

KOSOVO*

COUNTRY FACT SHEET 2020



* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244/1999

PUBLISHER

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For further information on voluntary return and reintegration, please visit the information portal www.ReturningfromGermany.de, or contact your local return and reintegration office.

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1 HEALTH CARE

General information on health care

Health Care System in Kosovo is organized in three sectors including primary, secondary, and tertiary health care. Primary Health Care (PHC) in Prishtina is organized in thirteen Family Medicine Centers and fifteen Ambulatory Care Units. These Family Medicine Centers offer basic primary care services. Secondary Health Care is decentralized in seven regional hospitals which each has up to 500 beds. The regions of Ferizaj, Gjakova, Gjilan, Peja, and Prizren, each have one regional hospital while the region of Mitrovica has two: one in North Mitrovic and the other in the South Mitrovica. Prishtina does not have a regional hospital, instead, it uses the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK) for health care services. There are also home services provided for vulnerable groups that can hardly reach health care premises. Tertiary Health Care is provided by the University Clinical Center of Kosovo located in Prishtina. UCCK is the main public health establishment including 15 clinics under its supervision.

Alongside the public health institutions, there are numerous private clinics and hospitals throughout Kosovo. Private hospitals are better equipped to offer personalized care, shorter wait times than in a public hospital such as short-term hospitalization, emergency room services, general and specialty surgical services. Private institutions have continued to remain a popular alternative to the public health institutions for a variety of reasons. For health care personnel, private institutions are a way to supplement their public sector incomes.

For patients, private institutions do not require referrals from Family Medicine Centers, and thus patients may move directly to specialty care.

Availability of medical facilities and doctors

In Kosovo, the public and private systems are supposed to function separately and independently. By law, doctors are forbidden to refer patients from the public sector to the private sector. In practice, such referrals happen regularly. It is common for doctors to work in both sectors at the same time. Even though the public health insurance is a right for all citizens, in Kosovo this has still not become a reality. Without public health insurance in place, some companies have begun to offer private health insurance. However, these are not enough affordable for the wider population in Kosovo.

Admission to medical facilities

Persons must first contact institutions on the primary level of the health system, Family Health Centers, or Main Family Health Centers. If follow-ups are needed, regional hospitals located in the main regions of the country should be visited. If services are not available at institutions of the secondary level, patients will receive a written recommendation to enter the tertiary level- Clinical Center of Kosovo in Prishtina. Vulnerable people also fall under the categories which are exempted from payments. These categories include war veterans, social assistance beneficiaries, and children.

1 HEALTH CARE

The health care is provided through the organization and implementation of medical activities by the health institutions of public, private and mixed sector. The medical activity is organized in order to ensure appropriate and successful health care for citizens in normal and extraordinary circumstances. The types of medical insurances for citizens and all communities in Kosovo are:

- Basic medical insurance- is a mandatory insurance for all citizens, who are in formal work relationship, and for natural and legal persons, in accordance with the law.
- Private medical insurance- is a voluntary insurance of citizens where the insurance is provided by the citizens and/or by the employers in the organizations founded in accordance with the law. The participation costs in private companies are 35 EUR. The patients may choose the company they want to register for medical insurance.

Availability and costs of medication

Kosovo pharmacies and healthcare facilities rely heavily on imported medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. Regarding the costs, the patients must pay for the services as follow: in the primary sector, if the patients do not possess any exemption, they have to pay the basic service fee up to 2 EUR. While for the secondary and tertiary sectors service fees depend on the type of treatment and the medical institution. Different institutions charge different service fees. The health insurance system has not been implemented yet. Essential medicines are supposed to be available

free of charge in every public health care center, but it happens often that they are out of supplies and not available in public clinics. Independent pharmacies may be able to import drugs needed, but they are likely to be expensive.

Access for returnees

Eligibility and requirements: Similarly, like all residents in Kosovo, returnees are eligible to benefit from the free services. In case of vulnerability, they also fall under the categories which are exempted from payments.

Registration procedure: No registration is required, except for proving the respective status such as unemployed, children, war veterans and social assistance beneficiaries. These categories are exempted from payments and participation.

