



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo  
*Qeveria - Vlada - Government*

# REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

## MIGRATION PROFILE LIGHT

2019

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY ON MIGRATION

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## Purpose of the Migration Profile Light 2019

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of developments in the field of migration for various local and international institutions, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, the academic/research community, as well as other stakeholders. The document contains recommendations that should serve decision-making bodies in order to include them in state and sectoral policies related to migration and development issues of the country.

The document reflects changes in policies, legislation or institutional developments that occurred during 2019, and the text remains similar to the profiles of previous years in the parts of the document where no developments or changes have taken place.

The analysis of migration trends presented in this document cover the 3-year period from 2017 to 2019, introduced through figures and tables, which also include previous periods of any significant change in migration trends.

The structure of the document includes developments related to policy and legislation, institutional developments, and the analysis of statistical data related to the field of migration.

The Migration Profile Light 2019 is drafted by experts and officials from the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, who are also members of the Government Authority on Migration, with the technical support and expertise by international partners.

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## Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AI	Administrative Instruction
B2B	Business to Business
BCP	Border Crossing Point
CBK	Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo
DCAM	Department of Citizenship, Asylum and Migration
DIMAK	German Information Centre for Migration, Training and Career
DIOC	Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime
DITHB	Directorate for Investigation of Trafficking with Human Beings
DLM	Department of Labour Market
DMF	Directorate for Migration and Foreigners
DRRP	Department for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons
EARK	Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo
EO	Employment Office
ERP	Economic Reform Program
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GRK	Government of the Republic of Kosovo
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILECU	International Law Enforcement Cooperation Unit
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KBRA	Kosovo Business Registration Agency
KIESA	Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency
KP	Kosovo Police
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
MCR	Ministry for Communities and Return
MDSI	Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MH	Ministry of Health
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs

<b>MLG</b>	Ministry of Local Government
<b>MLSW</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MTI</b>	Ministry of Trade and Industry
<b>MZHE</b>	Ministry of Economic Development
<b>NCR</b>	National Commission for Refugees
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>RAE</b>	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
<b>TAK</b>	Tax Administration of Kosovo
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>VoT</b>	Victim of Trafficking

# 1. Background information on the country

## 1.1. Size, population, bordering countries and length of borders

The Republic of Kosovo is the newest country in the Balkan Peninsula with a central geographical position surrounded by the Republic of Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia.



**Region:** Southeast Europe

**Kosovo geographic latitude:** 41° 51' 21 and 43° 16'

**Kosovo geographic longitude:** 19° 59' and 21° 47'

**Official name:** Republic of Kosovo

**Capital:** Pristina

**Length of borders:** 113.551 km in the southwest with the Republic of Albania, 170.772 km in the south with the Republic of North Macedonia, 79.165 km in the northwest with the Republic of Montenegro, 380.068 km in the north and east with the Republic of Serbia. The total borderline length of the Republic of Kosovo is 743.556 km,<sup>1</sup> it stretches over mountains and has a natural character

**Size<sup>2</sup>:** 10,908 km<sup>2</sup>.

**Neighbouring countries:** Republic of Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of Serbia

<sup>1</sup> National Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo for Integrated Border Management,

[http://www.mpb-ks.org/repository/docs/ALB\\_Strategjia\\_Kombetare\\_MIK\\_2013-2018\\_12.07.2013.pdf](http://www.mpb-ks.org/repository/docs/ALB_Strategjia_Kombetare_MIK_2013-2018_12.07.2013.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Idem

**Population:** 1,782,115 (estimated as of 01.01.2020)

**Population density:** 164 people per km<sup>2</sup>

**Form of government:** Parliamentary Republic

**Currency:** Euro (EUR)

**Independence Day:** 17 February 2008

**President:** Mr. Hashim Thaçi

## 1.2. Short characteristics of the country

The Republic of Kosovo is a constitutional state with a parliamentary democracy based on the principle of separation of powers in legislative, executive and judiciary. The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo exercises the legislative power. The Government of the Republic of Kosovo exercises the executive power and is responsible for the implementation of state policies and laws. The third pillar is the judiciary, an independent and unique power, exercised by the courts. The President of the Republic of Kosovo represents the unity of the people.

The administrative competencies in the field of migration and asylum are intertwined between the central and local (municipal) level.

The migration management system in Kosovo is regulated through a legal<sup>3</sup> and institutional framework. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is the responsible institution to address issues of asylum, foreigners, citizenship, readmission, irregular migration, as well as issues of reintegration of repatriated persons. Other institutions responsible for migration topics are: Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of European Integration, Ministry of Communities and Returns, Ministry of Economic Development, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Kosovo Police, and Central Bank of Kosovo.

The **Government Authority on Migration (GAM)**, established based on a Decision<sup>4</sup> of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, is responsible for monitoring migration movements and

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<sup>3</sup> Law No.04/L-219 on Foreigners, Law no.06/L-036 on Amending and Supplementing the Law No. 04/L-219 on Foreigners, Law No.06/L-026 on Asylum, Law No.04/L-215 on Citizenship of Kosovo, Law No.04/L-072 on State Border Control and Surveillance, Law No.04/L-214 on Amending and Supplementing the Law No.04/L-072 on State Border Control and Surveillance, Law No.06/L-013 n Amending and Supplementing the Law No.04/L-072 on State Border Control and Surveillance, Law No.04/L-216 on Cooperation between authorities involved in Integrated Border Management , Law No.04/L-218 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims of Trafficking, Law No.03/L-208 on Readmission, Law No.04/L-076 on Police, Law No.04/L-003 on Civil Status, Law No.04/L-205 on the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, Regulation (GRK) No. 13/2015 on Internal Organization of Systematization of Jobs in the Employment Agency.

<sup>4</sup> Decision of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo 08/158, dated 29 November 2013, on Establishing the Government Authority on Monitoring Migration Flows.

functions as an inter-institutional mechanism involving all relevant actors in the field of migration. GAM is responsible for drafting migration profiles, making recommendations to state authorities and proposing new policies in the field of migration to the Government.

## 2. General Migration Flows and Migration Stocks

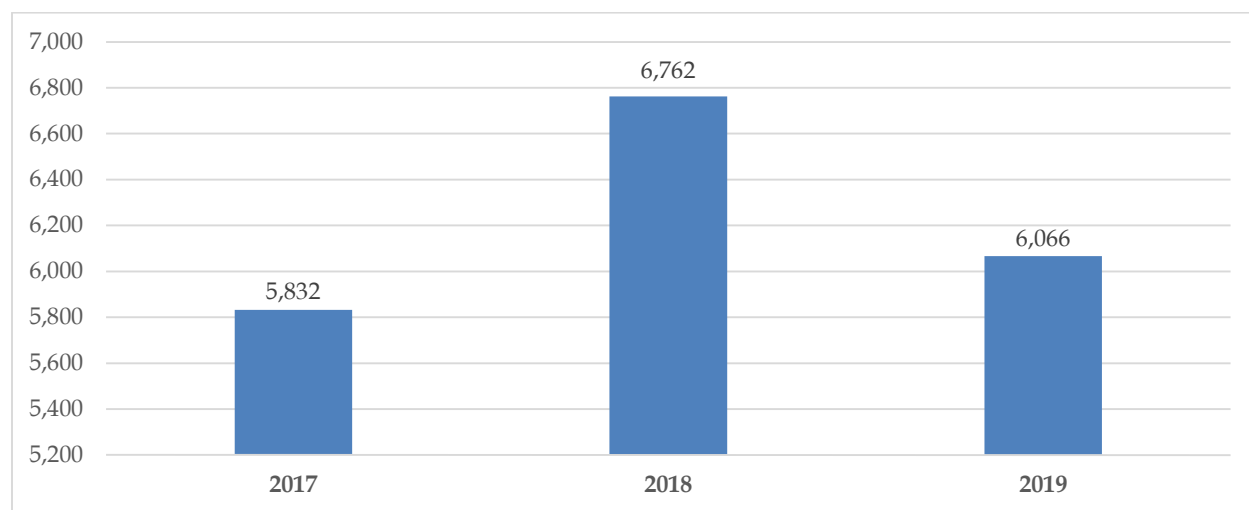
The resident population in Kosovo as of the end of 2019 (estimated as of 1 January 2020) was 1,782,115 inhabitants. The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) estimates the number of the population on a yearly basis, containing migration data assessed, by using a standardized methodology aimed at the inclusion of all migration groups.

### 2.1 Migration flows

#### Immigration

Based on the population estimation in 2019 of KAS, immigrants made up 0.34% of the total resident population or 6,066 people.<sup>5</sup> This estimate includes all categories of immigrants (returned Kosovar citizens and foreigners) regardless of the reason for immigration.

Figure 1: Immigration trends in Kosovo, 2017-2019



Source: KAS

The 2019 Population Estimation shows a decrease of about 11% of immigrants compared to 2018.

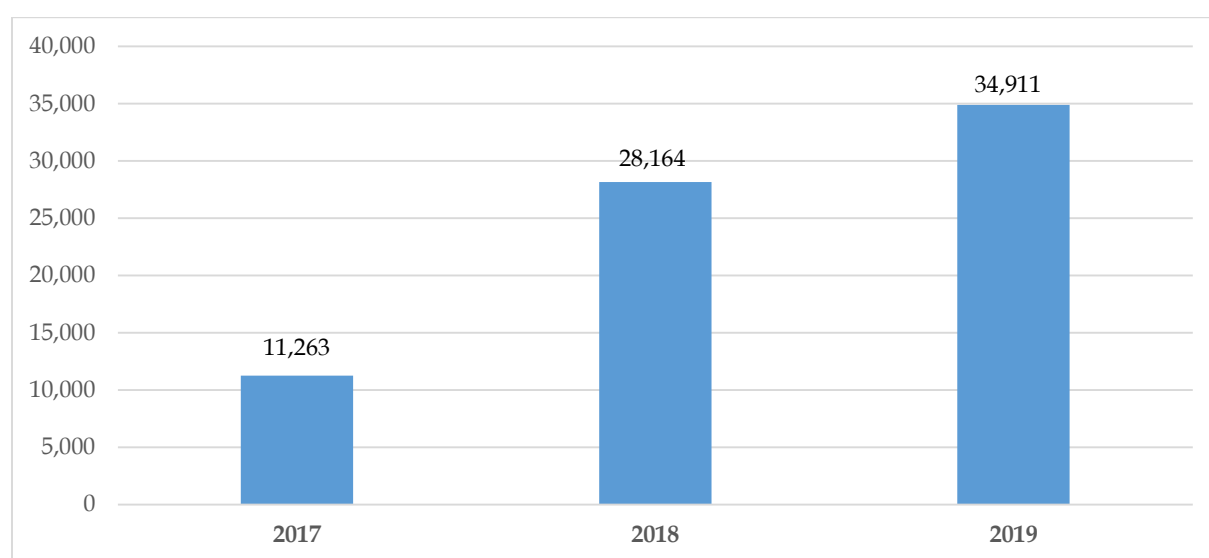
<sup>5</sup> Estimation, Kosovo Population in 2019, page 10, table 2: Pristina, June 2020: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3385/vleresimi-i-popullsise-se-kosoves-2019.pdf>

The data show that a significant number of persons who have immigrated in the period 2017-2019, are Kosovar citizens (returned/readmitted migrants) and foreigners, with an annual average of 6,220 persons or 0.35% of the total resident population per year.

## Emigration

The Kosovo Agency of Statistics estimates that the total number of Kosovar emigrants in 2019 was 34,911 persons<sup>6</sup> or 1.96% of the resident population. This number includes all emigrants regardless of the reason for migration and their status (regular and irregular).

Figure 2: KAS estimation of emigration from Kosovo, 2017-2019



Source: KAS

Data for the three-year period of 2017-2019 show that Kosovo continues to feature a high rate of emigration with an annual average of 24,779 persons or 1.4% of the Kosovar population.

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<sup>6</sup> Estimation, Kosovo Population in 2019, page 10, table 2: Pristina, June 2020: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3385/vleresimi-i-popullsise-se-kosoves-2019.pdf>

## Net Migration

The international migration balance (net migration) in Kosovo in 2019 was -28,845 inhabitants or -1.6% of the resident population. It is estimated that 55,678 inhabitants or about 3.1% of the country's population have left Kosovo during 2017-2019.

Table 1: Migration flows: immigration, emigration and net migration, 2017-2019

Year	Immigration	Emigration	Net migration (absolute no.)	Net migration (percentage)
2017	5,832	11,263	-5,431	-0.30
2018	6,762	28,164	-21,402	-1.19
2019	6,066	34,911	-28,845	-1.62

Source: KAS<sup>7</sup>

The migration flow data were obtained from an official publication of April 1, 2011 estimation of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Based on these data, over 550,000 Kosovars emigrated from Kosovo since 1969 and the population of Kosovar descent, including persons born outside of Kosovo, is estimated to be 703,978 inhabitants.

