NATIONAL STRATEGY ON DIASPORA AND MIGRATION

2018 - 2024

(DRAFT)
## CONTENTS

### NATIONAL STRATEGY

#### I- VISION OF THE NEW STRATEGY

- SITUATION ASSESSMENT .................................................................................. 2
- AIMS OF THE DOCUMENT ............................................................................... 3
- GENERAL OBJECTIVES .................................................................................... 4
- MIGRATION AND EU INTEGRATION ................................................................. 4
- DIASPORA AS QUALITY OF THE ALBANIAN SOCIETY .................................... 5

#### II- NEW MIGRATION AND ALBANIANS

- STAGES OF ALBANIAN MIGRATION ............................................................... 7
- REASONS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY ............................................................. 7
- "BRAIN DRAIN" PHENOMENON ...................................................................... 8
- MIGRATION AND NEIGHBOURS ..................................................................... 9
- SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS .............................................................. 10

#### III- THE STATE AND THE DIASPORA

- STATUS QUO OF THE DIASPORA ................................................................. 12
- PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE DIASPORA ......................................... 12
- RELATIONS OF THE STATE WITH THE DIASPORA ....................................... 13
- MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION BY THE STATE ........................................... 14
- CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF THE DIASPORA ............................................ 14
- AGENCY OF DIASPORA AND MIGRATION ................................................... 15
- CREATION OF THE DIASPORA REGISTRY BOOK .......................................... 16
- THE RIGHT TO VOTE .................................................................................... 16
- DIASPORA SUMMIT ..................................................................................... 16
- PUBLIC DIPLOMACY OF THE DIASPORA .................................................... 17
- IMPROVEMENT OF CONSULAR SERVICES ................................................ 18

#### IV- INVOLVEMENT OF THE DIASPORA IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

- DIASPORA AS AN ECONOMIC FACTOR ...................................................... 20
- FEATURES OF REMITTANCES .................................................................... 20
- REMITTANCES AND THE BANKING SYSTEM ............................................. 21
- USE OF REMITTANCES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ............. 22
- POLICIES FOR DIASPORA INVESTMENTS .................................................. 23
- DIASPORA NETWORKS .................................................................................. 24
- GUARANTEE FUND OF INVESTMENTS AND CREDITING ............................ 25

#### V- PROTECTION OF IDENTITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

- NON-MONETARY REMITTANCES OF THE DIASPORA ............................... 26
- PRESERVING NATIONAL IDENTITY ............................................................... 27
- EDUCATION AND THE MEDIA .................................................................... 28

#### VI- ALBANIA AND KOSOVO

- ......................................................................................................................... 30

#### VII- MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- ......................................................................................................................... 32
CONTENTS

ACTION PLAN

STRUCTURE OF THE MAIN MEASURES OF THE ACTION PLAN................................. 36

I- INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT........................................................................... 36
II- ALBANIAN COMMUNITIES ABROAD AND THE HUMAN CAPITAL..................... 36
III- ALBANIAN COMMUNITIES ABROAD AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT........ 37

MEASURES PROPOSED TO BE DISCUSSED .............................................................. 37

I- STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION......................................................................... 38
II- RELATIONS WITH THE DIASPORA AND MIGRATION........................................ 41
III- MEDIA AND INFORMATION NETWORKS......................................................... 48
IV- TRAINING AND EDUCATION............................................................................. 51
V- REGISTRATION AND VOTING............................................................................ 54
VI- DIASPORA AND ECONOMY................................................................................ 56
VII-MONITORING...................................................................................................... 59
VISION OF THE NEW STRATEGY
SITUATION ASSESSMENT

The National Strategy for Diaspora and Migration 2018-2024 of the Government of Albania is an instrument that deals with the situation of the phenomenon of migration and diaspora of Albania. It makes several recommendations, which might elucidate the future work of state structures.

The complexity of the migration phenomenon requires coordination of many state institutions and bodies and it determines the nature of the strategic document as a complex interdisciplinary strategy. The same nature of work was pursued even to prepare and elaborate the National Action Plan document through which measures it would be possible the implementation of the National Strategy 2018-2024.

The National Strategy is a dynamic document that has to be followed-up and monitored on regular basis. It will be a very useful tool for the citizen and it will raise awareness of the state structures for the fulfilment of obligations envisaged therein.

The public policies of Albania towards the diaspora have so far been influenced by the donor community and the NGOs. In 2004, Albania adopted the “National Strategy” on as complete as possible migration management. It was the first document which attempted at incorporating the interests of Albanians of the Albania in the country and abroad. The first Albanian migration strategy of 2004 called for Albania to be considered a country capable of managing migration flows. It was prepared with EU funding and supported by IOM. Irrespective of the intent, the aim had little to do with the country’s economic development and the image rather than the purpose was mostly appreciated.

The National Strategy 2018-2024 is based even on the critical assessment of the implementation of the Albanian Government policies in the field of migration through:

- the review of previous strategies in the field of migration and their action plans,
- verification of the measures taken and their impact on the state action,
- verification of the reasons for the delays and measures to be taken in the future,
- analysis of the existing conditions for the attainment of goals,
- drafting of conclusions and recommendations for policy development in this sector.

The National Strategy addresses:
- causes of migration,
- mechanisms of social and political factoring of migrants and diaspora in the Albanian society,
- their protection outside Albania,
- the organization of Albanian communities abroad,
- improvement of consular services by the consulates and the Albanian embassies.
The National Strategy seeks to produce a synthesis of the collective commitment of the Albanian society towards its compatriots, who have opted to live abroad. Apart from conventional treatment, it reflects some difficulties as appropriate choices are to be based on assessment and analysis of the right questions.

The aim of the Strategy is to provide Albania with a more comprehensive policy on migration and its alignment with the European Union integration policy orientations and the best international standards.

The Strategy promotes the organization of a state policy for engaging the Albanian emigration into the country's economic and political development.

Albania, coming out from an isolated communist dictatorship, was faced with the problem of migration. This phenomenon occurred at large scale emerging from the early 90s, and continuing at radical scale. Despite the complexity characterizing this phenomenon, it became a difficult challenge for the Albanian society.

The existence of such a phenomenon in Albania at a large scale can only but impact directly on the relations of Albania with the countries of the migration destination, especially the European ones.

The National Strategy aims at the elaboration and implementation of several specific and organically related reforms. Their fulfilment will require the participation of many stakeholders and institutions.

The strategy requires understanding migration as an added value of the society. It raises the need of managing migration through the strengthening of the ability of the Government to develop and implement the policy for a better management of the migration phenomenon. This process will assess the organization of Albanian communities and organizations in the world into a structured diaspora aiming at their factorization and interaction for the economic development of the country.
GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The forecasting and strategic planning in the policies related to the diaspora will lead to an understanding of the main risks of the future for both the homeland and the diaspora, which currently face political, economic and social challenges.

The main objectives of the strategy are:

Creating a comprehensive policy-making framework in the field of migration. Creating a useful instrument that will assist the Government and other stakeholders to improve migration and diaspora relations-oriented policies. Analysing results deriving from such a policy. Developing an ever-present policy in this scope of activity of the state. Preparing the administration for the new level of relations of the state policies with the diaspora.

The strategic document is divided into two parts:

the National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration and the Action Plan, which contains the objectives and the activities planned to be implemented in the period 2018-2024.

The National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration and the Action Plan 2018 - 2024 aim at organizing and administering the Albanian migration and diaspora. This process will strengthen the inter-institutional action within the country, the regional and international co-operation on this issue. It will seek to involve the civil society through an open and public discussion over this phenomenon.

MIGRATION AND EU INTEGRATION PROCESS

Migration in the European Union has been an important field of reflection in recent years. The European 2020 Strategy and the Stockholm Program recognize the potential of migrants in EU to build a competitive and sustainable economy.

