

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** ALB31543  
**Country:** Albania  
**Date:** 27 March 2007

Keywords: Albania – Shkoder – Religious groups – Catholics – Tertiary Education – Employment – Criminal law – Members of Parliament – Italy – Permanent Foreigners Permit of Stay – Residence – Asylum seekers

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

---

**Questions**

- 1. Please provide statistics regarding the religious demographic of both Albania generally and Shkoder specifically.**
- 2. Would a person holding a Permanent Foreigners Permit of Stay have residency rights in Italy?**
- 3. Please provide some statistics regarding the total number of asylum claims and successful asylum claims in Italy.**
- 4. Is there any evidence that Catholics are denied access to tertiary education in Albania?**
- 5. Is there any evidence that Catholics are denied access to employment or employment opportunities in Albania?**
- 6. Do Catholics have lesser rights under the criminal law in Albania?**
- 7. Can we get any statistics on the religious makeup of Albanian Members of Parliament i.e. how many Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim?**

**RESPONSE**

- 1. Please provide statistics regarding the religious demographic of both Albania generally and Shkoder specifically.**

A search of the sources consulted found reports that indicate that exact current statistics on religious affiliation in Albania are not available. According to the entry on Albania in the CIA's world fact book updated on 8 March 2007, Albania's religions were "Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10%". The fact book notes that the "percentages are estimates; there are no available current statistics on religious affiliation; all mosques and churches were closed in 1967 and religious observances prohibited; in November 1990, Albania began allowing private religious practice" (Central Intelligence Agency 2007, 'The World Factbook – Albania', CIA website, 8 March

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/al.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 1).

The Commission of the European Communities progress report on Albania for 2006 indicates that “no particular progress can be reported” regarding “demographic and social statistics” in Albania (Commission of the European Communities 2006, ‘Albania 2006 Progress Report’, CEC website, 8 November, p. 38 [http://www.delalb.cec.eu.int/en/news/al\\_sec\\_1383\\_en.pdf](http://www.delalb.cec.eu.int/en/news/al_sec_1383_en.pdf) – Accessed 13 November 2006 – Attachment 2).

A report dated 16 February 2004 submitted by Albania to the United Nations Human Rights Committee also notes that “There are no exact statistics on the percentage of every different religious group.” The report indicates that “Based on a census of some decades ago 50% of the population was of Muslim religion, 20% orthodox religion, 20% bektash religion and 10% of catholic religion.” The report also indicates that “Based on the freedom of conscience and religious beliefs in Albania are present 62 Christian protestant, Evangelic, Adventist, Bahai and Mormon associations, mostly with origin from the Western Europe and USA. There are also many religious Islamic associations” (United Nations Human Rights Committee 2004, ‘Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under Article 40 of the Covenant – Initial report – Albania’, UNHCR REFworld website, 16 February, p. 169 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=415a63484> – Accessed 21 March 2007 – Attachment 3).

An article on Albania in the 2001 edition of *Operation World* indicates that 41.48% of Albania’s population was Christian, 38.79% Muslim, 19.54% non-religious/other, 0.18% Bahai and 0.01% Jewish. The article also notes that “Over 50% of the population is culturally Muslim, but superstition and folk Islam are strong. Many Muslims belong to the syncretic Sufi Bektash movement” (Johnstone, Patrick, Mandryk, Jason and Johnstone, Robyn 2001, *Operation World*, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition, Paternoster Lifestyle, Carlisle, United Kingdom, p. 64 – Attachment 4).

A RRT research response dated 2 March 2007 includes demographic information on Catholics in Albania and information on the ethnic and religious makeup of Shkoder (RRT Country Research 2007, *Research Response ALB31389*, 2 March – Attachment 5). The response includes information from the US Department of State report on religious freedom in Albania for 2006 regarding Albania’s religious demography (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Albania*, September, Section 1 – Attachment 6).

In relation to Shkoder, a table on the Catholic-Hierarchy website indicates that Catholics made up 54.69% of the population in the province of Shkodre-Pult in Albania. The website is not officially sanctioned by the Catholic Church (‘Albania – Statistics by Province by Catholic Population’ 2005, Catholic-Hierarchy website, 20 November <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/spcal1.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 7). Another table on the Catholic-Hierarchy website provides information regarding the Archdiocese of Shkodre-Pult (‘Archdiocese of Shkodre-Pult’ 2007, Catholic-Hierarchy website, 3 February <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dshko.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 8).

