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# Albanian Emigration as a Developing component since its surviving stage

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## Introduction

The Albanian emigration could be considered quite as a re generation of a history not yet written but by all the chances will continue for a long period of time. Not to go deep down into the roots of the history, this one (the history) has recognised a forced Albanian emigration old enough, almost 500 years.

If we'd stop and analyse the Albanian emigration in the beginning of the 90-s, we will identify some of the causes and reasons or the quintessence of this existing phenomenon simultaneous as an international and socio-economic-political ones.

Naturally, the above mentioned precedent, where the earlier fluxes, were moving towards European countries, but not countries like Turkey, USA, Germany, Switzerland Great Britain, or in other neighbour balkanic countries, directions that at the time were becoming primary important in an alternative way. Such directions highlighted different experiences or activities, which even today are part of the family expectancies in between generations.  
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However, the post 90-s Albanian emigration is considered in many aspects, rather unique than rare. First of all such emigration was a necessary tool to ensure the economic survival of hundred thousand families; secondly, in comparison with the general population the emigrants ratio remains in high levels. It also needs to be mentioned the emergent forced feature, after long period of total isolation time, imposed by the communism regime. Another specific feature of this emigration was the internal migration, the not controlled de-

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rural, and the chaotic movements from villages towards the small cities, or metropolis, the economic and social infrastructure of which even without these movement was not able to offer full services. (Nicola Mai, Stephanie Schëander-Sievers). The very high level of unemployment, the changes of the property statues from the state one into private in fields such as agriculture and industry, the collapse of big industrial centres artificially populated, poor living resources, but economical survival, labour market stoned with institutions yet in the embryonic phase influenced that the expectancies of these category of population to get better living conditions, turned out to be false and in a lot of cases these “big industrial centres” became “the waiting rooms of the international emigration often illegal”.

The Tirana and Durres regions are the primary destinations of inside migrants followed by the ones of Lushnja, Lezha, Fieri and Vlore. The larger part of the migrants from the deepest part of the country moves in the central and the coast part of the country. Fluxes from less economical developed parts of the northeastern of Albania (prefectures of Duibra, Kukes and Shkodra) in figures were the double of the figures and fluxes from southeastern of Albanian (prefectures of Berat, Korce, Gjirokaster and Vlora). In addition to that there were some important fluxes of short distances, mostly fluxes “rural-urban”, within the central Albania and within the northeastern of Malesi.

Unfortunately, during the beginning of 2000, these fluxes were associated by a very negative effect of what is known as the rising of the trafficking and organised crime.

The rise of such phenomenon’s highlighted the importance of cooperation with international collaborators and the compilation of the Strategy against Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings, together with an action plan of implementation, results of which not spectacular, are meaningful. At the end the Albanian emigration is divided in the so called the perception of the “hosting country” specially influenced by medias almost equal with the stigmatization and the reality of an integration somehow successful, there.

In a study undertaken lately, only in Italy, the Albanian emigrants are owners of 14 thousand enterprises alongside with the student’s number.

Since in this honourable forum I represent the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and taking into consideration that this Ministry is “the eye and the ear of the government” in managing the labour market I will try to focus my speech, mostly in the issue of migration with employment intentions.

The case of such migrant category, closely related to the Multiplan integration of migrants in the society and institutions of the hosting country, from a long period of time are part of the priorities of the agenda of public policies of the proper governments. For sure, as we mentioned further above for this very complexes phenomenon nothing could be considered resolved as a priory or as the best one.

In the official approach of the Albanian government in terms of treating and resolving the phenomenon of migration following the international rights, respecting the human rights of people and specially this group of people which could be easily facing discrimination and not equal treatments in the hosting countries, dominate the opinion which is already consolidated, that migration if well managed in cooperation with the hosting countries of the transition, could be providing benefits for societies in the economic development of

respective countries, not excluding for at least one moment the benefits for the individuals as well as for their families and the communities.

