



ALBANIA

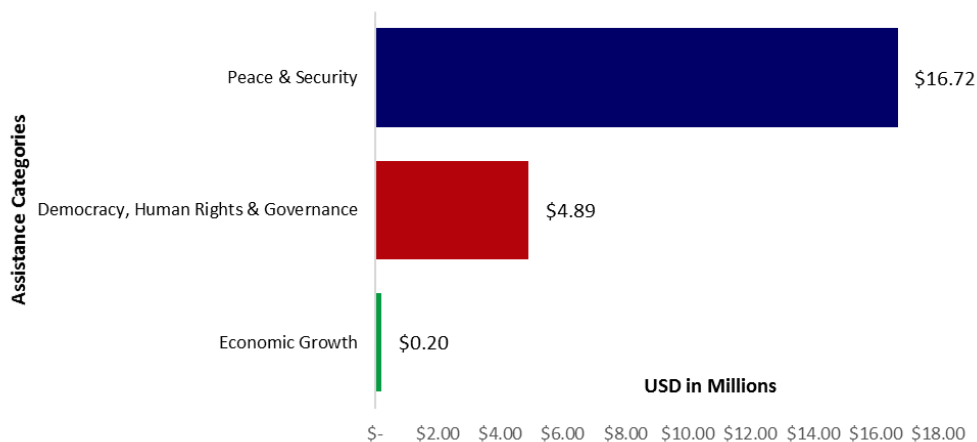
U.S. government (USG) assistance has boosted efforts to strengthen Albanian institutions and civil society, with a view to advancing the country's integration with Europe and countering the malign influence of Russia, China and other strategic competitors. Assistance provided by the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has supported new institutions and broad judicial reform to root out corruption and combat a culture of impunity. In addition, the U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Coordination's (ODC) assistance to the Albanian Armed Forces has spurred efforts to shore up our NATO Ally's cyber defenses and expand the Albanian Armed Forces' capability to operate with U.S. forces. The U.S. Embassy's Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) has used assistance funds to build skills in Albania's civil society and further develop investigative journalism to increase government transparency. USG assistance has also supported Albania's fight against COVID-19 and helped suppress the spread of disinformation. The U.S. Embassy in Tirana will continue to target foreign assistance to support programming that advances U.S. national security interests in Albania and the Western Balkans, contributing to a strong and free Europe.

over \$1.0 billion
USG assistance since 1991

\$21.8 million
State/USAID assistance for FY 2020*

\$2.9 million
COVID-19 assistance**

FY 2020 ACE-Coordinated State/USAID Assistance to Albania by Category* (\$21.8m)



Source: ACE

*Does not include centrally managed funds or \$2.05 million in FY 2020 COVID supplemental funds.

**COVID assistance includes reprogrammed, supplemental, and other USG funds.

NOTE: The assistance highlights below are examples of results achieved by funding in each category in the chart.



CIVIL SOCIETY & DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

PDS Tirana uses foreign assistance funds to train journalists to develop strong, investigative stories to expose corruption and hold the government of Albania accountable. For example, the Investigative Network Albania is an editorial board and publishing platform developed with U.S. assistance, where journalists can unveil stories they believe could counter corruption or increase government accountability. U.S. assistance is strengthening the capacity of local civil society organizations (CSOs) and helping them develop a code of conduct to become a legitimate voice in the policy process. For example, the Civic Education project engaged 2,000 high school students engaged in Islamic and Orthodox religious schools to cooperate on civil issues, building capacity in Albania to represent community interest and press for government accountability. USAID is implementing a five-year, \$8.9 million cooperative agreement with Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) to establish the U.S.-Albania Transparency Academy (USATA). As USAID's flagship anti-corruption activity in Albania, USATA will help the country fight corruption and bolster citizen engagement toward enhancing transparency and accountability. USATA will be active in four areas: (1) accountability and oversight in public financial management; (2) transparency and ethics in the private sector; (3) youth engagement in promoting a culture of transparency; and (4) justice for all.

