their Development?* Warsaw: Center for International Relations, Report 14/06

45. Arslan C., Dumont J-C., Kone Z., Moulan Y., Ozden C., Parsons Ch., Xenogiani T. (2014) *A New Profile of Migrants in the Aftermath of the Recent Economic Crisis*. Paris: OECD Publishing, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper No. 160, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxt2t3nnjr5-en>

46. Tollkuci E., Collaku M. (2017) Challenges of social indicators affecting the skilled migration of Albanian physicians. Tirana: Center for Economic and Social Studies, Paper presented in the conference Migration, Diaspora and Development in Albania and in the Western Balkans, Tirana, 27–28 October

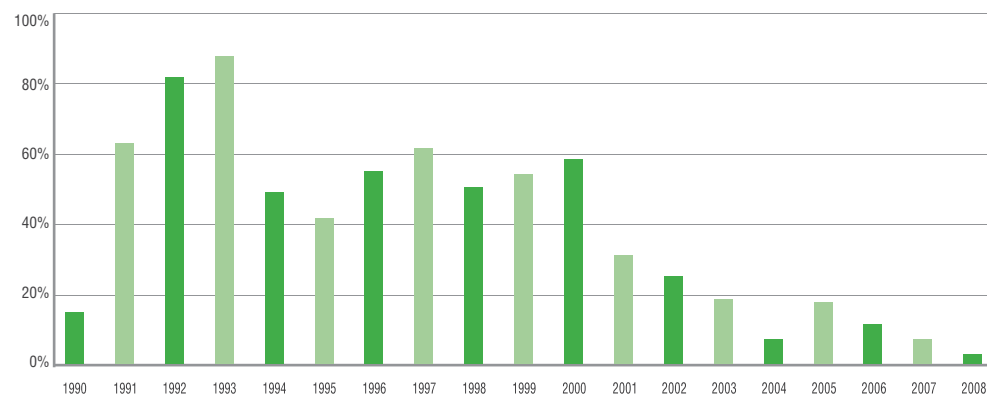
47. World Bank (2010) *Albania, the New Growth Agenda: A Country Economic Memorandum*. Washington DC: World Bank Report No. 53599-AL

48. The peak of 1991–1993 reflects the sudden opening up of the country after a 45-year period of self-isolation as well as the economic, political and social crisis that emerged in the first years of transition. The peak of 1997–1999 could be largely explained by the economic, political and social chaos that overwhelmed Albania after the collapse of the pyramid schemes

are estimated to have emigrated,⁴⁹ a much higher figure than for other countries in transition.⁵⁰ In some universities and research institutions, especially in natural sciences, engineering, nuclear physics and arts, the percentage was notably higher. For the Polytechnic University of Tirana, the brain drain is estimated at 58.2 percent, from the Institute of Nuclear Physics, about 76 percent, and from the Academy of Arts, 60 percent.⁵¹ The migration of this elite brought about not just the loss of human capital but also a weakening of the capacity for training subsequent generations.

This group emigrated primarily to the US, Canada and EU countries where they had finished their graduate or post-graduate studies.⁵² In the meantime, a survey conducted with lecturers in certain public universities shows that this form of brain drain continues (mainly to the US and Canada), though at a lower intensity.⁵³

FIGURE 6. BRAIN DRAIN FROM UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS, 1990–2008 (% OF TOTAL BY YEAR)



Source: Gëdeshi I. (2008) The relationship between migration and socio-economic changes in Albania, *Der Donauraum*, 48(3): 197–292.

The *third group* consists of Albanian students studying abroad, including those who, after completing their studies, stay in the host country or migrate to another one. UNESCO statistics show that the number of Albanian students in advanced OECD countries has been increasing. In 1998, some 4,596 Albanian students attended universities in these countries while, in 2005, this figure reached 15,241 and, in 2016, 24,372 students,⁵⁴ representing about 17 percent of registered students in Albania, up from 13 percent in 1998.⁵⁵ Such figures place Albania at the top of the Western

49. Gëdeshi I. (2008) The relationship between migration and socio-economic changes in Albania, *Der Donauraum*, 48(3): 197–292; World Bank (2010) *Albania, the New Growth Agenda: A Country Economic Memorandum*. Washington DC: World Bank Report No. 53599-AL

50. Horvat V. (2004) Brain drain threat to successful transition in South East Europe? *South-East European Politics*, 5(1): 76–93.

51. World Bank (2010) *Albania, the New Growth Agenda: A Country Economic Memorandum*. Washington DC: World Bank Report No. 53599-AL

52. Ditter J-G., Gëdeshi I. (1997) Conditions économiques et émigration des élites intellectuelles en Albanie, *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le Monde Turco-Iranien*, 23, January–June (online)

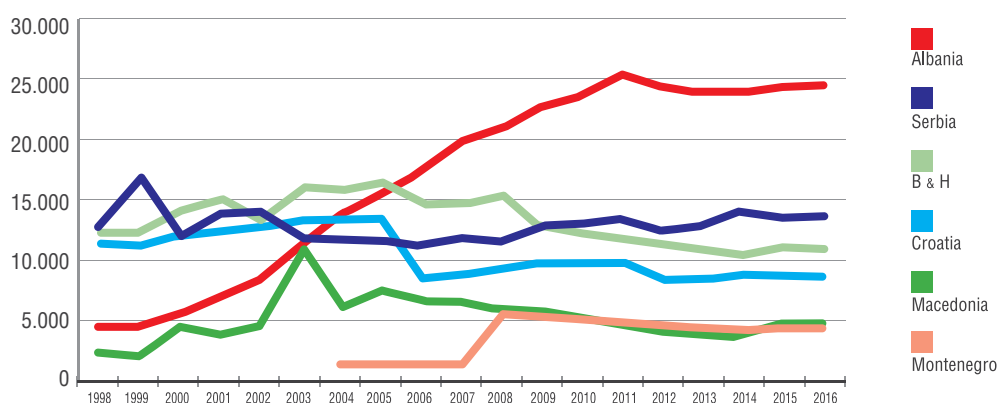
53. These surveys were organised in the universities of Shkodra, Elbasan, Korça, Gjirokastra and Tirana

54. OECD (2007) *Education According to OECD Indicators, 2006*. Paris: OECD

55. INSTAT (2016b) http://databaza.instat.gov.al/pxweb/sq/DST/START__ED/ (last accessed 28 February 2018)

Balkan countries (Figure 7), though by size of population it is ranked fourth, and by income per capita, it is the second lowest (Table 3).

FIGURE 7. TERTIARY STUDENTS FROM WB COUNTRIES STUDYING ABROAD



Source: UNESCO (2017) *Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students*. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>

TABLE 3. POPULATION, MIGRATION AND GNI PER CAPITA IN THE WB COUNTRIES

Country	Population	Migration	Migrants as % of population	GNI/capita
Serbia	7.1	1.30	18.0	5,820
Croatia	4.2	0.88	20.9	12,990
B&H	3.8	1.70	44.5	4,760
Albania	2.9	1.26	43.6	4,450
Macedonia	2.1	0.63	30.2	5,150
Kosovo	1.8	0.55	30.3	3,990
Montenegro	0.6	0.28	45.4	7,320

Source: World Bank (2016) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank.

The question then arises: how is it that, compared to other Western Balkan countries, such a large number of students from a small and poor country like Albania can study abroad in advanced OECD countries? Three possible hypotheses could explain this phenomenon. The first is that Albanians wish to provide a higher quality education for their children compared to the quality in Albania, so that they may become better integrated into the Albanian labour market when they return, and compete for qualified jobs. The second hypothesis assumes that on graduating from an EU university, it would be easier for the person to find a job and become integrated into the host country. The third hypothesis is simply a combination of the first two.

Answers were provided to this question through a survey, carried out by CESS in 2017. Some 303 Albanian students abroad (mainly in Italy, Germany, France, the Netherlands

and the United Kingdom) participated in the survey, of whom 70 percent saw their foreign university studies as a first step to residing abroad after graduation, 24.4 percent responded “Perhaps,” and only 5.6 percent responded “No.”⁵⁶

Interviews show that in many cases sending children to study abroad in advanced OECD countries is seen by parents as a strategy for their children to integrate more easily and progress better in the host countries in terms of incomes and careers. Arben, a former immigrant to Italy, confirmed this thesis. He now runs a successful services company in Albania. Arben said:

“In the early 1990s, like many Albanians, I emigrated illegally to Italy. After some years of hard work, I returned and set up my own business in Albania. Given the current situation, I see my son’s future in one of the EU countries. However, I do not want my son to emigrate and live as I did back then. Therefore, I will purchase his migration: I will finance his studies in a good university in the EU, thus creating the premises for easier employment and integration into the host country.”

Gent sees the perspective for his children along similar lines:

“When I got married, it seemed things were turning out well and we decided to build our life in Albania. But now, we think that our children should build their life abroad. Both my children study in private schools and are learning German, preparing to study in a German university.”

With regard to returning to Albania following graduation, the responses of the Albanian students are even clearer.⁵⁷ One half (49%) said: “I do not intend to return to Albania in the near future,” 32 percent responded that “I will come to Albania to work after a period of time abroad,” and only 4 percent said: “I will return to Albania after graduation, to work”⁵⁸ (Figure 8). The responses were not improvised or random, but were grounded well on reasoning, reflecting not only a desire for international experience but also a perception of the future, on employment and living conditions in Albania. Andra, an Albanian student in Italy said: “My return is conditioned upon employment. For that reason, most of the Albanian students want to stay here, but it is difficult. Only a few desire to return. In general, only those students who, thanks to their parents’ connections, have secured a job in Albania know what awaits them.”

With a gloomy employment outlook in Italy, many Albanian students prepare to migrate to other countries. Jola, an Albanian student in Italy, said:

“There are only a few Albanian students who want to return to Albania. If they can’t find a job in Italy, they aim to go to Germany, Spain or Austria.”

56. The survey asked: Do you see your studies as the first step to remaining (living or working) abroad after graduation? The response options were: “Yes”, “No” and “Perhaps”

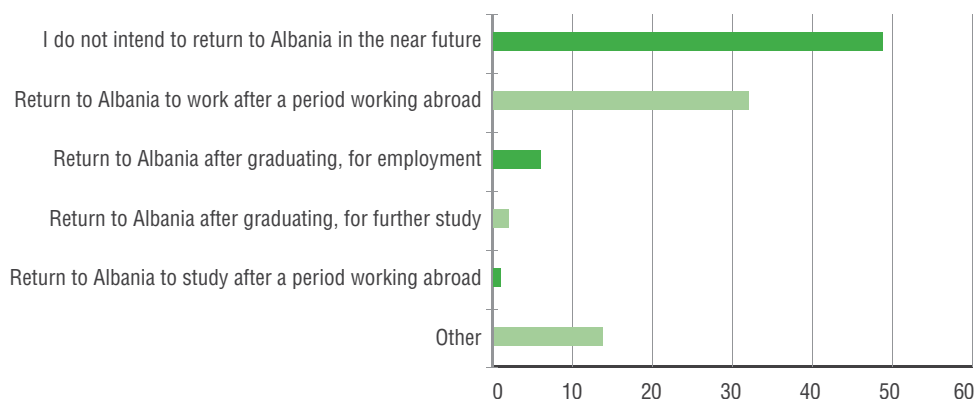
57. The question was: Related to your intentions to return to Albania, which of the following options is closer to your expectations?

58. An earlier survey realised by CESS in 2000 with 835 university students studying in the USA, Italy, France, among others, indicated that 45.5 percent were willing to return to Albania after graduation

Other students, like Endrit, who is studying for his Master’s in Germany, also consider the quality of life and living conditions:

“In Albania, I have my close friends, and there it is good from the perspective of the social life. But in Albania, the wages are very low, making it impossible to live on your own and cover your expenses. Therefore, you have to live with your parents. Economics is the main factor keeping us from returning to Albania.”

