

Albania

The Government of Albania has made efforts to address the problem of child trafficking. However, the worst forms of child labor, including street work performed by children, remain significant issues. Enforcement efforts are too narrowly focused to address the variety of the worst forms of child labor found in the country.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	6 - 14 yrs.	19.0
Attending School	5 - 14 yrs.	91.0
Combining Work and School	7 - 14 yrs.	20.8



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Albania are exploited in the worst forms of child labor,⁴² including in street work. Many street children work as street or shop vendors, vehicle washers, and shoe-shiners. Street children have also been found begging and drug running.⁴³ Children working on the streets are exposed to a variety of dangers, which may include severe weather, accidents caused by proximity to vehicles, and vulnerability to criminal elements.

Children work in textile factories and mines.⁴⁴ Children working in chromium mines in Bater, Bulqiza, Borje, and Klos are exposed to chemicals, carry heavy loads, work long hours, and experience injuries from working with tools while in the mines.⁴⁵

Children work as farmers and shepherds.⁴⁶ Children working in agriculture are at risk of using potentially dangerous machinery and tools, carrying of heavy loads, and applying harmful pesticides.

Albania is a source country for trafficked children, including girls for commercial sexual exploitation.⁴⁷ Trafficking of children to Greece and Kosovo, and within Albania for begging and other work has been reported.⁴⁸ Ethnic Roma children are most at risk to be trafficked for forced begging.⁴⁹ Research did not reveal populations most at-risk for other forms of trafficking.

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code establishes the minimum age for work at 16.⁵⁰ Children age 16 and 17 may perform “easy jobs” provided the work is not harmful to their health and growth and may be employed only after completing a medical check that determines they are capable of working. In addition, the law stipulates that only adults 18 years of age and over may participate in “difficult or dangerous jobs” that pose danger to their health or personality.⁵¹ The definition of “easy jobs,” “difficult or dangerous jobs,” and rules governing vocational training is established by the Council of Ministers.⁵² The Labor Code specifically prohibits night work for persons below the age of 18, in a separate article than that which governs “easy jobs.”⁵³ Laws and regulations appear to offer no more specific guidance on prohibited hazardous work for children age 16 and 17.

The Constitution of Albania prohibits forced labor by any person, except for military service; for service compelled by a state of emergency, war or natural disaster that threatens human life or health; or when specified by a judicial decision.⁵⁴

The Criminal Code of Albania prohibits inducing or encouraging minors under fourteen to criminal activity, with sentences up to five years imprisonment.⁵⁵ The Criminal Code also prohibits prostitution.⁵⁶

Penalties for soliciting, mediating or gaining from prostitution with a minor girl are harsher than those penalties for the same offense with an adult.⁵⁷ The Criminal Code also prohibits producing, delivering, advertising, importing, selling, and publishing pornographic material in minors' premises, and is punishable by fine or up to two years imprisonment.⁵⁸ The Criminal Code was amended in 2008 to include the exploitation of children for begging as a criminal offense.⁵⁹ However, there does not appear to be additional laws to protect street children.

Albanian law prohibits trafficking in persons for all purposes.⁶⁰

The minimum age for voluntary military service is 18, and 19 for compulsory recruitment.⁶¹

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

A National Steering Committee for the Program on the Elimination of Child Labor is chaired by the Minister of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, and is composed of representatives from the ministries of Labor (MOL), Education, Justice, and Interior; the President's Office; Employers' and Workers' organizations; and NGOs.⁶² Its mission is to give the government guidance on child labor issues.⁶³ The

Child Labor Unit of the MOL serves as secretariat for the Steering Committee and as the national focal point for child labor issues.⁶⁴

The Government of Albania has a Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS). It is implemented with the assistance of local government committees.⁶⁵ Committees have been established in Tirana, Berat, Korca, Elbasan, and Shkodra.⁶⁶ They are composed of heads of municipalities, labor inspectors, social welfare officers, education officers, trade unions, employment officers, and community police.⁶⁷ Their goals are to identify child laborers and the risks to which they are exposed; to refer them to services for rehabilitation, provide them with short-term support to avoid re-entry, or both; and to track them subsequently to verify that they have been removed and that risk of re-entry has been eliminated.⁶⁸ As a result of these efforts 315 children from Elbasan and Shkoder were withdrawn from various forms of employment and returned to school.⁶⁹

