

# SOUTHEASTEUROPE in Focus

No. 1/2021



## Emigration from the Western Balkans

Edited by Hansjörg Brey, Christian Hagemann, Valeska Esch  
and Viktoria Palm

© Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, Februar 2021

Widenmayerstr. 49

80538 Muenchen

Email: [info@sogde.org](mailto:info@sogde.org)

URL: [www.sogde.org](http://www.sogde.org)

All rights reserved

## Southeast Europe in Focus 1/ 2021

Edited and Published by Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft e.V. / Southeast Europe Association

Munich, February 2021

This publication includes conference papers and proceedings from two events focusing on emigration from the Western Balkans in 2020, organized in cooperation with the Aspen Institute Germany. This volume has also been published by the Aspen Institute Germany.

To re-watch all discussions from the conference, check the [conference playlist on our Youtube Channel](#).

### Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft / Southeast Europe Association and the editors.

**About the SOG:** The Southeast Europe Association (Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft – SOG) is an organisation that seeks to bridge political debate with scientific dialogue and socio-cultural exchange about Southeast Europe. The SOG is based on individual membership and is institutionally supported by the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. Since its establishment in 1952, the SOG is an important liaison organisation for German foreign policy. For more information: [www.sogde.org](http://www.sogde.org)

**Layout:** Wladimir Dirksen

**Graphic Design:** Johanna Deimel / Christian Hagemann

**Photograph** on cover: Christian Hagemann

<b>ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FOREWORD BY MINISTER OF STATE MICHAEL ROTH .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DEALING WITH THE EMIGRATION CHALLENGE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS – SUMMARY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>OPENING SPEECH BY FEDERAL FOREIGN MINISTER HEIKO MAAS AT THE CONFERENCE “YOUNG PEOPLE, MIGRATION AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS” .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
One Way Ticket No More: Seven Ideas for a Prosperous Western Balkans <i>Samir Beharic, Egzona Bokshi, Marjola Memaj, Sibel Bajram, Nina Drakulic, Nenad Jevtovic, Lorenta Kadriu, Nikola Kandic, Andrea Micanovic, Franceska Muco, Tomica Stojanovikj and Milja Zdravkovic</i> .....	15
<b>CHAPTER 2: FACTS, TRENDS AND CHALLENGES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Youth Emigration from the Western Balkans: Factors, Motivations, and Trends <i>Miran Lavrič</i> .....	22
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE EFFECTS OF EMIGRATION ON THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN .....</b>	<b>31</b>
The Effects of Emigration on the Western Balkan Countries <i>Isilda Mara, Hermine Vidovic</i> .....	32
The Cost of Emigration from the Western Balkans – The Case of Lost Investments in Education <i>Nenad Jevtović</i> .....	38
<b>CHAPTER 4: DOMESTIC REFORMS .....</b>	<b>46</b>
Voting with Their Feet: Policy Measures to Address Causes of Emigration from the Western Balkans <i>Mirna Jusić</i> .....	47
Making Education and Employment Reforms Work for the Young: Improving Education, Reducing Skills Mismatches and Easing Labor Market Access for Young People <i>Ivana Aleksić</i> .....	55
<b>CHAPTER 5: BRAIN GAIN POLICIES AND CIRCULAR MIGRATION .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Migration and the Western Balkan Countries: Measures to Foster Circular Migration and Re-Migration <i>Jelena Predojević-Despić</i> .....	70
Lessons from Romania on Highly Qualified Returnees: Processes, Policies, Effects <i>Remus Gabriel Anghel; Monica Roman</i> .....	95
<b>CHAPTER 6: THE ROLE OF THE DIASPORA .....</b>	<b>103</b>
Diaspora and Regional Relations <i>Nermin Oruč</i> .....	104
The Relationship between Locals and Emigrants in the Western Balkans <i>Lumnije Jusufi</i> .....	119
<b>CHAPTER 7: THE ROLE OF REGIONAL RELATIONS .....</b>	<b>128</b>
Possibilities for Regional Cooperation in Counteracting Emigration from the Western Balkans <i>Silvana Mojsovska</i> .....	129
Civil Society Impetus for a Systematic Approach Towards Migration: A New Narrative for the Western Balkans <i>Dafina Peci</i> .....	136

<b>BiH</b> – Bosnia and Herzegovina	<b>NIS</b> – National Institute for Statistics in Romania
<b>CEE</b> – Central and Eastern Europe	<b>NUTS</b> – Nomenclature of Territorial Units or Statistics
<b>CEFTA</b> – Central European Free Trade Agreement	<b>OECD</b> – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>CPFs</b> – Country Partnership Frameworks	<b>OMC</b> – EU's Open Method for Coordination
<b>CSOs</b> – Civil Society Organizations	<b>Ph.D.</b> – Doctor of Philosophy
<b>D4D</b> – Democracy for Development	<b>PISA</b> – Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>DIMAK</b> – Deutsches Informationszentrum für Migration, Ausbildung und Karriere (German Information Centre for Migration, Training and Career)	<b>pp.</b> – Percentage Points
<b>EC</b> – European Commission	<b>PPS</b> – Purchasing power standards
<b>EU</b> – European Union	<b>RCC</b> – Regional Cooperation Council
<b>FBiH</b> – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	<b>REA</b> – Regional Economic Area
<b>FDI</b> – Foreign Direct Investment	<b>RIRA</b> – Regional Investment Reform Agenda
<b>FES</b> – Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung	<b>RS</b> – Republika Srpska
<b>GDP</b> – Gross Domestic Product	<b>RYCO</b> – Regional Youth Cooperation Office
<b>GIZ</b> – Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Corporation for International Cooperation)	<b>SDC</b> – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>IBM</b> – Integrated Border Management	<b>SEE</b> – Southeast Europe
<b>IOM</b> – International Organization for Migration	<b>U.S.</b> – United States
<b>IPA</b> – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance	<b>UK</b> – United Kingdom
<b>ISCED</b> – International Standard Classification of Education	<b>UN</b> – United Nations
<b>MAP</b> – Multiannual Action Plan	<b>UNDP</b> – United Nations Development Programme
<b>MARRI</b> – Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative	<b>USAID</b> – United States Agency for International Development
<b>MHRR</b> – Ministry of Human Rights of Refugees (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	<b>VET</b> – Vocational Education and Training
<b>MIDWEB</b> – Migration for Development in the Western Balkans	<b>WB</b> – Western Balkans
<b>NEET</b> – Neither in Employment, Education nor Training	<b>WB6</b> – Western Balkans Six (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia)
<b>NES</b> – National Employment Services	<b>wiiw</b> – The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche)
<b>NGO</b> – Non-Governmental Organization	

## Foreword by Minister of State Michael Roth

Minister of State for Europe Michael Roth, German Federal Foreign Office



There may hardly be a family in the Western Balkans who does not count among them relatives in Germany, Austria, or Sweden. Indeed, over the past decades, emigration from the Western Balkans has taken on impressive proportions: according to new OECD figures, almost 20 percent of Albania's population today, for instance, has left the country within the first 15 years of this century. Young people are leaving their home countries in search of economic opportunities abroad. This may sound like a good deal for destination countries such as my own: Germany is gaining highly skilled labor force and unskilled workers alike, both of which are welcome contributions to its economy and society.

Moreover, we can see that there is more enthusiasm for the European Union in such places as Skopje than in some EU capitals: in a way, families in the Western Balkans are living a pan-European identity simply because of their reach across the continent. This has been palpable to me in my many visits to the region. Yet, as someone involved and invested in European policy, I believe we must honestly examine the consequences of emigration for the countries of origin. Circular migration, or the return of highly skilled members of the working force to their home countries after spending time abroad, simply isn't taking place to the extent that both migration experts and governments in the Western Balkans countries would have hoped. This, of course, is not only due to the economic opportunities abroad, but also to corruption, nepotism, inequalities, and lack of jobs at home.

Increasingly, we are thus witnessing shortages of highly skilled labor in the region, which in return limits the interest of foreign investors or puts additional pressures on critical sectors such as the medical field. Politically, those most keen on seeing change vote with their feet, leaving behind breeding ground for populism and making it more difficult for reformists to gain and sustain political momentum – a pattern familiar from other parts of the European continent.

To allow for such an honest consideration of the impact of emigration and to look for solutions together with our partners from the region, the Federal Foreign Office held a ministerial conference on "Young People, Migration, and the Demographic Challenge in the Western Balkans" during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, together with the Southeast Europe Association and the Aspen Institute Germany. It is our hope that we can continue building on these conclusions, presented to you in this publication, in the years to come. My personal take-away from the discussions held with the dedicated young participants of this conference is that the European Union has an interest and the responsibility to invest in the region, politically and economically. Those reforms that are at the core of the EU accession process, notably strengthening the rule of law, are also a key factor for stopping the mass emigration from the region. Together, our goal must be to create perspectives in Stuttgart, Vienna, Kolašin, and Štip alike.

Dear readers, dear friends of the Aspen Institute Germany and the Southeast Europe Association,

The Western Balkans as a region would need about 60 years to converge to the EU's average income level according to World Bank estimates based on the per capita income growth between 1995 and 2015.<sup>1</sup> Since 2012, 6% of the working-age population has left the region.<sup>2</sup> In 2019 alone, every day 430 individuals from the Western Balkans – a region of 18 million inhabitants – received a long-term residence permit in the European Union.<sup>3</sup>

These are just a few numbers illustrating the gravity of the economic and demographic situation in the Western Balkans. This population decline is reinforced by low birth rates across the region, except in Kosovo. The global Covid-19 pandemic is likely to further aggravate the dire economic situation across the region. Moreover, it has demonstrated how much the emigration of healthcare professionals from the region has further undermined the already relatively weak public health sectors, a tendency which has picked up in recent years not least due to the growing demand for healthcare workers in many EU countries.

In general, the EU ranks high among the preferred destinations of the diverse forms of migration from the Western Balkan emigrants, with its geographical proximity, higher wages, and the expectation of better living conditions. Moreover, young people's faith in the perspective of EU membership of their countries in the near future has further eroded over the past years, contributing to their decision to leave their home countries for the EU. Germany in particular welcomes high numbers of migrants from the region, especially in its healthcare sector. Migration flows thus link countries of origin and of destination through the transfer of workers, skills, and ideas. In order to transform such migration flows into a mutually beneficial situation, it is important for countries of both origin and destination to acknowledge their role in existing migration patterns as well as to coordinate their efforts in elaborating targeted and effective policies to address the challenge.

Against this background, the Aspen Institute Germany and the Southeast Europe Association welcomed the opportunity to organize a large conference hosted by the German Federal Foreign Office as part of Germany's EU Council Presidency on "Young People, Migration, and the Demographic Challenge in the Western Balkans", making the issue of emigration from the region one of the priority topics of our work in 2020.

Supported by the German Federal Foreign Office, we organized several events to put this topic on the agenda, both in Germany and the EU, as well as in the region. In June, Aspen Germany and the Southeast Europe Association joined forces in organizing an online expert workshop series on emigration from the Western Balkans to convene multiple perspectives, including those from decision-makers, the business community, academia, and civil society, and to jointly identify and analyze the various dimensions, key issues, and most pressing challenges of the migration phenomenon. To foster the dialog in the region on this topic, Aspen Germany held a closed-door conference with high-level government representatives and experts from the region and the EU, within the framework of its Western Balkans Regional Dialog project.

---

<sup>1</sup> World Bank Group, The Western Balkans: Revving Up the Engines of Growth and Prosperity, November 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/revving-up-engines-of-growth-and-prosperity-in-western-balkans>, (accessed 31 January 2021).

