

ALBANIA



Country profile

Capital: Tirana

Principal cities: Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodër, Gjirokastrë, Vlorë, Korçë, Kukës

Official language(s): Albanian

Other language(s): Greek, Vlach, Romani, Slavic dialects

Population: 3.1 million (2004)

GDP per capita PPP: 4,978 int'l \$ (2004)

Currency: Lek (ALL)

Labour force activity rate (pop. aged 15-64): 65.1% (2005)

Higher Education in Albania

The pre-university education system in Albania consists of three levels, the first 2 representing free and compulsory education: basic education (5 years), lower secondary education (4 years), and upper secondary education (3 years). Education participation rates at all levels, but particularly for secondary education, remain low by the standards of the EU and other countries in the region.

Higher education is offered by 8 state universities (the most recent being the University of Durrës which opened in September 2006), the Institute of Fine Arts, the Institute of Physical Training and Sports, and 15 private universities operating around the country. A total of 60,050 students (excluding PhD) were enrolled in public higher education institutions and 405 in private institutions in the academic year 2003/2004, for a teaching staff numbering 3,811. Students are required to pass an entrance examination (Matura) to obtain access to higher education.

The debate on autonomy in higher education is growing in Albania and is linked to problems of funding higher education and the choice of financial management system. The main source of funding is the government, with a small proportion of revenues raised by tuition fees. Separate tuition fee systems exist for full-time and part-time students, and tuition fees vary from faculty to faculty. Since 2005 universities have had more freedom to use funds generated by tuition fees.

Higher education institutions in Albania are governed by the new Law for higher education approved by Parliament in May 2007 which regulates the activities of universities and faculties, the establishment of management bodies and their functioning, and teaching staff recruitment procedures. Organisation and activities are covered by the statutes of the individual universities.

In September 2003, Albania officially joined the Bologna process. Since then, higher education legislation has been updated with a view to supporting the Bologna process reforms and responding to national needs.

The reform process has addressed issues such as study cycles, financing of higher education, academic standards, teaching load, and student admissions.

Years of compulsory education: 9

Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 and 6)¹: 16.4 (2003)

Number of higher education institutions: 10 public; 15 private

Bologna signatory country since: 2003

For further information, contact the National Tempus Office at :
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¹ The nation's total enrolment in tertiary education (regardless of age), as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education.

TEMPUS in Albania

Participation of Albania in Tempus

All Albanian state universities participate in Tempus. Regional universities have had less support in recent years, partly due to reductions in their budgets.

From 1992 to 1999, Tempus played a vital role in bringing the academic community into the European network of higher education institutions, mainly by supporting retraining and upgrading for academic staff (70%-80% of academic staff have retrained abroad through Tempus). Tempus has also been instrumental in supporting the reform process and the development of the capacity of universities to upgrade institutional management. Two overall long-term processes—the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the building of the EHEA—have shaped Tempus cooperation in Albania since 2000, and the dynamics of both have led to the updating of cooperation priorities on a yearly basis.

Updated since 2000 have been study programmes covering the fields of agricultural, the environmental sciences, geology, engineering, the natural sciences, nursing, tourism and leisure, and cultural heritage. Lifelong learning courses have been developed in the fields of civil society, environmental policy, transport policy, public administration reform, public health, justice, and teacher training. Information management systems, institutional evaluation, continuing education and the development of university strategic plans have also been supported through Tempus.

Impact of Tempus in Albania

Tempus has contributed to the harmonisation of higher education in terms of the development of unified curricula, with 70% of higher education institutions stating that over half their curricula comply with the Bologna criteria as a result of Tempus. Curriculum development projects also support the development and introduction of credit and accumulation systems in Albanian institutions.

Teaching methods are changing within faculties, particularly through projects that focus on capacity building. Tempus has provided opportunities to improve soft skills and to acquire knowledge on new or different processes, and work is now also commencing on student assessment methods. Tempus is considered an important instrument from a staff motivation perspective; it has also greatly influenced the application of quality assurance in teaching.

All the Tempus projects have led to partnership agreements, and, as a follow-up to cooperation within Tempus, joint degrees are being prepared between Albanian universities and EU institutions.

Students perceive very positively the work being done with the support of Tempus and have noted an improvement in teaching quality. Tempus has also been highly effective in developing human resources and in building capacity in public administration, civil society, and NGOs; it has, moreover, generally led to greater cooperation, not just through Tempus, but more importantly, at the national level.

Tempus has supported and improved university governance and cooperation with ministries, has reinforced structural links between rectorates, faculties, and central administration, has supported the integration of young academics, non-academic staff, and students in university decision-making, and has developed international relations services. Tempus has helped students improve their qualifications, and there is evidence of a growing interest in the labour market in graduates.

Participation in Tempus since: 1992

Number of JEPs: 89

Number of IMGs: 1214

Number of SCMs: 8

Number of CMEs: 21

Total budget allocated:

€30.89 million (€19.39 million 1990-1999; €11.5 million 2000-2006)

Total budget allocated to staff and student mobility in JEPs and SCMs:

€8.56 million (1992-1999)

€3.996 million (2000-2006)

Total budget allocated to IMGs:

€116,700 (1990-1999)

€606,518 (2000-2006)

- Unified curricula
- New methods
- Capacity building
- Internationalisation
- Role in Albanian society
- Governance