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**2014**

**Annual Review of  
Labour Relations and Social Dialogue in South East Europe:**

**Albania**

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**Content**

- **Summary**
- **Socio-economic developments**
- **Governmental policies and legislation**
- **Industrial relations**
- **Tripartite social dialogue**
- **Forecasts**

**Annex - Information about:**

- **Collective bargaining, social dialogue, social security, education & vocational training, employment, wages**
- **Trade unions and employer organizations**

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## **1. Summary**

Albania has made progress in socio-economic development during 2014. Economic development and EU integration have been amongst the main priorities of the government's program. In June 2014, the EU Foreign Ministers approved the report of European Commission to give the candidate status to Albania. The EU's Council of Ministers underlined that Albania should act decisively for implementation of all the recom-

mendations made in the Commission's report and intensify the efforts to guarantee the sustainable implementation of the key priorities mainly regarding the reform in public administration, judiciary system, fight against organized crime and corruption, as well as in protecting human rights and anti-discriminatory policies.

The economic indicators increased during this year; the general level of economic growth has been higher compared to the last two years. The main country's policies in the last years led to a further liberalization and an improved fiscal legal framework and improved conditions for business development and for attracting foreign investments.

Albania continues to be affected by the global economic crisis in many ways as lowering of the GDP's economic growth, significant reduction of remittances, high inflation rate, more unfavorable loans, etc. However, compared to other countries in the region, Albania has suffered less negative impacts of the crisis. Some of the factors that have so far prevented negative impacts of the crisis in Albania are: a consolidated banking system, growth of the export volume, foreign investments, increased number of active businesses, facilitation of the business from fiscal barriers, etc.

In the field of social dialogue, the activity of the National Labour Council (NLC) has continued. The re-composition of NLC, at the end of 2013, from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, with a new composition of the Council, aligned with the representation criteria as defined by ILO standards, is not approved completely by the social partners, and especially trade unions. Bipartite social dialogue remains weak, especially in the private sector. Trade Unions have enhanced their activity for employees' protection and collective agreements, but have not managed to overcome the rift between them. Trade union membership in the private sector remains low.

## 2. Socio-economic developments

Albania has marked a growth of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from year to year, but in the last 5 years the growth rates have been low. In 2010, growth was reported 3.8 percent, in 2011 it was 3.1 percent, in 2012 it was 1.5 percent, and in 2013 it was 0.8 percent. The GDP growth rate was higher in 2014, at the level of 2.1 percent. Economic growth for Albania<sup>1</sup> still remains under Europe's average for developing countries.

Public investments in 2014 have been much lower than one year before. Confindustria<sup>2</sup> (employers' organizations) explains: "Foreign investments in Albania have decreased dramatically in recent months. All this has come as a result of increased taxes and the application of progressive tax. Based on data for the period January-September, the net foreign investment in the country has declined by 24% ". Confindustria insists on the return of the flat tax, while a serious concern estimated the increase in income tax for 2015.

The trading balance<sup>3</sup> was increasingly improved during the last years, but still it continues to be negative. The coverage in 2013 was 47.6 percent and in 2014 (9 months) it was 48 percent. The main trading partners of Albania continue to be Italy and Greece. The budget for year 2015 is forecasted at the level of 414.4 billion Lek or around 27.8 percent of GDP, with a growth in nominal terms of 49.7 billion Lek compared to the initial budget of year 2014. The public expenses for 2015 are forecasted to reach 475 billion Lek or around 31.7 percent of GDP.

<sup>1</sup> International Monetary Fund, the report published for the economic development in Albania

<sup>2</sup> web: [www.Konfindustria.al](http://www.Konfindustria.al) Confindustria - Confederation of Albania Industries

<sup>3</sup> INSTAT, Foreign Trade, November 2014

Public debt to GDP is increasing. In 2011 it was at the level of 59 percent, in 2012 at the level of 60 percent, in year 2013 it was at the level of 65 percent and taking into account the unpaid arrears to the private sector (which reach the amount of 72.6 billion Lek), debt in 2013 is evaluated at the level of 72 percent of GDP. Although during 2014, the level of public debt was increasing and reached the level of 72 percent.

The fiscal situation was improved during 2014. The collected revenues have been amongst the highest ones compared to 2013. The majority of assets of Albania's economy have been already privatised mainly in the sectors of oil and gas, hydro energy system, telecommunication, transport, mines etc. Most of these strategic sectors are privatised. But in some sectors the privatisations have failed, as is the case of the extraction and refining company of Albpetrol Company and the case of CEZ Distribution Company, etc.

During the last years and 2014 the inflation rate was within the limits defined by the Bank of Albania, which was in the range of 2-4 percent. Meanwhile, the domestic currency has been generally stable against the main foreign currencies.

The average monthly wage of an employee was increased from one year to the other. For 2014, the average monthly wage in the private sector was 331 €, while in the state sector it was been 373 €. The average wage results to be higher in the state sector than private sector. The minimum wage in 2011 was 20,000 Lek (144 €) and every year was increased by an amount of 1,000 Lek (7 €) reaching the amount of 22,000 Lek in 2013 (158 €). Although the minimum wage in Albania is very low, compared to the other countries in the region, during 2014 there is no increase of the minimum wage.

The unemployment rate, according to INSTAT<sup>4</sup> sources, resulted to be 14.5 percent in 2011, 13.8 percent in 2012, 16.4 percent in 2013, while in 2014 it is at the level of 17.2 percent. Changes in employment were in the private sector, while the number of employees in the public sector is almost unchangeable. The number of registered jobseekers in the employment offices<sup>5</sup> for 2012 resulted to be 142,530, in 2013 were 142,648, in year 2014 it was 143,507. The percentage during these years is almost the same, around 13.4 percent. Employment in non-agricultural private sector increased (311,688 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of year 2013 to 314,130 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of year 2014), while the number of employees in agriculture sector is decreased.