Migration has been and remains one of the "hot potatoes" in the relations between Albania and the European Union. The latter, considering Albania as a priority country in the fight against irregular migration, identified this problem as an open issue in the European integration process of the country.

The integration of Albania in the European Union and the new international status that Albanians aspire for them naturally goes through the path of organizing its links with the old and new Diaspora.
DIASPORA AS QUALITY OF THE ALBANIAN SOCIETY

Diaspora is a term known as of more than 2500 years ago. Today, this term can be defined as "a community of migrants who maintain material or sentimental ties with their homeland, adapting themselves to the environment and the institutions of the host society". Diaspora should be understood neither as something unchangeable and rigid, nor as something that is unitary or framed. On the contrary, the diaspora should be referred to as emigrant communities whose identity changes over time.

Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (Lugina) are the states of departures of Albanians for migration. Albanian migration is traditional. About 200,000 people migrated when the Ottomans occupied Albanian land in the 15th century. Later, Albanians moved within the Ottoman territory, and they held as well important positions in the Ottoman structures in various parts of the Empire.

One of the oldest Albanian diaspora is the Arbëresh community in Italy, which still maintains its own cultural and linguistic roots. This population is the descendant of those Albanian families who led Albania in the 15th century when the Ottomans occupied this area and they became refugees in the Kingdom of Naples. Diaspora of Albanian origin is settled in Turkey. For a long time, it was dangerous to declare the Albanian ancestry, but in today’s Turkey, the Albanian diaspora is respected and Turkish historiography assesses the important role played by the Albanians in the Ottoman hierarchy, but even later on at the time of the foundation of the modern state of Turkey. Migration to the United States of America is consolidated in time and the oldest Albanian cultural association "Vatra" celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2012.

In Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Egypt, and Argentina there is a Diaspora, which, though old, maintains linguistic ties and it is in search of its identity. Today, the Albanian diaspora is present in European countries, Canada, Australia and Africa. In most host countries, Albanians have established their own organizations. The international organizations dealing with the Albanian migration focus mainly on the present-day diaspora. This is the case of those who have abandoned Albania and Kosovo after the collapse of communism in the 1990s and later. This definition is incomplete and does not represent the reality of the Albanian Diaspora. Many of those who left the 90s joined their family members or friends who were already living abroad. They joined the Albanian associations, which have long existed in many host countries.

The National Strategy seeks to reassess the Diaspora as a factor that will exert its impact on the homeland and vice versa, by adapting the nation to the new conditions of the time we live.
NEW MIGRATION AND ALBANIANS
STAGES OF ALBANIAN MIGRATION

In relation to the recent migration from Albania, we can identify three phases:

• the migrants’ wave before 1944,
• the later diaspora of those who left during 1945-1990 and which coincides mainly with the Albanians to the former-Yugoslavia,
• the great migration wave after the fall of communism, after 1990.

In 1989, around 19.5% of the population belonged to the 15-24 years old age group. The political isolation of the communist regime and the idea of freedom in the West were personified as ideas of freedom of movement and migration to the neighbouring states, mainly in Italy and Greece. Moving abroad was seen as an investment for the future and for a better life.

Albania became the country with the largest flow of migration in Europe, according to the measurement of the ratio between the migrants and the population. This phase of migration can be divided into several periods:

• the period 1991-1992, which was completely uncontrolled, when approximately 300,000 Albanians abandoned the country,
• the period 1992-1996, when the same number migrated, mainly illegally, despite temporary economy growth and better border control,
• the period 1996-1997, shortly after the collapse of the pyramid savings schemes, which led to the escape of hundreds of thousands people. Albania plunged into anarchy and many others moved away from fear of violence.

During the first decade of transition, a lack of state control over migration emerged. In the early 2000, approximately 25% of the total population, or over 35% of the workforce, had emigrated.

REASONS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY

People migrate when in their country they lack resources and opportunities to meet their needs and aspirations. The term "for a better life" includes some factors that force Albanians to leave the country. This is reflected in the lack of uniformity among Albanian emigrants. The main factors are:

Economic factor: Albanians leave mainly for economic reasons such as: lack of employment opportunities, - poor living conditions, especially in some areas where basic conditions such as electricity, water and housing are lacking.
Public security: Albania has experienced massive emigration flows as a result of low levels of public security or turmoil in the country. A considerable number of skilled people with sound economic conditions have left the country for a safer future for themselves and their family. This phenomenon occurred especially after the 1997 turmoil, which was accompanied by another wave of departure.

Weak institutions lead to a lack of trust of citizens in improvement of the situation in the country where corruption and organized crime paralyse the normal functioning of state institutions. Weak institutions and difficulties in law enforcement also affect emigrants’ efforts and perspectives to return and settle in the country, especially when they face difficulties in building private business or in relations with the public administration.

A special case is the departure because of the "blood feuds", which are a special social and cultural burden in the northern areas of the country. The previous governmental documents handle departure from the country mainly in the framework of anti-trafficking and border management measures. By its very nature, it is impossible to fight against it through repressive measures, but preventative measures are required as well. This phenomenon may be treated with long-term methods focused on the causes of migration from a practical point of view. This approach is in line with the Common European Migration Policy.

“BRAIN DRAIN” PHENOMENON

Migration data show a large loss of skilled citizens who have special qualities. In 1990, 40% of teachers and scholars left the country. This phenomenon continues to happen and is a large-scale phenomenon. "Brain drain" includes not only the academics or skilled persons of other fields. A high number of Albanian students go to Italy and Greece and then the country’s "brain" moves to Canada, the USA and Germany.

The "loss" of skilled and educated people is detrimental to the socio-economic development of a country, as they are the driving force of a country.

Taking measures to avoid the (permanent) departure of qualified and educated individuals will require the promotion of temporary migration and in particular circular migration. They will focus on skilled individuals whose contribution is beneficial to the development of the country. Albania will try to reach agreement with the main host countries, for example: Canada and the USA, on measures aimed at promoting voluntary return of emigrants.

Qualified emigrants will be required to voluntarily come to Albania for short stays for consultation purposes, teaching (for example in summer schools), or trainings. This will also serve for the registration of all intellectual capacities staying abroad.
Representatives of the talented young generation will be attracted to a professional career in the country by offering them scholarships for further study abroad or the opportunity to participate in exchange programmes with third countries, provided that they will return to their country. This is an investment for the future by increasing the level of young academics. In order to ensure their return, the (sending) institutions should maintain close relations with the emigrants abroad and offer them employment opportunities after returning home.

**MIGRATION AND NEIGHBOURS**

In selecting the host country, the main factor for Albanian migrants was geographic, cultural and linguistic proximity. Neighbours including Greece and Italy were the main destination during the 1992-1995 period. The afore-mentioned countries are preferred as well because of the scarce possibility of application of a migration project. The preference of Albanian migrants for other Western European countries or the USA was limited due to the economic situation and migration policy in these countries.

Migration statistics are clear in their ambiguity. Twenty years after the fall of communism, it was estimated that approximately 1.44 million Albanians, or 45% of the 3.2 million people currently living in Albania, had migrated and lived abroad, mainly in Greece and Italy. The Albanian government estimated that 600 000 Albanians lived in Greece in 2005, and 250 000 Albanians lived in Italy (though according to the Italian sources there were about 400 000 Albanians).

Albanians considered Italy as a place where cultural preferences and geographical proximity are combined. Life under the country’s communist regime had made Italy to be seen a symbol of freedom and the West. Radio and television broadcasting was the most important channel through which Albanians in communism maintained ties with the West. Italian language was the most spoken foreign language in Albania, Italian art and culture constituted special attractions. These factors helped to understand why Italy was the most preferred country by Albanian emigrants. In Italy, the number of Albanians in mid-2005 was highest compared with other emigrants in that country, or 13.7% more than Romanians and Moroccans.