FIGURE 8. INTENTION OF ALBANIAN STUDENTS TO RETURN TO ALBANIA AFTER GRADUATION, BY %



Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

The above responses from the student survey state the desires of Albanian students with regard to their future. There are many reasons preventing these desires from becoming reality, because they are conditioned by labour market opportunities, restrictive policies in host countries, changes in the personal situation, family conditions, etc. However, studies show that there is a strong correlation between potential and real migration.

One of the main brain drain flows from Albania is the elite of the country’s students abroad – the “brightest and best” – who do not return. The socio-economic consequences of this phenomenon are clearly evident: every year, qualified human and financial resources, or rather the youth and financial elite of Albania, leaves the country irreversibly (financially in the form of study fees) that amount to tens of millions of euros. According to a recent article in the *Times Higher Education*, countries that attract highly skilled graduates from poor countries are “free riding” on the education systems and talented human resources of these less-well-endowed countries.⁵⁹ This form of migration has become of great concern for the future of Albania. Erinda, an interviewee who obtained her PhD in France, said: “Through brain drain, the Albanian state is losing its own investment. This is one of the largest losses currently for Albania.”

59. Matthews D. (2018) Take the talent? Pay for the tuition, *Times Higher Education*, 11 January

4. The Albanian Scientific Diaspora

The Albanian scientific diaspora has been established and has grown alongside the above-mentioned three flows of brain drain, and with the children of Albanian emigrants who study in their host country. Various concepts of scientific diaspora exist. In our conceptualisation, the notion of a scientific diaspora is broader than the otherwise similar phenomenon of brain drain. A brain drain implies a process whereby already highly trained scientists and other qualified professionals migrate to other countries, which thereby experience a “brain gain”, although it is by no means gainsaid that they will automatically enter jobs that fully match their accumulated human capital, especially if there are language obstacles, problems with the recognition of academic or professional qualifications or discriminatory practices in the labour market (the result being “brain waste”). A scientific diaspora represents a longer-term “scattering” of a country’s scientific talent, including that which is nurtured abroad by further study and training – such as the acquisition of a PhD.

A further controversy surrounds the use of the term “diaspora” in this context. In its original meaning, a diaspora implies a “scattering” of a population as a result of a traumatic event such as a war, forced displacement or genocide, as in the case of the classic “victim” diasporas such as the Jews, Armenians and Palestinians.⁶⁰ An aspiration to return and to reclaim or restore the homeland is intrinsic to this definition. However, the literature on diasporas also acknowledges an extension of the term to other, less traumatic “scatterings”, for instance labour-migrant, imperial and trading diasporas.⁶¹ Although there is some resistance to this “stretching” of the term diaspora to connote almost any kind of migration,⁶² we hold to the validity of the term “scientific diaspora.” We see this phenomenon as an evolving process of dispersion and settlement abroad of both young and more mature Albanian brains and talent. Although such decisions to move and study abroad are individually taken, part of the movement is structurally forced by the lack of rewarding opportunities for highly qualified people in Albania.

In the present study we focus on one segment of Albania’s scientific diaspora: those who have or who are preparing a PhD at university in the EU, the US and Canada, among others, and who live and work in those countries or have moved elsewhere, but not back to Albania. This is the most qualified and dynamic segment of the Albanian scientific diaspora, a product of long years of study and research and one that can be easily identified and measured, constituting an essential factor for research and innovation. This segment clearly has the potential to play a very important role in the propagation of knowledge through face-to-face contacts, student education, training of young researchers and providing more dynamic power to universities and research

60. Safran W. (1991) Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return, *Diaspora*, 1(1): 83–99

61. Cohen R. (1997) *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press

62. For instance by Brubaker, who contends that the meaning of the word diaspora has itself become “diasporised”, i.e. scattered. Brubaker R. (2005) The “diaspora” diaspora, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(1): 1–19

The quantitative techniques consisted of two online surveys undertaken with Albanian PhDs and students who study abroad, and one survey in some public universities to assess the situation of the brain drain phenomenon



institutions in Albania.⁶³ This segment was also selected for practical reasons: the extent of its influence on Albanian public opinion and policy-makers, as well as any wider role given its size and significance.

The size and quality of the Albanian scientific diaspora is rapidly increasing. Almost ten years ago, it was estimated that around 200 Albanian PhDs were working in universities, laboratories and scientific institutions, as well as in the research departments of corporations of developed OECD countries.⁶⁴ At present, this number is many times larger and in our study alone, which we now present, we generated a sample of 725 individuals from Albania with a PhD and working abroad. Around 62 percent of them were working in universities and research institutions. Other Albanians with a PhD, not integrated into the universities or research institutions, are also working in line with their professional training in business, industry, administration etc. For example, the survey found that almost 97 percent of those who responded, and who had achieved a PhD abroad, had obtained jobs that broadly matched their level of qualification.

We now estimate that there must be at least 2,500 Albanian PhDs and PhD candidates in developed OECD countries. For a small country like Albania, this pool of researchers is not insignificant, and represents around 40 percent of Albanians who have a PhD and an estimated more than 25 percent of the academic potential

63. **Mogu rou P.** (2006) *The Brain Drain of PhDs from Europe to the United States: What We Would Like to Know*. Florence: European University Institute, RSCAS Working Paper 2006/11

64. **G deshi I.** (2008) The relationship between migration and socio-economic changes in Albania, *Der Donauraum*, 48(3): 197–292; **G deshi I., Black R.** (2006) *From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Mobilising Albania's Skilled Diaspora*. Tirana: UNDP policy paper

of the country.⁶⁵ This ever-growing reservoir of Albanian ‘brains’ may and ought to be mobilised for the benefit of the socio-economic development of the country, particularly if specific conditions are in place.

Albanians from Kosovo and Macedonia with a PhD also contribute to the Albanian scientific diaspora, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, numbering about one-fifth of those from Albania. In our analysis below, we will focus upon only the scientific diaspora from Albania, though 92 percent of Albanian PhDs from Kosovo and Macedonia who live and work in OECD countries are willing and ready to cooperate with Albanian universities and research institutions.⁶⁶

4.1 METHODOLOGY

From the methodology point of view, the study is based on literature review⁶⁷ and on qualitative and quantitative techniques which are cross-referenced or “triangulated”. The quantitative techniques consisted of two online surveys undertaken with Albanian PhDs and students who study abroad, and one survey in some public universities to assess the situation of the brain drain phenomenon. Qualitative techniques included interviews and focus group discussions realised mainly online with a) representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora, b) Albanian students who study abroad, c) parents of students in Albania (in this case face-to-face interviews), and d) migration experts and senior officials from universities and research institutions (also face-to-face).

4.2 QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

To gather quantitative data on the Albanian scientific diaspora and to analyse the brain drain from the country, we conducted three statistical surveys. The *first survey* covered the Albanian scientific diaspora as defined above, i.e. including Albanians who either have, or are in the process of obtaining, a PhD abroad and who live and work abroad. Some 725 representatives comprising this group responded to the survey, including 48 renowned experts and professionals who do not have a PhD but who work for international organisations, universities, research institutions or health care units outside of Albania. This latter group of respondents represents only 6.6 percent of the total sample and their inclusion or exclusion does not affect the overall results.

The questions we addressed to the diaspora concern their social and demographic characteristics, motives for emigration, field of study, employment in the host country, social capital and connections to Albania, possibility of return, the social and economic conditions they consider should be met before returning to their home country, and the existing and desired forms of cooperation with universities and research institutions in Albania.

65. *National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2017–2022*, where it is stated that the total number of academic staff in Albanian public and private universities is 3,209, of whom 1909 (59.5%) have a PhD (for more information see: *Strategjia Kombëtare për Shkencën, Teknologjinë dhe Inovacionin 2017–2022*, approved by the Council of Ministers of Albania, Decision No. 710, dated 01 December 2017, retrieved from the Official Journal: <http://www.qbz.gov.al/Botime/Akteindividuale/Janar%202017/Fletore%20215/VKM%20nr.%20710,%20date%201.12.2017.pdf> on 08 March 2018

66. CESS, Survey of Albanian PhDs

67. All the references are listed in the bibliography

A major difficulty for the research was to obtain e-mail contact details. We possessed some contacts from previous CESS projects⁶⁸ and we also used social networking (LinkedIn, Facebook). After establishing initial contact, a copy of the online survey and a cover letter were sent up to three times to the member of the diaspora to present the scope of the study and request their participation.⁶⁹ If the responses were positive, we asked, with a snowball method, the respondent to pass the survey on to friends and acquaintances who either had a PhD, or were still in the process of obtaining a PhD, abroad. In addition to filling in quantitative data, many representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora provided in their e-mails comments and opinions on cooperation with universities and research institutions in Albania. This input was analysed and is reflected in the report. Almost 65 percent of the individuals to whom we sent the survey responded, an acceptable level of response for an online survey. Around two percent refused to fill in the questionnaire on the grounds that the survey asked for personal information that they were reluctant to provide. A few others also refused, claiming that they were disappointed with the cooperation so far with Albanian universities and research institutions.

From the survey, we collected quantitative data also on Albanian PhDs from Kosovo (159) and Macedonia (29), whom we mention in the present study only to highlight the real dimensions of the ethnic-Albanian scientific diaspora. Such data may serve for another study, perhaps at the regional level, of the scientific diaspora.

The *second survey* relates to Albanian students who have left Albania to attend undergraduate or postgraduate taught courses abroad. Some 303 Albanian students studying abroad responded to this survey. We applied a methodology for this survey similar to the one we used in the case of the scientific diaspora. Almost 71 percent of the students contacted responded to the survey and less than one percent refused, on the grounds that the survey asked for personal information, whereas 28 percent did not respond at all.

The student questionnaire included 35 questions or groups of questions, helping with the collection of quantitative data on the social and demographic background of the students (age, gender, education, parental employment), current position (field and level of study, method of financing studies, place of study, etc.), factors contributing to the decision to study abroad, experience in the host country, and expectations to return home after completing the studies.⁷⁰

The *third survey* was conducted with some universities to assess the brain drain of lecturers and researchers over the period 2009–2017. The data were collected by human resources units in certain public universities and contained information

68. CESS (1998) *Creation of a Databank of Albanian Students and Fellows Who Have Obtained Higher Degrees Abroad*. Tirana: Soros Foundation

69. The survey and cover letter are annexed to this report

70. The student questionnaire was adapted from previous versions used to explore the phenomenon of UK “Erasmus” students studying abroad, and UK and Indian students studying abroad for full degree programmes (at bachelor, master or doctoral level). See King R., Ruiz-Gelices E. (2003) International student migration and the European “Year Abroad”: effects on European identity and subsequent migration behaviour, *International Journal of Population Geography*, 9(3): 229–252; King R., Sondhi G. (2018) International student migration: a comparison of UK and Indian students’ motivations for studying abroad, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 16(2): 176–191

about the place and year of emigration, age, gender, civil status, degree, qualification abroad, years of work at the institution, and field of study. We cross-referenced the data with previous surveys undertaken over the period 1990–2008.⁷¹

4.3 QUALITATIVE TECHNIQUES

In addition to the quantitative techniques, 34 Skype interviews and three focus group discussions were held with representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora and students abroad. Additional interviews were conducted face-to-face in Albania with four experts and five heads of academic and scientific institutions in the country, as well as with 15 parents of Albanian students who are currently studying abroad. From the interviews and focus groups, we collected qualitative information related to the causes and history of migration, study and employment experience in the host country, daily life, identity, social capital, connection to the homeland, policies for migrants, future plans and cooperation with home-country universities and research institutions. A few of these interviewees have already been quoted in earlier sections of this report.

