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Republika Kosova-Republic of Kosovo
Qeveria -Vlada-Government

REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

Light Migration Profile

2018

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY ON MIGRATION

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Purpose of Light Migration Profile 2018

The 2018 Light Migration Profile for the Republic of Kosovo has been developed following the international structure and methodologies for the development of light migration profiles and has been adapted to the migration circumstances and trends in Kosovo. This document outlines Kosovo's trends and policies related to migration, including immigration and emigration. The document also provides an analysis of migration trends and migration patterns in the Republic of Kosovo. The document reflects changes in policy, legislation or institutional developments during 2018, while sections of the document with no developments or changes hold similar text to previous years' profiles.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of developments in the field of migration for various local and international institutions, civil society organizations, academia/research community. The document makes recommendations that may serve decision-makers with the aim of incorporating these recommendations into national and sectoral policies related to migration and development issues of the country.

The migration trends analysis presented in this document covers the 3-year period from 2016 to 2018, presenting figures and tables, potentially including the prior periods of any significant changes in migration trends.

The structure of the document includes policy and legislative developments, institutional developments as well as analysis of statistical data related to migration.

Light Migration Profile 2018 has been compiled by experts from the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, who are also members of the Government Authority on Migration, with technical support and expertise from international partners.

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Acronyms

Abbreviation	Description
AI	Administrative Instruction
BCP	Border Crossing Point
BP	Kosovo Police
CBK	Central Bank of Kosovo
DCAM	Department of Citizenship, Asylum and Migration
DIMAK	German Migration, Vocational Training and Career Information Center
DITHB	Directorate for Investigation of Trafficking with Human Beings
DRRP	Department of Reintegration of Repatriated Persons
EARK	Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	European Statistics Agency
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German International Cooperation Agency
GoRK	Government of the Republic of Kosovo
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILECU	International Law Enforcement Coordination Unit
IOM	International Organization for Migration
K- RAE	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Rural Development
MCR	Ministry of Communities and Returns
MDSI	Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investment
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MFD	Migration and Foreigners Department
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MIT	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MLGA	Ministry of Local Government Administration
MLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TAK	Tax Administration of Kosovo
UN	United Nations
USA	United States

1. Country Background

1.1. Population, size, neighboring countries and borderline length

The Republic of Kosovo is the newest country on 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: South East Europe

Kosovo geographic latitude: 41° 51' 21" dhe 43° 16'

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

Official name: Republic of Kosovo

Capital city: Prishtina

Borderline length: Republic of Albania in the southwest 113.551 km, in Republic of Macedonia in the south 170.772 km, in Republic of Montenegro in the north-west, in Republic of Serbia in the eastern 380.068 km. Borderline of the Republic of Kosovo with neighboring countries mainly stretches through mountains, with natural character, with total borderline length of 743.556 km¹.

Area: 10,908 km²

Neighboring countries: Republic of Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of Serbia

Population: 1,795,666 (January 1, 2019 estimates)

Population density: 164 inhabitants per 1 km²

Form of Government: Parliamentary Republic

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Independence Day: 17 February 2008

President: Hashim Thaçi

¹ National Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo on Integrated Border Management, http://www.mpb-ks.org/repository/docs/ALB_Strategjia_Kombetare_MIK_2013-2018_12.07.2013.pdf

1.2 Summary of country features

Republic of Kosovo is a state of law with parliamentary democracy based on the principle of separation of powers into legislative, executive and judicial. The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo exercises the legislative power. The Government of the Republic of Kosovo exercises executive power and is responsible for the enforcement of state laws and policies. The third pillar is the judiciary, which is independent, single and 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 intersect between the central and the local (municipal) level.

The migration management system in Kosovo is regulated through the legal² and institutional framework. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is a responsible institution that addresses issues of asylum, foreigners, citizenship, readmission, irregular migration as well as issues of reintegration of repatriated persons. Other institutions with responsibilities in migration issues: Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investment, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government Administration, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry Finance, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry Justice, Ministry of European Integration, Ministry of Communities and Returns, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Kosovo Police and Central Bank.

Government Authority on Migration (GAM), established with decision³ of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, is responsible for monitoring migration movements and

Law No. 04/L-219 on Foreigners, Law No. 06/L-036 amending the Law No. 04/L-219 on Foreigners, Law no. 06/L-026 on Asylum, Law no. 04/L-215 on Citizenship, Law No.04/L-072 on State Border Control and Supervision, Law No.04/L-214 Amending and Supplementing the law on State Border Control and Supervision, Law No. 06/L-013 Amending and Supplementing the law on State Border Control and Supervision, Law no./L-/L-216 for Cooperation on border control and supervision, Law no. 04/L-216 on cooperation between authorities involved in the Integrated Border Management, Law No.04/L-218 on Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons and Protection of Victims of Trafficking, the 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 Employment Agency of Republic of Kosovo, GoRK Regulation no. 13/2015 on internal organization and systematization of workplaces in the Employment Agency

³ Decision of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo 08/158 of 29 November 2013 establishing the Government Authority for Monitoring of Migration Movements

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

2. Migration general flows and migration stocks

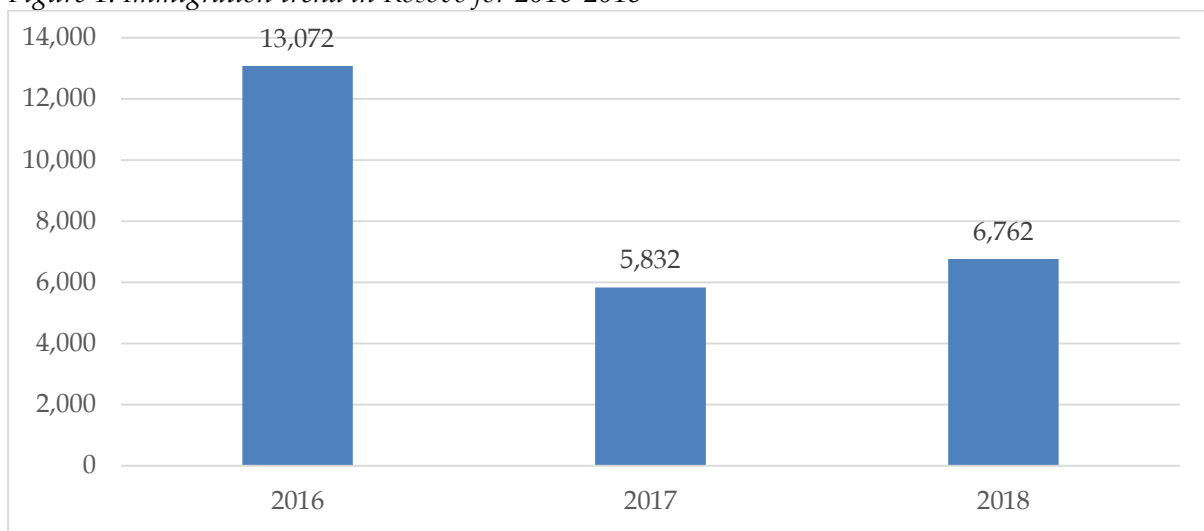
The resident population in Kosovo, at end of 2018 (1 January 2019), is estimated to be 1,795,666 inhabitants. The Kosovo Agency of Statistics annually estimates the population, including migration data, using a standardized methodology to include all migration groups.

2.1. Migration flows

Immigration

The total number of immigration during 2018, estimated by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, was 6,762^[1] or 0.37% of the total resident population. This figure includes all immigrants (Kosovans and non-Kosovans) without considering the reason for immigration.

Figure 1: Immigration trend in Kosovo for 2016-2018



Source: KAS

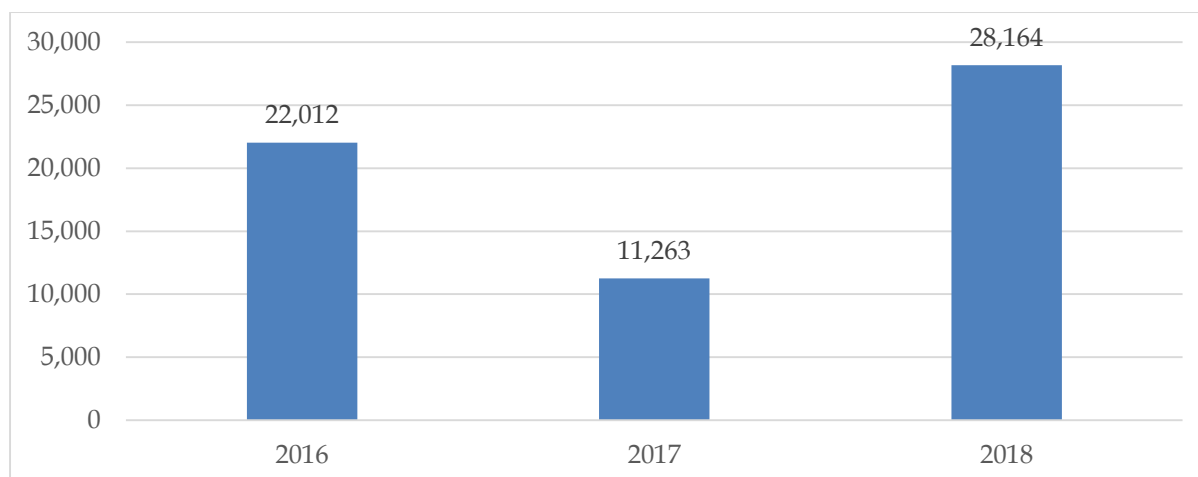
For 2016-2018 period, data show that a significant number of persons have immigrated (foreigners with temporary residence permits, returnees) with an annual average of 11,556 persons or 0.64% of the population within one year.

^[1] Estimate, Kosovo Population 2018, page 10 table 2: Prishtina, June 2019 <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3385/vleresimi-i-popullsise-se-kosoves-2018.pdf>

Emigration

The number Kosovan emigrants during 2018, estimated by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, was 28,164⁴ or 1.5% of the total resident population. This number includes all emigrants regardless of the reason for migration and their status (regular & irregular).

Figure 2: Kosovan migration estimated by KAS, 2016-2018



Source: KAS

Data for the period 2016-2018 show that Kosovo continues having a high rate of emigration with an annual average of 20, 479 persons or 1.14% of the Kosovo population.

Net migration

The balance of international migration (net migration) in Kosovo for 2018 was -21,402 inhabitants or -1.2% of the resident population. For the period 2016-2018 it is estimated that Kosovo lost 35,773 inhabitants or about 2% of the country's population.

Table 1: Migration flows: immigration, emigration and net migration for 2016-2018

Years	Immigration	Emigration	Net migration (absolute #.)	Net migration (percentage)
2016	13.072	22.012	-8.940	-0.50
2017	5.832	11.263	-5.431	-0.30
2018	6.762	28.164	-21.402	-1.19

Source: KAS

⁴ Assessment, Kosovo Population 2018, page 9 table 2: Pristina, June 2019: <http://ask.rks.gov.net/media/3385/valuesimi-i-popullsise-se-kosoves-2016.pdf>

2.2. Migration stocks

The official data published by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics were taken as a baseline (stock) for the migration flow. According to the publication by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics of 2014 entitled: “Kosovan Migration”^[4], based on 2011 data (April 1), it is estimated that more than 550,000 Kosovan residents have emigrated from Kosovo since 1969, while the estimated population of Kosovo origin, including persons born outside of Kosovo, is 703,978 inhabitants by April 1, 2011.

Immigration stocks

It is estimated that over 2% of the population or over 35,773 inhabitants of Kosovo have at least once or more resided abroad for a fixed period of time (usually more than one year) during the period 1969 to April 1, 2011. Most of the immigration occurred in 1999-2000 when a large number of Kosovans voluntarily returned to live in Kosovo as a result of the country’s liberation. Also, 2016, 2017 and 2018 are characterized by the highest number of Kosovan immigrants, due to the return of Kosovans after the large emigration that occurred in 2014 and 2015.

