

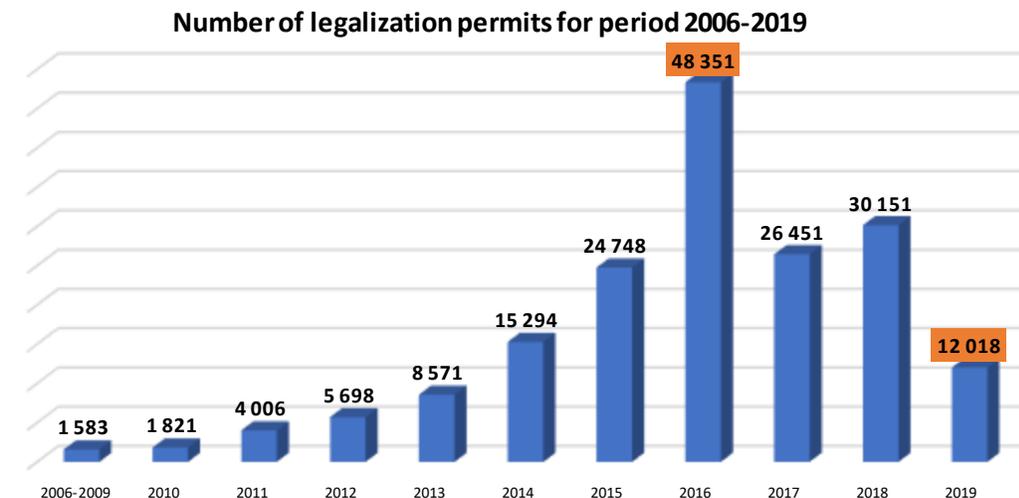
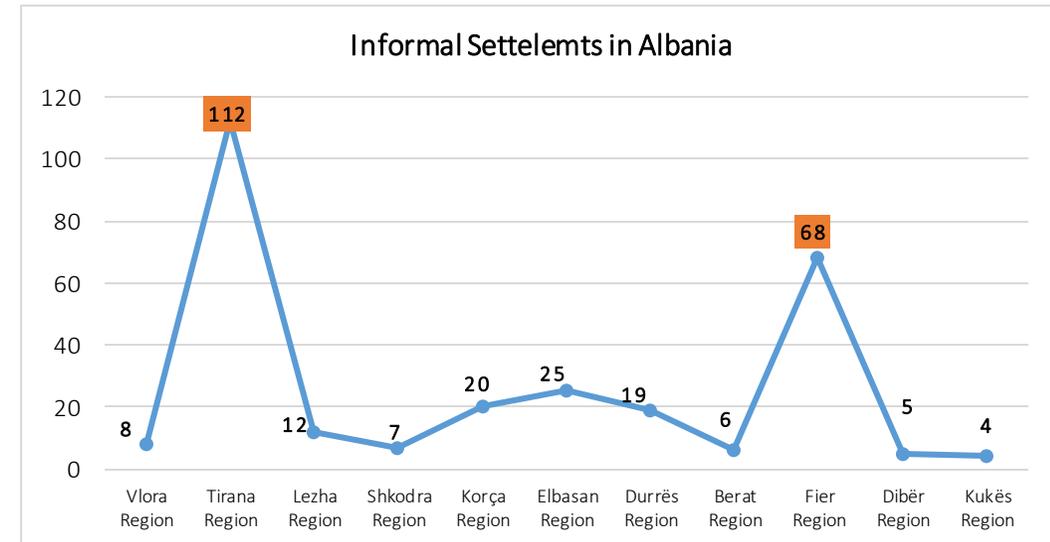
Post COVID-19 Recovery in Informal Settlements in the UNECE Region

Main Findings of the Draft Assessment Reports City of Tirana

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- There are **286 informal settlements** in Albania approved by Decision of National Territory Council in 2015.
- The total number of **illegal constructions** involved in the legalization process is about **280.000** – 2019 SCA Report.
- For 2019, there are about **62,206 illegal constructions**, administratively treated for legalization; compared to 2018, this number is 2.5 times lower, where has affected mainly the application of point 3 / c, article 27, of Law no. 9632, dated 30.10.2006, "On the local tax system", as amended, which provides that the legalization permit is issued, only after the payment of the infrastructure impact tax by the taxpayer has been confirmed".
- The decision to legalize or not, has resulted in **210 illegal constructions excluded from legalization procedures** because they do not meet the legal criteria and 12,018 have been legalized.
- For the three years 2016-2019, following the establishment of the Agency for the Treatment of Property (ATP), the financial assessment of 26,091 decisions has been completed resulting in the recognition of the right to compensation for property worth around 818,000,000 EUR.