<sup>2</sup> World Bank and wiiw, Western Balkans Labor Market Trends 2020, April 2020, <https://wiiw.ac.at/western-balkans-labor-market-trends-2020-dlp-5300.pdf>, (accessed 31 January 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat, First Permits by Reason, Length of Validity and Citizenship, (last update 23 November 2020). [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR\\_RESFIRST\\_\\_custom\\_487019/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_RESFIRST__custom_487019/default/table?lang=en), (accessed 31 January 2021).

The results of these closed-door discussions fed into the large international conference in the framework of the German Council Presidency in October 2020. This conference was opened by the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas (whose speech is included in this publication) and featured among others EU Commissioners Olivér Várhelyi and Dubravka Šuica as well as the foreign ministers from the Western Balkans, followed by two days of expert discussions. Moreover, the conference had a strong focus on including the perspective of the region's youth on a variety of issues, with representatives of the younger generation present at all panels and discussions.

This publication contains the background papers, which were prepared for the above-mentioned activities, providing insightful analysis and offering practical policy recommendations on the topic of emigration from the Western Balkans. The emphasis on the youth perspective is also mirrored in this publication with the first and last papers being written by youth representatives from the region, sharing their visions, hopes, and ideas.

The papers in this volume shed light on diverse issues and dimensions of migration, including current figures and trends, motives for emigrating, the effects of emigration on the countries of origin, the trans-national character of migration as well as the role of the diaspora and of regional cooperation in addressing the challenge. Furthermore, approaches to addressing the challenge with a focus on domestic reforms and the design of policies for circular and re-migration are analyzed and discussed in this publication.

We, the Aspen Institute Germany and the Southeast Europe Association, would like to express our gratitude to the German Federal Foreign Office for the opportunity to organize this important conference as part of the presidency and its support through the means of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe. Moreover, we would like to thank all workshop and conference panelists and participants who have so actively contributed to the success of our activities, and, in particular, all authors of input papers for contributing substantially with their expertise and for providing thought-provoking impulses for discussion and constructive solutions. Finally, we would like to thank Yannic Remme and Tina Bories for their support of this publication.

We hope you enjoy reading this joint publication of Aspen Germany and the Southeast Europe Association and we look forward to our upcoming activities focusing on the Western Balkans in 2021.



Valeska Esch  
Deputy Executive Director  
Program Director Europe  
The Aspen Institute Germany



Dr. Hansjörg Brey  
Executive Director  
Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft e.V.  
(Southeast Europe Association)

## **Chapter 5: Brain Gain Policies and Circular Migration**



## Migration and the Western Balkan Countries: Measures to Foster Circular Migration and Re-Migration

Jelena Predojević-Despić

*Research Associate at the Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade.*

**Executive Summary:** During the past decade, the governments of the Western Balkan (WB) countries have started to work more dedicatedly to find a systemic response to the long-term problems of emigration. Important national strategic documents and policies on migration and strengthening relations and cooperation with the diaspora have been and are still adopted. However, critical actions are needed to enable the adopted measures to be implemented continuously. It is necessary to introduce more models of migration governance in the implementation. A significantly larger number of government actors, civil society organizations, and the private sector will be involved. Therefore, it is crucial to develop innovative approaches to manage labor migration effectively. It is necessary to establish strong cross-sector collaboration, shared responsibility, and a clear division of competences between different ministries and public bodies at the national level and at other levels of government (regional and local).

It is also important to support and further develop initiatives that already exist, improving operational and strategic coordination. Some of them are coordination bodies which include professionals from various fields, diaspora agencies that holistically address the migration issues, local migration councils that are capable of enhancing migration management at the municipal level, initiatives that establish relations of trust with the diaspora, and at the same time have regular contacts with government institutions. In addition, the potential of local migration councils and service centers at the national employment services that exist in most WB countries needs to be used and developed more. Therefore, it is extremely important to strengthen institutional capacities and actors new to migration-related issues continuously. Efficient communication and coordination strategies between the WB countries and destination countries need to be further developed to achieve results.

The impact of different categories of migrants on the development of both destination countries and countries of origin is a topic that has so far not been in the focus of decision-makers. The sudden changes in labor markets caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown show that the lack of certain categories of workers in the labor market, including precarious workers, can seriously shake both destinations' socio-economic foundations and origin countries. Therefore, it is necessary to review and revise certain labor market and migration policies and immigration programs. Great efforts are also needed to improve the rights of migrant workers and combat fraud throughout the recruitment process. In this sense, providing clear and accessible information to participants throughout the migration process is extremely important.

For the WB countries, as emigration areas, it is important to develop temporary migration programs in cooperation with destination countries, which will also provide stimulation for wider representation of circular migration that for now have only a strong potential to provide development benefits for countries of origin and migrants. It is important to develop further initiatives such as DIMAK (German Information Centre for Migration, Training and Career), where migrants can get reliable information and advice on different migration issues. The development of its regional networking will also contribute to promoting regional migration and labor mobility in the WB, which are currently at a very low level. The WB countries should also direct policy development towards measures that integrate circular migration into wider migration programs and develop cooperation between development agencies in countries of origin and destination through the integration of migration into development activities. Such a development strategy would also contribute to a more significant stimulation of

return migration. Therefore, it is very important to design useful programs and strategies that support returnees and the local communities to which they return.

In order for migration to positively impact countries of origin, it is necessary that, upon arrival in the country, returnees have the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills acquired abroad. However, the lack of economic opportunities, the mismatch between their skills and labor market needs, distrust in government institutions, and the problems regarding recognizing diplomas obtained abroad are just some of the challenges that need to be worked on devotedly in all WB countries.

Finally, a great challenge is to provide necessary funds and obtain strong and continuous state support for investing in the effective migration policy. To provide consistent financing and implementation of such initiatives and to avoid them being sporadic, short on funding, or unreliable in the long run, the WB countries must combine funding between the public and private spheres. In addition, it is of utmost importance that the EU, international organizations, and the civil sector significantly contribute to long-term and more stable financial support.

## Introduction

The Western Balkan (WB) countries have been facing numerous international migration challenges for a very long time. In addition, they are still facing pronounced emigration flows of the domestic population. However, the WB countries have long neglected the pronounced problem of emigration, which has influenced the development of numerous negative demographic, economic, and social consequences, or have applied only a fragmented approach.

The scientific community from the WB region has continuously pointed to the results of numerous scientific studies, which for decades indicated the diverse and inevitable devastating consequences of long-term unfavorable migration processes and pointed to the need for a systematic political response in that domain. However, like most other traditionally emigration countries, the WB governments have long neglected important migration dynamics and failed to integrate the need to maximize the positive impact of migration on development and use it as a

powerful tool for social and economic growth to respond proactively to migrant protection issues.

Only in the last decade, there has been a shift in the interest of the WB countries in increasingly extensive research and readiness to deal more systematically with migration issues. There are positive attitudes aimed at the development potential of international migration and an increasing awareness that migration affects all segments of society. It is positive that the complex topic of migration in the region is beginning to be reviewed through a whole-of-government approach, primarily through the visible development of the legal framework for policymaking.

Such an attitude is largely the result of more intensive progress in European integration and stronger harmonization of legislation with the *acquis communautaire*,<sup>1</sup> the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>2</sup> and other international conventions. A significant additional effect was achieved by adopting the UN *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*<sup>3</sup> in 2018. In addition, the engagement of research institutes, international

<sup>1</sup> For more information see: European Commission, European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations: Chapters of the Acquis, n.d., [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/chapters-of-the-acquis\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/chapters-of-the-acquis_en), (accessed 1 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> For more information see: United Nations, The Sustainable Development Agenda, n.d., <https://www.un.org/sustainable-development/development-agenda/>, (accessed 1 September 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For more information see: International Organization for Migration, Global Compact for Migration, n.d., <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>, (accessed 1 September 2020).

organizations, and civil society organizations is extremely important for significant encouragements in addressing the root causes of economic migration from the WB region. In partnership with the governments of the WB countries, they expand the policy framework with a migration-development nexus and work to raise capacities of employees in public institutions so that they can successfully carry out numerous and diverse activities within migration systems.

The broadening of the migration agenda to issues that are receiving increasing attention at both the European and global level is a significant step forward for the WB countries. One of them is strengthening the relationship between the home country and the diaspora and engaging the diaspora in supporting the national development and creating conditions for the return of expatriates. In addition, an increasingly important topic, but one which also creates new challenges for societies of origin, is the development of circular migration, the need for its better understanding and management, as well as its use for the benefit not only of the destination countries and the migrants themselves but also of the countries of origin. However, although the strategic documents indicate that the governments of the WB countries no longer neglect the topic of migration, substantial emigration from the region shows that mechanisms must be found as soon as possible to turn the envisaged strategies and plans into constructive actions. Additional major uncertainties and complex challenges for governments are posed by the huge negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy, health care systems, social protection services, migration trends, and population mobility.

Having in mind numerous topics and challenges that the WB governments need to better

understand and turn into useful policies that address migration governance more comprehensively, this paper aims to see what migration measures exist in this domain in the countries of the WB region, as well as what approaches would be promising in reversing emigration trends and (re-)attracting migrants and diaspora members to the WB region. The paper provides an overview of the measures envisaged by national migration and diaspora strategies and policies and the main programs/projects and initiatives in the WB. The paper also discusses how policies, projects, and private initiatives could be active in the future to better understand the complex dynamics of economic migration in the WB and encourage their use in favor of social and economic development.

### Overview of National Migration and Diaspora Strategies in the Countries of the WB

All WB countries have significantly improved their migration policies in the last ten years, especially in policy design and migration policy institutionalization.<sup>1</sup> All countries have adopted national migration strategies, reflecting an important change in approaching migration issues. In addition, in most countries, national strategies addressing issues beyond immigration management, border control, and illegal migration have been adopted or are in the process of being adopted. The need to harmonize legislation in various domains, such as labor model issues and social protection for migrants abroad, is also pointed out.

In this regard, important strategic documents and policies have been adopted in the WB countries. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Policy on Cooperation with Diaspora was adopted in 2017.<sup>2</sup> A draft Framework Strategy for

This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

<sup>1</sup> A. Krasteva et al., Maximising the Development Impact of Labor Migration in the Western Balkans. Final Report, The European Union's IPA Programme for Balkans Region, 2018, [http://wb-mignet.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Final-report\\_Maximising-](http://wb-mignet.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Final-report_Maximising-)

[development-impact-of-labour-migration-in-WB\\_0412018-1.pdf](http://wb-mignet.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Final-report_Maximising-development-impact-of-labour-migration-in-WB_0412018-1.pdf), (accessed 10 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Policy on Cooperation with Diaspora, 2017, <http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/iseljenistvo/Dokumenti/PolitikaE%20final1.pdf>, (accessed 15 August 2020).

Cooperation with Emigrants of Bosnia and Herzegovina has also been prepared. Among the most important strategic documents in North Macedonia are the Resolution on Migration Policy for the period 2009-2014<sup>1</sup> and the Action Plan, the Resolution on Migration Policy for the period 2015-2020,<sup>2</sup> and the National Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023. Montenegro has incorporated certain migration topics into the National Strategy for Sustainable Development until 2030<sup>3</sup>, adopted in 2016, and the Law on Cooperation of Montenegro with its Diaspora – Emigrants, adopted in 2018.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the State Strategy on Migration 2013-2018,<sup>5</sup> Kosovo\* also has the Strategy for Diaspora 2013-2018 and the period 2019-2024.<sup>6</sup> Apart from the National Strategy on Migration Governance and the Action Plan 2019-2022,<sup>7</sup> Albania has also adopted the National Strategy of Diaspora 2018-2024.<sup>8</sup> In Serbia, the most important strategic documents are the Migration Management Strategy<sup>9</sup> from 2009, an umbrella document that preceded the drafting of the law of the same name. In 2011, the Strategy for Preserving and Strengthening the Relations

between the Homeland and the Diaspora and the Homeland and Serbs in the region<sup>10</sup> was adopted. A special step in exploiting the migration potential for the development of the country is the Economic Migration Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2027,<sup>11</sup> which was adopted at the beginning of 2020.