Poverty in Albania<sup>6</sup> increased from 12.4 percent in 2008 to 14.3 percent in 2012. This is the official figure for poverty, but the real figure is very high. Extreme poverty, defined in Albania as persons that have difficulties in meeting the basic food needs, increased from 1.2 percent in 2008 to 2.2 percent in 2012. The extreme poverty increased in urban areas to 2.2 percent and in rural areas to 2.3 percent. The number of poor families in the economic assistance scheme in Albania is around 100,000 families, 390,000 persons (3.9 is average number per family). The amount of economic assistance for a 4 members family is calculated to be 5,220 Lek, or 1,305 Lek per month/person, less than 10 € per month/person. This situation shows an extreme poverty in Albania, for a social state that almost does not exist for this category.

This situation shows the great poverty in Albania, for a welfare state that almost does not exist for these categories. According to INSTAT survey for living standards, Albania results to have the coefficient of Gini index at 34.5 percent.

<sup>4</sup> INSTAT, Albanian in figures, Labor Forces, Tirana, 2014. Survey of Labor Forces 2007-2014

<sup>5</sup> INSTAT, Registered job seekers, Tr.3.2012-Tr.2.2014

<sup>6</sup> INSTAT, Albania: Poverty trend 2002-2005-2008-2012, September 2013

### 3. Governmental policies

For 8 years (2015-2013) the country was led by the right coalition composed of the Democratic Party (PD) with 68 MPs, the Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI) 4 MPs, the Party for Justice, Integrity and Unity (PDIU) 2 MPs, and the Republican Party (PR) 1 MP. From 23 June 2013 (parliamentary elections 2013-2017), the country is led by the left-wing coalition, in total 83 deputies: composed of the Socialist Party with 65 MPs, the Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI) 16 MPs, Others 2. The right opposition coalition has 57 MPs: Democratic Party (DP) 50 MPs, Others 7.

The main reforms undertaken by the Government during 2014 are mainly related to the reform in public administration, civil servant status, reform in social insurance system, reform in territorial administrative division, reform in education and especially in higher education, efforts for reforming the judiciary system continue. The priority fiscal programs and policies in the state budget are related to the change of tax system from the flat tax to progressive tax, some changes in the customs system, support of business for VAT reimbursement in the situation of crisis, improvement of public services and improvement of rural infrastructure. Efforts have continued regarding approximation of Albania's legislation to the *acquis* of the EU. Work continues on supplementing the Law "On Occupational Health and Safety" and the Law "On Inspections in the Republic of Albania", with several by-laws.

The Administrative Court (founded in November 2013) has continued its activity, by shortening the duration of court proceedings from the judicial authorities of different levels, by reviewing the administrative acts of public administration and disputes between business and public administration. All individuals or various subjects, who suspect that administrative acts taken against them are unlawful, can file a complaint to this court, which according to the law should begin its review within a short period of time. During 2013, the majority of judicial processes reviewed by the Administrative Court were related to dismissal of employees. Dismissal of employees is a phenomenon that occurs massively every time there is a power rotation.

Although the GDP growth has been relatively higher compared to the last two years, employment has been in low levels there have been just few new jobs in the private sector of fashion. The Government has taken measures to establish a positive climate for business development, promotion of employment through the support of enterprises or companies which employ different categories of unemployed people.

Although, during 2014, there were some employment promotion programmes, supported by the government's funds, that have influenced the employment of people in need and vocational training for young people, employment in general and especially of the young people is still a challenge.

In 2014, trade unions have played a positive role regarding the protection of employees, mainly continuing with the private sector. Trade unions have cooperated with employers, in order that the shortage of jobs due to the crisis is met with minimal consequences. In this way, employees benefited a better protection from trade unions.

Although the trade unions are more represented in the state sector, they did not achieve to protect the dismissed employees especially for reasons related to power rotation.

#### 4. Industrial relations

The number of trade unions in Albania is high. Around 80 trade unions are recognised and operate on behalf of employees in Albania. Most of them operate under the umbrella of the two confederations, whereas the rest operate independently. The two biggest and most influential confederations are: the Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania (KSSH), and the Union of the Independent Trade Unions of Albania (BSPSH), which are represented with 10 members in the National Labour Council. The two biggest confederations represent about 90 percent of the members of trade unions in Albania. KSSH and BSPSH are represented in 12 regions in Albania and are mainly operational in the sectors of education and science, health, public administration, industry, metallurgy, textile, construction, agriculture, transport and telecommunication, oil, trade, etc. A characteristic feature is that trade unions have grown in the public sector and in private enterprises (former state enterprises), whereas representation is lower in the private sector.

In 2014, the expired collective agreements were renovated from the trade unions. The number of new collective agreements signed during this year in the private sector was relatively low. The number of contracts, at national level, where a big number of employees benefit, is low except of the public education sector.

In 2014 there has been changes regarding the structuring of some trade unions, especially federations of KSSH and BSPSH. The Union of the Independent Trade Unions of Albania (BSPSH) has organized its 6<sup>th</sup> Congress in September 2014. The Congress was organized following a wide campaign and elections in all the leading structures of BSPSH in regions and federations. Delegates from all districts, federations and representatives from European and American trade unions participated in the Congress.

The Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania (KSSH) has organized its 5<sup>th</sup> Congress on 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. The Congress is organized after the completion of elections conducted in all the regional structures and the federations that participate in KSSH. Delegates from all districts, federations and delegations from European and Asian trade unions participated in the Congress. The Congress approved the new organizational structure which is mainly dealing with the merging of some federations. The main leaders of two confederations (BSPSH and KSSH) are also re-elected in these congresses obtaining a new mandate to lead the trade unions movement in the next 5 years.

In January 2014 in Fushe Arrez (a region in north of country), leaders of Independent Miners Trade Union of Albania (SPMSH), BSPSH, the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, representatives of this Ministry, organised a working visit in the Copper Enrichment Fabric with "BERALB" employer, a Turkish company of mines exploitation. The main requests of the trade union were related to reduction of pension age of Albanian miners into 55 years of age, with 25 working years, out of which 12.5 in mines and 12.5 in ground.

BSPSH was leading the protests organized by the drivers of minibuses, vehicles 8+1, organised for some days, during the period February-March 2014, in some districts where thousands of persons participated.

The cause of protests was the decision of the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Interior Affairs for removing from circulation, minibuses, taxis 8+1, and organizing this service only from the bus lines, while the licensed minibuses will work only within their districts. This measure influenced the interest of thousands of drivers of these vehicles and employees.

