



ALBANIAN NATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL, BUSINESSWOMEN AND CRAFTS' ASSOCIATION

Informative Bulletin

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IN THIS NUMBER

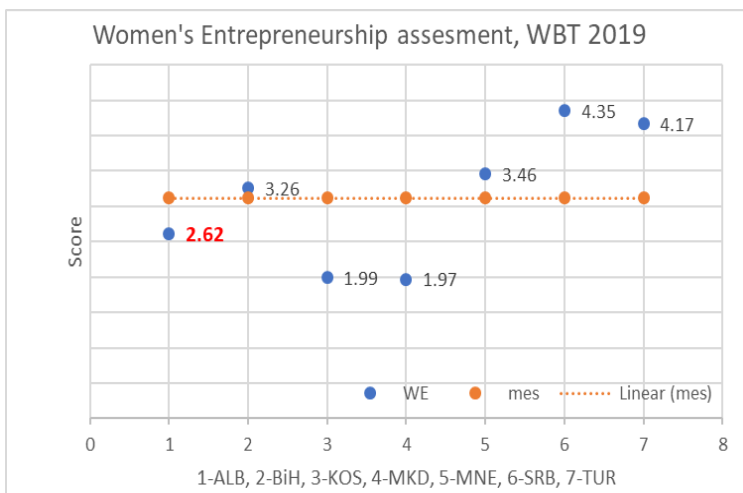
Assessment of Women's Entrepreneurs Policies in WBT

By Tefta Demeti

In the latest report published by the European Commission and the OECD "SME Policy index 2019 for the Western Balkans and Turkey (WBT)", the progress made by these countries in the SME development policies is assessed. With regard to the progress in policies for women entrepreneurs it is noted that:

Exist the gender gap in entrepreneurship and it is a policy challenge not only for the EU and its partner countries, but also at the global scale. The gender gap manifests itself in low numbers of female business owners, as well as in the statistics for com-

pany boards. Only 27.5% of business owners in the WBT region are women, and they hold just 14.2% of the top management positions in companies. Throughout the EU, in economic sectors traditionally dominated by men, and in international trade, the number of women entrepreneurs is also drastically lower than the number of men... P.7



Investment Climate in Albania

Foreign investors cite corruption, particularly in the judiciary, a lack of transparency in public procurement, and poor enforcement of contracts as continuing problems in Albania... P.4



Crossborder Project Ohrid-Pogradec

On July 11th, 2019, Ohrid, North Macedonia. In the framework of a 4-year project, Cross-border Ohrid-Pogradec, the theme, is a new problem for the Balkans, but not for Europe and the globe... P.10



UfM Regional Business Forum, Cairo

By Tefta Demeti

First UfM Regional Business Forum takes place in Cairo to promote the Trade Agenda and foster economic integration in the region

- Over 150 representatives of the private sector, civil society, governments and international organizations gathered in Cairo to discuss how to strengthen Market Access and e-Commerce in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

- The Forum, which comes as an immediate response to the mandate tasked to the UfM Secretariat by the Trade Ministers in 2018, is the first UfM event fully dedicated to Trade.

- The UfM reiterated its support to the Agadir Agreement and announced the launch of a capacity building programme in collaboration with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

- The UfM region remains to be one of the least economically integrated regions in the world in terms of trade and investment flows.

Acting upon the UfM Ministerial mandates and in line with the UfM Roadmap's emphasis on ensuring the contribution of UfM activities to regional stability and human development efforts, the UfM Secretariat organized its **first UfM Business Forum** fully dedicated to Trade on 18 June 2019 in Cairo, Egypt, in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry

(ASCAME) and the Egyptian Commercial Service (ECS). The Forum which was held under the auspices of the Minister of Trade and Industry of Egypt, and opened by the Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform, Hala Elsaid, also saw keynote speeches of Niklas Johansson, State Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Trade of Sweden and João Torres, Secretary of State for Consumer Protection of Portugal, focused on two interrelated themes, namely Market Access and the e-Commerce.

practices with the aim of identifying actions that can deliver the full benefits of e-commerce and those of a more open and integrated trading system in the region.