Being more concrete, the National Strategy of Migration (NSM) and the National Plan of Action for its implementation (NPA) are the official approach of the Albanian government, which sees the National Strategy of Migration (NSM) close related to the well economic and social development of the country.

However such approach and treatments of this nature need to be supported by well identified policies, a contemporaneous legal framework, stabilised institutions associated with expertise. In the case of Albania such requirements are fairly new. This is the reason, why these two major documents compiled by the help of the many years experience of and world wise practise, try to provide some paths very difficult ones to be crossed over, but necessary challenges for the fulfilment of social and economic goals which include the social protection as well as social insurances, training and education and up to savings and investments.

In accordance with the recommendations of ILO, IOM, but also other big and prestigious international organisations, Albania requires that the migration policies in their foundation should have:

1. Protection of the Albanian citizens that intent temporarily employment abroad
2. Organisation, emigration and legal employment in other countries
3. Easiness and re integration of the Albanian citizens repatriated

The Albanian government already convinced, has embraced the contemporary concept of managing the migration phenomenon, aiming so minimising the negative influences of it and maximising the benefits that rise from this phenomenon.

### **Albanian Migration**

The emigration as a phenomenon in its own is a very sharp issue with which Albania has been facing during the last ten years. It is a political, social and economic issue for the country itself as well as a factor for the relations with neighbour countries as well as Northern part of Europe.

Some of the reasons that promoted the massive emigration of Albanians are:

- Being free and opened towards the world in the beginning of the 90-s, inspired Albanians to search and hope for better life and felicity helped also by the mass media's propaganda of West of the World.
- The political changes from the monist political system towards a pluralist one were associated by destruction of the administrative and economic super structure, giving birth so to contingents of unemployment people and "free labour force" in the cities and villages.

- The approach and the political aggressiveness of the party that took over at the time whom in the name of getting rid of the communism heritage not only fired a majority of potential candidates but also established a political and social environment where the emigration was seen as the only way of surviving.
- The never ending transition period as well as the large number of economic difficulties that accompanied the collapse of the “pyramidal schemes”, the non-security of the order and life, were a good cause to search for better life in Italy and Greece.
- The familiar reunion in the hosting countries is another reason to live from Albania either legal or illegal.

It is understandable that the problem of Albanian emigration is considered critical also for the neighbour countries of the European Community which could not be any different as long as we discuss for integration and inclusion.

This is a real concern that takes place here and across Adriatic, but the truth is that it cannot be resolved by simply building division walls and police barriers, but through cooperation between all pairs.

### **Definition of the elements of Albania’s migratory policies**

After the collapse of the communism regime, during which the emigration of the Albanian citizens was not only prohibited by law but also considered as trait towards the country and for it was punished. In the beginning of the 90-s Albania faced a very specific category of emigration, which configured also one of the most specific features of the Albanian migration.

At this point, in Albania the political approach was consolidate and seen the emigration as an life alternative, through which the Albanian citizens like other millions any where in the world must and should have the chance to improve his/her own living conditions and employment throughout legal emigration and the familiar one. The Albanian government of that time alongside with a lot of other institutional actors maybe in a reasonable way of thinking but with not the right professionalism embraced only the shine side of this phenomenon the concept of “release valve” to decrease the massive number of unemployment of those years, but also to soften the non satisfactory socio-economical feelings that escorted the long and difficult period of transition.

Further more the phenomenon of emigration was embraced in its ideal aspect introduced so by the very early stage of the world experience: the emigration offers the chance for effective employment of an unemployment labour force, shipments from emigrants in their origin countries and their families, learning of new knowledge new approach and using them in the short future in their country’s socio-economical development.

Is this reasonable???? In a general way!

However we must not forget that such shipments at least ensured the life of thousand and thousand Albanians families disorientated in the chaotic socio-economical system that was as a result of the compilation of the total new legislation, the change of the new forms of the property and the “hard” privatisation of the time.