Greece is the other country that is geographically close to the Albanians. Illegal crossing of the Greek-Albanian border did not require large financial expenses. Citizens of both countries also share certain cultural and historical similarities. Although Greek is not spoken in Albania, apart from some southern regions where the Greek community resides, an increasing number of Albanians has moved to this country thus constituting a massive migration. As a result of this, the number of those who could speak Greek increased, and the cultural and linguistic distance between the two neighbouring countries was reduced.
Researchers describe migration from Albania as economic and of a high irregularity, with many undocumented emigrants and it is quickly and dynamically developed. A special feature is the multiple entry, especially with Greece. Now the mobility of emigrants travelling often between the homeland and the host countries has normalized due to the regulatory process in Italy and Greece and free visa-free travel. The Albanian diaspora in these countries is focusing on stabilizing the social and legal status they have in the host countries.

**SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS**

A distinctive feature of migration in Greece and Italy is the creation of organizations based on the interests of political parties in Albania. They have played and continue to play an important role in encouraging compatriots to participate in electoral voting (by ensuring their travelling to Albania). The representatives of these organizations in some of the political parties are part of the governing structures thus they increase the political impact of migration on Albanian politics.

By regulating the legal status of host societies, especially in Greece and Italy, the Albanian migrants are moving towards taking a natural role. Their votes are being considered important in local electoral processes. This will be a good opportunity to promote even the representation of candidates of Albanian nationality in the political and representative structures of the host countries.

The organized engagement of migration in Italy and Greece has significantly influenced the relations of Albania with these two countries. They have been raised to the level of strategic partnership, being an example of how migration and organized diaspora affect bilateral relations between the two states.
STATUS QUO OF THE DIASPORA

The analysis of the current situation shows that the Albanian diaspora is very dynamic. It is found in many leading states of the world such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and France, as well as in new economic powers such as Canada and Australia.

The Albanian Diaspora is increasingly organized, educated and willing to keep in touch with the countries of origin. The current level of remittances is controversial, but the main interest relates to the future of these incomes. The analysis on the current situation of Albanian diaspora organizations and migration policies indicate the important role that diaspora plays as a mediator between the host countries and the country of origin.

Albanian diaspora organizations in the West are currently focusing more on how to better organize itself in the host countries and on its domestic priorities.

The diaspora organizations in the host country may address the situation of members of diaspora, their needs and demands, political participation and rights of foreign workers, citizenship and rights of religious communities and so on.

The main quality of the Albanian diaspora is mobilization even through indirect lobbying to persuade the host government to act in favour of supporting the country of origin. The Albanian diaspora engagement was evident in the efforts for independence, first of Albania and then of Kosovo.

PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE DIASPORA

Organization of the diaspora and migration is defined as a voluntary association based on close relatives ties and non-voluntary arrangements of third-party institutions such as the state. Such organization focuses on integration in the receiving state and level of engagement oriented by the country of origin.

The promotion of rights of the Albanian diaspora starts with the fundamental issue such as self-reorganization. It will be based on ethnic and national Albanian unity and it considers the need of the nation for new international conditions.

The strategy will promote a coordinated action of the government with Albanian diaspora organizations for clear dialogue policy with the host countries on important issues including language learning, migration, citizenship policies, etc.

The Diaspora organizations in the host country will address the situation of members
of diaspora, their needs and demands, political participation and labour rights, citizenship, the rights of religious communities or other issues. The main quality of the Albanian diaspora is mobilization even through indirect lobbying to persuade the host government to act in favour of supporting the country of origin. The Albanian diaspora engagement was evident in the efforts for independence, first of Albania and then of Kosovo.

A large number of migrant organizations provide information, support and social services to the young migrants.

The National Strategy estimates that migrant organizations will not only be important for the countries of residence and migrant communities. These organizations can influence the development of civil society in the country of origin through mediation, transfer of ideas, practices and views, values and attitudes, norms of behaviour and social capital. They can play an important role by providing humanitarian assistance to the development and material financing of local partners.

**RELATIONS OF THE STATE WITH THE DIASPORA**

The National Strategy relies on a new quality report of the state institutions for migration and diaspora in accordance with the best European practices. It will promote transparency of institutions in each aspect of the decision-making process and the effectiveness of policies that will ensure coherence in the areas to be applied.

Diaspora is the "hidden" treasure of the Albanians, which must be presented and noted. Despite the documents produced by the state policy, little concrete action has been taken to make the Diaspora feel welcome in the development of the country of origin. They often face bureaucracy and corruption when they try to invest therein.

The strategy estimates that the role of the Albanian diaspora in the future will be stronger than in the past. This is also due to its structure, which is changing through some quality dynamics. If in the past the Albanian diaspora was less educated and used to work in factories or ordinary jobs, today the diaspora possesses skills that are missing in the homeland.

Diaspora has been educated and enriched over the years and it is willing to help the families in the country of origin.
MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION BY THE STATE

Migration management includes several practices for the advancement and positive impact of Albanian migrants and diaspora in the regions of origin. Such practices are based on models that will encourage the administration of the sending countries of origin to define migration strategies and capacity building for its implementation.

The National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration 2018-2024 targets a future where Albania will be considered a country capable of managing migration flows. This strategic goal is linked to the economic and social development of the society and the image of the country.

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF THE ALBANIAN DIASPORA

The new relationship of the state with the diaspora will be based on the establishment of the Consultative Council of the Albanian Diaspora.

This council will be a central organization of co-representation. It will guide the aspects of state policy co-operation with the diaspora and migration.

The Consultative Council of the Albanian Diaspora will be an Inter-Institutional Structure for the engagement of the Diaspora and Migration. This structure will consist of the main institutional partners of the Albanian state and diaspora.

The Diaspora Council will be committed to establishing an organized network of Albanian communities in the host countries and homeland as an "environment of transition" and protagonism.

The organization of Diaspora is considered as a structure of political opportunities. The National Strategy promotes organizational decisions through the political opportunities offered by the countries of residence. Therefore, the diaspora organizations will define their own goals, strategies, areas of action, in accordance with available resources, institutional arrangements in the host countries.

In the last 20 years, the importance of diaspora organizations has been recognized by national and international political institutions. The European Commission refers to them in the First Annual Report on Migration and Integration of 2004. In the United States, the high-level politicians have thanked openly the Albanian-American organizations.
Albanians will be organized following the existing models in their countries of residence. They will respect the legal and administrative framework required by the host country.

**AGENCY OF DIASPORA AND MIGRATION**

The National Agency on Diaspora and Migration will deal with the designing and coordination of migration and diaspora policies. The head will be proposed by the Prime Minister and he/she will be voted by the Albanian Parliament. The Board of the Agency consists of representatives of institutions dealing with the implementation of Albanian migration and diaspora policies.

The National Agency of Diaspora and Migration aims at:

- engaging the state structures to inform and support the diaspora,
- supporting and organizing a functional database for the diaspora,
- taking coordination measures for the realization of the right of the diaspora to vote in elections,
- involving the diaspora in the state administration through the expertise and engagement in various projects,
- promoting transparency in order to encourage investment,
- supporting private-public partnerships with businesses in the countries of residence of the diaspora and encouraging the diaspora to participate in public investment,
- encouraging and organizing the economic chamber of diaspora and other networks of organization according to the common interest,
- coordinating programs for the preservation of the Albanian identity and culture,
- encouraging the building of students’ networks and the innovative use of new social media.
CREATION OF THE DIASPORA REGISTRY BOOK

The creation of the diaspora registry book will be an important step towards the creation of a national memory basis for the present and the future. It will have multiple roles in both the voting process and the creation of well-organized networks of Albanians living abroad. The registry-book will also be a database for the collection of information on the professional capacities among the diaspora.

