

Albania

(Republika e Shqipërisë)



Capital:	Tirana
Languages:	Albanian
Area:	28'750 sq.km. (0.7 x Switzerland)
Population:	3,639 m (2009); cf. Switzerland: 7,7 m
Population density:	126,5 inhabitants / sq.km. (2009)
GDP/capita:	6'000 US-\$ (2008; cf. 2004: 2'673 US-\$)
HDI:	0.810 (2007/8; rank 68 of 177)
Unemployment rate:	12,5% (2009; this official number however is far too low)
Life expectancy:	73.9 years (2005)
Literacy:	98.7 % (2005)
Birth rate:	15.1 ‰ (2005; world average: 25 ‰)
Death rate:	5.2 ‰ (2005; world average: 9.3 ‰)
Ethnic groups:	95% Albanian (2009) 3% Greek (2009) 2% Serbian, Macedonian and Sinti (2009)
Religions:	70% Muslim: Sunni Muslims and a few Bektashis (2009) 28% Christian: 19% orthodox, 9% catholic (2009) 2% other (2009)

Geography

Land boundaries: Albania is located in South East Europe and is bordered with Montenegro, Serbia (Kosovo), Macedonia and Greece.

Terrain: 76% of Albania's surface is mountainous.
The coastal areas consist of smaller planes.

Climate: Subtropical-Mediterranean winter rain (Mediterranean climate)



History

15th century:	Ottoman Turks attack Albania (resistance lead by the national hero Skanderbeg)
From 1850:	Ottoman Empire weakens; world powers want to claim the Balkans
1878:	First big crisis
1912:	Balkan war and independence of Albania
1928:	First democratically elected government under Ahmet Zogu; increasing independence from fascist Italy
1939:	Italian occupation
1939-1944:	Guerrilla war against Italian and later German occupation
1944:	Establishment of a communist dictatorship under Enver Hoxha
1944-1948:	Pact with Yugoslavia, later alliance with the USSR
1961:	Break with the USSR and alliance with the People Republic of China
1967:	Complete suppression of religious observance, Albania becomes first atheistic state
From 1868:	Increasing isolation of the country, „all from own power“, as little external trade as possible, no technology imports; results: gap with industrial nations widens, completely missed connection with other nations
1990:	Collapse of the communist regime, mass emigration of Albanians
1991:	First free elections
1992:	Democrats under the leadership of Sali Berisha form the government; reforms
1997:	Unrest, collapse of the nation, socialists come to power
1998:	New constitution
1999:	Albania accepts 450'000 refugees from Kosovo
2005 and 2009	Berisha is again elected as prime minister

Government and Politics

Government type:	Parliamentary republic
Head of state:	Bamir Topi
Prime Minister:	Sali Berisha

External Trade

Import:	Machinery, crude oil, electrical equipment and cars from Turkey, Greece and Italy
Export:	Chromium, chromium products, textiles, footwear and foodstuffs to Italy, Greece and Germany