Some of the interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed. All the names cited in the reported interviews or focus groups are fictitious, and standard procedures were applied to help preserve the confidentiality of the participants.⁷²

71. **Gëdeshi I., Black R.** (2006) *From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Mobilising Albania's Skilled Diaspora*. Tirana: UNDP policy paper; **Gëdeshi I., Gërmenji E.** (2008) *Highly Skilled Migration from Albania: An Assessment of Current Trends and the Ways Ahead*. Brighton: DRC Migration, Globalisation and Development, Working Paper T25.

72. Although, strictly speaking, full anonymity and confidentiality cannot be assured in the case of focus groups, since other participants, beyond the researcher, are also present

5. Characteristics of the Albanian Scientific Diaspora

The Albanian scientific diaspora is relatively young, with an average age of 37 years; 72 percent are younger than 40 years, and only 2.3 percent are 60 years of age or older. Another group (12.3%) consists of those who emigrated with their parents when they were 15 years old or younger. This group completed only part of their pre-university education in Albania and is less connected emotionally to the home country.

At least according to our survey returns, the Albanian scientific diaspora is dominated by women (57.4%). Almost half of the members of the scientific diaspora are married (46%) or cohabit with a partner (2%) and it is not uncommon for the partner to be non-Albanian. Nearly half (46.9%) of the diaspora emigrated for the first time during the first decade of the transition (1990s), 37.6 percent in the second decade (2000s) and 11.5 percent in the third (2010s). Data show that only 3.9 percent of respondents had completed their studies during the final years of the socialist system. Almost 48 percent of respondents from the scientific diaspora had worked in Albania prior to emigration, and 36.9 percent had worked in Albanian public or private universities and research institutions.

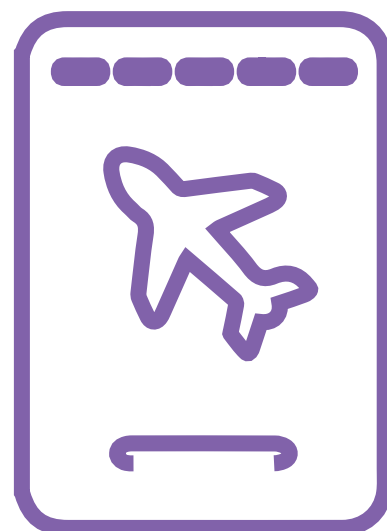
The underlying reasons for the emigration of the respondent representatives of the scientific diaspora are various.⁷³ Most reported the main reason was to study in a prestigious university (66.2%) or pursue professional and training opportunities (4.5%) abroad that are much better than those offered in the home country. Others—mainly those who emigrated with their parents or who did not leave for purposes of study—emphasised economic factors (14.9%), or, to a lesser extent, political factors (3.3%). A small number, mainly lecturers and researchers (2.8%), mentioned the poor infrastructure, equipment and facilities for research work in Albania.

The selection of the destination country is conditioned by other factors. In this regard, two groups are noted. The first group consists mainly of PhD candidates, who rank the reputation of the university, or the possibility of a scholarship, as the main reason. The second group consists of those already with a PhD, who emphasise job opportunities and the fact that they already know the language. Only a small number stated that they selected the host country because of the presence there of relatives or friends.

A characteristic of the Albanian scientific diaspora is that it is growing rapidly (Figure 9). The number of Albanian PhD holders (based on year of completion) has increased rapidly since the fall of communism. Dividing the period 1988–2017 into three separate decades, we note that the percentage of PhD holders is 2.6 times higher in the second decade than in the first decade, and 3.3 times higher in the third decade than in the second. This rapid increase is expected to continue. The number of PhD candidates by start year increased by almost 154 percent from 2012–2016 above the figures for 2007–2011, fuelled by a number of factors. First, the number of Albanian immigrants in OECD countries is increasing, and one of the objectives of

73. Gëdeshi I., Mara H., Dhimitri R., Krisafi H. (1999) *Emigrimi i Elites Intelektuale nga Shqipëria gjatë Periudhës së Tranzicionit*. Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese “Luarasi”

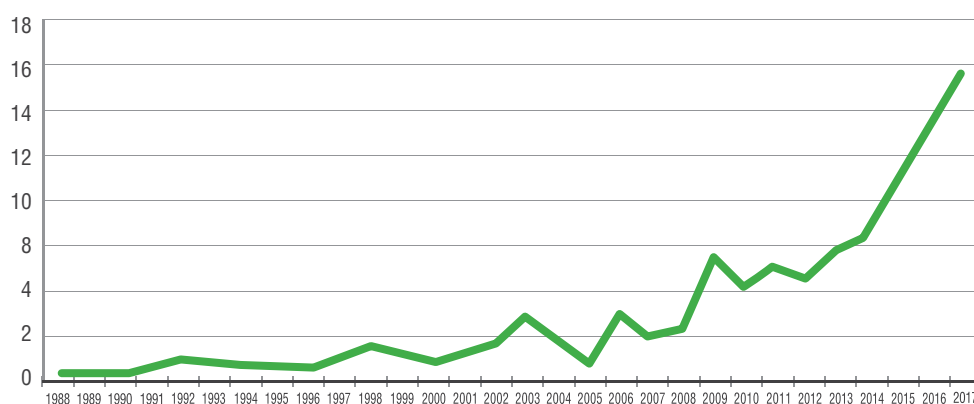
Between the first host country and the current destination country, the Albanian scientific diaspora may have travelled through two or three intermediate countries



their emigration is to provide a good education for their children. Their children attend schools and universities in the host country, and some continue on to PhD studies. Our data also include examples where both a parent and a child have completed a PhD in the destination country. Skënder, a professor of informatics in Germany and member of the Alb-Shkenca Institute, noted:

“Albanian migrants came to Germany when they were young and now they have become parents here. They value education and wish to provide for their children to be educated here. For that reason, I say that the number of those that take the academic path is increasing”

FIGURE 9. PERCENTAGE OF ALBANIAN DOCTORATES BY YEAR OF COMPLETION

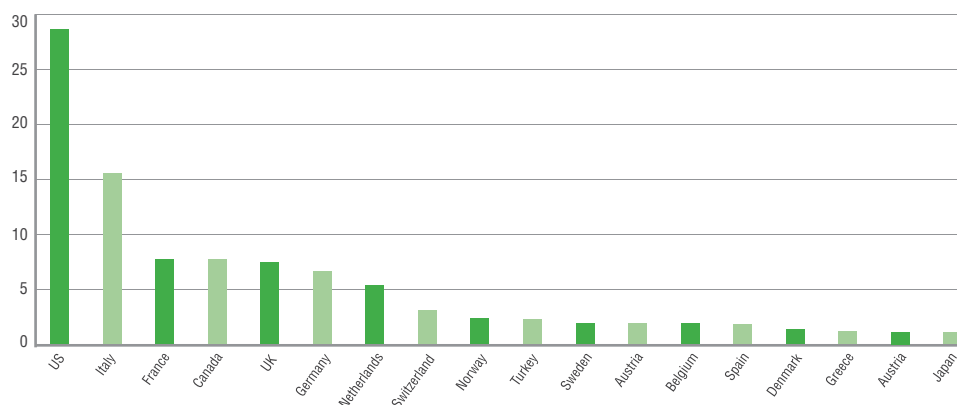


Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

Second, the number of Albanian students studying in OECD countries is increasing, including some who continue with PhD studies. In our sample, 68 percent of PhDs or PhD candidates completed their entire university studies abroad.

Although scattered across five continents and 40 different countries, almost 72 percent of the Albanian scientific diaspora is concentrated in the most industrialised OECD countries: the USA, Italy, France, Canada, United Kingdom and Germany (Figure 10). The US leads with 28.3 percent and, as we shall see, is the main destination of Albanian PhDs in their long journey. Survey data show that 18 percent of Albanian PhDs who currently live in the US completed their studies in Italy, France, UK, Germany and the Netherlands.

FIGURE 10. DISTRIBUTION OF THE ALBANIAN SCIENTIFIC DIASPORA BY HOST COUNTRY



Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

Italy is in second place (15.3%) and looks to be a starting point. The geographic proximity and cultural similarities, the large stock of Albanian immigrants and favourable policies for students are among the factors that explain the large concentration of the Albanian scientific diaspora in Italy. The next set of countries—France, Canada, the UK and Germany—are more or less at the same level, around 7 percent each, though their positions have changed over time. France, for example was the top destination in the early transition years, but now ranks lower.⁷⁴ In contrast, the UK and, recently, Germany have increased their share.

Another part of the Albanian scientific diaspora (18%) is in some smaller (in population terms) but highly developed countries in Western Europe, such as the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Belgium and Denmark. These countries offer a high quality of life, and the Albanian PhDs are employed in renowned universities and research institutions or multi-national companies. Others have gone as far as Australia (1%) and Japan (0.8%).

Unlike the scientific diaspora from Albania, almost half of that from Kosovo and Macedonia are concentrated mostly in their traditional destination countries of Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the UK, and in Scandinavia. Nevertheless, the US is also their country of primary choice (15%).

74. Until the late 1980s, the majority of Albanian students tended to study in France (72%), with fewer in Italy (13%), Austria (9%), and Greece (3%), according to Gëdeshi I., Black R. (2006) *From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Mobilising Albania's Skilled Diaspora*. Tirana: UNDP policy paper

The Albanian scientific diaspora is characterised by high mobility, with it moving from one destination country to another, with the final destination in Europe being the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland or in Scandinavia, or the US or Canada across the Atlantic. This pattern is clearly reported in Table 4, with countries such as Greece, Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria and, to a lesser extent, Austria, the first countries of immigration, serving as a starting point on the migrants' journey towards other countries (see also Figure 11). In the trajectory from first country of immigration to final destination country, Italy and Greece lost 10.9 and 7.9 percent, respectively, of migrants whereas the US and Canada gained 10.1 and 4.2 percent, respectively.

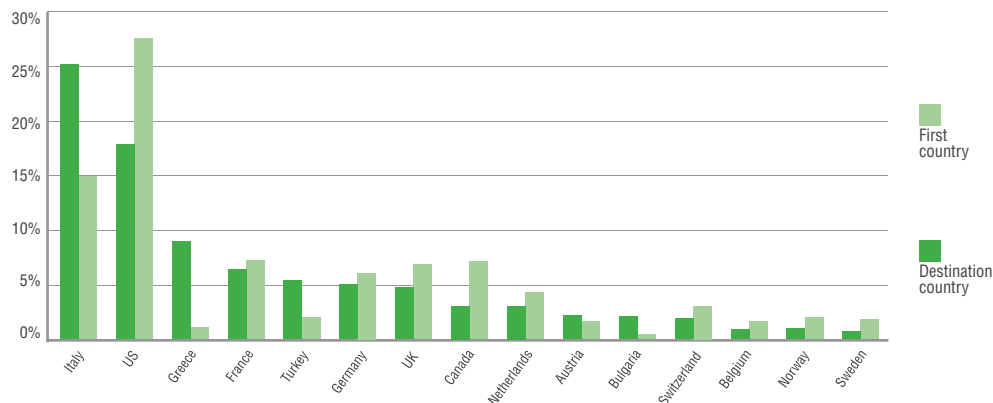
TABLE 4. FIRST COUNTRY OF IMMIGRATION AND DESTINATION COUNTRY (%)

Country	First country of immigration	Destination country	Difference
Italy	26.2	15.3	-10.9
USA	18.2	28.3	10.1
Greece	9.0	1.1	-7.9
France	6.6	7.4	0.8
Turkey	5.4	2.1	-3.3
Germany	5.2	6.2	1.0
UK	4.8	7.2	2.4
Canada	3.2	7.4	4.2
The Netherlands	3.1	4.4	1.3
Austria	2.1	1.8	-0.3
Bulgaria	1.8	0.0	-1.8
Switzerland	1.7	3.1	1.4
Belgium	1.0	1.7	0.7
Norway	1.0	2.1	1.1
Sweden	0.8	1.9	0.8

Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

Between the first host country and the current destination country, the Albanian scientific diaspora may have travelled through two or three intermediate countries. Many talented young people have followed initial university studies in Italy, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, or Cyprus, and have continued with a Master or PhD studies in other countries. Drini completed his bachelor studies in Bulgaria, a Master's in Austria and a PhD in the UK. Mimoza, daughter of an emigrant in the 1990s, completed her bachelor's and Master's in Italy, her PhD and subsequent postdoctoral career in universities in Italy, the UK and Japan and is now a member of a world-famous research group in Cambridge.