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The National Strategy foresees the taking of a series of steps for significant changes to the Albania’s legal framework, which will guarantee the welcoming and respect for the role of Diaspora and migration by the state structures. The right to vote and involvement in national decision-making will create a new space for protagonism of this category in the Albanian society.

The right of the diaspora to vote in the electoral system is important as it creates a concrete step to involving its professional expertise into the state administration levels. The young generations of the diaspora have educational levels which are to be admired for the state administration. The diaspora’s expertise will also be required in other areas, such as medical sciences, education and developmental studies.

DIASPORA SUMMIT

The Diaspora Summit will become a nationwide event being treated as a joint event of the most successful Diaspora members. The creation of this tradition will reflect into the sense of national unity, it will show the need to respect the diaspora and it will impact on the creation of a broad coordinating mechanism for its engagement.

This event will gather prominent figures starting with those who have a remarkable personal career in business and art up to those successful students living abroad. This will be the case to show successes, to award for major achievements, and above all, to exchange experience on challenges and the way they are faced.
The assessment of the diaspora's achievements will encourage its most renowned members to work as "public diplomats" of the state abroad. Public diplomacy has to do with the influence of attitudes and opinions on the formation and implementation of foreign policies. It contains dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy and cultivation of the public opinion in other states.

The protagonists of the societies where the Diaspora's members live, the actors, the singers, the athletes and the businessmen of influence, who have direct links with the media, friends in social networks and who create public influence would be the best ambassadors to cultivate good impressions for the Albanian nation.

The National Strategy will seek the engagement of the Albanian state, which also includes the support of the diaspora activity when it addresses a given situation in the receiving state. This will involve the active involvement of political institutions in the country of origin in favour of migrants vis-à-vis authorities in the host country.

Comprehensive migrant organizations will have culture and information centres that will be funded by state authorities or in cooperation with the host country and interested donors. These centres of culture will be included in the cooperation programs with host countries. They will be committed to sharing information and organizing various activities.
IMPROVEMENT OF CONSULAR SERVICES

The National Strategy requires special attention to the quality of reception services in the countries where the largest migrant communities are located. Creating a consular structure in assessment with the necessary financial resources and human resources is more than necessary.

Albanian Embassies will prepare periodic reports on the situation and organization of the Albanian community in host countries. The Albanian diplomats should have the necessary knowledge in the field of human rights and migration policies, in particular regarding the international and bilateral conventions on migration and migrant rights.

To protect properly the rights of the Albanian citizens, the Albanian embassies and consulates will have at their disposal legal experts specialized in human rights and migration policies, especially those who have full knowledge of immigration rules and practices of the country.

The list of the number of lawyers specialized in migration law and issues will be available to embassies and consulates as well as to the central services of the Albanian diplomacy.

Basic information on the community of Albanians in the host country will be made available through the website for each embassy and consular service. It will show how to contact embassies or consulates, the types of services they provide to the Albanian citizens and how to complain when services are not being provided.
INVOLVEMENT OF THE DIASPORA IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY
DIASPORA AS AN ECONOMIC FACTOR

The Albanian migration has been a political and economic determining feature of the Albanian society. It has played a major role in the economy.

The economy and money sent by migrants have helped the level of life of the Albanian family, but it did not affect the country's structured development. They covered the lack of effective development policies under the influence of conservative rules of the Albanian traditional family.

Albania has a large trade deficit and despite the incomes from migrants, they are not used to finance physical and administrative infrastructure to secure future economic growth.

The strategy seeks to establish the necessary state structures so that diaspora investments are geared towards objectives that have sustained results of generation of funds and well-being.

FEATURES OF REMITTANCES

Albania is an interesting case to analyse the issue of remittances. Remittances and remittance services are among the most important financial services for the diaspora. Remittances in some respects can be compared to other capital flows, such as foreign direct investment or official development assistance. It is because of this that these financial incomes are characterized by other functions, economic and political effects.

The remittances of the Albanian migration after 1990 identify several phases:

The first phase 1991 - 1997, where the remittances of the first immigrants resulted in an unprecedented economic growth in Albania between 1993 and 1997,

The second phase, with the collapse of pyramid schemes in 1997, where remittances had almost halved,

The third stage, where remittances due to the growing number of migration, prompted the economy to recover rapidly from the pyramid crisis.

The main ways used by the Albanian migrants to send money to their families in the 1990s was: bringing the money with them, sending them through relatives and friends or paid courier. At this time, this happened because migrants were mostly without documents and the choice of banks was impossible and dangerous. Even later, the banking system was rarely used for money transfers from the Albanian migration. The phenomenon is considered to have historical, psychological and practical reasons.
First, there were very few banks in Albania during the communist era and banking culture was limited.

The second reason is the pyramid crisis of 1997, where many people lost their savings and it was still difficult to build trust in the banks.

The third reason is limited access to banks, which are concentrated in urban areas even though many people receiving such remittances live in rural areas.

In 2005, Western Union covered nearly 80% of the remittance inflow market in Albania. Migrants preferred Western Union because of the speed and credibility of transfers, because money was often "sent" for emergency needs. The other reason is practical because money transfer operators work long hours, which enables transfers even after working hours of the migrants. These operators do not require bureaucracy and especially in case of rural poverty such transfers provide sustainable security of income.

**REMITTANCES AND THE BANKING SYSTEM**

Channelling remittances towards the mechanisms which are formal, acceptable and attractive for the customers enhances financial transparency and promotes the banking system. Remittances thus constitute a market opportunity for financial institutions that are willing to provide services on a profit basis. In cooperation with the international organizations and governments of countries that attract significant levels of remittances, it will be considered the promotion of low cost transfers, which facilitate the use of money-flow for development and attract more remittances through formal channels.

Until the mid-2000s, banks showed little interest in migrants and their remittances. This situation is changing. The World Bank, IOM and DFID have prepared studies on this issue in Albania, trying to encourage the flow of remittances through the banking system.

According to the Bank of Albania, there has been significant incoming remittances in the country since the first migrants went abroad to work. They have increased by exceeding one billion dollars in 2004. The growth throughout the years after this period has been slow. Since 2009 there has been even a slight decrease. This is related to the global economic crisis and the fact that most of the migrants of Albania live in Greece and Italy, the countries that have been affected by the economic crisis. Over the last two decades, the Albanian economy has been dependent on remittances from migrants, in particular due to the significant shortage of the consolidated production basis in the economy. With the representation of between 9 and 22% of the country's GDP over the years, remittances have exceeded several times the amount of foreign investment and aid from international institutions.
In Albania, remittances are largely used by family members to cover basic needs for a living such as food, clothing, and expenses for health care, child education and house construction. It is because of this that remittances failed to encourage the building of a stable economy and new jobs.

**USE OF REMITTANCES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The new National Strategy focuses on ways of encouraging diaspora’s participation in the country’s economic development. It encourages the need to attract investment from members of the diaspora and establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises, including those in the field of agriculture, food industry and development of rural areas. The action plans in this direction need expert insights and analysis.

Migrant remittances are one of the fundamental tools of the country’s development. The National Strategy on Migration and Diaspora includes a national action plan for remittances, which will promote:

- Improvement of data and good practices for financial remittances of this nature, Expansion of banking services in Albania, as well as improvement of cooperation between Albanian and foreign banks regarding remittances,

- Expansion of capacities of other financial institutions, but also of the Albanian Post to transfer remittances or improve that service,

- Improvement of the legal status of migrants to facilitate their lawful employment and access to the banking system of these countries,

- Building of state capacities and diaspora organizations in host countries to co-operate in joint development of initiatives among these countries.

