

TALKING POINTS

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Launching event of the study

“Return migration and reintegration in Albania, 2013”

7 October 2014

Hotel Tirana International, Consortium Room

Dear Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Mrs. Elona Gjebrea,

Dear Deputy Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, Mrs. Genta Sula,

Dear General Director of INSTAT, Mr. Gjergji Filipi,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the International Organization for Migration, Mission in Albania, which has partnered with INSTAT in the preparation of the study on return migration and reintegration in Albania and the organization of this event. The majority of initiatives of the United Nations Programme of Cooperation with the Government of Albania in the area of migration, are implemented under the leadership of IOM (as the mandated agency for dealing with migration issues), with the support of other contributing UN agencies, such as UNHCR, ILO, UNDP, UNODC, etc. Our cooperation includes support to policy development in the area of migration management (such as the formulation of migration related policy provisions in the NSDI 2014-2020); support to the efficient implementation of policy provisions (such as the Reintegration Action Plan for Returning Citizens 2010-2015); legal support to advance migration legislation, along with capacity building support for Migration Counters in the country, the front line structures that respond to the needs of returning migrants.

Similarly to other areas of UN support in the country, we have observed that efficient policy development and implementation in the area of migration is only possible when it reflects the local reality in Albania and is based on field evidence. Although return migration has emerged as part of the modern migration phenomena since the late 1990s, reliable data on the trend have been largely lacking. The study which will be presented today, is the first one in the area of return migration in Albania, and as such, will serve, we hope, as a very useful source of field evidence on the subject, which can be utilised for migration policy development and implementation.

Let me say a few more words about the study: Since 2009, we have all witnessed the negative impact of the world financial crises, which has hit a number of European Union member states, also destination countries for Albanian migrants, in particular Greece and Italy. As of 2010, empirical research undertaken in these countries, has shown that returns to Albania have increased and are likely to increase more, if migrants find it difficult to secure a stable job, hence sustainable income. However, the studies had not been able to take stock of the size of returns to Albania, return paths and migrant behaviour upon return to the country of origin.

The study being presented today is that it addresses exactly this need for better evidence on the subject of return migration in Albania. This evidence will be useful especially for the “users” of this study. It aims to shed light on the various factors shaping returnees’ patterns of reintegration in Albania. The evidence can further guide the provision of services in support of the reintegration of returnees by helping the National Employment Service and the Migration Counters (integral structures under NES).

Another innovative characteristic of the study is its methodology and the use of the so called ‘three-stage approach’ on return migration developed by Jean-Pierre Cassarino and applied in similar research in the Maghreb countries. This approach represents a comprehensive conceptual model for analysing return migration and reintegration because it views return migration as part of the migration cycle; all stages of the

migration cycle influence the willingness and preparedness of the migrant to return, and consequently the success of his/her reintegration in the country of origin.

Finally, the study provides a set of useful recommendations. Further research on return migration in Albania, is recommended along with its impact on the returnees and the communities where they settle. Further analysis of the dynamics of return and reintegration in Albania versus the mobility of labour migrants from Albania toward neighbouring countries is also required; analyses of the demographics of return migration would also be useful, because return is often associated with the internal migration of population. Finally, the improvement of services related to business start-up support for returnees is also necessary, as the latter are eager to invest their knowledge, skills and financial capital gained abroad, in particular in the agricultural sector.

I would like to conclude my statement by thanking IOM and in particular the IOM Development Fund for its financial support and the IOM and INSTAT staff for their successful cooperation in undertaking this research, hoping that this is only the beginning of more fruitful joint endeavours in the near future.

Thank you!