

Capital: Tirana
Population: 3.145 million (INSTAT 2003 est.)
GDP purchasing power parity: \$15.69 billion (2002 est.)
GDP real growth rate: 7.3% (2002 est.)
GDP- per capita (purchasing power parity): \$1,938 (World Bank, 2004)
Population below national poverty line: 30% (2001 est.)
Inflation Rate: 6% (2002 est.)
Ethnic Groups: Albanian 95%, Greek 3%, other 2% (1989 est.)
Religion: Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10% (pre-1937 estimate)
Language: Albanian
President: Alfred Moisiu (since July 24, 2002)
Prime Minister: Fatos Nano (since July 31, 2002)
Ambassador to U.S.: Dr. Fatos Tarifa* (status uncertain as of May 13, 2005)
Parliamentary Elections: July 3, 2005



National Interest: Albania plays a vital, moderating role in the Balkans by promoting peace and encouraging ethnic integration. The nation has been a reliable partner on issues of strategic importance to the U.S. and has contributed to the global war on terrorism. The U.S. supports Albania's entry into the Euro-Atlantic community, through accession to NATO and the EU. Albania's stability remains precarious and dependent on its ability to overcome a tumultuous history of isolation and poverty. U.S. assistance supports Albania's transition to a market economy, democracy based on rule of law, and specific policy and development priorities.

OVERVIEW OF USAID'S FOCUS IN ALBANIA

FY 05: Total AEEB - \$28 million, USAID Total - \$21.5 million

Economic Growth (FY05 \$6.438 million, 30%): USAID activities are designed to promote sustainable economic growth and job creation by strengthening the competitive capacity of private enterprises; increasing the access to credit for micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs); and fostering a policy environment that enhances business development, trade and private investment. USAID supports the formation of a skilled labor force through business and vocational training to Albanian high school and vocational college students. Assistance will improve the competitiveness of Albanian enterprises in domestic and foreign markets.

Democracy & Governance (FY05 \$4.077 million, 19%): USAID's democracy and governance program encourages citizen participation in economic and political decision-making processes; provides technical assistance to increase the transparency and accountability of local government units; and assists the Central Election Commission in its efforts to ensure a free and fair election in 2005. Another activity trains young political activists and parliamentarians in democratic principles and political organization. USAID also supports the 280-member Albanian Coalition Against Corruption in its anti-corruption efforts and a popular, biweekly anti-corruption and anti-trafficking TV program.

Rule of Law (FY05 \$2.2 million, 10%): This program has a strong anti-corruption focus. It targets state institutions that are legally empowered to fight corruption in the judiciary, other branches of government, and non-governmental bodies that play a role in increasing accountability and transparency in government, such as the Citizens' Advocacy Office (CAO) and the Albanian Bar Association. The program supports the effective implementation of existing anti-corruption laws, as well as the passage and implementation of other laws that will deter corruption in Albania.

Primary Health Care (FY05 \$2.7 million, 13%): The health program focuses on reforming the primary health care (PHC) system; improving financial management and sustainability; providing a well-defined integrated package of quality PHC services; and improving access to reproductive health services. A three-year program in collaboration with the Albanian Ministry of Health designed and tested a new PHC model that aims to improve the sector's efficiency, quality, management, and resource allocation. A new broad-based activity, that incorporates data and tools produced in a pilot project, addresses constraints on the sector (poor infrastructure, inadequate human capital, corruption, fragmented financing mechanisms) and reforms needed to strengthen central and local PHC capacities.

Special Initiatives & Cross-Cutting Programs (FY05 \$6.078 million, 28%): Special initiatives support the development and implementation of a national action plan to reform the energy sector; monitor the impact of the Government of Albania (GoA)'s implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy on rural citizens; foster religious harmony in Albania; and address the training needs of all USAID-funded activities. Two anti-trafficking initiatives focus on prevention, protection and reintegration: (1) a transnational activity to reduce child trafficking within Albania and between Albania, Greece, and Italy; and (2) a comprehensive activity to coordinate, integrate and support NGO, GoA, and other donor efforts to reduce the trafficking of women and girls.

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http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/countries/al/index.html