During his opening speech, the **UfM Secretary General, Nasser Kamel**, pointed out that *"trade and investment hold the key to unlocking one of the most drastic economic realities in the Euro-Mediterranean region, namely the fragmentation and the meagre level of regional economic integration, which rank among the*



The Forum brought together **150** stakeholders and representatives of governments, business communities, think tanks, trade negotiation circles, as well as regional and international organizations. The participants engaged in open discussions and exchange of experiences and best

lowest in the world."

The UfM Region remains to be one of the most economically fragmented regions in the world, with trade flows sharply skewed towards a higher concentration in the EU (90% of all Euro-Mediterranean trade flows), with a further 9% between the EU and its Southern and Eastern UfM neighbours, and only 1% of South-

South trade flow. Throughout the Forum, the participants stressed the need to fully implement and operationalize the existing bilateral and regional trade arrangements in the UfM region in order to promote economic integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area, and highlighted the fact that deeper and more comprehensive trade relations need to include new sectors and effectively tackle non-tariff measures in the region. Capacity building, technical assistance, and the transfer of knowledge and expertise are indispensable for a functional trading system with a robust regulatory framework and for the full use of free trade opportunities. They also highlighted the Agadir Agreement as a good example on South-South Cooperation in the field of trade, which merits political, financial and technical support and promotion.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is a game-changer for global trade. New disruptive digital technologies are generating unprecedented opportunities and challenges, and unleash an accelerating rate of interconnectedness and just-in-time demands to which trade needs to adapt to in a fast and a smart manner. Moreover, the bundling of goods and services together in the digital era requires a new level of inter-agency coordination at the policy level. It calls for a holistic policy whereby policymakers would need to develop coherent agendas.



During the Business Forum, **UfM Secretary General Kamel** conveyed the support of the UfM to the Agadir Agreement and announced new means to promote it further: *"The UfM Secretariat would like to back and further substantiate its commitment to promoting the Agadir Agreement by offering to the Member States of the Agadir Agreement its support to hold technical trainings in the area of trade policy, in cooperation with GIZ,"* he stated. *"Such trainings would encompass issues such as Rules of Origin, the classification of goods, origin certification and other technical trade issues, which will be based on the needs in the region. It is an endeavor that could prove particularly useful considering the ongoing revision of the Regional Convention on Pan-Euro Mediterranean Rules of Origin (PEM*

Convention)", he added. The UfM Business Forum serves as a first step towards a structured dialogue on Trade that will see further editions of the Forum over the coming years to promote trade and investment in the UfM region, and to contribute concrete recommendations that would feed into the coming UfM Ministerial Conferences on Trade.

Part of this prestigious event, was also a representative of SHGPAZ.

Investment Climate in Albania

By Kujtime Stefani

...In 2016, the Government of Albania (GOA) passed sweeping constitutional amendments to reform the country's judicial system and improve the rule of law. The implementation of judicial reform is underway, including the vetting of judges and prosecutors for unexplained wealth. Foreign investors perceive the investment climate as problematic and say Albania remains a difficult place to do business.

Investors report ongoing concerns that regulators use difficult-to-interpret or inconsistent legislation and regulations as tools to dissuade foreign investors and favor politically connected companies. The increasing use of public private partnership (3P) contracts has narrowed the opportunities for competition, including by foreign investors, in infrastructure and other sectors. Poor cost-benefit analyses and a lack of technical expertise in drafting and monitoring 3P contracts are ongoing concerns. The government had signed more than 200 3P contracts by the end of 2018.

Regulations and laws governing business activity change frequently and without meaningful consultation with the business community; business owners and business associations frequently note they did not receive enough notice, time, or opportunity for engagement on regulatory and legislative changes. Major foreign investors report pressure to hire

specific, politically connected subcontractors and express concern about compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act while operating in Albania. Reports of corruption in government procurement are commonplace.

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Property rights remain another challenge in Albania, as clear title is difficult to obtain. There have been

charged with removing illegally constructed buildings often acts without full consultation and fails to follow procedures.

Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Albania 99th of 180 countries, a drop of eight places from 2017. Consequently, Albania is now perceived as the most corrupt country in the Western Balkans. While it improved by two spots, to 63rd, in the World Bank's 2019 "Doing Business" survey, Albania continued to score poorly in the areas of enforcing contracts, registering property, granting construction permits, and obtaining electricity.

