

FRONTEX Liaison Officer to Albania, Kosovo*, North Macedonia monthly report

FLO name	<div>personal data</div>
Seat country/Region	Tirana, Albania/ Albania, Kosovo*, North Macedonia
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Executive summary

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- Migrant processing centres in Albania become operational, On October 11, the two designated migrant processing centers under the Italy-Albania migration protocol became operational, with the first group of 16 migrants arriving in October. After their arrival at the port of Shëngjin, four migrants—two minors and two with health issues—were immediately returned to Italy, while the remaining 12 were set for assessments in Albania. A subsequent court ruling in Rome mandated that these remaining migrants be transferred back to Italy, citing that their countries of origin could not be deemed safe, which raised significant concerns about the Italy-Albania agreement to manage asylum seekers.
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Migrant processing centres in Albania become operational

On October 11, the two designated centers under the Italy-Albania migration protocol were declared operational. Following this, on October 16, media extensively covered the arrival of the first group of 16 migrants intercepted by Italy. Upon completion of their arrival procedures at the port of Shëngjin, 10 people from Bangladesh and six from Egypt were set to be transferred to the nearby center in Gjadër for individual assessments under Italy's accelerated border procedure. However, four migrants—two minors and two individuals with health issues—were sent back to Italy immediately after the arrival. Media coverage included a small protest near the port of Shëngjin by civil society activists, who claimed the protocol violated human rights. Protesters displayed a banner reading "The European dream ends here" and vowed to continue opposing what they described as the West's support for autocratic leaders like Italian and Albanian Prime Ministers. The situation escalated when a court in Rome rejected orders to detain a group of migrants in a reception facility in Albania. The court affirmed that the migrants had a right to be brought to Italy, marking a setback for Prime Minister █████ plan to divert asylum-seekers abroad. This ruling came after the 16 migrants, saved from the Mediterranean by an Italian Navy ship, were taken to Albania, with four already returned to Italy. The court led indicated that the refusal to validate the detentions in Albania was because the migrants' countries of origin were not recognized as safe. █████

However, a recent ruling by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) complicated the matter, asserting that a country outside the EU cannot be declared safe unless its entire territory is deemed free of danger. The court ruling incited criticism from █████ Brothers of Italy party, which accused the judiciary of attempting to undermine Italy's borders. The 12 asylum seekers being held in the new Italian migration hub in Albania must now be transferred to Italy, delivering a significant blow to the controversial deal between the far-right government in Rome and Tirana aimed at curtailing migrant arrivals. In response to the ruling, the Italian government approved a decree that includes a legal definition of safe countries.

international relations

Albanian Ombudsperson to Inspect Italy's Migrant Processing Centres

In an interview, the People's Advocate (Ombudsperson), announced that the Albanian Ombudsperson's office will conduct inspections of the migrant reception and processing centres established by Italian authorities in Shëngjin port and Gjadër village (Lezha Municipality). The Ombudsperson emphasized that these inspections will focus on the human rights and freedoms of the migrants housed in the centres, underscoring this as a key commitment of the institution.

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