- The National Strategy Action Plan will promote the channelling of remittances via the banks and the taking of practical steps in using remittances for the country's development.

The National Strategy will foster the creation of mechanisms to inform the Diaspora members of the various opportunities by training their home-based family members in project planning and small business management. Creating examples that show the diaspora how their families will return the money received and not only be dependent on remittances will be an incentive for the diaspora to explore the future new possibilities of remittances in their households.
The National Strategy assesses the creation of a favourable environment for the diaspora in the homeland. It will be provided information on investment opportunities in the homeland. Diaspora members should be able to invest in the countries of origin without any fear of corruption or intimidation. The strategy assesses the revision of fiscal policies, and the creation of a more stimulating environment for investments of this nature in the economy.

The strategy assesses other technical issues, such as exemption from import taxes for machinery and equipment as well as raw materials for investment; corporation tax exemption and reduction of the number of procedures for obtaining a construction permit.

The strategy also requires the promotion of specific banking products for the diaspora, as well as supporting the creation of special banking policies (or the establishment of the Diaspora Bank).

The strategy estimates that the banking system may undertake a reform as regards the interest rates that will encourage the diaspora to go a step further than transferring remittances to the country of origin. Funds deposited by migrants can be used to grant local loans. Diaspora savings may be converted into cheaper loans, which will support local businesses.

The National Strategy promotes the need for a platform that will provide micro-credit for migration and diaspora. This could also be done through existing micro-financial institutions, which on the other hand offer loans to poorer groups. Loan granting models will also be offered for small income generating activities for individuals and for business development on behalf of organized groups.

Local associations (for instance: those of women, etc.) may be transformed into economic co-operatives through access to diaspora-funded loans as well as technical assistance provided by the project. The bid development potential lies with its capacity to reduce the cost of loans to the underprivileged who obtain a micro-loan. In this case, the end activities that benefit from loans may not have any forecast on for direct engagement of the diaspora. Within the context, the diaspora may prefer channelling funds to businesses of an unknown creditor rather than a relative with family ties, as this increases the possibility of paying the loan. Payments to family or friends may be exposed to the risk of being seen more as a “gift” than as a loan.

Diaspora investments will be geared towards collective businesses, which will be considered of great importance for the community of Diaspora members. In these cases, migrants have the opportunity to have their direct share in the business. This will be done through support to collective initiatives or private businesses, for example, by choosing a particular economic sector that is of the utmost importance to the local context. Moreover, if the diaspora considers return to the country of origin as an
option, empowering sustainable businesses in the country makes this option more attractive, or creates the possibility for the second or third generation to spend more time in the country of origin.

Diaspora will be encouraged to take active part in public-private partnership projects and specifically invest in infrastructural projects, possibly in the region of birth. The Albanian diaspora on the other hand consists of businessmen who have the necessary contacts to provide even bigger projects in these countries if the conditions offered are attractive.

## DIASPORA NETWORKS

Creating functional networks of the diaspora business will be an effective way for the interests of diaspora investors who would have a stronger voice and would resist to potential corruption demands while seeking investment opportunities. These business networks will be useful for their expertise in participation and contribution to development policies and strategic plans for the economic development of the countries of origin. A Diaspora Business Registry will be established to create such business networks.

The strategy considers the creation of an independent but coordinated forum for economists in Albania and cooperation among businesses and experts from the diaspora, which would strengthen the development of local knowledge in the future. The engagement of Diaspora experts and academics is considered to be the most significant mechanism in this dialogue.

The cultural centres of the diaspora will serve as contact points for meetings of different kinds of interest. In the framework of the cultural centres of diaspora, the professional capacities will be set up to provide support services related to investment opportunities in Albania (business environment, legal amendments, etc.), thus serving as a link between diaspora investors and the business community in the home country.

The attraction of the diaspora investment will need an altered public administration mentality that understands and encourages the Albanian diaspora potential.
The Albanian diaspora plays an important role for the economic development of the region. However, these potentials are not fully exploited or channelled into productive activities that would have sustained economic effects.

The strategy foresees the creation of a Guarantee Fund for Diaspora Investments based on the best experiences that exist in countries with large diaspora. As a financial model, the International Guarantee Fund for Albanians Abroad is based on IOM’s experiences in South America.

The IGF will enable Diaspora members who wish to invest in their home country to improve negotiating positions with financial intermediaries as well as lending opportunities in their migration countries. This approximation is facilitated through guarantees issued by the financial institution (s) in the country of origin that manages the fund.

IGF guarantees would be accepted as a collateral for obtaining loans in diaspora residence places. This fund would be capitalized by private, public and international investors, thus enabling coverage of losses in case of non-payment of the loan. These guarantees would be provided to financial institutions in the countries of migration, thus minimizing their exposure to risk, and making the loan granting to the Diaspora more attractive, especially for people who may not have a collateral in the country of migration.

This model covers an important shortcoming, and it addresses common problems for many migrants. The fund will serve people in the diaspora who want to channel savings abroad to create jobs and development in Albania.
PROTECTION OF IDENTITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
Remittances are closely linked to economic development. However, there are other types of remittances such as non-monetary remittances. Social transfers can now be brought home not only through home visits during holidays, but also by phone, internet, and migration. The strategy values this quality of remittances.

Diaspora will send technical knowledge or skills, or "technological remittances" to the country of origin. This is important in rural areas, in the field of agriculture and construction. Diaspora members will provide knowledge on new materials, products, and techniques because they have gained knowledge of them when working abroad. Eventually, many migrants can bring new knowledge at home.

Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Lugina have considerable potential for intellectuals living in the diaspora. Creating a state-run registry will provide more information on professional profiles of the diaspora in different fields, such as business, science, technology, health, tourism, etc. The strategy will foster the practice of "open invitations" for projects to be promoted to the Diaspora. To this end, a Science Research Fund will be set up, which will serve to encourage diaspora professionals to apply in these projects, thus enabling the transfer of knowledge and experience.

The strategy will re-evaluate co-operation with donors in this regard in Brain Gain model programs to create institutional structures that enable the return of talented professionals and prevention of the removal of persons who have graduated abroad.

For this purpose, the program established in 2008 will be re-evaluated, and it provides financial support to the skilled persons and it invites them to return to work in Albania. It has built a database with students and academics overseas, and it has driven over 150 people to return. It also plans to establish contact networks with those who are still abroad. This program supports university and public administration in hiring managerial and academic positions of qualified individuals abroad, selected on a competitive and transparent basis.

The return of highly qualified individuals is an integral part of the National Strategy in order to include the Albanian diaspora in the economic, scientific and administrative development of the country. This includes a critical analysis of existing laws and practices in the public administration that promote or impede the attraction of those who are graduated abroad.
Albanian Diaspora has an indisputable contribution to the national history and identity.

The identity of the diaspora is a social construct that develops over time. In the case of the Albanian diaspora, this process of building the identity is based on a common understanding of history, memory reproduced and recalled, injustices related to the division of Albanian inhabited territories, victimization and violent migration waves etc. Even if all Albanian migrants had not abandoned their homeland for the above-mentioned reasons, these common historical traumas unite them when they are in the host countries and thus gain the feeling of jointly constituting the "diaspora".

The family has been, and it remains the main axis of the Albanian nation. Most of its activities are defined by this concept. The Albanian diaspora and its organization has a lot to do with the "family", family relationships and ties with the homeland. It is an ethnic-national diaspora. Common history and language, myths and legends, food, costumes and folklore create and preserve the identity of the Albanian ethnic-social Diasporas.

The culture of close ties of Albanian families is considered to be one of the main advantages of the Albanian Diaspora.

In the early years of Albania's independence, the role of well-educated diaspora members was important both in state administration and in international negotiations about its status.

