

Factsheet dossier

DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT



WESTERN BALKANS & EUROPE

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This dossier contains country factsheets on diaspora engagement from the Western Balkan countries in the European countries. The factsheets were produced during ECONDIAS study project. Enhancing the Western Balkan diasporas' contribution to socioeconomic development in their countries of origin, with a focus on business diaspora and entrepreneurship in order to increase the transfer of knowledge/skills and investments, was overarching goal of ECONDIAS. The research conducted for ECONDIAS is based on both primary data collection as well as desk review of existing literature and resources publicly available. Local country experts were recruited to undertake the country research for the selected countries and for mapping country-level diaspora initiatives and practices, while the EU-level report was developed by ICMPD. ECONDIAS mapped 330 practices and initiatives across the six Western Balkan countries, 27 EU countries and Switzerland. The practices were mapped through desk research, as well as through direct contact to relevant stakeholders in the EU-27 (Embassies and Consular Offices, chambers of commerce, diaspora organisations), and were categorised based on the type of stakeholders involved, the type of activity, and the NACE code² of the economic sector of the activity.

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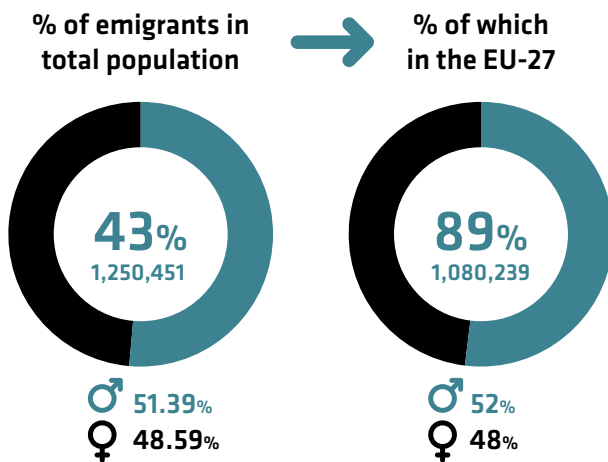
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Diaspora engagement mapping

ALBANIA

Facts & figures

Emigration¹



Top countries of destination²

Italy	486,187
Greece	446,614
USA	97,252
Germany	61,063
Canada	16,544

Political rights



Dual nationality³



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad⁴



The Albanian National Diaspora Strategy 2021-2025



The Albanian National Diaspora Strategy 2021-2025 is the first strategy that focuses specifically on the Albanian diaspora and reflects diaspora policies being a priority for the Albanian government at the time of adoption. The Strategy envisages the engagement of the Albanian diaspora, keeping in mind both the interests of the country's economic development and the importance of preserving the national identity. The mission of the Strategy is to strengthen the role of the Albanian diaspora in the economic development of the country and contribute with professional expertise. The fundamental value of the document is the development of a reliable partnership between the diaspora and the state institutions of Albania.

¹ UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Inflows), November 2022.

² UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin).

³ Art 3 of the Law on Albanian Citizenship, from September 6, 1998.

⁴ Amendments to the Electoral Code (Law No. 101/2020, dated 23 July 2020 allowed the possibility for voting from abroad. However, no decision in this regard was formally taken by the Central Election Committee (CEC). Thus, out-of-country voting was not implemented during Parliamentary Elections of 25 April 2021. Central Election Committee is still in the process of drafting detailed rules to enable the voting of compatriots in diaspora.



Overview of the policy and legislative framework

- 2018** ● **Law on the Albanian Diaspora** aims to define the rules for: a) the competencies of the state authorities responsible for relations with the diaspora; b) the method of maintaining, strengthening and realising diaspora links with the country of origin; c) the establishment of the Diaspora Coordination Council; d) the award of national prizes in the field of relations between the country of origin and the diaspora; e) the preservation and cultivation of national, linguistic, cultural and educational identity of diaspora members and their linkage with the state institutions in their country of origin.
- 2019** ● **Decision of the Council of Ministers “Determining the Criteria for Creating the State Register of Albanian Language and Albanian Culture Teachers and Issuing Certificates for Students in the Diaspora”**. The Ministry which is responsible for education creates the state register of Albanian culture and language teachers in the diaspora. The register contains the list of teachers who have the right to teach Albanian language and culture programmes abroad.
- 2019** ● **Decision of the Council of Ministers for the appointment of coordination officers for the affairs of the Albanian diaspora in the Albanian consulates in Italy and Greece**. The coordinating officers will exercise their function in the following areas: a) development of relations with the Albanian communities in a host country in cooperation with the National Agency of the Diaspora; b) identification of educational needs and communication with teachers of Albanian language and culture in cooperation with the Diaspora Publishing Centre; c) promotion and organization of Albanian businesses in the host country in cooperation with the Albanian Diaspora Business Chamber.
- 2020**
∨
2021 ● **Agreements between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and: the Government of Montenegro; and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia on Cooperation in the Field of the Diaspora**. According to the two separate agreements, the parties will encourage the exchange of experience and programmes in the field of diaspora; encourage direct cooperation between the institutions responsible for diaspora; support cooperation between their institutions according to the principles of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and IOM.

» Trends

Engaging Albanians abroad remains a new policy discussion in Albania. The government recognises the potential of Albanians abroad and aims to encourage Albanians abroad to return temporarily or permanently and support the socio-economic development of the country, with an emphasis on attracting qualified and skilled Albanians.

The Albanian National Diaspora Strategy 2021-2025 represents a concrete first step on formalising relationships with the diaspora. There are a number of Albanian diaspora organisations that can be connected to the country of origin through networks. At the state level, dedicated institutions were created to support the mobilisation of Albanians abroad by providing communication channels and building trust between the diaspora and the government.

✦ Achievements

Networking: Participation of Albanian diaspora in Albania's programmes on social, political, scientific, educational and cultural affairs are a priority for Albania. Since 2018, the state of Albania has held various online and in person forums/events/summits.

Mapping the diaspora: The government has created institutional mechanisms for identifying qualified and skilled diaspora members, with the aim of these members being able to potentially share/transfer their skills in the future.

Social and consular protection schemes: The government has concluded agreements with governments hosting significant numbers of Albanians abroad, including agreements on pensions with Greece, Italy and Canada, as well as the appointment of coordinating officers in the Albanian consulates in Italy and Greece.⁵

Investment and entrepreneurship: Positive achievements have been made in promoting investment and entrepreneurship of citizens residing abroad through the establishment of, for example, the Albanian Diaspora Business Chamber and the Connect Albania Platform.

Obstacles



- **Institutional change:** Albania recently created an enabling environment through establishing specific departments for dealing with diaspora engagement matters. However, some of these departments no longer exist and others are undergoing restructuring. Research with the diaspora suggested that frequent restructuring lowers diasporas' confidence in the institutional environment.
- **Gaps in communication:** Structured and regular communication between diaspora organisations and the origin country institutions is reportedly still at a nascent stage, with more sustained dialogue and development of concrete partnerships still desired.
- **Political factors:** Perceived corruption was mentioned by Albanian diaspora members in the research as an obstacle to further engaging with their country of origin. Concerns of political instability that may impact on the investment environment are also expressed by potential investors from the Albanian diaspora.
- **Lack of data:** The lack of comprehensive and up-to-date data on the diaspora is an important obstacle to further diaspora engagement because it is the very tool that enables the formulation of appropriate and evidence-based policies. The government has tried to engage in data collection of qualified diaspora members to create diaspora skills databases, but there are limited insights into the effectiveness of these initiatives.

⁵ Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 780 for the appointment of coordination officers for the affairs of the Albanian diaspora in the Albanian consulates in Italy and Greece. Appointment of coordinating officers for issues of the Albanian diaspora at the consular structures of the Republic of Albania in Italy and Greece. The coordinating officers will exercise their function in the following areas: a) Development of relations with the Albanian communities in the host country in cooperation with the National Agency of the Diaspora; b) Identification of educational needs and communication with teachers of complementary programs of Albanian language and culture in cooperation with the Diaspora Publishing Center; c) Promotion and organization of Albanian businesses in the host country in cooperation with the Albanian Diaspora Business Chamber.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT

Connect Albania 2017-ongoing

The Connect Albania platform aims to engage Albanian diaspora members as potential development agents, who can intermediate and facilitate foreign direct investments to Albania. It is the first online platform and programme that is directly aimed at promoting potential investments through members of the Albanian diaspora. The initiative is implemented by IOM Albania, with funding from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and in cooperation with the Albanian government.

YOUTH + EDUCATION + TRAINING

Code for Albania 2019-ongoing

Code for Albania is a three-year programme for high school students in Albania, offering professional training by Albanian diaspora professionals, for Albanian programmers, in collaboration with a CodeX NGO from Stanford University. It has already engaged more than 1,000 Albania students. The programme envisions young people as actors of change in Albanian society with the potential to enable the growth of future leaders in the field of technology, entrepreneurship and research in the origin country.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Albanian Diaspora Contributing to the Agriculture of the Home Country 2021

The programme aims to support the socio-economic growth of the rural areas of Albania by improving the capacities of agricultural SMEs in cooperation with the Albanian diaspora in Italy, through online training and field demonstrations. The project aimed to ensure the concrete involvement of the diaspora in the promotion of agricultural services as well as products in Albania by supporting farmers to become proactive and market-oriented by learning to identify trends and opportunities for local value-added products. The project is under a wider IOM Albania programme with funding from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in cooperation with the Albanian government, and is implemented by the Albanian Diaspora Business Chamber in partnership with the Italian Association of Producers (IAP).

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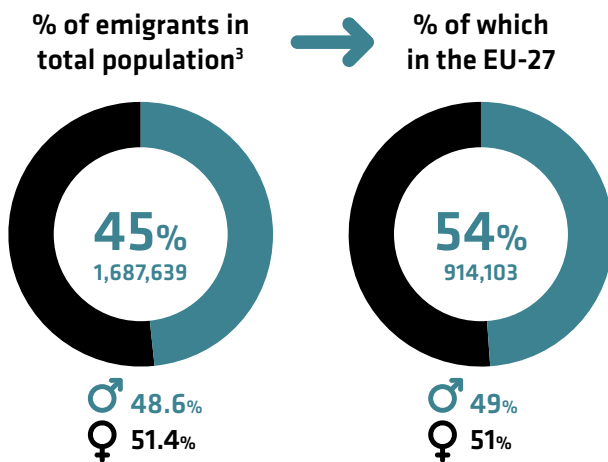
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The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

Diaspora engagement mapping

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹

Facts & figures

Emigration²



Remittances as a share of GDP: 10.1%
Remittances inflow (USD billion): 2,400

Top countries of destination⁴

Croatia	381,100
Serbia	342,526
Germany	221,720
Austria	168,798
Slovenia	122,235

Political rights



Dual nationality⁵



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad⁶
at embassies/consulates or through postal vote⁷



Terminology: When the concept of diaspora is used to estimate its size, diaspora is defined as “population with Bosnia and Herzegovina origins living outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. However, policy documents describe diaspora as “population with Bosnia and Herzegovina (or Republika Srpska, in case of Republika Srpska strategy) origins living outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina and feeling attachment to Bosnia and Herzegovina (or Republika Srpska)”.

1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONDIAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina focused on the engagement of its diaspora from Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

2 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Inflows), November 2022.

3 According to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Migration Profile 2020 estimates, based on combination of sources (above listed UN data being the main one), the total number of emigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina is 1,804,991. The main difference to the UN data is the figure for the number of emigrants in Germany, which according to the German Statistical Office is 304,000.

4 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin).

5 Bosnia and Herzegovina has bilateral agreements on dual nationality signed with Croatia, Serbia and Sweden.

6 Secured without restriction, with an obligation to register to the central voting list.

7 Voting from abroad is also possible by visiting polling stations in municipalities of previous residence in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Election Day.