**The need for reliable and accessible data on international migration.** One of the biggest challenges in formulating purposeful policies and efficient transitioning from policy design to implementation is the lack of reliable and accessible data on international migration. This challenge has been recognized in all WB countries, so one of the main areas of intervention is to improve the monitoring system and data quality and the exchange of data in the field of migration and its impact on the labor market and other spheres of society. For example, North Macedonia has proposed a set of measures and activities for consistent application of the legal obligation of reporting departures/arrivals of citizens of North Macedonia upon leaving/returning to the

<sup>1</sup> Службен весник на Република Македонија, Резолуција на миграционата политика на Република Македонија 2009-2014. бр. 6/2009, <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/6FEACAF74D35584EB6044E9EC2401ECF.pdf>, (accessed 15 August 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Службен весник на Република Македонија, Резолуција на миграционата политика на Република Македонија 2015-2020, бр. 8/2015, <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/88af0d7aeb7d4658b344c8c55ba9dfa3.pdf>, (accessed 15 August 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Službeni list Crne Gore, Nacionalna strategija održivog razvoja do 2030. godine. br. 80/15, <http://www.nssd2030.gov.me/>, (accessed 18 August 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Službeni list Crne Gore, Zakon o saradnji Crne Gore sa dijasporom – iseljenicima, br. 044/18 od 06.07.2018, <https://www.paragraf.me/propisi-crnegore/zakon-o-saradnji-crne-gore-sa-dijasporom-iseljenicima.html>, (accessed 16 August 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Republic of Kosovo, The State Strategy on Migration 2013-2018, 2013, [http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STATE\\_STRATEGY\\_ON\\_MIRGRATION\\_ACTTION\\_PLAN\\_2013-2018.pdf](http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STATE_STRATEGY_ON_MIRGRATION_ACTTION_PLAN_2013-2018.pdf), (accessed 19 August 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Republic of Kosovo – Minsitry of Diaspora, Strategija për Diasporën 2019-2023. Plani i Veprimit 2019-2023, 2018, [http://ambasada-ks.net/at/repository/docs/Projektstrategjia\\_p%C3%ABr\\_Diaspor%C3%ABn\\_2019-2023\\_dhe\\_Plani\\_i\\_Veprimit\\_2019-2021.pdf](http://ambasada-ks.net/at/repository/docs/Projektstrategjia_p%C3%ABr_Diaspor%C3%ABn_2019-2023_dhe_Plani_i_Veprimit_2019-2021.pdf), (accessed 19 August 2020).

<sup>7</sup> Republic of Albania – Ministry for Diaspora, The National Strategy on Migration and its Action Plan 2019-2022, 2019, <https://diaspora.gov.al/en/miratohet-strategjia-kombetare-per-qeverisjen-e-migracionit-dhe-planit-i-saj-i-veprimit-2019-2022/>, (accessed 19 August 2020).

<sup>8</sup> Republic of Albania – Ministry for Diaspora, The National Strategy of Diaspora and Action Plan 2019-2024, <https://diaspora.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NATIONAL-STRATEGY-OF-DIASPORA-2018-2024-english-IOM.docx>, (accessed 19 August 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Службени гласник РС, Стратегија за управљање миграцијама. број 59/09, <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2009/59/1>, (accessed 15 August 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Службени гласник РС, Стратегија очувања и јачања односа матичне државе и дијаспоре и матичне државе и срба у Региону. број 4/11 и број14/11, <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2011/4/1/reg>, (accessed 19 August 2020).

<sup>11</sup> Службени гласник РС, Стратегија о економским миграцијама Републике Србије за период 2021-2027, године. број 21/20, <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2020/21/1/reg>, (accessed 19 August 2020).

country.<sup>1</sup> In Bosnia and Herzegovina, improvements in quantitative migration statistics are planned, the establishment of a system for collecting data on emigration at the local level, and the support for academic research and programs that study the phenomenon of migration in an interdisciplinary manner. Albania plans to identify gaps in the administrative data collection on migration and elaborate on a new standard model for its collection. In Serbia, one of the strategic goals is to improve the monitoring and quality of data on economic migration by establishing a regular, updated, and synchronized statistical database for monitoring migration flows. The diaspora mapping by establishing and updating databases and other activities is also recognized as needed in all WB countries.

**Strengthening institutional capacities and institutional coordination.** The most important condition for achieving effective migration management is strengthening institutional capacities and institutional coordination. The Albanian Migration Strategy states that it is necessary to assess available human, financial, and information resources in the institutions in charge of the implementation of labor migration tasks. In this regard, it is foreseen to clearly define the competencies of key government institutions and agencies, to identify their capacities for migration governance, to review the existing institutional partnerships on migration, and to formulate new partnerships. Serbia emphasizes the importance of strengthening the capacities of institutions responsible for monitoring migration trends and establishing a greater degree of coordination to support the inclusion of the concept of economic migration in development policies.

**New models of migration governance are needed.** The importance of new models of migration governance is highlighted, such as the management at various government levels and the development of partnerships with civil society organizations. The policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasizes that it is essential to strengthen the capacities of local self-government units for cooperation with emigrants since it is the government level that effectively and directly realizes cooperation with emigrants that results in mutual benefits. Therefore, it is emphasized that the civil sector activities abroad and in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be supported, contributing to strengthening the ties of emigrants with the country of origin. The Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora of North Macedonia states that the success of the implementation of economic cooperation measures with the diaspora depends on the implementation at the local level and on the commitment of the local authorities to utilize this potential for development. In this sense, it is stated that the diaspora organizations are of enormous importance and that it is necessary to create new models of cooperation between them and the state institutions. Albania stresses the need for a comprehensive review of the current role of local governance structures in the strategy implementation and the improvement of horizontal and vertical coherence through enhanced operational and strategic coordination. In Serbia, the role of local actors stands out as key to the sustainability and implementation of the concept of migration and development. Therefore, it is stated that better coordination should be achieved at the local level and the strategic and operational connection of local migration councils<sup>2</sup> with youth offices and local employment councils. The role of the newly

<sup>1</sup> V. Janeska, Labor Market and Labor Migration in the Republic of Macedonia – Changes and Current Situation, 2013, [http://conference.iza.org/conference\\_files/EUEnlargement\\_2013/janeska\\_v9631.pdf](http://conference.iza.org/conference_files/EUEnlargement_2013/janeska_v9631.pdf), (accessed 25 August 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Since 2012, a local migration council has been formed in almost all local self-government units as the main local body dealing with migration management: local administration, police administration, employment service, school administration, local trustee, health center, center for social work, Red Cross and civil society

organizations. In 2012, all local migration councils were trained in the basics of migration management organized by KIRS and IOM. (The handbook entitled Migration and Local Development, created within the project “Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies”, implemented by IOM and UNDP, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), <https://serbia.iom.int/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Prirucnik%20o%20migracijama%20i%20lokalnom%20razvoju.pdf>, (accessed 5 September 2020).



formed Coordination Body for Monitoring Economic Migration Flows<sup>1</sup> is thus emphasized, with the competence of reviewing all issues of economic migration and directing the work of state administration bodies in that area. The Albanian National Strategy on Migration points out that the absence of a high-level coordination mechanism on migration governance has limited the Albanian Government's capacity to address migration-related issues with a holistic approach. It is stated that a thematic working group on migration is being formed to coordinate the work of all ministries at both strategic and technical levels. The establishment of the National Diaspora Agency is foreseen as well.

#### **Bilateral cooperation with destination countries.**

Certain mechanisms of bilateral cooperation with destination countries aimed at regulating and improving the position of its nationals abroad (in the field of labor, social, pension, and disability, health insurance, etc.), development of circular migration programs, temporary stays, and seasonal work engagements, and/or remigration, although to varying degrees, are included in the strategies of all WB countries.

In the area of access to social insurance and pension transfers for the diaspora, in North Macedonia, among other things, it is stated that the communication between the competent institutions and their efficiency in approving requests for social insurance and timely payment of pensions to citizens in/from the diaspora should be improved. A special goal in the Serbian Economic Migration Strategy is to create conditions for monitoring, encouraging, and supporting the return and circular migration. To have a better insight into the development potentials of circular migration, the importance of researching this phenomenon is emphasized. Regarding return and circular migration, the institutionalization and greater social affirmation

of programs as well as the development of regular monitoring mechanisms are foreseen. The need for measures to strengthen appropriate technical and human capacities is emphasized to improve the collection of data on return and circular migration. The Albanian strategy documents state that circular migration between Albania and the host countries should be assessed and encouraged through preferential measures or bilateral agreements negotiation. A special reassessment in cooperation with the EU countries and specific projects to facilitate the implementation of employment agreements is also envisaged. Negotiations related to the signing of bilateral agreements on social protection are also planned. One of the designed measures is the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns on violations of migrant rights. It is stated that the new policy needs to consider the growing role of the private sector (including recruiters and recruitment agencies) as a direct service provider on labor migration. Therefore, the plan for establishing high-level bilateral consultative committees with host countries for the protection of the rights of the Albanian diaspora communities is of great importance.

#### **Development of a framework for temporary and circular migration, return, and reintegration.**

The development of a temporary and circular migration framework is considered to reduce emigration pressure and avoid permanent departure, especially by skilled workers and their families. Along with the envisaged measures to improve living and working conditions in the country, most WB countries emphasize in their migration strategies the need to create better conditions for the return and reintegration of expatriates, especially those whose professional qualifications are in demand in the countries of origin. In addition, the measures aimed at

<sup>1</sup> In order to overcome the possible problem of stronger emigration of skills and talents after EU accession, in 2019 the Government of Serbia formed the Coordination Body for Monitoring Economic Migration Flows in Serbia, which included professionals from various fields: competent ministers, members of the academic community, representatives of state statistics, employers and successful businessmen, as well as representatives of

large trade unions. The result of this cooperation is the recently adopted Economic Migration Strategy for the period 2021-2027. J. Predojević-Despić, Brain Gain Policies in the Western Balkans: Challenges and Potential Initiatives, 2020, a paper presented at the Digital Conference "Emigration from the Western Balkans – Addressing the Challenge", Aspen Institute Germany, Berlin, September 10-11, 2020.

improving communication and cooperation with the diaspora are becoming increasingly common.

In North Macedonia, the need to create a policy for reducing intellectual emigration and the return of highly educated persons from abroad is emphasized. Diaspora mapping and the creation of a database for distinct categories of migrants are also planned. The Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora states that there is a need to create preconditions for establishing cooperation with professional diaspora members by stimulating the transfer of knowledge and technology. For example, it is proposed to develop the involvement of the diaspora in the implementation of public-private partnership projects. Kosovo's\* strategy to encourage and promote the return of intellectual potential envisages creating conditions for the engagement of professionals, lecturers, and students from the diaspora in public and private institutions to gain advanced experience in areas of interest. Therefore, there is a pronounced need to complete the registration of the diaspora.

Moreover, the need for the advancement of international cooperation and strengthening the capacity of institutions to better manage circular migration is highlighted. Providing support to emigrants in exercising their rights and interests abroad is of primary importance for the competent state institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The need to create benefits and privileges for return is also emphasized and the measures aimed at mapping the diaspora and their greater contribution to the country's development by establishing mechanisms for mobilizing human resources.