Nevertheless in a reasonable way, not lonely but not enough qualified, in some cases some intimidated voices were raised up and discussed their concern about breaking the importance of emigration towards the individuals and the society: the massive emigration, under no conditions whatsoever, even when this emigration was not according to the education and qualification level, step by step were preventing the fragile Albanian society from its best and qualified resources, from the most active labour force necessary as the oxygen for the country’s socio-economical re building.

For its own features and characteristics of the Albanian emigration at that time almost and entire individual especially male oriented one, this phenomenon had a negative impact in the institution of the family. At that time there were no family re union, or leaving together with the other part of the family. Another negative feature of the Albanian emigration at that time, which brought up the not regular way of leaving the country towards another country, was the lack of necessary legal documentations which increased the risk of family reunion and also discrimination in the field of legal employment, not being able to get bonuses, the approach towards the democratic state institutions of the hosting countries. And we should always keep in mind that in Greece it is located the largest Albanian community (the estimation show that in Greece the number of Albanian emigrants is somewhere in between 600 – 650 thousand people) and legal stance in hosting countries such as Italy and Greece.

According to the Internal Ministry, specifically the Department of Social Integration of Greece in October 2004 from the general number of stance permit ions of all kinds, 672.584, the number of Albanians requesting such service stand somewhere at 452.321 people from which the Albanian males number is 325.784 and Albanian females is 99.403. Regarding the case for stance permit ion for self-employed from the total number of 2.282 the Albanians and mainly males get 649 and Albanian females get 129: from the whole total of stance permit ion for foreign workers, which is 459.421, the Albanian males receive 251.717 and the Albanian females receive 45.513.

The features of the Albanian community getting settled and heading towards the integration into the hosting Greek society could be shown very well by the category of the stance permit ion with the intention of family re uniting: so from the total of permit ions given out for 2004 with the intention of family re uniting 60.220, Albanians have benefited by a high number of 51.713, specifically 9.393 for females and 42.915 for males, or in Italy where there are 250 thousand Albanians that hold regular stance permit ion.

In the end it is necessary to highlight that the Albanian citizens emigration, without excluding the factor of “surviving and consuming” became at last a system of exchange and relations. From the other side with the lack of emigration managing experience the emigration of the Albanian citizens has very little influenced in the macro economic development of the country, besides improving the economical situation of the individuals and their families.

It also need to be mentioned that the lack of experience in managing the migratory phenomenon was not the only reason, but there were also the lack of a proper strategy for managing the migratory phenomenon in function of a national economical and social development strategy throughout the contemporary treatments of shipments and emigrants savings with the aim of investing more than consuming, improving the protection level and the professional skills of the local labour force, establishment and monitoring the system of legal migration allowing and supporting so the participate of the private sector and compiling the promotion measures for repatriating with their free will of the emigrants specially the elite ones or the ones with required skills for the national labour market.

## **The Government Structures**

Many governmental institutions cover the issue of migration, but the main ministries are:

- Ministry of Public Order (MPO)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

In Albania there hasn't been a proper policy makers institution with the aim and the intention of treating the large features of the migratory process until recently where it has been established an intra-institutional group including representatives from the ministries in line such as Ministry of Public Order, Ministry of Foreign Affairs but the lead role is been appointed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

In addition to those Ministries there has been engaged also the opinions of the representatives from the academic world, civil society, organization of employers and union trades aiming so a sectarian presentation in the stage of compilation and debating regarding these policies. Mostly the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been the lead in making such policies since it is the "eye and ear" of the government relating to the labour market and at the same time it is institution that defined by law for the development of labour market.

Other than that in the Albanian context the policies for employment abroad in between others will be getting the approval of a major institution, "Comity Intra-Ministerial of Migration" leaded by the prime minister.

Excluding the details about the responsibilities for the main Ministries which may be found in the (NSM) and (NAPM) can be mentioned that:

**Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** is responsible for every aspect of migration for employment intentions. The Directory of Migration deals in a direct way with migration issues. One of the goals of this Directory is the assurance of legal conditions for participance of the private sector in the process of emigration. MOLSA handles the licensing; monitoring and Multi plan evaluating of the private employment agencies. Other institutions within MOLSA structure that handle migration are; (NES)

National Employment Services, (SSS) State Social Services and the (ISI) Institute of Social Insurances.