## 2.2. Migration stocks

The following table presents the migration stocks and flows extracted from the official publication "Kosovo Migration, 2014" of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics.

<sup>7</sup> Estimation, Kosovo Population in 2019, page 9, table 2: Pristina, June 2020: <http://ask.rks.gov.net/media/3385/vlerësimi-i-popullsisë-së-Kosovës-2016.pdf>

Table 2: Immigration stocks and flows in absolute and relative numbers, 2017-2019

Year	Total Population	Immigration Stocks (absolute numbers)	Stocks (percentage)
2017	1,798,506	53,910	3.00
2018	1,795,666	60,672	3.38
2019	1,782,115	66,738	3.74

Source: KAS

Table 3: Emigration stocks and flows in absolute and relative numbers, 2017-2019

Year	Total population	Emigration Stock (absolute numbers)	Stock (percentage)
2017	1,798,506	182,006	10.12
2018	1,795,666	210,170	11.70
2019	1,782,115	245,081	13.75

Source: KAS

### Net Migration Stock

During 2017-2019, over 74,338 inhabitants emigrated and more than 18,660 persons immigrated to Kosovo, translating into a decline of the population of more than 55,678 inhabitants in the three-year period.

Table 4: Emigration stocks and migration flows in absolute and relative numbers, 2017-2019

Year	Total population	Immigration flows (absolute no.)	Emigration flows (absolute no.)	Net emigration flows per year	Net migrations stocks (absolute no.)	Net Stocks (in relation to population distribution)
2017	1,798,506	5,832	11,263	-5,431	832,796	46.30
2018	1,795,666	6,762	28,164	-21,402	854,198	47.57
2019	1,782,115	6,066	34,911	-28,845	883,043	49.55

Source: KAS

The estimated number of inhabitants living abroad at the end of 2019 is over 883,986 or 49.6% of the population of Kosovo, compared to 703,978 inhabitants living abroad on 1 April 2011.

## 3. Legal migration with special focus on labour migration

This chapter introduces necessary data and services to be consulted with reference to the management of regular migration with a special focus on labour migration. Policies related to the management of regular migration are the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW).

### 3.1. Responsible State Authorities

The Division for Foreigners of the Department of Citizenship, Asylum and Migration (DCAM), Ministry of Internal Affairs, is the state authority responsible for receiving, reviewing and deciding on the applications submitted for temporary residence permits (including residence permits for labour purposes) and permanent residence permits in the Republic of Kosovo. DCAM<sup>8</sup> may decide on the residence permits for labour purposes without the approval of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), for as long as there is no annual quota for the employment of foreigners approved by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. Pursuant to the Law on Foreigners, EARK/MLSW issues short-term work permits for foreigners, for a duration of 30, 60 and 90 days within a period of 180 days during one year.

EARK<sup>9</sup> is responsible for providing employment services and vocational training for foreigners who have access to the labour market in the Republic of Kosovo. EARK provides counselling, information, vocational training and employment facilitation services to Kosovar jobseekers looking for employment abroad.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8876> (Article 20, paragraph 6)

<sup>9</sup> <https://apr.k.rks-gov.net/sq-AL>

## 3.2. Policies and Legal Framework

Regular migration (immigration) to the Republic of Kosovo, including immigration for employment purposes, is regulated by the Law on Foreigners<sup>10</sup> and other legal acts.

In 2019, the Administrative Instruction (MIA) no. 09/2019 on Procedure and Criteria for Issuing Residence Permits for Foreigners was approved and it was published in the Official Gazette on 03.09.2019. The administrative instruction regulates the procedure, criteria for the application, issuance, refusal and revocation of the residence permit for foreigners, short-term work permits for foreigners, temporary residence permits, as well as the form and content of the residence permit for foreigners.<sup>11</sup>

In 2019, EARK continued with the implementation of several programs to support Kosovars planning to emigrate for employment purposes. MLSW/EARK furthered the cooperation with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the German Information Center for Migration, Training and Career (DIMAK) with a series of information and counselling services in the field of migration. In this regard, Memorandums of Understanding have been implemented as in the following:

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare - Business Union and GIZ, aiming to improve opportunities for education and vocational training in the field of construction in the Republic of Kosovo. During 2019, young people from the Republic of Kosovo were offered the opportunity of vocational education and training in the dual two-year system in Germany in the field of construction and gastronomy;
- 11 candidates have benefitted from the program of vocational training and employment in Germany and they were monitored by EARK.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=16333>

<sup>11</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=23314>

### 3.3. Statistics

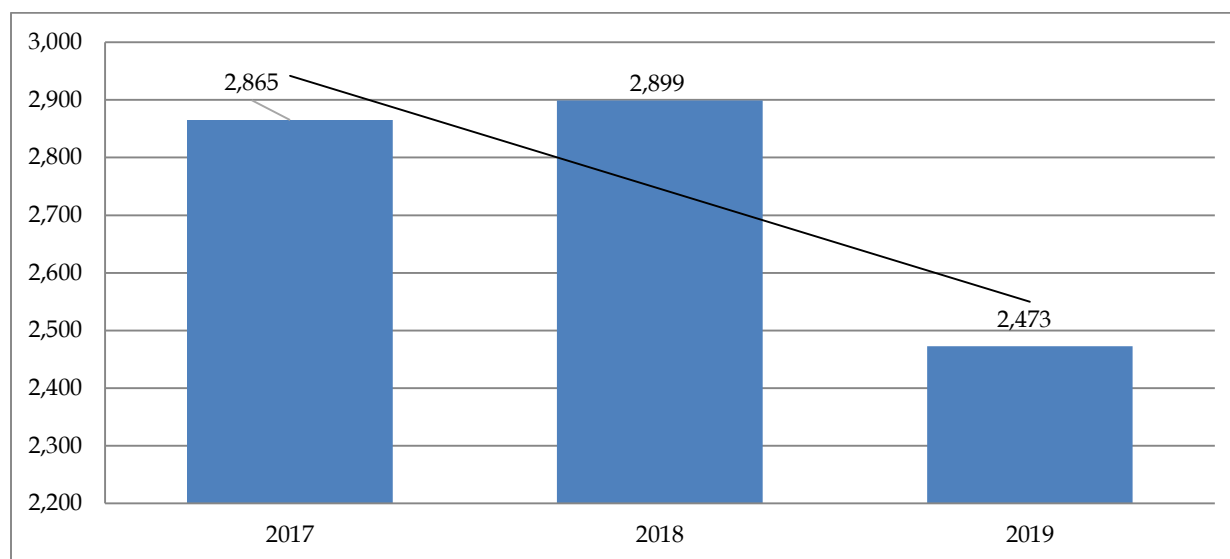
#### Regular Immigration

During 2019, a total of 4,530 temporary residence permits were issued for all categories, which is a decrease of -8.7% compared to the previous year (4,925): 1,808 (39.9%) temporary residence permits were issued for the category of family reunification, 2,473 (54.6%) for the purpose of employment, 229 (5.1%) for study/ education and 20 (0.4%) for other reasons.

Out of the total number of the positive decisions for temporary residence permits, 2,125 (46.9%) were issued to men, and 2,405 (53.1%) to women.

The number of temporary residence permits issued by countries: Albania 1,201 (or 26.5%), Turkey 927 (or 20.5%), Serbia 727 (or 16%), North Macedonia 462 (or 10.2%), the US 262 (or 5.8%), and other states 898 (or 19.8%).

Figure 3: Number of temporary residence permits for employment purposes, 2017-2019



Source: MIA/DCAM

The number of the temporary residence permits for employment purposes had during 2019 a declining trend of -17.23%. Factors that may have influenced the decline in employment of

foreigners in the Republic of Kosovo in 2019 may be related to the completion of projects of foreign companies in the country such as Bektel Enka (construction sector).

The most represented countries in the numbers of temporary residence permits issued for employment purposes: Albania 598 (or 24.2%), Turkey 597 (or 24.1%), North Macedonia 246 (or 10.3%), Serbia 254 (or 9.9%), the US 224 (or 9.1%), and other states 534 (or 22.1%).

### **Permanent residence permits**

The total number of permanent residence permits issued during 2019 was 142, an increase of 145% compared to the previous year (58). This increase was impacted by the fulfilment of the legal obligations related to timelines to obtain permanent residence permits.

Out of the total number of permanent residence permits, 80 (56%) were issued to men and 62 (44%) to women.

The reasons for permanent residence permits issued by categories: family reunification 47 (33.1%), employment 60 (42.3%), and other reasons 35 (24.7%).

Permanent residence permits are issued mainly to citizens from: Albania (21.8%), Serbia (15.5%), Germany (12.7%), North Macedonia (9.2%), Turkey (5.6%), and other countries (35.2 %).

### **Short-term work permits<sup>12</sup>**

A total of 174 short-term work permits were issued to foreign nationals in 2019, 12 of which were extended permits. According to the data, this is a decrease of 61% compared to the previous year (446).

The number of short-term work permits issued to nationals of the following countries: Romania 15% (27), Croatia 12% (21), North Macedonia 11% (19), Turkey 11% (19), and other countries about 51% (88).

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<sup>12</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8876> Article 22, Short-term work permit for foreigners up to ninety (90) days in any one-hundred-and-eighty day period within one (1) year.

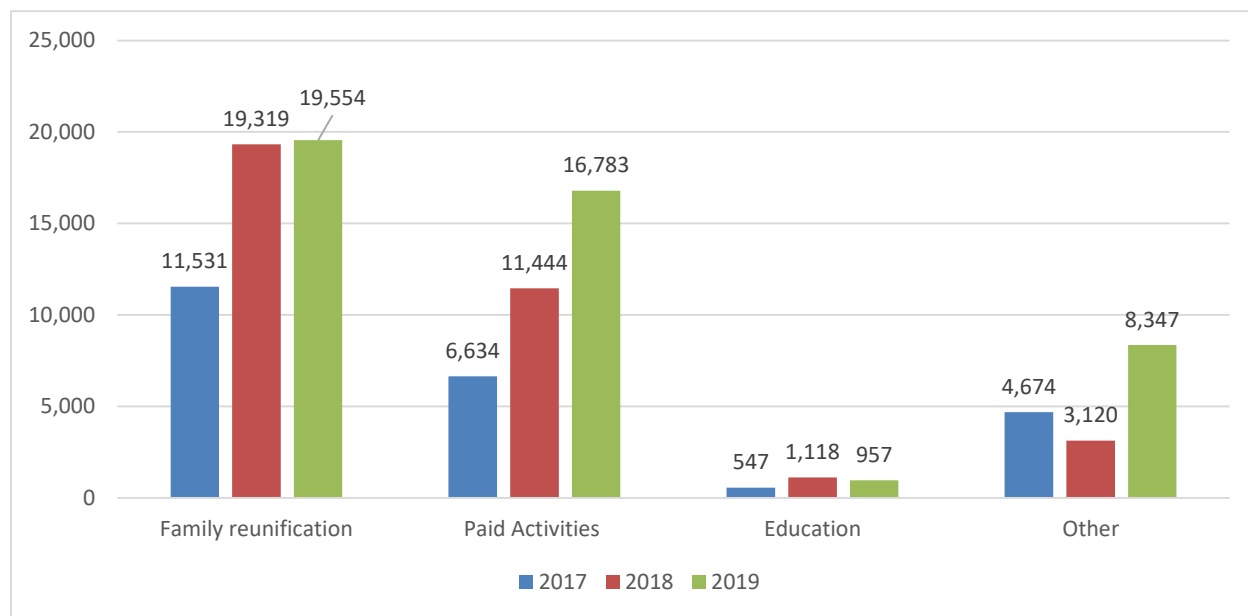
## Regular Emigration

### Citizens of the Republic of Kosovo with valid residence permits in EU member states and Schengen area

By the end of 2019, 45,641 valid residence permits were issued for the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, for all categories in the EU member states and the Schengen area. Based on the Eurostat data the number of valid residence permits has increased by 30.4% compared to the previous year (35,001).

Out of total number of all residence permits, 42.8% were issued for family reunification, 36.8% for employment and 2.1% for educational purposes. The residence permits classified for other reasons accounted for 18.3% (see Figure 4 for figures by categories). Germany registered 22,128 (48%) citizens of the Republic of Kosovo with valid residence permits, Croatia 6,369 (14%), Slovenia 5,862 (13%), Italy 2,329 (5%), and other countries accounted for about 20%.