Table 2: Immigration stocks and immigration flows expressed in absolute and relative numbers, 2016-2018

Years	Total population	Immigration stock (absolute numbers)	Stock (percentage)
2016	1,783,531	48.078	2.70
2017	1,798,506	53.910	3.00
2018	1,795,666	60.672	3.38

Source: KAS

Table 3: Emigration stocks and emigration flows expressed in absolute and relative numbers, 2013-2018

Years	Total population	Emigration stock (absolute numbers)	Stock (percentage)
2016	1,783,531	170.743	9.57
2017	1,798,506	182.006	10.12
2018	1,795,666	210.170	11.70

Source: KAS

^[4] KOSOVAN MIGRATION, Pristina, April 2014, page 76: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1379/migrimi-kosovar-2014.pdf>

Emigration stocks: In the period 2016-2018 (3-year period) it is estimated that over 210,000 persons emigrated, or over 11.70% of the population of Kosovo.

Stock of net migration

During the period 2016-2018 (3-year period) over 60,672 inhabitants immigrated into Kosovo (mainly Kosovan returnees), while over 210,170 inhabitants emigrated and Kosovo during this period lost more than 149,498 inhabitants.

Table 4: Emigration stocks and migration flows expressed in absolute and relative numbers, 2016-2018

Years	Total population	Immigration flows (absolute numbers)	Emigration flows (absolute numbers)	Net emigration flows, by years	Migration net stock (absolute numbers)	Net stock (relative to population distribution)
2016	1,783,531	13.072	22.012	-8.940	827.365	46.39
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

Source: KAS

Taking into account the population living abroad on 1 April 2011 (more than 703,000 inhabitants are estimated to be living abroad) at the end of 2018 it is estimated that over 854,198 inhabitants or 47.57% of Kosovo's population lived abroad.

3. Regular migration with a special focus on labor migration

This chapter contains necessary information about data and services for regular migration management counselling, with a particular focus on labor migration. Regular migration management continues to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW).

3.1. Responsible state authorities

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, namely the Division for Foreigners within the Department of Citizenship, Asylum and Migration (DCAM), is the state authority responsible for receiving, reviewing and deciding on applications for temporary residence permits (including permits for employment purposes) and permanent residence in the Republic of Kosovo. DCAM⁵ decides without the approval of the EARK for a residence permit for employment purposes, as long as there is no quota approved by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo.

According to the Law on Foreigners, EARK/MLSW issues short-term work permits for foreigners, in duration of 30 days, 60 days and 90 days, in a period of 180 days, within the year.

The EARK is responsible for providing employment services and vocational training for foreigners who have access to the labor market in the Republic of Kosovo. MLSW⁶ is also responsible for establishing cooperation in the field of employment services and vocational training through bilateral agreements with different countries, mainly the European Union countries. EARK also provides counseling, information, vocational training and employment facilitation services for Kosovan job seekers seeking employment abroad.

3.2. Policy and Legal Framework

Given the legislative changes at EU level in the field of migration and the harmonization of national legislation with that of the EU in the framework of the implementation of the SAA,

⁵ <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8876> (Article 20, paragraph 6)

⁶ <http://www.aprk.rks-gov.net>

the Ministry of Internal Affairs has amended and supplemented the Law on Foreigners.⁷ Law no. 06/L-036 on Amending and Supplementing the Law no. 04/L-219 on Foreigners was adopted by the Assembly on 30 March 2018 and promulgated in the Official Gazette on 03 May 2018).⁸

Services provided to foreigners arriving in Kosovo for employment purposes are governed by the Law on Foreigners. This law regulates entry, resident employment and removal of foreigners.

Law no. 04/L-205⁹ on Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, clearly defines the responsibilities of the Employment Agency for the provision of various services related to the employment of foreigners. The EARK through the relevant division provides information and advice to foreigners who immigrate to Kosovo for employment purposes and provides services to Kosovans seeking employment abroad. Migration services for employment and vocational training have also been provided through the Employment Offices and Vocational Training Centers.

Law on Registration and Provision of Services for the Unemployed, Jobseekers and Employers¹⁰, regulates the services to be provided to Kosovo jobseekers seeking employment abroad.

Also in 2018, the EARK continued to implement several programs to support Kosovans who choose to emigrate for employment purposes. MLSW/EARK in cooperation with GIZ and the German Migration, Vocational Training and Career Information Center (DIMAK) continued the cooperation which includes a range of information and advisory services in the field of migration. In this regard, the memorandums signed in the previous year are in the process of implementation.

⁷ Directive 2014/66/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer, Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers and Directive 2016/801/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing.

⁸ <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=16333>

⁹ Law No. 04/L-205 on the Employment Agency of Republic of Kosovo

¹⁰ Law no. 05/L -077 on Registration and Provision of Services for the Unemployed, Jobseekers and Employers, Article 8

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Landesverband Bayerischer Bauinnungen and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH Kosovo (GIZ), aiming at improving educational opportunities and vocational training in the field of construction in the Republic of Kosovo. During 2018, young people from the Republic of Kosovo were offered the opportunity of vocational education and training in the 2-year secondary education system in Germany, in the field of construction; and
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Besa Foundation and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH Kosovo (GIZ), aiming at circular migration and mobility through improved education and training. During 2018, this program benefited 18 candidates who have been part of the employment and training programs in Germany, and are monitored by the Agency (EARK).

3.3. Statistics

Regular immigration

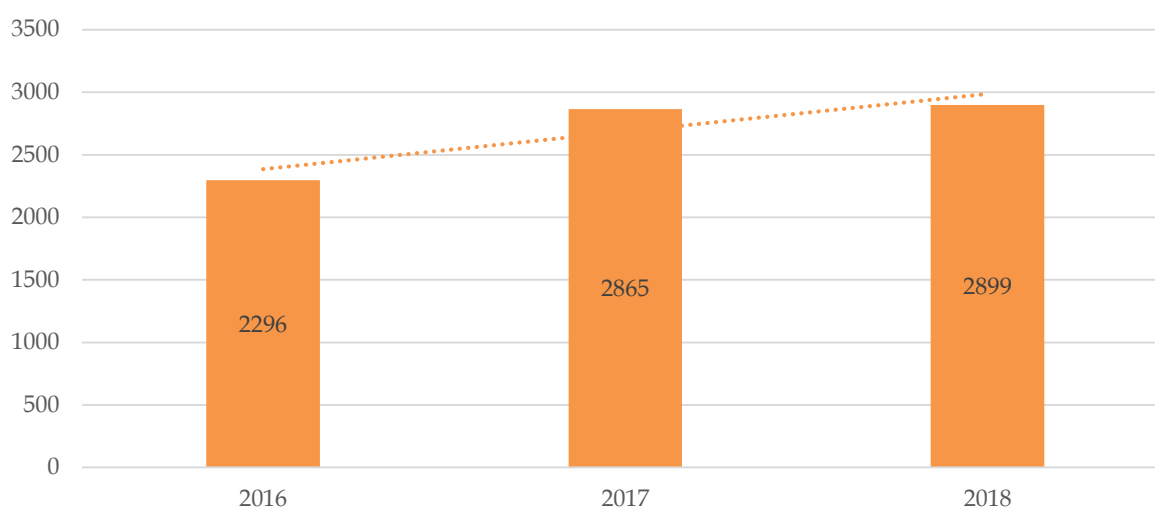
During 2018 a total of 4,925 temporary residence permits were issued. For family reunification, 1,680 (34%), work - 2,899 (58.9%), 210 for studies (4.3%) and other 136 (2.8%) permits were issued. Permits issued by gender structure: 2,610 (53%) for men and 2,315 (47%) for women.

According to statistics, the number of foreigners with temporary residence permits has dropped slightly compared to the previous year. Thus, in 2018, the number of foreigners with temporary residence permits is lower by 7.3% compared to 2017 (5,283).

Overall, the number of foreigners with temporary residence permits in the period 2016 - 2018 shows an increasing trend.

Countries represented in the number of issued temporary residency permits are: Turkey (29.3%), Albania (25.5%), Serbia (12.5%), North Macedonia (8.9%), USA (5.8%), and other countries (17.9%).

Figure 3: Trend of temporary residence permits for employment (2016 - 2018)



Source: MIA/DCAM

The number of temporary residence permits for employment in 2018 (2,899) was almost the same as the previous year (2,865) (as shown in Figure 3) with a slight upward trend (1.2%). If we compare 2018 with 2016 (2,296) there is a significant increase of 26.3%.

Countries represented in the number of issued temporary residency permits for employment are: Turkey (34.2%), Albania (25.3%), Serbia (7.5%), North Macedonia (8.7%), USA (6.0%), and other countries (18.3%).

Factors that may have contributed to the increase in the employment of foreigners in the Republic of Kosovo for the 3-year period may be related to the operation of foreign companies in the country such as Bektel Enka (Construction), Limak (Transport and Communication) and KEDS (electricity distribution network) with over 50% of foreign employees in Kosovo. The other percentages are: Commerce and Catering/Gastronomy.

Permanent residence permits

The total number of permanent residence permits issued during 2018 was 58, which marks a decrease of 15.5% compared to the previous year (67). Of the total number of issued permanent residence permit in 2018, 31 (54%) were men and 27 (46%) were women.

Permanent residence permits were issued for a variety of reasons: family reunification 15 (25.9%), employment 22 (37.9%), study 0 (0%) and other reasons 21 (36.2%).

Permanent residence permits are mainly issued to citizens from: Turkey (25.9%), Albania (24.1%), Germany (19%), Austria (8.6%), Montenegro (3.4%), and other countries (19%).

Short Term Work Permits¹¹

During 2018, EARK issued 446 Short-Term Work Permits for Foreign Citizens, including 60 extensions of short-term work permits. According to the report, this is a significant number compared to the previous year and it is worth noting that most of them belong to the categories of experts and trainers for Kosovo workers.

Short Term Work Permits by gender (446 persons, of which 395 men and 51 women) and by nationality (Spain, 79 (18%); North Macedonia 66 (15%); Croatia 40 (9%); Poland, 35 (9%); Germany 29 (6%); and others 197 (44%).

Regular migration

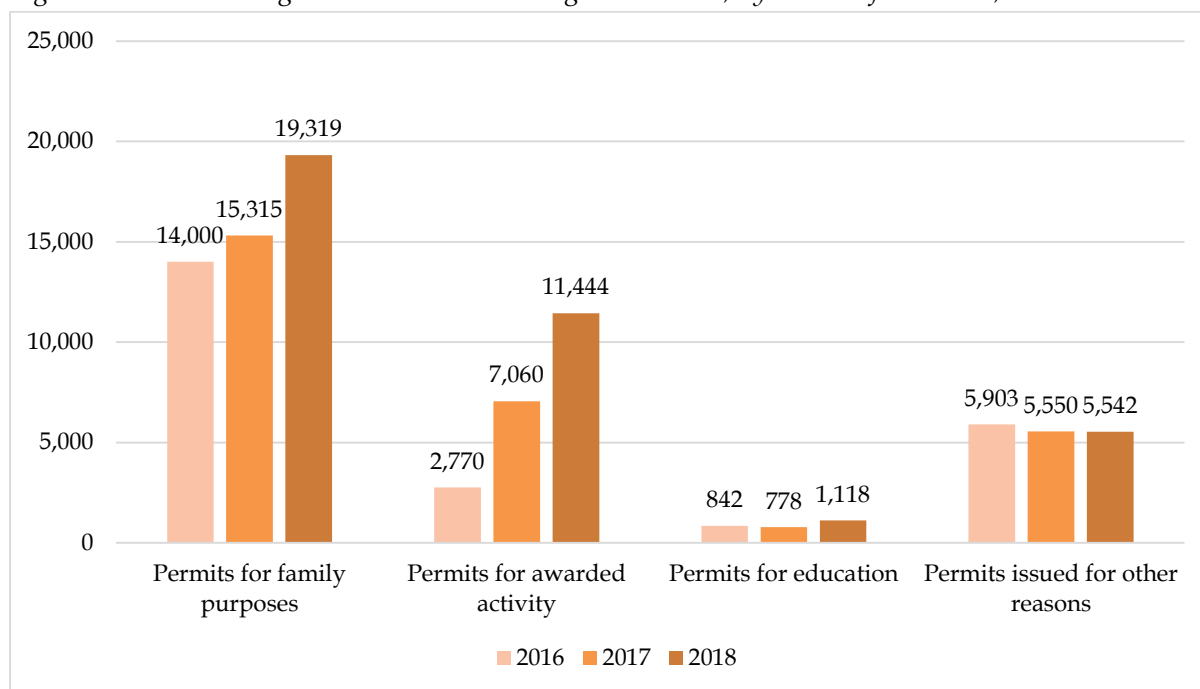
Citizens of the Republic of Kosovo with a valid residence permit in the EU member states and the Schengen area

For the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, at the end of 2018, there were 37,423 valid residence permits of all categories in the EU Member States and the Schengen area. The number of valid residence permits based on Eurostat data has increased by 23.3% compared to the previous year (28,703).

