

Albania

Geography

Location: Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea, between Greece and Serbia and Montenegro.

Map references: Ethnic Groups in Eastern Europe, Europe.

Area:

total area: 28,750 sq km.

land area: 27,400 sq km.

Land boundaries: total 720 km, Greece 282 km, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 151 km, Serbia and Montenegro 287 km (114 km with Serbia, 173 km with Montenegro).

Coastline: 362 km.

Maritime claims:

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation.

territorial sea: 12 nm.

Climate: mild temperate; cool, cloudy, wet winters; hot, clear, dry summers; interior is cooler and wetter.

Terrain: mostly mountains and hills; small plains along coast.

Natural resources: petroleum, natural gas, coal, chromium, copper, timber, nickel.

Land use:

arable land: 21%.

permanent crops: 4%.

meadows and pastures: 15%.

forest and woodland: 38%.

other: 22%.

Irrigated land: 4,230 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; soil erosion; water pollution from industrial and domestic effluents.

natural hazards: destructive earthquakes; tsunamis occur along southwestern coast.

Note: strategic location along Strait of Otranto (links Adriatic Sea to Ionian Sea and Mediterranean Sea).

People

Population: 3,413,904 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 32% (female 520,186; male 563,953).

15-64 years: 62% (female 1,026,321; male 1,104,371).
65 years and over: 6% (female 112,252; male 86,821) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.16% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 21.7 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.22 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -4.88 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 28.1 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 73.81 years.
male: 70.83 years.
female: 77.02 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.71 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Albanian(s).
adjective: Albanian.

Ethnic divisions: Albanian 95%, Greeks 3%, other 2% (Vlachs, Gypsies, Serbs, and Bulgarians)
(1989 est.)

Religions: Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10%
note: all mosques and churches were closed in 1967 and religious observances prohibited; in
November 1990, Albania began allowing private religious practice.

Languages: Albanian (Tosk is the official dialect), Greek.

Literacy: age 9 and over can read and write (1955)

total population: 72%.

male: 80%.

female: 63%.

Labor force: 1.5 million (1987).

by occupation: agriculture 60%, industry and commerce 40% (1986).

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Albania.

conventional short form: Albania.

local long form: Republika e Shqiperise.

local short form: Shqiperia.

former: People's Socialist Republic of Albania.

Capital: Tirane.

Administrative divisions: 26 districts (rrethe, singular - rreth); Berat, Dibre, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokaster, Gramsh, Kolonje, Korce, Kruje, Kukes, Lezhe, Librazhd, Lushnje, Mat, Mirdite, Permet, Pogradec, Puke, Sarande, Shkoder, Skrapar, Tepelene, Tirane, Tropoje, Vlore.

Independence: 28 November 1912 (from Ottoman Empire).

National holiday: Independence Day, 28 November (1912).

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory.

Flag: red with a black two-headed eagle in the centre.

Economy

Overview: An extremely poor country by European standards, Albania is making the difficult transition to a more open-market economy. The economy rebounded in 1993-94 after a severe

depression accompanying the collapse of the previous centrally planned system in 1990 and 1991. Stabilization policies - including a strict monetary policy, public sector layoffs, and reduced social services - have improved the government's fiscal situation and reduced inflation. The recovery was spurred by the remittances of some 20% of the population which works abroad, mostly in Greece and Italy. These remittances supplement GDP and help offset the large foreign trade deficit. Foreign assistance and humanitarian aid also supported the recovery. Most agricultural land was privatized in 1992, substantially improving peasant incomes. Albania's limited industrial sector is now less than one-sixth of GDP.

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 543 km line connecting Podgorica (Serbia and Montenegro) and Shkoder completed August 1986.

Highways:

total: 18,450 km.

Inland waterways: 43 km plus Albanian sections of Lake Scutari, Lake Ohrid, and Lake Prespa.

Pipelines: crude oil 145 km; petroleum products 55 km; natural gas 64 km.

Ports: Durres, Sarande, Shergjin, Vlore.

Airports:

total: 11.

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air and Air Defense Forces, Interior Ministry Troops, Border Guards.