Various associations in the world like "Vatra" printed textbooks, which were then sent to Albania. American Albanians were also protagonists in establishing special political and trade relations between the United States and Albania.

The other communities in the diaspora creates lobbies attached to the governments of the host countries in support of the country of origin and many of its figures became political authorities and representatives of the Albanian state.
Albanian diaspora with common cultural characteristics and traditions encourages younger generations to preserve national identity and remain members of the diaspora even though they live in welcoming societies and have dual identity as well as dual citizenship.

The strategy attaches particular importance to preserving the cultural, linguistic and national identity of the Diaspora. This is an important issue, which will be addressed only in close cooperation and coordination between the Diaspora and the countries of origin. Engagement with specific projects of educational and cultural programs will prevent further linguistic assimilation, especially of the second and third generations in the Diaspora. This will include Albanian language courses and teachers who teach in supplementary classes in schools. The Strategy foresees special agreements with the state institutions of Kosovo in this regard. The responsible administration of Albania and Kosovo will cooperate to create educational policies and programs that were welcomed by new generations.

The strategy appreciates the role of visual media and social media in language preservation. Public broadcasters will be obliged by law to devote 10 to 15 percent of the (terrestrial and satellite) diaspora and migration program.

Social media is turning into a revolution of interaction tools among the people through which they create, exchange and share information and ideas in communities and virtual networks. Social media has created a new reality and a "public" outlook on migration and diaspora.
ALBANIA AND KOSOVO
Albania and Kosovo are supposed to be among the poorest countries in Europe. But this happens if viewed in the values of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These values do not give a complete picture of the economic power of the Albanian nation. Among the many hidden assets of these two countries, even the large and scattered throughout the world diaspora should be counted, as it sends remittances on regular basis, thus bearing major responsibility for the welfare of the homeland and its population.

The strategy provides for a close co-operation with Kosovo institutions for a reassessment of the relationship with the common diaspora. Building an Action Plan in this direction would be important as well as mandatory.

Both countries will assess the common level of cooperation even Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia to co-ordinate with their respective institutions, on a case-by-case basis, the rights of the Albanian diaspora in their homeland.
MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION
The National Strategy is a projection document. But the public should be aware of the uncertainties. The projection may play a role in realizing the challenges of the current world by providing the strategy as well as the action plans.

Members of the Albanian Diaspora are interested in the political and economic situation of their state and certainly they will continue to have such interest in the future as well.

A negative scenario would be for the diaspora to feel neglected and separated from developments in the country of origin and it would thus be less interested in the situation and less willing to do something about it. This would open the way to its slow assimilation.

A positive and desirable scenario would involve diaspora members who would be closer to the political and economic developments of the countries of origin, where they would feel respected, welcomed, and would see clear advantages from close involvement in development of their country of origin although living abroad.

The monitoring structure for the implementation of the National Strategy will consist of:

- Sub-Committee on Diaspora and Emigration, which will fall under the composition of the Foreign Policy Committee in the Albanian Parliament,
- Committee on Diaspora and Migration, which will be chaired by the Prime Minister,
- Technical Group of Inter-Institutional Experts of Evaluation of the National Strategy Action Plan on Diaspora and Migration,
- State Agency for Diaspora and Emigration.

Monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy document serves as well to avoid any negative scenario. This process will re-emphasize the simple truth that Albanians everywhere are part of the nation.

A nation that elevates its peculiarity to the level of virtue makes peace with itself and the future. Time runs for the nation that acts.
ACTION PLAN OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON DIASPORA AND MIGRATION 2018 - 2024 (DRAFT)
The National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration is a complex cross-cutting strategy, which key to the success of its intervention will be the coordination between the institutions of the Albanian State and the latter with the civil society and international organizations and institutions.

The Action Plan of the National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration provides for concrete measures, which should be implemented mainly by the Albanian Government but also by other stakeholders involved in this process. Most of the measures provided for in this Action Plan foresee activities and actions that will need to be implemented within the established deadlines. Coordinated intervention of more than one state institution is necessary to carry out most of the activities.
STRUCTURE OF THE MAIN MEASURES OF THE ACTION PLAN

I - Institutional and managerial development

- Establishment of the Committee on Diaspora and Migration Policy,
- Establishment of the Agency of Diaspora and Migration,
- Bilateral agreement with Kosovo on the coordination between two countries concerning the Albanian diaspora,
- Establishment of the Diaspora Summit Organisation Group in coordination with Kosovo,
- Proposal for regular consultation and joint institutional action plan with IOM office in Tirana,
- Establishment of the Diaspora Consultative Council.

II - Albanian Communities abroad and the Human Capital

- Establishment of the Inter-Institutional Working Group on registration of the diaspora and migration,
- Recording and inventory of the special skills of the diaspora by occupations,
- Creation of a full scholarship scheme for Albanians abroad,
- Creation of a Digital Monitoring Scheme of Migration and Diaspora networks,
- Development of an international e-journal consisting of a bord of the best Albanian journalists in the Albanian communities all over the world,
- Establishment of the networks of “Nation’s Ambassadors” in the diaspora,
- Opening of a pavilion devoted to migration and diaspora in the National Museum,
- Permanent introduction of a special chapter concerning diaspora and migration in the INSTAT and Bank of Albania information,
- Initiation of the regular emission by the Albanian Post Office of “stamps” which topic is the history of diaspora and migration.
III- Albanian communities abroad and the Economic Development

- Establishment of the coordination office to start working on the setting up of the Diaspora Business Chamber,
- Drafting of proposals encouraging diaspora investment,
- Joint draft-agreement with Kosovo on diaspora investment,
- Creation of a Support Fund of Diaspora Investment (Guarantee Fund) in cooperation with the interested international organisations,
- Observing 18 December as the International Migrants' Day (UN Migrants’ day),
- Creation of advanced communication platforms of the diaspora and migration,
- Creation of the Diaspora Women’s Network.

MEASURES PROPOSED TO BE DISCUSSED

The proposed measures will be discussed by the inter-institutional structure to manage migration policies, in particular for the implementation of the National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration. It will evaluate the responsible institutions and the activities or actions to be carried out by them. The following measures are proposals. They are open to discuss, change or addition.
STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION
Measure 1

Decision-making by the government “On establishment and functioning of the Diaspora and Migration Committee”. Such committee will have mainly advisory competence towards the Council of Ministers and the prime minister or the minister entrusted by the latter with the coordination of work and organisation of meetings. It is obliged by law to meet once every six months.

Measure 2

Establishing the Working Group on Action Plan drafting. It is chaired by the deputy prime minister with the participation of representatives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Culture and other institutions.

Measure 3

Establishing upon a special law the National Agency on Diaspora and Migration. This structure will have policy-making, coordination and monitoring competence.

Measure 4

Establishing the Diaspora Consultative Council to start gathering the Albanian communities and organisations in the world into a single diaspora, in order to incorporate and establish partnership for the development of Albania.

Measure 5

Organising on regular basis the Albanian Diaspora Summit, in order to review the existing policies on mobilisation of the Albanian diaspora and issues including the preservation of language and culture, the brain drain phenomenon and investments in Albania.

Measure 6

Promotion of the idea of holding the Diaspora Summit in the country and abroad through informing the Albanian community in the world on this activity by means of the
publication of leaflets, brochures, magazines or other advertising material promoting the interest and participation in the Summit. Identifying human resources and foreseeing financial sources and initiating a fund-raising campaign to hold the Summit.

**Measure 7**

Defining a Diaspora Representing Structure and identifying the way the Diaspora Representing Structure will be elected, the status and its competences. Regulating through clearly written provisions the election and functioning of the Diaspora Representatives.