At the end of 2018, more than half (52%) of all residence permits were related to family reunification, 30% employment and 3% education. Residence permits classified for other reasons accounted for 15% of all valid residence permits. Germany registered 18,986 (54.2%) citizens of the Republic of Kosovo with valid residence permits, Slovenia 3,819 (10.9%), Italy 2,842 (8.1%) persons, Croatia 2,065 (5.9%) and other countries around 20%.

¹¹ <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8876> Article 22, short term work permit up to ninety (90) days within any one hundred and eighty (180) days within one (1) year, foreigners may work as follows:

Figure 4: Kosovo immigrants in EU and Schengen countries, by reason of residence, 2016-2018



Source: Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-igration/data/database>

The increase in the total number of valid residence permits in 2018 compared to 2017 by category was the highest in the employment category, 62%, followed by valid permits issued for one-year education purposes, an increase of 44%, family reunification by 26% and sub-category by -0.1%.

By countries, the number of valid residence permits for employment during the three-year period (2016-2018) was Germany 56%, Slovenia 20%, Croatia with 10% and other countries with 14%, while for education purpose, Germany leads with 28%, followed by Austria with 21%, Poland with 7%, Slovenia with 5% and other countries with 39%.

4. Irregular Migration

Irregular migration during 2018 has remained one of the priorities for the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, both in terms of emigration and immigration.

4.1. Responsible state authorities

Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration, within the Ministry for Internal Affairs, is responsible for migration policies, including irregular migration, asylum and refugee issues, and is shares responsibilities for implementation of policies related to irregular immigrant in the Republic of Kosovo.

The Border Police Department, within the Kosovo Police, is responsible for the management and control of the state border. The Border Police Department, within the management and control of the state border and the Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime (DIOC) within the Investigation Department deal with the prevention and combating of smuggling with migrants.

Directorate for Investigation of Trafficking in Human Beings (DITHB) is specialized directorate of Kosovo Police, charged with the responsibility of investigating cases and other human trafficking related offenses.

4.2. Policy and Legal Framework

The Government of Kosovo has developed a policy and legal framework¹² for preventing and combating irregular migration, smuggling with migrants and trafficking in human beings. The policies of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo during 2018 have focused on the advancement and harmonization of the legal framework with EU legislation, where the Law no. 04/L-219 on Foreigners was amended and adopted by the Assembly on 30

¹² Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo; Criminal Code of Kosovo, (CCK); Juvenile Justice Code; Kosovo Criminal Procedure Code (KCPC); Law on Police of the Republic of Kosovo; Law on Prevention and Combating Trafficking and Protection of Victims of Trafficking; Law on Foreigners; Law on Compensation of Victims of Crime; Law on Health; National Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings and Action Plan 2015-2019; DITHB Work Strategy and Annual Action Plan; other KP normative acts (Administrative Instructions, Principles, Standard Operating Procedures and Decisions); Standard Operating Procedures for Victims of Trafficking; Minimum standards for the care of victims of trafficking; Long-term strategy for reintegration of victims of trafficking.

March 2018 and published in the Official Gazette on 3 May 2018.¹³ Plans for 2019 include amending bylaws deriving from the Law on Foreigners for the purpose of harmonization with EU legislation. Based on the legal changes, the MIA in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has initiated a memorandum of understanding in the voluntary assisted return program, which is expected to be signed in 2019.

Based on the analysis of the evaluation of the implementation of the Migration Strategy 2013-2018, drafting of the Migration Strategy 2019-2023 has begun.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has amended and supplemented the Law no. 04/L-072 on State Border Control and Supervision, adopted by the Assembly on March 30, 2018.

Even during 2018, the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in cooperation with the National Authority against Trafficking in Human Beings and other partners with the aim of raising awareness of citizens has organized an awareness campaign throughout the territory of the Republic of Kosovo.

4.3. Statistics

Irregular immigration

Refusal of entry

During 2018, 2,016 persons were denied entry at all border crossing points (BCPs), marking a decrease by 28% compared to 2017, and a decrease by 26% compared to 2016.

Table 5: Refusal of entry at Border Crossing Points, 2016-2018

Years	2016	2017	2018
Number of persons	2.742	2.813	2.016

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

¹³ <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=16333>

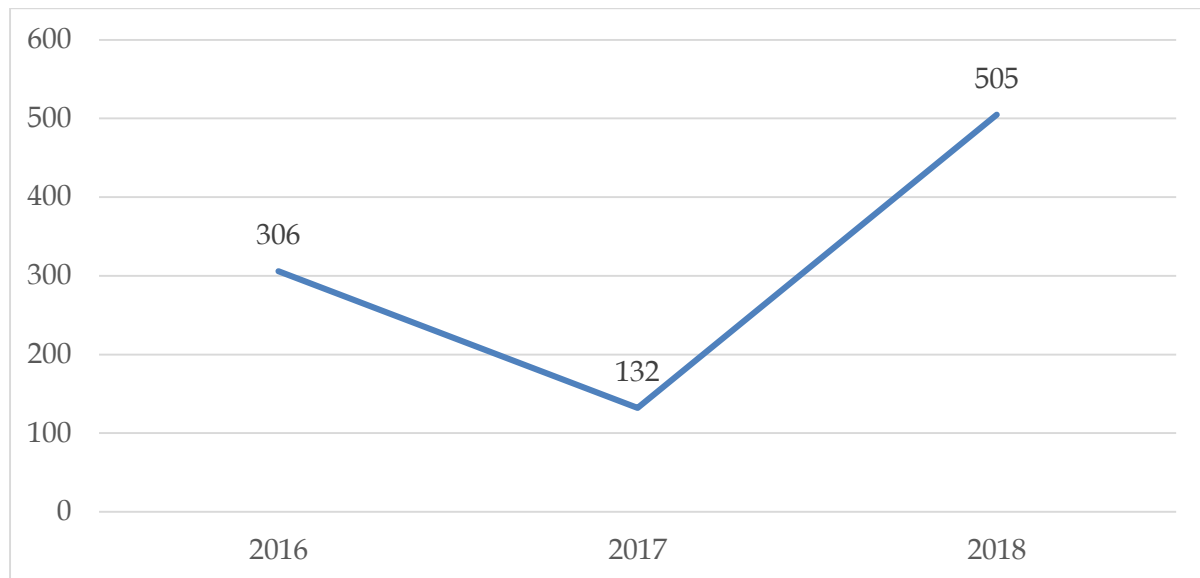
Of the total number of people refused entry at the border in 2018, 89% are from EU and Schengen Member States, 9% from Asian countries, 2% from African countries and America, Canada and Australia. If we compare these figures with 2017, where 94.6% of the total rejected persons were from EU and Schengen Member States, 4% from Asian countries, 2% from African countries, USA, Canada and Australia, we see a decline in entry refusal for EU and Schengen nationals by 5.6%, but an increase in refusals for Asian nationals.

Reasons for refusing entry at the border are as follows: nationals of neighboring countries such as: Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro were denied entry due to lack of valid documents or other violations, while EU and Schengen nationals were denied entry due to the lack of passports and biometric IDs. Citizens from Asian and African countries were refused entry because they did not have a visa to enter Kosovo, or did not have sufficient funds to live or failed to justify the purpose and conditions of stay.

Unauthorized border crossing

During 2018, 505 irregulars’ immigrants crossed the border and entered the territory of the Republic of Kosovo in an unauthorized manner. Compared to 2017, there is a significant increase of 282%, while compared to 2016, an increase of 65%.

Figure 5: Number of immigrants who entered Kosovo in unauthorized manner in 2016-2018



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

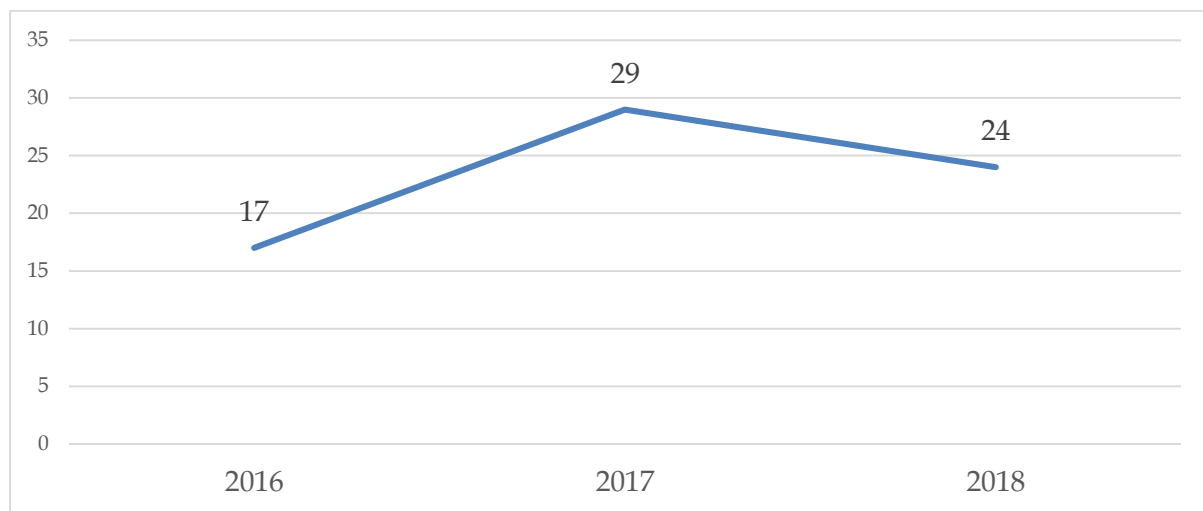
Of the total number of irregular immigrants (505), the largest number are from Syria (239), Palestine (70), Algeria (41), Morocco (36), Libya (34), Iraq (33), Pakistan (19), Iran (18), Afghanistan (7), Albania 2, North Macedonia 2, Tunisia 2, Central Africa 1 and Eritrea 1. The male gender is represented by 99% (498) of irregular immigrants, while the female gender by 1% (7). By age group, 5% of irregular immigrants were under 18 years of age, and 95% of adults (over 18 years).

The cases dealt with show that the irregular migrants moved in small groups, assisted by smugglers, who entered the territory of the Republic of Kosovo across the border with Albania and North Macedonia. Of 505 irregular immigrants, 498 were reported to have crossed the border unauthorized using illegal roads along the green border, while 7 have entered as clandestine using border crossings. The Republic of Kosovo is largely considered a transit country by irregular immigrants, not a destination country, as they are the main target of migration is the EU.

Fighting smuggling with migrants

During 2018, Kosovo Police continued systematic and detailed controls at all border crossing points and along the green border line, in order to prevent and combat smuggling with migrants. Organized criminal groups within the territory of the Republic of Kosovo, smuggling with migrants, have also been fought against.

Figure 6: Initiated cases of smuggling with migrants, 2016-2018



Source: Risk Analysis, Intelligence and Data Administration Unit, Border Department, Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime, Kosovo Police

During 2018, we saw a 17% decrease in the investigation of migrant smuggling cases compared to 2017, while a 41% increase is observed compared to 2016.

During 2018, the number of persons suspected of smuggling with migrants was lower by 35% compared to 2017, or lower by 23% compared to 2016. Of the 77 people suspected of smuggling migrants, 70% were citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, 18% of the Republic of Albania, 8% of Serbia, 3% of Turkey, and 1% of North Macedonia.

