



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Information received from Albania on follow-up to the
concluding observations on its combined thirteenth and
fourteenth periodic reports***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. The detailed responses to paragraph 48, which call for updated information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 19(b) (the right to education) and 35 (migrants and asylum seekers), have been compiled with the contributions of three institutions: the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Education.

II. Follow-up information on the concluding observations (CERD/C/ALB/CO/13-14)

A. Information relating to paragraph 19 (b)

1. Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

2. Regarding the conclusions and recommendations included in paragraph 19 (b) (right to education), the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is the national coordinating authority for implementing the strategic objectives of policies and the legal framework for Roma and Egyptian minorities, in cooperation with all responsible institutions and civil society.

3. The National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians, 2021–2025 is the strategic document aligned with the objectives of the National Strategy for Development and Integration and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Plan is also in line with the objectives of the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020–2030.

4. On April 20, 2022, the Fifth Policy Dialogue Seminar between Albania and the EU was held in Tirana, focused on the inclusion of the Roma and Egyptian national minorities. This seminar resulted in conclusions and operational measures, as well as Final Recommendations for the 2022–2024 timeframe. These recommendations were consulted with representatives from central and local government, civil society, and international organizations. The policy areas addressed by these recommendations include education, anti-Gypsyism, employment and vocational training, access to healthcare, social care, housing, civil registration, and returnees.

5. Commitments have also been undertaken within the framework of the Poznan Declaration for the Western Balkan countries, regarding social inclusion, participation, and integration of Roma in the fields of education, employment and vocational training, healthcare, housing, civil registration, anti-Gypsyism, non-discrimination, data collection, and inclusive mechanisms for coordination and strategic monitoring. The objectives of the Poznan Declaration are aligned with the National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians, the 2030 Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. As part of the integrated approach to address the challenges of effectively including Roma and Egyptian minorities in inclusive education, through the Social Inclusion Platform, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Sports, municipalities, and civil society have conducted workshops to discuss the provision of scholarships for Roma and Egyptian minorities and the school as a community center approach. These roundtables produced concrete recommendations on inclusive education and non-discriminatory approach in education.

7. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has increased the capacities of officials at both central and local levels to monitor the situation of Roma and Egyptian minorities through the ROMALB system. Over 140 employees have been trained, including staff from Regional Education Directorates.

8. According to reports from the ROMALB system, in 2024, around 9,380 Roma and Egyptian boys and girls were enrolled in and attended compulsory education. In addition, 600 Roma and Egyptian children benefited from free school transport, and 649 Roma and Egyptian students received scholarships at various educational levels, facilitating their access to education.

9. These measures were combined with actions in employment and vocational training, including employment services and career counseling, as well as registration in vocational education and training institutions, in the private and public sectors. Furthermore, 403 Roma and Egyptian individuals benefited from employment promotion programs during the period January–June 2025.
10. Every citizen with permanent residence in the Republic of Albania, aged 35–70, has the right to a free basic medical check-up, without discrimination. This program includes beneficiaries from the Roma and Egyptian communities.
11. The provision of services for vulnerable communities is related to Albania’s requirements in the context of its EU integration. Community-based services aim to deliver direct interventions and tools for planning specific socio-health integrated services.
12. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare aims to implement effective solutions to the social and health challenges facing Roma, Egyptians, and other residents in rural areas, with particular attention to Roma and Egyptian children in the early years of life, in order to ensure lasting impact and healthy child development.
13. According to implementation reports for the 2024 measures of the Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians there were 52,429 Roma and Egyptians receiving services from mobile medical teams in 2024 as compared to 53,017 reported in 2023.
14. The measures of the National Action Plan for Equality, Participation, and Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians 2021–2025 and the Social Protection Sectoral Strategy 2024–2030 outline the vision for moving beyond the Economic Assistance Scheme, aiming to reduce and alleviate poverty by ensuring payments and support to the most vulnerable families and individuals, helping them exit poverty and pursue opportunities for social and economic reintegration. This scheme has been reformed to bring transparency and efficiency, and to simplify documentation and procedures for applicants, including Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries.
15. Through the Financial Mechanism of the Social Fund, the Ministry has supported the establishment of missing social services in local government units. To date, 103 integrated social-health services have been established at the local and regional level, with integrated teams in place.
16. In terms of employment promotion policies, Roma and Egyptians are prioritized in active employment promotion programs. At employment offices, members of the Roma and Egyptian communities are registered as unemployed job seekers. Active employment policies that prioritize Roma and Egyptian groups aim to increase employability. According to the data, 6,111 Roma and Egyptians received counseling and career guidance services, focusing on helping unemployed individuals.
17. Regarding social housing, with the implementation of Law No. 22/2018 “On Social Housing” (as amended), housing alternatives have been expanded for vulnerable groups. To ensure the inclusion of Roma families in social housing programs, these programs interact with other services such as social services, employment, education, and healthcare. Through the Rent Subsidy Program, during the first half of 2025, approximately 2,300 vulnerable families benefited, 20.2% of which (about 460 families) were Roma and Egyptian families.
18. Free legal aid services are provided to all vulnerable categories as defined in Law No. 111/2017 “On State-Guaranteed Legal Aid”, including Roma and Egyptian minorities. Regarding legal aid, 166 lawyers have provided secondary legal aid to Roma and Egyptian community members. 547 Roma and Egyptians received primary legal aid. 20 legal aid service centers have been established and are operating to improve access to these services for Roma and Egyptians.
19. Access to civil registration has improved for both Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania. Training sessions have been conducted to strengthen the capacities of civil servants in implementing civil registration recommendations, including those affecting the Roma and Egyptian minorities. This also includes legal support for residence transfers, and other related procedures.