**Measure 8**

Dividing clearly competences among structures that will deal with migration and diaspora. Establishing a specialised unit in the legislation on migration in charge of making the necessary changes.

**Measure 9**

Following the procedures which are necessary to foresee in the budget the funds needed to start the National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration and the planning until 2024 of the necessary financial means for its implementation.

**Measure 10**

Assessing the organisation and administering of a network for the foreign and Albanian scholars specialised in the field of migration and specialised employees of institutions dealing with the diaspora and migration policy. (completing the page with the names and details of the employees of all the agencies dealing with the diaspora and migration policy).

**Measure 11**

Aligning other existing strategies or those that will be adopted with the National Strategy on Diaspora and Migration. This process will enable the assessment of the existing strategies or those that will be adopted in the future by the State Agency on Diaspora and Migration, in order to ensure compatibility with the National Strategy.
RELATIONS WITH THE DIASPORA AND MIGRATION
Measure 12

Identifying the cultural, sports, educational, scientific associations that operate in the host countries as well as the talented and successful individuals who act in these fields and the compiling of a special registry book in this regard.

Measure 13

Promoting success stories of diaspora and the awarding of the title “Ambassador of the nation” by the Albanian authorities. (drafting of legal and sublegal act on this issue).

Measure 14

Establishing the Albanian Cultural Institutes (especially in Greece and Italy), followed by a structure of cultural centres to promote the image of Albania and Albanian migrants as well as to provide services to the community of the Albanian emigrants. (approval by DCM “On establishment of the Culture Institutes in the host countries where a large Albanian community is settled”).

Measure 15

Improving Albanian consular and diplomatic services for the Albanians in the host countries. Building the capacities and assigning the staff needed to provide consular services and assistance on migration and legal issues to the emigrants. Identifying the gaps and the needs for specialised staff in the provision of consular services and specialised assistance in the field of migration and legal issues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Consulates.

Measure 16

Assessing the ratification of International Instruments in the field of migration. (establishing cooperation with the national and international institutions for the implementation of programmes, for instance UNDP to implement TOKTEN in Albania).
Measure 17

Adopting the new legal acts and amending the existing legal acts in the field of emigration in order to extend the scope of protection of migrants in accordance with the international standards. Conducting a thorough study on the dynamics and development of the Albanian communities in the world. Determining the states of priority action by the diaspora policies. Updating the database with all the Albanian associations in the world, showing the data of these organisations and posting this database on the website which is considered useful.

Measure 19

Reconsidering the new legal acts and amending the existing acts in the field of migration to ensure approximation with the acquis communautaire. Drafting practical manuals related to the issues of migration and making them available to the officials in charge of applying the legislation on migration. Identifying the legal/sublegal acts to be applied in practice by each institution dealing with certain issues of diaspora and migration.

Measure 20

Organising regular trainings in the field of domestic and international legislation for the employees dealing with the migration issues. Identifying the needs and the experts in need of training in legal issues. Drafting training modules in this field and including such a module in the training of the civil service employees. Developing general and specific training in the field of migration and reassessing them for incorporation into the Albanian university programme.

Measure 21

Preparing and disseminating information (brochures, leaflets etc) addressed to migrants, providing information on their status and rights as well as services offered to the diplomatic and consular representations as well as by the migrants’ associations with the support of national or international organisations.

Measure 22

Involving the community of the Albanian emigrants in the cultural life of the host
country and in Albania in order to promote them (signing and/or amending bilateral agreements with the host countries of the Albanian migration including the migration element in them).

**Measure 23**

Drafting and publishing by the MoFA, based on the quarterly information received by the representation, of an annual report on the assistance given to the Albanian citizens about the concrete situation of the Albanian community abroad.

**Measure 24**

Training of diplomats about the migration law and in particular the rights of the emigrants.

**Measure 25**

Establishing high level consultative committees with the host countries on the protection of the rights of the Albanian migrants and the functioning of these bilateral committees on regular basis.

**Measure 26**

Conducting an awareness raising campaign concerning the various possibilities to appeal against the violation of rights of emigrants in the respective structures of these countries and the international ones, which deal with the protection and respect for the human rights as well as protection of the rights of migrants, through activities including:

- Publication of this information on the website on migration devoted to this issue,
- Publication in the Albanian newspapers abroad,
- Publication and dissemination of leaflets concerning this information,
- Publication of these rights through the websites created by the Albanian community abroad.
Some of the international structures dealing with these rights are as follows:

Special rapporteur for migrant’s rights of the United Nations
Commissioner for Human rights of the Council of Europe
European Court in Human rights
European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe
Commission for Petition of European Parliament for the EU Ombudsman of the EU

**Measure 27**

Establishing contacts with the European Regional and Local authorities on Asylum and Immigration (ERLAI) based in Brussels in order to investigate on the possibility of support of politics to protect Albanian emigrants in the EU host countries.

**Measure 28**

Establishing and intensifying close contact through associations of the Albanian migrants and local associations for the protection of migrants. Identifying the organisations in the host countries dealing with protection of human rights and migrants’ rights.

**Measure 29**

Promoting action by the Albanian Government of the international structures dealing with the protection of emigrants. Reporting by the Albanian Government of the cases of violation of the rights of the Albanian migrants before the international structures dealing with the protection of emigrants, for instance:

Commissioner for Human rights of the Council of Europe
Special rapporteur for Human Rights and Special Rapporteur for Migrant’s Rights of the United Nations European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe
Measure 30

Reassessing the completion of procedures of ratification of international instruments (unless already ratified), as follows:
International Labour Organisation Convention no. 143 “On migrant workers”.
Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention “On the legal status of Migrant Workers”.
Ratification of the UN Convention “on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families”.

Measure 31

Supporting the Albanian migrants’ organisations in the establishment of the local advisory structures for the foreign citizens in the cities where Albanian emigrants are settled, based on the guideline prepared by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and Council of Europe.

Measure 32

Reviewing the service policy, fees and bureaucratic procedures through the Albanian diplomacy representations.

Measure 33

Negotiating the signing of the bilateral agreement for the social protection of emigrants with the host countries in order for them to transfer social insurance even in Albania. Reviewing the practice of collection of the voluntary contribution for social insurance and if necessary signing agreements through the Social Insurance Institute and banks. (reassessing the special action plan on issues of the pension of the Albanian migrants).

Measure 34

Coordinating and organising meetings or “Days of Albania” based on an annual programme as well as other regular activities on Albanian diaspora to advertise Albanian tourism and the incentives linked to investment in Albania.
Measure 35

Reviewing the information policy of the state institutions on migration. Assigning a contact person to each ministry involved in this process and the respective institutions that will be responsible for provision of information on and migration and diaspora.

Measure 36

Reviewing the framework of existing agreements on migration. Negotiating the framework of agreements of employment with the host countries of the Albanian migration. (These agreements must include special parts related to the vocational training, or they may be discussed separately).

Measure 37

Reassessing in cooperation with the EU countries and undertaking special projects to facilitate the implementation of the employment agreements. (Taking advantage of the provisional and special legislation of the host countries, which are short of the work force).

Measure 38

Assessing and promoting circular migration between Albania and third countries through advantageous measures and negotiating the bilateral agreements by giving priority to Greece and Italy. Reviewing further possibility to entering into agreement with other countries, as per the needs. Establishing a contact point within the MoFA for the assessment and monitoring of the situation of foreign labour market and then transferring such information to the responsible institution.
Measure 39
Creating and updating a database of newspapers, websites, radio and television of the diaspora, which are in place in countries considered to be of prior importance for the national policies on diaspora.

Measure 40
Creating an electronic newspaper on diaspora and migration that will be addressed to the Albanian communities all over the world.