Table 6: Suspects of smuggling with migrants by nationality, 2016-2018

Nationality	2016	2017	2018	Total
Kosovo	15	27	12	54
Albania	8	1	5	14
Serbia	3	1	2	6
Turkey	0	1	1	2
North Macedonia	0	1	0	1
Total	26	31	20	77

Source: Risk Analysis, Intelligence and Data Administration Unit, Border Department, Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime, Kosovo Police

Trafficking in Persons¹⁴

Annual data show that during 2018, 3 victims of trafficking were identified, compared to 2017, when 7 victims were identified, marking a decrease of this occurrence for 4 persons. By nationality, 2 identified victims were from Albania and 1 from the Czech Republic. All victims were women. One of the victims of the Republic of Albania and one of the Czech Republic have been voluntarily repatriated, and according to the Law, they have been provided with accommodation and services under the Standard Operating Procedures for trafficked persons (shelter, health care, financial assistance, education and work). Cooperation protocols have been signed and unique forms of communication are in use with: North Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro in the fight against Human Trafficking.

¹⁴ For the purposes of this Profile only foreign victims of trafficking in the Republic of Kosovo and domestic victims of trafficking abroad were considered.

Irregular migration

Kosovo citizens denied entry at the border or caught at the border in EU and Schengen Member States¹⁵

During 2018, 1,520 Kosovo citizens were denied entry or caught in the EU Member States and the Schengen area, a decrease of - 5.2% compared to 2017 (1,600). Denial of entry into the EU Member States and the Schengen area occurred mainly at land borders (84% or 1,295 persons) compared to sea borders (3% or 45 persons) and airports (13% or 195 persons).

Entry was denied due to absence of valid visa or permit in 61% of cases (820), lack of valid document in 36% of cases (485), counterfeit travel documents in 2% of cases (30), and fake visa or residence permit in 1% of cases (20).

Total number of Kosovo citizens who were refused entry at the border by country was similar to the two previous years, with: France with 33%, Croatia with 28%, Hungary with 12%, Slovenia with 12% (which compared to the previous year (110) has increased by 37% (175) and other countries with 15%.

Kosovo citizens caught illegally residing within the territory of the EU Member States and the Schengen area¹⁶

Number of Kosovo citizens caught illegally residing within the territory of the EU Member States and the Schengen area marked continuous decrease in the past three years. Data categorized by gender show that men dominate with 82% (4,875), compared to women with 18% (1,040). Disaggregated by age group, the group of 18-34 dominated with 90% (3,365), the age group under 18 was 10% (385). The decline in 2018 (5,945) compared to 2017 (7,835) was -30.9%. This decrease is due to the fact that during this period as in the previous two years there has been no significant movement of irregular migrants and shows that Kosovan citizens are not interested in resorting to irregular migration routes.

Number of Kosovo citizens caught with irregular residence within the territory of the EU Member States and Schengen area by countries: Germany - 41% (2,460), Switzerland - 18%

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, last accessed on 25.06.2019.

¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, updated on 26.06.19

(1,085), France - 13% (770), Croatia - 7% (390), Austria - 6% (335), Hungary - 5% (285), and countries the other - 10% (610).

Kosovo citizens with irregular residence in EU member states and Schengen area with removal order¹⁷

The number of Kosovo citizens with irregular residence in EU member states and the Schengen area with removal orders in 2018 (5,865) shows a decrease of - 29% compared to 2017 (7,570). This decline, as in the previous two years, is a result of the continuous decline of irregular migration.

Number of Kosovo citizens with irregular residence in EU member states and Schengen area with removal order by countries changed compared to the previous year: France - 40% (2,325), Germany - 15% (1,085), Croatia - 8% (460), Switzerland - 8% (450), Belgium - 6% (365), and other countries - 23% (1.375).

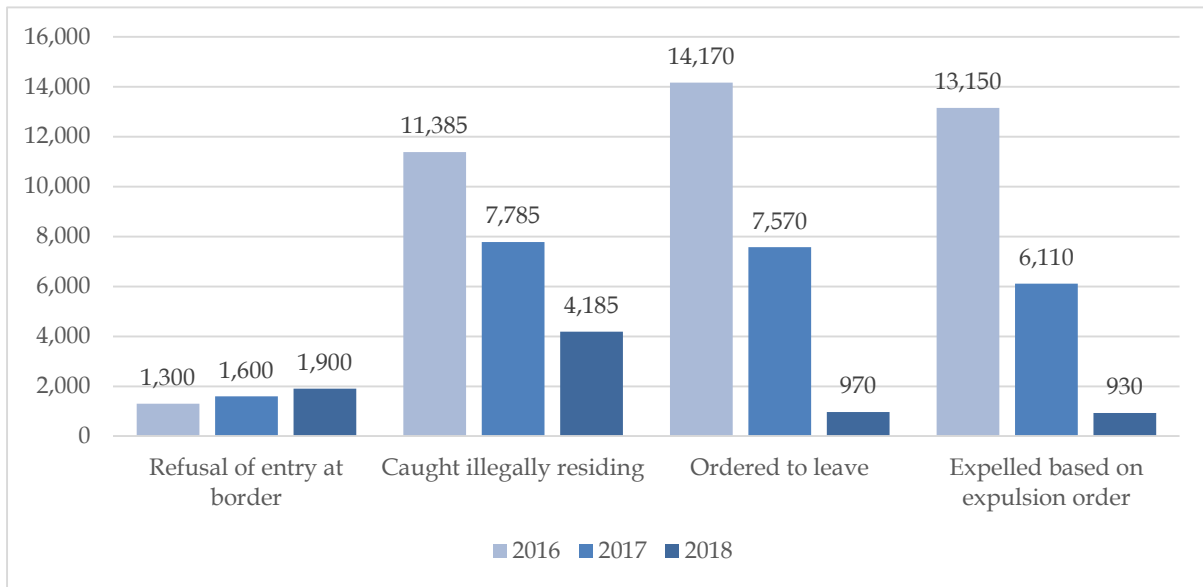
Kosovo citizens removed from EU member states and Schengen area based on removal order¹⁸

The number of Kosovo citizens who left the EU Member States and the Schengen area on the basis of the removal order during 2018 was 3,340, which shows a significant decrease of about 90% compared to 2017 (6,110). Kosovo citizens who left the EU member states and Schengen are based on removal order were from Germany with 52% (1,740), France with 9% (305), Croatia with 9% (305), Sweden with 9% (290), Austria with 5% (190) and other states with 15% (510).

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, e perdituesuar e 26.06.19

¹⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database>, last update 23.05.2018

Figure 7: Kosovo citizens denied entry at the border; caught with illegal residence; have been ordered to leave and were removed the EU Member States and Schengen area, 2016 – 2018



Source: Eurostat

5. Return, readmission and reintegration

This chapter includes a summary of returns, readmission and reintegration process, with detailed information on the number of voluntary and forced returnees. The chapter covers both the return of foreign nationals and the return of Kosovans to their home country.

5.1. Return of foreigners

5.1.1. Responsible state authorities

The Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration (within the MIA) and the Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (DMF) within the KP are the authorities responsible for the return of illegal foreigners from the Republic of Kosovo to their countries of origin or last place of residence.

5.1.2. Policy and Legal Framework

National Migration Strategy and its Action Plan constitute the main national strategic framework containing the return policy of foreigners residing illegally in Kosovo and regulation of appropriate mechanisms for implementation of policy.

The decision on voluntary removal is an administrative measure deriving from the Law on Foreigners and the authorities responsible for issuing the decision on voluntary removal are:

- Division for Foreigners issuing a voluntary removal decision in cases when the application for a residence permit is denied or residence permit revoked, while in other cases it is the responsibility of the DMF. If the removal is accompanied by entry ban, the period of entry ban may not be shorter than one (1) month and longer than five (5) years.
- In case of failing to comply with the voluntary removal order and other offenses under Article 97¹⁹ of the Law on Foreigners and Administrative Instruction (MIA) 09-2014 on returning of foreigners with illegal residence in the Republic of Kosovo, DMF issues and executes the forced removal order against the foreigner. Entry ban may not be shorter than one (1) month and longer than five (5) years.
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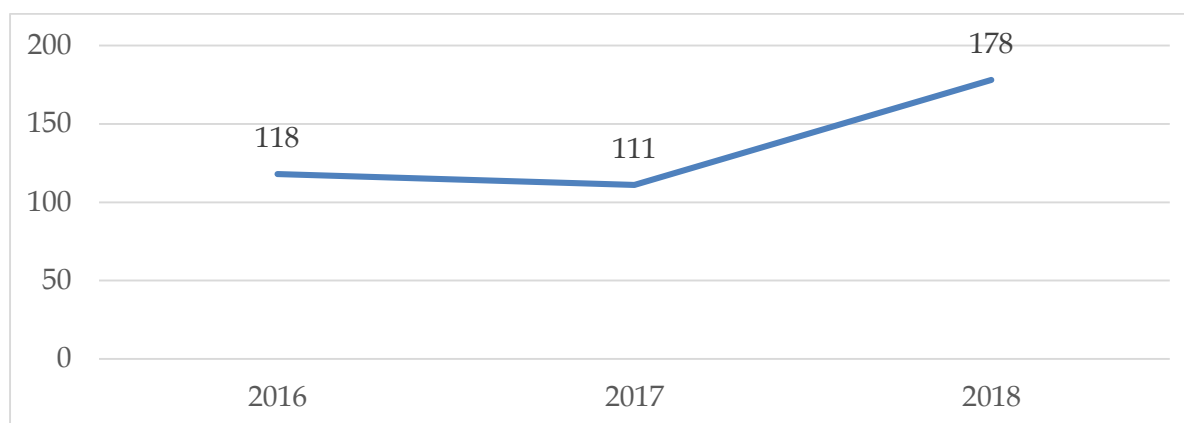
¹⁹ Law No. 04/ L -219 on Foreigners, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8876>

5.1.3. Statistics

Voluntary removal decision

Annual data show that the number of Decisions²⁰ for voluntary removal during 2018 (178), was higher than in the previous year (111).

Figure 8: Voluntary removal decision, 2016 - 2018



Source: Border Police Department - Department of Migration and Foreigners

The largest number of voluntary removal decisions were issued against Albanians in 73% of the cases (130), while 27% were from other countries.

Number of voluntary removal decisions categorized by gender show that women dominate with 78%, compared to men with 22%. Among the reasons for issuing voluntary removal decisions against foreigners residing in the Republic of Kosovo were the absence of a valid residence permit, cancellation or revocation of a residence permit, or were found to be in violation of the provisions of the Law on Foreigners or other applicable laws.

As part of its voluntary assisted return program, IOM assisted the return and reintegration of two persons in the country of origin (Algeria).

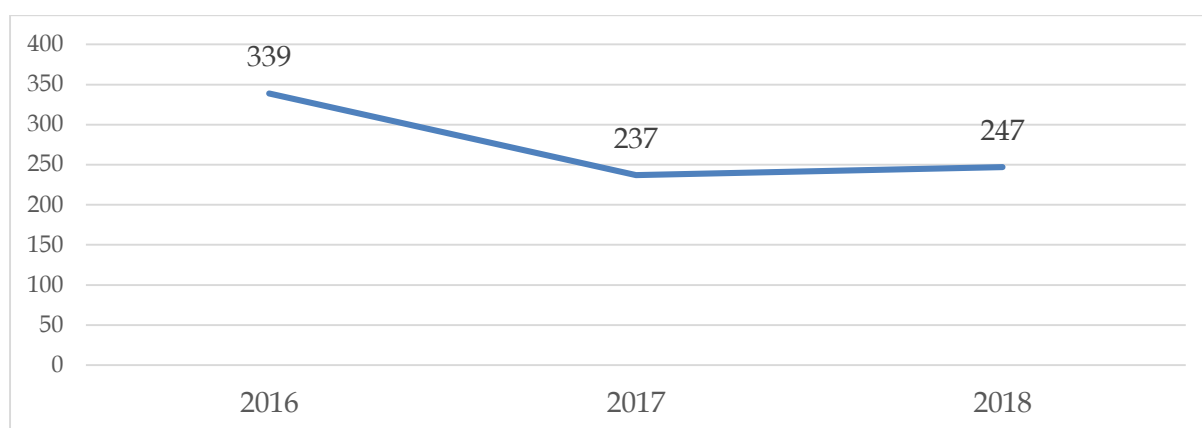
²¹ Forced removal decision

During 2018, 247 forced removal orders were executed, marking an increase of 4% compared to 2017, while a decrease of 27% compared to 2016.