Draft 2019 Cooperation Strategy with the Emigrants of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2020-2024. The strategy follows the four goals namely (1) developing legal and institutional frameworks for cooperation with the diaspora, (2) involving the diaspora in the social development of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, (3) involving the diaspora in the economic development of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and (4) involving the diaspora youth in development policies of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2015** ● **2015 Strategy in the Area of Migration and Asylum for the Period 2016-2020**, is the latest comprehensive Strategy on migration, which also included one objective on emigration. Among its six objectives, Measure 6.2 of Objective 6 aims at “the improvement of legal and institutional framework that will contribute to the tracking of migration flows from Bosnia and Herzegovina and creating links between emigration resources and the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. Separate strategic documents on emigration were developed after this Strategy.
- 2017** ● **2017 Policy on Cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina Diaspora** is the first policy document on the Bosnia and Herzegovina diaspora since independence. According to the Policy, its objective is “the establishment of long-term institutional co-operation with Bosnia and Herzegovina diaspora and the maximum increase of its influence on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s development. At the same time, the vision is to communicate the clear commitment of the Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions to assist emigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina in establishing comprehensive ties with their country”. The Policy is currently in effect until the adoption of 2019 draft **of the Cooperation Strategy with the Emigrants of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2020-2024**.
- 2019** ● **2019 Strategy on Cooperation with diaspora of Brcko District for 2020-2024** was developed with the support of the Diaspora4Development (D4D) project (see spotlight section) and follows the four strategic goals outlined in the 2019 Strategy on Cooperation Strategy with the Emigrants of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2020-2024 (see above), specified for the Brcko District.
- 2020** ● **2020 Strategic Plan on Cooperation with Republika Srpska Diaspora** is the Republika Srpska diaspora strategy, which is predominantly focused on “maintaining the national identity of the Republika Srpska diaspora abroad”. It also mentions attracting investments from “Serb diaspora members who acquired property abroad”.

» Trends

The current Bosnia and Herzegovina policies on attracting diaspora contributions are strongly geared towards attracting more remittances and channelling the remittances to be used productively, while other diaspora potentials are somewhat underrepresented.

Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted its first policy document on diaspora in 2017, Policy on Cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina Diaspora, after years of discussions and as a compromise for an originally envisaged Diaspora Law. The policy balanced diverging interests in the country in terms of engaging the diaspora.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a draft Strategy on Cooperation with Diaspora for the period 2020-2024, which was initiated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) Diaspora for Development (D4D) in 2017. Initially the strategy was planned to be implemented at the state level, with a request by the Republika Srpska entity to have a "modular" approach i.e. to draft three entity level strategies that will then be combined into the country level framework strategy. However, the Republika Srpska entity eventually withdrew from the work on the strategy, although a modular approach was adopted.

Diaspora Offices have also been introduced at different levels, including in the Sarajevo canton and a number of municipalities.⁸ However, in some cases, the drafted strategies seem to still have insufficient resources for implementation, according to recent research. Additional diaspora projects and activities continue to be implemented by international donors and civil society.



Achievements

Remittances: Remittances play a central role as the main development contribution from the diaspora to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 2010, the annual inflows of remittances were about \$2 billion, which is around 11 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina's GDP. Remittances are often transmitted through informal channels, given the lack of specific initiatives to attract remittances and a number of obstacles to developing better international payment procedures.

Investments: For many years, diaspora investment was sporadic. However, since the launch of two projects (DiasporaInvest funded by USAID, and Diaspora4Development funded by the SDC, see below), the number of businesses started by diaspora has rapidly increased. There are various possible forms of diaspora contributions through investment. There are also a number of cases where diaspora members who worked for a company abroad opened a subsidiary in their country of origin, or cases where a company established by a diaspora member has been a support (or supplier) to a larger company abroad. This particularly applies to the IT and business process outsourcing sectors. It appears that global trends will support these types of investments regardless of diaspora support policies and mechanisms. However, a key area for future development would be to attract investment in other sectors important to Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as metallurgy, woodworking, agriculture or tourism.

Skills transfer: Several international donors and non-governmental organisations recognised the potential of diaspora members' skills and developed different skills transfer schemes (e.g. mentorship for PhD students, or trainers in STEM programmes). These initiatives have been particularly important in a situation of low access to quality education fostering human capital with up-to-date skills in relevant sectors.

Networking: Diaspora is increasingly participating in events organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including local meet-ups or business to business events. The willingness of diaspora members to invest their money, time and skills in Bosnia and Herzegovina indisputably exists. This has been confirmed by all previous studies on diaspora conducted on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁸ The actual number is changing, but the most recent mapping done as part of this project in spring 2022 found that there were 32 municipalities with offices for diaspora.

Obstacles



- **Low confidence in institutions:** Diaspora has low trust in government institutions and prefer to cooperate with non-governmental organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main obstacle for diaspora's enhanced involvement is the lack of available channels for diaspora contributions and the lack of established cooperation from the institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina). For example, many skills transfer schemes offered to universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were rejected due to the perceived threat of competition by staff in the country of origin.
- **Business environment barriers:** The diaspora survey implemented in order to develop the first Bosnia and Herzegovina Strategy on diaspora has shown that diaspora investors are not facing obstacles in starting their business any differently from other investors. Administrative barriers, government inefficiency and corruption have been noted by the diaspora as the key obstacles for efficient and sustainable diaspora investment. In addition, the lack of information about investment opportunities is also recognised as a business environment shortcoming that hinders diaspora investments.
- **Divisions among the diaspora:** Cooperation with a dispersed and not very well institutionally organised diaspora community is a big challenge. The Bosnia and Herzegovina diaspora is rather spread across the world and does not have organisations representing a large enough number of diaspora members that would make implementation of cooperation between diaspora and country of origin governments less cumbersome. Moreover, even in cases where they are organised, they are often organised around ethnic communities, creating an additional layer of division and complicating cooperation further.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



DiasporaInvest (2017 - 2022) and Diaspora4Development (2016-2021)

These are two larger-scale development projects, DiasporaInvest (DI) funded by USAID, and Diaspora4Development funded by the SDC. The former is a USD 6.2 (EUR 5,6) million project implemented in the period from April 3, 2017 through April 2022. The DI's purpose was to catalyse the economic contribution of Bosnia and Herzegovina diaspora to foster the country's socio-economic development by engaging with the diaspora investors in a structured way, providing incentives for diaspora investment through matching grants and technical assistance to investors, and establishing local platforms for business services and investment facilitation. The latter project's second phase, which ran from December 2016 to December 2021 with a budget of CHF 4,83 (EUR 4,8) million, had a goal to increase socio-economic opportunities and perspectives for women and men in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to improve their livelihoods through increased diaspora engagement.

INVESTMENT

Nasa Perspektiva 2019 - ongoing

Nasa Perspektiva, a local NGO from Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been supported by the DiasporaInvest project to establish a one-stop shop that provides various administrative, legal, market research and consultancy services to potential and actual investors from Bosnia and Herzegovina diaspora. It also organises diaspora conferences and business-to-business events to connect diaspora investors and businesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

INVESTMENT

InQuire 2020 – ongoing

InQuire is a training and mentorship programme by Bosnia and Herzegovina diaspora academics for PhD students in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The programme offers a 25-week training in research methods and ongoing mentoring support by matching researchers and scholars from Bosnia and Herzegovina working in leading research institutes abroad with students enrolled in PhD programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is implemented by a research institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina (CREDI) and offers participants the opportunity of employment after completion of the programme. As such, it is a skills transfer scheme that also contributes to reducing emigration of highly skilled people by offering further education and employment of researchers in Bosnia and Herzegovina who would otherwise need to emigrate to pursue such a career.

SKILLS
TRANSFER

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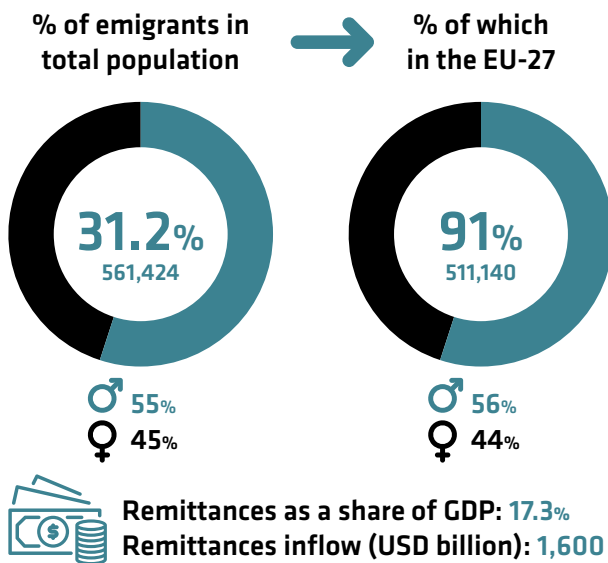


Diaspora engagement mapping

KOSOVO*1

Facts & figures



Emigration²



Top countries of destination³

Germany	202,905
Switzerland	145,882
Italy	44,706
Austria	34,706
USA	25,294

Political rights

 Dual nationality⁴	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad⁵ by postal/mail voting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Terminology: Use of the concept of diaspora and “*mërgata*” or migrants.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99.

1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Kosovo focused on the engagement of its diaspora from Germany and Switzerland.

2 World Bank. Bilateral Migration Matrix 2017; OECD, Database on Immigrants in OECD and non-OECD Countries (DIOC); World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Inflows), November 2022.

3 The data on migration included here are retrieved from the latest most comprehensive and reliable report of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics “Kosovar Migration”, published in 2014, as UN DESA data is not available. However, the current numbers may be differ. Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2014. “Kosovan Migration.” Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Prishtina: Kosovo Agency of Statistics.

4 Law No. 03/L-034, For the Citizenship of Kosovo, Article 3, 2008.

5 Kosovo, Central Election Commission, Law No. 03/L-073 on General Elections. Chapter XIV Out Of Kosovo Voting, Article 96 General Provisions. 96.1 An eligible voter who is temporarily absent from Kosovo may vote for elections for the Kosovo Assembly if he or she has successfully applied for Out of Kosovo voting in accordance with the provisions of this law and CEC rules

Kosovo has a diaspora engagement policy



The Strategy on Diaspora and Migration 2013-2018, approved by the Kosovo government in August, 2013, aims to advance the position and role of the diaspora in home country developments, the preservation of identity, the advancement and protection of political and social rights, as well as their role in the socio-economic development of the country and the transfer of knowledge.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2012** ● **The Law on Diaspora and Migration** aims at the preservation and cultivation of national identity, language, culture and education of diaspora members and their relationships with institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. It also aims to support in the organisation of the diaspora in various countries where they live and to encourage and develop intercultural relations between the Republic of Kosovo and countries in which the diaspora is present. According to this law, a migrant or diaspora member is considered “anyone dwelling or emplaced outside the Republic of Kosovo and who was born or has family origins in the Republic of Kosovo”. At the time of research, the government is drafting a new law on diaspora, expected to be approved in 2023.
- 2013** ● **Strategy on Diaspora and the Action Plan 2013-2018** was approved as the first strategic document on diaspora and as an important sign of recognition of the role and continuous contribution of the Kosovo diaspora abroad. The main goals of this Strategy were related to the advancement of the political and social rights of the diaspora, the preservation of the cultural and linguistic identity of the diaspora, assistance for integration in the countries of settlement, and facilitation of their engagement in the socio-economic development of the country of origin.
- 2017** ● **Project Strategy on Diaspora 2019-2023**. This strategy was a continuation of the first diaspora strategy adopted in 2013, aiming to create stable medium-term policies, through which the state institutions are obliged to advance and strengthen the structured organisation of the diaspora, supporting their institutionalisation, the representation of the interests of the diaspora and its activities in all spheres. However, this strategy could not go through parliamentary procedures to be approved, due to government changes.⁶

» Trends

The engagement of the Kosovar diaspora abroad is not a new topic in Kosovo. However, despite numerous discussions, state institutions have not managed so far to create sustainable mechanisms for engaging the diaspora and utilising their financial and human potential for the development of the country. Political uncertainty has been a factor that has left Kosovo (at least since 2017) without a functional diaspora engagement strategy, while updating the existing law on diaspora and migration is also a key area of development.