Figure 4: Kosovar emigrants in EU member states and Schengen area, by reason of stay, 2017-2019



Source: Eurostat<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>

## 4. Irregular Migration

Irregular migration continued to be amongst the priorities of the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo in 2019, both in terms of emigration and immigration.

### 4.1. Responsible State Authorities

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is the responsible institution for drafting migration policies and implementing policies related to irregular immigration in the Republic of Kosovo.

The Border Police Department, Kosovo Police, is responsible for the management and control of the state border. This department works in cooperation with the Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime (DIOC), Department of Investigations, for the prevention and fight against smuggling of migrants.

The Directorate for the Investigation of Trafficking in Human Beings (DITHB) is the specialized directorate of the Kosovo Police in charge of investigating cases and other offenses related to trafficking in human beings.

### 4.2. Policies and Legal Framework

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo has drafted policies and the legal framework<sup>14</sup> for the prevention of irregular migration, the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings.

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<sup>14</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo; Criminal Code of Kosovo (CCK); Juvenile Justice Code; Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo (PCCK); Law on the Police of the Republic of Kosovo; Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims of Trafficking; Law on Foreigners; Law on Crime Victim Compensation; Law on Health; National Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings in Kosovo and Action Plan 2015-2019; DITHB Work Strategy and Annual Action Plan; Other normative acts of KP (Administrative Instructions, Principles, Standard Operating Procedures and decisions); Standard Operating Procedures for Victims of Trafficking; Minimum standards for the treatment of the victims of trafficking; Long-term strategy for the reintegration of victims of trafficking.

### 4.3. Statistics

#### Irregular Immigration

##### Refusal of Entry

The data show that a total number of 3,028 persons were refused entry at border crossing points (BCPs) in 2019, an increase of 33% compared to 2018 and 7% compared to 2017.

Table 5: Refusal of entries at Border Crossing Points, 2017-2019

Year	2017	2018	2019
Number of Persons	2,813	2,016	3,029

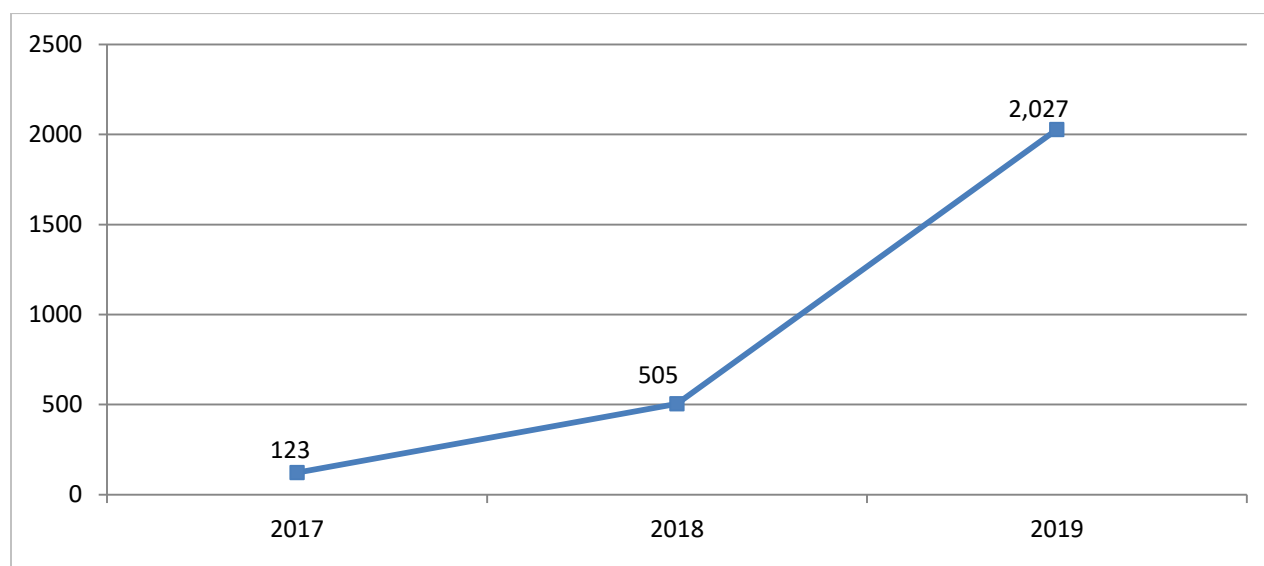
Source: Risk Analysis, Intelligence and Data Administration Unit, Border Department, Kosovo Police.

80% of the total number of people refused entry at the border in 2019 were from EU member states and the Schengen area, 19% from Asia and 2% from other countries. Amongst the reasons for entry refusals for the citizens of the neighbouring countries of Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro were lack of valid documents, entry bans to enter the Republic of Kosovo; the failure to provide biometric IDs and passports was the main reason for the citizens of the EU member states and the Schengen area to be refused entry. The citizens of Asian and African countries were refused entry due to absence of visas, sufficient financial means and failure to justify the purpose and conditions of their stay.

##### Unauthorized border crossing

A number of 2,027 irregular immigrants crossed the border and entered the territory of the Republic of Kosovo in an unauthorized manner in 2019. This is a significant increase of over four times compared to 2018 (505), and an increase of almost 17 times compared to 2017 (123).

Figure 5: Number of immigrants entering Kosovo in unauthorized manner, 2017-2019



Source: Risk Analysis, Intelligence and Data Administration Unit, Border Department, Kosovo Police

The majority of the total number of irregular immigrants (2,027) was from Syria (908), followed by Iraq (560), Morocco (151), Algeria (119), Palestine (93), and other countries (196). In terms of gender, 82.5% (1,666) of the irregular immigrants were men and 17.5% (361) were women. By age group, 19.5% were under 18 years old and 80.5% were adults (over 18 years old).

Based on the detected cases, irregular immigrants who entered the territory of the Republic of Kosovo in an unauthorized manner mainly moved in small groups, assisted by smugglers and entered the territory of the Republic of Kosovo across the border with Albania. Out of 2,027 immigrants, the largest percentage entered from Albania with 96.3% (1,953) and North Macedonia 2.8% (57).

### **Fight against smuggling of migrants**

Kosovo Police continued with the systematic and detailed controls of all border crossing points and the green border line, as well as with the prevention and fight against organized criminal groups involved in smuggling of migrants within the territory of the Republic of Kosovo.

In 2019, the number of cases initiated on smuggling with migrants (24) was the same as the previous year (24), and a slight decrease of -17% is observed compared to 2017 (29). The number of persons suspected of smuggling of migrants was 35, which is an increase of 133% compared to 2018 (15). This increase comes as a result of the detection and arrest of criminal group members involved in the organized crime of smuggling of migrants.

Out of 35 persons suspected of smuggling of migrants, 68% were citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, 9% citizens of the Republic of Albania, the same number was from North Macedonia and 14% from other countries.

*Table 6: Suspects of smuggling of migrants per citizenship, 2017-2019*

Citizenship	2017	2018	2019
Kosovo	27	12	24
Albania	1	5	3
Serbia	1	2	1
Turkey	1	1	1
North Macedonia	1	0	3
Syria	0	0	2
Iraq	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35</b>

*Source: Risk Analysis, Intelligence and Data Administration Unit, Border Department, Kosovo Police*

### **Trafficking in Human Beings**

Annual data show that in 2019 5 victims of trafficking (VT) were identified, marking an increase of 2 persons compared to 2018 when 3 victims were identified. By citizenship, 1 identified victim was from Albania, 2 from Serbia and 2 from Montenegro.

Upon being identified as victims of trafficking, they were provided with accommodation and services pursuant the Standard Operating Procedures for Trafficked Persons (shelter, health care, financial assistance, education and work) during their stay in the Republic of Kosovo.

## **Irregular Emigration**

### **Kosovo citizens refused entry or detained at the border in EU Member States and the Schengen area**<sup>15</sup>

In 2019, more than half of the total number of Kosovo citizens who were refused entry or detained at the border of EU Member States and the Schengen area were registered in Croatia and Slovenia.

During this period, about 1,460 Kosovo citizens were refused entry or were caught at the border of EU Member States and the Schengen area, a decrease of -4.1% compared to 2018 (1,520) and -9.5% compared to 2017 (1,600). Refusal of entry occurred at land borders (83%), and sea borders (3%) and airports 14%.

Entry was refused due to an absence of valid visas or permits in 80% of the cases, valid documents in 10% of the cases, counterfeit travel documents in 8%, and falsified visas or residence permits in 2% of cases.

The majority of Kosovo citizens were refused entry by Croatia with 38%, followed by Slovenia with 21%, Hungary 17%, Germany 5%, the United Kingdom 5% and other countries with 15%.

The trend of Kosovo citizens who were refused entry or were caught at the border of the EU Member States and the Schengen area had a steady decline during the last three years.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, last update on 05.06.20, extracted on 23.06.20.

### **Kosovo citizens caught residing illegally within the territory of EU Member States and the Schengen area**<sup>16</sup>

In 2019, about 5,390 Kosovo citizens were caught residing illegally within the territory of EU Member States and the Schengen area.

This number has decreased by -9.3% compared to the previous year (5,945) and by about 9 times compared to the record level of 2015 when the total number of Kosovo citizens residing illegally within the territory of EU Member States and the Schengen area reached 52,275.

By gender, as in the previous years, men dominate with 82% (4,400) compared to women with 18% (975). Kosovo citizens residing illegally within the territory of the EU Member States and the Schengen area were mainly aged 18-34 which constitutes 82% of the total number, and 7% were under the age of 18.

The number of Kosovo citizens caught residing illegally within the territory of the EU Member States and the Schengen area, based on the ranking of countries and percentages, has not changed considerably from the previous year: Germany 40% (2,165), Switzerland 19 % (1,020), France 12% (620), Croatia 9% (465), Hungary 6% (330), Austria 5% (280), Italy 4% (215) and other countries 5 % (290).

### **Kosovar citizens caught residing illegally in the EU Member States and the Schengen area issued an expulsion order**<sup>17</sup>

The number of Kosovar citizens who were issued an expulsion order in the EU Member States and the Schengen area in 2019 was almost the same as in the previous year with a decrease of 1%.

More than half of the 5,805 Kosovo citizens residing illegally in the EU Member States and the Schengen area who were issued an expulsion order in 2019 were from only two EU countries,

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<sup>16</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, last update on 05.06.2020, extracted on 22.06.2020

<sup>17</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, last update on 05.06.2020, extracted on 23.06.2020.

France 39% (2,255) and Germany 13% (765), and the rest from Croatia 10% (575), Slovenia 9% (540), Switzerland 8% (450) and other countries 21% (1,220).

**Kosovo citizens expelled from the EU member states and Schengen area on the basis of an expulsion order**<sup>18</sup>

In 2019, the total number of Kosovo citizens removed from EU Member States and the Schengen area<sup>19</sup> by expulsion order was 2,465 and according to Eurostat data, 2,210 of them returned to the country of origin. This marks a decrease of -33.8% compared to the previous year when 3,340 Kosovo citizens were removed from the EU Member States and the Schengen area.

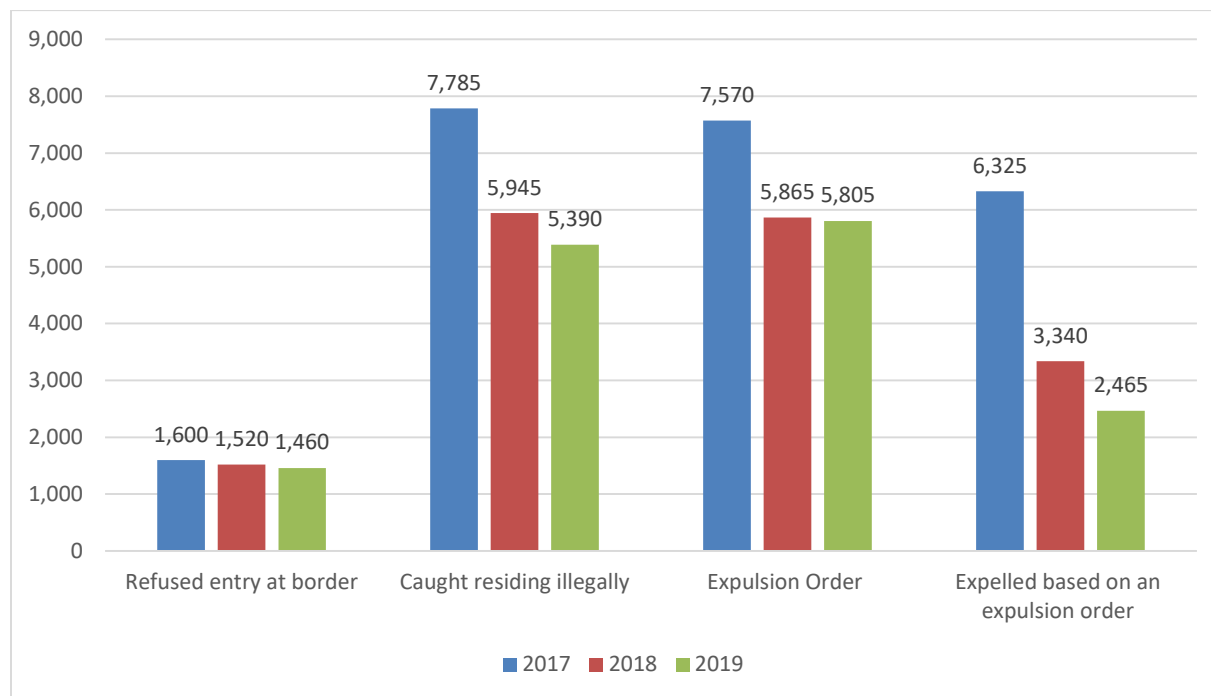
The total number of Kosovo citizens leaving the EU Member States and the Schengen area based on an expulsion order by countries: Germany 36% (890), Croatia 16% (405), France 12% (300), Austria 9% (210), Sweden 7% (175), Slovenia 6% (165), and other countries 12% (320).