The Serbian strategy emphasizes the need to develop programs to retain human capacity from the category of deficit occupations and create a supportive environment for attracting highly qualified professionals, returnees, and immigrants. A special goal is to improve the cooperation between the diaspora and the home country, to encourage a wide variety of investment options for transnational entrepreneurship through favorable business conditions. Measures are planned to strengthen the cooperation of professionals of various

profiles in the country and abroad, and facilitate return after acquiring new knowledge and skills, including developing investment projects and analyses of potential investors and mediation in investment and other activities. It is pointed out that it is necessary to create a proactive attitude of local self-government towards the diaspora.

The Albanian strategy envisages measures of reassessment of policies aimed at promoting the return of skilled migrants. It is also stated that it is necessary to gain a better insight and consider the specific needs of Albanian returnees and migrants, and provide privileges and benefits for returnees whose qualifications are needed in Albania. Although the strategic documents state that institutional structures should be created in Albania to enable the return of talented professionals and prevent the movement of people who have graduated abroad, there is a significant emphasis on the measures for developing cooperation with the diaspora. It is planned to encourage diaspora professionals to apply for different projects through the Development Fund of Diaspora. Other measures for the establishment of registers and databases are foreseen, which should enable more efficient implementation of the national strategy and cooperation with the diaspora: e.g., expansion of the National Civil Registry with data on migrants, the establishment of networks of professional organizations abroad, scholars specialized in the field of migration, etc. The creation of the Diaspora Business Register, among other things, should enable the establishment of better contacts between migrants and businesses in Albania. It is also emphasized that efforts should be made among emigrants to promote consular and diplomatic services through an online platform provided by Albanian diplomatic missions.

**Increasing the international mobility of students and skills.** The strategic migration documents of most WB countries also include measures aimed at improving the international circulation of students and attracting international students as well as foreign workers whose occupations are in demand. The Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro encourages the

integration of foreign, especially young and educated, labor forces. It is stated that migration in the country will be significantly affected by the upcoming EU integration and global trends. The development of attractive policies with a view to encouraging foreign citizens to integrate economically is also envisioned in Kosovo\*. Albania highlights that it is important to remove obstacles to the mobility of students and professionals and to promote student exchange programs and internships with host country universities with a high presence of Albanian students. It is emphasized that the quota system for managing labor immigration should be reviewed to enable a better response to the needs of the labor market, which should be periodically monitored and forecast. The Serbian Economic Migration Strategy foresees measures for the development of programs for attracting and including foreigners of various educational profiles in the labor market of the Republic of Serbia. The mobility of students and researchers should be encouraged by harmonizing the education system with the needs of the labor market, emphasizing the monitoring innovations. To strengthen the capacities of higher education institutions to attract international students and researchers is another priority.

**The need for systemic reforms.** For migration measures of countries of origin that enable return and/or cooperation with the diaspora to achieve a positive effect, it is necessary to implement measures aimed at a favorable environment for social and economic prosperity, the rule of law, high-quality public services and the highest standards of education and health care, along with the prevention of systemic corruption and the practice of nepotism and clientelism, etc. As the first step in achieving this goal, strategic migration documents must emphasize the need for systemic reforms. The special goal of the Serbian Economic Migration Strategy is the improvement of living and working conditions in the economic and social sectors. This goal is

planned to be achieved through structural reforms and raising the capacity and efficiency of the public sector and strengthening institutional capacities. The emphasis is placed on creating incentives to attract direct investment, starting own businesses, developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation, and strengthening the fight for the rule of law against corruption and nepotism. The Albanian Strategy of Diaspora states: Despite the documents produced by the state policy, little concrete action has been taken to make the diaspora feel welcome in developing the country of origin. Even when they try to invest in it, they often face bureaucracy and corruption. Therefore, the measures that should create a favorable home country environment for the Albanian diaspora are fiscal incentives, information dissemination, avoidance of corruption, risk reduction, avoidance of import taxation for machinery, equipment and raw materials for investment, the abolition of tax corporation, and the reduction of the number of procedures for obtaining construction permits.

### Overview of Main Programs/Projects and Initiatives in the WB Mainly Supported by International Actors

Building legislation, inter-institutional cooperation, and capacity of national and local actors. Progress in building legislation improved inter-institutional cooperation, and capacities of national and local stakeholders in the WB countries have been increased through project cooperation with international organizations, donors, and the civil sector. The project, *Migration for Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB)*,<sup>1</sup> led by IOM, was implemented between 2010 and 2012 in all WB countries. The project aimed to re-establish public services in post-war countries through temporary skills transfers of diaspora members. Although networking was significant and improved governance in deficit sectors, the

<sup>1</sup> For more information see: International Organization for Migration (IOM), MIDWEB: Migration for Development in the Western Balkans, <https://austria.iom.int/en/midweb-migration-development-western-balkans>, (accessed 2 September 2020).



relatively short time spent by diaspora professionals in countries of origin did not allow for significant knowledge transfers. The MIDWEB project focused particularly on capacity-building in certain fields of local organizations. Its important contribution is that it has enabled the strengthening of the capacity of migration service centers, mainly in national employment services (NES). These centers were later further developed. Their services became available not only in the capitals but also in other major towns. Over time, they have become significant factors in providing easy access to information for emigration, temporary departure abroad, and reintegration programs for returnees. However, their work should be continuously improved, and certain obstacles need to be removed. For example, a legal framework needs to be built in Albania to exploit the potential of the migration counters. The lack of labor agreements with the EU Member States has significantly limited their ability to serve potential migrants fully.<sup>1</sup> The Kosovo\* Employment Agency has provided counseling services at the municipal level and is currently developing an online module to provide complete labor migration information.

The EU funded CBMM<sup>2</sup> project (2010-2013) is important for improving migration management and the global project *Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies*<sup>3</sup> (2014-2018), implemented in Serbia by IOM, UNDP, etc. The latter also focused on the local level of governance<sup>4</sup> and gave important proposals for

improving specific inter-governmental coordination mechanisms in migration management. The projects of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees which are important for Bosnia and Herzegovina are *Migration and Development: mainstreaming the concept of migration and development into relevant policies, plans, and activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina*,<sup>5</sup> as well as the *Diaspora for Development (D4D)*.<sup>6</sup> By reviewing challenges and opportunities for using migration in the function of development, the projects improve, as stated, mostly unstructured and sporadic cooperation between actors at different government levels, and improve the preconditions for including emigration and the diaspora in integrated development strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To improve the legal framework for evidence-based migration-related policies in Kosovo\*, the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration is implementing the project *Strengthening Migration Management Authorities in Kosovo\* (MIMAK)*.<sup>7</sup> The main objectives are to support management and coordination among stakeholders and strengthen the role of the National Coordinator on Migration. In this regard, it is important to develop the capacities of the Government Authority on Migration, particularly related to the developmental impacts of migration, and to better inform the population on the benefits of regular migration and the consequences of irregular migration. In 2017, the Government of

<sup>1</sup> A. Krasteva et al., Maximizing the Development Impact of Labor Migration in the Western Balkans. Final Report.

<sup>2</sup> IOM 'Capacity Building of Institutions Involved in Migration Management and Reintegration of Returnees in the Republic of Serbia' project. For more information: <https://returnandreintegration.iom.int/en/resources/report/capacity-building-institutions-involved-migration-management-and-reintegration>, (accessed 5 September 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For more information: <https://www.iom.int/mainstreaming-migration-national-development-strategies>, (accessed 5 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Handbook Migration and Local Development, created within the project 'Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies', implemented by IOM and UNDP, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), <https://serbia.iom.int/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Prirucnik%20o%20migracijama%20i%20lokalnom%20razvoju.pdf>, (accessed on 5 September 2020).

<sup>5</sup> For more information: [www.sa.undp.org/dam/docs](http://www.sa.undp.org/dam/docs), (accessed 4 September 2020).

<sup>6</sup> 'Mainstreaming the concept of migration and development into relevant policies, plans and activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Diaspora for Development (D4D)' is a project of the Government of Switzerland and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in partnership with UNDP and IOM, in the period 2016-2020. For more information: [http://www.ba.undp.org/content/bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina/bs/home/operations/projects/poverty\\_reduction/migration-and-development1.htm](http://www.ba.undp.org/content/bosnia_and_herzegovina/bs/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/migration-and-development1.htm), (accessed 4 September 2020).

<sup>7</sup> For more information: <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/capacity-building/regions/western-balkans-and-turkey/ongoing-projects/>, (accessed 4 September 2020).

Albania, through international cooperation with the World Bank and Harvard University, achieved significant progress in maximizing the labor migration of Albanians and its impact on the economy and society as a focus of migration management policies.<sup>1</sup>

The *Global Program Migration and Diaspora* commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, implemented by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), is realized in the WB in Serbia, Albania, and Kosovo\*, and through one of the components of the *Program Migration & Diaspora*.<sup>2</sup> It advises governments and international partners on policy, organizational and strategy development relating to migration. For example, in Kosovo\*, there is cooperation with the competent ministries in managing regular labor migration and adopting the Diaspora Law and Diaspora Strategy 2019-2023. In Serbia, in partnership with the competent ministry, the Economic Migration Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2027 has been developed, while extensive activities on the preparation of the Action Plan are underway.

Improvement of the possibilities for wider representation of circular migration. In cooperation with the state institutions of the WB countries, GIZ has significantly promoted the importance of circular migration in the last ten years and improved the possibilities for their wider representation in the WB. Within the global project *Program Migration for Development (PME)*, implemented in Serbia, Albania, and Kosovo\*, the *German Information Centre for Migration, Training, and Career (DIMAK)* was established within national employment services, i.e., Migration Service Centers.<sup>3</sup> The aim was to provide reliable information and advice on the benefits of working in Germany, on training, study, and professional development, as well as a legal departure to Germany, professional advancement, and job opportunities. At DIMAK,

returnees from Germany and third countries are advised on social and economic reintegration in the country of origin. In addition, DIMAK strengthens the capacities of employees in national employment services through on-the-job training. GIZ implemented the project *Triple Win Nurses – Sustainable Recruitment of Nurses in the WB* between 2013 and 2020 in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with national employment services. The project has the form of a global skill partnership and provides for mediation in finding employment in Germany, under the same conditions as people already working in Germany, assistance in language and professional preparation, and monitoring the departure of candidates and their integration in Germany. They are employed in hospitals and homes for the elderly as health care assistants (until their diplomas are recognized) and after that as qualified health workers. About 1,400 medical workers have been employed and settled in Germany. It is emphasized that the project provides benefits not only for migrants and the destination country but also for the country of origin, through the possibility of sending remittances and reducing the number of unemployed medical staff. However, not only the unemployed but also employed candidates had the right to apply. After the validation of diplomas, it was possible to obtain a permanent residence permit in Germany. Therefore, the certainty of the win effect for countries of origin must be called into question. GIZ's initiative to provide the youth from Kosovo\* with two years of professional training and work in Germany has been expanded by interventions that include entrepreneurship training for youth to prepare them to start a business in Kosovo\* and transfer their skills to their homeland after completing their training in Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Creating conditions for the return to countries of origin. The *Brain Gain Program*, implemented by the Albanian government between 2006 and

<sup>1</sup> A. Krasteva et al., Maximizing the Development Impact of Labor Migration in the Western Balkans. Final Report.

<sup>2</sup> For more information: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/78803.html>, (accessed 12 August 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Program Migration for Development, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/20626.html>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> A. Krasteva et al., Maximizing the Development Impact of Labor Migration in the Western Balkans. Final Report.