BSPSH and Union of the Independent Trade Unions of Kosovo (BSPK) have signed cooperation agreements through which two trade unions will work, fight and lobby together for resolving the social problems of membership, for strengthening the network of Youth and Women and strengthening of structures and forums of Confederations, through education and exchange of positive experiences. On 22 November 2014, the Union of the Independent Trade Unions of Albania (BSPSH) has been part of a very big protest where opposition, citizens, trade unionists, employees, unemployed, etc., participated against the rise of electricity prices, unemployment, tax rises, poverty, increased unsafety in the country, etc.

As a practice of work for more than a decade, KSSH has organised protests and manifestations on 1<sup>st</sup> of May. Also on 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2014, it organized a big protest. The main requests were related to employment, occupational safety, social justice, reforms in education, health, welfare and pensions, against aggravation of the economic situation, obstacles of country's integration in the EU, corruption, etc.

## 5. Tripartite social dialogue

The National Labour Council (NLC) was restructured in the framework of strengthening the social dialogue between the state, employers and employees (trade unions) by electing the best representatives and more active ones among the employees. In this Council, the Government is represented with 7 ministers, trade unions with 10 members and employers with 10 members. The National Labour Council organised regular meetings during 2014 and different economic-social issues were reviewed for which the partners have taken a decision. There was an issue from trade unions which is related to their representation because one of the two biggest confederations of trade unions of Albania, BSPSH, claimed the increase of the BSPSH members in the National Labour Council.

At the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, at national level, is established the National Reconciliation Office<sup>7</sup> with 5 representatives (1 from Ministry, 2 from employees' organisations and 2 from employers' organization). Tripartite social dialogue, at local level, was improved in relation to its establishment and operation. At the Regional Department of the National Employment Service in 12 regions of the Albania, the Reconciliation Offices are established and operate with representatives from the National Employment Service, employees' organizations and employers' organizations. The sectoral and bipartite dialogue still remains weak, mainly due to the insufficient culture of trade unions or lack of dialogue culture and employers' scepticism towards the trade unions. Collective agreements and negotiations are more developed in urban areas, especially in Tirana, Durres, Vlora, Shkodra, etc, as the biggest numbers of enterprises are concentrated in these cities. Institutionalization of cooperation at the grassroots and enterprise level, between legal representatives of trade unions, employers and state structures shall lead to improvement of social dialogue and better protection of employees. These efforts should help in order to avoid usual conflicting situations between social partners at the grassroots level, or even as high as at the National Labour Council's discussions. Cooperation and improvement of social dialogue is one of the EU's requests for Albania's integration into EU.

## 6. Forecasts

The GDP is expected to grow higher than in year 2014. Economic growth is expected to be gradually recovered at 3 percent in year 2015. A significant influence is expected to be mainly from the reforms in energy sector; fight against fiscal evasion; increase of

<sup>7</sup> Order of Minister of Social Welfare and Youth no. 203, dated 24.10.2014, "On establishment and operation of State Reconciliation Offices"

efficiency in using public funds; undertaking of tax reforms; improvement of business climate; supporting packages in different sectors of economy as textiles, manufacture, tourism, agriculture and other increasing sectors; increase of FDIs, especially in energy; increase of exports, foreign factors as continuity of Euro zone economic recovery and especially of the neighbouring countries, Italy, Greece, etc. High level of public debt remains the main risk for economic growth. Government has published its programme<sup>8</sup> where it presented the way how to reduce public debt from 72 percent of GDP at the end of 2014, gradually every year up to 65.5 percent of GDP in 2017.

The expansion of economic activity is expected to grow supported by the growth of private consumption and public investments for the period 2015-2017, with a constant trend along this period with an average of 5.3 percent of GDP. Also the domestic economic activity is expected to grow due to obtaining the EU candidate status. Under these circumstances, it is expected an increase of employment level in the country and the salaries and pensions are expected to be increased, although during 2014 there was no increase. Now that Albania has obtained the candidate status, it is in the phase of opening EU membership negotiations.

Improvements are required political dialogue<sup>9</sup>, for property issue, public administration, human rights, etc. Positive developments are expected for 2015 regarding the social dialogue and working relations, improvements of legal framework, especially of working relations legislation, Labor Code, improvement of relations between employees and employers in state and private sector. Also the activities of trade unions are expected to undergo positive developments regarding the fulfillment of requirements and working conditions for employees.

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Finance: "Report on draft budget for year 2015", Tirana October 2014

<sup>9</sup> EU Commission emphasizes that "constructive and sustainable policy dialogue will remain essential for a successful reform process".

## **Annex of data**

### **• Collective bargaining system**

The most important collective bargaining agreements are those signed between the central institutions and trade union federations, at national level. Such agreements are: collective bargaining agreement in education, signed by the Trade Union Federation of Education and Science of Albania (FSASH), Independent Trade Union of Education of Albania (SPASH) and Ministry of Education and Science. This contract covers the entire pre-university education system. The collective bargaining of the Trade Union Federation of Industry Employees of Albania covers former state enterprises that have been privatized and are active in the energy sector. The bargaining of the Health Federation with the Public Health Directorate covers all the workers in the health sector. Branch-collective agreements mainly occur at the national level, or at the regional level, between the relevant branch trade unions and the employers; they cover minimum wage, remuneration in case of dismissal, overtime work, term of contract and the free activity of trade unions. They mostly deal with general level negotiations which involves all the relevant enterprises. Collective bargaining at the enterprise level makes up for the biggest number of collective bargaining agreements and is equivalent to bargaining at branch level, but suited to a specific enterprise. In this case the partners in negotiations are the employer and the enterprise trade-unions. They are more frequent in the garment sector, which is highly developed in Albania compared to other sectors. However, they are, rather remarkably, present in the construction and other sectors. In some cases, collective bargaining is related to the cooperation of trade-union federations of the two biggest confederations in the country, such as KSSH and BSPSH, as is the case with the Federations of Education, industry trade unions, construction trade unions, etc.

### **• System of tripartite social dialogue**

The National Labour Council (NLC) is the highest level institution of cooperation for social partners (Government-Employers-Employees). It is founded in 1997 and its activity is continuously improving. The representation of employers and employees to the NLC is determined by their organisation and activity. The main indicators of trade unions' performance are the number of members with quotas, number of collective agreements signed, number of employees covered by these agreements, number of branches/professions and territorial organisations, engagement in negotiations and resolutions of conflicts through mediation and membership in international organisations, etc.