Required documents: When receiving medical services in the public sector, patients have to present their documents each time they get medical services, this is to prove that they belong to one of these categories. Such documentation may include a certificate of unemployment, social assistance document, or any other document that proves their vulnerability.

General information on labour market

Kosovo is the youngest country in Europe with the youngest population. Kosovo's Gross Domestic Product per capita is the lowest in the region. Based on a preliminary estimate from the World Bank, Kosovo's GDP grew 4.17% year-on-year in 2019. However, in its previous report in April, the bank warned that a prolongation of the COVID-19 related containment measures beyond the second quarter requires careful macro-prudential management as it could further slowdown growth in 2020. In recent years, the economy has been driven by public investment in infrastructure and private consumption. Remittances from the diaspora – located mainly in Germany, Switzerland, and the Nordic countries - are estimated to account for about 17% of GDP and international donor assistance accounts for approximately 10% of GDP. With international assistance, Kosovo has been able to privatize most of its state-owned enterprises. Labor Force Participation Rate in Kosovo is around 40%.

Despite workforce potential, Kosovo's economic growth is unable to generate jobs for the entire active labour force that stands as an unutilized recourse of the economy. According to the latest data of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics on the Labour Market Survey, the unemployment rate among young people remains still an unsolved issue for the Kosovo economy. The average income ranges between 300-400€ per month, whereas the minimum wage is 200€. The legal working age in Kosovo is 18, which is at the same considers

a legal age as well in general and the pension age is 65. Kosovo's economy has shown progress in transitioning to a market-based system and maintaining macroeconomic stability, but it is still highly dependent on the international community and the diaspora (Remittances) for financial and technical assistance. With international assistance, Kosovo has been able to privatize most of its state-owned enterprises. Most of Kosovo's population lives in rural towns outside of the capital, Pristina. Inefficient, near-subsistence farming is common due to small plots, limited mechanization, and a lack of technical expertise. The promising economic sectors that continue to employ more people are: trade by 17.0%; construction by 11.9%; education by 11.3%; and manufacturing by 10.3%. Meanwhile, other sectors participate with the lowest percentage in employment. Kosovo is the laggard country from Western Balkans in terms of competitiveness. The country has problems in terms of available skilled labour. Low competitiveness as identified by indicators in the Global competitiveness report, lack of information about the EU markets and need for networking, standardization, licensing and accreditation. However, Kosovo has set following priorities to improve competitiveness of the country: improve skills of labour through training programs and education, improve of business.

Finding employment

There is no unemployment support scheme in Kosovo yet. Usually, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo together with international

organizations provide the job seekers with assistance to find work through active labor market measures and different programs on paid vocational internships. Through these programs, they can get a very modest salary of 150 EUR.

Unemployment assistance

The way to have access to job announcement is through the websites and for public sector in the national newspapers but also in the information boards of the institutions or the agencies publishing the vacancies. Some of the most common websites for job seekers are:

- Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo: <https://apr.k.rks-gov.net/en-US/Home/Index>
- Indeed: <https://www.indeed.com/q-Kosovo-jobs.html>
- Portal pune: <https://www.portalpune.com/>
- Gjirafa : <https://gjirafa.com/>
- Kosova job : <https://kosovajob.com/home>

Further education and training

The Employment Agency has recognized the need to acquire a better understanding of the role of Vocational Trainings Centers in addressing the high unemployment challenge and the role of the centres in equipping beneficiaries with relevant skills for the job market. Vocational Training Centers in Kosovo are available to facilitate the job seekers' access to employment agencies. These centres are located in different municipalities such as

Pristina, Mitrovica, Prizren, Gjakova, Gilan, Ferizaj, and Skenderaj. In the context of vocational education and training reforms in Kosovo, there are some competence centers that provide expertise for different projects or program support in multiple business areas. Two centers of competences are functional in Malisheva and Skenderaj. In the long term, this should increase the competitiveness of businesses and reduce unemployment, particularly among young people. Available vocational training includes accounting, arc and gas welding, hairdressing, electricians, tailoring, IT training, construction, hydraulic. Doro.

Access for returnees

Eligibility and requirements: All persons over 18 years capable to work.

Registration procedure: When registered in these offices the returnees must provide ID, diplomas, and necessary certificates.