20. Anti-Gypsyism is a specific component of the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2021–2025, aimed at raising recognition and awareness in public policies. The Law on Protection from Discrimination was amended in 2020, expanding the list of recognized forms of discrimination (including multiple discrimination, intersectional discrimination, hate speech, segregation, sexual harassment, structural discrimination, incitement and assistance in discrimination, and declared intent to discriminate) by referring to international practice and current social contexts. In relation to these concepts, ASPA, the Albanian School of Public Administration, has developed training programs and an online training curriculum on anti-Gypsyism.

21. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare will continue to cooperate with all responsible institutions to improve the living conditions of the Roma and Egyptian minorities.

2. Ministry of Internal Affairs

22. The Ministry of the Interior, in accordance with its obligations arising from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), has responsibly followed the recommendations issued by the Committee, undertaking concrete measures aimed at improving the political and legal framework in the field of migration.

23. In this context, the necessary steps have been taken to:

- Draft and effectively implement national migration policies, in accordance with human rights principles and international standards for the protection of migrants and asylum seekers;
- Improve the relevant legislation with the aim of ensuring the rights of migrants and asylum seekers residing in the territory of the Republic of Albania, including the right to seek international protection, the principle of non-refoulement, access to basic services, and fair procedures for the examination of asylum claims.

B. Information relating to paragraph 35 (b)

24. As of May 2024, the National Strategy on Migration and its corresponding Action Plan 2024–2026 have entered into force, adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 271, dated 02.05.2024. The document is aligned with relevant EU and UN strategies.

25. In line with Chapter 24, the inter-institutional monitoring mechanism has been strengthened through the establishment of a dual oversight system composed of the Technical Committee and the Migration Steering Group, both established by Orders of the Prime Minister. In July 2024, the monitoring tool was finalized, and on 30 September 2024, the first meeting of the strategy's monitoring mechanism was held, with the participation of responsible institutions, international organizations, and civil society. The mechanism meets regularly to follow up on progress and ensure cross-sectoral coordination.

26. In January 2025, the Migration Sector within the Ministry of the Interior, in its role as the technical secretariat and with support from designated focal points in the institutions responsible for implementing the measures, prepared the first monitoring report covering the period May – December 2024:

- The report has been translated into English and shared with partners for comments.
- The report indicates an implementation status of approximately 75% of the measures planned for completion by the end of 2024, which have been either fully or partially implemented.
- The report is expected to be presented at the upcoming meeting of the Technical Committee on Migration.

27. The implementation report of the strategy highlights several achievements in the areas of foreign nationals' integration, the prevention of irregular migration by Albanian citizens, and the promotion of regular migration pathways. The Ministry of the Interior, through the General Directorate for Migration and Asylum Development, with support from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), has organized a series of training sessions for

the Local Migration and Diaspora Structures in municipalities across the country. These trainings have focused on preparing staff within these structures to raise awareness among citizens and young people about regular migration routes and opportunities to the European Union, as well as to support the integration of foreign nationals at the local level.