The MOL is responsible for the enforcement of laws relating to child labor.⁷⁰ There are approximately 150 labor inspectors that enforce all labor laws, including those on child labor.⁷¹ The majority of inspections take place in shoe and textile factories.⁷² According to data from the Government of Albania, 362 children were identified as a result of labor inspections.⁷³ These children were given a variety of services and assistance, including school supplies, technical training, and medical and psychological assistance.⁷⁴

The Government of Albania does not have data on the number of child labor cases opened during the reporting period.⁷⁵ As child labor in Albania occurs in sectors other than textiles and footwear, the work of labor inspectors does not sufficiently cover child laborers.⁷⁶

Various government officials are responsible for identifying cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children and other crimes such as using children as drug runners. Such officials include social administrators in municipalities or communes; Child Protection Units in some of the main municipalities such as Korca, Elbasan, Shkoder, Durres, Kukes, Gjirokaster, and Pogradec; police; and labor inspectors.⁷⁷ Police refer trafficking cases to the General Prosecutor's Office.⁷⁸

The Ministry of Interior is responsible for enforcement of laws against trafficking in persons, and trained officials in anti-trafficking awareness and identification.⁷⁹ The intent of these trainings was to sensitize officials and improve their ability to identify potential trafficking victims.⁸⁰ Two cases involving trafficking of minors were opened in 2009.⁸¹ The Ministry of Justice operates a trafficking-in-persons hotline and the Children's Human Rights Center of Albania operates a National Child helpline, but no cases were received during the reporting period.⁸²

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

A number of policy frameworks on children's issues and development address the issue of child labor.

The National Strategy for Children (2005-2010) includes plans for awareness-raising on child labor, developing municipal and communal structures for protecting children at risk of child labor, and improving legislation concerning children and coordination between central and local governments, NGOs and international organizations to combat child trafficking.⁸³

The National Strategy for Development of Social Services (2005-2010) provides for an increase in the social protection coverage for working children, and decentralization and diversification of social services.⁸⁴ However, the plan does not identify concrete actions and there is no evidence on implementation efforts to improve social protection schemes for working children.

The National Strategy for Social Inclusion (2007-2013) includes a section which addresses child labor and the Child Labor Monitoring System.⁸⁵ The CLMS is also listed as a priority within the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development.⁸⁶

In addition, the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy (2008-2012) includes a National Strategy on Child Trafficking and Protection of the Victims of Trafficking, which provides a comprehensive action framework on the issue.⁸⁷ Planned activities include awareness raising, capacity building, cooperation within law enforcement, legislative reform, victim protection, return and reintegration, and prevention of trafficking in children.⁸⁸

The National Strategy for Employment and Vocational Training includes provisions for improving vocational training services and providing employment opportunities for young people, which may benefit older children at risk of the worst forms of child labor.⁸⁹

The National Strategy on Youth and its National Action Plan includes the establishment of information units on youth employment in urban and rural areas; and the establishment of additional reintegration activities for ex-trafficked children, including vocational training courses, summer camps, street theaters, and engaging with peer educators in recreational activities with ex-trafficked children.⁹⁰

The Government of Albania has had a bilateral agreement with Greece to combat human trafficking since 2006.⁹¹

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government participated in the \$3.5 million USDOL-funded regional project that ended in 2009 that worked to increase the outreach of institutions to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, to mainstream worst forms of child labor into national policies and legislation, and raise awareness.⁹² The project reported figures of 276 and 426 children withdrawn and prevented respectively, from the worst forms of child labor in Albania through the provision of education and vocational training opportunities.⁹³

The Government of Albania participated in a one year USD 0.918 million project for the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Central and Eastern Europe funded by the Government of Germany⁹⁴

The Government of Albania continued its technical cooperation with ILO through a Decent Work Country Program, which includes as a priority the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking of children.⁹⁵