Required documents: Registration is accessible in the Employment offices. The returnees can visit the closest office and must declare as jobseekers. In this case, they will be on the list of the Employment Management System. They undergo through ordinary procedures like an interview.

3 HOUSING

General information on housing

Both apartments and houses are widely available in towns in Kosovo, and mostly in the capital-Prishtina. Rent in rural areas is very low and almost nonexistent. Recently there is huge evidence of internal migration in Kosovo, movements from the rural population, so the demands are high in the capital and urban areas. These demands keep prices of rent very high compared to incomes. Approximate monthly rents without including utilities in Prishtina vary from 150 to 500 €.

- Studio/flat:150-200€;
- Apartment with one bedroom:200-250€;
- Apartment with two bedrooms:250-350€;
- Apartment with three bedrooms: 300-500€;

Recently the estimated monthly average rent is 200 EUR, whereas in the other cities the price is lower than in Prishtina approximately 60-80 EUR. Inside the town, in Prishtina, the average price of 1 m² of an apartment is between 800 and 900 EUR. Kosovo has the lowest gross tariffs for power for households and has a smaller share of taxes and levies for electricity in the whole of Europe. Eurostat's update for the European Union and its surroundings revealed the rate in Kosovo declined 4.4% year over year to 6.1 EUR in 2020, which means households there paid the least for electricity in Europe.



Finding accommodation

Apartments and houses for rent can be found through different websites and agencies throughout the country. Main websites include:

- <https://www.merrjep.com/sh-palljet/vendbanime/banesa/prishtine>
- <http://www.kosova-immobilien.com/>
- <http://www.kosova-immobilien.com/partners/prona-net/>
- <https://gjirafa.com/Top/Patundshmeri>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/175681372461525/>.

3 HOUSING

Social grants for housing

According to the legislation, the provision of social housing is a municipality-level responsibility. Municipalities are required to design a three-year housing program based on housing needs and the identification of available land for construction, and subsequently to request a financial contribution from the central government or donor community to implement it. However, the lack of comprehensive and disaggregated data at the municipal level hence prevents local- and central-level institutions from establishing a clear and accurate picture of the scale of social housing needs. In September 2010, the Government of Kosovo established the Reintegration Fund to support the sustainable reintegration of repatriated citizens of Kosovo. The Reintegration Fund for Repatriated Persons offers comprehensive support for returned migrants, through assistance with temporary and long-term housing, employment, the establishment of small businesses, vocational training and linguistic training for children. Similarly, key services for displaced persons and returnees include housing reconstruction (full reconstruction or minor repairs), support with construction materials and basic furniture, income-generating activities, and employment.

Social Work Centers are the main providers of social grants for housing, beyond occasional support offered by some NGOs. However, these centers only assist those persons who participate in the social aid scheme.



Access for returnees

Temporary housing facilities: In Kosovo the government offers a temporary accommodation up to one week for those with limited support from their families. They are likely to be the ones with the most important needs.

Social housing: Social Work Centers are the main providers of social grants for housing, beyond occasional support offered by some NGOs. However, these centers only assist those persons who participate in the social aid scheme, these are people with extreme need of support.

4 SOCIAL WELFARE

Social welfare system

Social support in Kosovo mainly includes monthly monetary assistance for poor families, people with disabilities, including children, pensioners enjoying the right to pension in accordance with the applicable laws, and categories of war invalids and families of martyrs. In order to get social assistance applicants should show up in the Social Work Centers and check if they may be entitled by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. Centers are located in every municipality of Kosovo. Applicants must visit the nearest center for social welfare for further information and submission of their documents.

The social assistance scheme provides temporary financial assistance to families that are in poverty and are selected in accordance with the criteria outlined in the law and the resources allocated for this purpose from the budget of Kosovo. To realize the right to social assistance, all family members must be citizens of the Republic of Kosovo and should meet the conditions that fall within one of the categories defined by law. Exceptionally, beneficiaries of social welfare can be foreign nationals if: have a residence in Kosovo, persons in the quality of the asylum seeker, refugee persons, and persons who enjoy temporary and complementary protection. Regarding the application process for assistance, when persons return voluntarily, they can apply directly to the Municipal Office for Return and Communities for Reintegration Assistance, in this case, they will be registered in the Case Management System (CMS) and will apply for reintegration assistance.