28. The Albanian authorities have undertaken concrete steps to increase the involvement of migrants in decision-making processes and public life at both local and central levels. The Ministry of the Interior has carried out awareness-raising activities in municipalities with a higher concentration of migrants, with the support of institutions such as the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Sports, and Local Government Units.

29. Furthermore, through legislative amendments, a clear pathway has been ensured for acquiring Albanian citizenship. Detailed information has been prepared and disseminated for applicants for long-term residence, clearly outlining the main criteria, such as the uninterrupted period of stay and the required language proficiency.

30. The citizenship application procedure has been simplified, and the application process is publicly available, thus ensuring that applicants have comprehensive and accessible guidance to meet the legal requirements. This process aims to facilitate the integration of migrants into Albanian society by ensuring a fair approach aligned with international standards and best administrative practices.

31. During the 2024–2025 period, several important measures have been undertaken to protect against discrimination and to support the integration of migrants in Albania. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination has included dedicated sections on foreign nationals in the annual report, reflecting their access to rights. Cooperation agreements have also been signed for the exchange of data on foreign nationals employed in Albania.

32. Law No. 79/2021 ‘On Foreigners’, as amended by Law No. 43/2025 ‘On Some Amendments and Additions to Law No. 79/2021, “On Foreigners”’, guarantees the right to legal residence and employment in Albania through the issuance of residence permits and single permits according to specific relevant categories. It ensures the right of access to integration programs and services for foreigners, enhances the provision of information, and facilitates procedures for obtaining residence and single permits. The law guarantees the issuance of documentation in line with certified international standards, including special travel documents in cases of loss, damage, or replacement. Furthermore, the provisions of the Law “On Foreigners” do not exclude the possibility or the right to appeal through administrative procedures, in accordance with the applicable legislation.

33. In fulfilment of the legal obligations arising from Articles 97 and 98 of the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Albania, a series of concrete and coordinated actions have been undertaken aimed at improving the integration of foreigners into the country’s economic, cultural, and social life. The responsible authorities have continued their efforts to facilitate foreigners’ access to the labour market, in accordance with their residence status. During 2024, several cooperation initiatives were carried out with the private sector and business associations to identify employment opportunities for foreigners with various skills and qualifications.

34. In several regions of the country, information offices have been established within employment offices, providing employment guidance and support in preparing the necessary documentation for applications. Additionally, vocational training programs have been implemented for specific categories of foreigners (such as asylum seekers and economic migrants), offering them the opportunity to acquire skills that align with the needs of the local labour market. In cooperation with non-governmental organizations and educational institutions, free Albanian language courses have been offered to foreign adults and children. Language learning is considered a fundamental element for integration into the community and for improving daily communication with public institutions.

35. In accordance with Article 98, public institutions have increased awareness-raising efforts regarding the rights of foreigners and the prohibition of all forms of discrimination through training of administrative staff and dissemination of informational materials.

Guidelines for equal services have been developed and made available in several foreign languages.

36. Partner non-governmental organizations have provided psychological, legal, and social support to vulnerable categories of foreigners, particularly victims of discrimination, trafficking, or domestic violence. A hotline and a digital platform have been established to report cases of discrimination and to seek assistance anonymously.

37. During this period, inter-institutional cooperation as well as collaboration with international organizations operating in the fields of migration and human rights has been strengthened. Specific partnerships have been developed with the EU Delegation in Tirana, GIZ, UNHCR, IOM, and local organizations for the design and implementation of sustainable integration programs based on the principles of inclusion, respect, and equality.

C. Information relating to paragraph 35 (a)

38. The Albanian authorities remain fully committed to the implementation of Law No. 10/2021 “On Asylum,” ensuring that every person present on the territory of the Republic of Albania has full, equal, and impartial access to seek international protection, in accordance with the obligations arising from international law and European standards.

39. Albania has ratified a series of international instruments protecting the rights of refugees and migrants, including the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), among others. Following ratification, these international instruments have direct applicability within the Albanian legal system and are directly implemented by state institutions, in compliance with constitutional principles and international public law.