²⁰ Amendments to the Law on Foreigners replaced the Voluntary Removal Order with Voluntary Removal Order.

²¹ Amendments to the Law on Foreigners replaced the expression Order with Decision (article 31).

Figure 9: Removal decision by force, 2016 - 2018



Source: Border Police Department - Department of Migration and Foreigners

This decline in forced removal decisions in the last two years compared to 2016 is a result of inspections of various businesses employing foreign nationals, as well as dissemination of information leaflets to non-Kosovans at the Border Crossing Points, providing information about the procedures of residing in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo.

By gender, 56% of those forcibly deported were women and 44% were men.

By nationality, 91% were from Albania, 3% from Turkey, 3% from Serbia and 3% from other countries.

Also, during 2018, the Directorate for Migration and Foreigners deported 24 persons from the Republic of Kosovo by decision of the courts of Kosovo, pursuant to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo. Compared to 2017, there is an increase of 50%, while compared to 2016, an increase of 41%. Of these deportations, 17 were nationals of Albania, 3 of Turkey, 2 of Bulgaria and 2 of Serbia.

5.2. Readmission

5.2.1. Responsible state authorities

The Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration/Division for Readmission and Return within the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the main state authority responsible for the implementation of Law no. 03/L-208 on Readmission and Bilateral Readmission Agreements.

5.2.2. Policy and Legal Framework

Law on Readmission establishes rules and procedures for readmission of a person who is a citizen of the Republic of Kosovo or a foreigner who does not meet the conditions for entry or residence on the territory of the requesting country. Enforcing readmission legislation takes precedence in terms of readmission cooperation with countries with which Kosovo has not yet signed a bilateral readmission agreement.

So far, the Government of the Republic of Kosovo has signed readmission agreements with 24 countries^[1], 20 of which are with EU member states and Schengen countries.

5.2.3. Statistics

Enforcing the law on readmission as well as bilateral readmission agreements continued in 2018, about 94% of readmission cases were handled on the basis of bilateral readmission agreements with EU member states, 5% of readmission cases were based on in bilateral readmission agreements with non-EU countries, and less than 1% of readmission cases were handled in accordance with the Readmission Law.

Annual data show that 2,395 persons were readmitted in 2018²² with irregular residence in EU countries and the Schengen area, which represents a decrease of 47% compared to the previous year (4,509). By return, 70% (1,668) were forcibly returned and 30% (727) were IOM-assisted volunteers.

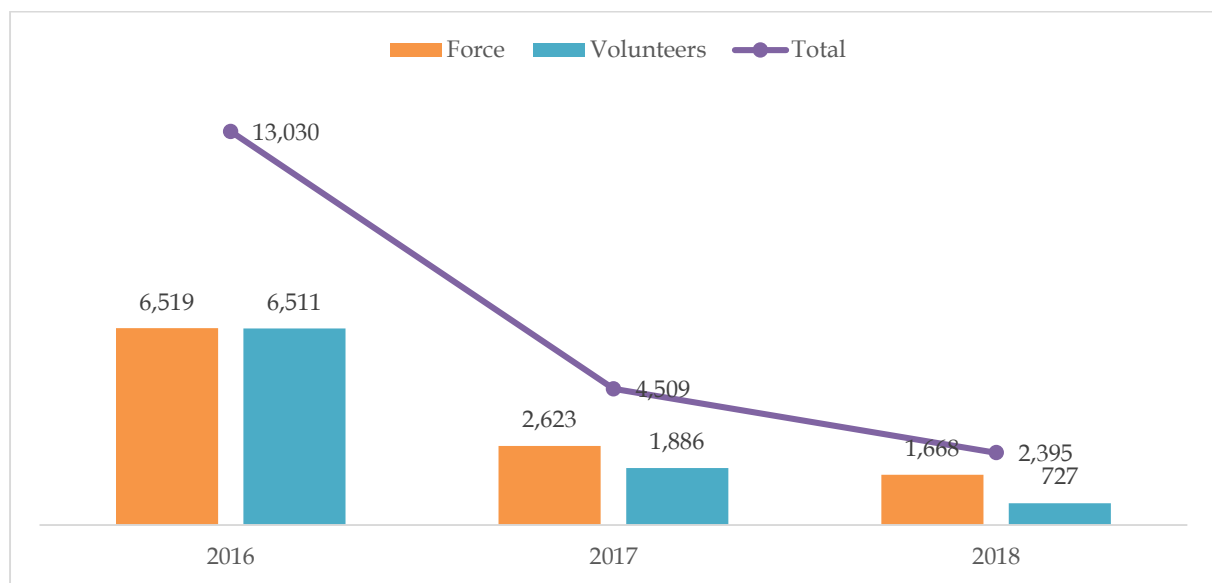
^[1] 2009 Republic of Albania, 2009 Republic of France, 2010 Swiss Federal Council, 2010 Germany, 2010 Kingdom of Denmark, 2010 Republic of Austria, 2010 Kingdom of Norway, 2011 Republic of Slovenia, 2011 Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg), 2011 Republic of the Czech Republic, 2011 Montenegro, 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 Croatia Italy, 2015 Republic of Turkey and 2017 Republic of North Macedonia

²² The number of forcefully readmitted and volunteers is calculated based on the readmitted by force according to KP and DCAM data, as well as IOM-assisted voluntary returnees for 2018.

Of the total number, by gender, the same as in the previous year, men lead by 70% (1,158 persons) compared to women by 30% (510 persons).

Men account for the largest share of forced readmissions with 70%, who are between the ages of 18-34 and have stayed less than six months in European countries. This shows that those who are readmitted in young age (active for work) are mainly men who left Republic of Kosovo. Also, regarding the voluntary assisted returnees from IOM, men lead with 63% (458) and men take 37% (269).

Figure 10: Readmission (voluntary and forced), 2016–2018



Source: DCAM, PK, IOM

Of the total number by age, the leading age group is 18-34 (975 or 41%) and 35-64 (722 or 30) while the 0-5 (284 or 12%) and 6-13 (274 or 11%) age groups are smaller.

Based on school age (6-17) years, the number of forced re-admissions of this age-group for 2018 is 276 or 16%. Whereas, the number of voluntary assisted re-admitted by IOM of school age (6-17) is 128 or 17%.

According to annual data for 2018, the highest number of readmitted by force was from Germany 71% (1,187), Switzerland 10.3% (172), France 4.7% (78), Sweden 3.3% (55), Austria 2.7% (45) and other countries with 7.9% (131).

According to IOM annual data for 2018, the highest number of readmitted was from Germany 75% (546), Austria 12% (88), Luxemburg 6.3% (46), Belgium 18% (25), Switzerland 1.9% (14), and other countries with 2.1% (15).

The trend of readmissions over the last three years as seen in Figure 9 has been steadily declining.

5.3. Reintegration

5.3.1. Responsible state authorities

Ministry of Internal Affairs/Department for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (DRRP) is the responsible body for managing the reintegration of repatriated persons, including policy making, legislation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of reintegration policies. Central and local institutions involved in implementing the reintegration program are: MLSW, MEST, MESP, MoH, MLGA, MAFRD, Municipal Offices for Communities and Return and other relevant municipal directorates.

5.3.2. Policy and Legal Framework

Policies of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo in the field of reintegration of repatriated persons are defined by State Strategy for Sustainable Reintegration of Repatriated Persons and Action Plan 2018 - 2022 which were adopted in March 2018.

Responsible institutions, eligibility and support criteria and procedures of repatriated persons during the reintegration process are regulated by Regulation (GoRK) no. 13/2017 on the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, which is expected to be amended in 2019.

In order to facilitate the implementation of reintegration policies²³ during this period, the Ministry of Internal Affairs/DRRP has defined ways and format of cooperation and

²³ During this period, the following were developed and adopted:

- Finalization of Reintegration Risk Management Plan , Integrity Plan for the staff of the Department for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, Local plans, Assessing the Specific Needs of Vulnerable Groups, evaluation of the project for exchange of information on the reintegration of returnees between Kosovo and Sweden.

Coordination with stakeholders at central and local level. Cooperation has also continued with international organizations, civil society and signed cooperation agreements²⁴ with many local and international institutions in order to provide better services to repatriated persons. Hundreds of municipal officers and representatives of other institutions relevant to the implementation of the Strategy, Action Plan, Regulations, Guidelines and other documents were trained.

5.3.3. Statistics

During 2018, in the framework of emergency and sustainable reintegration schemes, 3,165 repatriated persons^[3] were supported, citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, which is lower by 45.3 % compared to 2016 (5,786 persons).

By ethnicity, the largest number of beneficiaries in 2018 is the Albanian community with 50.4% (1,594), followed by the Roma community with 7.4% (234), Ashkali 11.4% (362), Egyptian community 4% (127), and other minority communities 26.8% (848).

According to the municipalities of origin for 2018, the largest number of beneficiaries in different reintegration schemes is from Fushë Kosova municipality with 7.6% (241), Podujeva with 6.8% (215), Ferizaj with 6.1% (194).), etc.

The largest number of beneficiaries of the various reintegration schemes are repatriates from Germany with 65.2% (2,065), France with 2.1% (65) and Sweden with 2.1% (65).

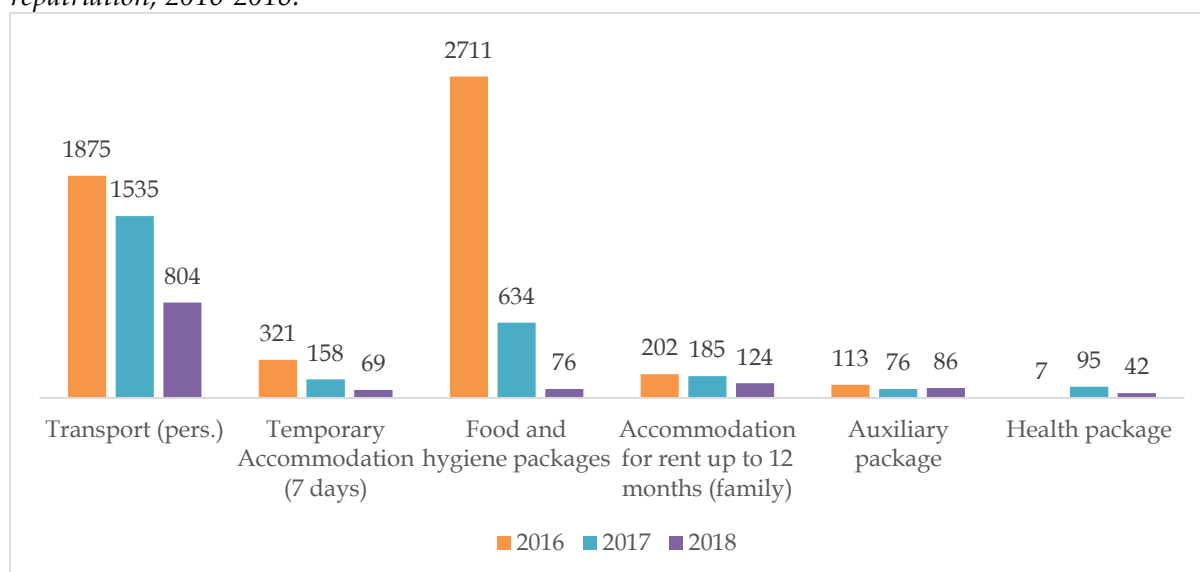
Under the various Reintegration schemes, special attention has been paid to children and vulnerable groups, and during 2017 and 2018 121 repatriated persons of this category have been supported.

Here below data are presented on supported repatriated persons under benefit schemes:

²⁴Agreements include government institutions, civil society organizations and various donors (MEST, MLSW, GIZ, DIMAK, UNDP, NGO Monitor, D&D Business Support Center etc.).