The UK Home Office country report on Albania dated April 2004 refers to a 2001 article on Albania and Kosovo by James Pettifer that indicates that “The Roman Catholic community is

based mainly in the north-west around Shkodra” (UK Home Office 2004, *Republic of Albania Country Report*, April, Paragraph 6.26 – Attachment 9).

However, an earlier book published in 1997 by James Pettifer and Miranda Vickers refers to Shkoder as being one of “the most strongly Islamic” towns in Albania, but “also the spiritual home of Albania’s estimated 350,000 Roman Catholics”. It is stated in the book that:

In 1991 the ban on religion was lifted, resulting in a gradual revival of religious practice, together with the restoration and re-building of churches and mosques. The re-emergence of religion in Shkoder – which, along with Durres, Elbasan and Kavaja, was the most strongly Islamic town in Albania – showed this process in high relief. Shkoder is also the spiritual home of Albania’s estimated 350,000 Roman Catholics, and the two religious communities helped each other when work began on opening up the closed mosques and churches. Before the war Shkoder had thirty-five mosques, but only one, the beautiful Leaden Mosque, survived the 1967 purges intact. It was also the setting for serious violence when paramilitary police fired on worshippers inside the mosque on 2 April 1991 in disturbances associated with the victory of the communists in the election at that time. In 1992, when the city’s Catholic church reopened, Muslims as well as Catholics helped to get it ready, and five days later Catholics helped to open Shkoder’s second mosque. Five seminaries – four Islamic and one Jesuit – reopened in Shkoder, and by 1993 there were four imams teaching in Shkoder’s Islamic school, which had 130 pupils (100 others had been granted scholarships to study in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya and Turkey) (Vickers, Miranda and Pettifer, James 1997, *Albania – From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity*, Hurst & Company, London, pp. 99-100 – Attachment 10).

## **2. Would a person holding a Permanent Foreigners Permit of Stay have residency rights in Italy?**

An article dated 1 July 2006 on the City of Turin website provides information on stay permits (permesso di soggiorno) and permanent stay permits (carta di soggiorno) in Italy for non-European Union foreigners. It is stated in the article that:

Stay permit [permesso di soggiorno]

Foreigners from outside the European Union are considered to be legally resident when in possession of stay permits for:

- Work purposes:
  - Self-employed or employee
  - Single owner business (in actual fact, there is no self-employed form, as this falls within the category of residence for purposes of work).
- Family reasons, connected, however to stay permits for reasons indicated in letter a).
- If issued for other reasons, however, the stay permit does not give the foreigner the same rights as those of Italian citizens, unless there are reciprocal agreements.

Permanent stay permit [carta di soggiorno]

This is more advantageous than the stay permit because:

- It is valid for an undetermined time period, and therefore does not require renewal.
- It allows holders to carry out all legal activities, with the exception of those that the law expressly prohibits to foreigners or reserves exclusively for citizens.
- It allows access to public administration services and facilities (‘Purchase of a house in Italy’ 2006, City of Turin website, 1 July

<http://www.comune.torino.it/en/housing/purchase-of-a-house-in-it.shtml> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 11).

An undated article on the Provincia di Perugia website provides further information on the carta di soggiorno. According to the article:

A foreign national owning an indefinitely renewable permesso di soggiorno (i.e. for open-end subordinate employment or self-employment) and who has regularly lived in the Italian territory for at least six years (art. 9.1 of Consolidated Act) may apply for a carta di soggiorno. Law no. 189/2002 has extended the requirement of the regular stay in Italy from five to six years. The applicant must prove to have sufficient means of subsistence.

Foreigners may apply for a carta di soggiorno for themselves, their spouses and minor dependent children. The carta di soggiorno is issued for an open term. It must be stamped, at the request of the holder, within ten years from issue and represent a personal identification document for no more than five years from issue or renewal. Renewals must be applied for by the holder, who will have to submit new photographs.