2011 with UNDP's support, was among the first in the WB to recognize the importance of strengthening institutional capacities to create conditions for the return to the countries of origin. The program aimed to integrate the highly skilled and scientific diaspora into the socio-economic development of the country of origin through defined measures gathered in one place and to encourage the return of professionals. It is stated that the program managed to bring back 138 highly qualified individuals to the country and paved the way for significant returns of highly qualified individuals to be employed in various sectors. However, the effects of the program were limited.<sup>1</sup> Among the main reasons is the project's unsecured sustainability after its completion: interruption of funding, insufficient cooperation, and coordination between stakeholders in implementation, and the lack of evaluation of the achieved results and effects.<sup>2</sup>

Other international projects in the WB aimed at responding to the wave of brain drain. Using the diaspora's potential can also have similar limitations: state institutions did not play an active role in implementation, and project sustainability was not ensured. On the other hand, the implementation of several projects was successful, and good results were achieved, such as, for example, the *Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals Project*<sup>3</sup> (2006-2008), implemented by IOM in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, and Serbia, as well as the *Brain Gain Program* developed by World University Service Austria (2002-2011). It was implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, and Serbia. The program

targeted the temporary return of scholars from the former Yugoslavia to the region for teaching and researching purposes and enabled the implementation of over 600 guest lectures by scholars who had emigrated from the region. *Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN)*, a UNDP program, also engaged qualified expatriate nationals from the diaspora and local professionals to serve in key capacities in national institutions.

*The Zoran Djindjic Internship Program of German Business for the Countries of the Western Balkans*, which has been supported by GIZ for about 15 years, provides up to 75 scholarships each year, offering young graduates and students from the WB the opportunity to do internships for three to six months in leading German companies.<sup>4</sup> In addition, an alumni network has been established, which is numerous and active. It also turned out that most participants got a job or continued their studies after the internship. One of the most important achievements of the program is that it has a significant influence on regional understanding and networking.

An incentive that has the potential for growth of mobility and capacity-building of scientific institutions is the program of the newly formed Science Fund in Serbia. The program, launched at the end of 2019, enables short-term visits and joint activities of researchers from Serbia with professionals from the diaspora. Although it is possible to involve researchers from the diaspora in other scientific projects, funding is provided only for domestic researchers.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the association called *Returning Point*, founded by associations of professionals in the

<sup>1</sup> I. Gëdeshi, R.King, Research Study on Brain Gain: Reversing Brain Drain with Albanian Scientific Diaspora, Tirana: UNDP, 2018, [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Brain\\_Gain%20web.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Brain_Gain%20web.pdf), (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> T. Pavlov, B. Zeneli, National Brain Gain Policies in WB Country Examples, in: Skilled Migration and Development Practices, Bern, SDC, 2013, pp.45–64.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the TRQN Project, <https://serbia.iom.int/projects/temporary-return-qualified-nationals-trqn-project-making-contribution-reconstruction-and>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> For more information: The Zoran Djindjic Internship Program of German Business for the Countries of the Western Balkans, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/20626.html>, (accessed 4 September 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Within the first public call of the Serbian Science and Diaspora Program: Vouchers for Knowledge Exchange, the Science Fund will finance 92 projects. The duration of the projects is up to one year. This program is the first of three planned programs within the Development of Cooperation with the Diaspora. For more information about The Science Fund Serbia: <http://fondzanauku.gov.rs/poziv/2019/11/dijaspora/>, (accessed 4 June 2020).

diaspora and Science Technology Park Belgrade and supported by UNDP, also has good development potential.<sup>1</sup> The association was established on the initiative of the Government of Serbia to create the best possible conditions for the implementation of the Economic Migration Strategy and to strengthen the Serbian industry's innovation potential by using the potential of the diaspora. In that sense, this organization provides ideas and proposals from the diaspora for consideration by the highest executives. One member of Returning Point is always an associate member of the Prime Minister's Office. Although the association was founded relatively recently, significant results have been achieved, such as mediation in providing tax and customs benefits for returnees. Therefore, it is very important to ensure the work of this organization when the project funding is completed.

The *Kosovo\* Mobility Platform* initiative, developed as a pilot project on circular migration by the Employment Agency, in collaboration with GIZ, equips potential labor migrants with better information, education, and prospects for return. However, the platform focuses only on the social services sector and, in particular, on care activities. However, if properly managed and developed, it has the potential for much wider implementation in promoting circular migration in Kosovo\*.<sup>2</sup>

Improving the international migration statistics system. The lack of a reliable, regular system to monitor migration flows, the unavailability of data on the characteristics of emigrants from the WB countries, and the consequences of emigration, as well as the lack of systematic data on various aspects of the diaspora are the basic challenges that hinder formulation and

implementation of the effective and evidence-based migration policy responses. The partnership between the EU, international organizations, and national statistical institutes in all WB countries has existed for a long time. Numerous projects have enabled huge progress in many segments of the data production systems in general. However, migration-related data remains a challenge in the WB. In addition, data on emigration is still a difficult problem to solve in most EU countries. One of the important reasons is the increase in temporary and circular migration.

Numerous international projects have aimed to find solutions to complex challenges in providing internationally comparable data and making it available for many stakeholders. Among them are EU funded projects in which partners from the WB also participated. Their goal was to achieve innovative solutions by connecting professionals in statistics, science, and public administration at the national and local levels and empower public administrations to develop and implement policies and strategies using enhanced datasets and empirical evidence. Some of the most important projects are: *Managing Migration and its Effects in South-East Europe: Transnational Actions Towards Evidence-Based Strategies (SEEMIG)*<sup>3</sup> and *Making Migration Work for Development – Policy Tools for Strategic Planning in SEE Regions and Cities (MMWD)*<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, strategic projects funded by the European Union's Interreg Danube Transnational Program and the South-East Europe Program were also instrumental in this effort, for instance the projects *Improving Institutional Capacities and Fostering Cooperation to Tackle the Impacts*

<sup>1</sup> Returning Point is a platform whose mission is to provide the Serbian diaspora with information on all ways to get in touch with Serbia, and the possibilities for providing assistance as well as the circulation of information for individuals who want to return to the country. For more information: <https://tackapovratka.rs/?lang=en>, accessed 31/8/2020, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> M. Sauer, S. Kllloqi, Circular Migration as a Policy Tool to Foster Development in Kosovo, Eastern European Social Policy Network, Compilation of Workshop Papers, European Centre Vienna, 2017, [https://eespn.euro.centre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/BB\\_Report\\_final\\_small.pdf](https://eespn.euro.centre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/BB_Report_final_small.pdf), (accessed 12 September 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For more information: <https://www.demografia.hu/en/seemig>, (accessed 12 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> For more information: [http://southeast-europe.net/en/projects/approved\\_projects/?id=167](http://southeast-europe.net/en/projects/approved_projects/?id=167), (accessed 12 September 2020).

of *Transnational Youth Migration (YOU MIG)*<sup>1</sup>, *Danube Region Information Platform for Economic Integration of Migrants (DRIM)* and *Changing Discourses, Changing Practices: The Roma as Human Resource (RARE)*. Given that the same or very similar challenges associated with migration data collection and definitions are present in all WB countries, the experiences and results achieved in these and similar projects can be a good basis for establishing stronger regional cooperation to find solutions applicable throughout the WB region.

### Measures to Foster Circular Migration and Re-migration: Possible Policy Measures and Initiatives

One of the most important reasons for the significant increase in the interest of policymakers in circular migration<sup>2</sup> is that it is believed that it can contribute to creating flexible labor markets and that it has a strong potential to provide development benefits of labor

migration.<sup>3</sup> However, for development benefits to be felt in countries of destination and origin and for migrant workers to be winners in circular schemes, the concept of circular migration must be understood much more broadly than the usual temporary contract labor migration.

**Circular migration must be properly regulated and well managed.**<sup>4</sup> However, over the past decades, temporary migration programs have often generated strong public opposition, mostly related to the exploitation of migrant workers and rights abuses, while examples of good practice are rare and/or short-lived. On the other hand, the development of the framework and the wider representation of managed circular migration programs, such as EU circulation migration schemes and mobility partnerships,<sup>5</sup> are believed to increase safer legal migration opportunities.<sup>6</sup> However, research shows that not all internal labor market gaps can be addressed through circular migration. It can represent only one among the many employment strategies implemented, and 'permanent'

<sup>1</sup> For more information: YOU MIG, DRIM and RARE projects [http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects?approved\\_project\\_filter%5Bcall%5D=79&approved\\_project\\_filter%5Bstatus%5D=&approved\\_project\\_filter%5Bpriority%5D=68&approved\\_project\\_filter%5Bacronym%5D=&approved\\_project\\_filter%5B\\_token%5D=uhf-rZOEmsWY43n\\_0B](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects?approved_project_filter%5Bcall%5D=79&approved_project_filter%5Bstatus%5D=&approved_project_filter%5Bpriority%5D=68&approved_project_filter%5Bacronym%5D=&approved_project_filter%5B_token%5D=uhf-rZOEmsWY43n_0B), (accessed 12 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> There is considerable variation among definitions of temporary and circular migration. In general, very few countries have existing definitions of temporary or circular migration. Therefore, statistics on temporary and circular migration are a great challenge. Temporary migration is usually defined as "migration for a specific motivation and/or purpose with the intention that, afterwards, there will be a return to country of origin or onward movement." Circular migration is "frequently related to short-term residence that may be subject to little or no administrative recording, particularly if a residence permit has already been granted in the context of a previous stay or if a migrant is a citizen of the countries he or she migrates to/from (double or multiple citizenship)." To produce comparable statistical information and to analyze the developmental impact of circular migration, countries need to have a common definition. United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, *Defining and Measuring Circular Migration*. Final report of the Task Force on Measuring Circular Migration, Conference of European Statisticians, Luxembourg, 9-10 February 2016, [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/bur/2016/February/14-Add1\\_Circular\\_migration.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/bur/2016/February/14-Add1_Circular_migration.pdf), (accessed 15 October 2020); European Union, Temporary

and Circular Migration: empirical evidence, current policy practice and future options in EU Member States. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/circular-migration/0a\\_emn\\_synthesis\\_report\\_temporary\\_circular\\_migration\\_finalsept\\_2011\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/circular-migration/0a_emn_synthesis_report_temporary_circular_migration_finalsept_2011_en.pdf), (accessed 15 October 2020).

<sup>3</sup> P. Wickramasekara, *Circular Migration: A Triple Win or a Dead End?* International Labor Office, Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), Geneva: ILO, GURN discussion paper; no.15, 2011, <http://www.migration4development.org/sites/m4d.emakina-eu.net/files/no15-mar11-circular-migration-a-triple-win-or-a-dead-end.pdf>, (accessed 13 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> G. Hugo, *What We Know about Circular Migration and Enhanced Mobility*. Migration Policy Institute, Migration and Development, Policy Brief, No.7, 2013, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/what-we-know-about-circular-migration-and-enhanced-mobility>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>5</sup> P. Wickramasekara, *Circular Migration: A Triple Win or a Dead End?* Geneva: ILO. 2011.