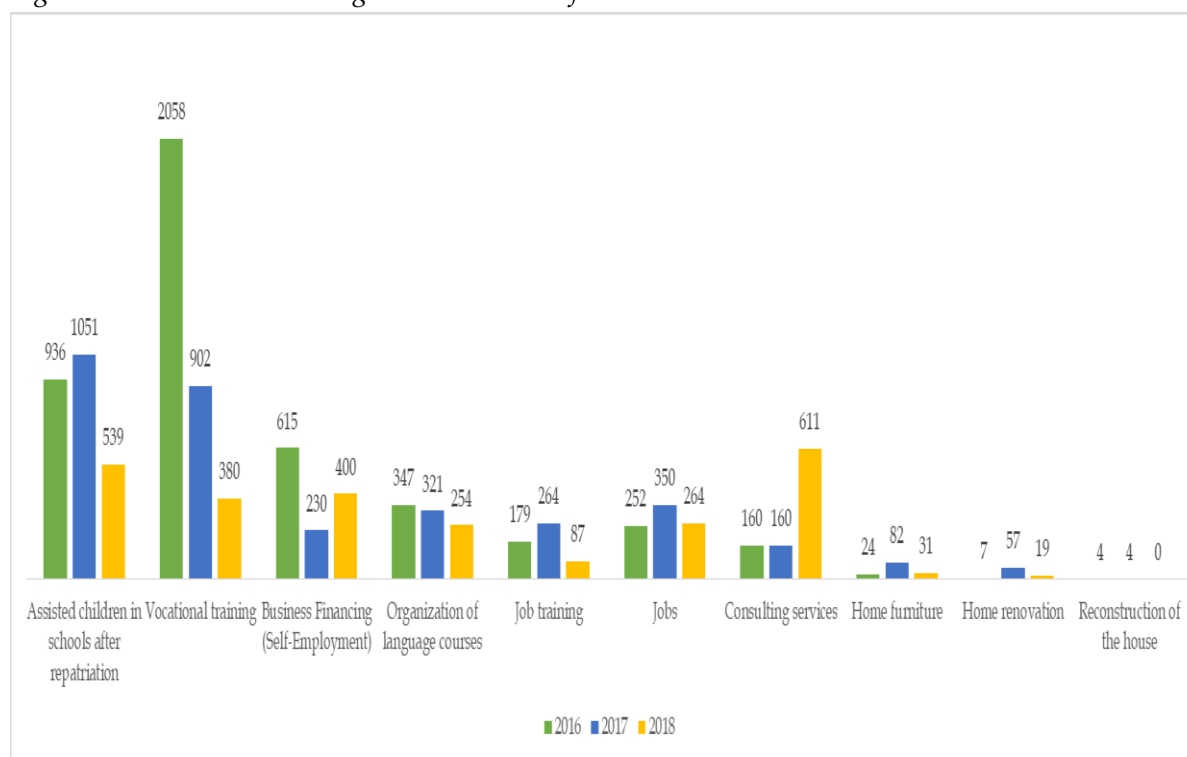
^[3]The number of 3,165 beneficiaries during 2018 represents new and transferred beneficiaries, of which 2,365 persons are supported by various Reintegration schemes and 800 persons are supported by various international organizations, based on statistics.

Figure 11: Assistance shortly after arrival and emergency²⁵ assistance within 12 months after repatriation, 2016-2018.



Source: DRRP/MIA

Figure 12: Sustainable reintegration assistance for 2016 - 2018



Source: DRRP/MIA

²⁵ Rental accommodation up to 12 months, for 2016 - 202 apartments/families with 737 persons), in 2017 - 185 apartments/families with 653 persons and in 2018 - apartments/families with 365 persons.

Within the framework of sustainable reintegration schemes, the period 2016-2018 marks a significant increase in the start-up financing scheme. 2018 marks an increase of 42.5% (400 beneficiaries) compared to 2017 (230 beneficiaries). There has also been an increase in consultancy and other schemes.

6. Integration

Integration of foreigners into Kosovo society is regulated through the legal framework pertaining to the Law on Foreigners and the Law on Asylum as well as a number of other legal acts at central and local level. During 2018, work has been done on drafting legal regulation regarding the establishment of a central referral mechanism for the integration of foreigners with legal residence in the Republic of Kosovo and the definition of procedures and criteria for this category.

6.1. Responsible state authorities

Integration of foreigners with legal residence in Kosovo society is the responsibility of some central institutions and municipality.

State authorities responsible for providing services to facilitate integration of foreigners into Kosovo society are the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Local Government Administration and municipalities.

During 2018, work has been done on drafting the Regulation on the integration of foreigners, which aims, among others, to designate the institutions responsible for managing, coordinating and monitoring the process of integration of foreigners into Kosovo society, as well as mandating the Department for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons within the MIA as a central level body responsible for integration of foreigners.

6.2. Policy and legal framework

Integration of foreigners with legal residence in the Republic of Kosovo is regulated through a number of legal acts.

Chapter IX of Law no. 04/L-219 on Foreigners (Articles 126 and 127) provides the legal basis for the conditions and services of integration of foreigners into economic, cultural and social life, including responsibilities of state institutions and cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations for the purpose of promoting and implementation of programs for the integration of foreigners into society.

During 2018, Law no. 06/L-026 on Asylum (Article 41), which foresees measures for integration of persons with refugee status and persons with subsidiary protection status in Kosovo society, by enabling teaching of history, language and culture in the Republic of Kosovo.

Legislation in force guarantees the right to acquire citizenship of Kosovo (through naturalization)²⁶ and access to respective services in order to facilitate the integration process in society.

During 2018, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has developed the draft Regulation on Integration of Foreigners in Kosovo. The purpose of this draft regulation is to establish criteria, procedures and designate the authorities responsible for the process of integration of foreigners. The categories of foreigners that are subject to this draft regulation are: asylum seekers, persons with refugee status, persons with temporary protection, persons with subsidiary protection, persons with temporary and permanent residence, and stateless persons. According to the draft regulation, foreigners in the integration process enjoy the right to education, health care, social assistance, vocational training and employment, information, housing, and other services guaranteed by the legislation in force. The draft regulation on the integration of foreigners has been finalized and is expected to be adopted in 2019.

6.3. Statistics

During 2018, 349 persons have acquired citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo, marking an increase of 4% compared to 2017 (335). By gender, women lead with 57.3% (200) compared to men with 42.6% (149).

Age group disaggregation of the persons who have acquired citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo: 18-34 with 45% (156 persons), 35-64 with 45% (157 persons) and other age groups by 10.3% (36 persons).

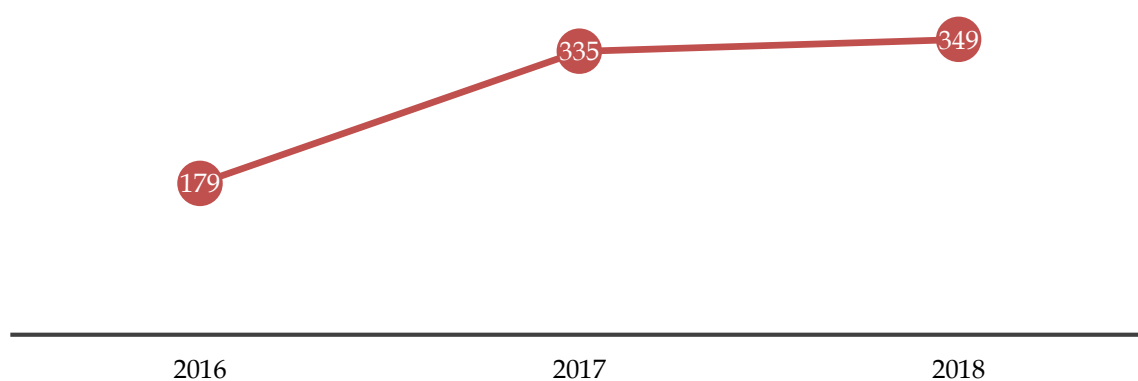
Regarding the citizenship or country of origin of foreigners who acquired the citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo during 2018, Albania leads with 63% (220 persons), followed by

²⁶ Law no. 04/L-215 on Citizenship of Kosovo, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo no. 33/2 September 2013, Prishtina

Serbia with 3.4% (12 persons), Turkey with 1.7% (6 persons), Bosnia and Herzegovina with 1.7% (6 persons), and other countries with 30% (105 persons).

The number of persons who have been denied citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo is 556. Number of denials by age group is: 18-34 with 39% (217 persons), 35-64 with 42% (233 persons), 14-17 with 3.6% (20 persons) and other age groups with 15.5% (86 persons).

Figure 13: Number of persons who have acquired citizenship of the Republic of Kosovo, 2016-2018



Source: DCAM

Trends show that in 2018 there has been an increase in the acquisition of citizenship and the main reason for this increase is meeting the legal criteria for acquiring citizenship related to completing the period of residence in the Republic of Kosovo.

7. Migration and development

This chapter provides an overview of policies and strategies of the Republic of Kosovo related to migration and development. The focus is on introducing ways to use the potential of migration for development purposes, remittances and investments from diaspora, as well as policies for engaging diaspora's experts (return of knowledge).

7.1. Responsible state authorities

Given the fact that Kosovo has large diaspora (about 834.000 persons), the leading role in this area is played by the Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investment. Besides her, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Education in their scope include development of policies and strategies that in a directly or indirectly regulate issues relating to migration and development. The common goal is to create an enabling environment in the country and diaspora for promoting cultural values and attracting investments from diaspora.

In this regard, the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, through MDSI, is committed to preserving the identity of diaspora members, organizing them in their countries of residence, and promoting resources and opportunities for their investment in the country of origin for the purpose of economic development.

MDSI has promoted and supported the establishment of diaspora organization structures such as business networks, professional networks, youth networks, diaspora councils (e.g. Coordination Council of Albanian Associations in Austria) with the aim of establishing bridges between the diaspora and institutions of the Republic of Kosovo, and with the aim of establishing and strengthening links within the diaspora. Also, in cooperation with other relevant institutions (such as TAK, KIESA, Customs, MFA), diaspora (Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy etc.) organized information sessions for diaspora and foreign businesses on the opportunities that Kosovo offers for investment.

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare drafts employment policies and has an important role in promoting regular migration as well as in linking labor market needs with migration.

Ministry of Finance is also committed to creating an enabling investment climate through fiscal policies, including from diaspora investors.

Ministry of Trade and Industry is another important institution linking migration through policies to improve the business environment such as investment promotion and export, empowerment and creation of economic zones, development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and strengthening private sector in general.

Ministry of Economic Development indirectly through the development of policies and strategies in the energy sector, mining, information technology as well as in the public enterprise sector, aims at the overall economic development of Kosovo and a favorable development climate for investors.

Ministry of Education through its policies ensures the preservation of identity by creating special curricula for diaspora members.

7.2. Policy and Legal Framework

Government of the Republic of Kosovo during 2018 has been committed to contributing to improving economic governance as one of the essential pillars of the enlargement strategy through regular dialogue with the EU and the instrument of the Economic Reform Program. Under coordination of the Minister of Finance, Economic Reform Program (ERP) ²⁷2018-2020, which is currently being implemented, deals with the reforms needed to strengthen macroeconomic and fiscal sustainability, long-term economic growth and competitiveness, including support measures for a comprehensive agenda of structural reforms related to the energy and transport market, sector developments, trade and business environment reforms, digital economy, informal economy reduction, innovation, social and labor market policies.

The Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investment uses its main strategic policy on the Diaspora Strategy and Diaspora 2013-2018 and the Action Plan in carrying out its mission in support of diaspora, and during 2018 has initiated drafting of new Diaspora Strategy 2019-2023 and Action Plan 2019-2021.

²⁷ <https://mf.rks-gov.net/page.aspx?id=1,28>

Diaspora as a potential for economic development of the country is incorporated in the National Development Strategy 2016-2021.