The carta di soggiorno may also be requested by the foreign spouse, minor child or parent (in the same household) of an Italian citizen or of a EU citizen living in Italy. In this case the requirement of six years of stay in Italy does not apply. This provision is grounded on article 30.4 of the Consolidated Act, according to which the carta di soggiorno will be granted to foreigners wishing to reunite to their families where their family members are resident Italian or EU citizens, or foreign citizens already holding a carta di soggiorno.

...The holder of a carta di soggiorno may

- enter the State territory without a visa
- carry out all sorts of lawful activities in Italy
- use public administration services, unless as otherwise provided
- participate in the local public life, vote where allowed by the law and in compliance with the provisions in chapter C of the Convention on the participation of foreigners in local public life signed in Strasbourg on February 5, 1992.

The holder of a carta di soggiorno may be expelled only for serious reasons of public order and national security, i.e. if the person is suspected to deal with criminal activities or to belong to mafia-like criminal association and provided that a preventive measure has been taken, also of precautionary nature.

The Ministry of Interior has specified that all applicants for a carta di soggiorno will have to submit their fingerprints (Circular of January 9, 2003 no. 300/C/2002/2800/P/12.222.1^Div.) ('Stay permit and Visa' (Undated), Provincia di Perugia website [http://www.provincia.perugia.it/Guide-tema/Lavoro/i-servizi-/Stranieri-/English/Residence-/carta\\_soggiorno\\_eng.doc\\_cvt.htm](http://www.provincia.perugia.it/Guide-tema/Lavoro/i-servizi-/Stranieri-/English/Residence-/carta_soggiorno_eng.doc_cvt.htm) – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 12).

An article on the Expats in Italy website, which provides information on Italy by people who have moved there, indicates that “The Carta di Soggiorno is also a residency permit, similar to the Permesso di Soggiorno, but with a couple of important differences. It is more like the US “green card” in that it is a permanent document. Whereas the Permesso di Soggiorno is usually given for two years and then has to be renewed, the Carta di Soggiorno does not expire, and needs to be renewed periodically only if you want to use it as a form of

identification.” Non-EU citizens “have to make several rounds of Permesso di Soggiorno before they have accumulated enough time as a resident in Italy to apply for the Carta.” A carta di soggiorno “can be issued only under the following conditions” to non-EU citizens:

- The requester has been legally residing in Italy for at least six years
- The requester possesses a valid permesso di soggiorno which allows for a non specified number of renewals (for any of the different reasons discussed in the section on permesso di soggiorno)
- Has sufficient income for the sustenance of him or herself as well as dependent family members that live with him or her
- Has not been charged with a grave crime.

The article also notes that “The carta di soggiorno does not have an expiration, but must be reconfirmed within 10 years of its issue. It is valid as an identification document for five years after its issue, after which it needs to be renewed (only for identification purposes) with the latest data on residence of the holder, as well as updated photographs” (‘Carta di Soggiorno’ (Undated), Expats in Italy website, <http://www.expatsinitaly.com/arrival/cartasoggiorno.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 13).

Recent articles on the City of Turin website refer to changes in relation to residence permits. An article dated 13 March 2007 indicates that short-term residence permits for visitors coming to Italy for less than 90 days have been abolished (‘Short-term residence permits-abolished’ 2007, City of Turin website, 13 March <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/papers/shortterm-residence-permi.shtml> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 14).

Another article dated 12 March 2007 indicates that “The stay permit has been transformed into a ‘long-term stay permit’”. According to the article:

The stay permit has been transformed into a ‘long-term stay permit’ and is issued after 5 years here on a regular basis.

In the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, the legislative decree on ‘long-term stayers’ establishes that citizens from outside the EU, as foreseen by a European directive, after five years regular residence are almost compared to citizens from other EU countries.

Benefits include the issuing of a ‘super stay permit’ and the possibility to move around EU countries freely even for work purposes.

The following can apply for a long-term stay permit for themselves and family members: ‘foreigners who have had a valid stay permit for at least five years’, with an income that is no lower than the yearly social security benefit.

Those applying for family members too must prove they live in suitable lodgings based on minimum Regional law parameters for public council housing or on hygiene/health requirements ascertained by the local Health Authority.

Said permit will not be issued to those foreign citizens considered dangerous for public order and safety.

Those with a long-term stay permit, even if issued by another European Union Country, can enter Italy without a visa and do any autonomous or employed work, except for anything expressly forbidden for foreigners.