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<sup>18</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, last update on 05.06.2020, extracted on 29.06.2020.

<sup>19</sup> Norway and Switzerland have not reported data in this database for returned non-EU citizens

Figure 6: Kosovo citizens refused entry at the border; caught residing illegally, ordered to leave and left the EU member states and the Schengen area, 2017–2019



Source: Eurostat

## 5. Return, readmission and reintegration

This chapter provides a summary on return, readmission and reintegration processes, with detailed data on the number of voluntary and forced returns. It covers both the return of foreign nationals from Kosovo as well as Kosovars returning to their home country.

### 5.1. Return of foreigners

#### 5.1.1. Responsible State Authorities

The Department of Citizenship, Asylum and Migration (MIA) and the Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (DMF), Kosovo Police, are the responsible authorities for the return of foreigners staying illegally in the Republic of Kosovo to their countries of origin or to the last country of stay.

#### 5.1.2. Policies and Legal Framework

In 2019, the Administrative Instruction 03/2019 (MIA) on Return of Foreigners with Illegal Residence in the Republic of Kosovo was approved and was published in the Official Gazette on 15.05.2019.

This Administrative Instruction (AI) regulates the standards and procedures for the return of foreign citizens and stateless persons who do not meet or have ceased to meet the legal requirements for stay in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo, pursuant to the Law on Foreigners and Asylum. The AI also facilitates the voluntary return standards and procedures.

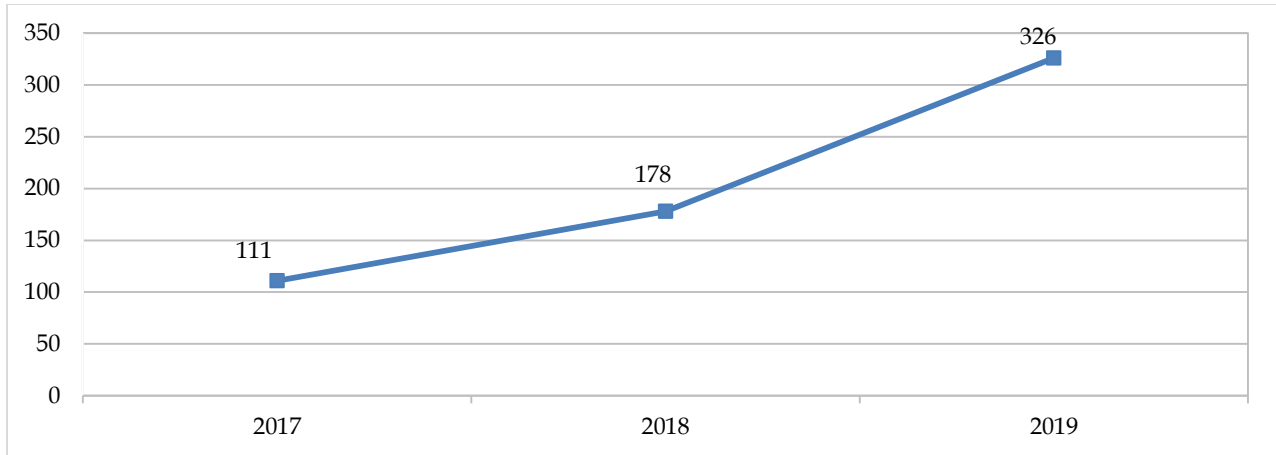
On 27.05.2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the field of migration management on “Assisted voluntary return”. In line with the MoU, a total of 3 people were assisted in their return (2 from Ukraine and 1 from Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 2019.

### 5.1.3. Statistics

#### Voluntary Return Orders

The data show an increase of decisions for voluntary departure from the territory of the Republic of Kosovo by 83% compared to 2018 and about three times more compared to 2017.

Figure 7: Voluntary Return Orders, 2017-2019



Source: Risk Analysis, Intelligence and Data Administration Unit, Border Department, Kosovo Police

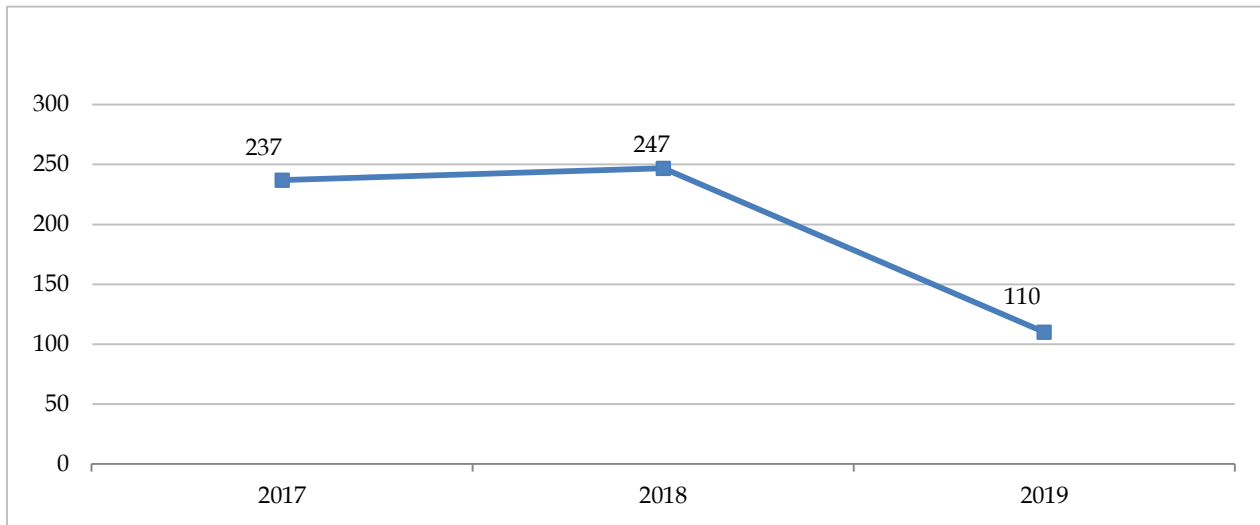
The largest number of decisions for voluntary return by countries were against citizens of Albania in 45% of cases (146), followed by Bangladesh 21% (68), Turkey 19% (61), Northern Macedonia 4% (13), Serbia 3% (12) and 8% (26) from other countries.

In terms of gender, the number of voluntary return decisions was dominated by men with 54%, compared to women with 46%. Among the reasons for issued voluntary return decisions for foreigners with irregular residence in the Republic of Kosovo were the failure to provide a valid residence permit, cancellation or revocation of the residence permit, or the foreigners were found working in violation of the Law on Foreigners or other applicable laws. As part of the Assisted Voluntary Return Program, IOM assisted the return and reintegration of two persons to their country of origin (Algeria).

## Forced Return Orders

110 decisions for forced return from the territory of the Republic of Kosovo were executed in 2019, a decrease of 53% compared to 2018 and 55% compared to 2017.

Figure 8: Forced return orders, 2017-2019



Source: Risk Analysis, Intelligence and Data Administration Unit, Border Department, Kosovo Police

73% of deportees who received a forced return decision were women and 27% were men. In terms of citizenship, 81% were from Albania, 15% from Serbia and 4% from other countries.

Based on decisions of Kosovo Courts and on the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, the Directorate for Migration and Foreigners has deported 33 persons from the Republic of Kosovo. 24 were citizens of Albania, 5 were from Turkey, 2 from Serbia, 1 from Slovakia, and 1 from the United Kingdom. This is an increase of 37% compared to 2018, and 106% compared to 2017.

## 5.2. Readmission

### 5.2.1 Responsible State Authorities

The Department of Citizenship, Asylum and Migration/Division of Readmission and Return, Ministry of Internal Affairs, is the main state authority responsible for the execution of the Law No. 03/1-208 on Readmission and the implementation of the bilateral readmission agreements.

### 5.2.2. Policies and Legal Framework

The Law on Readmission defines the rules and procedures for the readmission of citizens of the Republic of Kosovo or foreigners who fail to meet the conditions for entry or stay in the territory of the requesting state. The execution of the readmission legislation has priority over the readmission cooperation with countries with which Kosovo has not yet signed a bilateral readmission agreement.

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo has signed readmission agreements with 24 countries<sup>20</sup>, of which 20 are EU member states and Schengen countries.

### 5.2.3. Statistics

In 2019, about 94% of readmission cases were handled under bilateral readmission agreements with EU member states, 5% of readmission cases were based on bilateral readmission agreements with non-EU countries, and less than 1% of readmission cases were processed pursuant to the Readmission Law.

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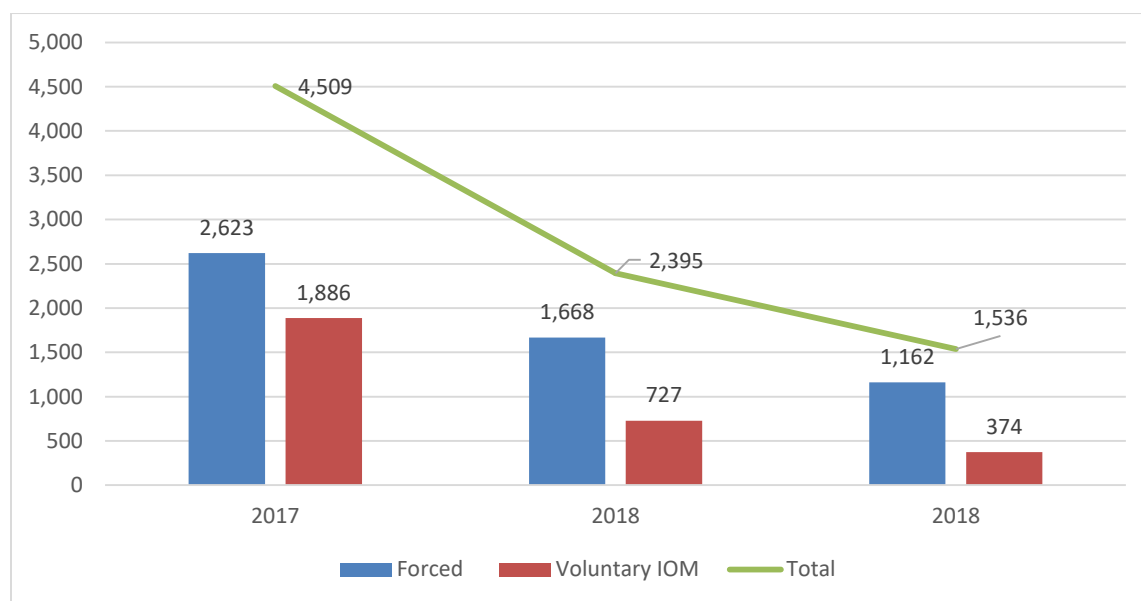
<sup>20</sup> 2009 Republic of Albania, 2009 Republic of France, 2010 Swiss Federal Council, 2010 Federal Republic of Germany, 2010 Kingdom of Denmark, 2010 Republic of Austria, 2010 Kingdom of Norway, 2011 Republic of Slovenia, 2011 Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg), 2011 Czech Republic, 2011 Montenegro, 2011 Kingdom of Sweden, 2011 Republic of Finland, 2012 Republic of Hungary, 2012 Republic of Bulgaria, 2012 Republic of Malta, 2013 Republic of Estonia, 2013 Principality of Liechtenstein, 2013 Republic of Croatia, 2014 Republic of Italy, 2015 Republic of Turkey and 2017 Republic of North Macedonia.