Linking migration with the development of the Republic of Kosovo, it is worth noting that the main pillar of the engagement is cooperation activities with the Global Network of Albanian Diaspora Businesses (25 networks/branches established, with over 6,000 member businesses). Also, conferences were organized in the Republic of Kosovo with businesses from the Diaspora and Kosovo, attended by around 300 businesses. Other meetings have also been organized in order to inform diaspora businesses about the opportunities Kosovo offers for investment. These meetings also created opportunities for cooperation between local businesses and the diaspora. Information sessions as well as conferences with diaspora businesses resulted in around 20 companies initiating procedures to list as strategic investor in Kosovo in various sectors.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare implemented two agreements with Germany on circular migration within its policies. The purpose of agreements was to enhance the professional skills of job seekers through dual education system (both practical and theoretical). This program during 2018 benefited 18 people. The Employment Agency through its division and Employment Offices continues to provide migration services for employment and vocational training and utilizes the information module within the EARK website for all services provided for regular migration.

The Ministry of Finance, in order to provide enabling environment for doing business and with particular emphasis on creating preconditions for producers in order to develop the production sector, provided some incentives aiming at developing manufacturing businesses as much as possible, as these policies will incentivize employment, resulting in more sustainable economic growth.

Government Decision 13/07, which entered into force in January 2018, exempts the excise tax on all producers of raw materials for all energy sources used for production purposes. Also Decision no. 14/07 exempts from customs duty all producers of raw materials and by-products used in the production process; for all lines of manufacturing machinery used for production; and for information technology equipment.

During 2018 there were developments in the field of customs facilities through the following decisions:

- Decision 07/40, dated: 11/04/2017, applicable since January 2018 to all manufacturers, exempting them from paying customs duties for a list of IT equipment.
- Decision 08/40, dated: 11/04/2017, applicable January 2018, for the manufacturing industry, exempting all manufacturers authorized by the Tax Administration of Kosovo from payment of customs duties on spare parts of production machinery.

The Joint Committee MF, TAK and KC, during 2018 approved a total of 394 decisions/authorizations for manufacturing entities. According to data from the Kosovo Customs, exemptions for production entities for 2018 total about €73.8m. Further details are provided below. Customs duty exemptions of €9m, excise duties exemptions of €11.7m, VAT exemptions of €53.1m.

Ministry of Trade and Industry within the framework of development policies in order to improve the business climate has unified the number of business registration with Kosovo Customs and Tax Administration of Kosovo and shortened the deadline for business registration to less than 2 day. In the World Bank's 2018 Doing ²⁸Business report, the Republic of Kosovo is ranked 40th (60th in 2017) in the world, as taxes on services provided to businesses in the process of their registration have been reduced. There are 29 business registration centers (one-stop shops) in the municipalities of Kosovo and a module for online business registration has been developed, with over 1,000 registered online businesses up to date. Investment and Enterprise Support Agency operates within the MTI, whose mandate is to promote and support investments, export, tourism, SMEs, and Economic Zones in the Republic of Kosovo, with particular emphasis on fostering diaspora businesses, which are treated the same as local investors. As a result of these development policies in 2018 (9,967 businesses) 600 businesses were registered (Kosovo Business Registration Agency) more than in the previous year (9,344 businesses).

²⁸ <https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/Annual-Reports/English/DB2018-Full-Report.pdf>

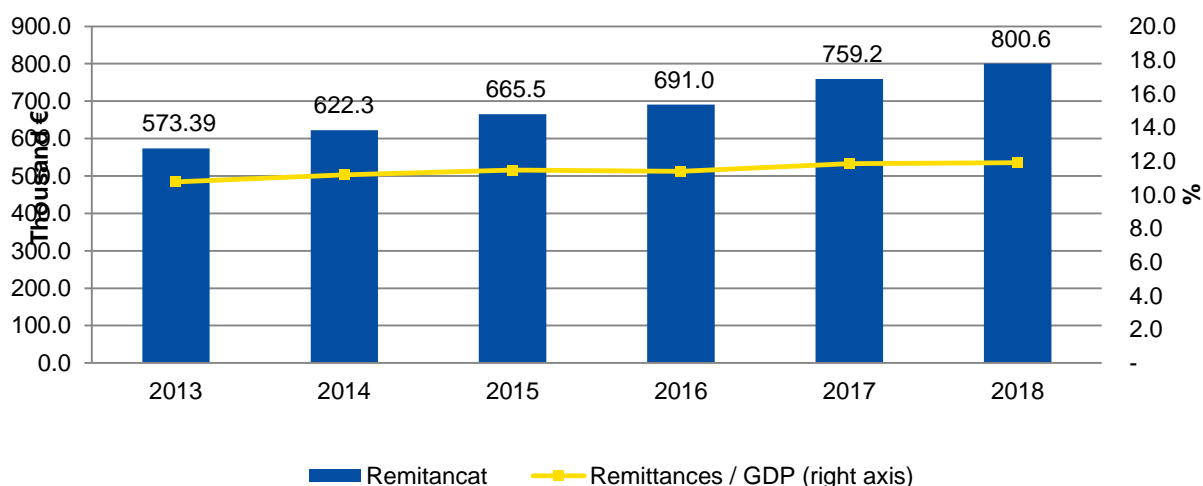
Ministry of Economic Development, in the framework of development policies, has drafted and is implementing the Energy Strategy 2017-2026 which sets out the basic objectives for the development of the energy sector based on sustainable economic development, environmental protection, efficient use of energy, development of new conventional and renewable energy generation capacities, creation of a competitive market and job generation related to the energy sector²⁹. In the Information Technology sector, drafted the Kosovo Information Technology Strategy which is the main driver for economic growth, employment and innovation by 2020 through increasing the international competitiveness of the IT industry.

7.3. Statistics

Remittances

Remittances generally have multiple impact on key aspects of development in the Republic of Kosovo. Remittance are increasing as a result of the increasing trend of regular emigration for employment purposes. In 2018, remittances to Kosovo totaled € 800.6 million, compared to €759.2m in 2017. Remittances in 2018 covered 12% of Gross Domestic Manufacturing (GDP).

Figure 14: Remittances, 2013-2018



Source: CBK, 2018

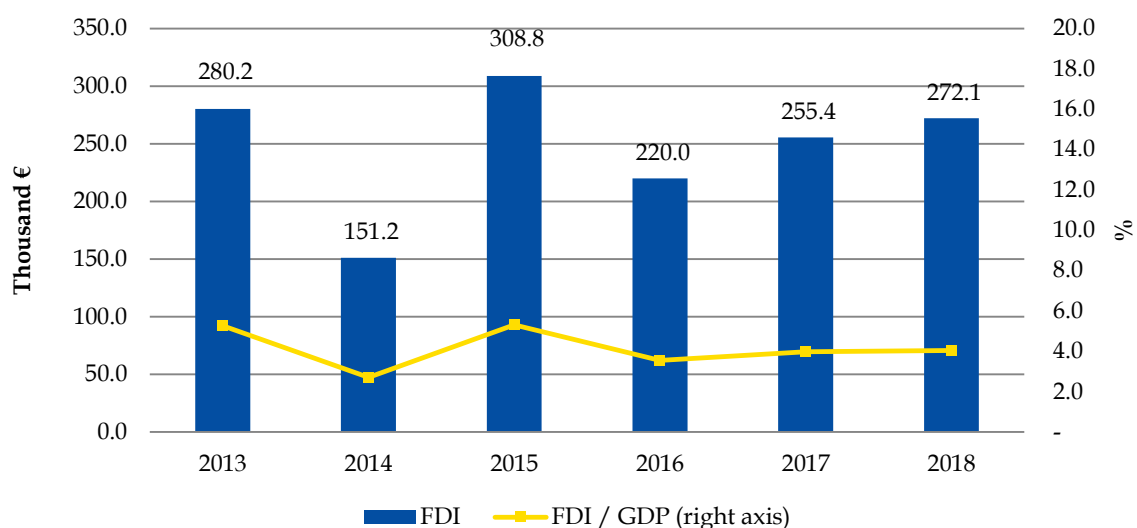
²⁹ https://mzhe-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_e_energjise_2017-26_-.pdf

About 64% of remittances are transferred through the financial system, while the remainder involves goods and other means through informal channels. The main source of remittances continues to be the Germany and Switzerland with 31.1% of total remittances received in Kosovo. Italy 4.4% and Austria 3.8% of total shipments, followed by Belgium (2.6%), US (7%) and Sweden (3.4%).

Foreign Direct Investments

Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Kosovo in a 2018 were € 272.1 million, or 6.5% higher compared to the previous year. The chart below shows the trend of FDI in Kosovo during 2013-2018.

Figure 15: Foreign direct investments in Kosovo expressed in millions of Euros and as a percentage of GDP, 2013-2018



Source: CBK, 2018

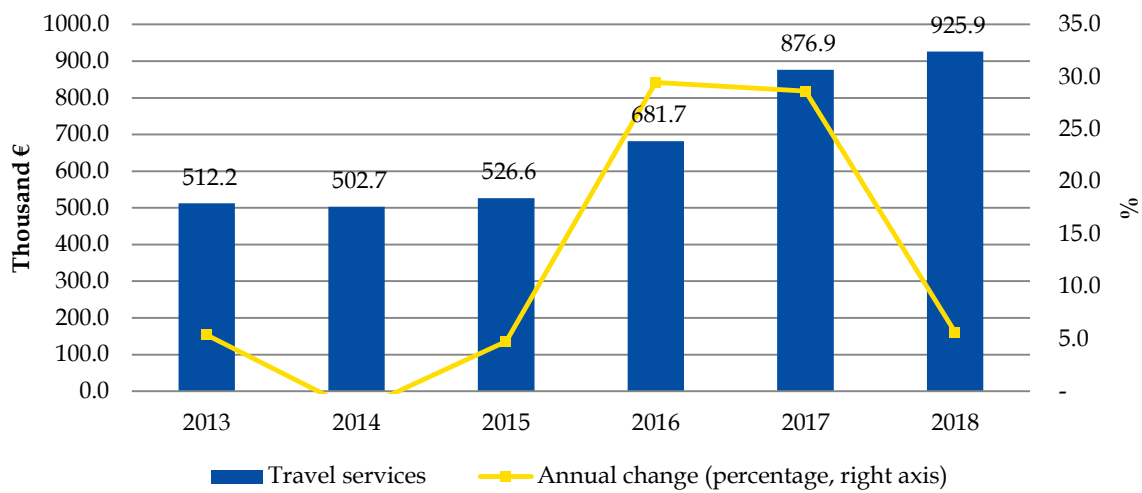
Sectors that had a positive trend compared to the previous year and which have influenced the growth of investments during 2018 are the real estate sectors with 76.2%; Energy with 9.6%, and Construction with 9.1%.

Visitor travel services in Kosovo/Diaspora Tourism in Kosovo

Republic of Kosovo enjoys considerable diaspora tourism, especially during the summer and winter seasonal holidays. Revenues from travel services for personal purposes have steadily increased since 2013 as can be seen from Figure 14, reaching 925.9 euros in 2018, at a time when the number of visits to Kosovo by international agencies (including NGOs, foreign missions in Kosovo) have declined and this has led to a reduction in expenditures

from these categories. As there are few other visitors to Kosovo, the dominant share of this category's revenue, around 90%, may be attributed to the diaspora.

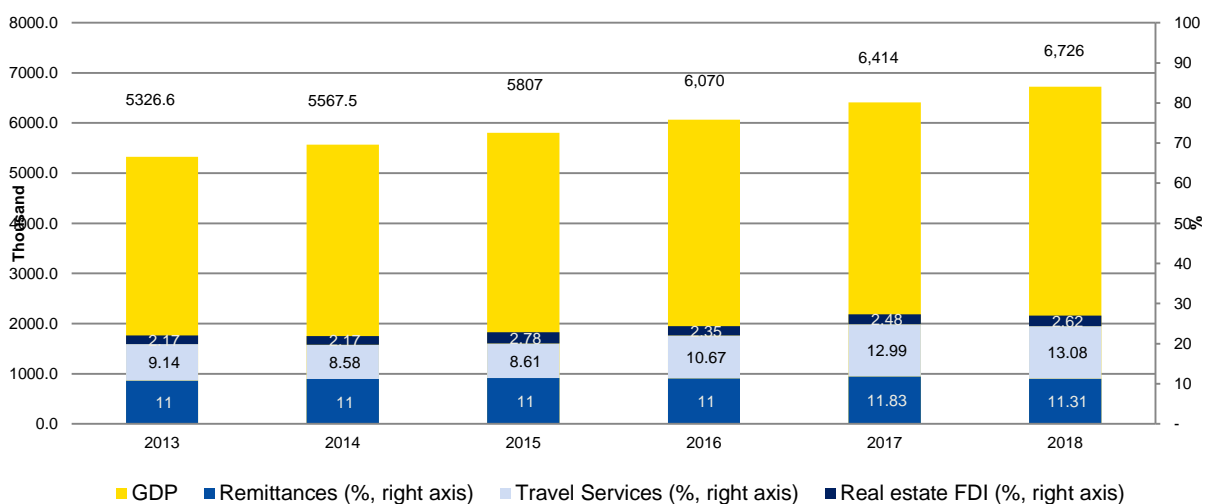
Figure 16: Visitor Travel Services, 2013-2018



Source: CBK, 2018

The importance of the diaspora may also be seen from the share of gross domestic product where remittances account for about 11% of GDP, diaspora tourism with 13% and real estate FDI with 2.6%, as shown in Table 15. Given that the sum of these three components accounts for about 30% of GDP, revenues from migration are an important factor in enabling domestic consumption (consumption plus investment) and helping to boost domestic production.