Furthermore, employees will not be required to draw up a stay contract as well as their work contract.

The permit gives the person rights to:

- social security and assistance,
- health,
- school and social services
- and to services and goods available to the public like, for example, council housing.

This decree comes into force on 15th February 2007.

From that moment onwards, anyone with all requirements can apply for the new permit ('UE long-term stay permit' 2007, City of Turin website, 12 March <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/papers/ue-longterm-stay-permit.shtml> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 15).

A further article dated 19 March 2007 on the City of Turin website refers to a “draft of the [new law amending the ‘regulations for immigration and conditions of foreigners’](#)” being “ready and should go before the Council of Ministries next week.” The draft law includes “changes in residency permits”, including permits lasting longer, the period depending on the length of a contract of employment. The draft law would also provide the opportunity for legal foreign residents “who have lived in Italy for five years to be employed in the public administration on the same basis as EU citizens” and “access to all the social security services for those who have been here for two years and for any minors included in their permit”. The article indicates that the timing “will be rather slow”, with legislative decrees to be issued in the two years after the draft law is enacted ('Immigration Law Reform' 2007, City of Turin website, 19 March <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/latest/immigration-law-reform.shtml> – Accessed 26 March 2007 – Attachment 16).

The RRT research response dated 2 March 2007 includes information on the Permesso di Soggiorno in Italy (RRT Country Research 2007, *Research Response ALB31389*, 2 March – Attachment 5).

### **3. Please provide some statistics regarding the total number of asylum claims and successful asylum claims in Italy.**

The US Department of State report on human rights in Italy for 2006 indicates that “In 2005 the government granted refugee status or asylum to 907 persons.” The report notes that “The government also provided temporary protection to individuals who may not qualify as refugees under the 1951 convention and the 1967 protocol and provided it to 4,375 persons

during the year” (US Department of State 2007, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006 – Italy*, March, Section 2(d) – Attachment 17).

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) country report for 2005 includes information on the number of asylum applications and the recognition rates for convention status in Italy during 2004 and 2005. A graph on page 4 of the report indicates that for 2005, there were 14,950 asylum applications in Italy. However, according to a table on page 169 of the report, figures from the Eligibility Commission show that there were 14,590 applications for asylum lodged in Italy in 2005. The ECRE report also notes that:

The Italian authorities do not provide a monthly breakdown. According to the Italian Council for Refugees, in 2005 about 13,000 asylum seekers lodged an asylum request in Italy (in 2004 the Italian Council for refugees believed the figure to be around 14,000). UNHCR estimated (Asylum levels and trends in Industrialised countries, 2005) that approximately 9,500 asylum applications were made in Italy in 2005. It is difficult to make an accurate estimation of application numbers due to the way in which the Italian authorities record statistical information.

In relation to recognition rates, the ECRE report indicates that there was a six percent recognition rate for convention status and a 29.5 percent recognition rate for subsidiary protection in Italy in 2005 (European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) 2006, ‘ECRE Country Report 2005’, European Council on Refugees and Exiles website, September, pp. 4, 7, 169-171 <http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE%20Country%20Report%202005rev.pdf> – Accessed 19 March 2007 – Attachment 18).

An article dated 27 May 2005 on a UNHCR website refers to statistics “being reported in the Italian media about the recognition rates of asylum seekers in Italy – namely that around 92 percent of the asylum applications in Italy are rejected, or – to put it another way – only 8 percent are genuine refugees.” The article indicates that “This is a serious distortion of the true picture”, and notes that in 2004, in addition to the 8.96 percent of asylum applicants granted refugee status, Italy also “granted subsidiary forms of international protection” to 27.03 percent of the applicants for asylum. “Thus in total, in 2004, Italy granted some form of international protection to 3,132 people – or 36 percent of the people who lodged asylum claims.” These figures did “not include people recognized on appeal” (‘Italy: misleading statistics reported in the Italian media’ 2005, *UNHCR*, 27 May – Attachment 19).

#### **4. Is there any evidence that Catholics are denied access to tertiary education in Albania?**

A search of the sources consulted found no specific reference to Catholics being denied access to tertiary education in Albania.