<sup>6</sup> K. Newland, D. R. Agunas, *Circular Migration and Development: Trends, Policy Routes and Ways Forward*. Migration Policy Institute, Program on Migrants, migration and development, Policy Brief, April, 2007, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/circular-migration-and-development-trends-policy-routes-and-ways-forward>, (accessed 9 September 2020).



migration policies would also have to be supported.<sup>1</sup> It should also be clarified under what conditions a temporary stay can be transformed into a permanent stay.<sup>2</sup>

**There are large differences in the categories of migrants who can participate in circular migration.** It is stated that mostly only highly skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, and researchers benefit from such migration arrangements. Simultaneously, in the EU, for example, unskilled and low-skilled third-country nationals have very limited opportunities to migrate for employment despite the high demand for their services. Although there are very few legal admission channels for low-skilled migrants, most are reserved for male-dominated industries. Such a situation puts migrant women in an unfavorable position, especially those who perform non-seasonal low-wage labor, such as domestic and care jobs.<sup>3</sup> In addition, most migration programs do not take into account workers in an irregular status in the EU. It is considered that only through their inclusion in well-designed policy responses will their absorption into labor markets or dignified return be enabled.<sup>4</sup>

The impact of different categories of migrants on the development of both destinations and countries of origin must also be considered. High-skilled migrants and professionals are much more welcome and are considered much more relevant for the economies of destination and origin

countries. However, the sudden changes in labor markets caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown show that even the low-skilled, often portrayed as undesirable by the receiving societies, represent the categories of workers essential to economies.<sup>5</sup> This fact is especially true for health and care workers, cleaners, seasonal agriculture workers, etc. In Canada, there are growing demands about the need to redefine parts of the immigration program and regard immigration as an economic driver and in a completely new way, i.e. to be part of the strategy towards securing health and security.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is considered of utmost importance to take measures to ensure that migrant workers' rights are protected, given that precarious workers are indispensable factors of economies rather than accessories.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Labor migration governance falls largely under the jurisdiction of individual sovereign states.**

Bilateral agreements are the preferred path for many countries; however, they are not binding.<sup>8</sup> Unlike refugees, there are no clear normative and institutional frameworks governing their access to rights for labor migrants. Although progress has been made in normative developments, respect for migrants' rights in national legislation is far from satisfactory.<sup>9</sup> The exploitation of migrant workers, poor working and accommodation conditions, long working hours, low wages, and high commissions of employment agencies or other often illegal intermediaries are

<sup>1</sup> A. Venturini, Circular migration as an employment strategy for Mediterranean countries. CARIM analytic and synthetic notes 2008/39, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Florence, 2008, <http://migration4development.org.630elm001.blackmes>

[h.com/sites/default/files/A\\_Venturini\\_2008\\_Circular\\_Migration\\_as\\_an\\_Employment\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Mediterranean\\_Countries.pdf](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/A_Venturini_2008_Circular_Migration_as_an_Employment_Strategy_for_Mediterranean_Countries.pdf), (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> P. Wickramasekara, Circular Migration: A Triple Win or a Dead End? Geneva: ILO, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> K. Newland, A. Riester, Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers. Migration Policy Institute: Towards a Global Compact for Migration: A development Perspective, Issue No.3, 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/LegalPathwaysLowSkilledWorkers-FINAL.pdf>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> P. Wickramasekara, Circular Migration: A Triple Win or a Dead End? Geneva: ILO, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> M. Andriescu, Pandemic, Europe Feels the Pinch from Slowed Intra-EU Labor Mobility. Migration Policy Institute: Migration Information Source, 2020, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/covid19-europe-feels-pinch-slowed-intra-eu-labor-mobility>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>6</sup> First Policy Response, COVID-19 Six Months Later: A conversation with Senator Ratna Omidvar. Canada must make it easier for essential workers to immigrate. Immigration Policy, 17 September 2020, <https://policyresponse.ca/canada-must-make-it-easier-for-essential-workers-to-immigrate/>, (accessed 20 September 2020).

<sup>7</sup> M. Andriescu, Pandemic, Europe feels the pinch from slowed Intra-EU Labor Mobility, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> K. Newland, A. Riester, Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> F. Crepeau, I. Atak, Global Migration Governance. Avoiding Commitments on Human Rights, yet Tracing a Course for Cooperation, Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights, Vol. 34. No. 2, 2016, pp.113-146.

just some of the violations of workers' rights involved in temporary working programs. Therefore, it is necessary to work devotedly to combat fraud throughout the recruitment process and protect migrant workers against abuse and dependence on the will of agencies or employers. In the WB, for example, after the initiation of the WB Regulation, a rapid growth of employment agencies was recorded in a short period. In some cases, questionable employment strategies were applied.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to provide clear and accessible information for all participants in the migration process, especially migrants themselves. Well-planned communication strategies significantly reduce the risks of misuse.<sup>2</sup> In this regard, establishing a system that registers, controls, and screens employers wishing to hire immigrants, such as the German WB Regulation proposal, is especially important. As stated, this would significantly contribute to the growth of public trust in the system, which is a key determinant of any migration policy.<sup>3</sup>

It is also necessary **to work on expanding the legal channels for international recruitment**. In this sense, good cooperation between countries of origin and destination is crucial. In this way, numerous obstacles to the development of circular migration programs can be removed more efficiently. Numerous actors involved in facilitating international migration, collectively known as the 'migration industry', can do a great deal to help provide better conditions for migrants and make better use of migration for development. However, for many of them, migration has become a business, and they benefit from an insufficiently defined policy framework and communication strategies.<sup>4</sup> In addition, it is impossible in most countries to implement a smooth circular migration system

due to the lack of staff trained and experienced in this field.<sup>5</sup>

Considering the previous experiences and cooperation between National Employment Services (NES) and GIZ, the WB needs to develop the potential of DIMAK in the WB, especially in terms of expanding opportunities for circular migration programs. In this sense, the services of migration service centers should be developed and expanded, and the capacity of NES staff should be strengthened. Moreover, the expansion of activities to other countries in the region and other destination countries should be considered. Good practice examples from other countries can be further developed to protect migrants' rights, especially low-skilled workers. For example, certain recruitment agencies in Haiti do not charge the usual high commissions for agricultural workers. In several countries under the *Seasonal and Agricultural Workers Program*, IOM has participated in recruiting workers through bilateral agreements. Several countries use only government agencies to hire migrant workers.<sup>6</sup>

The development of circular migration policies can be considered successful only if it equally considers the interests and development effects of migrants' destination and origin. One recommendation for improving the German WB Regulation<sup>7</sup> is that the potential negative effects among the labor force of the countries of origin must be examined in advance. It is emphasized that potential shortages in the labor markets of countries of origin should be prevented, especially in the supply of skilled workers and possible down-skilling of engaged migrants in destination countries. In this regard, the policy development in destination countries should build a model consisting of the harmonized relations between circular and permanent migration channels. This fact will affect the

<sup>1</sup> J. Bither, A. Ziebarth, Creating Legal Pathways to Reduce Irregular Migration? What We Can Learn from Germany's "Western Balkan Regulation". Migration Strategy Group on International Cooperation and Development, 2018, <https://www.gmfus.org/publications/creating-legal-pathways-reduce-irregular-migration-what-we-can-learn-germanys-western>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> G. Hugo, What we know about circular migration and enhanced mobility, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> K. Newland, A. Riester, Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> J. Bither, A. Ziebarth, Creating Legal Pathways to Reduce Irregular Migration? What We Can Learn from Germany's "Western Balkan Regulation", 2018.

promotion of international labor mobility. In this regard, immigration policy should allow for a flexible visa regime that will reduce administrative procedures and the time required to obtain work visas. In this way, circular migration would gain significant momentum. Although visa regimes for high and medium-skilled workers are more favorable, a step forward needs to be made in this regard. For example, procedures should be shortened, or the dependence of migrants on the employer, as is the case with H-1B visa holders in the United States. Allowing temporary migrants to obtain visas to repeat the temporary stay has, in some cases, proved to be very useful, as migrants do not have to be separated from their families for long periods, and experience has shown that when migrants can circulate freely, they generally do so.<sup>1</sup> In addition, New Zealand's program to support seasonal migration within the development framework of the *Recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme* has managed to significantly increase salaries and achieve development effects in sending countries involved in the program.<sup>2</sup> Spain has encouraged circular migration through the possibility of seasonal migrants who return to their countries of origin for four successive years and register with the Spanish consulate or embassy to obtain permanent residency.<sup>3</sup>

The policy should include measures to reduce the costs and negative effects of migration. Among the most significant are measures that minimize the family disruption caused by circular migration.<sup>4</sup> Temporary migrants also need to be included in immigration and integration programs available to other migrants. It is important to enabling better living conditions, such as for migrants to have decent housing while

periodically staying in destination countries. Among the measures that can significantly encourage circular migration and the return of migrants to their countries of origin are the development of opportunities for portable social welfare benefits, pensions, health, and life insurance.<sup>5</sup>

To make the most of development benefits, **countries of origin should also direct policy development towards measures that integrate circular migration into development programs.** Moreover, the success of policies should not only be measured by the volume of return. However, it must also consider the impact of return migration on migrants' welfare and their households.<sup>6</sup> In addition, conditions should be created in the country to encourage expatriates to return, use human and social capital gained abroad, and invest in the origin country. In this sense, the already started development of cooperation between the governments of the countries of origin and destination through migration programs and agencies should be further strengthened. However, effective problem-solving requires expanding the migration and integration-related issues to wider plans. It is believed that development agencies at both ends of the migration process should, through joint efforts, integrate migration into their development actions and processes.<sup>7</sup>

One of the biggest challenges for policymakers is designing useful programs and strategies that support returnees and the local communities to which they return. The **development of efficient reintegration services** is among the first and perhaps the most important steps in this direction. The experiences of Mexico and the countries of Central America<sup>8</sup> show that the

<sup>1</sup> By K. Newland, D. R. Mendoza, A. Terrazas, *Learning by Doing: Experiences of Circular Migration*. Migration Policy Institute: Insight, Program on Migrants, Migration and Development, September 2008, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/learning-doing-experiences-circular-migration>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> K. Newland, A. Riester, *Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers*, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> By K. Newland, D. R. Mendoza, A. Terrazas, *Learning by Doing: Experiences of Circular Migration*, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> G. Hugo, *What we know about circular migration and enhanced mobility*, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> K. Newland, A. Riester, *Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers*, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> M. Schoch, J. Litchfield, A.H. Tsegay, *The Effect of Return Migration on the Household Welfare: Evidence from Ethiopia*. Migrating out of Poverty, University of Sussex, School of Global Studies, Working Paper 66, 2020, [www.migratingoutofpoverty.org](http://www.migratingoutofpoverty.org), (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>7</sup> G. Hugo, *What we know about circular migration and enhanced mobility*, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> R. Soto et al., *Sustainable Reintegration: Strategies to Support Migrants Returning to Mexico and Central*



development of reception and reintegration services must provide different types of both general and individually tailored services. A well-functioning coordination of a large number of actors involved in this work is also very important as well as efforts made to include as many beneficiaries as possible in the services, i.e., to make the services available at the municipal level. In addition, it was crucial for the services' development that they were government-led. It is emphasized that good organization and coordination between the government and the NGO sector was often lacking. However, efforts to identify the socio-demographic characteristics of returnees and the characteristics of their migration process immediately upon return, and in some cases even before that, have made it possible to enhance the capacity to target services according to the needs and characteristics of the migrants.<sup>1</sup>

**The role of civil society organizations in implementing the program is enormous**, not only in providing services in cases where public services cannot do so. They are mainly responsible for designing specific services according to the needs of returnees. Networks of psychosocial support and assistance to returnees were largely formed through them.<sup>2</sup> These services were designed mainly on a one-stop basis. Their centers were located mainly within the municipal administration building to be as accessible as possible to migrants.

The pilot project's experiences to formulate the one-stop-shop approach for young migrants and returnees in immigration and emigration

environments, implemented within the EU funded YOUMIG<sup>3</sup> project, can also be a good basis for further development of this approach in the WB. To empower young migrants by providing relevant and location-specific information concerning their rights, obligations, and opportunities, and any administrative procedures to be undertaken at the local level, a large number of national, regional, and local institutions have been involved in facilitating migration services in strengthened cooperation.