MOLSA is at the same time the main, competent and responsible authority to handle employment agreements with other countries.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs** not only from this list, but also because of its legal function has been included at early stages of compiling the policies for employing abroad. In the NSM and NAPM, the MFA has been appointed to handle things already classical for its homologues in world especially for countries that send emigrants abroad. These goals and functions are: founding the enquiries and the developed labour markets in the main employment countries, but also the possibilities of increasing such potential labour market in those countries where the treatment conditions and employment for the foreign labour force are more favourable and convenient. In addition to this MFA through its own diplomatic representatives is appointed to gather and distribute the information about the labour and social legislation with a special attention towards the field of social protection and according to the law about the consular services, is the main institution for protecting the rights of the emigrant workers.

In between others, MFA through its policies aims to support and organise the Albanian communities abroad since in its compound takes part a very important structure named the Institute of Diaspora. The compound, its mission, goals and activities are approved by sub legal acts.

Nevertheless MFA is the main participant in the process of signing an agreement either bilateral or multilateral, ratified by Albania as well as re accepted agreements.

**Ministry of Public Order** part of which are also the migratory authorities, has a classic and double role; controlling and admitting foreigners as well as controlling and exiting of the Albanian citizens as well as taking the right measures against illegal trafficking. Its role is very important in signing and implementing the re admittance agreements.

**Ministry of Education and Science** as part of the vocational training process includes under its supervision the vocational educational centres that work for a period of time of 3-5 years and are attended by students of the age group of 14-18 years old. The other part of vocational training is been performed by the Vocational Training Centres public and private ones which are monitored by MOLSA. Relating the second component the vocational training system which seems to have more deficiencies in order to full fill the labour market's needs, because of a lot of theoretical and less practical performance, the small number of instructors, the lack of financial motivation, also the disproportion of the didactical modules with the real requires of the labour market's needs, it's noticeable a disproportion between the demand and the offers.

MES has its own policies with identified priorities which part of these priorities are establishing the Albanian cultural centres in the hosting countries such as Italy, Greece etc. providing the necessary conditions for educating the educators, implementing the existing national programmes (the Strategy for promoting the employment of students graduated abroad), implementing the common programmes with the international institutions for repatriating students qualified abroad etc.

The role of ME is very important because the policies for employment abroad should take in consideration the education system' capacities of a country in order to fulfil the actual and the future needs of country for qualified labour force.

**Ministry of Justice** actively participates in the policy of employing abroad with legal intervene, mainly for administrative and legal sanctions in order to avoid and punish different abuse from the private employment offices part, for signing and ratifying the International Convents that do protect the rights of the emigrants and their families. MJ also undertakes indicatives for compiling different necessary legal dispositions for punishing the authors of the penal acts that are related to the trafficking and exploitation of the human beings, protection of the witnesses and victims that do testify against these acts.

### **The Program of the Albanian Government**

According to the government some of its priorities in the field of migration are managing the migratory fluxes, increasing the care towards the emigrants and their families, as well as providing them easiness to apply and emigrate in a legal way alongside trying to fight the illegal emigration. Taking into consideration the actual economical situation as well as the employment in the country, the government considers as a priority canalising the emigrant's money shipments into the economical development. The Albanian government has been showing the right attention for the impact of these shipments from the emigrants. This is the reason that the government has been engaged in promoting the seasonal employment as an alternative of permanent emigration for employment purposes and for promoting repatriating the qualified emigrants. Been interested for the living conditions of the Albanian citizens abroad the government is engaged to help in these citizens social, cultural and economical integration in their hosting countries being careful to keep alive and develop the Albanian cultural heritage.

### **Legal and Political framework for the emigration**

The existing legal framework in the field of migration consists in:

The Albanian Constitution of the 1998

Article 8 defines that Republic of Albania protects the rights of its citizens with a temporarily or permanent stance abroad.