Despite such institutional setbacks, the engagement of the diaspora has intensified in recent years, with some important initiatives coming mainly from civil society organizations, international organisations and diaspora communities themselves. There are a considerable number of organisations of the diaspora that are regularly engaged in various social, economic and political issues in Kosovo. More active initiatives are aimed at engaging of the diaspora in the economic development of the country and, more recently, fostering circular migration and the transfer of knowledge and skills from diaspora professionals to the country of origin.

⁶ The current government, namely the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, has expressed that they are planning a new diaspora strategy.

The Kosovar diaspora has been also very active politically, especially in the past two national elections, with a large increase in the diaspora votes.



Achievements

Political processes: The participation of the diaspora in electoral processes is one of the most tangible results of increased discussions on the engagement of the diaspora for the democratisation of the country. The number of voters from the diaspora has increased tenfold in the past five years, directly influencing the orientation of political parties' policies towards the diaspora. Diaspora votes by mail in Kosovo (sent by mail in the last parliamentary elections of 2021), equal the votes needed for the election of more than five mandates (MPs) in the Kosovo Assembly of 120 members.

Financial and social capital: Despite the recent pandemic and financial crises, the Kosovar diaspora has increased the amount of remittances sent to the country of origin. Moreover, the Kosovar diaspora is one of the biggest philanthropic contributors, with over 51% of donations coming from citizens abroad to support various social/civic causes.

Obstacles



- **Low confidence in institutions:** The lack of trust both between diaspora and the government institutions of the country of origin and among diaspora organisations themselves has hindered the diaspora's engagement potential.
- **Political factors:** Frequent changes of governments, as well as frequent elections, have impeded the establishment and adoption of diaspora-related policies and legislative frameworks.
- **Limited capacity:** The institutional bodies mandated for diaspora engagement have previously had insufficient knowledge and expertise to adopt effective diaspora engagement policies and interventions. This has been especially evident in the Kosovar diplomatic and consular missions in the countries in which the diaspora is mostly concentrated.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



Albanian Diaspora Business Networks 2013

The Albanian Diaspora Business Network started as an initiative of the former Ministry of Diaspora⁷ in 2013, as part of the Kosovo Strategy on Diaspora and Migration 2013-2018. By 2017, the Ministry with the support of Diaspora Engagement for Economic Development (see below), managed to establish 25 Diaspora Business Networks in 22 countries. This initiative played an important role in connecting the diaspora businesses to each other, as well as with the Kosovar business community. However, coordination issues between different branches of the network have hindered the potential of such a network, by not enabling the mobilisation of the diaspora's financial capitals for investments in the country of origin at the expected level. Yet, the network has had a relatively great impact on market linkages and facilitation of business partnerships through business forums, conferences, business-to-business meetings, etc.

⁷ Currently, Ministry of Diaspora is merged with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Diaspora Engagement in Economic Development (DEED) 2016

CAPACITY BUILDING AND INVESTMENT

'Diaspora Engagement in Economic Development' (DEED) was a programme funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and implemented in cooperation with UNDP in Kosovo and supported by IOM. The DEED Programme was an innovative initiative to encourage the Kosovar diaspora to be more actively involved in the economic development of the country and its communities of origin. The project consisted of three main components that it aimed to achieve:

1. Strengthening capacities of Kosovo authorities to implement the national Strategy on Diaspora 2013-2018;
2. Upscaling and consolidation of the tested models and mechanisms that facilitate migrants' investments in Kosovo; and
3. Improving the business environment in Kosovo to facilitate the development impact of migration and remittances.

Engaging Diaspora Professionals 2019

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Launched in 2019 by the NGO GERMIN, Engaging Diaspora Professionals (EDP) is a programme that seeks to bring diaspora professionals from all over the world to transfer their know-how and skills to Kosovo. In its first year, with the support from GiZ, the Engaging Diaspora Professionals programme successfully engaged 30 diaspora professionals from Germany and created a pool of more than 200 professionals ready to engage in the near future in their country of origin. As part of the EDP initiative, two research studies have been conducted, one to assess the readiness of the diaspora experts to be engaged at the country of origin level, and one to identify the need for diaspora expertise in the country of origin's institutions.

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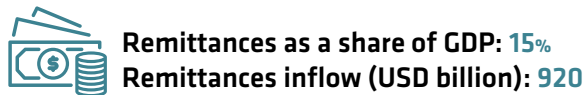
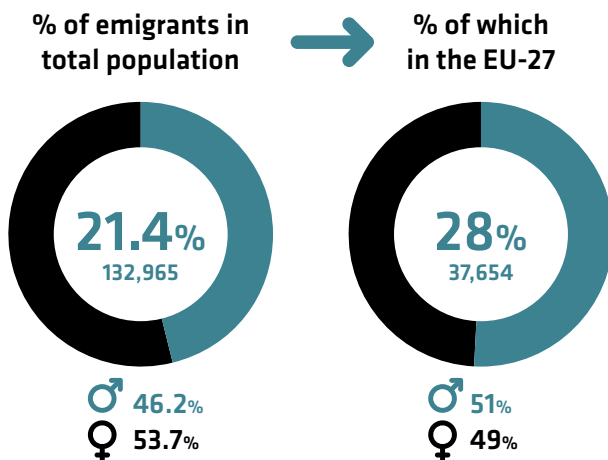
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Diaspora engagement mapping

MONTENEGRO¹

Facts & figures

Emigration²



Top countries of destination³

Serbia	72,596
Germany	17,407
North Macedonia	9,269
Croatia	5,815
Slovenia	3,541

Political rights



Dual nationality: Ambiguous⁴



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad⁵



¹ This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Montenegro focused on the engagement of its diaspora from Germany.

² UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Inflows), November 2022.

³ UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020. However, there is missing information on Montenegrins in the US and Turkey. According to the report of 2013, there are 24,112 Montenegrins in the United States of America, and 54,850 in Turkey.

⁴ According to Jelena Dzankic, European University Institute, EUDO Citizenship Observatory, country report Montenegro: "The question of dual citizenship in Montenegro is a rather politically sensitive one...provisions of the Citizenship Act reflect the ambiguity over whether dual nationality is possible in Montenegro or not. Art. 2 of the Citizenship Act notes that 'a Montenegrin citizen holding at the same time also the citizenship of a foreign country' will be considered a Montenegrin citizen when dealing with Montenegrin authorities. Such a provision implies that it is possible to hold multiple nationalities, including the Montenegrin one. However, the present conditions for naturalisation conflict with this provision, in that a foreign citizen is requested to obtain release from his/her other nationality in order to obtain the Montenegrin one (art. 8, para. 2 The only dual nationality agreement that Montenegro has concluded is with North Macedonia. However, the agreement does not regulate any matters related to the acquisition or loss of nationality. If the laws were consistently applied, the only people in possession of dual nationality in Montenegro would be the ones who possessed nationality of Montenegro and another country before 3 June 2006. An exception to this norm concerns those citizens naturalised pursuant to arts. 10, 11, and 12 of the Citizenship Act, who are not required to submit the release from their original nationality when being admitted into Montenegrin nationality. However, practice has shown that it is possible for the citizens of Montenegro residing outside the Balkans (e.g. EU, United States, Canada, etc.) to obtain dual nationality on the grounds of art. 8 alone. In some cases, citizens from the other republics of the former Yugoslavia were able to do so as well. Still, as nationality issues are rather complex in the region, and checking is facilitated by the similarities of language, it is generally more difficult to obtain dual nationality." Available at: <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/19627>.

⁵ Montenegro, Law on Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament (1998, amended 2016). Article 88. Voters staying abroad shall cast their votes at polling stations in the area of their last place of permanent residence in the territory of Montenegro before they went abroad.

Terminology: Since the 2020 Strategy of cooperation with the diaspora-emigrants was passed, the term that is used is diaspora-emigrants (*dijaspora-iseljenici*). The definition of the term from the Strategy is: "Diaspora-emigrants are considered to be Montenegrin citizens and other persons descending from Montenegro, who live abroad and view Montenegro as their mother state, or a state of their descent, as well as hold it as a democratic, independent, sovereign and civil state". All emigrants are subsumed under this 'joint' category. The term was expanded when the new Strategy was passed to include different attitudes among diaspora members towards their status, as some prefer to be referred to as diaspora members and others as emigrants. In this case the term diaspora refers more to the attachment to the country of origin and the term emigrants refers to the fact that persons left the country of birth for longer than one year.

Montenegro has a diaspora engagement policy



The Government of Montenegro passed the Strategy of Cooperation with Diaspora-Emigrants for the timeframe 2020-2023, together with an action plan. The main goals of the Strategy are: (1) preservation of the state identity of diaspora-emigrants and their belonging to Montenegro, (2) preservation of the cultural identity of diaspora-emigrants, (3) strengthening educational, scientific, cultural and sport related cooperation with diaspora-emigrants, (4) informing and networking with diaspora-emigrants, (5) protection of the rights and status of diaspora-emigrants, and (6) enhancing economic partnership with diaspora-emigrants.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2017** ● **The Strategy for Integrated Migration Management in Montenegro 2017–2020** was the first main policy framework on migration. The objectives of this strategy were to align emigration and immigration policies with EU legislation, strengthen the institutional framework, and establish a monitoring system for implementing the strategy and action plans. The continuation of this Strategy is the Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro 2021–2025 (see below).
- 2017** ● **Law on Foreign Affairs, Official Gazette, 70/2017** is the law that provides framework for Montenegrin relations with other countries. One of the tasks of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as defined by this Law, is development of cooperation with emigrants and their organisations (Article 13). This is defined within diplomatic-consular tasks also, as diplomatic and consular representative offices are in charge of developing cooperation with Montenegrin emigrants, acting with the purpose of preserving state identity and belonging of Montenegrin emigrants and their national and cultural identity in the country of settlement (Articles 17, 28 and 29).
- 2018** ● **Law on Cooperation of Montenegro with Diaspora-Emigration, Official Gazette, 44/2018 and 47/2019** provides the main definitions and proscribes the way cooperation with diaspora-emigrants is implemented. It also recognises the main actors in this cooperation and the scope of their authority, including the Department for Diaspora and Emigrants, the Council for Cooperation with Diaspora, the Committee for International Relations and Emigrants, Montenegrin Mothers Association, the Council of Minority People in Montenegro, etc. The Council for Cooperation with Diaspora-Emigrants is established by this act. The Council is composed of representatives of diaspora-emigrants, representatives of Montenegrin state bodies on the state and local municipality levels, prominent public personalities from Montenegro, as well as diaspora-emigrants.⁶

⁶ There are three relevant by-laws that regulate relations with diaspora: Regulation on criteria and procedures for awarding distinguishing members and organizations of diaspora-emigrants, Official Gazette 15/19, Regulation on evaluation of the programs and projects proposed by organizations of diaspora-emigrants, Official Gazette 16/19 and Regulation of emigrant ID form, Official Gazette 57/19.

- **Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro for the Period 2021-2025, with an Action Plan for 2021 and 2022** is the continuation of the 2017 Strategy for Integrated Migration Management in Montenegro. It aims (1) to ensure that migration management policies, practices and discussions take into account Montenegro's international obligations in the protection of persons seeking international protection, refugees and stateless persons, and that it recognizes the established legal framework for the protection of these persons; (2) to assist state authorities to address the challenges of international protection (asylum) and mixed migration in a way that takes into account the need to protect certain categories of persons; (3) to assist in identifying trends in the areas of migration, trafficking and other mixed movements and early identification of challenges and preparation of responses to them.

» Trends

The Montenegrin economy relies heavily on remittances, which account for 12.6% of its GDP. Recognising the economic potential of the diaspora, Montenegro has launched significant efforts to engage the diaspora more strategically in economic development. In order to stimulate the exchange and cooperation, the Department for Diaspora and Emigrants was established, whose main task is to maintain relations with the diaspora population all over the world. Moreover, two strategic documents were consequently passed which laid out the direction of this cooperation. One of the main goals of the cooperation with the diaspora was economic exchange. However, due to a number of contextual and structural circumstances, the implementation was delayed and had not yet yielded the intended results at the time of research.