**The reintegration of migrants after returning to the country of origin is one of the most demanding processes.** It involves not only adapting returnees but also local communities. Therefore, reintegration programs are a very important part of the entire process. Only a very small number of migrants in the world have the opportunity to go through reintegration programs. Most programs also focus on including returnees in the labor market while neglecting the structural level's improvement. Programs should be gender-responsive and provide comprehensive services.<sup>4</sup> The reintegration process requires long-term support and significant resources, which the available programs usually cannot meet.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the long-term effects of the reintegration programs are also in question. For example, the *Beautiful Kosovo Program Phase II* has achieved very good results in short-term employment. However, after the completion of infrastructure projects, it failed to provide any new work without international aid.<sup>6</sup> In addition, low-skilled workers need to be well supported in

America. Migration Policy Institute, 2019, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/sustainable-reintegration-migrants-mexico-central-america>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> YOUMIG Project. For more information: [http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved\\_project\\_output/0001/33/e1bd29695e25b3af211276ebb38c283c54cb06e8.pdf](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_output/0001/33/e1bd29695e25b3af211276ebb38c283c54cb06e8.pdf), (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> P. Wickramasekara, Effective return and reintegration of migrant workers with special focus on ASEAN Member States. International Labor Organization, 2019, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/asia/ro-bangkok/sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_733917.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/asia/ro-bangkok/sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_733917.pdf), (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>5</sup> K. Newland, B. Salant, Balancing Act. Policy Framework for Migrant Return and Reintegration. Migration Policy Institute: Towards a Global Compact for Migration: a Development Perspective, Issue No.6, 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/policy-frameworks-migrant-return-and-reintegration>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>6</sup> IOM Office of the Inspector General, Evaluation of the Employment through the Beautiful Kosovo Programme (EU-BK II). Geneva: IOM, 2016.

reintegration opportunities and finding safe, legal ways for temporary work programs. That is why GIZ's initiative in Serbia to establish the e-registration of seasonal workers in agriculture<sup>1</sup> is very important. It is planned to expand the electronic databases to seasonal occupations in other sectors and to include new occupations, such as housework (cleaners, babysitters, etc.). This data would significantly improve the position of migrant women, protect the rights of the most vulnerable categories of migrants, and enable new types of legal entry into the labor markets of destination countries.

**Cooperation with the private sector can give a significant stimulus to the development of reintegration programs.** Large companies can help provide training to returnees, such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency with the Scania Corporation.<sup>2</sup> Migrants and returnees themselves can also join forces in launching start-up companies. A program to support seasonal workers from Colombia on agricultural plantations in Spain was also noticed. They were supported in developing a business plan that migrants could realize upon return.<sup>3</sup> Although it is a less tested option, connecting returnees with companies from destination countries that intend or have already established business activities in the countries of origin of migrants is also an option to be developed. Such and similar ventures should be given broader incentives.<sup>4</sup> The example of engineers returning to Tunisia, who after training in Germany got jobs in German companies in Tunisia, is worth mentioning, even though there are a small number of returnees. In the WB, there is great potential for the development of such initiatives. For example, there has been the Microsoft

Development Centre Serbia in Belgrade for a long time, which also employs returnee engineers and unique local talents from Serbia and the WB region.

It should be emphasized that returnees from the EU are most likely to have access to return and reintegration assistance. In addition, the EU provides the largest number of destination country assistance for reintegration.<sup>5</sup> Among them are very important incentives for the WB countries that GIZ implements through programs in several areas. Most projects aim to encourage structural reforms. Moreover, the global program *Migration for Development* provides advisory services in countries of origin, encourages training and education to gain professional qualifications, and increases job opportunities and social integration.<sup>6</sup> It should be emphasized that during the implementation of the program, GIZ closely cooperates with state institutions and numerous civil society organizations. These programs are also available not only to migrants and returnees but to all those who are interested. Assistance is also available in Germany, where the program focuses on individual advice through reintegration scouts and works closely with towns and communities in Germany.

**For migration to positively impact countries of origin, returnees must have the opportunity to activate knowledge and skills acquired abroad, and savings and social capital in the country of origin.** However, economic opportunities, the mismatch between their skills and labor market needs, and problems with recognizing diplomas obtained abroad are often lacking. In addition, there is often distrust in government institutions and problems in rebuilding social and professional networks, which is important for a

<sup>1</sup> For more information: Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Modernization of Municipal Services, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/31760.html>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>2</sup> UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Office for Independent Evaluation, Independent Evaluation: Operations and Industrial Maintenance Training Academy in Erbil, Iraq. Vienna, 2015, [https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2015-06/TFIRQ11001-Scania-Erbil-2014\\_0.pdf](https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2015-06/TFIRQ11001-Scania-Erbil-2014_0.pdf), (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>3</sup> K. Newland, B. Salant, Balancing Act. Policy Framework for Migrant Return and Reintegration, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> K. Hooper, Exploring New Legal Migration Pathways: Lessons from Pilot Projects. Migration Policy Institute, 2019, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/exploring-new-legal-migration-pathways-lessons-pilot-projects>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>5</sup> K. Newland, B. Salant, Balancing Act. Policy Framework for Migrant Return and Reintegration, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Programme 'Migration for Development'. For more information: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/62318.html>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

sense of belonging to society. There are also cases of social stigma and employment discrimination, especially regarding the low-skilled and forced returnees.<sup>1</sup>

Given that return migration is one of the main factors of the migration-development nexus (along with remittances and diaspora engagement),<sup>2</sup> it is necessary to develop policy measures to enhance awareness of migrants' needs. In addition, awareness should be raised that the transfer of skills and knowledge by expatriates and returnees is of great added value for the country of origin.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, countries of origin should develop pilot programs that emphasize the importance of scientific and cultural-artistic projects with migrants and returnees and the development of economic opportunities, and transnational and returnee entrepreneurship.

It is very important to expand the possibilities of informing the target groups of migrants and returnees in the country and abroad to facilitate access to opportunities in the country of origin. There is a potential for that in the cooperation of diplomatic missions, chambers of commerce, associations of migrants, especially the high-skilled and professionals in the country and abroad, and employers' organizations. As already mentioned in the paper, the WB has opportunities for development in this domain. Some of them are the online portal diplomatic missions in Albania, or the association Returning Point in Serbia, which has relations of trust with various institutions of the professional diaspora abroad, economic structures in the country, and regular contacts with the Office of the Prime Minister. These relations and contacts are

perhaps of crucial importance for the policy's efficiency.

Moreover, to gain the trust of the diaspora and increase the chances of return, and reduce the emigration pressure, the economic and social conditions in the countries of origin must be satisfactory. Therefore, the WB countries need to significantly intensify their European integration processes, rapidly build European standards in all areas of the economy and society, insist on the rule of law, in particular, and above all an independent judiciary as well as investigative journalism as its backbone.

The WB countries can also develop information and communication technologies and use them to simplify administrative procedures in various domains of the economy and society and to improve the living standards of the population. The example of Estonia, which has positioned itself as a regional leader in digitalization, shows that such a strategy guarantees results.<sup>4</sup>

Accomplishing good migration policy results is not an easy task, even if there is a clearly defined and coherent management system. Migration measures must be in line with the development agendas of the countries of origin to ensure policy sustainability.<sup>5</sup> However, this is not the case in WB countries. It is necessary to provide continuing financial and political support, which must not fall victim to a government change, as it is often the case in the region. Measures should be broad in scope and specific in content. In addition, effective communication and coordination strategies between countries of origin and destination<sup>6</sup> need to be developed to achieve results. However, at the moment, good cooperation between countries of origin and

<sup>1</sup> R. Soto et al., *Sustainable Reintegration: Strategies to Support Migrants Returning to Mexico and Central America*, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> P. Wickramasekara, *Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers with Special Focus on ASEAN Member States*, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> J. P. Cassarino (ed.), *Reintegration and Development*. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. European University Institute, Florence, 2014, <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/30401>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>4</sup> I. Birka, *Can Return Migration Revitalize the Baltics? Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania Engage Their Diasporas, with Mixed Results*. Migration Policy Institute, Migration Information Source, 2019, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/can-return-migration-revitalize-baltics-estonia-latvia-and-lithuania-engage-their-diasporas>, (accessed 9 September 2020).

<sup>5</sup> K. Newland, D. R. Agunas, *Circular Migration and Development: Trends, Policy Routes and Ways Forward*, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> K. Newland, A. Riester, *Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers*, 2018.

destination is considered to be the exception rather than the rule.<sup>1</sup>

There must be strong cross-sector collaboration and shared responsibility across the region among the very large number of institutions involved in implementation.<sup>2</sup> In many countries, there is insufficient staff with the knowledge and experience to manage the significant demands of running a smooth migration system.<sup>3</sup> This fact is especially true at the local level. Although the WB strategic documents envisage that local governments in various segments have a significant role in migration policy implementation, no significant progress will be made without dedicated efforts in building their capacities. Therefore, several challenges stand in the way of developing and implementing coherent and coordinated migration policies between the different policy areas and governance levels in the migration field. It is often carried out in an uncoordinated manner, leading to inconsistencies in the policies pursued at different levels of government. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies and policies that foster cooperation between different stakeholders and levels of administration and effective coordination between supranational, national, and sub-national administrations, local authorities, civil society sectors as well as other relevant stakeholders.

Designing, establishing, and implementing effective and sustainable migration arrangements that include a combination of permanent, temporary/circular, and return migration is a huge challenge for any country. Therefore, much innovative thinking, a strong commitment to communication, cooperation, and compromise is needed.<sup>4</sup> The proactive stance of national authorities and institutions is

particularly important to achieve high flexibility of policy measures and to quickly adapt migration programs to individual needs and changing labor market conditions.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to ensure conditions for the regular implementation of scrupulous evaluations of migration and (re)integration programs. However, this is usually not the case. Among the most important reasons are limited resources for monitoring and evaluation, the choice of insufficiently reliable indicators, and the lack of reliable and internationally comparable migration and integration-related data and information. In all WB countries, the national census statistics, despite their numerous shortcomings, are the most important statistical data source on the population contingent of the citizens residing abroad.

Given that most countries in the region are rapidly working to significantly improve demographic statistics and create conditions for the establishment of registration-based censuses, it sounds paradoxical that the opportunity to obtain data on emigrants and their characteristics at the regional and local level might be lost. The foreign statistical sources of external migration and the data of international organizations are also important. However, the data is much less accessible, less comprehensive in content, and above all, adapted to the needs of foreign users.<sup>6</sup> In addition, data production systems are still set up according to the permanent migration pattern, and there is still no system that can adequately monitor the flows of international migration<sup>7</sup> in a globalized world.

<sup>1</sup> K. Newland, B. Salant, *Balancing Act. Policy Framework for Migrant Return and Reintegration*, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> R. Soto et al., *Sustainable Reintegration: Strategies to Support Migrants Returning to Mexico and Central America*, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> G. Hugo, *What We Know About Circular Migration and Enhanced Mobility*, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> K. Newland, B. Salant, *Balancing Act. Policy Framework for Migrant Return and Reintegration*, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> K. Newland, A. Riester, *Legal Migration Pathways for Low-Skilled Workers*, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> J. Predojević-Despić, G. Penev, *Population of Serbia Abroad by Destination Countries: Regional Approach*, *Bulletin of the Serbian Geographical Society - University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography*, vol. 96, no. 2, 2016, pp.83-106.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, *Economic Commission for Europe, Defining and Measuring Circular Migration*. Final report of the Task Force on Measuring Circular Migration, Conference of European Statisticians, 2016; K. Newland, D. R. Agunas, *Circular Migration and Development: Trends, Policy Routes and Ways Forward*, 2007.

## Conclusion

**Build on already improved policies by overcoming challenges related to policy implementation.** In the last ten years, the governments of the WB countries have visibly changed their position. They are beginning to work more dedicatedly to find a systemic response to the long-term problems of emigration and the complex challenges posed by international migration flows. It is also important that there are positive attitudes in strategic documents that migration can positively affect the development and unfavorable demographic, social, and economic circumstances present throughout the region. The first step in tackling several challenges and addressing migration more comprehensively is adopting important national strategic documents and policies on migration, strengthening relations and cooperation with the diaspora, and on possible ways of exploiting its development potential. One of the important topics in this regard is the development of a framework for a wider practice of temporary and circular migration and the creation of better conditions for return and reintegration, especially of well-educated emigrants whose skills are urgently needed. However, for the envisaged measures not to remain promising only on paper, it is necessary to overcome the significant challenges that stand between policy formulation and decision-making and implementation.