NLC is composed of 27 members<sup>10</sup>: 7 Government representatives, 10 representatives from employers' organisations: Business Albania, Albanian Association of Banks (SHSHB), Albanian Builders' Association (SHNSH), Albanian Tourism Association (SHSHT), Association of Food-Beverage Businesses (SHBUP), Albanian Association of Information Technology (SHSHTI), Union of Investors and Industrialists of Albania (BI&ISH), National Chamber of Clothing Manufacturers (DHKPV), Albanian Insurance Bureau (BSHS), Council of Albanian Agro-business (KASH), 10 representatives from employees' organisations, trade unions: the Union of the Independent Trade Unions of Albania (BSPSH), the Independent Trade Union of Education of Albania (member of BSPSH), the Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania (KSSH), the Trade Union Federation of Industry Employees of Albania (member of KSSH), the Trade Union Federation of Health Care of Albania (member of KSSH), the Trade Union Federation of Textile, Fashion and Craftsmanship (member of KSSH), the Trade Union Federation of Financial and Trade Sector, Banking and Tourism (member of KSSH), the Trade Union

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<sup>10</sup> Council of Ministers Decision No. 1060, dated 14.12.2013 "On establishing the number of representatives of employers' and employees' organizations in the National Labor Council".

Federation of Education and Science of Albania (FSASH), the Autonomous Trade Union of Food, Trade and Tourism (SAUTT). The cooperation between different partners, special cooperation and coordination among the trade union confederations themselves remains indispensable for the interest of all social partners and especially of the employees and trade union activity.

- **Social security system**

Coverage of the labour force with insurance systems (social security, health insurance, pension, unemployment insurance) is relatively low. Out of the total number of labour forces in Albania, 68.7 percent are insured. Employees in the public sector are all insured as their contributions are calculated from the state budget funds.

Employees in the private sector (non-agricultural) who are registered and reported from the private subjects pay the insurance. This does not cover those employees in the informal economy that do not pay insurance or other state obligations.

The number of employees in the private agricultural sector in Albania of 449,972 or 43.3 percent is very high compared to the number of employees in non-agricultural private sector of 314,130 persons. The payment of social insurance from the employees in agricultural sector is only at the level of 26 percent. This burdens the social insurance scheme because the number of contributors in relation to beneficiaries is very low.

The number of contributors in the social insurance scheme is 638,340 persons, whereas the number of beneficiaries is 582,318 persons. The ratio beneficiary/contributor is 1/1.1. These statistical data show that immediate measures should be taken in order to increase the number of contributors in the social insurance scheme by fighting informality and increasing the insurance amount.

The reform undertaken in 2014 in the area of social insurance and the adoption of law from the Parliament increased the retirement age for males and females, as well as the working years required to benefit a full pension.

#### Coverage of labour force by social insurance

(In number and percentage)

Name/sector	Employment 2014	Social insurance	
		Number	%
State sector	164,000	164,000	100
Private non-agricultural sector	314,130	314,130	100
Private agricultural sector	449,722	115,818	26
-Unemployment (getting an unemployment payment)		11,386	100
-Self-employed, others		33,006	100
Total	927,852	638,340	68,7

Source: INSTAT, Quarterly Labor Force Survey 2014

INSTAT, Table of employment data 2014

Institute of Social Insurance: Statistics of social insurance January-September 2014

- **Education and vocational training**

Albania spends less on education in terms of its GDP share than the other countries in the region (2.8 percent in 2013, 2.9 percent in 2014, in the 2015 budget is projected 2.8 percent) compared to 4.6 percent which is the average share of GDP spent on educa-

tion in Eastern Europe. The reform in higher education is focused on monitoring and legal assessment of public and private education as well as development of the legal framework “*On higher education and scientific research*”. The conditions for developing, with a new security and quality standard, the state graduation for 45,000 high school graduates, are established. Institutional accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and contracting of a foreign agency for this purpose, are forecasted to be carried out in 2015. Efforts are being made to enhance the quality of education in Albania, especially of the higher education. High number of private higher education institutions, from the perspective of the number of population, remains a serious concern. According to the data of the National Accreditation Agency, Albania had 53 non-public higher institutions, of which 17 were closed down and 13 were suspended.

Taking into account the high unemployment rate of young people, especially of the ones that have a degree in high education, and the labour market demands, which is mainly interested in technicians and specialists, vocational education is proclaimed as one of the priorities of the Government in the field of education. Vocational education is stimulated and efforts to adapt the best western countries’ experiences in this sector are made in order to increase the professional training of students in vocational schools in accordance with market demands.

Vocational education is still facing a number of difficulties related to students’, parents’ and the labour market’s perception of this type of education, the low number of students enrolled for this type of education, the lack of qualitative experts in such schools and a weak commitment of social partners, etc. According to data of the Vocational Education and Training Agency, students from vocational schools make up for about 20 percent of students enrolled in higher education. There are 40 such schools, located mainly in cities, with only 3 of them focusing on agriculture and agro-business located in rural areas.

- **Employment rate**

(In number and percentage)

Description	2011	2012	2013	2014
Employment total: (I+II+III)	925,242	958,474	955,192	927,852
I. Public state sector	165,100	164,400	163,900	164,000
II. Private non-agriculture sector	256,288	268,690	290,763	314,130
III. Private agriculture sector	503,854	525,384	500,529	449,722
Employment by private sector: (%)	100	100	100	100
Agriculture	45.7	46.2	44.3	43.4
Manufacturing	8.0	7.1	7.5	8.1
Construction	7.5	8.2	7.1	6.4
Mining, Electricity, Gas and Water	3.1	1.9	2.2	2.9
Market service	19.6	21.6	21.9	22.2
Non-market service	16.1	15.0	17.0	16.9

Source: INSTAT, *Employed by sectors, 2000-2014*.