In relation to religion in general, the US Department of State report on religious freedom in Albania for 2006 indicates that the government “sought to protect” freedom of religion “and did not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors.” It is stated in the report that:

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. The Government at all levels sought to protect this right in full and did not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. According to the 1998 Constitution, there is no official religion and all religions are equal; however, the predominant



religious communities (Sunni Muslim, Bektashi, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic) enjoy a greater degree of official recognition (e.g., national holidays) and social status based on their historical presence in the country. All registered religious groups have the right to hold bank accounts and to own property and buildings.

Although it does not specifically comment on tertiary education, the report includes information on educational institutions managed by “religious communities, organizations and foundations” in Albania. It is stated in the report that:

According to official figures, religious communities, organizations and foundations managed 101 educational institutions, out of which 15 were officially religious-affiliated schools, with more than 2,600 students. Under law, the Ministry of Education must license such schools, and the curricula must comply with national education standards. Both the Roman Catholic and Muslim groups operated numerous state-licensed schools and have reported no problems in obtaining new licenses for new schools. During the reporting period, VUSH [Albanian Evangelical Alliance] reported that it was unable to obtain the necessary licenses, despite guarantees that they would teach the state curricula and employ only state-accredited instructors. The Orthodox Church and the Bektashis operate only strictly religious educational centers for the training of clerics.

The report also notes that “The Ministry of Education states that public schools in the country are secular and that the law prohibits ideological and religious indoctrination. Religion is not taught in public schools. No restriction is imposed on families regarding the way they raise their children with respect to religious practices” (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Albania*, September, Section II – Attachment 6).

The previous year’s US Department of State report on religious freedom in Albania indicates that a “Roman Catholic-affiliated university” had opened in Tirana. According to the report: “In January 2005, a new Roman Catholic-affiliated university with 200 students, the Lady of Good Counsel, was opened in Tirana” (US Department of State 2005, *International Religious Freedom Report 2005 – Albania*, November, Section II – Attachment 20).

The report dated 16 February 2004 submitted by Albania to the United Nations Human Rights Committee indicates that “article 18 (2,3) of the Constitution provides that “no one can be discriminated for reasons such as sex, race, religion, ethnic group background, language, political, religious and philosophical beliefs, economic, educational and social status, and its family origin. No one can be discriminated for such reasons, except when there is a legitimate and objective ground.” The report also notes that “The Law ‘On the University education in the Republic of Albania’ no. 8461, dated 25.2.1999 defines every basis for non-discrimination in accordance with the fundamental human rights in the area of university education, in compliance with international agreements ratified by the Albanian government, including the International Convention on Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination.” The rights defined in the law include the right “to university education in Albania, be it public or non-public” for Albanian and foreign citizens and “the right to be accepted in public universities through competitions (as per their skills) (article 31)” (United Nations Human Rights Committee 2004, ‘Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under Article 40 of the Covenant – Initial report – Albania’, UNHCR REFworld website, 16 February, pp. 167 & 247 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=415a63484> – Accessed 21 March 2007 – Attachment 3).



## **5. Is there any evidence that Catholics are denied access to employment or employment opportunities in Albania?**

A search of the sources consulted found no specific reference to Catholics currently being denied access to employment in Albania.

The report dated 16 February 2004 submitted by Albania to the United Nations Human Rights Committee indicates that “Law no. 7691, dated 12.07.1995 ‘Labour Code of the Republic of Albania’, amended by law no. 8085, dated 13.03.1996 prohibits any kind of discrimination in the area of employment and profession (article 9)” (United Nations Human Rights Committee 2004, ‘Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under Article 40 of the Covenant – Initial report – Albania’, UNHCR REFWORLD website, 16 February, p. 244

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=415a63484> – Accessed 21 March 2007 – Attachment 3).

However, the European Commission progress report on Albania for 2005 notes that in Albania, “In general terms, it appears that the level of protection against discrimination is still far from the EU standards, requiring the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and the establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” (European Commission 2005, ‘Albania 2005 Progress Report’, Delegation of the European Commission in Albania website, 9 November, p. 20

<http://www.delalb.ec.europa.eu/en/news/documents/SEC%201421%20FINAL%20EN%20Progress%20report%20AL.pdf> – Accessed 20 March 2007 – Attachment 21).