✈ Achievements

In 2021, the Business Forum was initiated, which gathered successful businessmen/women of Montenegrin origin who live and work abroad. During the Forum, they met with the representatives of different Montenegrin institutions and discussed opportunities and mechanisms of cooperation. One of the topics discussed at the last forum organised in Bijelo Polje in 2021 was setting priorities for such cooperation. During the Forum, representatives of Montenegrin institutions elaborated on the country's development plans and discussed them with business diaspora members. Part of the programme encompassed "matchmaking" between Montenegrin companies and potential investors from the Montenegrin diaspora. According to representatives of the Department for Diaspora and Emigrants, several investments were already launched as a result of the Forum. This Forum became part of the traditional gathering called "Days of diaspora".

Obstacles



- **Political factors:** Political uncertainty following the 2020 Parliamentary elections impacted the country's institutions and their functioning, including relations with diaspora organisations. Additionally, political divisions are also echoed in diaspora organisations, hampering their cooperation both amongst themselves and with the country of origin. Proposed changes to the nationality policy further hindered cooperation. Cooperation with the diaspora is highly politicised in the country.
- **Limited economic cooperation:** Although mentioned in the policy documents, economic cooperation with the diaspora in practice is not a priority. There are some events that focus on economic cooperation, such as the Business Forum, however, most activities are about culture and identity.

- **Administrative barriers:** Information about procedures and the investment context in Montenegro is rarely accurately available online or in languages other than Montenegrin, while the paperwork is very complex and decentralised.
- **Low engagement of diaspora organisations:** Although there are a significant number of Montenegrin diaspora organisations, most do not have either formal membership or regular activities and projects. Most of the organisations are focused on cultural and humanitarian events rather than on economic engagement and are dependent on funding from Montenegro.
- **Low confidence in institutions:** For the diaspora, perceptions or experiences of corruption have hindered their engagement. These issues affect different aspects of society, including economic investment of diaspora members in Montenegro. Namely, as noted by research participants, potential investors have reportedly faced extortion or bribes to obtain licenses, approvals, or other necessary documents.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



Airline connection between Luxembourg and Montenegro

TOURISM

This project represents a successful and sustainable commercial connection between Luxembourg, a country in which Montenegro has relatively large community of emigrants, and Montenegro. The line is operated by Luxair, a commercial airline from Luxembourg. A member of Montenegrin diaspora from Luxembourg pushed forward the idea and provided essential contacts and recommendations, even at her personal cost. The opening of the line brought multiple benefits to both countries and various groups within both countries, especially Montenegrins. Tourists from Luxembourg are ideal clients for the Montenegrin tourism sector. Their visits to Montenegro have reportedly boosted touristic capacities, including hotels and restaurants. Also, it prompted Luxembourg companies to examine business opportunities in Montenegro and opening up employment opportunities for local people.

The Business Forum 2021

NETWORKING

Department for Diaspora and Emigrants started organising the Business Forum within the traditional gathering of diaspora members: Days of Diaspora. The Business Forum is an opportunity to gather successful businessmen/women of Montenegrin origin who live and work abroad, representatives of Montenegrin institutions and businesses. During the Forum, they discuss opportunities and mechanisms of cooperation, and decide on priorities of such cooperation in the future. The last forum was organised in Bijelo Polje in 2021. According to representatives of the Department for Diaspora and Emigrants, five investments were already made as a result of it.

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 Edited by: **ICMPD**
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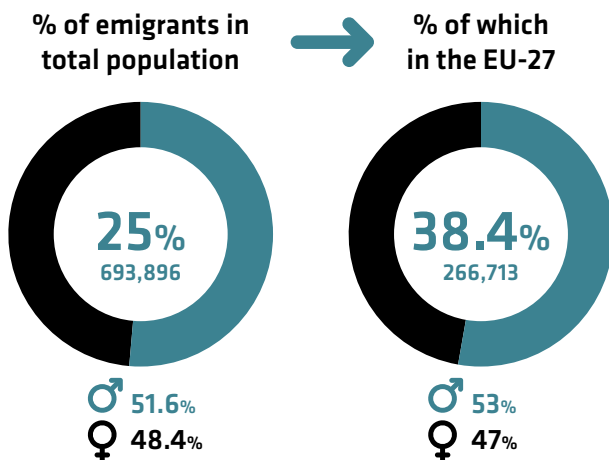
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Diaspora engagement mapping NORTH MACEDONIA¹


Facts & figures

Emigration²





 **Remittances as a share of GDP: 3.2%**
Remittances inflow (USD billion): 450

Top countries of destination³



Turkey	198,004
Germany	108,634
Switzerland	69,612
Italy	68,840
Australia	53,144

Political rights

-  **Dual nationality⁴**
-  **Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad⁵ in diplomatic-consular offices abroad⁵**

1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in North Macedonia focused on the engagement of its diaspora from Italy and Switzerland.

2 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Inflows), November 2022.

3 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin).

4 The Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 67/1992; 8/2004; 98/2008; 158/2011 and 55/2016) (Закон за државјанството на Република Македонија („Службен весник на Република Македонија“ бр. 67/1992; 8/2004; 98/2008; 158/2011 и 55/2016)).

5 North Macedonia, Electoral Code Art. 6, 2006, last amended in 2019. Electoral Code has been amended in February 2020. According to the OSCE Interim report produced in March 2020, the amendments did not affect overseas voting practices.

6 North Macedonia, Electoral Code Art. 6(2), 2006: "Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia who on Election Day are temporarily employed or residing abroad and are registered in the Voter Register based on the records of the relevant authority and the application for voting, shall vote for the election of the President of the Republic and for the election of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia in the Diplomatic-Consular Offices of the Republic of Macedonia abroad, or the consular offices, pursuant to the provisions of this Code".

North Macedonia has a diaspora engagement policy



National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023. The strategy aims at creating a comprehensive and consistent approach for establishing and efficiently managing cooperation with the diaspora. The policies, action and operational plans are divided into four pillars. Pillar one addresses political-legal and consular issues. The second pillar focuses on diaspora and economic development, in particular, remittances, human capital transfer, trade, investment, tourism and philanthropic contributions. Pillar three focuses on education science and the youth and the fourth pillar addresses cultural ties, cultural identity and cultural heritage.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2009** ● **Resolution on the Migration Policy for 2009-2014 and Action Plan.** As part of the diaspora policy, the following measures are foreseen: establishment, maintenance and development of an administrative register of the population in the country; introduction of fully automated vital registry records of citizens (books of births, deaths, marriages etc.); legal obligation for deregistration/registration of Macedonian citizens when leaving/returning from abroad; mapping the diaspora and creating a database for certain categories of migrants (researchers, artists, etc.) where emigrants would register voluntarily.
- 2015** ● **Second Resolution on Migration Policy for 2015-2020 and Action Plan.** In this resolution, the second strategic goal focuses on diaspora, specifically Goal 2.4 on fostering investments made by citizens living abroad (diaspora); Goal 2.5 on transfer of human capital (via “talent return”, “talent circulation”, “virtual return”); and Goal 2.6 on promoting diaspora tourism.
- 2018** ● **Law on Financial Support of Investments and its Amendments,** support foreign and domestic investors to invest in the Republic of North Macedonia inside and outside the free economic zones. Invest North Macedonia is a competent authority for providing financial support outside the technological industrial development zones. According to the Article 33 of the Law, additional measures for financial support are granted to the North Macedonian diaspora.
- 2021** ● **Third Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2021-2025** was adopted along with the Action Plan on the Migration Policy of Republic of North Macedonia for 2021-2025.⁷ In this policy, Strategic Area 3 – managing legal migration – focuses also on emigration by addressing the reasons for emigration and fostering return of the diaspora.

» Trends

In the past, diaspora affairs were managed by the foreign policy of the Republic of Northern Macedonia, as well as international and bilateral agreements and treaties, in line with international standards. There was no comprehensive and consistent state policy in terms of establishing cooperation with the diaspora until 2019, when the Government adopted the National Diaspora Cooperation Strategy for the Period 2019-2023.

In September 2009, voting rights for citizens residing abroad were introduced. North Macedonians abroad acquired the right to vote in the presidential and parliamentary elections by electing three MPs in the three additional electoral districts (Europe/Africa, North and South America and Australia/Asia).⁸

⁷ Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, “Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia”, No. 290/2021 of December 23, 2021.

⁸ Spaskovska, L. (2010). EUDO Citizenship Observatory. Italy: EUI Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.



Achievements

Encouraging investment: Article 33 of the Law on Financial Support for Investments regulates additional financial support for the Macedonian diaspora. For productive initial investments of business entities established by citizens of North Macedonia who have/had a permanent or temporary residence outside of the country for a period of at least five years prior to the day of application, the amount of financial support is increased by 15% of the justified investment costs, up to EUR 1,000,000 annually.

Strategy implementation: With the adoption of the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora (2019-2023), support was provided for a total of 19 diaspora project initiatives in 2019 that aim at asserting the right to national, linguistic and cultural identity.⁹

Obstacles



- **High costs of remittances:** most remittances are informally transferred to individual households due to high remittance transfer costs and most of these funds are used for personal consumption, which indicates no long-term effects at the macro level.
- **Political and administrative barriers:** diaspora members cite corruption, inefficient administration and institutions, as well as slow procedures in establishing a business as obstacles hindering their economic engagement in North Macedonia.
- **Lack of data:** a lack of relevant data on the number and main characteristics of persons who temporarily or permanently leave the country hinders effective engagement of the diaspora. In these circumstances, trends and characteristics of emigration of North Macedonian citizens abroad can only be identified using foreign data sources.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



The SECO Start-up Fund (SSF) 1999 - ongoing

The fund is a facility for development loans established by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs since 1999. SSF offers loans for start-up projects of Swiss entrepreneurs or enterprises in emerging economies (economies under development or in transition), including in North Macedonia (with the aim of offering it also to Macedonian diaspora in Switzerland to invest in North Macedonia). Until now, four companies (founded by diaspora members in Switzerland) have been established in North Macedonia with these loans. All of them are successfully operating and contributing to job creation and economic development in the country of origin.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND INVESTMENTS

⁹ Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. (2021). Resolution on Migration Policy of The Republic Of North Macedonia. Skopje: Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Macedonia2025 2007 – ongoing

Macedonia2025 in cooperation with the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO SACO) offers its services to Macedonian medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs). CESO SACO provides senior Volunteer Advisers with experience in diverse sectors and industries to assist small entrepreneurs/MSMEs in improving their business operations by providing skills development, training, coaching, mentoring and related best practices, business tools, processes and systems.

Connect2MK 2020 – ongoing

Connect2MK aims to connect Macedonian businesses with experts from the diaspora, in order to help them grow and prosper. Through the platform, the experts offer mentorship, opportunities for partnerships and/or investments. Both Macedonian businesses and experts create a profile on Connect2MK (they fill out a short questionnaire), and the platform matches them based on the region and expertise needed. Currently, the platform counts 32 experts and 50 companies.

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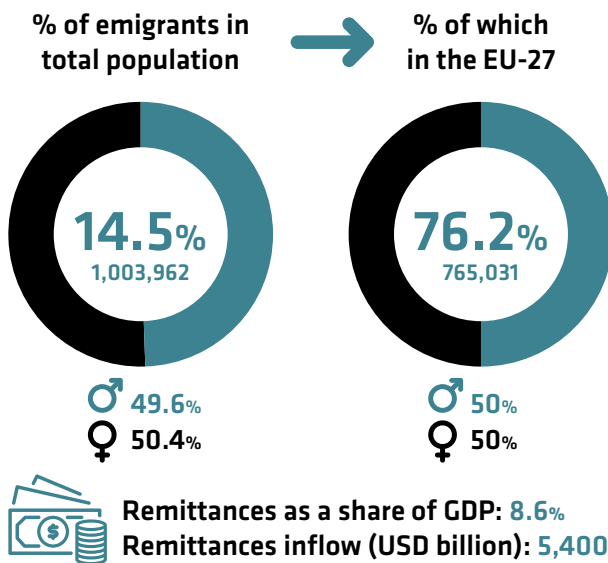


Diaspora engagement mapping

SERBIA¹

Facts & figures

Emigration²



Top countries of destination³

Germany	199,691
Austria	177,609
France	96,899
Italy	86,911
Switzerland	66,207

Political rights



Dual nationality⁴



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad⁵ through diplomatic and consular representatives⁶



1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONDIAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Serbia focused on the engagement of its diaspora from Austria, Germany and Sweden.