Note: Annual average

- **Unemployment rate**

(In number and percentage)

Name	2011	2012	2013	2014
Unemployment rate (%)	14,5	13,8	16,4	17,2
Registered unemployed (number)	142,484	142,530	142,648	143,507
Registered unemployed (in %)	13,3	13,3	13,4	13,5

Unemployed getting an unemployment payment (number)	8,537	9,038	7,823	7,490
Unemployed getting an unemployment payment (in %)	5,9	6,6	5,5	5,5

Source: INSTAT, Albania in figures 2013, Tirana 2014

[www.instat.gov.al](http://www.instat.gov.al) INSTAT: Registered jobseekers 2014

### • Average monthly wage

The Average monthly wage is being increased from year to year. Differences by economic sectors are high. The highest wage is in industry sector 354 € per month. In general, employees' wages are very low, especially in private sector. In 2014, the average monthly wage in private sector was 331 €, whereas in state sector was 373 €. The average wage in public sector results to much higher than in the private sector.

Wages in private sector for some categories as in construction, industry, transport, telecommunication, etc., should be higher. 62 percent of employed in the private subjects inspected by the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) during 2013 resulted with minimum salaries, based on which personal income tax and payment of social and health insurance contributions are calculated.

Average monthly wage by economic activity

Wage according to sectors <sup>11</sup>	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average monthly wage (private sector)	284	302	315	331
<i>Industry</i>	297	324	337	354
<i>Construction</i>	272	288	293	310
<i>Transport and telecommunication</i>	295	310	315	338
<i>Trade</i>	281	297	302	315
<i>Agriculture, forestry, fishing</i>	273	290	326	337
Average monthly wage (state sector)	312	333	360	373
Education	340	363	395	421
Health	300	323	337	375

Source: INSTAT, Albania in figures, (wages) 2013, Tirana 2014

INSTAT: Average monthly wage in state sector and official minimum wage, 2000-2013

During 2014, there was no increase neither of the minimum wage nor of the salaries in general; also there was no 13<sup>th</sup> wage or bonuses at the end of the year.

### Gender pay gap

Females in Albania are paid 17.63 percent less than males. According to the "Gender pay gap in Albania" report conducted for the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, with the technical and financial support of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, this difference in salaries is due to different rewards provided by the labour market. According to the report, the division of professions on gender basis, lack of experience, child care and part-time job, are the main reasons that contribute to female's salaries lower than those of males. According to the Labour Force Survey 2013, the employment rate for females of age 15-64 is 43.1 percent, whereas for males this indicator is 57.3 percent. Males in the non-agricultural private sector account for 66.6 percent of all the employed in this sector. Females in the agriculture private sector account for the highest percentage of all the employed (54.4 percent). While in the state sector, females account for 48 percent of the total employment. In Health and

<sup>11</sup> INSTAT: Albanian in figures. Salaries. Tirana 2014

Education sectors, females make up the biggest part of the employed, respectively 68.2 percent and 72.4 percent, whereas in Construction, Transport and Telecommunication males account for respectively 97.3 percent and 80.5 percent of all the employed.

- **Monthly minimum wage**

Minimum official wage, the monthly unemployment salary, the social welfare for households and minimum pension:

Monthly incomes	2011	2012	2013	2014
Minimum official wage	144	151	158	158
Monthly unemployment payment	50	50	50	50
Full social assistance for households	30	32	32	32
Partial social assistance for households	24	24	24	24
Minimum pension (urban)	76	79	83	85
Minimum pension (rural)	50	53	56	58

(in €)

Source: INSTAT, *Albania in figures 2013, Tirana 2014*  
Administrative data

- **Actual weekly working hours**

Daily and weekly working hours are sanctioned by law. According to Article 78 of the Labour Code the duration of the normal working day is not more than eight hours. Article 83 states that the number of normal weekly working hours is not more than forty; as set in a Decision of the Council of Ministers through collective bargaining.

According to the data of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, based on the inspections conducted by the State Labour Inspectorate in private sector, it resulted that 94.9 percent of the total working hours belong to the weekly working time of 40-48 hours, 5.3 percent belong to over 48 hours. The weekly working time over 48 hours is higher for females than for males, for males it is 3.7 percent whereas for females is 5.6 percent. Employees with the duration of annual paid leave below 28 days make up 4.1 percent of the total employees identified as private subjects inspected during the year.

### **Normal work / atypical work**

Data for this category of employees are limited, but this type of employment is particularly frequent in the private sector, especially in the service sector, such as house helpers, child-care assistant and cleaning personnel, etc. These are mainly women's jobs used undertaken over long-term time periods or as part-time jobs. Men tend to work in different sectors, such as in the construction sector. My opinion is that atypical work makes up for 10 percent of the overall employment, while the number of women employed in atypical work is double compared to the number of men.

Official data of the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), emerging from the controls conducted of inspected private entities show 2,460 subjects, and 4,650 atypical employees.

## Number of employers and atypical work, inspections of SLI

*(In number and percentage)*

Employment by sector	Employment	Inspections (SLI)		
		No. of subjects	Atypical work	%
State sector	164,000	188		
Private non-agricultural sector	314,130	166.870	4650	2.7
Private agricultural sector	449,722	131		
<b>Total</b>	<b>927,852</b>			

Source: INSTAT, Statistical bulletin 2014

State Labor Inspectorate (SLI), statistics data 2013

- **Migration**

It is estimated that there are about 1.4 million Albanian emigrants<sup>12</sup>, or 30 percent of the country's population. Given that emigration was chaotic, clandestine and unregistered, figures on this phenomenon by states are not very accurate. The main cause of emigration was poverty or unemployment (75 percent), whereas the other part (25 percent) have emigrated due to social, cultural, life security issues (blood feud is a special concept in Albania), etc. Greece, where most of emigrants reside, is suffering a harsh economic crisis and many Albanian emigrants are getting back home. Also, Italy or other countries are not in a positive economic situation for employment and treatment of emigrants. Most of emigrants are living for more than 10 years and, under these conditions, they start to cut the relations and remittances are declining as a result.

Under such circumstances, the remittances were significantly lowered leading to negative effects in the domestic economy and influencing the increase of poverty, because a major part of remittances were sent by the emigrants to their families for daily consumption.