Legal and Institutional Framework



- ❑ EU's 2020 Progress Report, on property rights - continued progress is needed towards advancing the process for registration, digitization, compensation and need to conclude the first registration of the immovable properties and titles in the territory.

Law 111/2018 "On Cadastre" creates State Cadastre Authority

- ❑ Established the Cadaster State Agency (SCA), which united several major agencies responsible for property registration, compensation, and legalization, including the Immovable Property Registration Office (IPRO), the Agency of Inventory and Transfer of Public Properties (AITPP), and the Agency for the Legalization and Urbanization of Informal Areas (ALUIZNI).
- ❑ The SCA is organized at the central level, through the General Directorate in Tirana, and at the local level, in directorates and offices, as subordinate structures.

Law 20/2020 "On the Finalization of the Transitory Process of Property Deeds in the Republic of Albania

- ❑ The new law on legalization No. 20/2020 has eliminated many unnecessary links providing fast procedures and simplified documentation, thus easing the bureaucratic burden on stakeholders.
- ❑ SAC has the right to process ex officio, during the initial registration, improvement of the cadastral zone or tracking process of the illegal constructions for which no application or self-declaration has been made until the date of entry into force of this law.
- ❑ The value of constructions which are not legalized will be registered with the database for identification purposes in pursuance with procedures that will be decided from the Council of Ministers.
- ❑ Deadlines for legalization are shorter compared to the previous legislative acts.

Legal and Institutional Framework



SCA is the main authority competent for the legalization procedures, responsible for:

- Cooperation and unification of the procedures with the central state bodies and the local governance units for the process of the legalization, urbanization, and integration of zones/dwelling areas/blocks of dwellings with legalized buildings;
- Programs the funds from the State Budget for the legalization and urbanization of the informal zones;
- Issues legalization permits;**
- Organizes a national **information and awareness campaign for the citizens** in collaboration with the public mass media at the national level;
- Establishes a **database on the illegal constructions and the progress of the legalization process;**
- Prepares the manual of procedures, instructions, forms;
- Keeps evidences of illegal constructions through **updating the construction situation on the ground**, reflecting the construction function;
- Administrates illegal constructions, for which the possessors have not applied for legalization until the date of entry into force of the new law;
- Determines the area and configuration of the construction plot for the entity that disposes of the legalized construction, etc.

Informal Settlement in (Tirana, Lapraka)

- ❑ Lapraka's population has sixfolded in 20 years, from around 10,642 in 1993 to about 65,354 today.
- ❑ Urbanization resulted in serious urban problems such as shortages in infrastructure, particularly in housing.
- ❑ **Typology of informal structures** - mostly built after 1990s, having a residential function and organized as a family unit 2 or 3 floors high.
- ❑ Houses are built **without a project design** but rather designed by the needs of the inhabitants who own the houses - not gone through the process of verifying the applicability of standards, both during the design and the execution of works, especially from the aspect of seismic risk.
- ❑ Apart from the fast urbanization that has resulted in **lack of public or green space in and/or services like playgrounds, non-compliance with proper distances**, Lapraka is also one of the most **flood prone areas** in the city.
- ❑ In the last two years there are issued 1,100 permits from 8,000 applications made.



Informal Settlement in (Tirana, Lapraka)

As one of the five strategic poles for the development of a Polycentric Tirana, Lapraka has recently undergone some formalization efforts and is experiencing major infrastructure investments especially in its southern and northern part:

- ❑ the bike path and the Great Ring Road
- ❑ the new green corridor along the river will be the northern part of the projected “Orbital Forest” one of the main strategic projects of the city.
- ❑ improvement of the Tirana River Infrastructure and adjoining environment (improvement works for the riverbed and flooding problems, greening of the riverbanks to create a green corridor throughout the whole river trail and adjoining neighborhoods).
- ❑ 5 new schools are being constructed to improve the situation of this unit to address issues regarding with overcrowded schools.
- ❑ Investment in Sportive Terrains are foreseen for this area.