**Improve data availability and collection.** One of the main challenges is the lack of reliable and accessible data on international migration. Most countries refer to the improvement of the monitoring system and data quality and the exchange of migration and migration-related data as one of the main intervention areas. A particular problem is the lack of data on the size of the emigration phenomenon and the characteristics of emigrants. Therefore, to solve this problem, it is important to strengthen and expand cooperation between national statistical institutes of countries of origin and countries of destination of migrants and international organizations. It is also extremely important to establish a regular, updated, and synchronized

statistical database for monitoring migration flows in all WB countries.

**Develop innovative approaches to manage labor migration effectively.** Improving policy-making, development of inter-institutional cooperation, and raising capacities of both national and local stakeholders, which is significantly achieved through cooperation with international organizations, donors, and the civil sector. It contributes to the view that the fragmented migration policy response must be focused on applying the Whole-of-Government approach. In this sense, it is necessary to introduce more models of migration governance in the implementation of which a significantly larger number of actors will be involved. Therefore, it is crucial to develop innovative approaches to manage labor migration effectively. It is necessary to establish strong cross-sector collaboration, shared responsibility, and a clear division of competencies between different ministries and public bodies at the national level and at other levels of government (regional and local). In addition, the involvement of research institutions and civil society is of great importance for the success of the measures. Research indicates that it is necessary to improve communication and cooperation with certain ministries and public institutions relevant to migration and related issues. This point primarily refers to the Ministry of Interior and the National Employment Service, but also others.

Although new measures are still at an early stage, and much more evidence is needed to assess their effectiveness, it is important to support and further develop certain initiatives to improve operational and strategic coordination. Examples are the Coordination Body for Monitoring Economic Migration Flows, in charge of reviewing all economic migration issues and directing the work of state administration bodies in Serbia, or the National Diaspora Agency in Albania to holistically address migration-related issues. In addition, the potential of local migration councils in Serbia, or migration counters and service centers at the national employment services that exist in most WB countries, needs to be used and developed further. Therefore, it is extremely



important to continuously strengthen institutional capacities and actors new to migration-related issues. Additionally, efficient communication and coordination strategies between the WB countries and destination countries need to be further developed to achieve results.

**Review and revise certain elements of migration policies in order to improve the rights of migrant workers.** The impact of different categories of migrants on the development of both destination countries and countries of origin is a topic that has not yet been in the focus of decision-makers. High-skilled migrants and professionals are generally considered to be much more relevant for the economic development of both destination and origin countries, so for them, legal immigration channels are disproportionately larger than for low-skilled migrants. However, the sudden changes in labor markets caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown show that the lack of certain categories of workers in the labor market, including precarious workers, can seriously shake the socio-economic foundations of both destination and origin countries. Therefore, it is necessary to review and revise certain elements of labor markets and migration policies, and immigration programs. Great efforts are also needed to improve the rights of migrant workers and combat fraud throughout the recruitment process and protect migrant workers from abuse and dependence on agencies or employers. In this sense, providing clear and accessible information to participants in the migration process, especially migrants themselves, is extremely important.

**Develop temporary migration and return programs in cooperation with destination countries.** For the WB countries, as emigration areas, it is important to develop temporary migration programs in cooperation with destination countries, which will also provide a stimulation for circular migration, as for now such programs have a strong potential to provide development benefits only for countries of origin and migrants. In this regard, it is important to further develop initiatives such as DIMAK and

continue to work on regional networks to achieve the strongest possible impact and promote regional migration and labor mobility in the WB, which are currently at a very low level. The policy should include measures to efficiently reduce the costs and negative effects of migration and to develop opportunities for portable social welfare benefits, pensions, health insurance, etc. When developing policies, the WB countries should also include measures that integrate circular migration into wider migration programs and develop cooperation between development agencies in countries of origin and destination through the integration of migration into development activities.

Such a development strategy would also contribute to a more significant stimulation of return migration. Therefore, it is very important **to design useful programs and strategies that support returnees and the local communities to which they return.** However, this is one of the biggest challenges for policymakers. It is necessary to develop innovative solutions to complex policy problems and work dedicatedly on their implementation. It is also necessary to provide conditions for the regular implementation of rigorous assessments of migration and reintegration programs.

**Effective policies to encourage return and reintegration should cover the entire migration process,** contain flexible measures that can be easily adapted to the needs of migrants, and be gender-sensitive and gender-responsive. For migration to have a positive impact on countries of origin, it is necessary that, upon arrival in the country, returnees have the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills acquired abroad, as well as savings, etc. However, the lack of economic opportunities, the mismatch between their skills and labor market needs, and distrust in government institutions, and the problems with recognizing diplomas obtained abroad are just some of the challenges that need to be worked on devotedly in all WB countries. In that sense, the processes of European integration should be significantly intensified. European standards should be built rapidly in all domains of the economy and society insisting on the rule of law.

**Provide necessary funds and obtain strong and continuous state support needed for policy implementation.** Finally, a great challenge is to provide necessary funds and obtain strong and continuous state support for investing in an effective migration policy. Otherwise, complex migration problems will become bigger and harder to solve. To provide consistent financing and implementation of useful initiatives and to avoid them being sporadic, short on funding, or unreliable in the long run, the WB countries must combine funding between the public and private spheres, as well as donations. In addition, it is of utmost importance that the EU, international organizations, and the civil society sector significantly contribute to long-term and more stable financial support.

## Appendix

*A list of core indicators (developed within the EU funded Project YOUNIG)<sup>1</sup> that are relevant to the contexts of countries characterized by immigration, emigration, or return migration, with a special focus on young migrants:*

The indicators relate to two main areas affecting or affected by migration processes: 'Population and Society' as well as 'Economy, Living Conditions, and the Environment'. These indicators can help policymakers better understand migration-related issues and adopt important measures that can contribute to a better insight into the scope of migration movements, their impact on the labor market and other spheres of society, and better (re)integration. In addition, not all of the proposed indicators are available. Most are available or can be produced at the national level, but not at the lowest government levels. However, within the YOUNIG project, proposals are made to produce data and render it more easily accessible for a wide range of stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup> For more information: E. Skoglund, Z. Csányi, Quantitative Analysis of the Objective and Subjective Aspects of Youth Migration in the Danube Region. Within the project YOUNIG, 2019, [http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved\\_project\\_output/0001/32/1f04dd4d6ee3459935876d76137f00984ee07c05.pdf](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_output/0001/32/1f04dd4d6ee3459935876d76137f00984ee07c05.pdf), (accessed 9 September 2020).

## Priority Area – Population and Society

Topic: Demography and population: Population policy, family policy

- **Population; by sex, age, urban/rural, (according to Country of Citizenship, Country of Birth)**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Population on January 1 (Eurostat: December 31; published on January 1): based on the concept of the 'usual resident population', namely the number of inhabitants of a given area on January 1 of the year in question.

- **In-migration, internal/international**

Area of relevance: Immigrants

Definition: Immigrant: a person undertaking immigration. Immigration means an action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a country for a period that is or is expected to be, at least 12 months, having previously been usual resident in another country.

In-migration refers to intra-country movements.

- **Top-5 sending countries**

Area of relevance: Immigrants

Definition: Sending country or country of origin: the exact definition might be based on the concept of birth or citizenship.

- **Out-migration, internal/international**

Area of relevance: Emigrants

Definition: Emigrants are people leaving the country where they usually reside and effectively taking up residence in another country. According to the 1998 UN recommendations on the statistics of international migration (Revision 1), an individual is a long-term emigrant if he/she leaves his/her country of previous usual residence for 12 months or more. Emigration is

the number of emigrants for a given area during the year. Out-migration refers to the outflow in intra-country movements.

- **Number of returnees registered, sex, education level**

Area of relevance: Returnees

Definition: Returning migrants are persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year. In the European policy-related texts, returnee often refers to a non-EU/EEA (i.e. third country) national migrant who moves to a country of return, whether voluntary or forced.

Topic: Education and science policy: Accessibility of education

- **Completed education of persons aged 15-34, by education levels; by sex, age groups, native/foreign (according to Country of Citizenship)**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Education levels (most often used by Eurostat), Low education: Less than primary, primary, and lower secondary education (ISCED<sup>1</sup> 2011 levels 0-2), Medium education: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 3 and 4), High education: Tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 5-8). The educational attainment of an individual is defined as the highest ISCED level completed by the individual.

- **Student outbound mobility ratio at tertiary level; by sex**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: The term internationally mobile students (diploma/degree mobility) refers to students who have physically crossed an international border between two countries to participate in educational activities in the country of destination, where the country of destination of a given student is different from their country

of origin" (UNESCO). The status of a mobile student is dependent on the crossing of a border motivated by education. It is not dependent on formal resident status in the reporting country of destination. The status of a mobile student is maintained for as long as continued education at the same level of education lasts.

- **Skill-level of return migrants**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Returning migrants as the ex-pats returning to the country of origin (the country collecting this indicator). The skills are approximated by education level (primary, secondary, tertiary).

Topic: Social development and Social capital, Diversity management policy: Social cohesion, tolerance/trust

- **[Average] Subjective well-being [in the population] [SUBJ]**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Subjective well-being (SWB) is often – though not exclusively, measured in the form of life satisfaction, namely as an individual answer to a question: "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?"

- **Tolerance towards foreigners (foreign workers) [SUBJ]**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Tolerance towards foreigners can be framed as tolerance, or attitudes towards migrants, or more specifically towards migrant workers.

- **Intentions to migrate within the next five years, [if possible] intended destination, duration of absence**

Area of relevance: Emigrants

Priority Area - Economy, Living Conditions, and Environment

<sup>1</sup> International Standard Classification of Education.



Topic: Economic development: Macroeconomic performance

- **Regional GDP per capita (NUTS3), GDP per capita at Local Administrative Unit (LAU) levels**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Gross regional product (GRP) is conceptually equivalent to gross domestic product (GDP); the latter measures newly created value through production by resident production units (or residents in short) in the domestic economy, while the former measures newly created value through production by regional production units (or regional residents in short) in the regional economy, be it a state, province or a district

- **Business demography: Number of active enterprises; by size (number of employees), ownership (local/foreign-owned), sector**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Business demography refers to the population of firms taking into consideration such aspects as the total number of active enterprises in the business economy, their birth and death rates.

Topic: Income and living conditions: Income

- **Disposable household income per capita**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: The disposable household income refers to the amount of money that all individuals in the household sector have available for spending or saving after income distribution measures have taken effect; the latter comprises payment of taxes, social contributions, and benefits, and social received.

Topic: Labor market: Economic activity and inactivity

- **Population, by activity status; by sex, age (5-y. intervals), national-foreign, NUTS<sup>1</sup>**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: In the labor market, the population aged at least 15 years old (most often, 15-64 years old) is divided into (economically) active and inactive. The former group includes employed (civilian employment plus the armed forces) and unemployed. The currently (economically) active population is called the labor force.

Topic: Urban and regional development: Health facilities

- **The workforce in healthcare/Shortage of work in healthcare/Healthcare workforce gap**

Area of relevance: Immigrants, Emigrants, Returnees

Definition: Health workers are “all people engaged in actions whose primary intent is to enhance health”.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nomenclature of Territorial Units or Statistics

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, World Health Report 2006, <https://www.who.int/whr/2006/en/>, (accessed 9 September 2020).