The 1997 book by James Pettifer and Miranda Vickers indicates that Catholics had previously faced discrimination in relation to employment. The book notes that a “ban imposed in 1967 on all forms of religious worship” in Albania was lifted in 1991. According to the book, “During the period of religious persecution, it is generally accepted that more severe pressure was placed on the Catholic population than on other religious groups” and “Catholics often found themselves the victims of discrimination; Muslims tended to be favoured in the allocation of jobs and housing.” It is stated in the book that:

During the period of religious persecution, it is generally accepted that more severe pressure was placed on the Catholic population than on other religious groups. The Catholic Church was seen as an instrument of the Vatican, and some Catholics, most notably in Mirdite, had undoubtedly collaborated during the war with the Axis invaders, particularly the Italians, and supported anti-Hoxhaist forces in the resistance movement. Because of this, Catholics often found themselves the victims of discrimination; Muslims tended to be favoured in the allocation of jobs and housing. In communist eyes the Church could never shake off the wartime heritage. As Hoxha came from a Muslim background and from southern Albania where he had frequent contact with Orthodox Albanians, his knowledge of the northern Catholics was limited. He consequently mistrusted them and by banning religion hoped to eliminate the bond of Catholicism linking many of the northern clans (Vickers, Miranda and Pettifer, James 1997, *Albania – From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity*, Hurst & Company, London, pp. 96, 99 & 108 – Attachment 10).

## **6. Do Catholics have lesser rights under the criminal law in Albania?**

A search of the sources consulted found no specific reference to Catholics having lesser rights under the criminal law in Albania.

The Commission of the European Communities progress report on Albania for 2006 notes that “Freedom of religion is guaranteed in law and in practice” and under the Albanian constitution, “all religions are equal.” It is stated in the report that:

Freedom of religion is guaranteed in law and in practice. According to the Constitution, there is no official religion and all religions are equal. Despite some isolated incidents, Albania continues to provide a valuable example of religious harmony in the region. However, religious communities are adversely affected by the authorities’ failure as yet to provide for full restitution of properties and other belongings (Commission of the European Communities 2006, ‘Albania 2006 Progress Report’, CEC website, 8 November, p. 11 [http://www.delalb.cec.eu.int/en/news/al\\_sec\\_1383\\_en.pdf](http://www.delalb.cec.eu.int/en/news/al_sec_1383_en.pdf) – Accessed 13 November 2006 – Attachment 2).

The US Department of State report on religious freedom in Albania for 2006 indicates that “According to the 1998 Constitution, there is no official religion and all religions are equal; however, the predominant religious communities (Sunni Muslim, Bektashi, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic) enjoy a greater degree of official recognition (e.g., national holidays) and social status based on their historical presence in the country. All registered religious groups have the right to hold bank accounts and to own property and buildings” (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Albania*, September, Section II – Attachment 6).

The report dated 16 February 2004 submitted by Albania to the United Nations Human Rights Committee indicates that along with the Constitution, “The Criminal Code also grants the freedom of religious beliefs. Article 131 of the Criminal Code provides as crimes the “interference with the activity of religious institutions”, article 132, “destruction and damage of religious objects” and 133 consider penal contravention the “interference with the religious ceremonies.”” It is also stated in the report that:

1343. Religious communities are juridical persons. They enjoy independence in managing their properties in accordance with their principles, rules and habits, to the extent [sic] that interests of third parties are not at risk. Discrimination because of origin, sex, health and political or religious beliefs trade union participation or because of membership at any ethnic, racial or national group is considered anti constitutional (article 18 of the Constitution, article 253 of Criminal Code).

1344. Promoting hatred or disagreements between nationalities, races or religions, as well as preparation, distribution and maintenance of notes incorporating the above, are convicted by fine or imprisonment up to ten years (article 265, Criminal Code) (United Nations Human Rights Committee 2004, ‘Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under Article 40 of the Covenant – Initial report – Albania’, UNHCR REFWORLD website, 16 February, pp. 167 & 243 <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=415a63484> – Accessed 21 March 2007 – Attachment 3).

## **7. Can we get any statistics on the religious makeup of Albanian Members of Parliament i.e. how many Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim?**

A search of the sources consulted found no information in relation to the religious affiliations of Albania's Members of Parliament.