COVID-19 Impact in the Informal Settlement



- ❑ The two 2 main social centers of Lapraka closed during the initial lockdown for security reasons, impacting the daily care/assistance to families and the elderly members frequenting these centers.
- ❑ The economic assistance scheme in Lapraka was supported with a second payment during the pandemic, which was available only for the 3 months of the emergency situation, April - June 2020 - about 334 families assisted with food & hygienic packaging; *however excluding several vulnerable groups such as those working in the informal sector.*
- ❑ There are about 66 Roma families, leaving in this area, depending income-generating activities, such as litter and scrap collection or informal trades. *Recommended measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission such as hand washing, physical distancing, self-quarantine, self-isolation are often impossible for them as:*
 - *Same environment serves many functions, being used by as a living room, bedroom and kitchen.*
 - *Often the number of inhabitants living in the same environment varies from 4 to 10 people.*
 - *No running water at home, which collect it in the wells; often not equipped with proper toilets but rather septic tanks.*
 - *In general, inadequate access to social services, limited capacities and opportunities to cope and adapt, and limited or no access to technologies. Only 15 of them are part of the economic schema.*
- ❑ Businesses in Lapraka area, providing mostly commercial services such as restaurants, bars and cafes, were the most affected categories due to pandemic situation. Despite the assistance provided by the government during the quarantine, yet they are facing challenges as the pandemic has significantly reduced their clientele.

Challenges

1. **High number of objects without legalization permits**, which referring to SCA reports account for about 280.000 objects-buildings yet not legalized in Albania and specifically more than 8,000 in Lapraka, pose the challenges of informal settlements that have once again been thrown into the spotlight in the midst of the current pandemic situation.
2. There is yet an **ongoing need to further escalate urban rehabilitation and upgrade, improve infrastructure and services** in Lapraka informal settlement.
3. Although social protection schemes are among the most effective interventions in the fight against vulnerability, the pandemic crisis has revealed **insufficiency to provide adequate assistance**, as it still end up excluding several vulnerable groups such as those working in the informal sector).
 - The study of World Vision Albania on “Impact assessment of the COVID-19 outbreak on wellbeing of children and families in Albania” shows that an average of 76.9% interviewed families do not fully meet **food needs, needs for disinfectants and face masks and needs for necessary hygiene sets** which are essential in the time of pandemic.
4. **Citizens have still to further gain trust in government** to provide security of tenure throughout all this time.
5. The **Municipality of Tirana does not have an emergency preparedness or disaster response plan**, nor any strategic document approaching crisis management as part of its own function of civil emergency plan. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis was initially managed solely from the central government.
6. Generally across all municipalities the collection of revenues is expected to be difficult throughout 2020, which creates **further financial insufficiency for the city to fulfill its function on civil emergency plans**. In addition, the inadequacy of local financial resources limits principally the building of local human capacities for strategic planning for civil protection and emergency response.

Draft Recommendations



1. Closer collaboration between the Municipality of Tirana and the SCA is fundamental in order to advance the legalization process in the informal settlements.
 - Accelerating the **legalization process**, with their ownership titles recognized, residents may have more incentives for economic stability and better access work opportunities under formal work structures.
2. The Municipality should further raise efforts in planning for **upgrading urbanization** and improving access in a sustainable way for the vital public services such as water and sanitation facilities waste management, transportation, etc.
 - **Upgrading** will contribute to improve in general the city' equitability, resilience and will also help to put settlement and the city on the path to sustainable, low carbon development and reduces risk from flooding and other climate hazards.
3. *Design **specific packages for informal settlements** that address meeting the needs to prevent the spread of pandemic (food, disinfectants and face masks and necessary hygiene sets - shampoo, toothbrushes, feminine hygiene products, other personal care items).*
4. **Public awareness** and education, professional capacity building, advocating and advise on professional ethics and codes in property related and environmental aspects must be further improved to gain citizens trust.
5. For the local government to fulfil a more significant role in crisis management it is critical that the central government consolidates (i) the institutional framework and provides (ii) the national plans on which local plans may be elaborated.
6. Support local government from central government through **unconditional or even conditional transfers should be considered to make executing the function of civil emergency plan.**

QUESTIONS?



Thank you for your attention.

We look forward to working with you!