When personnes are forcibly repatriated to Kosovo, the Department of Migration and Asylum is informed of their arrival by the sending country and gives this information to the Department of Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (DRRP). The DRRP informs the municipality of origin through Case Management System and regional coordinators. The DRRP team at Prishtina International Airport accesses repatriated persons upon their arrival, assesses their immediate needs, provides the necessary assistance (temporary residence and accommodation, health services, transportation to the municipality of origin), and records them in CMS. Upon arrival in the municipality, the staff of Municipal Office for Return and Communities approaches the repatriated person to provide information about the assistance available and to make a more thorough assessment of the needs. The repatriated person fills out the application form for assistance and submits the request to the Central Reintegration Commission (CEC). The request is then reviewed within the period specified in the Regulation in force and if successful, assistance is granted. In some cases, repatriated persons may benefit from donor programs for 'voluntary return' funded by organizations such as IOM.



4 SOCIAL WELFARE

Access for returnees

Eligibility and requirements: Persons over 18 years, with permanent disabilities and not capable to work; Invalids) Persons over 65 years; Parents with at least one child under the age of 15. Families with one person capable for work and at least one child under the age of five

Registration procedure: Applicants must present the document of being unemployed which is issued by Employment Offices in the respective municipality.

Required documents: ID card of Republic of Kosovo, birth certificates of all family members, and declaration of family unit.

Pension system

Basic age pension –the minimal regular monthly pension is paid to all citizens of the Republic of Kosovo regardless if they have been employed or not and who meet the criteria set forth by the law. The basic age pension is paid to all persons who are permanent citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, possess identification documents, and have reached the age of sixty-five (65) years. The monthly amount of this pension is 90 €

Access for returnees

Eligibility and requirements: Kosovo citizens eligible to access the basic pension of Kosovo, whereas contribution pension is for those who have worked and contributed to the pension fund.

Required documents: ID card (basic pension), birth certificate and diploma of education (contribution scheme)

Vulnerable groups

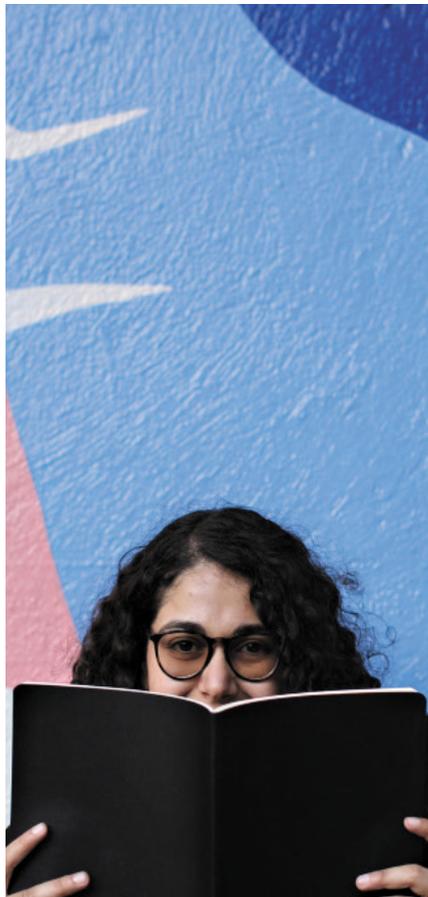
Recognized vulnerable cases in Kosovo are:

- Individuals from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities are discriminated across the board and extensively deprived in all poverty dimensions and other minorities who are deprived in terms of limited access to power and voice;
- Unaccompanied minors;
- Lonely elderly people are among the most vulnerable groups in society, at the same time it is the neediest group for care, as various situations have made them live alone and forgotten by both society and the state social care system;
- Victims of trafficking;
- Persons with disabilities are especially vulnerable—a majority of them rely on their family for both financial support and assistance with daily activities.
- Social Work Centers and some NGO's are the main contributors supporting and providing assistance to vulnerable groups in Kosovo.