## Remittances from emigrants in years

*(In million €)*

Year:	2011	2012	2013	2014
Remittances	665	675	500	251 <i>(6-mujori i pare 2014)</i>

Source: Bank of Albania

[www.open.data.al](http://www.open.data.al)

- **Human Development Index (HDI)**

Year:	2010	2011	2012	2013
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.708	0.714	0.714	716

Source: <http://hdr.undp.org>: Human Development Report

Index international ranking for Albania is 95: (Human Development Index 0.716; Life expectancy at birth (years) 77.4; Mean years of schooling (years) 9.3; Expected years of schooling (years) 10.8; Gross national income (GNI) per capita (PPP \$) 9,225; Change in rank, 2012-2013 is 2.

<sup>12</sup> According to the Civil Registry Office, Albania has 4.2 million inhabitants whereas according to the latest census, the outcomes of which were published in 2012, Albania has a population of 2.8 million inhabitants. The difference of 1.4 million inhabitants represents the number of Albanian people migrating.

- **Gini-coefficient**

Albania has a Gini-coefficient of 34.5 percent. This data for Albania refers to the disparity of consumption, which has a tendency of being more fairly distributed than incomes. The data for gini coefficient international rankings for recent years are absent.

- **Collective agreement coverage**

Pursuant to official administrative data of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, in total at the branch level there are 18 signed collective agreements in the public and private sector in the fields of education, health, public affairs, arts, culture, agriculture, environment, public order and construction, covering 226,320 employees. At the enterprise level there are signed 562 collective contracts in the public and private sectors. In total, 75,000 employees are covered by collective bargaining at enterprise level. (There are currently 10 collective bargaining agreements between the Federations and the respective ministries, which cover over 117,500 employees; 8 collective bargaining agreements between Federations and public institutions that cover 33,820 employees).

**Collective agreement coverage by sectors**

(In number and percentage)

Name	Employees 2014	Collective agreement coverage		
		Contracts	Employees	%
Public sector ( <i>branch level</i> )	164,000	10	117,500	71.6
Private non-agricultural sector:	314,130		108,820	34.6
- <i>branch level</i>		8	33,820	
- <i>enterprise level</i>		562	75,000	
Private agricultural sector	449,722	38	17,100	3.8
- <i>enterprise level</i>				
Total	927,852	618	352,240	37.9

Source: INSTAT, Albania in figures 2013, Tirana 2014  
MLSAEO, Administrative data. Trade Union

In the state/public sector, about 71.6 percent of employees are covered by collective bargaining agreements; most belonging to the education and health sectors. In the non-agricultural private sector, which employed 314,130 employees in 2014, according to the data of the above-given table, only 29 percent are covered by collective bargaining. In the agricultural private sector, which, according to the data in 2014 employed a total of 449,722 persons (data INSTAT), the number of agreements is very small.

- **Ongoing important collective bargaining agreements**

During 2014, efforts of the trade unions have continued to ensure the enforcement of many collective bargaining agreements signed previously. The Trade Union Federation of Education and Science of Albania (FSASH) and the Independent Trade Union of Education of Albania (SPASH) had one of the collective agreements (among the most important ones in the country), in education sector, during the period 2010-2014, which is signed by the Ministry of Education and Science. This contract extends its effects over the entire education personnel in the pre-university system, including teachers of kindergartens, teachers of elementary and secondary cycle of 9-year schools, teachers of high schools and vocational schools. In addition, there are also positive developments regarding the new collective bargaining agreement in the textile, fashion, industry, health, construction, education and other sectors. There is an increase of collective bargaining at the enterprise level compared to 2013. This means that there have been more agreements, leading to an increase of coverage of employees with collective bar-

gaining agreements covering more than in 2013. The Trade Union Federation of the Workers of Textile, Confections and Handicraft of Albania (affiliated to KSSH) has signed new collective bargaining agreements in fashion enterprises.

The Trade Union Federation of Industry Employees of Albania, member of KSSH, in 2014, reached the level of 8 collective agreements belonging to energy sector, mining sector; Albanian Power Corporation (KESH), Electricity Distribution Operator (OSHEE), etc., covering 12,000 workers, members of this federation. The Independent Trade Union of Construction and Public Works Employees of Albania (BSPSH) has reached several agreements with entities in the construction sector, in public works, cleaning and maintenance sectors, etc. The Trade Union Federation of Construction, Paper, Wood and Public Infrastructure Employees of Albania (FSNLDIP) has continued its work on signing 1<sup>st</sup> level act agreements, and collective bargaining agreements in enterprises and private entities dealing with construction, service and public infrastructure. It has signed an act-agreement with the Association of Public Services of Albania, a BSPSH member, and has continued with signing contracts with some representatives of fashion industry. The Trade Unions Federation of Education, Training and Science Employees of Albania (a KSSH member) has continued its extension to the private sector, signing contracts with some pre-university education institutions (public and private), with some compulsory 9-year education organisations (public and private), with higher general and vocational education institutions, and with some higher education institutions. Despite improvements and a growing of number of contracts, increase of the number of employees covered by contracts, trade union fragmentation and in particular the existence of several trade unions and federations for one profession, frequently even in one district or enterprise operations remain problematic.

- **Trade union density**

The analysis on the labour market and the membership of trade unions in Albania shows that out of 164,000 employed in the state sector, (according to the trade union data) about 100,000 are trade union members; half of them belonging to the education and health sectors.

Table with the number of employed and membership in trade unions

(In number and percentage)

Name	Employed 2014	Supporters	%	Real (Quota)	%
Public sector	164,000	100,000	60	39,000	23
Private non-agricultural sector	314,130	100,000	32	53,000	16
Private agricultural sector	449,722	10,000	2.2	9,000	2
Total:	927,852	210,000	22	101,000	10.8

Source: INSTAT. Trade unions; data processing by author.

Out of 314,130 people employed in the non-agricultural sector, about 120,000 are members of trade unions (according to unions' data, including supporters), or about 38% of the total. Often, trade unions report their membership based on their supporters (virtual members), and not on paying members. The number of employees from the private sector who are members of trade unions is very low (only 10.8%). This remains the main challenge for the future of trade unions of Albania.