FIGURE 11. FIRST COUNTRY AND CURRENT DESTINATION COUNTRY



Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

Other representatives of the scientific diaspora have continued their journey toward the US. Petrit is a professor at a US university. He told us: “I completed my bachelor’s studies in Turkey and later came to the US for my Master’s. Later, I went on to complete my PhD, after which, I started to work as a lecturer at the university.” Ndrëçim, one of the leaders of an organisation of the Albanian scientific diaspora, said: “A colleague graduated in biology and is now working at [names “Ivy League” university]. Some others have moved around Europe, to the United Kingdom, and some have gone to the US, where they work in large laboratories, with greater opportunities.” Quantitative data from the survey show that most Albanian PhDs who have emigrated from EU countries to the US have studied scientific subjects such as biology, mathematics, informatics, physics or chemistry.

Meanwhile, others, pursuing a successful career, moved on to other universities within the EU in order to progress in their academic career. Mirela said:

“I just accepted a very attractive offer from [names top European university] for a full professor position. Although the University of [names Dutch university] made a counter offer as full professor not to let me go, the new job is in a different category professionally. I have been living in the Netherlands for 18 years; it is time for something else”

Other researchers who work for universities, research institutions or multinational companies have gained extensive experience in various countries. Entela earned her PhD in France, works for one of the large oil companies in the US and has developed extensive experience from Arab countries. Agim, who also earned his PhD in France, works for a French multinational in South-East Asia and is one of the most prominent geologists in the country where he works.

The Albanian scientific diaspora is diversified in terms of field of study. Table 5 reports the various fields among the respondent Albanian PhDs. Around 19 percent have studied (or are studying) social sciences, 18 percent biology, maths or physics, 17 percent economics and business studies, 14 percent medicine and related, 13 percent engineering or construction and 10 percent computing, informatics or electronics.

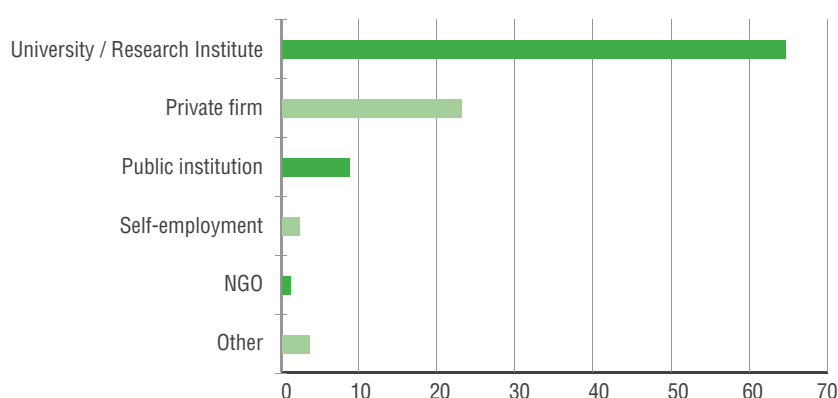
TABLE 5. MAIN SUBJECT OF STUDY

Subject	Percentage
social sciences: politics, sociology	19
sciences: biology, maths, physics	18
economics and business studies	17
medicine, and related	14
engineering and construction	13
computing, informatics, electronics	10
other (e.g. law, architecture, languages, media studies)	9
Total	100

Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

This scientific diaspora in advanced countries is employed mainly by universities, laboratories and research institutions. Survey data show that 62 percent of Albanian PhD-holders are employed by universities and research institutions, 23 percent by private firms and 8 percent by public institutions (Figure 12). The percentage employed in universities and research institutions is higher in the UK, US, Germany and the Netherlands.

FIGURE 12. EMPLOYMENT OF ALBANIAN PHDS (%)



Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

6. Social Capital of the Albanian Scientific Diaspora

The Albanian scientific diaspora, especially the first generation, maintains close links with the home country. According to the survey, 96 percent of Albanian PhDs maintain regular contact with Albania, through a range of communication media (Skype, telephone, e-mail) with relatives, friends and colleagues from universities and research institutions where they used to work before. Nearly 75 percent visit Albania during the holidays, once or more during the year, to visit parents, relatives and friends.

Through this regular communication, visits to the home country, use of Internet and watching Albanian TV stations, the scientific diaspora is well informed of the political, economic and social events taking place back home. Gjergji, a university professor in the US, said:

“Every day I spend around 15 minutes reading *Balkanweb* and learning the latest developments in Albania. A friend of mine spends around an hour and a half on detailed news from Albania. When I need to know something in greater detail, I ask him. The Internet is the source of our information.”

Members of the Albanian scientific diaspora discuss such information when they get together. Gjergji continued:

“I am lucky to have Albanian friends at my university. They are well-educated people and academics and we get together at least twice a week for a coffee, as we used to do in Albania, and discuss the politics in our country.”

From the frequent contacts and communications with the home country and among fellow Albanians, they manage to preserve an Albanian identity and belonging. Afërdita, a young scholar who has just completed her PhD in the Netherlands, said:

“My mind is that of an Albanian. When I wake up in the morning, I read the news first from Albania, then the Dutch news. Of course, I get updates about the Netherlands, too. I live here and what happens here affects my life here. When I arrived, I was 23 and I felt totally Albanian. Perhaps I may feel increasingly more Dutch over the years, but I believe I will always remain Albanian.”

Others, who have lived longer in their host country, describe their situation ambivalently. Arben, a professor at a US university, said:

“I consider myself an American citizen; I have been living here for ten years, I have my job, my family interests and my life, here. Therefore, I can convincingly say I am an American citizen. However, I left at a mature age and, for those like me, it would be difficult to say I do not care about

The Albanian scientific diaspora possesses a rich cognitive social capital in the host country, by which we mean that its members are well integrated into the norms, values and attitudes that govern academic behaviour



what happens in Albania. I am happy when I hear about good things and I get sad when I hear about unpleasant things happening. Also, my brother and sister live there; I have my memories. Both countries are important to me, here lies the future of my children and of their children. Therefore, I am very keen on what happens in America. On the other hand, I am also interested in what happens in Albania.”

Such Albanian belonging is also noted among those who, while working for various international organisations, have lived in various countries around the world. Shpëtim, a researcher who currently lives in Italy, said:

“First of all, I feel Albanian, though I feel somewhat a citizen of the world. I have been around in many US states, in Europe and in many other countries, wherever my work takes me. I feel somehow a citizen of the world, but with a distinct Albanian seal!”

The interest in the home country diminishes among the second-generation Albanians born abroad to Albanian parents, or those who emigrated when they were very young and grew up in the host country, though they do not deny their Albanian identity. Endrit, a university professor in the US, talked about his sons (one, a university professor, and the other, a manager for an insurance company):

“My sons like Albania and visit it every year for holidays, but they have no idea of what happens in Albania and see themselves totally here. They see Albania only as an attractive country that they can visit during the summer vacations, to enjoy the beautiful beaches in the south of the country. They have also many friends in Albania. But, none of them reads any news about the country. Myself, first thing every morning,

I read the news on my mobile phone and share with them the latest on Albania. They like to say they are of Albanian origin, that they visit Albania on holiday, connect with friends, but it's only for fun; it is not that they are really interested in the economic and political developments in Albania, its pressing issues, etc."

Meanwhile, Agron, a researcher with a long experience in the US and active in the Alb-Shkenca academic diasporic organisation, suggested tapping into the potential of the Albanian scientific diaspora:

"I have always wished, and continue to hope and seek to cooperate with colleagues and institutions in Albania. We have so much to offer. Honestly, I am often saddened by the indifference of the government to support such participation and make use of this great desire. Unfortunately, the window of opportunity narrows every year as our children here (the next generation) do not have the same emotional and spiritual bond with home as we have"

The Albanian scientific diaspora possesses a rich cognitive social capital in the host country, by which we mean that its members are well integrated into the norms, values and attitudes that govern academic behaviour. Due to its integration, it has 'very frequent' (48%) and 'frequent' (22%) contacts with colleagues, academic and scientific circles and local communities. Therefore, the diaspora can serve as a bridge between universities and research institutions in home and host countries. In addition, with its rich social capital, it may mobilise prominent scientific and other academic figures in the host country to cooperate with universities and research institutions in Albania. This was affirmed by Shpresa, a professor of economics in a European university:

"I have discussed with my husband, who is also an academic, about establishing a network and bringing to Albania renowned figures from the field of economics to deliver lectures or participate in summer schools. They would gladly come to Albania, even for no fee, because they are our friends"

When asked about the possibility of engaging his colleagues in a form of cooperation in Albania, Altin, a university professor in the US, said:

"I would engage not only myself, I am Albanian, but also my American colleagues who are better qualified and have more extensive knowledge and experience, and have contributed in countries similar to Albania, in the field of vocational education"

However, the Albanian scientific diaspora has a poor structural social capital in terms of memberships of and affiliations to associations, institutions and networks. According to quantitative data, participation in networks and cultural and scientific

organisations is low. Only 18.1 percent of the diaspora say that they participate in one or more organisations, mainly cultural (53.1%), student (22.6%) or scientific (21.8%), with far fewer in political (6.2%) organisations.⁷⁵ The low and sporadic participation in organisations and networks does not allow for the undertaking of joint initiatives and actions that would benefit the home country. Many of the respondents said that they participate in one or more professional and scientific organisations in the host country or internationally, but not in Albanian scientific diaspora organisations. This was affirmed by Gjergji, a professor from a US state university:

“I do not participate in any Albanian scientific association, though I have been invited to Alb-Shkenca. Here, I participate in some professional associations related to my work. They are American and international associations on vocational education.”

Participation in these associations allows Albanian PhDs to establish contacts and cooperation opportunities with scientists, researchers and professionals from around the globe, enhancing their scientific profile. Meanwhile, the low level of participation of Albanian PhDs in Albanian scientific diaspora organisations indicates their early stage of development and that comprehensive efforts are needed for their organisation.⁷⁶

Certainly, one of the largest and oldest Albanian scientific diaspora organisations is Alb-Shkenca, with around 400–500 members, and which brings together Albanian scholars and researchers from around the world, including Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro.⁷⁷ The members of Alb-Shkenca discuss the current problems in their home country and many express their commitment to volunteering for the progress of science and technology in Albania.⁷⁸

There are a number of reasons for the low participation of the members of the Albanian scientific diaspora in organisations and social networks. The first explanation is that Albanian emigration is a relatively recent phenomenon and lacks a tradition of forming associations. This is also noted with the Albanian emigration from Kosovo, which, given its longer history and specific circumstances, is better organised than that from Albania. Luan, a PhD researcher in the US, noted:

“We are not used to having scientific groups with a certain status, comprising a specific group, with elections to be held periodically to elect a chair. Perhaps, some are committed at the beginning, but when they see that this has no real contribution, they pull back”

75. Survey responses mention some networks and organisations including Alb-Shkenca, Network of Albanian Academics in the Netherlands, Albanian Professionals in Washington DC, Albanian American Women's Organization, Motrat Qiriazi, Network of Albanian professionals in Britain, Network of Albanian professionals in Norway, Albanian–Canadian Community Association

76. The low participation in organisations is also noted among the Albanian emigrant population in general. A survey conducted in 2008 of about 2,200 Albanian emigrants showed that only nine percent participated in organisations. For more, see: **de Zwager N., Gressmann W., Gëdeshi I.** (2010) *Market Analysis: Albania—Maximising the Development-Impact of Migration-Related Financial Flows and Investment to Albania*. Vienna, IASC, http://cessalbania.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Albania_Market_Analysys.pdf (last accessed 26 February 2018)

77. Interview with Professor Gentian Zyberi, director of Alb-Shkenca

78. *Buletini Alb-Shkenca, Dhjetor 2005*: <http://www.alb-shkenca.org/index.php/revista/buletini>

In addition, the Albanian scientific diaspora is dispersed across various cities, often unable to reach a critical mass to organise itself in any one place. In the meantime, in interviews, the respondents from this diaspora underlined the lack of publicity by the existing organisations and associations. Elian, a researcher in Italy, said:

“Many are uninformed of the existence of these associations abroad. The Albanian organisations and their leaders should reach out to experts in relevant fields and ask them to become members. I am certain that for all those who have emigrated to the UK or Switzerland there is no reason to keep them from becoming members.”