The annual data show that 1,536 people were readmitted in 2019, a decrease of 36% compared to the previous year (2,395). According to the manner of return, 75% (1,162) were returned by force, and 25% (374) have returned voluntarily assisted by IOM.

In terms of gender and age, 76% (884) of the Kosovar citizens readmitted by force were men, and 24% (278) were women. Men make up the largest percentage of over 70% of the readmitted persons, aged between 18-34 years (391 or 44%) and who have stayed less than six months in European countries. This shows that those who are readmitted are young (active for work), mainly men, who have left the Republic of Kosovo.

Based on IOM data, assisted voluntary readmissions show a higher percentage of men of 62% (232) compared to 38% (142) of women.

Figure 9: Voluntary and forced readmission, 2017-2019



Source: DCAM, IOM

The largest percentage of the readmitted (forced and voluntary assisted) are 18-34 years old (600 or 39%) and 35-64 years old (550 or 36%). A lower percentage is seen for the age groups of 0-5 years old (160 or 10.5%), 6-13 years old (159 or 10.3%) and 14-17 years old (52 or 3.4%).

Based on the annual data for 2019 (1,536), the largest number of readmitted (by force and voluntary assistance) are from Germany 54.6% (839), France 22.2% (342), Sweden 3.4% (53) and other countries with 20% (302). According to the annual data for 2018 (2,395), the largest number of forcibly readmitted and voluntary assisted returnees was from Germany with 72.3% (1,733), Switzerland 7.7% (186), France 3.2% (78) and other countries 16.6% (398).

Based on this data, the trend of readmission (by force and voluntary assisted) during the last three years (2017-2019) has been declining.

## 5.3. Reintegration

### 5.3.1. Responsible State Authorities

The Department for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (DRRP) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the responsible authority for managing the reintegration of repatriated persons.

### 5.3.2. Policies and Legal Framework

The **State Strategy for Sustainable Reintegration of Repatriated Persons and the Action Plan 2018–2022**<sup>21</sup> defines the policies of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo in the field of migration and reintegration of repatriated persons.

Other responsible institutions, criteria and procedures for the assistance and support of repatriated persons during the reintegration process are regulated by the Regulation (GRK) no. 13/2017 on Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, approved by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/viewConsult.php?ConsultationID=40273>

<sup>22</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=15304>

In the framework of advancing reintegration policies, the following documents have been drafted:

- Municipal plans for sustainable reintegration of repatriated persons 2019-2022;
- Draft Regulation amending the Regulation (GRK) no. 13/2017 on Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, expected to be approved next year;
- List of risks in achieving the objectives of reintegration 2019-2021.

In order to facilitate the implementation of reintegration policies during this period, the DRPR/Ministry of Internal Affairs has defined the manner and format of cooperation and coordination with stakeholders at the central and local level, international organizations and civil society, and has signed cooperation agreements<sup>23</sup> with many local and international institutions in order to provide better services to repatriated persons.

### 5.3.3. Statistics

During 2019, the various emergency and sustainable reintegration schemes supported 7,979 repatriated persons<sup>24</sup>, an increase of more than 1.5 times compared to 2018.

Based on the ethnicity,<sup>25</sup> the largest number of beneficiaries is from the Albanian community with 14.4% (1,150), followed by the Roma community 1.9% (148), Ashkali 2.3% (186), Egyptian 0.54% (43) and other communities.

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<sup>23</sup> Agreements include government institutions, civil society organizations and various donors (MEST, MLSW, GIZ, UNDP, Red Cross).

<sup>24</sup> The number of beneficiaries of 7,979 persons during 2019 represents new and transferred beneficiaries, of which 1,561 persons were supported in various Reintegration schemes by DRRP, 2,536 by Local Institutions and 3,882 by various international organizations. This increase comes as a result of the support for repatriated persons in 2019 but also of previous years by the Department for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (DRRP), Local Institutions and International Organizations which did not have a criterion of the date of repatriation.

<sup>25</sup> The number of beneficiaries mentioned in the text by ethnicity, municipalities of origin and countries of return reflects the beneficiaries in different schemes only from DRPR.

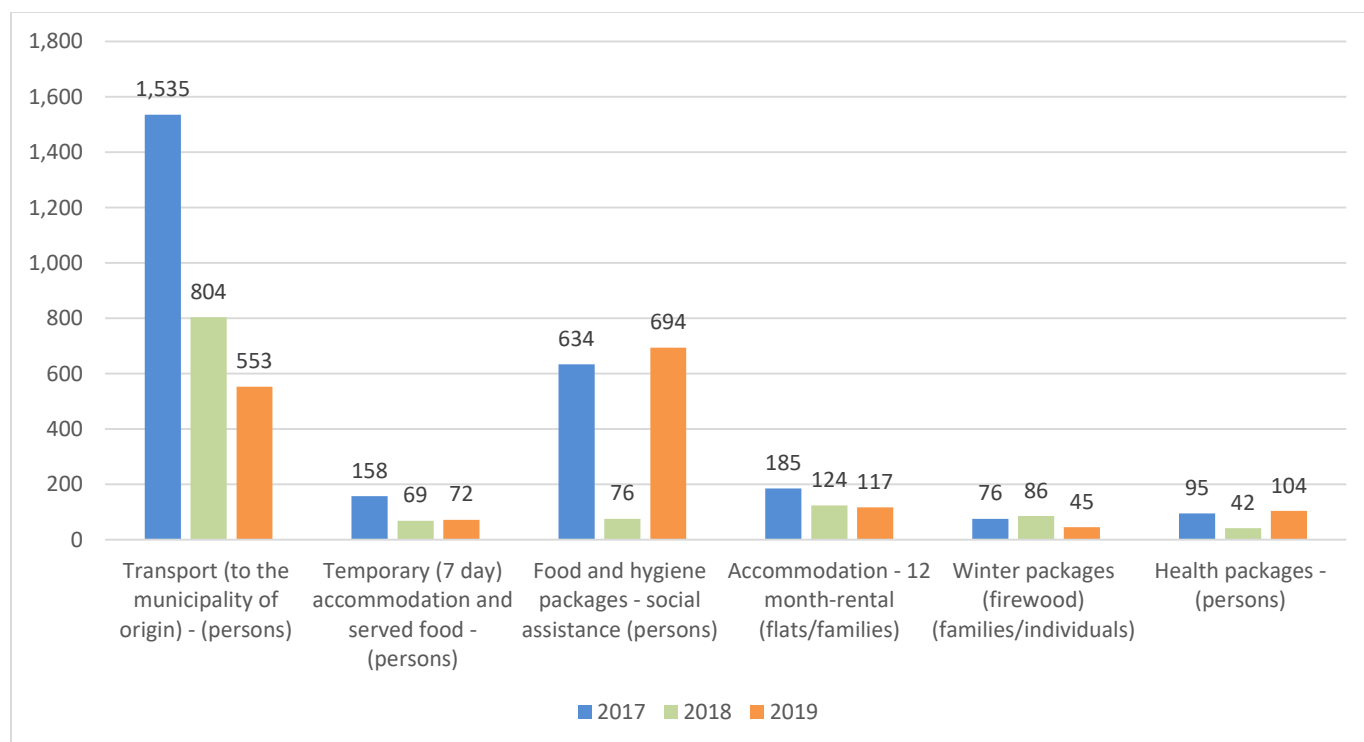
The major number of beneficiaries in various reintegration schemes based on their municipality of origin are from Podujevë/Podujevo 2.2% (174), followed by Vushtrri/Vučitrn 1.7% (135), Prishtinë/Priština 1.6% (132), Mitrovicë/Mitrovica 1.5% (116), Ferizaj/Uroševac 1.3% (106) etc.

The largest number of persons who have benefited from various reintegration schemes are repatriates from Germany 15% (1,190), followed by Syria 1.3% (107), France 1.1% (85), Switzerland 0.68% (55), Sweden 0.58% (47), etc.

A total of eighty-five (85) families with three hundred and five (305) repatriated members belonging to vulnerable groups have benefited from the reintegration schemes during 2019 and 2018.

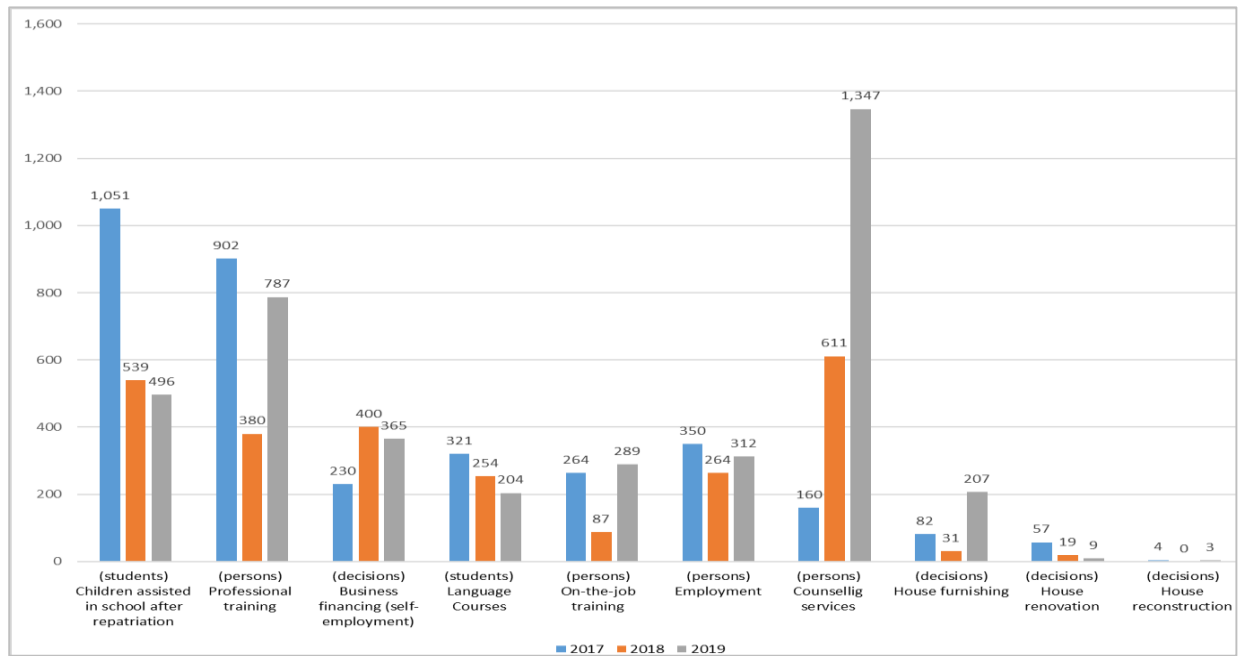
The following figure shows the data on the support provided to the repatriated persons per benefit schemes.

Figure 10: Assistance provided immediately after the arrival and emergency assistance within 12 months upon readmission, 2017-2019



Source: DRRP/MIA/Local Institutions and International Organizations

Figure 11: Assistance for sustainable reintegration, 2017-2019



Source: DRRP/MIA/Local institutions and International Organizations

As a result of agreements signed with international organizations (UNDP, GIZ) during 2018-2019 there has been a significant increase in financing a scheme for business establishment as part of the sustainable reintegration schemes.

## 6. Integration

The integration of foreigners in the Kosovar society is regulated through the legal framework of the Law on Foreigners and the Law on Asylum, as well as through a number of other legal acts. During 2019, Regulation (GRK) no. 09/2019 on the Integration of Foreigners was approved providing the basis for the establishment of the integration system of foreigners in the Republic of Kosovo.

### 6.1. Responsible State Authorities

DRRP/MIA is responsible for managing and coordinating integration policies in close cooperation with the relevant central and local institutions. Each of the ministries envisages integration measures as part of their operational and financial plan. Ministries and municipalities appoint officials with the responsibility of coordinating integration activities. DRRP/MIA in cooperation with the Ministry of the Local Government Administration (MLGA) are responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of integration policies at the local level.