Energy and power, tourism, water supply and sewerage, road and rail, mining, and information communication technology represent the best prospects for foreign direct investment in Albania over the next several years.



instances of individuals manipulating the court system to obtain illegal land titles. Compensation for land confiscated by the former communist regime is difficult to obtain and inadequate. The agency

Beijing +25 Report on Gender Equality

By Flutura Xhabija

Today, on July 5th, 2019, The Monitoring Network against Gender Based Violence organized a meeting on "Monitoring Network Activity and the Performance of the Alternative Report of Beijing +25"

During the meeting, representatives of the Children's Human Rights Center of Albania (CRCA), the Albanian National Professional Businesswomen and Craft's Association, Albanian Center for Population and Development (ACPD) and the Albanian Helsinki Committee shared with the participating organizations the draft-findings of the Beijing Report +25.

The members of the Monitoring Network against Gender Based Violence are continuing to work

on the preparation of the report on the following issues:

- 1. Inclusive development, common prosperity and decent work;
- 2. Eradicating poverty, social protection and social care services;
- 3. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes.
- 4. Participation, Accountability and Responsible Gender Institutions.
- 5. Peaceful and comprehensive society;
- 6. Preservation, protection and rehabilitation of the environment.

This meeting was organized under the project "Establishing a

network of non-profit organizations for a better implementation of international standards on gender equality and gender-based violence in Albania", implemented by the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives. The project is funded by the European Commission and implemented with the support of UN Women.



For Pogradec Lake

By Flutura Xhabija



On July 13, 2019, Pogradec. Two ministers of the government, in an open meeting with all the socio-economic actors for a sustainable and competitive development of the Lake area; articulated, alternative and concrete discussions of all participants by integrating also civil society, and Us, SHGPAZ!

All for one co-operation Work, Wok and Work !!!

SAFER in SUMMER

By Esmeralda Ballesha*

Food safety is important for everyone throughout the year but it's especially important in summer. Summer is one of the most risky seasons regarding the food safety issues. Food poisoning and foodborne illness are more common in summer than at any other time of the year. Foodborne bacteria grow fastest at temperatures between 32 to 43 °C and during the summer months the warmer temperatures and higher humidity are ideal for bacterial growth. Since foodborne illness can be serious, or even fatal it is important for everyone to know and practice safe food-handling behaviours to help reduce risks of getting sick from contaminated food.

All consumers need to follow the Four Basic Steps to Food Safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. And the main areas they should be aware all year but especially in summer are:

1. **Keep clean!** (Wash hands and surfaces often, unwashed or improperly washed hands and surfaces can quickly spread germs and cause foodborne illness).
2. **Separate:** *Don't cross contaminate!* (Separate raw and cooked foods. Improper handling of food, kitchen tools and surfaces can cause microorganisms to transfer from raw to cooked food. Cross-contamination during preparation, grilling, and serving food is a prime cause of foodborne illness).

3. **Cook foods thoroughly!** (Cook at proper temperatures to prevent foodborne illness. Food is safely cooked when it is heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness, 75°C or equivalent e.g. 70°C for 2 minutes at the core of the food. Using a food thermometer is the best way to ensure the safety of meat, poultry, and seafood and egg products).
4. **Keep food at safe temperatures!** (Keeping food at an unsafe temperature can cause bacteria to grow to dangerous levels that can cause illness. The temperature of your refrigerator should be between 0°C and 5°C degrees (ideally

5. **Use safe water and raw materials when preparing food!** (Raw materials, including water and ice, maybe contaminated with dangerous microorganisms and chemicals. Toxic chemicals may be formed in damaged and mouldy foods. Care in selection of raw materials and simple measures such as washing and peeling may reduce the risk).

In order to help consumers make safer and wiser choices and enjoy the activities of all seasons brings by avoiding the food risks, the Food Safety Project will organise a series of campaigns during the next years having in focus educating consumers how to behave and on what to be aware of.

The campaigns goal will be to involve (engage) all the target groups in a joint collaboration and to connect the main actors to contribute together in order to guarantee an improved food safety system in Albania. *Everyone in the food system can do their part to help ensure the safety of food. Informed consumers can help extend the precautions taken by industry and government by becoming educated on how to buy, prepare and store food safely.*



4°C) and freezers should always be kept at -18°C or less. Refrigerate food promptly and Preserve the cold temperature of the cooler by replenishing the ice as soon as it starts to melt).