Albanian embassies in countries with a concentration of the Albanian scientific diaspora could provide a notable contribution to reinforcing its organisation. This requires, first of all, that they have a database of the Albanian scientific diaspora in the respective country, as well as supplementary financial and human resources. Representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora could be invited to national celebrations, working meetings, and consultations, where they may be also informed of economic, political and scientific developments in Albania. In these activities, representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora have the chance to get to know each other. Albanian diplomatic missions may serve also as a go-between for the scientific diaspora and the institutions in Albania, though this has not yet been the case. Ermira, a young researcher who lives and works in the Netherlands, told us about her experience:

“I have regular contacts with the Albanian Embassy in the Netherlands. I have been invited to various activities, symposiums that they have organised. Although I have not attended all these activities, I constantly receive e-mails from the embassy. However, I have not been invited, so far, by Albanian institutions about any form of cooperation.”

7. Role of the Scientific Diaspora

Many countries—including Hungary, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, India, China, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Tunisia, Morocco, Chile, South Africa and Colombia—now pay more attention to their migrant academics, researchers and engineers, who can be mobilised and organised to the benefit of their country of origin. These countries have developed various ways of formalising links to their respective scientific diasporas, whereby migrant academics and researchers have established links with scientific circles in their country of origin. In 1991, a group of Colombian researchers studying and working abroad established the Caldas Network of Colombia, with the intention of strengthening the national research community.⁷⁹ At the same time, migrant professionals from India and China created associations and networks in Silicon Valley in the USA to cooperate with their countries of origin.⁸⁰ At the start of the post-socialist transition, Hungary made attempts to activate a network of emigrant scientists (estimated to be 12% of its global potential).⁸¹ In the early 2000s, a group of Romanian scientists created the Ad-Astra Network in favour of the reform of the research sector in their home country.⁸² These diaspora associations and networks are just some current examples and others are about to be formed.

This new tendency is so strong that some of the most fervent critics of brain drain seem to have changed their opinion. For example, Bhagwati who, in the 1970s, demanded the taxation of host countries in order to compensate the losses from brain drain for the countries of origin⁸³, wrote in 1994 that the developing countries have changed their mind by hoping now to benefit from the skills/talents of their citizens abroad⁸⁴. To cut it short, the approach in use is not the one of brain-drain prevention, but that of diasporas. So, if certain conditions exist, the emigration of skilled people, instead of impoverishing the country of origin, could lead it to prosperity, as long as the diaspora can be “mobilised” to that effect.

7.1 ALTERNATIVES FOR COOPERATION

The Albanian scientific diaspora can have an impact on the socio-economic development of the home country in two main ways. The first is through the return of PhD-holders to Albania. This is highly dependent upon certain conditions being in place. The return

79. Kuznetsov Y. (ed.) (2006) *Diaspora Networks and the International Migration of Skills: How Countries Can Draw on their Talent Abroad*. Washington DC: World Bank Institute (WBI) Development Studies. On the wider issue of “emigrant nations” working towards “engaging their diaspora populations”; see Collyer M. (ed.) (2013) *Emigrant Nations: Policies and Ideologies of Emigrant Engagement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

80. Tejada G. (2012) Mobility, knowledge and cooperation: scientific diasporas as agents of development, *Migration and Development*, 10(18): 59–92

81. Portnoff A-Y. (1996) Les diasporas scientifiques et techniques modèlent l'avenir, *Futuribles*, 210 : 57–59

82. Nedelcu M. (2008) *Internet Diaspora: How Romanian Scholars Abroad Connect Home*. Working Paper Series of Research Network 1989; Working Paper 17/2008

83. Bhagwati J., Martin P. (1976) *Taxing the Brain Drain: A Proposal*. Amsterdam: North Holland

84. Bhagwati J., Rao M. (1994) Vive les étudiants étrangers, *Courrier International*, 204, 29 September–5 October

The Albanian scientific diaspora can have an impact on the socio-economic development of the home country in two main ways. The first is through the return of PhD-holders to Albania



of highly qualified emigrants, trained over many years in universities, laboratories and research institutions in advanced OECD countries, would bring into the country new skills and knowledge, capable of providing a dynamic impetus to the academic and scientific life in Albania. But is a policy for their return realistic? The alternative, the second option for mobilising the PhD diaspora, is to get them to cooperate with universities and research institutions in Albania. However, what should the balance be between the two alternatives?

From the many interviews and contacts we have with representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora, Ermal, a professor at a university in Canada, gave a typically rational assessment:

“Even if many persons from the scientific diaspora were willing to return, it would be difficult for this to materialise, because there are no specialised laboratories, and the universities in Albania lack proper functioning. Instead of inviting foreigners to provide consultancy or lectures, or be involved in important projects in Albania, experts from the diaspora could be a very good choice.”

7.2 RETURN TO THE HOME COUNTRY

The return of Albanian PhDs is a dynamic and constant process that takes place in parallel to the brain drain process. In 2006, Gëdeshi and Black noted that around ten percent of Albanian lecturers and researchers who emigrated after 1990 had returned to the country after gaining several years experience abroad. A third of those worked in the same academic or research institution as prior to their emigration, while the rest mostly worked in the private sector.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, many talented and experienced individuals who have earned a PhD in European or US universities are back in Albania working for public and private universities, research institutions, public administration, civil society organisations, international organisations and the private sector.

Our survey data show that 17.1 percent of Albanian PhDs “would like to return” to Albania, 49.7 percent say they “have not decided yet”, and 33.2 percent say they “will not return.”⁸⁶ A breakdown of answers from the group that would like to return shows that this desire is higher among PhD candidates (20%) than it is among those already with a PhD (15%), the result of a number of reasons that will be addressed later on.

In the case of return to Albania, the three top employers that Albanian PhDs would like to work for are public universities (87%), research institutions (77%) and international organisations (74%). The desire to work, by order of preference, in those organisations is undoubtedly related to their reputation and job reliability. In addition, there were some other choices, including private universities (62%) and NGOs (51%). A smaller group opted for the public administration (40%), private firms (32%), and freelancing (30%).⁸⁷

Return to the home country is dependent upon a number of social, economic, professional and family factors the representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora gave in their responses. One of the main reasons is that their only goal was to earn a PhD from a renowned university in an EU country. Then after completion, when “the possibilities for an academic career in the host country are limited” or when “the labour market is closed to foreigners,” the best and perhaps the only alternative is to return to Albania. Others were conditioned by the terms of the scholarship for doctoral studies, which bind them to return to work in their home country.

The above-mentioned cases concern individuals who are about to finish, or have recently finished, their PhD. Meanwhile, their family conditions are another important factor preventing the person staying on in the host country (Figure 13). Dritan, who is studying for his PhD at one of the top UK universities, said: “Until now, I have tried to avoid the dilemma: of whether to stay or return. But the main reason, in my case, to return to Albania is my family, my parents. I would rather not leave them alone; this is important.”

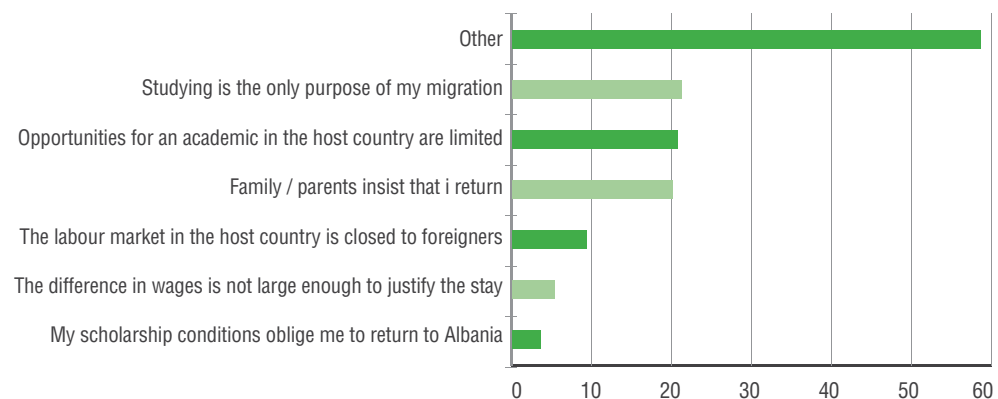
85. Gëdeshi I., Black R. (2006) *From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Mobilising Albania's Skilled Diaspora*. Tirana: UNDP policy paper

86. We asked the respondents: Would you return to work and live in Albania?

87. We asked the respondents, in the event that they wished to return to Albania: Which institutions would you like to work for in Albania? (rank all the options, starting from the most preferred)

The survey responses of those who obtained a PhD some years ago and who work in universities, laboratories or research institutions in advanced OECD countries show that the majority (59.8%) chose the heterogeneous option “Other”. More than four-fifths of respondents in this category highlight the love for their country and the desire to use their know-how and experience obtained over their years in emigration to the benefit of Albania. They want to contribute to the advancement of education and research in their home country, to improve the health care, socio-economic development, change the mind-set and fight corruption, and assist European integration. Some respondents noted that they would be honoured to contribute towards the development of their country, though the opportunities and living conditions, employment and professional career opportunities in the host country were greater.

FIGURE 13. REASONS GIVEN BY ALBANIAN PHDS FOR RETURNING TO ALBANIA



Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

Of those wishing to return, only small minorities stated that they would return to Albania within the next six months (6.5%), in the next year (11%) or in the next 2–3 years (11%). Others suggested 3–5 years (13.5%), 5–10 years (15.5%), or an undetermined period of time. Almost 58 percent of those who wished to return pushed back the return for at least five years, long enough to assess the development of the social and economic conditions at home and progress made in the research system.

This leads to the question, why does the majority of the Albanian scientific diaspora not wish to return? Based on their responses to open-ended questions in the survey, we grouped some of the main reasons, as shown in the following sub-sections.⁸⁸

Most of the respondents said that they feel they have integrated well into the host country, which provides for a comfortable (in terms of accommodation, transport, infrastructure) and secure life, along with open employment and career opportunities.

⁸⁸. An open-ended question was: If you have decided not to return to Albania, what are the reasons?