5 EDUCATION

General information on education

The preschool education system is divided into three levels: Kindergarten (for children of 1–2 years of age), Kindergarten (for children of 3–4 years of age), and Preprimary class (for children of 5 years of age). According to the law on primary and secondary education in Kosovo, the primary education (1–5 classes) and low secondary education are mandatory for everyone. The mandatory education begins when the child reaches 6 years of age (the minimal age of mandatory education). According to this law, education in the publicly funded educational institutions is free of charge. The low secondary education is the second phase of mandatory education which includes the classes between 6 to 9, for students of 12 to 15 years of age. The education in primary schools in Kosovo is held in four languages: Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Turkish. The high secondary education is organized in the general and professional education. The high secondary education lasts 3 or 4 years depending on the educational curricula designed by the Ministry of Education. All students are entitled to pursue this level on a voluntary basis. The high secondary education is divided into two categories: general and professional education. In accordance with the law on education, the rights to special education in Kosovo are for those children that don't have or are not able to have a normal education. In Kosovo, there are a total of 7 schools for special education. Books for compulsory education up to the fifth grade are free of charge.



Cost, loans, and stipends

There are no tuitions fees in primary and secondary public schools, except the higher education level and in private institutions on all levels. Municipality stipends are available to the students with a good grade average. The award varies up to 600 EUR.

5 EDUCATION

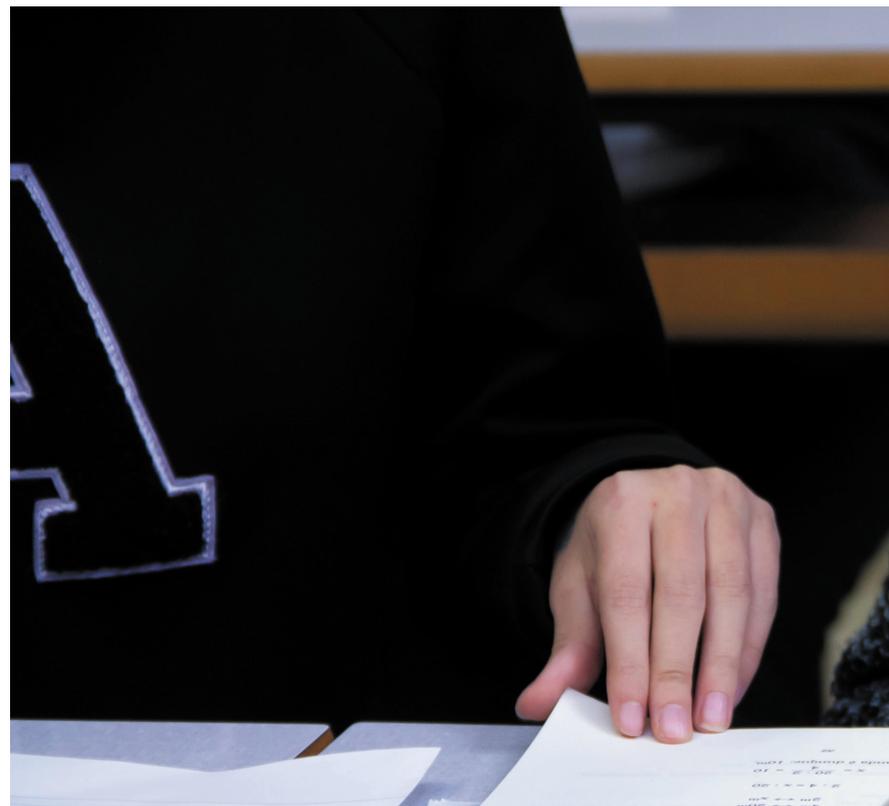
Approval and verification of foreign diplomas

National Qualifications Authority is in charge of recognizing foreign diplomas. Its responsibilities are the oversight of national qualifications along with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Agency for Accreditation and other professional bodies approved for this purpose by the government, and in particular the acknowledgement of professional qualifications and foreign diplomas. Delivery time is up to 10 days; payment fee 20 EUR.

Access for returnees

Registration procedure: For the registration of children, first of all, parents have to submit the request in the Ministry of Education. The final decision, which is taken by the Ministry, oblige all schools to accept the children within all municipalities in Kosovo.