2 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Inflows), November 2022.

3 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin).

4 Citizenship Law of the Republic of Serbia, Article 23, 2004.

5 Republic of Serbia, Law on the Election of Members of the Parliament, 2021 ; Republic of Serbia, Law on Election of the President of the Republic, 2021.

Republic of Serbia, Law on Election of the President of the Republic [in Serbian], accessed 5 April 2022

6 Serbian nationals residing abroad can submit a request to register in the unified voter list to vote in elections abroad through diplomatic and consular representatives of Serbia. The request should be submitted no later than five days before the conclusion of the register, i.e., 20 days before the Election Day. A polling station could be opened if at least 100 voters register. Serbian citizens can only vote in the elections for deputies of the National Assembly and the polls for the President of the Republic.

The Republic of Serbia has a diaspora engagement policy



2011 The Strategy of Maintaining and Strengthening the Relationship of the Mother Country and the Diaspora, and the Homeland and Serbs in the Region. The Strategy was developed in order to protect the rights and interests of the Serbian citizens abroad and improve the relationship between the diaspora with the country of origin. The main objective of the Strategy refers to the positioning of Serbia as a country of origin for all its citizens who live abroad, Serbs in the region, as well as Serbs from the region and their descendants. The Strategy is based on four main pillars that include: (1) Restoring diaspora trust in the homeland, (2) Improving the position of the diaspora and Serbs in the region, in foreign countries where they live, (3) Strengthening awareness among the domestic population about the importance of the diaspora and Serbs in the region, and (4) Networking. The Strategy also includes measures for strengthening identity among diaspora members and measures for its greater engagement for the purpose of local economic development. Overall, the diaspora policies aims to support diaspora engagement in Serbia, strengthen the ties with the diaspora, stimulate return and improve conditions for economic collaboration and transnational entrepreneurship.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2009** ● **Law on Diaspora and Serbs in the Region (“Official Gazette of RS”, no. 88/09)**. The Law provides the framework for maintaining and strengthening the ties between the diaspora and the country of origin, and deals with the institutional framework and overall collaboration between the diaspora and Serbia.
- 2012** ● **Law on Migration Management (“Official Gazette of RS”, no. 107/12)**. In addition to other forms of migration, the Law covers emigration, defined as the migration from the Republic of Serbia exceeding a 12 month period. One of the key provisions of the Law refers to the development of a unified data collection and exchange system in the field of migration management, including at the local municipality level.
- 2020** ● **Economic Migration Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the Period 2021-2027**. The goal of the Strategy is to foster the economic and social environment to deter emigration of the Serbian working population, strengthen ties with the diaspora, stimulate return and circular migration, and attract foreigners of various educational profiles. The Strategy has six specific objectives including ones directly related to diaspora engagement in local economic development such as improving cooperation between the diaspora and the country of origin and stimulating transnational entrepreneurship (Specific objective 4) and creating conditions for monitoring, stimulating and supporting circular and return migration (Specific objective 5).

» Trends

Among the recent developments in Serbian diaspora policies, of particular importance is the adoption of the Economic Migration Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the Period 2021-2027. It is the first document that systematically tackles economic migration issues and recognises the diaspora-local economic development nexus. In the institutional context, a significant step forward refers to the reaffirmation of the economic diplomacy as one of the foreign policy priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It will be implemented through the network of 103 diplomatic and consular missions in charge of strengthening Serbian economic position abroad. Finally, recent activities related to economic promotion of the local economic potentials in targeted markets should not be neglected. They are primarily

conducted by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Serbia through its affiliation network active in nine countries, five of which are in the EU. DACH countries – Germany, Austria and Switzerland, are covered by representative offices in Austria (Vienna) and Germany (Frankfurt).



Achievements

There are several recent achievements resulting from the engagement strategies pursued over the last five years and reflecting positive changes in diaspora engagement towards local economic development.

Institutional partnerships: The most important progress refers to the development of institutional partnerships between stakeholders from different sectors including entrepreneurs from the diaspora and regional business support institutions (e.g. regional development agencies). An example of such initiatives is the “Business Atlas of Serbia and Diaspora”, a platform developed with the support of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and regional development agencies in order to facilitate collaboration between companies and local administration with the aim to provide information and boost investments.

Investments: Several important diaspora foreign investments have taken place over recent years. The most important is the Mind Park, an industrial park based near Kragujevac, which provides full business support for investors interested in doing business in Serbia.

Obstacles



- **Low confidence in institutions:** A majority of business diaspora perceives state institutions as unreliable partners. Communication between business diaspora and state institutions including some formal business associations are still characterised by a lack of trust. Diaspora members also cite corruption as a challenge to their engagement.
- **Administrative capacity:** Some of the typical administrative barriers noted by potential diaspora investors include insufficient knowledge with regard to administrative permits, the local tax system, incentives, legislative requirements, etc. Research also shows that diaspora members perceive local institutions as not sufficiently supportive in terms of attracting investments. There are several stakeholders dealing with diaspora related issues, including supporting diaspora engagement in local economic development. Underdeveloped collaboration and communication mechanisms between key local actors, including both authorities and international organisations, can lead to inefficiencies in the implementation of diaspora engagement projects, where synergies may otherwise be possible.
- **Lack of data on diaspora:** There is a general dearth of complete and accurate data on the diaspora, their structure, and their ties to the Serbian socio-economic environment and their perceptions of the local institutions. Local authorities have insufficient information on the existing diaspora networks and lack capacities including lack of financial resources to be proactive in stimulating diaspora direct investments.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



Returning Point Platform/Tacka Povratka 2020 – ongoing

REPATRIATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Platform has been setup to provide support to (potential) repatriates coming back to Serbia, including assistance related to investing and facilitating scientific and academic collaboration. The platform focuses on recognising highly qualified individuals, connecting local private and public partners with diaspora institutions, and identifying and removing legislative gaps and obstacles for investments and collaboration. The platform has been developed as a private-public partnership established by the Serbian City Club, Serbian Entrepreneurs as diaspora organisations on the one side and the Science Technology Park Belgrade on the other. It provides support through programmes of support across several fields (work, study, investment, contribution, and retirement).

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Link Up! Serbia II 2020 – ongoing

The programme aims at providing support to transnational entrepreneurship activities conducted by Serbian diaspora in Austria and other DACH countries. It consists of two components: Component 1 – Mentoring support, Diaspora business hub and technical support to local self-governments; Component 2 – Online platform for collaboration and business events.

RESEARCH AND NETWORKING

Diaspora Research Programme 2019

The Programme is implemented by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia. It has been developed as a one-time support programme aiming to connect local researchers and their peers employed with academic institutions in Europe. The Programme provided financial support for collaboration between the researchers from Serbia and the diaspora, including scientific visits and conducting joint research activities.

NETWORKING AND TECHNOLOGY

Tesla Nation 2019 – ongoing

Tesla Nation is an international network of entrepreneurs from the Serbian diaspora in the ICT industry. There are several associations of entrepreneurs and activists collaborating on projects based on innovation and technology as well as Serbian origin. The association works as a network of ambassadors, all of them either employed in large international companies or having their own start-ups.

RETURN AND REPATRIATION

“Carta Serbica” 2022 – ongoing

Set up in 2022 as a part of the “Returning Point” project, this initiative aimed at stimulating return of the Serbian diaspora to the country of origin. All citizens with Serbian origin who were born in the diaspora or who, due to certain life circumstances, left Serbia and renounced their Serbian citizenship, willing to return, either to work or retire in Serbia, can apply for the programme. The programme enable interested participants to obtain a temporary residence and work permit in Serbia for one year and the possibility to apply for Serbian citizenship. “Carta Serbica” provides additional benefits and incentives, such as tax and customs benefits, as well as the possibility of taking out housing loans for tax non-residents in cooperation with the bank “Poštanska štedionica”.

“Suncev zrak” 2020 – ongoing

“Suncev zrak” is a start-up which was setup with the support of the GIZ programme “Business Development Ideas”. Its mission initially referred to assisting mothers in breastfeeding and was later expanded to providing overall psychosocial support to families. The start-up was developed by a Serbian woman employed as a paediatric nurse with the university hospital in Munich, Germany.

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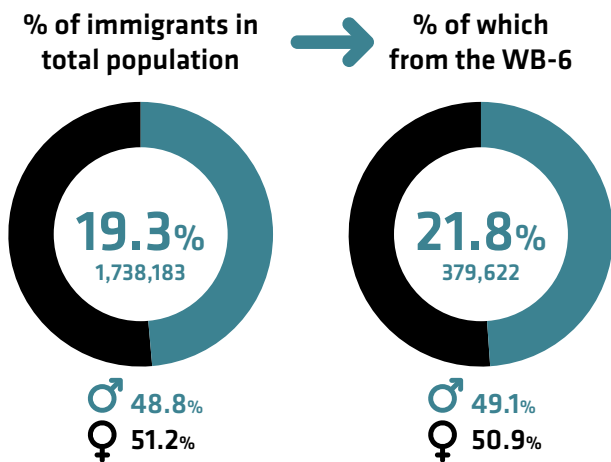


Diaspora engagement mapping

AUSTRIA¹

Facts & figures

Immigration²





Remittances outflow (USD million): 7,016 or 1.5% of GDP in 2021
Bosnia and Herzegovina, remittances outflow from Austria (USD million): 255,6 in 2021
Serbia, remittances outflow from Austria (USD million): 742,8 in 2021

Western Balkans countries of origin population in Austria³

Bosnia and Herzegovina	172,373
Serbia	144,416
Kosovo ⁴	33,539
North Macedonia	28,418
Albania	4,927
Montenegro	2,019

Political rights

 Dual nationality⁵	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Right to vote in elections for immigrants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

EU Citizens may vote in local elections, non-EU citizens do not have the right to vote.

Voting from abroad by Austrians: entitled to vote in elections at federal level (election of the Federal President, election of the National Council, European election), referendums and plebiscites by applying for automatic ("official") delivery of absentee ballots abroad for a period of ten years or through Austrian embassies.⁶

1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Austria focused on diaspora engagement with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

2 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Outflows), November 2022. The KNOMAD/World Bank, Bilateral Remittance Matrix, 2021.

3 Eurostat, Population on January 1, by country of birth, 2021.

4 All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

5 Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz, Sections 10 paragraph 3, 28; No dual nationality in the case of Naturalisation.

6 All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Terminology: While most data on migration refer to either nationality and/or country of birth, there are also a few datasets utilising the term “migrant background” to specify individuals who are either naturalised Austrian citizens, or who have parents born outside of Austria. The term “diaspora” is not used in official publications.

Austria does not have a migration and development/diaspora engagement policy.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2016** ● **Focus Paper on Migration and Development.** The Austrian Development Agency published a focus paper on migration and development in 2016 which set out its aim to strengthen migrants’ and diaspora engagement with their countries of origin, including through diaspora organisations networking, as well as collaborating with other development actors to promote both business opportunities and social entrepreneurship.

» Trends

While Austria does not have an official diaspora engagement strategy despite it being a country of settlement for multiple Western Balkans migrant populations, its focus paper encourages supporting diaspora populations and organisations, and several projects have been funded in this regard. Having the Western Balkans in mind, a larger project focused on diaspora entrepreneurship in Serbia has demonstrated potential for sustainability and efficacy. There is room for streamlining diaspora engagement into policies in the future and for more collaboration with countries of origin in this regard.