### 6.2. Policies and Legal Framework

Regulation (NRC) no. 09/2019 on the Integration of Foreigners was drafted and approved providing the basis of building the integration system of foreigners in the Republic of Kosovo. This Regulation was published in the Official Gazette on 24.07.2019.<sup>26</sup> The regulation defines the procedures, criteria and institutions responsible for the integration of foreigners in the social, economic and cultural life in the Republic of Kosovo. A number of other legal acts regulate the integration of foreigners with legal residence in the Republic of Kosovo. Chapter IX of Law no. 04/1-219 on Foreigners (Articles 126 and 127) provides the legal basis for the conditions and services of integration of foreigners in economic, cultural and social life, including the responsibilities of state institutions and cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations for the promotion and implementation of programs for the integration of foreigners

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<sup>26</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=21006>

in society. The legislation in force guarantees the right to acquire Kosovo citizenship (by naturalization)<sup>27</sup> and access to relevant services in order to facilitate the process of integration into Kosovo society.

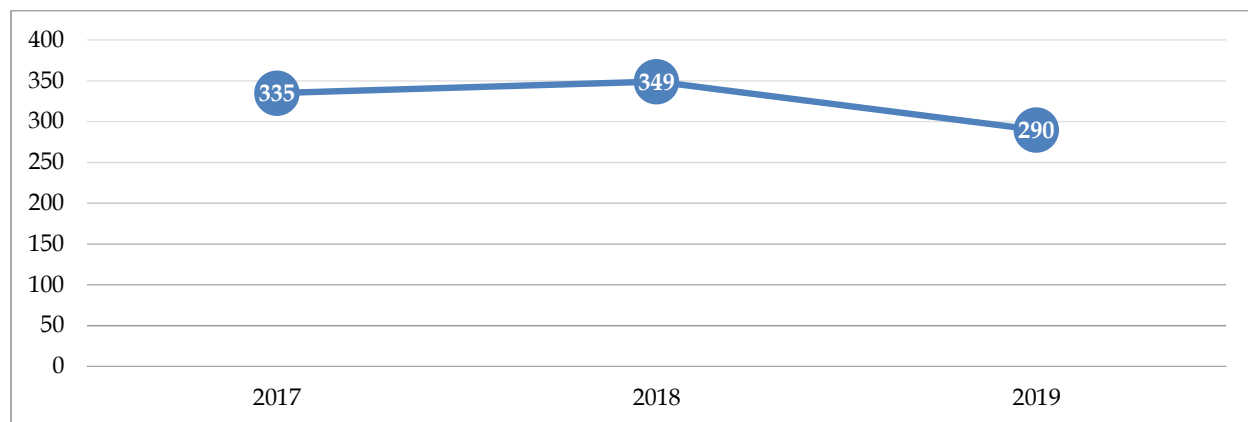
A Guideline for the Implementation of the Regulation, a needs assessment form, an application form and forms for an Individual Integration Plan have been drafted in preparation for the implementation of Regulation (GRK) no. 09/2019 on the Integration of Foreigners.

### 6.3. Statistics

In 2019, 656 applications for the citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo were received, of which 290 persons acquired citizenship and 454 applications were rejected for non-compliance with the legal criteria. Compared to the previous year, the number of decisions for gaining citizenship has decreased by 17%.

By citizenship, persons who have acquired the citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo in 2019 are from Serbia 25% (or 74), Albania 18% (or 51), North Macedonia 10% (or 29) and other countries 47% (or 136).

Figure 12: Number of persons who have acquired citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo, 2017-2019



Source: DCAM

<sup>27</sup> Law No.04/L-215 on Citizenship of Kosovo, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo/No.33/2 September 2013, Pristina

During the last three years, the trends of acquiring the citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo show almost a linear trend. 973 persons have acquired citizenship, with women leading with 58% (565) compared to men with 42% (408).

## 7. Migration and Development

This chapter reflects the development policies and strategies of the Republic of Kosovo related to migration and development. The focus is on introducing ways in which the potential for migration could be used for development purposes by utilising remittances and investments from the diaspora, as well as on policies for the return of experts from the diaspora (brain gain).

### 7.1. Responsible State Authorities

Considering that the Republic of Kosovo has a significant diaspora, the Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments (MDSI) carries the main role. Additionally, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Education, include in their scopes of work the drafting of policies and strategies, which directly or indirectly regulate issues that deal with migration and development. The common goal of these institutions is to create a favourable climate for attracting investments from the diaspora.

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo, specifically the **Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments**, is engaged in preserving and developing the identity of the diaspora members, promoting and advancing their rights, organizing them in the countries they live, and promoting resources and opportunities for their investments in the country of origin for the purpose of economic development.

**The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare** drafts employment policies and has an important role in promoting regular migration, connecting the needs of the labour market with migration, and developing programs through the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK).

**The Ministry of Finance** commits through fiscal policies to create a favourable climate for investments, including investors from the diaspora.

**The Ministry of Trade and Industry** is another important institution that interlinks migration to improve the business environment through policies such as promoting investment and exports,

strengthening and creating economic zones, developing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and strengthening the private sector in general.

**The Ministry of Economic Development**, also indirectly, aims by drafting policies and strategies in the sector of energy, mining, information technology, at the economic development of the Republic of Kosovo and the creation of a favourable investment climate.

**The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)** ensures the preservation of identity (cultural, linguistic) by creating special curricula for diaspora members, as well as special educational programs on migration issues.

## 7.2. Policies and Legal Framework

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo remains committed to maintaining a sustainable macroeconomic environment, strengthening economic growth and better employment perspectives. The Economic Reform Program (ERP) 2019-2021<sup>28</sup> was finalized under the leadership of the Minister of Finance as National Coordinator, after discussing the content of the measures, their consistency with relevant strategic documents and policy recommendations resulting from the Economic and Fiscal Dialogue with the European Commission.

Some of the Government's medium-term fiscal objectives related to migration are as follows:

- Sustainable financing for the Government public activities, ensuring that tax policies are aimed at stimulating activities in the private sector and that they generates sustainable revenues for the state budget.
- Simplification of administrative fees and reduction of the regulatory burden.
- A balanced budget structure, prioritizing capital investments in addressing structural barriers, by improving public infrastructure.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://mf.rks-gov.net/page.aspx?id=1,28>

The ERP 2020-2022<sup>29</sup> foresees Measure 4 in Field II, Agriculture, Industry and Services. This Measure offers financial access for SMEs, technical support in links among enterprises in industrial clusters, support in improving quality standards and transition to higher value-added activities and growth of the level of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the diaspora investments. Measure 9 Establishment and functioning of the Commercial Court is expected to increase legal certainty through the efficient resolution of commercial disputes by this Court, which will serve as an incentive and reduce the risks when expanding existing businesses and will increase the growth of direct investment by foreign companies and the diaspora. This measure is a continuation of:

- ERP 2018-2020 (Measure 6: Boosting private sector competitiveness through support to industrial SMEs, specifically Activity 7: Providing support and strengthening the cooperation with diaspora networks with the purpose of increasing investments and export), and
- ERP 2019-2021 (Measure 5: Boosting competitiveness in the production industry).

In 2019, under Measure 5, the data analysis for the development of the industrial sectors was finalized and will serve for the drafting of concrete policies for the improvement of the competitiveness of the private sector, as well as of potential investors from the diaspora.

Investments are continuing for the physical infrastructure of the Economic Zones (Suharekë/Suva Reka, Viti/Vitina, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Lipjan/Lipljan). The purpose of investing in these areas is to create spaces for the development and expansion of businesses in the manufacturing industry, which will enable the businesses from the diaspora to be included.

In 2019, as part of this measure of ERP 2019-2021, five investment activities were organized in Dubai, Vienna, Athens, New York and Bern, and more are planned to be held in Germany, Belgium and Italy. Participating in the said forums enabled the establishment of over 150 contacts

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<sup>29</sup> ERP 2020-2022 was drafted during 2019 and it reports the implementation of the measures in 2019. The document is a continuation of the ERP 2018-2020 orientation and it reflects the commitment of the GoK. (i.e. the measures of the ERP 2019-2021 implemented in 2019, but their implementation is reported in ERP 2020-2022).

with companies that have shown interest in investing in the Republic of Kosovo. Currently, 10 companies that have started investments are being supported. This year the amount of foreign investments in the Republic of Kosovo amounts to 256.9 million euros (January-October 2019), and 90% are investments from the diaspora according to the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (CBK).

Considered as a potential for the economic development of the country the **Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments** included diaspora in the framework of the National Development Strategy 2016-2021 and the ERP 2019-2021.

MDSI has continued with the implementation of policies for the diaspora. The Ministry has promoted and supported the establishment of diaspora organization structures such as business networks (24 countries with over 6,000 members), networks of professionals, youth networks, Diaspora Councils (e.g. the Coordinating Council of the Albanian Associations in Austria), in order to create bridges between the members of the diaspora themselves and the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo.

Furthermore, in cooperation with relevant institutions in the country (Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency (KIESA), Tax Administration of Kosovo, Customs, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) and those in the diaspora (as the Network of Diaspora Businesses), MDSI organized information sessions, B2B meetings and economic forums in the Republic of Kosovo. The purpose of these activities is to inform about and to present the potentials and resources to the diaspora, as well as the opportunities offered by the Republic of Kosovo for investments. A specific goal is the motivation and encouragement of businesses by the diaspora community to invest in the Republic of Kosovo, as well as to support the export of local products to countries where the diaspora lives and operates.

As a result of the above-mentioned activities, several cooperation agreements were signed between diaspora and local businesses, as well as agreements for the export of local products to countries the diaspora lives in.

**The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare** has implemented three "ODA" (Official Development Assistance) agreements with German companies on circular migration. The purpose of the agreements is to advance the professional skills of jobseekers through the dual system (practice and theory simultaneously) of education. The Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo is the implementer of the program and this year 11 people have benefited from the program. The Employment Agency through the Labour Market Department, specifically its Division for Migration Services, and through the Employment Offices, has continued to provide migration services for employment and vocational training, in order to inform citizens about possible ways of legal migration and mobility, and utilizes an information module within the EARK website for all services provided for regular migration.

**The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)** has continued with the implementation of the development policies in order to improve the business climate. The Ministry has approved the Administrative Instruction on the definition, requirements, conditions and procedures for the creation of a Unique Identification Number for Business Organizations<sup>30</sup>, which serves for the registration in the Kosovo Business Registration Agency (KBRA) register, tax and customs duties, pension contributions, health insurance, labour inspection authorities and for any other purpose defined by the law.

In addition to the promotion of investments, exports and tourism, one of the development policies of the Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency (KIESA)<sup>31</sup> calls for a special treatment of diaspora investors, considering them as local investors with high priority.

In continuation of these policies, it is noteworthy that the Competitiveness and Export Readiness Project for the Republic of Kosovo supports the certification of products for export markets, consulting, strengthening the capacity of exporters, and reducing the cost of business inspections. As a result of this project, 32 companies have benefited in the above areas in 2019.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18914>

<sup>31</sup> <https://kiesa.rks-gov.net/>

The aforementioned MTI development policies have resulted in an increase in business registration this year to 10,054 registered businesses, compared to 9,967 in the previous year.

The Kosovo Business Registration Agency (KBRA)<sup>32</sup> started with the online registration of businesses in 2019, and as a result 2,285 companies have been registered, a significant increase compared to the previous year (319).

Based on the World Bank Doing Business Report<sup>33</sup>, Kosovo has had a great increase since 2015 by easing the criteria for doing business, ranking Kosovo on the 44<sup>th</sup> place in this year's report (2019), because of an improved result increasing from 73.71 to 74.15 points in total. This result indicates a more efficient business environment.

**The Ministry of Economic Development<sup>34</sup> (MED)** has included in its scope drafting policies and strategies for supporting the development of the market economy, the liberalization of the market in public services, as well as drafting and monitoring sectoral policies in the field of energy, information technology, postal services and mining. The creation of these policies has influenced the energy sector to have a positive investment trend, and according to the CBK the share of energy is 9% in 2019. Once adopting the Law on Energy Efficiency, MED has established the Energy Efficiency Fund, an important authority established to achieve energy efficiency objectives, specifically to promote, support and implement measures, as well as to attract and manage financial resources in order to finance and implement investment projects.