In addition, children attend quality schools and some of these older children (the second generation) have gone on to find a job after completion of university studies in the host country. Meanwhile, the social and cultural life is rich, health care and education are of good quality, incomes and social security are adequate and most immigrants feel accomplished in the host country. When asked about such advantages, Bora, a medical researcher with a PhD in the Netherlands, listed several:

“First, the country I currently live in provides security for my future life, in the sense that I have a safe job and should it be that my job is no longer secured, I have the support of the state until I find another job. That is, I am not left unaided in the middle of the street, with no income or security. Also, the social and cultural life is many times better than in Albania. I play tennis once a week here. In Albania you do not have this possibility. The environment here is much cleaner and greener. Housing is as expensive as in Tirana, but here the conditions are much better. The university or institution that employs you ensures your professional advancement and you do not pay for attending a training course or conference”

Another group of respondents pointed out that their expertise and field of research are such that they require access to libraries, laboratories and auxiliary infrastructure, human resources and large financial investments. The host country provides these conditions, supports them and values their work, while they are positive about their achievements and scientific career. Erlind, a neurology lecturer at a US university, said:

“I have never wished to return to Albania. I am happy here; I love my job and my life here. I do not think I would be able to have this job and this life in Albania, not even in Western Europe. I have lectured in many countries I have visited, and I think they do not provide the technological conditions that I have here in the US. Concerning cooperation, I agree with it, and I would be very glad to offer it”

Valbona, a professor in another US university, underlined this view: “It is very difficult to do research in biology in Albania at the level of my specialisation.”

A smaller group, which migrated with their parents in the early 1990s, highlighted that they have been raised in the host country and that their family and friends are here. Others stated that they are in a relationship with non-Albanian partners (married or cohabiting) and for that reason, too, see their future in the host country.

All are aware that such social, economic, cultural and scientific conditions are not offered in Albania and that it will take decades before they are available. The respondents did not hesitate to criticise the negative phenomena of Albanian society, and the incapability of the political class to tackle the real problems of the country.

7.3 CREATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The return of highly qualified Albanians from the scientific diaspora could be a very important factor for the socio-economic development of Albania in general, and of universities and research institutions in particular. Certainly, members of the diaspora who do return home are, in general, though not always, more scientifically and professionally competent, are part of international scientific networks, have mastered novel research technologies and methods, are more creative and confident, and more fluent in foreign languages than those who graduated in Albania.

The experience of other countries shows that the return of part of the scientific diaspora has been accompanied by an increase in the scientific output and quality of universities. For example, the return of academics and researchers to Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong was accompanied by a doubling of research articles in these countries between 1989 and 1994, and the scientific output of the best universities in these countries does not differ greatly from that of Western countries.⁸⁹ This situation is noted also for China, where the return of scientists who have studied in the US and other English-speaking countries has significantly increased the scientific and academic standards in universities.⁹⁰

The above-cited studies show that emigrants return to their home country when they assess positively the social, economic and political conditions, as well as the professional career opportunities, protection and quality of social services, improvement in environment and infrastructure, security and an in-depth reform of universities and research institutions, with a higher investment in education and science.

The individuals surveyed from the Albanian scientific diaspora were asked about the conditions that should be in place in order for them to return.⁹¹ Their responses varied but may be grouped into certain areas (Figure 14). First, the majority of respondents looked for greater economic and political stability (66%), reduced levels of corruption at home (64%), higher job security and social security (52%), improvement in public order (37.5%), improved infrastructure and a clean environment (32%), and a rich social and cultural life (23%).

With regard to the development of education and science in Albania, respondents wanted to see in-depth reform of the universities and research institutions (52%), more investments in education and science (49%) and a change in the mentality (29.5%). Respondents wanted these institutions managed by individuals selected on merit, who appreciate and motivate research and teaching.

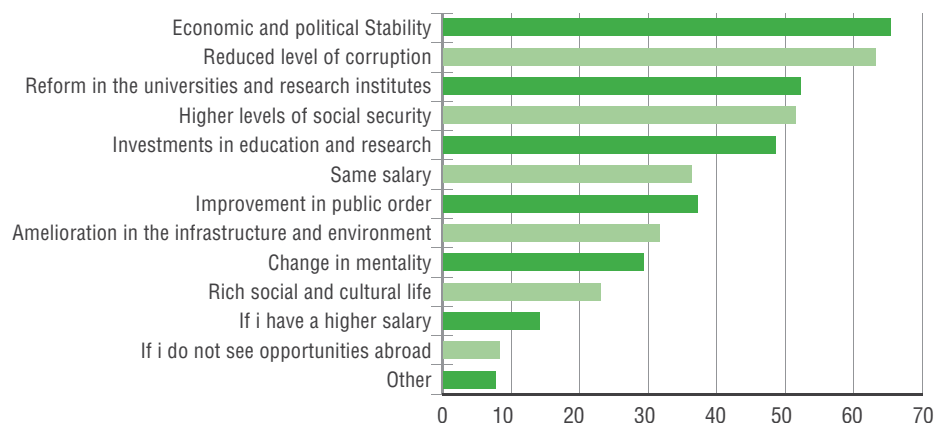
A third category is related to personal income, and respondents pointed to the same salary as they received in the host country (36.6%) or a more competitive salary (13.8%). Interestingly, although salary is an important element for the welfare of the individual, it did not emerge as the main element determining the return of the emigrants.

89. Gaillard J., Gaillard A-M. (1998) Fuite des cerveaux, retours et diasporas, *Futuribles*, 228: 25–49

90. Fangmeng T. (2016) Brain circulation, diaspora and scientific progress: a study of the international migration of Chinese scientists, 1998–2006, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 25(3): 296–319

91. We asked the respondents: If you have not yet decided, what conditions do you think should be in place in Albania for your return to be feasible?

FIGURE 14. CONDITIONS TO BE IN PLACE FOR THE RETURN OF ALBANIAN ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS



Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

For many respondents, it was understandable that the socio-economic conditions and proper research infrastructure would not be in place in the short to medium term. Therefore, the option of a sustainable return of representatives of the Albanian scientific diaspora would not be a realistic, durable and long-term policy but, rather, would lead to disappointment and their eventual re-emigration. During the years 2006–2011, under the Brain Gain Programme, some 62 PhDs returned to Albania,⁹² but some of these have emigrated again. Representatives of the scientific diaspora affirmed this situation in the questionnaire, e-mails and interviews. Leka, who lives in Luxembourg, wrote in the questionnaire: “I have returned twice to Albania, after completing my Master’s and my PhD, and on both occasions I was badly disappointed and felt impelled to return to the West.”

The global experience shows that the return of highly qualified migrants is related to both the overall social and economic development of the country and the development of universities and research there. Thus the government of South Korea, in the 1970s and 1980s, took some measures to encourage young scientists and engineers to return to their homeland, but without significant results. In the 1980s, the situation changed as a result of the rapid and sustainable economic expansion of the country. As a result about two-thirds of the holders of an American doctorate returned to the country. Thus, in 1990, the South Korean government cancelled the subsidies for the return of emigrants, because they were not playing any significant role in the decision making on whether to return to the homeland.⁹³

92. Pavlov T., Zeneli B. (2013) National brain gain policies in case country examples of the Western Balkans, in: Varzari V., Tejada G., Porcescu S., Bolay J.C. (eds) *Skilled Migration and Development Practices: Republic of Moldova and the Countries of South-East Europe*. Bern: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 45–64; Zeneli B. (2013) Brain gain programme in Albania: case study and policy guide for policy makers in Southeast Europe, in: Pavlov T. (ed.) *Brain Gain Policies and Practices in the Western Balkans*. Beograd: Group 484 Center for Migration, 9–51; Gëdeshi I., Jorgoni E. (2010) *Social Impact of Emigration and Rural–Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe*. Brussels: European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

93. Gaillard J., Gaillard A-M. (1998) Fuite des cerveaux, retours et diasporas, *Futuribles*, 228: 25–49; Gaillard A-M., Gaillard J. (1999) *Les Enjeux des Migrations Scientifiques Internationales. De la Quête du Savoir à la Circulation des Compétences*. Paris: L’Harmattan

7.4 DIASPORA OPTIONS

Given the non-feasibility of a definitive return to Albania, the most realistic way for the scientific diaspora to contribute to the development of the country is to cooperate with universities and scientific institutions. Actually 22 percent of the Albanian PhDs interviewed said that they have cooperated with universities and scientific institutions in Albania. This percentage is low if it is considered that 26.5 percent of the diaspora had worked in Albania prior to their emigration and are former staff members of universities and research institutions. Moreover, 11 percent of them graduated from Albanian universities. Other respondents have cooperated in obtaining information during their PhD thesis preparation, in scientific conferences, and in publishing research articles.

Nevertheless, the cooperation is generally sporadic, primarily in the form of visiting lectures and workshops, organisation and participation in conferences, joint projects, consultancies, co-authored articles, hiring for scientific work, PhD supervision and exchange of experiences. Such cooperation is often based upon personal relations and individual initiatives, rather than upon any institutional programmes. Elira, a researcher in the Netherlands, said in her interview:

“I cooperate with the faculty, but this is only because of the personal contacts I maintain with my former university professors. I am part of an editorial board, and I accept (or otherwise) to edit articles due to be published. This is something I do on a voluntary basis, because I want to help the institution. The editor of that journal approached me; no institution has contacted to ask for cooperating. I have not been asked to give lectures either”.

Other persons who work in international organisations or institutions complain about the level of indifference in Albania. Drita, an experienced expert working for an international organisation, wrote in the questionnaire:

“One suggestion I have is that the government should turn its eyes towards Albanians working for the EU and other international organisations and use this network of Albanians to endorse their policies in relations with these institutions. This is not happening at all. For example, I have many opportunities and technical influence to assist, but no one is interested. I work for other countries and assist them in their relations with the EU, but with my own country, there has been no approach. Of course, I might not be directly involved, but I could certainly provide my advice and support”.

Meanwhile, 88.1 percent of respondent Albanian PhDs said that they wish to cooperate with universities and scientific institutions in Albania, with only 2.8 percent saying “No” and 9.1 percent not answering. Those who selected “No answer” in general did not have contacts with universities and scientific institutions in Albania or work in very advanced scientific sectors, which prevented them from cooperating with Albanian institutions. Igli, a researcher in the US, e-mailed:

“Please bear in mind that my responses are related to my domain, i.e. neuroscience. The opportunities within this domain to cooperate with Albanian academics are more limited, as a result of the limited or non-existent funds and resources in Albania for such research”

The size of the Albanian scientific diaspora is larger when it is considered that around 90 percent of the Albanian PhDs from Kosovo and Macedonia who live in the EU, North America or elsewhere, also wish to cooperate with universities and scientific institutions in Albania. In interview, Ahmet, an Albanian from Kosovo and lecturer in informatics in Germany, said: “I have participated in a number of initiatives and have tried to establish connections with colleagues in Albania and Kosovo”

7.5 OBSTACLES

The feedback from the interviews indicated that cooperation between the Albanian scientific diaspora and the universities and scientific institutions in Albania, as in other countries,⁹⁴ faces obstacles and difficulties. These relate not only to the financial aspect but also to the interests, mentality and mediocrity of some of the leaders in the country’s universities and scientific institutions. Some sections of interviews and e-mails from members of the Albanian scientific diaspora illustrate very clearly the nature of such obstacles.

Drini, a former professor in a public university in Albania and currently a professor in a US university, told us about his experience:

“A couple of years ago, I applied for a Fulbright position in Albania. I am a US citizen and have a full professorship here in the USA. While my application was approved in the USA, the Albanian university did not see me as being ‘American enough’. I am sure, that if a John or Mary had applied, even if they were simply ‘assistant professors’, the Albanian University would have jumped and approved their application. Unfortunately, my name is Drini. I told you this story so that you can have an idea of how we, the diaspora, feel about coming back to help. We are not welcome!”