✪ Achievements

Multiple projects have been financed and demonstrated results through the help of the Austrian Development Agency that have diaspora engagement and entrepreneurship at their centre.⁷ Here, it is important to highlight that a more specific focus on diaspora entrepreneurship was achieved through the LinkUp! programme⁸ with a focus on Serbian diaspora. This project was noted as successful by Bosnian diaspora members and stakeholders when asked about regional examples of diaspora development from countries of settlement. Smaller, diaspora-initiated projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been implemented on an individual basis. This demonstrates the potential of utilising the Austrian Development Agency and its resources further when it comes to Western Balkans diasporas. Overall, when it comes to diaspora populations from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina living in Austria, the development initiatives have been led by these diaspora individuals and are largely based on remittances and desires to build something or to invest ‘back home.’

Policy Planning: In line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the Austrian Development Agency financed a two-year study by the OECD on labour migration to better, among other things, embed migration and diaspora strategies into broader agendas and policies of the Western Balkans. The study’s results represents an important step towards better policy building including capacity building recommendations when it comes to the links between diaspora and development.⁹

⁷ There is no list that would encompass all these projects as the Austrian government and institutions do not indicate diaspora participation. A tertiary look through previously funded projects reveals this to be the case.

⁸ This programme is implemented by ICMPD.

⁹ OECD South East Europe Division. “Labour Migration in the Western Balkans: Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits.” OECD, 2022.



Obstacles

- **Untapped potential of diaspora organisations:** Few Western Balkans diaspora organisations are specifically focused at fostering more business entrepreneurship between countries of origin and Austria, instead focusing on cultural or other aspects. They represent underutilised potential in terms of investment and development in countries of origin.
- **Restricted dual nationality:** Austria's restrictive citizenship laws do not allow for dual nationality, thus limiting the interest of certain diaspora members to invest in their homeland due to restrictions they may face as foreign nationals in countries of origin.
- **Complex bureaucratic processes:** There are limited coordinated efforts at improving the business environment or fostering more diaspora investment between institutions and governments in countries of origin in the Western Balkans and Austria. Due to complicated bureaucratic regimes in countries of origin, potential diaspora entrepreneurs are sometimes dissuaded from investing.
- **Low trust in institutions of countries of origin:** Diaspora from the Western Balkans in Austria are one of the most well integrated groups in Austria and place higher trust in Austrian institutions and organisations than they do in those in countries of origin.¹⁰ Frequent administrative changes and political instability in countries of origin make diaspora reluctant to invest there (see respective country of origin factsheets).

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



Link-Up Serbia! 2016-2017

Implemented by the ICMPD, the project is focused on better understanding the potential of direct diaspora investment by Serbian diaspora members in Austria and facilitating further activities with relevant stakeholders and municipalities in Serbia to foster, highlight, and continue diaspora investment and entrepreneurship between Austria and Serbia. Beyond mapping and analysis of diaspora potential, the project also encompasses the creation of sustainable business networks and partnerships between Austria and Serbia.

Kombiflex Gmbh 2019 – ongoing

The company Kombiflex Gmbh produces and exports stainless steel from the city of Bihać in Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria. It is founded and managed by two Bosnian brothers, with one responsible in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other managing the business in Austria. The business has grown immensely from the time of its creation and the number of employees have grown from 40 in 2019 to around 100, with very little turnover. The company's employees are well-paid, and have incentives for growth, training opportunities, and clear pathways to management positions.

INVESTMENT

CAPACITY BUILDING AND
EMPLOYMENT CREATION

AUSTRIA

10 "Migration & Integration 2022." Statistisches Jahrbuch. Vienna, Austria: Statistics Austria, 2022.

Written by: **Dženeta Karabegović**
Edited by: **ICMPD**
December 2022

Implemented by
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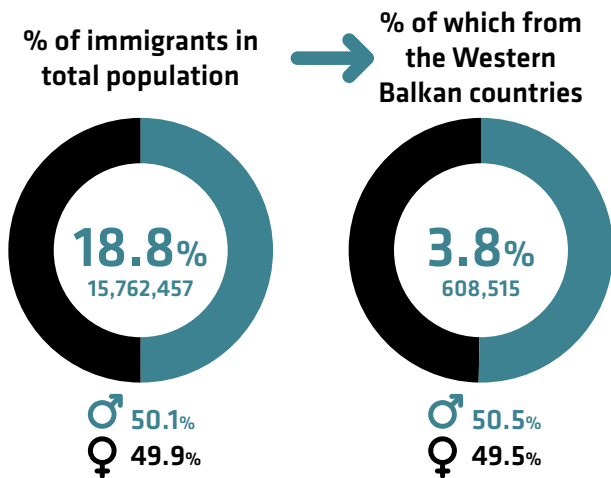


Diaspora engagement mapping

GERMANY¹

Facts & figures

Immigration²



Remittances outflow (USD million): 17,326 or 0.4% of GDP in 2021

Remittances outflow per receiving country:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, remittances outflow from Germany (USD million): 327 in 2021

Montenegro, remittances outflow from Germany (USD million): 153 in 2021

Kosovo³, remittances outflow from Germany (USD million): 923 in 2021

Serbia, remittances outflow from Germany (USD million): 1,241 in 2021

Western Balkan population in Germany⁴

Bosnia and Herzegovina	204,189
Serbia	190,045
Kosovo ³	166,056
North Macedonia	117,969
Albania	76,582
Montenegro	17,335

Political rights



Dual nationality with restrictions⁵



Right to vote in elections for immigrants⁶



EU Citizens may vote in local elections, non-EU citizens do not have the right to vote.

Voting from abroad by Germans



by post or through the municipality in charge⁷

1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Germany focused on diaspora engagement with Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.

2 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Outflows), November 2022. The KNOMAD/World Bank, Bilateral Remittance Matrix, 2021.

3 All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

4 Eurostat, Population on January 1, by citizenship, 2021.

5 Nationality Act of 22 July 1913. Section 12. In certain cases, German nationality law allows its citizens to have or acquire an additional citizenship. Multiple nationality may result from the following situations: (1) As a rule, children born to a German and a non-German parent, or to parents with dual nationality, acquire the nationalities of both parents at birth, according to the principle of descent. (2) Ethnic German repatriates and family members admitted with them acquire German citizenship when they are issued a repatriates certificate, in accordance with Section 7 of the Nationality Act; they do not have to give up their previous citizenship. If allowed by their countries of origin, their children born in Germany then acquire at birth both German citizenship and that of their parents.

(3) In certain cases, German citizens may apply for dual nationality, allowing them to acquire foreign citizenship while retaining their German citizenship. However, in the coalition agreement of 2021 – 2025, the government states to adapt the nationality law and allow for multiple nationality.

Terminology: A person is considered to have a 'migration background' (*Migrationshintergrund*) if they or at least one of their parents is not German by birth. Currently, there is a discussion to replace the term 'migration background' by 'immigrants (*Eingewanderte*) and their descendants'.

Germany does not have a diaspora engagement policy

No concrete national document formulating policy but German development cooperation 'works to shape regular migration so that it benefits development, and it strives to present alternatives to irregular migration' and is active in five areas: (1) Offering pathways for safe, orderly, and regular migration; (2) Supporting voluntary return and sustainable reintegration; (3) Advising partner countries on migration policy; (3) Facilitating remittances to developing countries; (4) Supporting development engagement by people with a migration background in Germany.⁸

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2009** ● **General Administrative Regulation on the Residence Act, 51.4.1.2 AVwV AufenthG.** The administrative regulation allows migrants with a permanent residence permit to leave the country for more than half a year in case their "stay abroad serves the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany (e.g. as development workers, foreign spouses of German diplomats or to promote development-related business relationships or employment relationships abroad)".
- 2018** ● **National Action Plan for Integration.** The newest National Action Plan for Integration has been implemented since 2018. It is subdivided into five phases of integration. For the first time, the period before migrating to Germany has been considered and, in this context, the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and other relevant actors of the German development cooperation have been involved actively in the content design. Their inclusion shows an increasing awareness on the complexity of migration and the interdependencies between migration and integration.



Trends

Within the field of development cooperation, diaspora and their engagement have played an important role since the early 2000s. German Development Cooperation, GIZ, 'works to shape regular migration so that it benefits development, and it strives to present alternatives to irregular migration'. It is active in five areas:

- Offering pathways for safe, orderly, and regular migration,
- Supporting voluntary return and sustainable reintegration,
- Advising partner countries on migration policy,

⁶ Neither active nor passive right to vote at federal, regional (*Bundesland*) level or to vote in plebiscites at federal or regional level. Right to vote for European Union citizens at local level.

⁷ Germans staying abroad who do not have a registered domicile in Germany have to submit a written application for entry into the voters' register before each election. The application has to bear the applicant's personal handwritten signature; the original document must be submitted to the municipal authority in charge. The application must not be sent by e-mail or fax. If the nominations have been approved the postal voting procedure is initiated. Postal voting documents are either sent by post or need to be picked up at the municipality in charge. Official courier services are provided by [German missions](#).

⁸ <https://www.bmz.de/en/development-policy/migration>.

- Facilitating remittances to developing countries,
- Supporting development engagement by people with a migration background in Germany.

To implement the migration and development strategy, the programme 'Migration & Diaspora' and its predecessor programmes were set up and implemented by GIZ.

In recent years, key areas of development to support diaspora engagement from Germany have included: facilitating and supporting transparent and sustainable remittance transfers, supporting diaspora enterprise development in countries of origin and collective development projects by civic organisations, capacity building of migrant organisations in Germany and simplified access to dual nationality since 2014 for those who held it at birth.



Achievements

Cooperation frameworks: One of the newest achievements of Kosovar diaspora business organisation Besa Foundation is the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with Kosovo Manufacturing Club and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo* for the establishment of Vocational Education and Training.

Dialogue: In terms of general collaboration with all diaspora groups in Germany, the establishment of Diaspora Dialogues and the first Diaspora Summit in 2022 has facilitated engagement. These platforms serve as new formats of exchanging with diaspora as part of the GIZ Programme Migration and Development, as well as with different diaspora organisations and is supported by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.

Obstacles



- **Less organised diaspora community:** In Germany, Western Balkan diasporas show a rather low degree of organisation. As compared to well-organised diasporas that provide many opportunities for communication, such as mailing lists or platforms for news, weakly organised diasporas are hard to reach. This complicates information flow and dissemination of relevant news.
- **Limited capacities of diaspora organisations:** Most of the Western Balkan diaspora organisations in Germany are less formal and engage members on a voluntary basis. Lack of formal organisational structure, less experience in project development and limited knowledge of funding opportunities further restrict organisational growth.
- **Lack of funding for start-ups:** For German start-ups, seed funding is difficult to access for investing abroad. Direct capital cannot be provided by development organisations.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



Knowledge Transfer Serbia – Germany 2022

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

“Knowledge transfer - entrepreneurial diaspora as a generator of cross-border economic cooperation with Germany” is a project initiated by the Central Council of Serbs in Germany (CCSG) and implemented with the financial support of GIZ. The aim of the project was to provide entrepreneurs who want to expand their business both hard and soft skills (establishing communication with potential German partners, preparing business documentation, picking up contacts, reach out to potential business partners etc.), and transfer knowledge and experience gathered by the diaspora members during years of working and being active abroad on both German and EU markets.

Programme ‘Migration & Diaspora’ 2019-2022

CAPACITY BUILDING

The programme ‘Migration & Diaspora’ realised five project activities related to diaspora support: expert missions; support of diaspora organisations by implementation of projects with partner organisations in the country of origin; support of developmental engagement of diaspora through dialogue forums; support of diaspora migrants when starting a business in their country of origin (‘Business ideas for development’); improvement of remittance transfers. The framework for the activities is provided by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the 2030 Agenda along with the planned Skilled Workers Immigration Act (*Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*) and the German national action plan on integration.