Required documents: Birth certificate; diploma- certificates and diplomas need to be acknowledged, evidence from the school confirming that the child has attended previous classes





General situation of children and infants

Poverty remains a harsh reality for many in Kosovo, with the proportion of children living in poverty estimated at around 23%, including more than 7% living in extreme poverty. Living in poverty is a root cause of many negative consequences for the fulfillment of child rights in Kosovo, including child labor, child marriage, lower access to services, and poorer social outcomes. Poverty in Kosovo disproportionately affects women, children, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and rural populations. (World Bank Group 2019).

In particular, children from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) communities have lower attendance rates at schools, fewer employment opportunities, and are more likely to be in poverty.

For children with disabilities, obstacles remain in the form of limited access to appropriate education, health care, and rehabilitation services, and barrier-free access to public facilities and services. Access to appropriate education includes accessible and inclusive learning spaces, the availability of teachers and assistants trained in the area of inclusive education, and provision for addressing other barriers such as transport, access to assistive devices, and appropriate toilet facilities. Similarly, children in the second decade of life struggle with successfully navigating the complex employment market due to issues with the quality, relevance, and inclusiveness of education systems.

(Non-) governmental actors dealing with children's well-being and rights

These non-governmental actors are working in the child protection field, with the joint mission to advocate and protect the rights of children in Kosovo and are based in Prishtina

- Save the children in Kosovo: <https://kosovo.savethechildren.net/>
- UNICEF Program in Kosovo: <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/>
- SOS Children's Villages International in Kosovo: <https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/where-we-help/europe/kosovo>
- Terre des hommes in Kosovo: <https://www.tdh.ch/en/our-interventions/kosovo>
- KOMF- Coalition of NGOs for the Protection of Children: <http://www.komfkosova.org/?lang=en>

The main objectives of these NGO's are: enhancing the approval of laws and policies for children; monitoring the implementation of laws and national policies for children; sensitizing and mobilizing the relevant state authorities at both local and central level, sensitizing the service providers and other actors on child protection issues; raising awareness of the wide opinion on all issues related to child protection; increasing the participation of children and all other groups who are exposed to the violation of children rights; creating spaces to develop best practices in the field of children rights.

7 CONTACTS

Ministry of Communities and Return

Return and reintegration services

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Municipal Office for Return & Reintegration

Return and reintegration services

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Terre des Hommes Kosovo NGO

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Regional coordinator for Return and Reintegration Office, Gilan

Return and reintegration services

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SOS Children's Villages International, Kosovo

Children's welfare

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Caritas Kosova NGO

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Coalition of NGOs for the Protection of Children (KOMF)

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Return and Reintegration Office, Prizren