Figure 17: Travel services expressed in millions of euros, 2013 - 2018



Source: CBK, 2018

8. Asylum and international protection

8.1. Responsible state authorities

The Asylum Division operates within DCAM/MIA, and is at the same time the main body responsible for implementing the asylum procedure such as: reviewing international protection applications, conducting interviews, making first instance decisions, etc.;

The Asylum Center is responsible for accepting and accommodating applicants for protection during the status determination procedure, and has the capacity to accept and accommodate 100 applicants, provide medical, psychosocial, legal services, offer various integration related courses, pocket money etc...

The National Committee for Refugees (NCR) is responsible for examining appeals lodged against decisions taken at the first instance; The KP Border Police is the body in charge of the initial procedure, which includes submitting applications, first interview, fingerprinting and photographs, and the transfer of applicants to the Asylum Center.

8.2. Policy and Legal Framework

Asylum policies are among the priority policies for the Republic of Kosovo, in particular in the context of reforms undertaken in the process of visa dialogue with the European Union and in the implementation of measures deriving from the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union.

Law no. 04/L-217 on Asylum was amended and adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo on March 30, 2018, and is promulgated in the Official Gazette on May 3, 2018. The new Law no. 04/L-217 partially transposes the following EU acts:

- Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection and
- Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection

This Law regulates the standards and procedures for granting the status of refugee, subsidiary protection, and temporary protection, as well as the rights and obligations of

asylum seekers, refugees and persons who are granted Subsidiary Protection and Temporary Protection.

8.3. Statistics

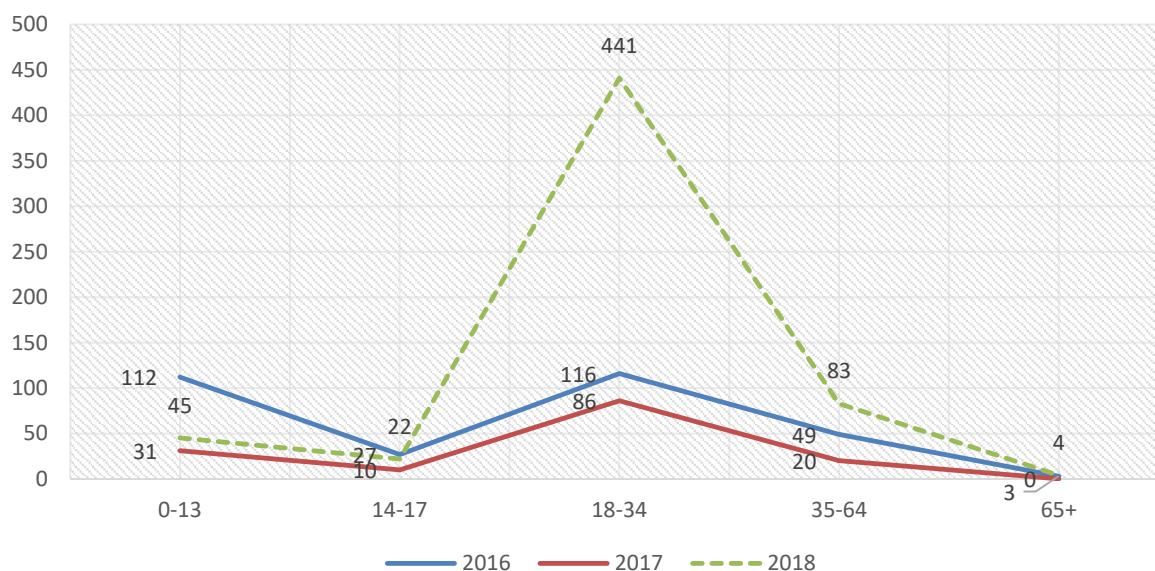
Asylum seekers in Kosovo

The number of asylum seekers in Kosovo during 2018 was 595, threefold increase compared to 2017 (147), while in 2016 there were 307 asylum seekers, i.e. 109% more than in 2017. One may say that the movements of migrants towards the western countries and their journey from the countries of origin through the Balkan route are also observed in the territory of Kosovo, especially during 2018, which is also seen from the statistics presented in this chapter.

Of the total number of asylum seekers by gender, men leads with 92% (546) leaving women with 8% (49).

The most represented age group is 18-34 with 74.1%, 35-64 with 13.9%, 0-13 with 7.6%, 14-17 with 3.7%, and 65+ with 4 (0.7%). There is an increase in the number of asylum seekers in the age group 0-13, which shows the increasing trend of asylum seekers in Kosovo.

Figure 18: Asylum seekers in Kosovo by age group (2016 - 2018)



Source: DCAM/MIA

Considerable number of asylum seekers aged 0-13, mainly accompanied by family members, is a result of the general situation in the region as well as migratory movements from the Middle East. Of the total number of this category, 2.01% were unaccompanied minors.

High representation of 18-34 age group, active age group, is based on the fact that people in this age were mainly subjected to pressure of various military groups trying to force them to actively participate in war zones in the country of origin, but also because of their potential advantage to gain protected status or residence for employment purposes in Western countries.

In 2018 there were **550** first instance decisions, 310% more than 2017 (134). Of the total number of decisions, 84.7% (466) were terminated proceedings, 9.1% (50) positive permanent ruling, 5.1% (28) voluntary termination of the proceedings, 0.55 % (3) rejection of request, 0.55% (3) rejection under accelerated procedure, while 4.7% (28) were in the application phase, and 2.9% (17) pending final decision of 2018.

During 2018, the main countries of origin of asylum seekers in Kosovo are: Syria 237 (39.8%), Palestine 79 (13.3%), Turkey 75 (12.6%), Algeria 41 (6.9%), Morocco 36 (6.1%), and other countries are represented by 21.2%.

Asylum seekers are provided with free of charge health services, legal, administrative assistance, social and psychological assistance, daily meals, clothing, hygiene kits and other forms of physical assistance. A total of 429 people received medical services, 342 free of charge legal services, 166 social counseling and Albanian language courses twice a week.

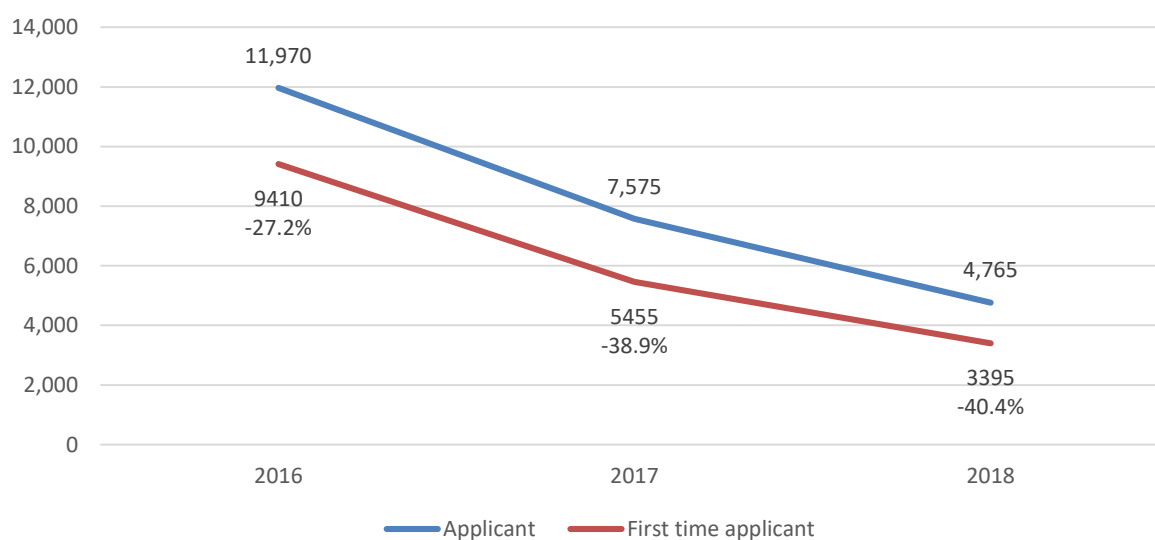
The length of stay of asylum seekers in the Asylum Center during 2018 was 23 days, while in 2017 it was 26 days on average.

Kosovo asylum seekers in EU member states and the Schengen area

Number of first time applicants³⁰ for asylum of Kosovo citizens in EU-28 and the Schengen area in 2018 was 3,395, which was down by 1,370 (-40.4%) from the total number of applicants.

This latest figure for 2018 shows a decline of **2,060 (-60%)** of first-time applicants in EU countries and the Schengen area compared to a year ago, as the number of first-time applicants declined **5,455** in 2017 at **3,395** in 2018. This is the continuation of the significant decline from **3,955** for first time applicants between 2016 and 2017. This significant drop in the number of Kosovar asylum seekers in EU countries during 2018 is a result of preventive measures taken by local authorities, raising the awareness of Kosovar citizens about the consequences of irregular migration, but also as a result of more intense information about policy changes of asylum on migration in EU countries (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Kosovo asylum seekers in EU member states and the Schengen area, 2016-2018



Source: Eurostat

Of the 3,395 first-time applicants registered in 2018, France (2,185) accounted for 64% of all first-time applicants from Kosovo to the EU Member States and the Schengen area. This

³⁰ A first-time applicant for international protection is a person who submitted an application for asylum for the first time in a given EU Member State and therefore excludes repeat applicants (in that Member State) and thus reflects the exact number of new arrivals applying for international protection in the reporting Member State.

number was followed by Germany (565, or 17%), Belgium (150, or 4%), Sweden (150, or 4%), Switzerland (90, or 3%) and other states (260, or 8%). Of the total number of Kosovar asylum seekers, 56.8% are men and 43.2% women.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The period 2016-2018 is marked by a significant increase in the emigration of Kosovar citizens for employment purposes to the EU countries and the Schengen area, in particular during 2018. The preferred destination countries are: Germany, Slovenia and Croatia resulting in a significant increase with Kosovo citizens having been received for employment purposes. Therefore, taking into consideration the increasing trend of emigration for employment purposes, it is recommended: a) to negotiate bilateral agreements in the field of migration with the countries of destination (in particular with countries where Kosovo migrants are targeting), including social protection provisions, equal working conditions, access to the health system, etc.
2. Statistics of recent years, especially 2018 compared to 2016 show that remittances, diaspora tourism in the Republic of Kosovo as well as FDI (around 90% of the diaspora) have shown significant growth and constitute about 30% of GDP. It is recommended that the Government of the Republic of Kosovo design and develop concrete policies and programs that contribute to the orientation of remittances and intellectual capital for the development of priority sectors of the national economy. At the same time, it is recommended to facilitate (decrease) the costs of remittance transfers in cooperation with the financial sector.
3. Trends show that migrant movements in the region have begun to affect the Republic of Kosovo as well, and this indicates an increase in the number of migrants and asylum seekers in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. It is recommended that Kosovo institutions establish a monitoring mechanism of migration trends in the region through regional cooperation and in co-operation with international institutions and implement activities envisaged within the Response Plan in case of influx of migrants and refugees (such as those dealing with reception facilities or with basic equipment and supplies).