40. Law No. 10/2021 contains clear provisions respecting the principle of non-refoulement, in accordance with Article 11, prohibiting the return of any person to a country where their life, liberty, or integrity may be at risk due to persecution, torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment. In line with this principle, every application for international protection is processed individually and with a sensitive approach to the applicant’s personal circumstances, ensuring full protection for those genuinely in need of asylum.

41. In practice, inter-institutional cooperation between the Border Police and the Directorate of Migration, Asylum, and Anti-Trafficking Policies within the Ministry of Interior has been significantly strengthened to ensure early identification and immediate referral of persons expressing the need for international protection. In this context, trainings have been organized for the relevant staff, focusing on asylum procedures, in cooperation with international organizations such as UNHCR, IOM, and EUAA, which provide technical assistance and support to strengthen institutional capacities.

42. To guarantee effective access to asylum procedures, applicants for international protection are provided with comprehensive and understandable information in a language they understand regarding their rights, the procedures followed, and the forms of support available during the process. They are also ensured free legal aid throughout the administrative phase of the application review. The information covers their rights and obligations, procedural flow, and legal mechanisms for appeal in case of rejection of the international protection application.

43. The asylum application review process is conducted fairly, impartially, and with full respect for the principles of confidentiality and personal security of the applicants. Throughout the procedure, the authorities guarantee special protection for vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied minors, trafficking victims, persons with disabilities, and others in need of specific protection.

44. To date, to our knowledge, no complaints have been filed regarding the implementation of the Asylum Law in the Republic of Albania by the beneficiaries of this law.

45. The Albanian authorities will continue their cooperation with international organizations to further strengthen the asylum system by improving the regulatory

framework, enhancing institutional mechanisms, and sharing best practices at the regional and international levels.

D. Information relating to paragraph 35 (c)

46. The Protocol has been ratified by Law No. 20/2024 “On the Ratification of the Protocol between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Italian Republic on Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Migration.

47. The Protocol is based on the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Albania and Italy (signed in Rome on October 13, 1995), as well as on the culture, mutual understanding, and cooperation between the two countries. In this context, the Protocol reflects Albania’s full commitment, as part of Europe, in the spirit of solidarity to support the members of the broader European family, with a perspective towards EU membership.

48. The Protocol is also in compliance with the provisions of the new European Union Pact on Migration and Asylum. Specifically, this commitment aims to intensify relations in the management of irregular migration flows, a highly problematic phenomenon in the region, by establishing this important cooperation framework with the Italian side, an EU member state and a friend of Albania, which was also the original proposer of this initiative.

49. Albania has closely cooperated with Italy and other international authorities to establish a secure framework for the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers, respecting international laws and fulfilling obligations arising from ratified conventions. Albania reaffirms its commitment to fully comply with all obligations under the approved Protocol.

50. Albania has taken the necessary measures to ensure that the Protocol with Italy is fully consistent with its international commitments. Regarding its implementation:

- An implementing agreement of the Protocol has been signed between the Ministry of Interior of Albania and the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice of Italy.
- Upon the proposal of the Ministry of Interior, the Albanian government has established a National Task Force, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Interior, which includes high-level representatives from key institutions involved in the implementation of the Protocol.

51. The Ministry of Interior, through Order No. 208 dated 23.10.2024 issued by the Minister of Interior, has established the Working Group for the Collection of Information on Public Order and Security Issues, within the framework of implementing the Protocol between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Italian Republic on strengthening cooperation in the field of migration.

52. Albania is committed to continuously reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the protocols and procedures to ensure that they do not undermine the country’s efforts to prevent human trafficking and guarantee the protection of potential victims.

E. Information relating to paragraph 34

53. The management of migrant and refugee flows in Albania constitutes a priority for national security, the protection of human rights, and the fulfillment of international obligations. These processes are supported by a clear legal and practical framework, in accordance with international standards and border security regulations.

54. Law No. 79/2021 “On Foreigners”, as amended, regulates the entry, stay, and departure of foreign nationals from Albanian territory and guarantees their rights. This law particularly addresses cases of irregular stay and establishes the relevant procedures for their treatment. Since 2021, Law No. 10/2021 “On Asylum” has also been implemented, setting out the conditions for granting refugee status, subsidiary and temporary protection, and safeguarding the rights of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.

