



# MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

## WHAT ALBANIAN RETURNEES DO? - THE CHALLENGE OF RE-CONNECTING!

*This Working Paper is prepared by Cooperation and Development Institute and aims to investigate and provide a robust understanding of the situation of the inflow of the Albanian migrants from Germany. The study took place from March until August 2017 and included desk review, media monitoring, in-depth interviews and field visits.*

Total first-time applications for asylum in Germany logged by Albanian nationals:

- fell by 72,4% in 2016 as compared to 2015: From 53,805 requests it came down to 14,853.
- continue to trickle down exponentially: for the 1st semester 2017 they stop at 2,187.

The German Migration Wave changes the migration decision-making trigger for the Albanians:

- more than the search for employment, higher income or better health care, it is,
- perception of no improvement in the foreseeable future for his / her situation in the current location.

On top of the pull and push factors, there is strong presence of a third element impacting the intensity of the Albanian migrant flux to Germany in 2014-2016 - we call it the "[connectivity factor](#)". Connectivity is conditioned from:

- inequality gap: the perception by the would-be migrants of the difference (financial, income and wealth) between the home country and the targeted migration location - the highest the perceived difference from the situation in Albania with the perceived one in Germany, the stronger the incitement to migrate; and,
- the nature and intensity of communication with former Albanians already in Germany: the internet-based connections have had a multiplication role by being instantaneous, low- or no-cost and one-to-one. Overall biased-and-partial information played a huge role in reinforcing the amplitude of the flux; and
- the perception of the possibility to close through migration the inequality gap in the form of access to education (for children), health care, social, and economic opportunities.

Albanian migrants estimated that to connect to their desired future - the opportunity being provide by market, state or kin, or a combination of three - was easier in Germany than in their home country.

Individuals that were the most distant from the economic centers in Albania (correlated with urban centers) constituted the bulk of migrants. They were joined by individuals that all by living in the city(ies), were unable to connect with the "social and economic dynamic" that pushes their career upwards. Both sub-groups - geographically and socially dis-connected - left Albania because they felt powerless to reach and benefit from the opportunities that the country offered to them.



In Germany they felt connected to the system through public services, state apparatus and charities. Geographical distance, kinship or access to social networks were not relevant anymore. The biggest added value elements the Albanian migrants got during their stay in Germany was their face-to-face experience with the German state.

With the return from Germany the challenge of connecting to life opportunities has been re-transferred to the home country. During their stay in Germany some of them did lose the work they had back home, children did miss schooling, neighbors have moved as well, economic and political centers of gravity have shifted.

Public services have not fulfilled their tasks vis-a-vis returnees. Non state actors have been trying to fill that gap. Some returnees found themselves less connected than before emigration. From 1,009 registered returned emigrants in 2010 has reached the lowest figure in 2016 with 289 registered emigrants. This can be explained by a lot of factors, but the most important are related as follow:

- Lack of trust in the services of public institutions.
- Lack of concrete measures and programs to support and help in concrete terms the returned citizens and not only be limited in giving information.

Top 5 Regional Employment Offices in 2015-2016 where is concentrated more than 80 % of the registration are:

- Vlora with 106 in 2015, and 86 in 2016,
- Gjirokastra with 92, in 2015,
- Korca with 69 in 2015, and 33 in 2016,
- Shkodra with 25 in 2015, and 46 in 2016,
- Durres with 31 in 2015, and 22 in 2016,
- Tirana with 33 in 2015, and 19 in 2016.

Religious organizations in Germany and Albania have massively contributed to alleviate either the stay in Germany, or their re-insertion in Albania. Their assistance has been instrumental for the most dis-connected, i.e. rural and poor.

Given the existence of the push factors and low connectivity, the migration flux is taking a different form. The asylum seeker justification, is replaced by other causes (i.e. child migration) adapting to the target country legal context. With the closure of the German destination, new irregular migration endeavors to other EU member states are spurting, i.e. France.

The other tendency is the regular migration. More Albanians are following the legal way to leave. The professionals and middle class are going, leaving behind the unconnected poor and the politically-connected rich.

From zero in 2011 and in 2012, the number of people certified in German language (private schools not included) has gone up to 325 in 2016 (the number of those following English or Italian has decreased by 1/3).

After their stay in Germany, there are tens of thousands of Albanian citizens that were exposed to and know what the state can do for them and their family. Now they know how the democratic institutions should work, how the rule of law is applied, why corruption is not inevitable, what to expects from the public service, etc. Expectations of Albanian would-be-migrants' from German authorities now regard only the administrative part of the migration procedures.