- **Employers' organizations density**

Albania has a total of about 111,083 active enterprises<sup>13</sup> and half of them are concentrated in the region of Tirana and Durrës, (out of which 99,782 or 89.8 percent employ 1-4 people, 5,235 or 4.7 percent employ 5-9 people, 4,660 or 4.2 percent employ 10-49 people, and 1,406 or 1.2 percent employ over 50 people). Enterprises with main activities of trade, transport and storage, hotels, bars and restaurants, information and communication dominate in number, 84.8 percent. The enterprises are small, and when it comes to numbers, most of them are not a member of an employer's organizations, but when it comes to their relevance in terms of the national income for their size, most of these businesses are members of "Business Albania"<sup>14</sup>, or of other employers' organizations. The employers' organizations are getting consolidated. In 2012-2014 there were about 30 employers' organizations. The majority of them, over 25 employers' organizations and associations have joined thus forming a bigger organization of the employers in Albania, called "Business Albania".

- **Workplace representation**

The organization that represents the workers in the working place in enterprises is the trade union council. The trade union council in enterprise or in working place carries out its function in compliance with the charter of federation and collective agreement.

The establishment of labour councils in enterprises is a new thing and an unknown phenomenon for the workers. Although the experience is missing, some training courses were organized from the trade unions, during 2014. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has given the main contribution mainly in relation to the experience of Germany in labor councils.

Changes between Labour Councils and Trade Union Councils, relations and cooperation between the Trade Unions and Labour Councils in enterprises, benefits and issues concerning both parties were identified. Establishment of labour councils in enterprises marks the beginning of this process, in compliance with EU Directives, as an indispensable European social norm. Trade unions should use this additional instrument in order to increase their competences in labour relations and strengthen the protection of workers' interests. Trade unions are the main representative authorities of labour at the workplace, although legislation allows for selected representatives of the employees if there are no members of organized trade unions. Trade union representatives at the work place play an important role in negotiations and in collective bargaining with the employees. Trade union organizations at the work place are the main representative bodies for employees. There are not yet other bodies representing the employees, except for the procedure in implementation of Law No.10237, of 18.02.2010 "On Occupational Health and Safety", allowing for the establishment of Occupational Health and Safety Councils with representatives of employees. The Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 108 dated 09.02.2011 on the skills needed from employees dealing with occupational health and safety is being implemented.

- **Trade unions**

In 2014, the trade unions of Albania underwent no significant change. 83 trade unions are recognized in Albania. Most of them (over 90 percent) are part of confederations,

<sup>13</sup> INSTAT. Active enterprises by economic sector and size. Tirana 2014

<sup>14</sup> Established in 2011 due to a need to represent the interests of employee organizations, to build their capacities and to promote socio-economic policies, and to support and develop free entrepreneurship and the labor market.

whereas the remaining part, although high in number, represent less than 10 percent of the trade union membership in Albania.

- **National Trade Union Confederations**

Table of membership in the Confederation of trade unions<sup>15</sup>

No.	National trade-union confederation	<i>In number</i>	
		Individual membership	International membership
1	Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania <i>Konfederata e Sindikatave të Shqipërisë</i>	105,000	ITUC
2	Union of Independent Trade Unions of Albania <i>Bashkimi i Sindikatave të Pavarura të Shqipërisë</i>	95,000	ITUC
3	Union of Trade Unions of Albania* <i>Bashkimi i Sindikatave të Shqipërisë</i>	-	-
4	Union of Independent Trade Unions* <i>Unioni i Sindikatave të Pavarura</i>	-	-
5	Union of Autonomous Trade Unions* <i>Bashkimi i Sindikatave Autonome</i>	-	-
6	The Confederation of Employees of Albania <i>Konfederata e Punonjësve të Shqipërisë</i>	-	-

Source: ITUC. Report for the WTO General Council Review of the Trade Policies of Albania; [www.bsps.org.al](http://www.bsps.org.al), [www.kssh.org.al](http://www.kssh.org.al)

The Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania and the Union of Trade Unions of Albania represent over 90 percent of the overall number of trade union membership in Albania.

- **Trade Union Federations by branches**

No	Trade Union Federation <i>Federata e Sindikatave</i>	Individual membership	National membership	s/national membership
1	The Trade Union Federation of Education, Training and Science <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Punonjësve të Arsimit, Edukimit dhe Shkencës</i>	EI	KSSH	8,500
2	The Trade Union Federation of Industry Employees of Albania <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Punonjësve të Industrisë së Shqipërisë</i>	Industrial-Global Union PSI/EPSU	KSSH	12,000
3	The Trade Union Federation of Civil Service and State Administration Employees <i>Federata e Punonjësve të Shërbimit Civil dhe të Administratës Shtetërore</i>	PSI/EPSU	KSSH	3,000
4	The Trade Union Federation of Health of Albania <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Shëndetësisë të Shqipërisë</i>	PSI/EPSU	KSSH	6,300

<sup>15</sup> Membership and activity of trade unions called confederations: Union of Trade Unions of Albania, Union of Independent Trade Unions, and Union of Autonomous Trade Union are low; there is no official data about them.

5	The Trade Union Federation of Transport and Telecommunication of Albania <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Punonjësve të Transportit dhe Telekomunikacionit</i>	ITF/ETF	KSSH	2,500
6	The Trade Union Federation of Construction, Wood and Public Infrastructure of Albania <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Punonjësve të Ndërtimit, Drurit dhe Infrastrukturës publike</i>	BWI PSI Industrial-Global Union	KSSH	8,000
7	The Trade Union Federation of Textile, Fashion and Craftsmanship <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Punonjësve të Tekstilit, Konfeksioneve dhe Shërbimeve Artizanale</i>	Industrial-Global Union	KSSH	8,000
8	The Trade Union Federation of Employees in Agriculture, Forestry and Environment <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Punonjësve të Bujqësisë, Ushqimit, Pylltarisë dhe Ambjentit</i>	EFFAT IUL	KSSH	2,500
9	The Trade Union Federation of Police Service <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Shërbimit Policor</i>		KSSH	1,500
10	The Trade Union Federation of the Retired and Unemployed <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Pensionistëve dhe të Papunëve</i>	PSI	KSSH	5,000
11	The Trade Union Federation of Financial, and Trade sector, Banking and Tourism <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Shërbimeve Financiare, Tregtare, Bankare e Turizmit</i>		KSSH	
12	The Trade Union Federation of Press, Media, Culture and Sports Employees <i>Federata e Sindikatave të Punonjësve të Shtypit, Medias, Kulturës dhe Sportit</i>		KSSH	
13	The Independent Trade Union of Education of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Arsimit të Shqipërisë</i>	EI	BSPSH	8,500
14	The Independent Trade Union of Miners of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Minatorëve të Shqipërisë</i>		BSPSH	8,000
15	The Independent Trade Union of Health of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Shëndetësisë Shqiptare</i>		BSPSH	6,500
16	The Independent Trade Union of Telecom of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Telekomit të Shqipërisë</i>		BSPSH	
17	The Independent Trade Union of Topography of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Tipografëve të Shqipërisë</i>		BSPSH	
18	The Independent Trade Union of Civil De-	PSI	BSPSH	3,500

