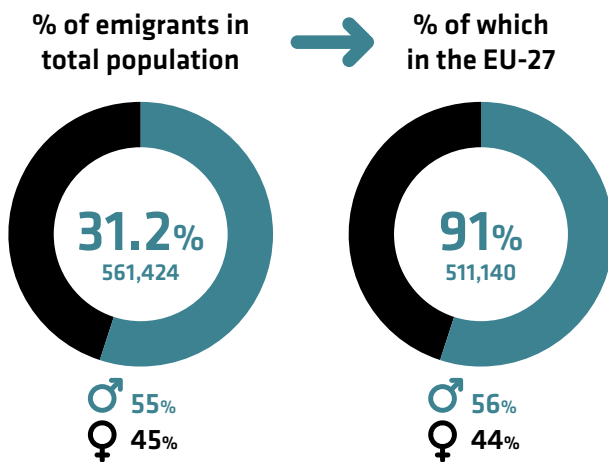


# Diaspora engagement mapping

## KOSOVO\*1

### Facts & figures

#### Emigration<sup>2</sup>





**Remittances as a share of GDP: 17.3%**  
**Remittances inflow (USD billion): 1.6**

#### Top countries of destination<sup>3</sup>

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

#### Political rights

 <b>Dual nationality<sup>4</sup></b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 <b>Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>5</sup> by postal/mail voting</b>	<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.<sup>6</sup>

### » 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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 Diaspora<sup>7</sup> 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.

NETWORKING

<sup>7</sup> 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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