This is also the experience of Anila, who earned her PhD in England and now lives and works in another EU country. She said:

“I left Albania for family reasons. Before leaving, I asked the senior officials of the faculty if I could continue to contribute. That is, to come for some weeks during the year and teach my subject, even without payment. I also asked to be part of the research, working voluntarily. But I saw no desire whatsoever for this. They were not open even for someone teaching a subject on a voluntary basis”

94. Teferra D. (2005) Brain circulation: unparalleled opportunities, underlying challenges, and outmoded presumptions, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(3): 229–250

Zana, an experienced expert working for an international organisation in the EU, e-mailed:

“My husband is a professor [in an EU country] specialised in Balkan issues. For years, he has been offering lectures and books for free, but no Albanian university is interested in having them; they want projects that come together with money”

Petrit, a university professor in the US, said:

“Some years ago, I wanted to take two students from a faculty in Tirana to continue with a Master’s in the US. All the expenses for their studies would be covered by my university here. I asked for the selection process to be transparent and open for all to compete. But that did not materialise. I want to cooperate, but I do not see the same desire and transparency at the other end”

Such indifference and such attitudes, of course, cause disappointment among the Albanian scientific diaspora and prevents cooperation. As Anila continued: “Perhaps they are afraid of the quality of the teaching, and the standards in the way the students are tested, their evaluation, the methodology of teaching, the lecturing and involving students in discussion.”

It is clear that sustainable long-term cooperation of the Albanian scientific diaspora with universities and scientific institutions in Albania requires, first and foremost, in-depth reform of the Albanian institutions and a radical change in the mentality. It also requires establishing a friendly environment, regular communication between the parties, and discussion of ideas and initiatives which may be suggested by the individuals and then adopted by the institution.

7.6 FORMS OF COOPERATION

There are various forms of cooperation that exist between the universities and scientific institutions in Albania and the Albanian scientific diaspora. Some of them were listed earlier, and we give them again here. They include short series of lectures and seminars, participation in joint projects, consultancy for the Albanian government or the private sector, supervision of PhD students, co-authored articles, participation in scientific conferences, training and summer schools, among others.

Thus, we asked Albanian PhDs about their desired forms of cooperation with universities and scientific institutions.⁹⁵ The answers are reported in Table 6.

Most of the respondents (80.7%) preferred participation in joint projects with universities, research institutions or think tanks in Albania, increasing the quality

95. Respondents were asked: If you were to cooperate with universities and research institutions in Albania, public and private, what form do you think this cooperation should take? Respondents could choose one or more alternatives: Short-term cycle of lectures; Participation in joint projects; Consultancy or expertise for the government and the private sector; Supervision of PhDs for colleagues from Albania; Joint papers; Participation in Conferences; Summer Schools; Training; Other (specify)

of the output, such as study reports, policy papers, etc. In addition, through joint projects, the diaspora thought that it would be good to enhance and reinforce personal contacts with the home country and transfer know-how. Interviewees pointed to the assistance in drafting project proposals for international research grants. Anila said:

“I could contribute to writing project proposals for EU funds. I am willing to sit together with Albanian colleagues and write project proposals, exchange experiences and discuss how to assist in obtaining funds from the EU for conducting research”

TABLE 6. SUPPORT AMONG ALBANIAN PHDS LIVING ABROAD FOR DIFFERENT FORMS OF COOPERATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS IN ALBANIA

Form of cooperation	Percentage
participation in joint research projects	80.7
lecture course	75.1
consultancy, especially for government or private sector	67.8
participation in conferences	67.4
joint papers	62.9
supervision of Albanian PhD students	48.2
summer schools	47.3
training schemes	42.9
other	3.2

Source: CESS (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.

The second most preferred form of cooperation was through a series of lectures (75.1%), where visiting researchers and professors could visit Albania and deliver lectures on various subjects for a period of a few days to a few months. In addition to transferring knowledge, such lectures would also help revive Albania’s academic life, including the teaching process in universities. It is well known that face-to-face contact with students better transfers knowledge. In addition, the input from renowned representatives of the scientific diaspora would enliven the exchange of ideas, establish new contacts and networks of academics and researchers in the country.

Many respondents said that they could provide a series of lectures while visiting family in Albania. Others said that they could benefit from a Fulbright Scholarship, or take a sabbatical from their university. Meanwhile, given the current technological situation, lectures on certain topics can be delivered over the Internet by the experts.

Some interviewees pointed to lectures or training in scientific research that need to be conducted with Albanian undergraduate and PhD students. Alba, a lecturer in a US university, said:

“Research in Albanian universities continues not to receive attention. I

studied for my PhD in the US and took eight courses related to scientific research. But, most Albanians who have obtained or are in the process of obtaining a PhD, have not attended a single course on scientific research. This requires that those of us who have graduated in the US contribute to enhancing the quality of scientific research in Albania.”

Mimoza, currently a researcher in the UK, said:

“When I was a student in Tirana, we had some subjects on scientific research. But if I reflect on them, none of those subjects really taught me anything. Thus, I think I could contribute, perhaps once a year I could come and teach a few open classes, either myself or someone else who has a PhD from abroad, and who could improve the quality of learning of those subjects. I think that there should be somebody experienced to deliver some lectures or to work together with the relevant researcher and deliver the lectures together. Most of our lecturers [in Albania] have a Professor Doctor title, but they have not published anything in genuine international reviewed scientific journals”

In the survey, almost 68 percent of respondents chose “consultancy for the government or the private sector” as their form of cooperation. Some have had successful experiences in Albania. But many respondents, such as Vjollca, voiced their concern:

“The money of Albanian taxpayers ends up with very expensive foreign experts. You could hire a foreign expert for a qualified opinion, but not for preparing every document, doing everything”

Consequently, there is a need for activating experts from the Albanian scientific diaspora who know the country, the language and local mentality and who cooperate very well, supplementing each other, with Albanian academics and researchers. Manjola, an experienced lecturer in the US, shared her opinion:

“I am sorry to see that Albania wants every study to be conducted by foreigners. I think that the time is ripe for such studies to be conducted by the Albanians. But it would require preparing a group of Albanians to conduct the studies. The best would be to establish groups where an Albanian from the scientific diaspora works together with one or more Albanians from universities and research institutions in the country, and together they conduct joint studies. The Albanians from the diaspora may instruct, follow up and verify compliance with scientific criteria, etc.”

Participation in conferences (67.4%) and publication of joint papers (62.9%) are two other forms of cooperation selected by the representatives of the scientific diaspora, as these enhance the quality of research articles and their publication in international journals. Meanwhile, supervision of PhD theses was nominated by 48.2 percent of respondents, where cooperation between the scientific diaspora and universities in Albania would undoubtedly enhance the quality of the theses. Long experience of

scientific work, the use of advanced and new research methods and techniques, knowledge of new scientific theories and other information that the scientific diaspora possess would greatly help PhD students in Albania, while the evolution of new technologies facilitates distant communications. In this regard, Edlira, an experienced researcher in the Netherlands, pointed to the clear division of roles. She said:

“If I were to supervise a PhD thesis in Albania, I would be not a promoter but a co-promoter. In other words, the promoter should ensure monetary and financial conditions of the PhD student to be able to develop scientifically, while I would help him or her from the point of view of the science and knowledge. In this regard, I am totally open to cooperation”

Other interviewees asked for the process and selection of PhD candidates to be institutionalised.

In addition to such forms of cooperation, respondents also selected summer schools (47.3%), training (42.9%) and other forms (3.2%); these are potentially important for transferring and disseminating knowledge, establishing personal contacts and exchanging ideas.

7.7 COOPERATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS IN KOSOVO AND OTHER WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

These forms of cooperation extend to universities and scientific institutions in Kosovo and Macedonia. Survey data show that 74 percent of the Albanian scientific diaspora are willing to cooperate with these institutions, affirmed by Indrit, a lecturer of economics at a mid-Western US university: “I would gladly go to Kosovo, also the University of Tetovo [in Macedonia]. I feel welcome in Kosovo, though I have no connection or acquaintance”

Many interviewees said they were willing to cooperate with universities and scientific institutions in Western Balkan countries. Afërdita, from the Netherlands, said:

“During my PhD work, I cooperated even with South Africa, for delivering presentations and lectures in universities. I have travelled so far, but Balkan countries are closer. Albanian PhDs I believe will not be against the idea of contributing to universities in Balkan countries”

Arben, a lecturer in the US, had a similar opinion:

“I would undoubtedly cooperate with Balkan countries. Some time ago, I went from the USA to Sudan, a country at war. I appreciated that visit because it was part of a scientific study, with scientists who were very good experts. If I go, for example, to Montenegro, it would be a pleasant experience and something would remain”

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study has been to provide recommendations to help engage the Albanian scientific diaspora in the social and economic development of their home country.


The Albanian government needs to identify and locate Albanian academics and researchers in OECD countries and create a database. Such a databank should contain the social and demographic data of the person, their degree, field of study, university of graduation and current job position.⁹⁶

This databank, to be curated perhaps by an independent institution, would require continuous updating in order to reflect the rapid quantitative and qualitative changes among the Albanian academic and scientific elite in industrialised countries. It would serve for Albanian universities, research institutions, public administration, think tanks, etc., as a pool from which, temporarily or over the long-term, Albanian academics, scientists and experts working in those countries could be attracted back to Albania. Their proven capacities to master advanced research methods, their ability to assimilate new research technologies and approaches, and their self-confidence and international contacts would significantly contribute towards the consolidation of the scientific and academic standards of Albanian universities, research institutions, public administration and think tanks.

Based on the experience of other countries, the Albanian government needs to assist in the recording, management and consolidation of the Albanian scientific diaspora. In parallel with the political will and administrative capacity, this would also require the reform of the universities and research institutions in order to create a more efficient scientific community, capable of implementing joint projects or research exchange. In today's conditions, thanks to new communication technologies including the Internet, it is relatively easy to establish a network to connect a scientific and academic elite in host countries with the national scientific and academic community. Such cooperation would help in obtaining information of a scientific and technical nature, on the one hand, and in the globalisation and consolidation of the national academic and scientific communities, on the other.

Such cooperation with Albanian emigrant and diaspora academics and researchers should be supported by Albanian diplomatic embassies, particularly in the USA, Italy, France, Canada, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, and Spain. The embassies could maintain regular contacts inviting the diaspora to

⁹⁶. Address by Prof. Dr. Gentian Zyberi on behalf of Alb-Shkenca Institute at the meeting on the "Integration of the Albanian Scientific Diaspora", Tirana, 1 October 2016



Despite the fact that wage supplements are no longer considered to be the only method of attracting highly qualified people to return to or visit the country, there may be other, related incentives that can pave the way for the engagement of skilled people in Albania

important occasions or visits by well-known personalities, informing them of new developments in their homeland.

The return of part of the academic and research elite to Albania will be determined to a considerable extent by the economic and social development of the country and the sustainable progress of an efficacious national research system, so that the gap with industrialised countries in which this elite works grows smaller. Furthermore, the process of brain gain or competence gain is closely linked with the frequency and quality of exchanges taking place between the country of origin and the scientific diaspora. As a general rule, the more linked the potential candidates are with the national research community and the more information they receive on employment opportunities in their field of expertise, the more feasible it will be for them to take the decision to return.

The Albanian government, with the contribution of the international organisations, should establish a special programme, in order to offer financial possibilities for universities and research institutions to invite for short periods Albanian academics and researchers to visit from OECD countries. It is important that universities should be part of these initiatives in order to ensure a certain interest and long-term approach to bringing back and utilising such capacities in the formulation of appropriate and attractive curricula and education projects.

Despite the fact that wage supplements are no longer considered to be the only method of attracting highly qualified people to return to or visit the country, there may be other, related incentives that can pave the way for the engagement of skilled people in Albania. Such initiatives might consist of the establishment of quotas in the public administration and universities that, through legal provisions, are given to highly skilled Albanians from abroad based on a well-defined set of criteria. People with degrees and postgraduate degrees from reputable Western universities ought to be given special status to ensure their engagement in areas where such expertise is needed the most.