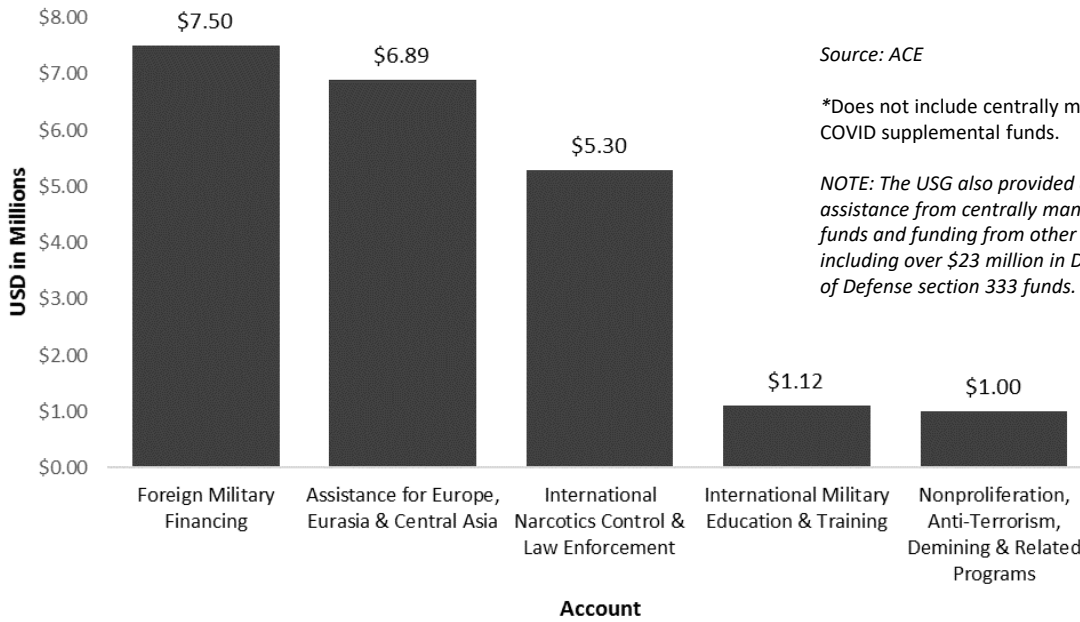


PEACE & SECURITY ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

U.S. security assistance has helped Albania build its capacity and make significant progress in its Euro-Atlantic defense-related integration efforts. The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) supports NATO interoperability and military modernization in Albania through the provision of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) assistance. In 2018, Albania became one of the first six countries to receive FMF under the European Recapitalization Incentive Program (ERIP) through the provision of \$30 million in FY 2017 FMF-OCO for the purchase of UH-60 helicopters. In exchange for the ERIP investment, Albania committed \$12 million in national funds to its UH-60 procurement and agreed to divest legacy Russian rotary wing platforms. Additionally, \$18.2 million in FMF from FY 2018-2020, provided through the Countering Russian Influence Fund, were committed to improve the Albanian Ministry of Defense's cyber defense capabilities. The PM Bureau also oversees U.S. International Military Education Training (IMET) funding which helped integrate Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) leadership with U.S. and other Western institutions, primarily through U.S. professional military education courses for senior, mid-level, and junior officers. Although Albania does not have the overall resources of many other NATO members, it has continued to enhance its role in NATO with one of the highest percentages of uniformed personnel deployed in support of NATO operations. Albania's military capacity has increased in part because of the AAF's excellent relationship with the New Jersey National Guard. As a result of engagement by U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and the New Jersey National Guard, the AAF's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Company recently completed the third iteration of EOD level-2 training and began construction to refurbish existing EOD ranges. Albania also re-committed to send EOD personnel to support United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, in part due to expanded capabilities and equipment provided through U.S. funding. U.S. support to the AAF has helped prepare the military to respond to natural and manmade disasters.



FY 2020 ACE-Coordinated State/USAID Assistance to Albania by Account* (\$21.8m)



Source: ACE

*Does not include centrally managed funds or COVID supplemental funds.

NOTE: The USG also provided additional FY 2020 assistance from centrally managed State/USAID funds and funding from other USG agencies, including over \$23 million in Department of Defense section 333 funds.