***By Esmeralda Ballesha**
National Technical Advisor Support to Food Safety, Veterinary and Phitosanitary Standards

Vocational education and training

by Violeta Shqalsi

Vocational education and training (VET) is a realistic alternative and proper guidance for young people in the dilemma, for adults aiming at requalification and decent reintegration into the labor market. Always oriented to the skills that the job market requires, Labor Force Survey (LFS) provides nationally recognized qualifications, affordable cost from every household and social layer. Encourage entrepreneurial spirit, without denying the possibility of further study.

Currently, vocational education and training is provided in 35 public vocational education schools and 10 public vocational training centers. These institutions offer 26 learning courses, 87 professional profiles and 50 short-term professional courses. The number of students in vocational education has increased, in 2014 in vocational schools studied 14,365 students or 14% of students in secondary school. In the academic year 2018-2019 the number of students in the Professional Education (PE) was 19,311 students or 20.6% of students attending secondary education, with an increase of 32.4% compared to the 2013-2014 school year.

Also in vocational education the number of students from marginalized groups has increased. In the academic year 2018-2019, 519 Roma / Egyptian students attended vocational education and the number of pupils with disabilities

was 108 pupils. Also 43% of students in PE schools are from rural areas.

INSTAT data (LFS) show that employment rates by educational

Academic Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total:	14365	17203	17738	18750	19019	19,311
Male	11953	14592	15165	16105	16304	16,158
Female	2412	2611	2573	2645	2715	3,102

level are higher for people with vocational education. The rate of employment of persons with secondary vocational education is 68.3% in relation to 53% for persons with general secondary education, which means that the employment opportunities for persons with vocational secondary education are 15.3% higher than those who complete the gymnasium.

In recent years there has been an increase in the demand for enrollment in vocational secondary schools due to the increase of the VET image.

In addition to increasing the number of vocational education, priority has been given to increase quality. For the first time in 20 years, in 2016 began the training for all VET teachers and instructors in the field of pedagogy as the continuous professional development of teachers is one of the main pillars of quality assurance in vocational education.

Budget financing for VET schools is increased and with state budget funds, schools and vocational training departments have been re-

structured, providing modern facilities for the teaching process and the development of professional practices. Also, vocational education schools are equipped with laboratories, professional cabinets, equipment and tools for developing practices, financed from state budget and donor funds.

Assessment of Women's Entrepreneurs Policies in WBT

By Tefta Demeti

...For instance, while women make up around 31% of active entrepreneurs in the EU, this share falls to only 3% in the construction sector; 7% in transportation and storage; 11% in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; and 19% in information and communication. The picture is slightly better in real estate (31%) and professional, scientific and technical activities, but women are most active in the human health and social work sector (60% of all entrepreneurs), in other services (59%) and in education (55%).

Overall, the assessment scores suggest that there has been progress on policy design and implementation, with Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro leading in this assessment period, while Albania is estimated at 2.62 points, below the region's average of 3.12 points.

25.7% (new)

(INSTAT, June 2019)



3.2%

A collection of six Euro banknotes is displayed on a light-colored, textured surface. The banknotes are arranged in two rows. The top row includes a 10 Euro note (pinkish-red), a 50 Euro note (yellow), and a 200 Euro note (purple). The bottom row includes a 5 Euro note (yellow), a 20 Euro note (green), and a 100 Euro note (blue). Each banknote features a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, with the denomination and the word 'EURO' clearly visible. The banknotes are slightly overlapping and cast soft shadows on the surface below them.

By Flutura Xhabija

Consultation table for standards of a safe working environment

By Tefta Demeti

mmendations for Albania, and further presented the document prepared in the State Police "Outcomes and Challenges".



Women and Health

GLOBAL HEPATITIS REPORT, 2017

Assembled materials by **Arlinda Demeti**

This WHO *global hepatitis report* describes, for the first time, the global and regional estimates on viral hepatitis in 2015, setting the baseline for tracking progress in implementing the new global strategy. In May 2016, the World Health Assembly endorsed the Global Health Sector Strategy (GHSS) on viral hepatitis 2016–2021. The GHSS calls for the elimination of viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030 (reducing new infections by 90% and mortality by 65%). The report focuses on hepatitis B and C, which are responsible for 96% of all hepatitis mortality. It presents data along the five strategic directions (strategic information, interventions, equity, financing and innovation) – key pillars of the GHSS to facilitate monitoring of progress in countries, regions and globally, and to measure the impact of interventions on reducing new infections and saving lives between 2015 and 2030.