Measure 41
Reviewing and updating the website diaspora.gov.al with thorough information on migration. The responsible persons (in each involved institution) will select the proper information according to the area covered by them and they will update it. IT experts of each line ministry of the involved institution will be able to use this website to add information by the contact persons.

Measure 42
Encouraging and supporting the establishment of groups and special associations of Albanian migrants based on interests, common professions, or geographical location. Creating facilities such as: publication in the newspaper or website of information that enables the creation of professional groups and common interests. Establishing contacts among the counterpart groups in various countries to create functional networks of this nature.

Measure 43
Organising a media campaign concerning promotion and information on migration as a phenomenon; identity of Albanians, Albanian history and culture; training on recent political, social and economic development in the country. Reflecting in this campaign that the diaspora and migration will be integral part of the political and economic developments of Albania.
Measure 44

Planning and organising an information campaign on: issues related to migration and diaspora promotion at large scale of registering of migrants and information on the right to vote (after approval) existence of information sources on issues of interest to migration and diaspora.

Measure 45

Informing the associations of the Albanian emigrants of different ways to appeal against the violation of rights of migrants before the respective structures of these countries as well as international structures.

Measure 46

Reviewing and assessing the broadcasting zone by the national Albanian television operator wherever there is a community of Albanian emigrants. Encouraging them to increase the number of programmes for the diaspora. Encouraging agreement with the media in the host countries so that the media broadcasts programmes for the Albanian communities.

Measure 47

Assessing an action plan on attraction of the Albanian diaspora in Albania for tourism and investment purposes. Publishing in the electronic newspaper, websites of the Albanian communities in the world, compiling and disseminating brochures, leaflets with information on the Albanian tourism and investment opportunities in Albania in this field.

Measure 48

Reassessing the creation of the website links of each ministry of agency with the website on migration and diaspora by opening a section devoted to this topic.

Measure 49

Reviewing the electronic websites of embassies on the level of information offered by these websites about services to the emigrants.
TRAINING AND EDUCATION
Measure 50

Reviewing the practices and conditions for education of migrants and the new generations of diaspora in the mother tongue. Identifying the needs for Albanian language classes in the host countries. Reassessing the drafting of standard curricula on teaching in the Albanian language.

Measure 51

Creating a permanent structure that will follow the assessment and provision of the necessary school textbooks. It will follow the training of teachers who will teach the classes that will be set up for this purpose.

Measure 52

Reviewing and signing the agreements of cooperation with the educational institutions in the host countries for the opening of Albanian language classes in the schools and existing educational facilities in these countries. (creating and promoting programmes of Albanian language teaching to children of Albanian emigrants in cooperation with the respective structures of the host countries).

Measure 53

Reviewing and guiding the programmes/donors who grant scholarships abroad for the expertise fields which are needed in Albania. Assessing the conduction of a thorough study on the number of Albanian students in universities abroad and the fields of their specialisation. Reassessing the consideration of the condition of return to Albania (for a period of not less than one year) for all the students who obtain scholarships to study abroad in the framework of educational programmes of various donors for Albania.

Measure 54

Reassessing the incorporation into the law on undergraduate education of the provisions which foresee the responsibility of the Albanian state to enable the teaching of Albanian language to emigrants and their families.
Measure 55

Promoting programmes or donors who grant scholarships for study outside Albania. Organising information activities in secondary and high schools in order to make these programmes and the application procedures known to the pedagogues, students or pupils.

Measure 56

Preparing an evaluation report on difficulties of Albanian students who study abroad and on the factors which influence in this situation. Organising in the host countries the taking of measures to enable communication and functional networks to help Albanian students.

Measure 57

Reassessing the policies in order to promote return of skilled migrants. Assessing the supply and demand for qualified staff in the Albanian labour market and establishing contact between emigrants and small and medium sized enterprises in Albania by creating an electronic database of enterprises and CV-s of qualified migrants.

Measure 58

Implementing national and common programmes with the international institutions in order to attract the qualified migrants to serve to the economy of Albania. Assessing programmes which encourage investors to employ qualified staff from migration or diasporas abroad.

Measure 59

Coordinating and creating the opportunities to the Albanian students to be welcomed and assisted by the members of the Albanian diaspora to facilitate their studies in foreign universities.
REGISTRATION AND VOTING
Measure 60

Enriching the National Civil Registry with migrants’ data. Reviewing the legal basis for the registration of the migrants in the law “on civil registration” and assessing the technical elements based on the following criteria:
Citizens must be bound by law to declare their leaving the country to the Civil Registration Office if they will stay abroad for 12 months or more.
Registering of their address abroad through embassies or consulates must be mandatory for the new migrants, after a certain date which has to be decided. Registration of migrants who have left before the indicated date is voluntary. This is important if it will be given the possibility to vote abroad through the embassies and consulates based on the registration.

Measure 61

Reassessing the collection of additional data in the National Civil Registry Book that will be needed for migration management through the registering with the embassies and consular services. Defining the responsibilities and data to be collected as well as identifying and planning the creation of the proper network and infrastructure.

Measure 62

Making an assessment for identification of the necessary infrastructure for voting abroad by the Albanian emigrants. Amending the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the Electoral Code on the exercising of the right of Albanian migrants to vote abroad. In this framework, considering the reflections on respective amendments to the law on Consular Services and other acts in implementing and in line with the amendments to the Electoral Code.

Measure 63

Organising a public debate on the purpose of the system of registration and voting of emigrants in order to draft clear proposals in this regard. Conducting a thorough technical study to analyse the modalities of implementation.
DIASPORA AND ECONOMY
Measure 64

Involving the Albanian diaspora and migration in the designing and implementation of the policy of the emigrants’ remittances and defining the measures for attraction of diaspora’s investment.

Measure 65

Processing and implementing a coherent and compete policy on administering of migrants’ remittances.

Measure 66

Reassessing the taking of measures to increase the migrants’ remittance flow by encouraging migrants who bring their savings to Albania. (such as: through favourable exchange rates, as well as the possibility to keep their savings in foreign currency).

Measure 67

Reassessing in cooperation with the Bank of Albania the taking of measures to route the migrants’ remittances from the informal to the formal transfer channels, but less expensive ones. Establishing regular dialogue with representatives of the banking system of the country on this issue.

Measure 68

Encouraging the private companies to attract emigrants’ remittances through the financial products (such as securities).

Measure 69

Informing emigrants of the investment opportunities in Albania through the media, banks (internet, brochures) etc. Motivating emigrants who invest their income in the special sector of the economy.
Measure 70

Reassessing for the purpose of improvement and extension of banking services in the host countries of emigrants as well as their relatives in Albania (mainly in rural areas) for example through mediation of “corresponding banking institutes”.

Measure 71

Encouraging the banks in the host countries, with the assistance of the associations of Albanian emigrants, to define “ad hoc” services for the emigrants (to the extent possible and negotiable).

Measure 72

Creating funds for development at local level to support investment through emigrants’ remittances.

Measure 73

Assisting the microcredit and microfinance institutions to implement the policies what aim at channelling the emigrants’ remittances through agreements with the financial institutions in the host countries.

Measure 74

Encouraging the associations of emigrants for the promotion of local development through voluntary raising of donations by the members to fund various projects in their town or village.
Monitoring on constant basis the National Action Plan. Every 6 months there will be a reporting before the Committee on Diaspora and Migration and at least once a year before the Subcommittee on Migration and Diaspora. The Parliament shall approve a resolution on issues of migration and diaspora on annual basis.

The action plan is a document which will contain thorough measures and the necessary elements to implement them. It will be the result of cooperation of a great number of ministries and institutions that will be involved in the processing of policies of the area of action by the state.
You are welcome to express your opinions related to the National Strategy Project and the Diaspora and Migration Action Plan 2018-2024 at the address: pandeli.majko@diaspora.gov.al