## 7.3 Statistics

### Remittances

Remittances generally have a multiple impact on key aspects of the development of Kosovo. Revenues from remittances are increasing as a result of the growing trend of regular emigration

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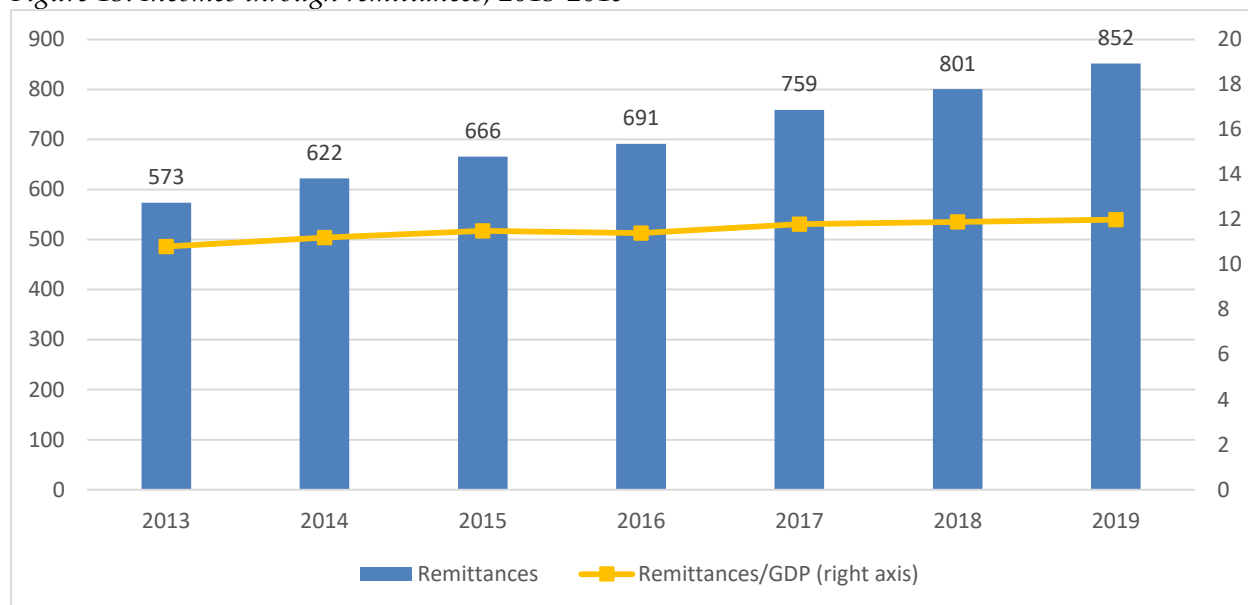
<sup>32</sup> <https://arbk.rks-gov.net/>

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/AnnualReports/English/DB2019-report\\_web-version.pdf](https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/AnnualReports/English/DB2019-report_web-version.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> <http://mzhe-ks.net/sq/ministria#.XtYVSFUzaM8>

for employment purposes. In 2019, remittances in Kosovo reached the amount of 851.5 million euros compared to 800.6 million in 2018. Remittances in 2019 had a share of 12% in the gross domestic product (GDP).

Figure 13: Incomes through remittances, 2013-2019



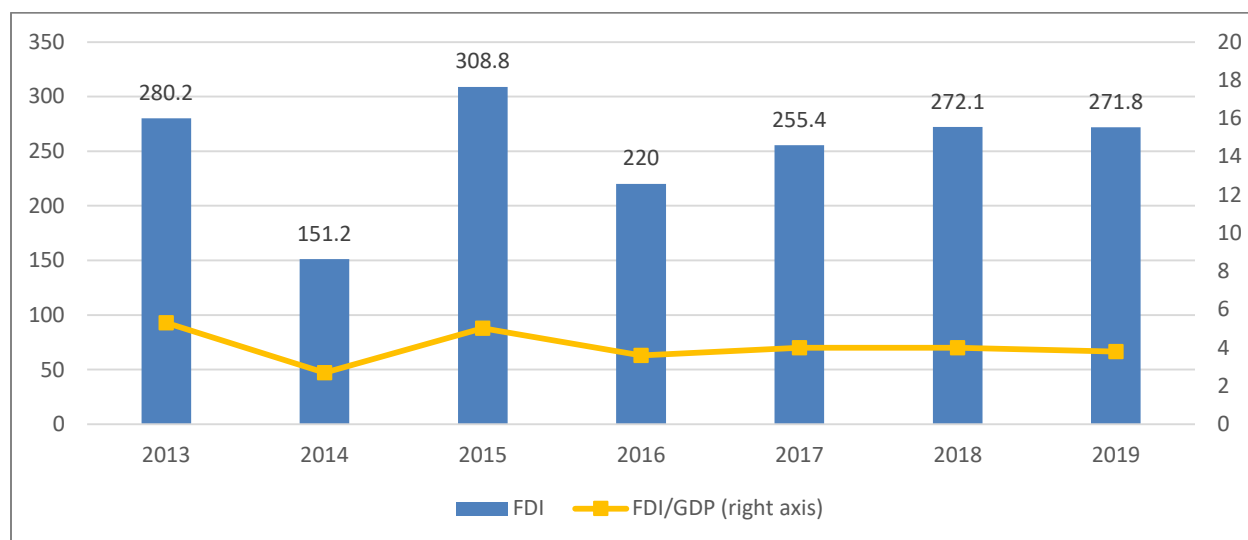
Source: CBK, 2020

About 64% of remittances are transferred through financial system, and the rest includes remittances in kind transferred through informal channels. The main sources of remittances continue to be received from Germany (41%) and Switzerland (20%), followed by the USA (7%), Italy (4.9%) and France (4.3%), Austria (4%) and Sweden (3%).

### Foreign Direct Investments

Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Kosovo in 2019 amounted to 271.8 million euros, almost the same value as in the previous year. The figure below shows the FDI trend in Kosovo during 2013-2019.

Figure 14: Foreign Direct Investments in Kosovo in millions of euros and as GDP percentage, 2013-2019



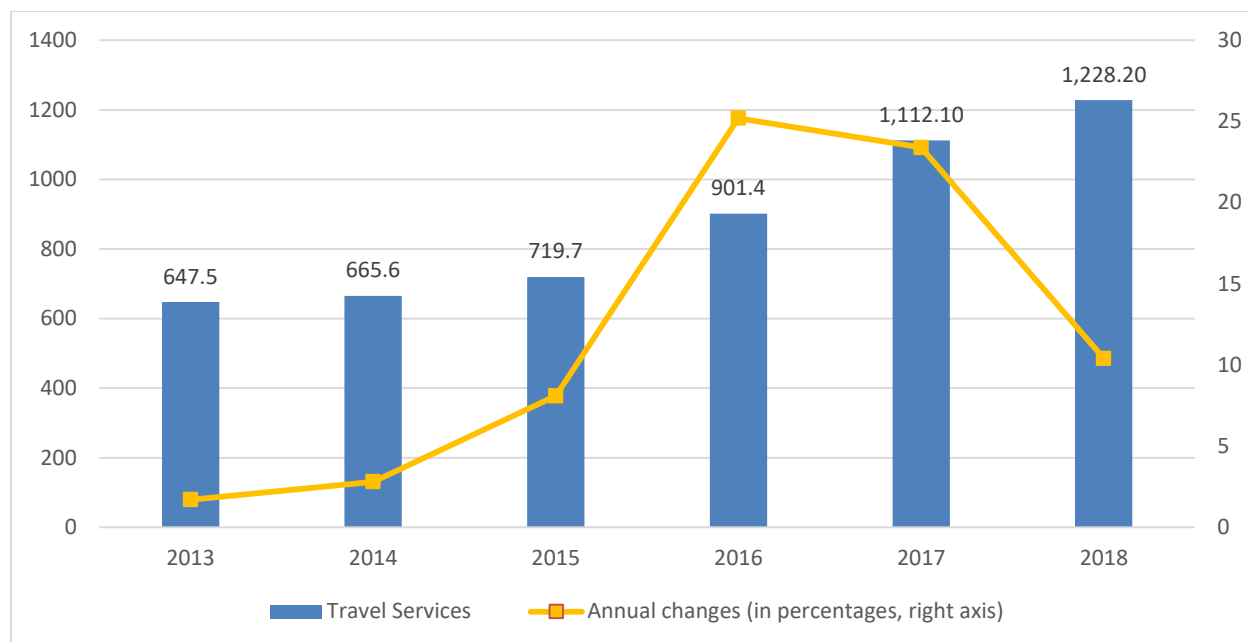
Source: CBK, 2020

The sectors that have shown a positive trend compared to the previous year and affected the investment growth during 2019 are the real estate, energy and financial sectors. In 2019 the share of real estate in total direct investments in Kosovo was 87%, energy 9%, and the financial sector 6%.

### Travel services for visitors / Diaspora Tourism in Kosovo

Kosovo enjoys a considerable diaspora tourism, especially during the summer and winter holidays. Revenues from travel services have increased steadily since 2013 as shown in Figure 14, reaching 1,321.4 million euros in 2019, at a time when the number of visits of international agencies (including NGOs and foreign missions in Kosovo) has decreased, leading to the reduction of expenditures from these categories. Since there are only a few other visitors to Kosovo, the dominant part of the income of this category, about 90%, can be attributed to the diaspora.

Figure 15: Travel services for visitors, 2013-2019

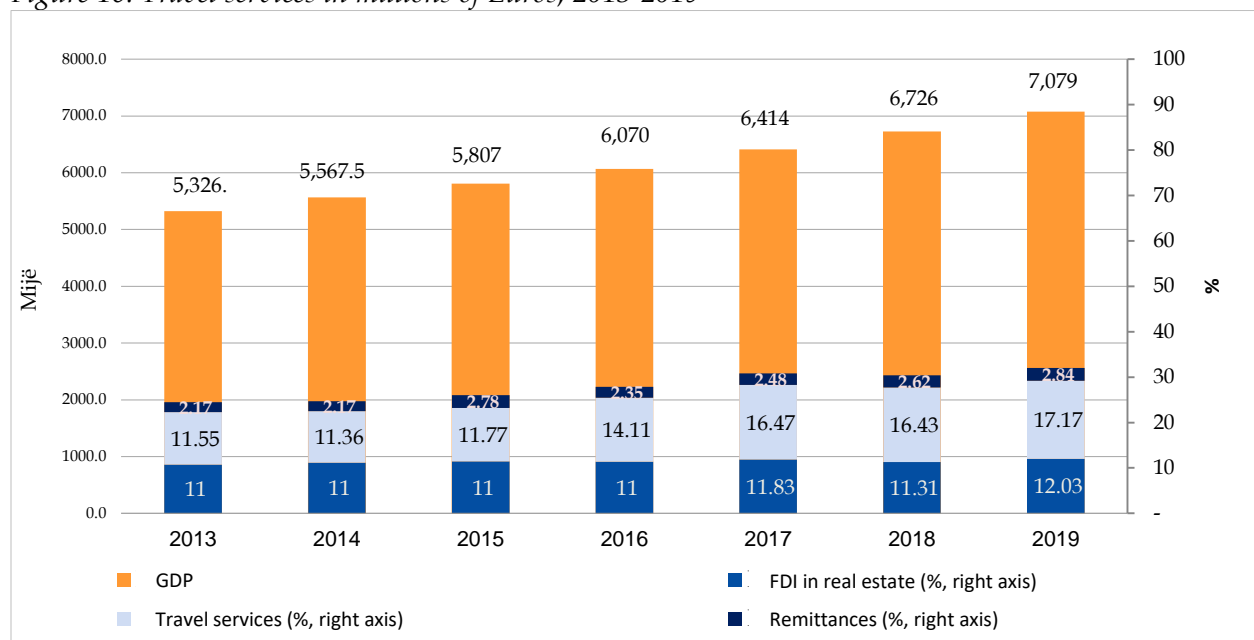


Source: CBK, 2020

The importance of diaspora can be seen also from the percentage of the participation in the gross domestic product, where remittances comprise 12% of the GDP, diaspora travel services comprise 17% and the percentage of FDI participation on real estate amounts at 2.7%, as presented in Graph 14, 15 and 16.

The three components, constituting more than 30% of the gross domestic product, show that migration revenues are a significant factor to enable the country's domestic consumption (consumption plus investment) and help the local production grow.

Figure 16: Travel services in millions of Euros, 2013-2019



Source: CBK, 2020

## 8. Asylum and international protection

### 8.1 Responsible State Authorities

The Division of Asylum, DCAM/MIA, is the responsible authority for the execution of the asylum procedure. The Asylum Center is responsible for accepting and accommodating applicants for international protection during the procedure of the determination of the status. The National Commission for Refugees (NRC) has the competence to review appeals in the second instance against decisions of the first instance.

The KP Border Police is responsible for the initial procedure, from the submission of applications to the initial interview, obtaining fingerprints and photographs, and transferring applicants to the Asylum Center.