1) Viral hepatitis is a major public health problem in need of an urgent response.

Viral hepatitis caused 1.34 million deaths in 2015, a number comparable to deaths caused by tuberculosis and higher than those caused by HIV. However, the number of deaths due to viral hepatitis is increasing over time, while mortality caused by tuberculosis and HIV is declining. Most viral hepatitis deaths in 2015 were due to chronic liver disease (720 000 deaths due to cirrhosis) and primary liver cancer (470 000 deaths due to hepatocellular carcinoma). Globally, in 2015, an estimated 257 million people were living with chronic HBV infection, and 71 million people with chronic HCV infection. The epidemic caused by HBV affects mostly the WHO African Region and the Western Paci-

fic Region. The epidemic caused by HCV affects all regions, with major differences between and within countries. The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region and the European Region have the highest reported prevalence of HCV.

2) Vaccination dramatically reduced new HBV infections among children, but other HBV and HCV prevention interventions have not been implemented sufficiently.

An early win in the global response to viral hepatitis was achieved through the effective scaling up of hepatitis B vaccine. In 2015, global coverage with the three doses of hepatitis B vaccine in infancy reached 84%. This has substantially reduced HBV transmission in the first five years of life, as reflected by the reduction in HBV prevalence among children to 1.3%. However, coverage with the initial birth dose vaccination is still low at 39%. Other prevention interventions are available but insufficiently implemented. Although injection drug use is the major route of HCV transmission in some regions, the provision of effective harm reduction services has been inadequate. Globally, 5% of health-care-related injections remained unsafe. As a result, an estimated 1.75 million new HCV infections occurred worldwide in 2015.

3) A large burden of chronic infections among adults calls for greater access to testing and treatment.

Access to affordable hepatitis testing is limited. Few people with viral hepatitis have been diagnosed (9% of HBV-infected persons, 22million, and 20% of HCV-infected persons, 14 million). Among those diagnosed, treatment has reached only a small

GLOBAL HEPATITIS REPORT, 2017



PREVENT



TEST



TREAT

fraction. In 2015, 8% of those diagnosed with HBV infection or 1.7 million persons were on treatment, while 7.4% of those diagnosed with HCV infection or 1.1 million persons had started treatment. While the cumulative number of persons treated for HCV reached 5.5 million in 2015, only about half a million of these persons had received the newer, more effective and better tolerated class of drugs called direct-acting antivirals (DAAs). There were more new HCV infections than patients who were started on treatment in 2015.

4) “Early adopter” countries are on the road to eliminating viral hepatitis.

Several “early adopter” countries are showing that rapid scale up of testing and treatment can be achieved through committed political leadership, and a reduction in the prices of essential medicines and diagnostics to expand testing and treatment services. First-line tests for the diagnosis of viral hepatitis are available for as little as US\$ 0.5. The most effective hepatitis B treatment – tenofovir – is available for US\$ 48 per year. Hepatitis C can be cured within 2–3 months with highly effective DAAs, and in some countries a full course of generic DAAs can be accessed for only US\$ 200.

Crossborder Project Ohrid-Pogradec

Nga Flutura Xhabija

...measures against river, lake, sea and mountain risks followed by tourists who visit these areas; there are quite a few human life losses from lack of information, qualifications, rescue tools, experts and other preventive measures; last year the Macedonian representatives opened the project with some modest and theoretical measures, but this year was much more effective and with concrete facts about the work done, even two days ago, two foreign tourists who were lost in the mountain of Galicica, the

Macedonian part were rescued. The conference was neatly organized with European-level speaker and professionals. The proposals and recommendations were well formulated and the participation from the Macedonian side was multi-level such as ministers, directors, experts and cooperative actors (police, responsible persons of tourism and the business sector). A panel was also dedicated to the role of women entrepreneurs which is a young sector in terms of

experience and very much needed in Balkan countries where a good part of their income co-



mes from tourism and tourist services. From the Albanian side was a low level of representation... as usual only money attract them... other things are not on the agenda of Albanian state representatives. We as SHGPAZ are an active part of this sector! We continue our commitment, others do what they think ...

Note: The opinions presented in the bulletin are those of the experts themselves and do not represent the opinion of EU

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