The third paragraph of the article 8 defines the constitutional obligation of the Republic of Albania for assuring the assistance for Albanians that live and work abroad in order to save and further develop their connections with the national cultural heritage.

Article 38 of the Constitution dwell the freedom of movement. Such regulation guarantees the freedom of movement for the Albanian citizens abroad.

The Albanian government considers as the best way of protecting the rights of the Albanian emigrants, active cooperation with the governments and the private and public institutions of the hosting countries.



The other way of protecting the Albanian emigrants rights is promoting and supporting the organisations and association of the Albanian communities abroad, affixing a signature and ratifying tractates, agreements and international convents bilateral or multilateral with the aim of using the in maximum the International Law in the general sphere of human rights and specially the ones that handle issues of migratory field.

It is very important to pay a lot of attention to the establishment and functions of the honest and contemporary system of recruiting where the public institutions together with the private ones (APP) do not act as “rivals” but with the same rights and goals defined so in the legislation and aiming the eradication of abuses and reducing of the costs of migratory processes.

Among the main measures defined so in the (NSM) and (NAPM) related to the efficient and contemporary protection of the Albanian emigrants expressed in different chapters could be mentioned the most important ones that offer a legal base to assure this protection as down below:

- Bilateral employment agreement
- Fulfilment of the minimum standards and contract for employment abroad
- Convents and recommendations of ILO
- The convent of UN about the rights of emigrant workers
- The order and discipline through the process of recruiting
- Licensing the agent of recruiting

The Albanian authorities have chosen the active managing migration for employment purposes. The debating and discussed issues lay out for resolution in the (NSM) and (NAPM) define the time and the way of the state’s interference. In between others the Albanian state in order to be more adequate in terms of regulation, allowing the private agencies of mediators and recruiting, but also participate in an active way in this process through the institutions. However just like the other countries that send emigrant abroad, Albania faces with the hosting countries policies, which not always apply to the policies of the origin countries. After the establishment of the democratic system in Albania as well as in the framework of improving free movements of Albanian citizens, these ones (Albanian citizens) are free to live their country, besides any specific case defined so by the law, but not necessary the Albanian citizens have the right to enter in other countries.

The Albanian government has chosen to cooperate with the main hosting countries embracing so the concept that the legal and managed emigration is for the best of states, individuals as well as the proper societies.

### **About the state’s role**

Just like mentioned further above the Albanian state is trying to implement the system of managed migration from the state, through its legal, institutional and administrative instruments. Regarding one of this instruments, which is the organisation of the migration Albania allows the activities of the private employment agencies not as antagonist actors, not alone but, taking into account as a state its organisation through its public agencies.

However no matter that the number of this private employment agencies is not noticeable as a result of the lack of a proper study, there are chances that special agent in an illegal way could be taking advances of the process of recruiting and mediating. In the Albanian legislation these agencies services should not face up by the job seekers, leaving so the specialised state institutions or agencies as State Labour Inspectorate.

Despite that it is necessary training and specialising these inspectors in relation with three issues:

- Who?
- What?
- How should be inspected?

Another major reason, which induces the Albanian state to interfere in the management of the employment abroad, is also the negative phenomenon of removal of the human capacities essential for the countries development. The above-mentioned concern does not induce the Albanian state to create the circumstances of an autarky. In the Strategy for Economic and social development and the Strategy for Employment and Vocational Training as well as some other sectarian strategy aiming that the most important human resources shall be used for the countries development according to the actual stages.

One of NSM-s is switching into a very important component of SESD of the country taking into account the characteristics always in changing of the emigration process, not only Albanian one.

Certainly it is impossible to discuss in details very important issues, such as repatriating or using the shipments from the emigrants, which by the estimations this amount of money is 1 milliard dollars per year, in a report of this nature, but it is necessary to mention that everything remains as a priority of the Albanian government.

**Thank you for your time and the attention**