55. The identification and screening process of migrants at the border is regulated by Instruction No. 174, dated 12.09.2022, which delineates the responsibilities of local

authorities in conducting the screening procedure. This process is carried out within 10 hours from the moment of apprehension and aims to categorize foreigners as: subjects of entry refusal, asylum seekers, potential victims of trafficking, irregular migrants, or unaccompanied children.

56. For cases involving administrative appeals, a Complaints Review Commission has been established under the central authority, composed of 3 to 5 members. The Commission reviews all complaints related to decisions concerning foreigners in irregular situations.

57. Unaccompanied children cannot be returned at the border and are immediately referred to the child protection officer. Their return is a last resort and is implemented only if it is in the best interest of the child, in accordance with Law No. 18/2017 and Decision No. 111, dated 06.03.2019.

58. In cases where an irregular foreigner requests voluntary return to their country of origin, the competent authority seeks assistance from IOM for the implementation of assisted return.

59. In cases where detention measures are imposed, local authorities may apply alternative measures or place the individual in the Detention Center, always in accordance with the assessed risks and the best interest of the child.

60. For the protection of unaccompanied children, an integrated system has been established to ensure cooperation between state institutions and non-governmental organizations. This system is coordinated by the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child, which guarantees that return and repatriation occur only when it is in the best interest of the child.

61. In summary, Albania has established a sustainable legal and institutional framework for managing migratory flows, respecting human rights principles and international obligations, especially for vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children.

Ministry of Education (Information on paragraph 19b the Right to Education)

62. Each school year, all pre-university educational institutions, through the annual instruction circular, are guided, among other things, to:

- Take measures to create a friendly, safe, and inclusive internal and external school environment.
- Give priority enrolment to children from the Roma and Egyptian national minorities and ensure their completion of upper secondary education.

63. Continuous measures have been undertaken to facilitate and increase school attendance for all students, including Roma and Egyptian students, such as:

- Providing free textbooks in use, free of charge for 16 categories of students.
- Providing free transportation for students traveling more than two kilometers to school.
- Offering scholarships in basic education for students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out.
- Improving school infrastructure.
- Equipping schools with computers and laboratories.
- Introducing assistant teachers into the system.
- Introducing mediators into the system.
- Improving psycho-social services.
- Implementing special after-school programs and initiatives such as “School as a Community Center,” “Doing Homework at School,” “Art, Craft, Sports”, etc.
- Reviewing and updating curricula to improve the quality of education for all students.

64. The Ministry of Education has approved the updated Curriculum Framework. In the preparation of subsequent documents based on this framework, priority has been given to including Roma cultural heritage and history in the curricula.

65. In the framework of support for national minorities, a teaching plan for minority schools has been drafted and approved by Order No. 531, dated 9.9.2022, of the Ministry of Education and Sports. This plan also applies to the Roma minority and includes the division of subjects taught in the Albanian language and those taught in the minority's mother tongue, thereby creating opportunities to preserve and develop their language and culture.

66. A Roma language program has been drafted for grades 6–9, with the aim of preserving and developing the mother tongue of Roma students, strengthening their linguistic and cultural identity, and equipping them with communication, reading, and writing skills in the Roma language.

67. The curricula of the subjects “History,” “Civic Education,” and “Albanian Language” include elements that aim to raise awareness and knowledge about Roma history and culture. These elements are intended for all students, not only Roma students and contribute to developing linguistic and civic competencies, as well as fostering respect and appreciation for the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Roma community.

68. The staff of pre-university educational institutions are being trained in inclusive education, diversity, and anti-Gypsyism. This training is part of the measures in the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021–2025.

69. The Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education is developing a special module on Roma and Traveller history, culture, and art, and will continue with teacher training in this area.

70. Vulnerable groups of students receive support from designated staff within local pre-university education institutions, acting as mediators for these groups, to assist in awareness-raising and improving their access to education. Currently, 13 mediators are employed in 13 local pre-university education offices. They are graduates in psychology/social work. The mediators serve to improve communication and cooperation between vulnerable groups and pre-university education institutions, aiming to increase attendance in the learning process.

71. Educational institutions monitor situations of overrepresentation of Roma and Egyptian students to take measures preventing and avoiding segregation.

72. Approximately 100 Roma and Egyptian teachers, graduates in education, are employed within the pre-university education system.

73. The promotion of equality and non-discrimination, tolerance, and inclusion are the fundamental principles of strategic educational development at all levels.