AnaVita Naturkost GmbH 2000 – ongoing

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The company was founded by Dr. Ana Medugorac, who came up with the idea of starting a business as a result of her experience working on agricultural projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was the first on the mushroom market to start importing products from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now, AnaVita Naturkost GmbH is a family-owned business based in Munich with the assortment including air-dried mushrooms as well as a variety of risotto mixes. The raw products are picked and grown, respectively, by self-employed families in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In many cases, this is the only income source for the families and Dr. Medugorac emphasises on the importance of fair and stable salaries. Three years ago, a subsidiary was opened in Croatia. The goods, e.g. the risotto mix, are produced in Croatia while the raw items are imported from Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.

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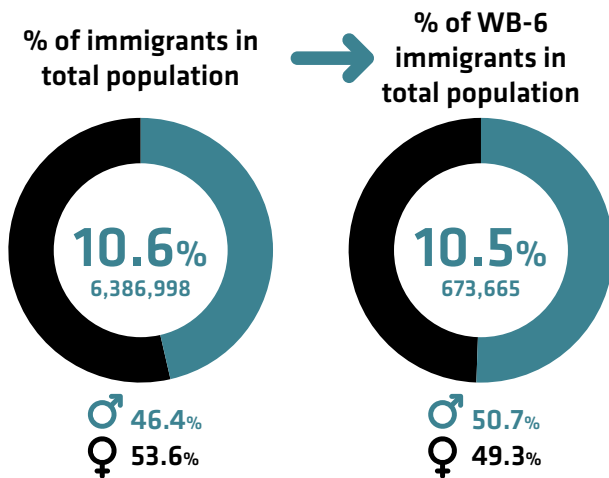
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Diaspora engagement mapping

ITALY¹

Facts & figures

Immigration²



Remittances outflow (USD million): 12,273 or 0,6% of GDP in 2021
Albania, remittances outflow from Italy (USD million): 647 in 2021
North Macedonia, remittances outflow from Italy (USD million): 14 in 2021

Western Balkans countries of origin population in Italy³

Albania	505,323
North Macedonia	15,126
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,804
Kosovo ⁴	2,162
Serbia	891
Montenegro	68

Political rights

	Dual nationality⁵	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Right to vote in elections for immigrants⁶	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Voting from abroad by Italians by postal vote	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Terminology: "Diaspora", "young people who come from families with migration histories" are both used.

Italy does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Italy focused on diaspora engagement with Albania and North Macedonia.

2 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Outflows), November 2022. The KNOMAD/World Bank, Bilateral Remittance Matrix, 2021. For more information on national statistics on remittances, see [here](#).

3 Eurostat, Population on January 1, by country of birth, 2021.

4 All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

5 Law no. 91 of February 5, 1992.

6 Immigrants from the non-EU countries do not have the right to vote, not even at a local level; however, some local governments have decided to introduce a form of institutional participation of immigrants establishing positions such as "Foreigners' Councils," "Immigrant Council," "Adjunct Immigrant Municipal Councillors," "Immigrant Representatives".

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2014 ● **General law on International Development Cooperation No. 125/2014** introduces expressly the migration phenomenon recognising the role of the diaspora as part of civil society and giving to migrant associations the possibility to play an operational role in the policies involving both host and home countries. Specifically, Paragraph 6 of the Article 2 emphasises the promotion of local development through the role played by communities of immigrants and their relations with their Countries of origin.
- 2014 ● **National Council for Development Cooperation, CNCS.** National Council for Development Cooperation (CNCS) is governed by article 16 of the law 125/2014 and is the main instrument of participation, consultation and gathering of 54 major public and private, for-profit and non-profit stakeholders operating in the sphere of international development cooperation. This is the space where diaspora associations are also included. It meets at least once a year to express non-binding opinions on matters concerning development cooperation.

>> Trends

Based on knowledge sharing and consultative mechanism, Italian policy on international cooperation has considered diaspora organisations as enablers of development and diaspora organisations have been integrated into development cooperation programmes to support investments and employment generation. In an integrated, multilevel, multi-actor approach, migration has, therefore, become a key element of Italian development cooperation action across many areas, such as health, education, vocational training, labour, human rights protection, and security.⁷ Through different projects, Italy also supports partner governments in developing integrated strategies for engaging the diaspora with their countries of origin.

★ Achievements

Data collection: For engaging diasporas and their associations as key players in development and international cooperation, The General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies maintains the Register of Associations and Bodies that carries out activities in favour of immigrants and diasporas. In Italy there are more than 2,100 registered diaspora organisations and through national and local diaspora summits Italy actively includes the diaspora in cooperation programmes. Currently, there are forty-seven Albanian diaspora associations registered on the portal while the registered associations representing the Macedonian community are three.

Obstacles



- **Low trust in institutions:** Declining trust in the governments of countries of origin has at times discouraged diaspora members from investing their resources in the country.
- **Limited awareness of investment opportunities:** Where a desire to invest in the country of origin exists, diaspora members lack information about the opportunities and/or facilities the countries of origin may offer.
- **Low engagement in partnerships:** While the 2014 Italian law recognises diaspora associations as important partners in Italian development cooperation projects, in practice traditional cooperation partners (such as structured NGOs familiar with complex bureaucratic cooperation procedures) continue to perceive diaspora associations not as real partners but as beneficiaries in development projects.

⁷ <https://www.esteri.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Programming-and-policy-planning-document-2021-2023.pdf>

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



2021, EU Fellowship Scheme

The programme is designed and implemented with the purpose of engaging and mobilising 35 highly skilled Albanian diaspora professionals wherever they live in Italy. Their main responsibility is to support and give their expertise in priority areas related to the EU accession process.

2018, Engage the Albanian Diaspora to the Social and Economic Development of Albania 2018 - ongoing

The programme is funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by IOM in Albania, in coordination with the Albanian State Minister for Diaspora, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and Economy, and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. The project has three components: supporting the Albanian government in diaspora engagement, supporting the Albanian diaspora through knowledge transfer, and encouraging them to invest.

2009, Manda Soldi a Casa 2009 - ongoing

The website, run by CeSPI (Centre for International Policy Studies), certified by the World Bank, and supported with the contribution of the Bank of Italy, can be used for the purpose of comparing the cost of sending remittances. It aims to ensure greater transparency and clarity of information, stimulating market players to improve their transfer offers to migrants.

2017, National Diaspora Summits 2017 - ongoing

To recognise diaspora groups as actors of development and to engage them in the overall national development cooperation system, Italy's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation opened the first migrant Diaspora Summit in Rome on 18 November 2017.⁸ After that, different local and national diaspora summits were organised enabling an exchange between migrant associations and enhancing their role in the Italian development cooperation system.

2011, Migrant Associations for Co-Development (A.MI.CO) Training Course 2011 - 2021

The project aims to consolidate the role of migrant associations as co-development actors by offering training focused specifically on the following topics: (1) Project development and implementation; (2) Budget development; (3) Creation and management of partnerships and (4) Monitoring and communication. Specifically, the Course aims to foster the design, development and implementation of international development cooperation activities promoted by migrant associations, and to facilitate collaboration among them. Through the A.MI.CO. Programme, IOM has strengthened the role of migrants' associations as natural transnational actors in the field of development cooperation, empowering more than 274 associations with connections to more than 60 countries around the world.

SKILLS TRANSFER
AND RESEARCH

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

REMITTANCES

NETWORKING

CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT

ITALY

⁸ https://www.cespi.it/sites/default/files/documenti/diaspore_e_cooperazione_italiana.pdf

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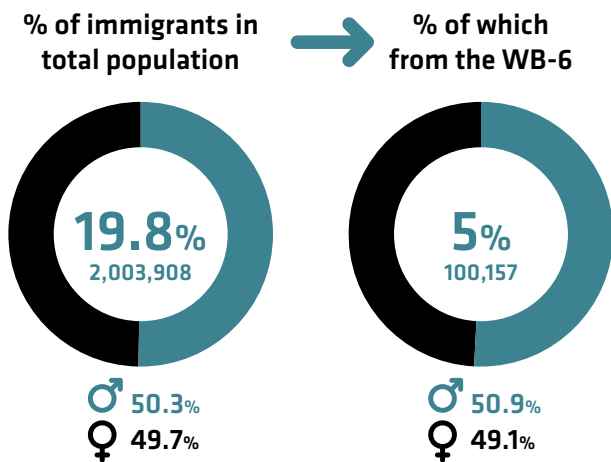


Diaspora engagement mapping

SWEDEN¹

Facts & figures

Immigration²





Remittances outflow (USD million):
2,140 or **0.3%** of GDP in 2021
Albania, remittances outflow from Sweden (USD million): 12 in 2021
Serbia, remittances outflow from Sweden (USD million): 87 in 2021

Western Balkans countries of origin population in Sweden³

Bosnia and Herzegovina	60,161
Serbia	15,874
Kosovo ⁴	11,164
North Macedonia	9,410
Albania	7,908
Montenegro	1,411

Political rights

 Dual nationality⁵	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Right to vote in elections for immigrants with restrictions⁶	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Sweden does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

1 This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Sweden focused on diaspora engagement with Albania and Serbia.

2 UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Outflows), November 2022. The KNOMAD/World Bank, Bilateral Remittance Matrix, 2021.

3 Eurostat, Population on January 1, by country of birth, 2021.

4 All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

5 Hedvig Bernitz, "Country Report: Sweden," EUDO Citizenship Observatory Country Report (European University Institute, Florence, 2012), 1.

6 Hedvig Bernitz, "Access to Electoral Rights: Sweden," EUDO Citizenship Observatory Country Report (European University Institute, Florence, 2013), 5-8. Foreign residents in Sweden do not have electoral rights in national elections or in national referenda. In regional and local elections and referenda, however, foreign residents in Sweden have electoral rights if they are included in the electoral role, have reached the age of eighteen and have been registered as residents in Sweden for a continuous period of three years prior to the election day. Special rules apply for EU and Nordic citizens who are residents in Sweden. As other foreign residents, EU and Nordic citizens in Sweden do not have electoral rights in national elections and referenda. However, the EU citizens and citizens of Iceland and Norway do not have to be residents in Sweden for a period of three years in order to have electoral rights in regional and local elections. To vote in regional and local elections, they have to be registered in the electoral roll, have reached the age of eighteen and are registered as residents in Sweden. Foreign EU residents in Sweden, who have regional and local electoral rights and have not voted in another EU country, have, moreover, the right to vote in European Parliament elections in Sweden. Those who are abroad during the election period can either vote at a Swedish diplomatic mission or by post.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 1975** ● **Aliens Act.** With the introduction of the Act, the foundations for the Swedish migration policy were laid. The Aliens Act introduced new protection grounds, apart for the ones required by the Geneva Convention, and introduced permanent residence permits for those in search of protection. The 1975 Act was, moreover, of particular importance for the current Swedish integration policy. By providing nearly equal rights, protection and opportunities to everyone regardless of their ethnic and cultural background, the 1975 Act represented an important step towards a multicultural society. Among the introduced rights was also a provision of subsidies to migrant associations.
- 2003** ● **The Policy for Global Development** This policy sees development as a concern for Sweden as a whole, and represents a foundation for Swedish policy coherence for development. With it, Sweden became the first donor country with a development policy that integrated development cooperation in all policy areas, including migration. Among the policy areas that were identified to contribute to global development, and to which development cooperation can contribute, is also migration policy.
- 2010** ● **Swedish Government Bill 2009/10:60.** Whereas in the 1980s, the responsibility for integration was taken from the Swedish Public Employment Services (PES) and assigned to the municipalities, the 2010 reform centralised the Swedish integration policy again. The responsibility for the implementation of the integration policy was handed back to the PES.
- 2016** ● **Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance. Government Communication 2016/17:60.** In this Communication the Government outlines the direction of Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The framework declares that migrants and their associations are 'development agents' with 'unique knowledge about needs and opportunities in their countries of origin'. Accordingly, 'migrants' and 'diaspora groups' should be recognized and supported within the framework of development cooperation. It also calls for greater diaspora engagement in social remittances, e.g. transfers of political ideas and skills obtained in Sweden, and further economic interaction between migrants and home countries.⁷
- 2017** ● **The Law on Newly Arrived Immigrants.** This law aligns support provided to migrants to that provided to Swedish job seekers. Moreover, the Establishment Programme, the main civic integration programme for certain newly arrived migrants in Sweden, became mandatory in 2018.

