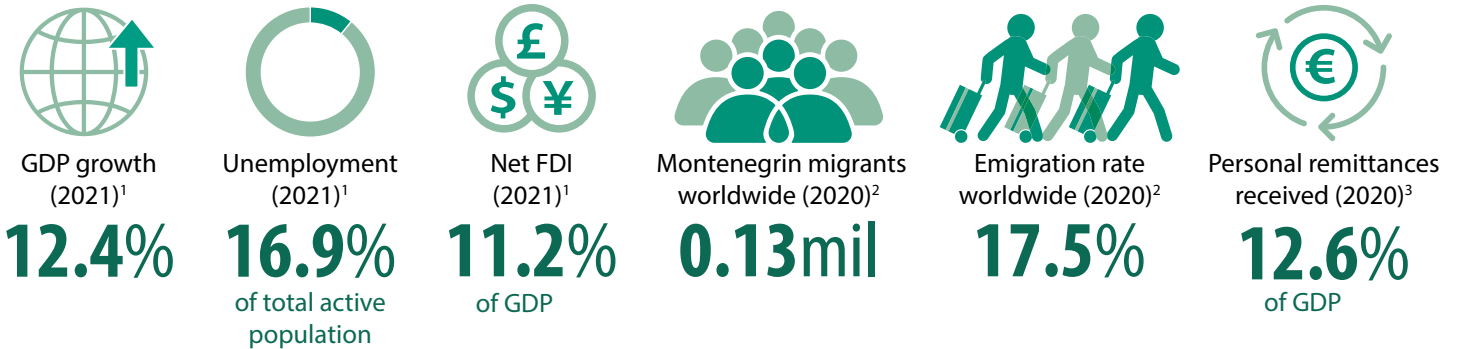


Labour Migration in the Western Balkans: Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits

MONTENEGRO

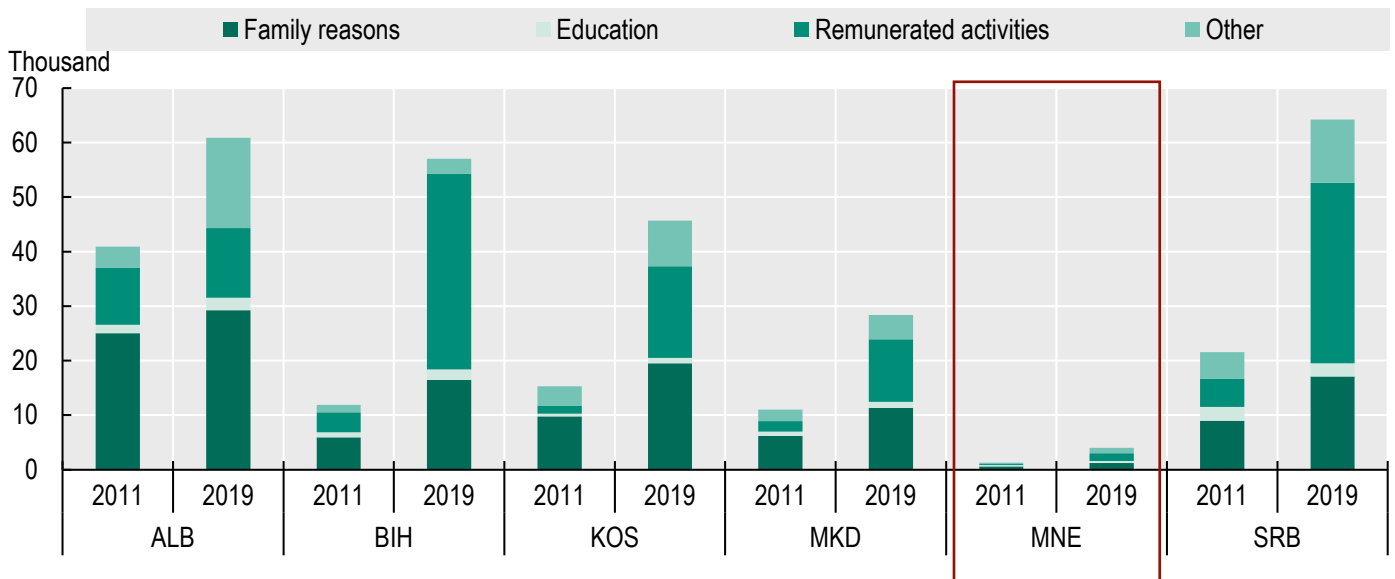


Key facts



Sources: ¹European Commission (2022), EU Candidate Countries' & Potential Candidates' Economic Quarterly (CCEQ) – 1st Quarter 2022; ²UN DESA (2021), International Migrant Stock 2020; ³World Bank (2022), World Development Indicators

Migration from Montenegro to the European Economic Area has tripled over the last decade



Note: Number of first residence permits attained by WB6 citizens in European destination countries by citizenship and reason. European destination countries include EU Member Countries, European Economic Area non-EU countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and Switzerland. "Other" includes international protection, residence without the right to work (such as pensioners), and people in the intermediate stages of the regularisation process. Data for the United Kingdom are available until 2018.

Source: Eurostat (2021), First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship [MIGR_RESFIRST].

In 2011, Montenegrin citizens predominantly migrated to the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland for family reasons. However, work reasons gained importance between 2011 and 2019, with the number of first residence permits for remunerated activities issued to Montenegrin citizens increasing eightfold.

Key findings:

- ❖ **Montenegro has the lowest emigration rate to OECD countries among all Western Balkan Six (WB6) economies**, with 9% of its population residing in OECD countries in 2015/16, but migration flows to Europe increased between 2011 and 2019. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the number of first residence permits for Montenegrin citizens in the European Economic Area and Switzerland decreased by 30% compared to the previous year.
- ❖ **More recent migrants from Montenegro, arriving after 2010, are more highly educated than those who arrived earlier.** However, there is also evidence of the highly skilled returning to Montenegro, partially due to students completing their education abroad.
- ❖ **One in three highly skilled Montenegrin migrants in OECD countries are overqualified**, which is a share close to the OECD foreign-born population average (35%) and lower than the average rate of migrants from the WB6 (47%) (OECD DIOC 2015/16).
- ❖ **Montenegro's integrated policy framework on migration management** is formed by the Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Persons Returned on the Basis of Readmission Agreements (2021-25) and its action plan, while the Interdepartmental Working Group that developed the Strategy is in charge of monitoring implementation. However, there is no permanent co-ordination body to ensure a co-ordinated and coherent migration policy approach.
- ❖ **Montenegro has a dedicated institution for diaspora engagement**, the Department for Co-operation with Diaspora and Emigrants, but the strategic framework in the area is limited in scope.

Main priorities:

- ❖ **Create a dedicated inter-ministerial body to strengthen co-ordination and ensure coherence in migration policy.** Co-operation across ministries in charge of different aspects of migration is key to create a holistic approach to migration management and ensure policy coherence across different policy domains.
- ❖ **Continue building ties with the diaspora and develop a more holistic policy framework to promote and support diaspora engagement.** It is necessary to better know the diaspora, build stronger institutional capacity and create a national programme for diaspora engagement.
- ❖ **Develop policies to actively attract back migrants, going beyond return taking place through readmission agreements.** Strategies and policies to promote return migration are lacking, and more measures and capacity building are needed to promote the short- and long-term return migration of key diaspora groups.

Labour Migration in the Western Balkans:

Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits

This report analyses labour migration patterns of the Western Balkan economies, investigates their root causes as well as potential consequences, and examines the economies' current migration and diaspora policies. It builds on results from an original survey of emigrants from the Western Balkans in addition to a wide range of OECD and international migration data sources as well as regional stakeholder consultations.

The report provides Western Balkan policy-makers with targeted policy recommendations on how to address the structural challenges, which incentivise emigration and maximise the benefits from emigration for the Western Balkan economies' own socio-economic development by strengthening ties with the diaspora and capitalising on its skills and investment resources.