### 8.2 Policies and Legal Framework

In 2019, MIA continued with amendments of the secondary legislation in this area, as a continuation of legislative changes at EU level, as well as the harmonization of state laws with EU laws. Two Administrative Instructions and a Regulation have been adopted:

- Administrative Instruction (MIA) No. 01/2019 on Procedures and Standards of Reception and Initial Treatment of Applicant for International Protection;
- Administrative Instruction (MIA) No. 02/2019<sup>35</sup> on Procedures and Standards of Review and Ruling on Application for International Protection;
- Regulation (GRK) No. 29/2018<sup>36</sup> on Work of the National Commission for Refugees, published in the Official Gazette on 04.01.2019.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18548>

<sup>36</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18792>

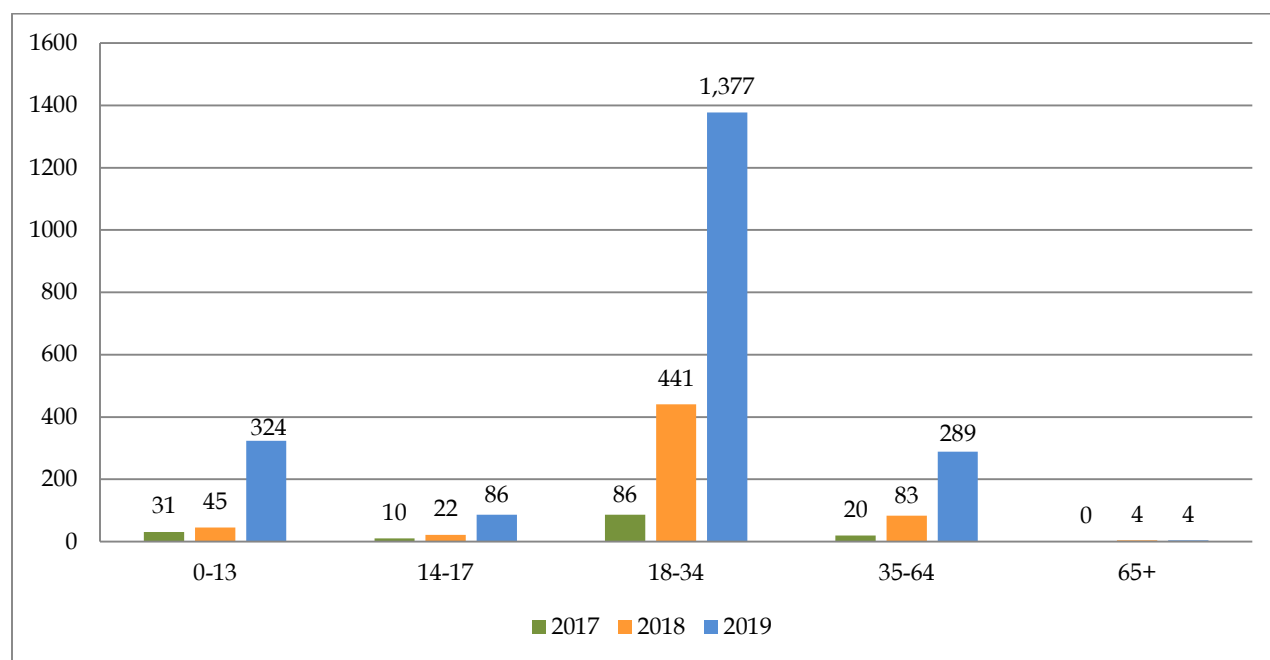
### 8.3. Statistics

#### Asylum seekers in Kosovo

The number of asylum seekers in Kosovo during 2019 was 2,081, an increase of more than three times as compared to the previous year (595). Developments in Syria, as well as the movements of migrants from Turkey and Greece, show that the number of migrants and refugees in the Western Balkans, not excluding Kosovo, may increase.

The main countries of origin of the asylum seekers in Kosovo are: Syria 911 (43.8%), Iraq 559 (26.9%), Morocco 152 (7.3%), Algeria 120 (5.8%), Palestine 89 (4.3%), and other countries 250 (12%). The most represented age group is 18-34 years old with 66.2% followed by 35-64 years old with 13.9%, 0-13 years old with 15.6%, 14-17 years age group with 4.1%, and 65+ age group with 0.2 %.

Figure 17: Asylum seekers in Kosovo, by age group, 2017-2019



Source: DCAM/MIA

The significant number of asylum seekers aged 0-13, mainly accompanied by family members, comes as a result of the general situation in the region and migratory movements from Middle

East countries. 42 (2.02%) of the total number of this category were unaccompanied minors. By gender, men dominate with 81.7% (or 1,700 persons) and women are represented with 18.3% (or 381 persons).

1,924 decisions of the first instance were issued in 2019 with the following status of decision: the procedure was terminated for 89.7% (1,867) of the decisions, a permanent positive decision was issued for 1.3% (27), the procedure was voluntary terminated for 1.3% (27), the request was rejected for 0.10 % (2), the request was rejected by accelerated procedure for 0.05% (1), and 6.8% (141) were in the application phase, and 0.77% (16) were pending a decision at the end of 2019.

Asylum seekers were provided with free health services, legal and administrative assistance, social and psychological assistance, daily meals, clothing, hygiene kits and other forms of physical assistance. A total of 1,090 medical services, 663 free legal services, 776 social counselling and Albanian language courses were provided.

### **Kosovo Asylum Seekers in the EU Member States and Schengen Area**

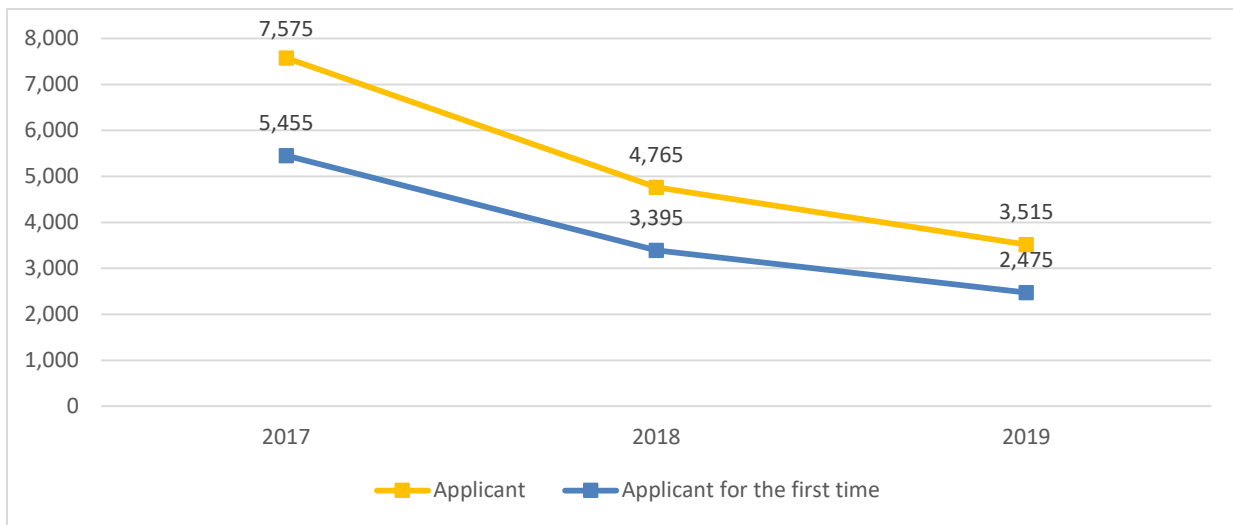
Based on Eurostat statistics<sup>37</sup>, the number of first time asylum seekers (applicants) in the EU member states and the Schengen area in 2019 was 2,475, indicating a decrease of -27% compared to the 3,395 applicants in 2018. This decrease has been resulting from awareness raising campaigns for Kosovar citizens about the consequences of irregular migration, and is a result of campaigns undertaken over the years by Kosovo authorities. On the other hand, changes in asylum and migration policies from EU countries may have also resulted in reducing this number.

58.5% of the total number of Kosovar asylum seekers are men and 41.5% are women.

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<sup>37</sup> [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyappctzm&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctzm&lang=en)/11.06.2020

Figure 18: Kosovo asylum seekers in the EU Member States and Schengen Area, 2017-2019



Source: Eurostat

The majority of the total number of the Kosovar asylum seekers in EU countries was registered in France (54.8%), Germany (24.3%) and Belgium (5.5%).

Figure 18 above shows a continuous declining trend of the applicants and those applying for the first time for asylum.

## 9. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on data presented by various institutions that include migration in their scope of work, the following conclusions and recommendations were drawn:

1. Based on KAS statistics on the trends of the last three years, the impact of migration and the demographic developments in the country are evident. Emigration, in proportion to the total number of inhabitants of the country, increased significantly from year to year, particularly from 2018 to 2019.
2. Based on Eurostat statistics, the regular emigration of Kosovar citizens to EU countries and the Schengen area (especially to Germany) has increased considerably, especially during 2019. This increase was also marked in the category of employment, but data on the profile of migrants and sectors they are employed in are missing.

**Recommendation:** In order to complement the profile of migrants and sectors they are employed in, the state authorities are recommended to take a number of measures that may affect the enhancement collection of data and information.

1. Collect data/information through Kosovo's diplomatic and consular missions in the EU member states and the Schengen area, and channel it through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments. The same may be completed in cooperation with embassies of these countries located in Kosovo.
2. Review the bilateral state agreements negotiated and signed between Kosovo and EU countries (especially with countries where the highest labour migration trends have been recorded). In the framework of these arrangements, it is recommended to include also data exchange on Kosovar migrants, their profiles, economic sectors they are engaged in and other relevant information.
3. Enhance and extend the EARK information services on migration opportunities at all stages (before, during and after migration) throughout the country.

4. Extend the EARK monitoring mechanism for private employment agencies with the aim, among others, to collect data on the emigration of Kosovo citizens for employment purposes.
3. Regular immigration trends in the Republic of Kosovo, especially for employment purposes, showed a slight decline in 2019. According to statistics, immigrants for employment purposes in Kosovo, return to the country of origin once their projects come to an end, because of an absence of other opportunities to join other projects or find other work in the labour market. The decline in the number has been affected by the development of professional skills of local human capital and many sectors do not deem it necessary to hire foreign experts for a number of profiles.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that a more detailed study on the reasons for this declining trend, the countries of origin of immigrants for employment purposes and the relationship to possible involvement of strategic or privatized projects in Kosovo is undertaken.

4. Irregular immigration to Kosovo has increased considerably during 2019 as compared to previous years. Developments in Syria and the movements of migrants from Turkey and Greece indicate that the number of migrants and refugees in the Western Balkans, not excluding Kosovo, may increase.

**Recommendation:** The projections of a rising trend recommend that the state authorities ought to focus on:

1. Advancing the system of migrant reception and treatment regardless of their legal status, and strengthening the capacities and infrastructure for the registration, referral and treatment of migrants during their stay in Kosovo, pursuant to international human rights principles and standards.

2. Advancing services aimed at their integration into Kosovo society, regardless of the length of the stay in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo.
5. Based on Eurostat data, irregular emigration of Kosovar citizens to EU member states and the Schengen area had a continuous decline, especially during 2019. Men make up the largest percentage (over 70%) of the forcibly readmitted persons aged 18-34 years (391 or 44%) and are reported to have stayed less than six months in EU countries. This indicates that people who attempted to stay illegally in EU countries are of a young working age and that migration for employment issues is mainly pursued by men and to a lesser extent by women.

**Recommendation:** Although low in number, it is recommended that a study/profiling is undertaken on identifying the push factors for irregular emigrants who have been readmitted by force.

6. The number of beneficiaries of the reintegration schemes for repatriated persons has increased in 2019 compared to 2018. This increase has been impacted by a number of factors, including international mechanisms in the implementation of reintegration policies.

**Recommendation:** To further advance sustainable reintegration by:

1. Advancing the cooperation and agreements with international organizations operating in Kosovo.
  2. Engaging the local level in the implementation of reintegration policies, including non-governmental mechanisms at this level.
  3. Assessing the impact of the reintegration schemes, in particular with regard to projects aimed at sustainable socio-economic reintegration.
7. The contributions of the diaspora in 2019 through remittances and visits (diaspora tourism) have increased compared to 2018. Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) of which

90% are from the diaspora, amounted to 271.8 million euros, stayed at almost the same value as in the previous year (272.1 million euros).

**Recommendation:** Trends in the contribution of diaspora to the development of country have been increasing, which is encouraging for the economy, but it is recommended that this is also addressed in the new development strategy of Kosovo, by including objectives such as:

1. Reduction transfer costs of remittances to below 5%.
2. Establishment of the Commercial Court and access to finances (credits) of more favourable terms, in order to encourage investments by the diaspora community that would directly affect the economic development of the country and the creation of new jobs.
3. Development of concrete sustainable programs, funded by the Government, aiming to return human (intellectual) potential in various economic and social domains in Kosovo.