» Trends

The Swedish migration and development policy frameworks provide institutional grounds that foster diaspora engagement in Sweden. The Swedish migration policy assumes a multicultural approach to ethnic and migrant minorities, promotes international mobility, enables demand-driven labour migration and acknowledges the effects of migration on development. Moreover, the Swedish Policy for Global Development seeks to integrate development cooperation also within migration policy. In connection to these, diaspora groups and organisations have been identified as actors of development work. They have been recognised as important ties in knowledge transfer, trade and investments between the origin and destination countries. However, research conducted for ECONDIAS has found that the Albanian and Serbian diasporas in Sweden generally do not intentionally get involved in the work for socio-economic development of their countries of origin.

⁷ Fredholm Axel, Johan Sandberg, and Olle Frödin, "The Migration-Development Nexus Revisited: Immigrant Organizations and the Swedish Policy Framework for Development and Humanitarian Assistance," *Forum for Development Studies* 49, no. 3 (2022): 467-492.



Obstacles

- **Low labour market participation of diaspora:** Some Western Balkan diasporas in Sweden are relatively new and growing. As seen in the case of the Albanian diaspora, Albanians have only recently started to migrate to Sweden and their participation in the labour market is still low, diaspora business and entrepreneurial activity as well as their transnational economic activities have been rather limited.
- **Limited capacities of diaspora organisations:** Most Western Balkan diaspora organisations in Sweden are small-scale and have limited capacity to engage in transnational business activities. Activities are further restricted because of funding constraints due to lack of support and knowledge about available funding opportunities.
- **Challenging cross-sectoral cooperation:** State actors like Embassies and development cooperation actors experience challenges in engaging with economic actors. One example represents the Serbian Embassy's ambition to foster trade and investment relations between Serbia and Sweden. The Embassy had difficulties in obtaining access and creating relations with actors within the economic field. Another example is the Albanian Embassy which seeks to foster business and trade relations between Albania and Sweden, but their contacts with Albanian entrepreneurs who have moved (back) to Albania from Sweden are limited.

SPOTLIGHT: Practices



2019, [Challenge Fund Albania 2019](#) - ongoing

The Challenge Fund Albania is a part of the “EU for Innovation” project, which is funded by the European Union, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and is implemented by GIZ and the Swedish Embassy in Tirana. The first phase of the project has run between 2018 and is currently in its extension phase until the end of 2022. The ambition of the project has been to improve the innovative ecosystem in Albania and to boost the creation of start-ups there. Different Albanian start-ups could apply for co-funding for their business ideas and projects during different calls. These grants are co-funding opportunities for start-ups up to a maximum of 50% of the project costs. As the second phase of Challenge Fund Albania runs until 2026, the plan is to hand over the project to the Albanian government which would work on it afterwards.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
AND INNOVATION

2014-2019, [Serbian Swedish Business Council](#)

The Serbian Swedish Business Council was founded by the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Sweden. The Council sought to act as a platform that allows the Swedish and Serbian business community to meet and discuss business that is of mutual interest. One of its specific areas of work was to facilitate networking among the Serbian economic diaspora in Sweden. Despite the fact that the Council did not target exclusively diaspora businesses as its members, the Serbian business diaspora in Sweden was engaged in its establishment and represented a significant share of its members.

NETWORKING

2009-2022, Swedpartnership

Swedpartnership is a financial support programme run by Swedfund which gives small and medium-sized Swedish businesses an opportunity to enter into sustainable collaborations with companies in countries with developing and growing markets. In so doing, Swedpartnership aims at supporting the creation of sustainable and financially viable companies in developing markets, and at creating long-term financial cooperation between Swedish and local companies in emerging markets. Within the 13 years of its operations, the programme offered financial support to over 250 business cooperation. Diaspora businesses were not targeted in particular for financial support, but rather the allocation of financial support was evaluated according to the financial viability of the proposed business plan.

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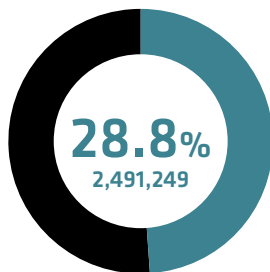
Diaspora engagement mapping

SWITZERLAND¹

Facts & figures

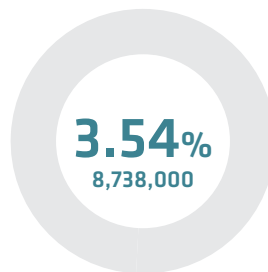
Immigration²

% of immigrants in total population



♂ 49.1%
♀ 50.9%

→ % of which from the WB-6



Remittances outflow (USD million):

31,593 or **4%** of GDP in 2021

Bosnia and Herzegovina, remittances outflow from Switzerland (USD million): 89 in 2021

Kosovo³, remittances outflow from Switzerland (USD million): 420 in 2021

North Macedonia, remittances outflow from Switzerland (USD million): 75 in 2021

North Macedonia, remittances outflow from Switzerland (USD million): 75 in 2021



Western Balkans countries of origin population in Switzerland⁴

Kosovo ³	99,535
North Macedonia	74,762
Serbia	67,206
Bosnia and Herzegovina	57,783
Albania	5,716
Montenegro	3,062

Political rights



Dual nationality⁵



Right to vote in elections for immigrants

with restrictions⁶



Voting from abroad by Swiss nationals

by postal vote for national, and some cantonal elections



Terminology: Population with migration background, which includes Swiss nationals and persons with foreign nationality, both first and second generations.

Switzerland does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

¹ This factsheet was produced under the ECONIDAS project, which examined diaspora engagement with the Western Balkans. The research conducted in Switzerland focused on diaspora engagement with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and North Macedonia.

² UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020 (Destination and Origin). World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (Outflows), November 2022. The KNOMAD/World Bank, Bilateral Remittance Matrix, 2021.

³ All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

⁴ Eurostat, Population on January 1, by country of birth, 2021.

⁵ All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

⁶ Federal Act on Swiss Citizenship (Swiss Citizenship Act) of 20 June, 2014.

⁷ Voting is possible at communal and cantonal level in mainly French speaking cantons (Neuchâtel, Jura), on communal level in Geneva, Vaud, Fribourg/Freiburg, and some communes in the city of Basel, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Graubünden). Voting in national elections is not possible.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



2008 ● (last major update 14 December 2012) **Migration Partnerships** provide the basis for different instruments of Switzerland's migration-related foreign policy. The substance of a migration cooperation is adaptable and differs across countries. In 2009, migration partnerships were signed with Bosnia and Herzegovina and in 2010 with Kosovo. As an instrument framework, migration partnerships are considered to improve bilateral relations, help to promote a whole-of-government approach, better management of irregular migration, improved cooperation on return, improve understanding of the context of partner countries, and promote development and stability in partner countries.

2020 ● **The Swiss Migration Strategic Framework for the Western Balkans** aims at coordinating migration-related initiatives in the area. It provides direction for Switzerland's Migration Partnerships. The objectives of the framework are to assist: partner country institutions in handling migration effectively, efficiently, and transparently; migrants, their families, and the host communities in countries of origin to benefit from comprehensive social and economic services; and partner countries to promote safe, orderly, and regular migration management in the region by participating collectively and advancing reciprocal learning processes.

» Trends

Swiss diaspora engagement with Western Balkan countries include the identification of diaspora community leaders and the development of diaspora organisations' capacities, as well as the support of collective development projects and, in the case of Kosovo, efforts to reduce the transaction costs of financial transfers.

Swiss migration policy views migration as a worldwide phenomenon that presents both obstacles and opportunities, and therefore requires government engagement at the destination, transit, and origin of movement. In this sense, the government views diaspora groups as vital partners in the diaspora organising and integration process in the country of settlement and provides engagement opportunities in the countries of origin. The Swiss government engages diaspora communities by recognising and supporting diaspora leaders in their respective communities, collaborating with organisations to further the integration efforts of community members, and constructing measures and infrastructures for diaspora engagement in the countries of origin, all while addressing significant external migration-related issues.

Further trends include investment and entrepreneurship of nationals residing abroad in their countries of origin (via country-specific financing programs supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and/or the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs), cultural initiatives led by diaspora communities, contribution to building a positive image of the home country on the international stage, competence sharing/transfer of skills by members of the diaspora (Swiss Entrepreneurship Program by Swissconnect), and remittances sent by migrants residing abroad.

» Achievements

Switzerland's activities in diaspora support programs in the Western Balkans are separated into national and international endeavours. In Switzerland, the Swiss government is committed to the support and development of diaspora leaders' capacities, as well as the inclusion of diaspora groups in the integration process. The activities abroad include diaspora entrepreneurship, diaspora professionals, and development cooperation aid to countries of origin. These efforts differ on a country-by-country basis.



Obstacles

- **Low policy implementation:** Policy recommendations and numerous studies on diaspora engagement strategies in Switzerland have either been overshadowed by other development issues or have not yet been implemented. In addition, there are overlaps between development policy and diaspora engagement policy, necessitating a streamlined approach towards diaspora engagement.
- **Low diaspora participation in policy design:** . Switzerland's current activities in the field of migration are characterised by strong inter-institutional cooperation and international collaboration. However, design and implementation of diaspora engagement activities are delegated to implementers of Swiss development programmes in the countries of origin, This introduces a barrier for participation of diaspora members in policy formation.
- **Limited access to Migration Partnerships for North Macedonia:** due to the absence of a migration partnership with Switzerland, North Macedonia has implemented a smaller number of projects than the other two countries under study for ECONDIAS in Switzerland.
- **Limited access to financial services:** Although remittance flow from Switzerland towards the Western Balkan countries is increasing and financial transfer mechanism are fast-growing, outreach of these financial services is still limited. Hence, low usage of formal financial services limits the potential of leveraging remittances for investment.
- **Heterogeneous diaspora groups:** Many Western Balkan diaspora groups organise themselves along ethnic and religious affiliations, rather than on the basis of country of origin. This complicates coordination between different diaspora groups for programmes directed towards country of origin.



SPOTLIGHT: Practices

Albinfo.ch: Independent platform for Albanian speakers in Switzerland and beyond 2014-2022

Albinfo.ch connects the Swiss Albanian diaspora with their home countries. Through networking and trading, they may enhance social, economic, and cultural conditions at home. Founded through the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Federal Office for Migration and the Federal Commission on Migration, the platform is currently independent. It serves Switzerland's second-largest foreigner group, the Albanian-speaking population. Albinfo.ch offers news to the Albanian-speaking diaspora and others daily in Albanian, French and German features and short reports, and also serves to connect Albanian-speaking businesses and business owners.

NETWORKING

i-diaspora: Founding new grounds for Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora 2017-2022

Founded in 2017, i-platform encourages cooperation, know-how transfer, and investments between Bosnia and Herzegovina **and Switzerland. The platform combines young people who want to help Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless of ethnic or religious affiliations. While the** Bosnia and Herzegovina diaspora in Switzerland contributes a major portion of remittances to Bosnia and Herzegovina (10.9% of GDP in 2019), the development potential of its immaterial contributions (knowledge transfer, connecting and networking capacities) remains to be developed and i-diaspora is a major partner in this process.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
AND NETWORKING

Swinto: Transforming remittances as financial instruments 2018-2022

INVESTMENT AND REMITTANCES

The Zug-based Swinto Schweiz AG manages the Swinto financial platform in Switzerland and Kosovo. The Swinto app can transfer money, make payments via QR codes, exchange currencies, make deposits, and withdraw money. The Central Bank of Kosovo has licensed the firm to operate in Kosovo as a Non-Bank Financial Institution for Electronic Money, supported by a bank in Switzerland, and is foreseen to expand quickly into Europe, the UK, and the Western Balkans. Swinto transforms remittances into a financial ecosystem by enabling Swinto users to shop, pay bills, and transfer money via the app. These services aim to disconnect clients from banks and open small investors to a broader set of financial products including microinvestments, P2P lending and other.

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