Return and reintegration services

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Save the Children Kosovo

Child protection

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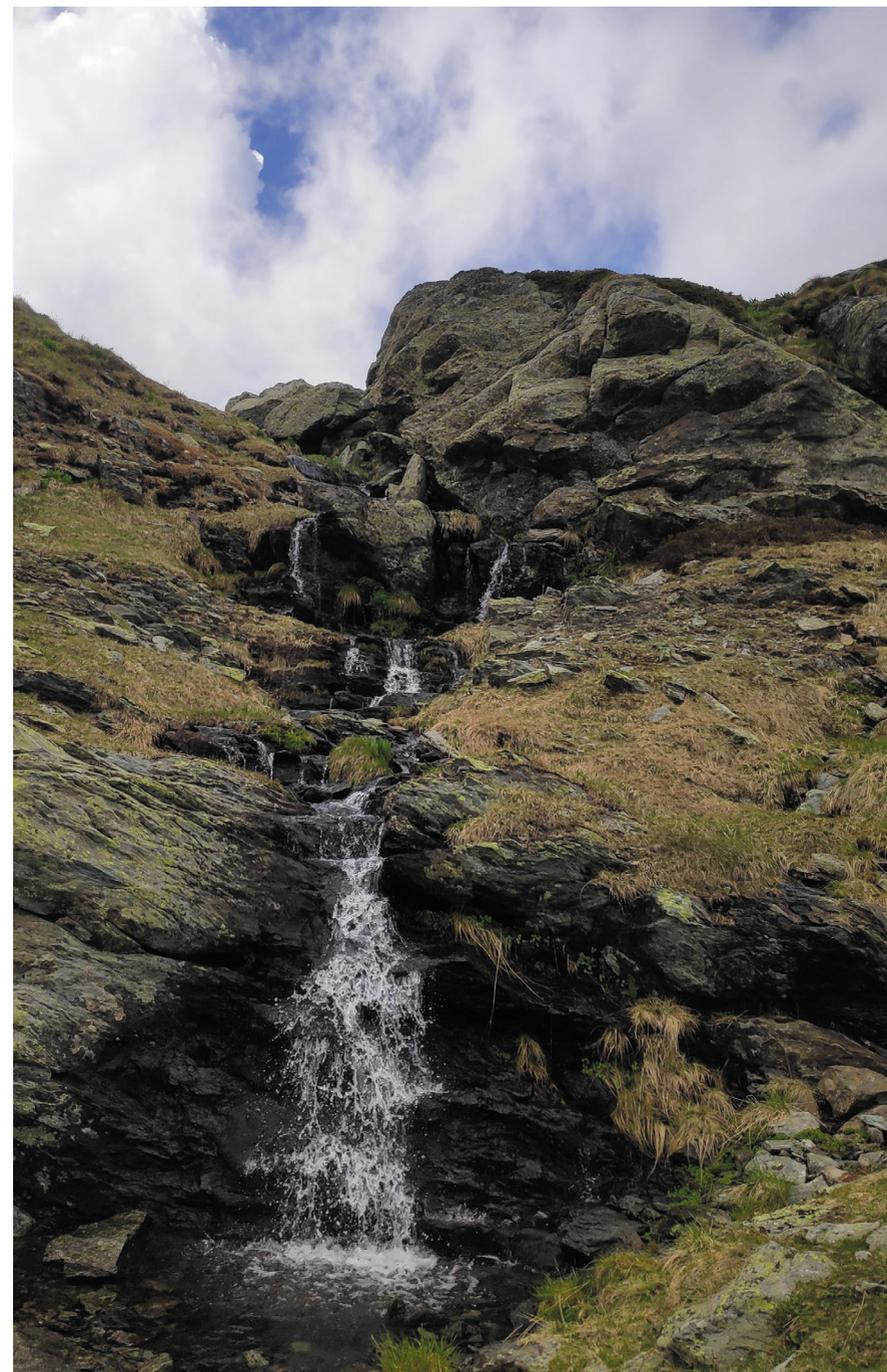
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AT A GLANCE

Migrant assistance in Kosovo

The Virtual Counselling project is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Germany. Migrants living in Germany who are considering a return are offered return and reintegration counselling by IOM staff in Kosovo. Local IOM staff can be contacted in Albanian, Serbian and English through online messengers.

This service aims to empower migrants to return in dignity by informing them about various return and reintegration options and assistance programmes.

Contact Arife at IOM Kosovo

WhatsApp: +383 49 968 523



Measures to be undertaken before return

- **Documents:** The returnee should request German authorities all documents which may need later in the country of origin. The documents they need to have before they enter Kosovo are: birth certificate and other civil registration documents, diplomas from the school they attended in Germany, and certificates of attended courses or vocational trainings.
- **Transportation:** Get information about the arrival at the airport and the onward journey.
- **Accommodation:** Find temporary accommodation. In Kosovo the government offers a temporary accommodation up to one week for those with limited support from their families.
- **Health:** Health information, including immunization, illnesses and serious health conditions, and any other relevant health information.
- **COVID-19:** Should get information concerning COVID-19 rules and restrictions in place and act accordingly.

Measures to be undertaken immediately upon arrival

- **Registration:** The returnee should get registered. The registration should be conducted after passing the border control at the airport or crossing the land border.
- **Reception:** Reception is available in the reintegration reception office which shall be completed upon arrival of repatriated persons. Reception officials at the airport inform repatriated persons on the overall reintegration process.
- **Children:** Children born in Germany should present translated birth certificate issued by German authorities. For those above 18, passport and ID is required.
- **Education:** Apply for school-school enrolment. Diplomas and certificates have to be presented.
- **Social Welfare:** Apply for social welfare. Social assistance offices are established in every municipality across the country. Only vulnerable persons in need with poor conditions will be supported.
- **Jobs:** Contact services which provides assistance on finding jobs. Firstly, the returnee should go in person and get registered as a job seeker and should present an identification document issued by Kosovo government