Bibliography

- Arslan C., Dumont J-C., Kone Z., Moulan Y., Ozden C., Parsons Ch., Xenogiani T.** (2014) *A New Profile of Migrants in the Aftermath of the Recent Economic Crisis*. Paris: OECD Publishing, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper No. 160, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxt2t3nnjr5-en>.
- Atoyan R., Rahman J.** (2017) *Western Balkans: Increasing Women's Role in the Economy*. Washington DC: International Monetary Fund, IMF Working Paper.
- Barjaba K., King R.** (2005) Introducing and theorising Albanian migration, in: **King R., Mai N., Schwandner-Sievers S.** (eds) *The New Albanian Migration*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1–28.
- Barré R., Hernandez V., Meyer J.B., Vinck K.** (2003) *Diasporas Scientifiques*. Paris: IRD Editions.
- Bhagwati J., Martin P.** (1976) *Taxing the Brain Drain: A Proposal*. Amsterdam: North Holland.
- Bhagwati J., Rao M.** (1994) Vive les étudiants étrangers, *Courrier International*, 204, 29 September–5 October.
- Brubaker R.** (2005) The “diaspora” diaspora, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(1): 1–19.
- Buletini Alb-Shkenca**, Dhjetor 2005: <http://www.alb-shkenca.org/index.php/revista/buletini>
- CESS** (1998) *Creation of a Databank of Albanian Students and Fellows Who Have Obtained Higher Degrees Abroad*. Tirana: Soros Foundation.
- CESS** (2017) *Albanian Scientific Diaspora*. Tirana: CESS.
- Civici A., Gëdeshi I., Shehi D.** (1999) Roli i remitançave në ekonominë shqiptare, *Ekonomia dhe Tranzicioni* [Role of Remittances in the Albanian Economy, *Economy and Transition*], 2.
- Cohen R.** (1997) *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press.
- Collyer M.** (ed.) (2013) *Emigrant Nations: Policies and Ideologies of Emigrant Engagement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- De Soto H., Gordon P., Gëdeshi I., Sinoimeri Z.** (2002) *Poverty in Albania. A Qualitative Assessment*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
- de Zwager N., Gedeshi I., Germenji E., Nikas C.** (2005) *Competing for Remittances*. Tirana: International Organization for Migration.
- de Zwager N., Gressmann W., Gëdeshi I.** (2010) *Market Analysis: Albania – Maximising the Development-Impact of Migration-Related Financial Flows and Investment to Albania*. Vienna, IASCI, http://cessalbania.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Albania_Market_Analysis.pdf (last accessed 26 February 2018).
- Ditter J-G., Gëdeshi I.** (1997) Conditions économiques et émigration des élites intellectuelles en Albanie, *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le Monde Turco-Iranien*, 23, January–June (online).
- Esipova N., Ray J., Pugliese A.** (2017) Number of potential migrants worldwide tops 700 million, *Gallup News*, 8 June, <http://news.gallup.com/poll/211883/number-potential-migrants-worldwide-tops-700-million.aspx> (last accessed 26 February 2018).
- European Training Foundation** (2007) *The Contribution of Human Resources Development to Migration Policy in Albania*. Turin: ETF.
- Eurostat Newsrelease** (2016) Asylum in the EU member states: record number of over 1.2 million first-time asylum seekers registered in 2015, *Eurostat Newsrelease*, 44/2016, 4 March.
- Fangmeng T.** (2016) Brain circulation, diaspora and scientific progress: a study of the international migration of Chinese scientists, 1998–2006, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 25(3): 296–319.
- Gaillard J., Gaillard A-M.** (1998) Fuite des cerveaux, retours et diasporas, *Futuribles*, 228: 25–49.
- Gaillard A-M., Gaillard J.** (1999) *Les Enjeux des Migrations Scientifiques Internationales. De la Quête du Savoir à la Circulation des Compétences*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Gëdeshi I.** (2002) The role of remittances from Albanian emigrants and their influence in the country's economy, *Eastern European Economics*, 40(5): 49–72.
- Gëdeshi I.** (2008) The relationship between migration and socio-economic changes in Albania, *Der Donauraum*, 48(3): 197–292.
- Gëdeshi I.** (2010) *Global Crisis and Migration – Monitoring a Key Transmission Channel for the Albanian Economy*. Tirana: IOM, UNDP, WB.
- Gëdeshi I., Black R.** (2006) *From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Mobilising Albania's Skilled Diaspora*. Tirana: UNDP policy paper.
- Gëdeshi I., de Zwager N.** (2012) Effects of the global crisis on migration and remittances in Albania, in: **Sirkeci I., Cohen J.H., Ratha D.** (eds) *Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond*. Washington DC: The World Bank, 237–254.
- Gëdeshi I., Germenji E.** (2008) *Highly Skilled Migration from Albania: An Assessment of Current Trends and the Ways Ahead*. Brighton: DRC Migration, Globalisation and Development, Working Paper T25.
- Gëdeshi I., Jorgoni E.** (2010) *Social Impact of Emigration and Rural–Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe*. Brussels: European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- Gëdeshi I., Mara H., Dhimitri R., Krisafi H.** (1999) *Emigrimi i Elites Intelektuale nga Shqipëria gjatë Periudhës së Tranzicionit*. Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese “Luarasi”.
- Gedeshi I., Mara H., Preni X.** (2003) *The Encouragement of Social-Economic Development in Relation to the Growth of the Role of the Remittances*. Tirana: CESS.
- Glytsos, N.** (2006) *Is Brain Drain from Albania, Bulgaria and Greece Large Enough to Threaten their Development?* Warsaw: Center for International Relations, Report 14/06.
- Horvat V.** (2004) Brain drain: threat to successful transition in South-East Europe? *South-East European Politics*, 5(1): 76–93.
- INSTAT** (2004) *Migration in Albania. Population and Housing Census 2001*. Tirana: INSTAT.
- INSTAT** (2010) *Labour Market 2008*. Tirana: INSTAT.
- INSTAT** (2012) *Population and Housing Census 2011*. Tirana: INSTAT.
- INSTAT** (2014) *Migration in Albania*. Tirana: INSTAT.
- INSTAT** (2016a) *Labour Market 2015*. Tirana: INSTAT.
- INSTAT** (2016b) http://databaza.instat.gov.al/pweb/sq/DST/START__ED/ (last accessed 28 February 2018).
- INSTAT, IOM** (2014) *Return Migration and Reintegration in Albania*. Tirana: INSTAT/IOM.

- King R., Ruiz-Gelices E.** (2003) International student migration and the European “Year Abroad”: effects on European identity and subsequent migration behaviour, *International Journal of Population Geography*, 9(3): 229–252.
- King R., Sondhi G.** (2018) International student migration: a comparison of UK and Indian students’ motivations for studying abroad, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 16(2): 176–191.
- King R., Uruçi E., Vullnetari J.** (2011) Albanian migration and its effects in comparative perspective, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 13(3): 269–286.
- Kuznetsov Y.** (ed.) (2006) *Diaspora Networks and the International Migration of Skills: How Countries Can Draw on their Talent Abroad*. Washington DC: World Bank Institute (WBI) Development Studies.
- Laczko F., Tjaden J., Auer D.** (2017) Measuring global migration potential, 2010–2015, *Global Migration Data Analysis Centre*, 9, July.
- Mansoor A., Quillin B.** (eds) (2006) *Migration and Remittances. Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Matthews D.** (2018) Take the talent? Pay for the tuition, *Times Higher Education*, 11 January.
- Moguérou P.** (2006) *The Brain Drain of PhDs from Europe to the United States: What We Would Like to Know*. Florence: European University Institute, RSCAS Working Paper 2006/11.
- Nedelcu M.** (2008) *Internet Diaspora: How Romanian Scholars Abroad Connect Home*. Working Paper Series of Research Network 1989; Working Paper 17/2008.
- Nikas C., King R.** (2005) Economic growth through remittances: lessons from the Greek experience of the 1960s applicable to the Albanian case, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 7(2): 235–258.
- OECD** (2007) *Education According to OECD Indicators, 2006*. Paris: OECD.
- Pavlov T., Zeneli B.** (2013) National brain gain policies in case country examples of the Western Balkans, in: **Varzari V., Tejada G., Porcescu S., Bolay J.C.** (eds) *Skilled Migration and Development Practices: Republic of Moldova and the Countries of South-East Europe*. Bern: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 45–64.
- Portnoff A-Y.** (1996) Les diasporas scientifiques et techniques modèlent l’avenir, *Futuribles*, 210 : 57–59.
- Safran W.** (1991) Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return, *Diaspora*, 1(1): 83–99.
- Samson I.** (1996) *Albania Experience Among Transition Trajectories*. Grenoble: University Pierre Mèndes France, Working Paper, *Strategjia Kombëtare për Shkencën, Teknologjinë dhe Inovacionin 2017–2022*, approved by the Council of Ministers of Albania, Decision No. 710, dated 01 December 2017, retrieved from the Official Journal: <http://www.qbz.gov.al/Botime/Akteindividuale/Janar%202017/Fletore%20215/VKM%20nr.%20710,%20date%201.12.2017.pdf> on 08 March 2018.
- Teferra D.** (2005) Brain circulation: unparalleled opportunities, underlying challenges, and outmoded presumptions, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(3): 229–250.
- Tejada G.** (2012) Mobility, knowledge and cooperation: scientific diasporas as agents of development, *Migration and Development*, 10(18): 59–92.
- Tejada G.** (2013) Skilled migration, transnational cooperation and contributions to development: evidence from the Moldovan scientific diaspora, in: **Varzari V., Tejada G., Porcescu S., Bolay J.C.** (eds) *Skilled Migration and Development Practices: Republic of Moldova and the Countries of South-East Europe*. Bern: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 96–122.
- Tejada G., Varzari V., Porcescu S.** (2013) Scientific diasporas, transnationalism and home-country development: evidence from a study of skilled Moldovans abroad, *South-East European and Black Sea Studies*, 13(2): 157–173.
- Tollkuci E., Collaku M.** (2017) Challenges of social indicators affecting the skilled migration of Albanian physicians. Tirana: Center for Economic and Social Studies, Paper presented in the conference **Migration, Diaspora and Development in Albania and in the Western Balkans**, Tirana, 27–28 October.
- UNESCO** (2017) *Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students*. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>
- Varzari V.** (2013) The scientific community of the Republic of Moldova: an empirical analysis of cooperation prospects with the Moldovan scientific diaspora; in **Varzari V., Tejada G., Porcescu S., Bolay J.C.** (eds) *Skilled Migration and Development Practices: Republic of Moldova and the Countries of South-East Europe*. Bern: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 123–139.
- World Bank** (2010) *Albania, the New Growth Agenda: A Country Economic Memorandum*. Washington DC: World Bank Report No. 53599-AL.
- World Bank** (2011) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank** (2015) *Country Partnership Framework for Albania 2015–2019*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank** (2016a) *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank** (2016b) *South-East Europe Regular Economic Report, Resilient Growth and Rising Risks*, 10.
- Zeneli B.** (2013) Brain gain programme in Albania: case study and policy guide for policy makers in Southeast Europe, in: **Pavlov T.** (ed.) *Brain Gain Policies and Practices in the Western Balkans*. Beograd: Group 484 Center for Migration, 9–51.
- Zyberi G.** (2016) *Fjala e Mbatjur në Emër të Institutit Albshkenca në Takimin Integrimi i Diasporës Shkencore Shqiptare*. Tirana: Instituti Alb-Shkenca, 1 Tetor 2016. <http://www.alb-shkenca.org/index.php/artikuj/9-aktivitete/2016/2-integrimi-i-diaspores-shkencore-shqiptare>.



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

United Nations Development Programme Albania
"Skenderbej" Street, Gurten Building, 2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania
For more information: <http://www.al.undp.org>

Copyright ©UNDP 2018. All rights reserved
Design and layout: Grid Cartels, Albania