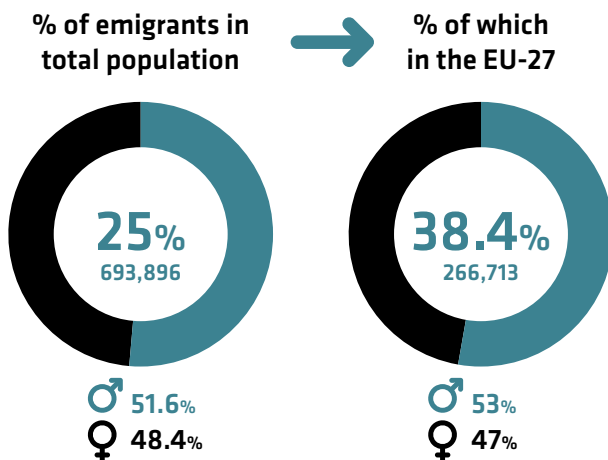


Diaspora engagement mapping NORTH MACEDONIA¹

Facts & figures

Emigration²



Remittances as a share of GDP: 3.2%
Remittances inflow (USD million): 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.

Written by: **Merita Zulfu Alili**
Edited by: **ICMPD**
December 2022

Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union

