



Home » Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs » Bureau of Public Affairs » Bureau of Public Affairs:  
Electronic Information and Publications » Background Notes » Albania

## On this page:

[Profile](#)  
[Geography](#)  
[People](#)  
[History](#)  
[Government](#)  
[Political Conditions](#)  
[Economy](#)  
[Defense](#)  
[Foreign Relations](#)  
[U.S. Relations](#)  
[Travel/Business](#)  
[Background Notes A-Z](#)

January 4, 2011 | Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

## Background Note: Albania



**Official Name:** [Republic of Albania](#)



### PROFILE

#### Geography

Area: 28,748 sq. km. (slightly larger than Maryland).

Major cities: *Capital*--Tirana (600,000, 2005 est.). *Others*--Durrës (200,000, 2005 est.), Shkodër (81,000, 2005 est.), Vlorë (72,000, 2005 est.).

Terrain: Situated in the southwestern region of the Balkan Peninsula, Albania is predominantly mountainous but flat along its coastline with the Adriatic Sea.

Climate: Mild, temperate; cool, wet winters; dry, hot summers.

#### People

Population (2009 est.): 3,639,453.

Population growth rate (2009 est.): 0.56%.

Ethnic groups (2004 est., Government of Albania): Albanian 98.6%, Greeks 1.17%, others 0.23% (Vlachs, Roma, Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Balkan Egyptians, and Bulgarians).

Religions: Muslim (Sunni and Bektashi) 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, and Roman Catholic 10%.

Official language: Albanian.

Health (2007 est.): *Life expectancy*--males 74.95 years; females 80.53 years. *Infant mortality rate*--20.02 deaths per 1,000 live births.

#### Government

Type: Parliamentary democracy.

Constitution: Adopted by popular referendum November 28, 1998.

Independence: November 28, 1912 (from the Ottoman Empire).

Branches: *Executive*--President (chief of state), Prime Minister (head of government), Council of Ministers (cabinet). *Legislative*--140-seat unicameral People's Assembly or Kuvendi

Popullor elected by regional proportional vote; all serve 4-year terms. *Judicial*--Constitutional Court, High Court, multiple district and appeals courts.

Suffrage: Universal at age 18.

Main political parties: Democratic Party of Albania (DP); Albanian Socialist Party (SP); Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI); Albanian Republican Party (PR); Demo-Christian Party (PDK); Union for Human Rights Party (PBDNJ); New Democracy Party (PDR); Social Democratic Party (PSD); Social Democracy Party (PDS).



an bicycles in the Albanian capital of Tirana, April 4, 2007. [© AP Images]

[Subscribe to Updates](#)

The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.