	fence and Order Employees of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Punonjësve Civilë të Mbrojtjes dhe Rendit</i>	EPSU		
19	The Independent Trade Union of Light and Textile Industry <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Industrisë së Lehtë dhe Tekstile</i>	Industrial-Global Union	BSPSH	8,000
20	The Independent Trade Union of Artists of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Artistëve të Shqipërisë</i>		BSPSH	
21	The Independent Trade Union of Energy of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Energjetikës së Shqipërisë</i>	PSI Industrial-Global Union	BSPSH	4,000
22	The Independent Trade Union of the Retired of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Pensionistëve të Shqipërisë</i>	PSI	BSPSH	5,500
23	The Independent Trade Union of Construction and Public Works Employees of Albania <i>Sindikata e Pavarur e Punonjësve të Ndërtimit, Punëve Publike të Shqipërisë</i>		BSPSH	8,000
24	The Trade Union Federation of Trade sector, Banks and Services <i>Federata Sindikale e Tregtisë, Bankave dhe Shërbimeve</i>		FSTBSH	3,000
25	The Trade Union of Oil Industry Workers <i>Sindikata e Punonjësve të Naftës</i>		SPNSH	

Source: The organization department, KSSH; [www.bspsb.org.al](http://www.bspsb.org.al)

Some of the federations that are members of trade union confederations are merged reducing thereby the number of federations. This has not damaged the representation and protection of employees, but it is considered as a necessity under the limited financial sources and membership.

Following its 4<sup>th</sup> Congress, KSSH has approved the new organisational structure making a re-composition of some federations, by merging some of them and reducing the number of federations from 13 to 8.

The current website of BSPSH reports that the current structure of BSPSH contains 11 federations, while other federations are being monitored by BSPSH for full membership. The number of federations is not important, while the coverage of professions by trade unions/federations and employees' representation is of a high relevance. Both BSPSH and KSSH cover various professions and represent employees although their composition varies.

#### • Employers' Organizations

##### 1) Business Albania (*Biznes Albania*):

- Union of the Industrialists and Investors of Albania – represented in the National Labour Council with one representative (*Bashkimi i Industrialistëve dhe Investitorëve të Shqipërisë*)

- The National Union of Civil Guards (*Bashkimi Kombëtar i Rojeve Civile*)
  - The Italian Chamber of Commerce in Albania (*Dhoma e Tregtisë e Italisë në Shqipëri*)
  - The National Chamber of Fason Producers (*Dhoma Kombëtare e Prodhuesve të Veshjeve*)
  - The Confederation of Entrepreneurs of Construction Materials (*Konfederata e Sipërmarrësve të Materialeve të Ndërtimit*)
  - Albanian Confindustria – represented by one person in the National Labour Council (*Konfindustria Shqiptare*)
  - The Association of Food and Beverage Business of Albania (*Shoqata e Biznesit të Ushqim Pijeve, Albania*)
  - The Association of Albanian Publishers (*Shoqata e Botuesve Shqiptarë*)
  - The Association of Organic Agriculture (*Shoqata e Bujqësisë Organike*)
  - The Association of Albanian Exporters (*Shoqata e Eksportuesve Shqiptarë*)
  - The Association of Professional and Business Women (*Shoqata e Grave Profesioniste, Afariste dhe Zejtare*)
  - The Association of Meat Importers and Processors (*Shoqata e Grave Profesioniste, Afariste dhe Zejtare*)
  - The Association of Accountants and Financial Experts of Albania (*Shoqata e Kontabilistëve dhe Financierëve të Shqipërisë*)
  - The Association of Constructors of Albania – it is represented in the National Labour Council with 2 representatives (*Shoqata e Ndërtuesve të Shqipërisë*)
  - The Association of Wood Processing (*Shoqata e Përpunuesve të Drurit*)
  - The Association of Bread Producers (*Shoqata e Prodhuesve të Bukës*)
  - The Association of Flour Producers (*Shoqata e Prodhuesve të Miellit*)
  - The Association of Hydrocarbon Companies (*Shoqata e Shoqërive të Hidrokarbureve*)
  - The National Association of Shoe Producers – it is represented with one person in the National Labour Council (*Shoqata Kombëtare e Prodhuesve të Këpucëve*)
  - The National Association of International Road Transporters (ANALTIR) (*Shoqata Kombëtare e Transportuesve Rrugorë Ndërkombëtarë (ANALTIR)*)
  - The Environmental Association for Sustainable and Rational Development (*Shoqata Mjedisore për Zhvillim të Qëndrueshëm dhe Racional*)
  - The Albanian Tourism Association (*Shoqata Shqiptare e Turizmit*)
  - “Dinamo” Agro-Food Market Association (*Shoqata Tregu Agro-Ushqimor “Dinamo”*)
  - The Union of Tour Operators of Albania (*Unioni i Operatorëve Turistikë Shqiptarë*)
- 2) The Council of Employers’ Organizations – represented with two representatives in the National Labour Council (*Këshilli i Organizatave të Punëdhënësve*)
  - 3) The Confederation of the Employers’ Organizations Council - represented with two representatives in the National Labour Council (*Konfederata e Këshillit të Organizatave të Punëdhënësve*)
  - 4) The Agro-Business Council of Albania - represented with one representative in the National Labour Council (*Këshilli i Agrobiznesit të Shqipërisë*)
  - 5) The Union of Business Organizations of Albania (*Bashkimi i Organizatave të Biznesit të Shqipërisë*)

**International membership:** The main employers’ organizations are members of the European Business Confederation (BUSINESS EUROPE).