ANTI-CORRUPTION, RULE OF LAW & GOOD GOVERNANCE ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

The INL Bureau supports Albania’s implementation of sweeping judicial reforms required for the opening of EU accession negotiations, including restructuring the judicial system, creating a Specialized Anti-Corruption Structure (SPAK), and vetting of all judges and prosecutors. USAID also supports judicial reform through USATA, an independent institution that will facilitate the adoption of cutting-edge tools and techniques that promote citizen, media, and private sector voices – as well as ensure open government and judicial integrity. USATA will seek inclusive ways to empower citizens and improve government responsiveness and accountability to help reduce corruption and increase transparency and confidence in Albania’s institutions – in particular, the judiciary. With INL assistance implemented by the U.S. Justice Department’s (DOJ) Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) and International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), SPAK combats high-level corruption and organized crime and helps change Albania’s long-standing culture of impunity. SPAK consists of a Special Prosecutor’s Office, National Bureau of Investigation, and a specialized court. The United States and EU backed a vetting law in 2016 that helped restore the integrity of the Albanian judicial system. U.S. funding supports vetting through the presence of an INL-funded OPDAT legal advisor that sits on the international monitoring body that oversees the process. OPDAT support helps implement stringent vetting that roots out corrupt actors in the judicial system. Of the 286 judges and prosecutors vetted thus far, 125 have been dismissed for unexplained wealth, ties to organized crime, or incompetence. A further 50 have preemptively resigned rather than undergo the vetting process. These efforts advance judicial reform and promote rule of law. Through the Justice for All project, USAID has helped Albania’s High Court to manage and reduce its backlog of cases. With USAID assistance, the Court developed procedures to prevent future case backlogs and was able to prioritize and sort through 72 percent of the 35,000 cases currently filed with the Court, resulting in increased access to justice through a more timely and transparent judicial process for citizens. INL is continuing to support this backlog reduction effort.



BUSINESS, INVESTMENT & ENERGY ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

The Department of Commerce’s Commercial Development Law Program (CLDP) is helping the government of Albania to protect itself from malign economic influence in foreign direct investment (FDI), procurements in the telecom sector, or technology procurements by the government and SOEs. Assistance may include development of regulations to screen foreign direct investment that may pose threats to Albania’s national interest. CLDP will introduce U.S. best practices to ensure fair, non-arbitrary, effective and corruption free investment and to develop a level playing field for U.S. companies. During 2020, Albania demonstrated its commitment to align with the U.S. approach and signed both the Clean Network pledge, which is aimed at excluding untrusted vendors from its telecommunication networks, and a memorandum of understanding with the USG on economic cooperation. Investment screening is a key element in Albania’s economic growth as foreign direct investment increases.

In order to promote economic cooperation and energy stability, USAID has provided technical assistance to Albania and Kosovo to facilitate the establishment of a joint power exchange company, the Albania Power Exchange (ALPEX). In 2020, the Albanian Prime Minister inaugurated a 400-kW power line connecting the two countries’ grids. The 400kV line significantly increases capacity for both countries and marks an important step forward in efficiency and profitability for their respective energy markets. USG assistance is part of the broader effort to bring together the Albania and Kosovo electricity markets, which will improve the flow of electricity and deliver economic benefits to both countries. The creation of ALPEX represents a key milestone for integration with regional electricity markets.



COVID-19 ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHT

Since the COVID-19 global pandemic began, the USG has provided approximately \$2.9 million in COVID-19 mitigation assistance to Albania, including \$2.05 million in USAID supplemental assistance, over \$216,000 in State existing resources, \$15,000 in USAID existing resources, and over \$575,000 in Department of Defense assistance. As part of this assistance, USAID helped respond to the COVID pandemic and provided 32,160 test kits and a new PCR testing machine to increase the number of tests per day; provided critical hygienic supplies for primary health care facilities and training for healthcare workers in 13 municipalities; donated incubators, defibrillators and radiant warmers for pediatric hospitals to support children treated for COVID-19; funded 12 vehicles to enable the Government of Albania to expand its contract tracing and testing activities nationwide; provided infection prevention and control for COVID-19 for neonatologists and nurses from 12 regional maternity wards; developed communications campaigns to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including tailored messages for families, children, teachers, and vulnerable groups; and developed disability-friendly materials for parents and social workers to explain COVID-19 risks. Additionally, INL provided equipment and sanitary supplies to the entire court and prison systems.