### Internet Sources:

European Council on Refugees and Exiles website <http://www.ecre.org>

Catholic-Hierarchy website <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/>

### **Government Information & Reports**

Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/>

UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

Central Intelligence Agency website <https://www.cia.gov/>

### **United Nations (UN)**

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) website

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd>

### **Non-Government Organisations**

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org>

### **International News & Politics**

*BBC News* <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

### **Region Specific Links**

Delegation of the European Commission in Albania website

<http://www.delalb.ec.europa.eu/en/>

Parliament of Albania website <http://www.parlament.al/eng/default.asp>

City of Turin website <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/>

Provincia di Perugia website <http://www.provincia.perugia.it/Guide-tema/Lavoro/i-servizi-/Stranieri-/English/>

Expats in Italy website <http://www.expatsinitaly.com/>

### **Search Engines**

Copernic <http://www.copernic.com/>

### Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

### **List of Attachments**

1. Central Intelligence Agency 2007, 'The World Factbook – Albania', CIA website, 8 March <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/al.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007.

2. Commission of the European Communities 2006, 'Albania 2006 Progress Report', CEC website, 8 November [http://www.delalb.cec.eu.int/en/news/al\\_sec\\_1383\\_en.pdf](http://www.delalb.cec.eu.int/en/news/al_sec_1383_en.pdf) – Accessed 13 November 2006.

3. United Nations Human Rights Committee 2004, 'Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under Article 40 of the Covenant – Initial report – Albania', UNHCR REFworld website, 16 February  
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=415a63484> – Accessed 21 March 2007.
4. Johnstone, Patrick, Mandryk, Jason and Johnstone, Robyn 2001, *Operation World*, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition, Paternoster Lifestyle, Carlisle, United Kingdom. (Library)
5. RRT Country Research 2007, *Research Response ALB31389*, 2 March.
6. US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Albania*, September.
7. 'Albania – Statistics by Province by Catholic Population' 2005, Catholic-Hierarchy website, 20 November <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/spcal1.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007.
8. 'Archdiocese of Shkodre-Pult' 2007, Catholic-Hierarchy website, 3 February <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dshko.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007.
9. UK Home Office 2004, *Republic of Albania Country Report*, April.
10. Vickers, Miranda and Pettifer, James 1997, *Albania – From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity*, Hurst & Company, London. (Library)
11. 'Purchase of a house in Italy' 2006, City of Turin website, 1 July <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/housing/purchase-of-a-house-in-it.shtml> – Accessed 19 March 2007.
12. 'Stay permit and Visa' (Undated), Provincia di Perugia website [http://www.provincia.perugia.it/Guide-tema/Lavoro/i-servizi-/Stranieri-/English/Residence-/carta\\_soggiorno\\_eng.doc\\_cvt.htm](http://www.provincia.perugia.it/Guide-tema/Lavoro/i-servizi-/Stranieri-/English/Residence-/carta_soggiorno_eng.doc_cvt.htm) – Accessed 19 March 2007.
13. 'Carta di Soggiorno' (Undated), Expats in Italy website <http://www.expatsinitaly.com/arrival/cartasoggiorno.html> – Accessed 19 March 2007.
14. 'Short-term residence permits-abolished' 2007, City of Turin website, 13 March <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/papers/shortterm-residence-permi.shtml> – Accessed 19 March 2007.
15. 'UE long-term stay permit' 2007, City of Turin website, 12 March <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/papers/ue-longterm-stay-permit.shtml> – Accessed 19 March 2007.
16. 'Immigration Law Reform' 2007, City of Turin website, 19 March <http://www.comune.torino.it/en/latest/immigration-law-reform.shtml> – Accessed 26 March 2007.

17. US Department of State 2007, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006 – Italy*, March.

18. European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) 2006, 'ECRE Country Report 2005', European Council on Refugees and Exiles website, September  
<http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE%20Country%20Report%202005rev.pdf> – Accessed 19 March 2007.

19. 'Italy: misleading statistics reported in the Italian media' 2005, *UNHCR*, 27 May. (CISNET Italy CX124210)

20. US Department of State 2005, *International Religious Freedom Report 2005 – Albania*, November.

21. European Commission 2005, 'Albania 2005 Progress Report', Delegation of the European Commission in Albania website, 9 November  
<http://www.delalb.ec.europa.eu/en/news/documents/SEC%201421%20FINAL%20EN%20Progress%20report%20AL.pdf> – Accessed 20 March 2007.