The Government of Albania participated in a Youth Employment and Migration project, jointly implemented by the ILO, IOM, UNDP/United Nations Volunteer program, and UNICEF.⁹⁶ The project seeks to enhance decent work opportunities for young people and migration management through

better alignment of national youth, employment and migration strategies.⁹⁷

The Government of Albania participated in the Transnational Action against Child Trafficking (TACT) project, which was funded in 2006 by USAID, Austrian Development, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic Aid, UNICEF, and the Oak Foundation.⁹⁸ The TACT project was implemented by Terre des Hommes, and sought to curb child trafficking in Albania through direct interventions, capacity

building, empowerment of at-risk communities, and advocacy.⁹⁹

While Albania has several programs in place to address trafficking, there is less emphasis on programs to assist children involved in street work. Research found no evidence of programs to combat the WFCL that are wholly funded and implemented by the Government without international assistance.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Albania:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Adopt specific legal or regulatory definitions of dangerous and difficult jobs that are prohibited for children age 16 and 17.
- Enact additional laws to provide protections for street children.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Broaden enforcement efforts to target all sectors where child labor is occurring.
- Increase efforts to identify and assist children involved in street work.
- Implement research to determine reasons for low number of trafficking complaints on the government's hotline, and if needed, a comprehensive information campaign to educate the public on the mechanisms available for reporting suspected cases of trafficking and the public services available to victims of trafficking.
- Focus coordination efforts to combat trafficking in persons by assisting enforcement agencies in identifying trafficking cases.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Expand and improve programs to prevent children's involvement in the worst forms of child labor in street work.

⁴² Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are based on UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity, School Attendance, and Combined Working and Studying Rates*, 2005-2010. Data on working children and school attendance are from 2005. Data on children combining working and schooling are from 2000. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working

children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

⁴³ U.S. Department of State, "Albania," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2009*, Washington, DC, March 11, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eur/136016.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Tirana, *reporting*, February 16, 2010.

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Albania."

⁴⁵ ILO-IPEC, *PROTECT CEE Fact Sheet - Albania*, 2005; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ippecinfo/product/download.do?type=document&id=1899>.

- ⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Albania.”
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Albania (Tier 2 List),” in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2009*, Washington, DC, June 2009;; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/123135.htm>.
- ⁵⁰ Government of Albania, *Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania*; available from http://pbosnia.kentlaw.edu/resources/legal/albania/crim_code.htm.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Government of Albania, *Albanian Constitution*; available from <http://www.president.al/english/pub/doc/Albanian%20Constitution.pdf>.
- ⁵⁵ Albania, *Criminal Code*.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, Government of Albania, “Albania,” in *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences against Children*, 2008; available from <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/CsaAlbania.pdf>.
- ⁵⁷ Albania, *Criminal Code*.
- ⁵⁸ Government of Albania, “Sexual Offences against Children “.
- ⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Albania.”
- ⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Albania (Tier 2 List).”
- ⁶¹ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, “Albania,” in *Child Soldiers Global Report*, London, 2008; available from http://www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org/files/country_pdfs/FINAL_2008_Global_Report.pdf.
- ⁶² U.S. Embassy- Tirana, *reporting. February 16, 2010*.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Albania.”
- ⁷⁰ U.S. Embassy- Tirana, *reporting. February 16, 2010*.
- ⁷¹ Ibid.
- ⁷² U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2009: Albania.”
- ⁷³ U.S. Embassy- Tirana, *reporting. February 16, 2010*.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² ILO-IPEC, *Trafficking and other Worst Forms of Child Labour in Central and Eastern Europe (Phase II). Final Technical Progress Report.*, Geneva, January 2010.
- ⁹³ Ibid.
- ⁹⁴ ILO-IPEC official, E-mail communication, July 17, 2010.
- ⁹⁵ ILO-IPEC, *TPR-PROTECT CEE*.
- ⁹⁶ United Nations Development Programme, *Youth Employment and Migration: Reaping the benefits and mitigating the risks (2008 - 2011)*, [2010].
- ⁹⁷ Ibid.].
- ⁹⁸ Terre des Homes, *Terre des hommes Albania - TACT - Transnational Action against Child Trafficking*, [2010]; available from <http://www.tact-project.com>.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid.].