

# ETF Research forum for Evidence-based Policies on Skills and Migration

9-10 June 2026

Thon Hotel EU, Brussels

## FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION? NEW MOBILITY PATTERNS IN MONTENEGRO

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# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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- 01** DO RECENT MIGRATION DEVELOPMENTS INDICATE AN EMERGING SHIFT IN MONTENEGRO'S MIGRATION PROFILE FROM PREDOMINANTLY EMIGRATION TO MORE COMPLEX MOBILITY PATTERNS?
- 02** HOW DO NEW IMMIGRATION FLOWS RELATE TO LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS?
- 03** WHAT INDICATIONS EXIST THAT RECENT MIGRATION TRENDS MAY CONTRIBUTE TO SKILLS CIRCULATION AND HUMAN-CAPITAL FORMATION?



# MAIN FINDINGS

- *Migration in Montenegro primarily understood through emigration and brain drain*
- *Foreign labour mainly viewed as seasonal labour replacement in tourism, construction and services*

... BUT WHAT DO RECENT INDICATORS SHOW?

WORK PERMITS INCREASED BY ~42%  
COMPARED TO 2019

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FOREIGN-OWNED BUSINESSES **INCREASED**  
**BY ~141%**  
BETWEEN 2019 AND 2024

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FOREIGN RESIDENTS REACHED **OVER 100,000**  
**IN 2025**  
(~16% OF POPULATION)

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INCREASING IMMIGRATION AND DIVERSIFICATION  
OF MIGRANT PROFILES OBSERVED SINCE 2022



FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION?

# WHO ARE THE “NEW IMMIGRANTS”?

## What indications exist of skills circulation and human-capital formation?

- Presence of internationally connected professionals, ICT workers and entrepreneurs points to potential for: **knowledge transfer, business creation, and workforce diversification**
- Findings also point to an underutilised scientific diaspora as a potential channel for future skills circulation and cooperation

## Main profiles identified through interviews

- **Russia & Ukraine** → safety-motivated relocation, remote work, ICT professionals
- **Western Europe & North America** → lifestyle migration, freelancers, retirees
- **Türkiye** → entrepreneurial and business-oriented migration
- **Western Balkans** → labour and professional mobility

## How do these flows relate to labour-market dynamics?

Immigration continues to function as a labour-market adjustment mechanism, particularly in sectors facing labour shortages.

However, recent inflows increasingly include entrepreneurs, remote workers and highly skilled professionals, suggesting more diverse economic roles beyond labour replacement.

FROM EMIGRATION TO IMMIGRATION?

NEW MOBILITY PATTERNS IN MONTENEGRO  
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# THANK YOU

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## Understanding and Addressing the Potential Migration of Medical Doctors from Albania and Kosovo

**Authors:** Isilda Mara, Ilir Gëdeshi, Russell King

**Presenter:** Isilda Mara

**Affiliation:** Researcher at IWI, Research associate at wiiw,  
Independent economist



# Research Questions

- **How big is the potential migration of medical doctors from Albania and Kosovo?**
- **What are the socio-demographic characteristics of those intending to migrate?**
- **Which destination countries are most desired?**
- **What are the main reasons behind their intention to migrate?**

# Methodology: Mixed-method design

## Quantitative survey

Albania: **723 doctors**

Kosovo: **318 doctors**

Conducted 2023–2025

28-question online questionnaire

Response rates: **35% (AL), 39% (KO)**

Analysis: descriptive statistics + regression

## Qualitative interviews

Albania: **19 interviews**

Kosovo: **12 interviews**

Face-to-face and online

Thematic analysis of motivations and context

# Main Findings

## Scale of potential migration

Intention to migrate: **40% (AL)**, **47% (KO)**

Among ages 24–40: **53% (AL)**, **66% (KO)**

With *concrete plans*: **16% (AL)**, **21% (KO)**

## Migration duration

**Albania:** more plan to leave *permanently*

**Kosovo:** more expect to *return* and “give something back”

## Who is most likely to migrate?

Younger doctors

Those with previous migration experience

Highly trained doctors (e.g., PhD holders) seeking specialisation

## Motivations

**Albania:** economic factors (income, living standards)

**Kosovo:** career development, training, specialisation

## Destinations

**Germany** is the top destination for both countries

**Kosovo:** Switzerland is second

**Albania:** more diverse (USA, UK, Italy)

Germany’s pull strengthened by the **2016 Western Balkan Regulation**

## Policy implications

Revitalise the health sector: investment, reform, meritocracy

Mandatory service requirements risk pushing students to study abroad

Promote partnerships with foreign hospitals to enable contribution without permanent return

## Interpretation

Findings are **indicative**, not predictive

Intentions reflect a specific moment and a non-random sample

Combined evidence still shows a credible pattern of significant potential medical migration

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## Migration prospects, conflict-induced displacement and human capital accumulations

Nermin Oruc



# Questions and hypotheses

- **According to brain gain theories, migration prospects have a positive effect on human capital accumulation, as higher emigration probability raises the expected return to education.**
- **However, in conflict settings this may not materialize, for two possible reasons.**
- **The aim of this paper is to empirically test whether migration prospects generate brain gain in conflict-affected countries, and specifically whether conflict-induced displacement attenuates this effect through two channels: distortion of education incentives (incentive channel) and destruction of educational capacity (capacity channel).**

# Theoretical framework and model

## Baseline model:

$$\Delta HK_{it} = \alpha_i + \tau_t + \beta_1 \text{MigPros}_{i,t-1} + \beta_2 \text{Disp}_{it} + \beta_3 (\text{MigPros} \times \text{Disp}) + \gamma X_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

## Dependent variables:

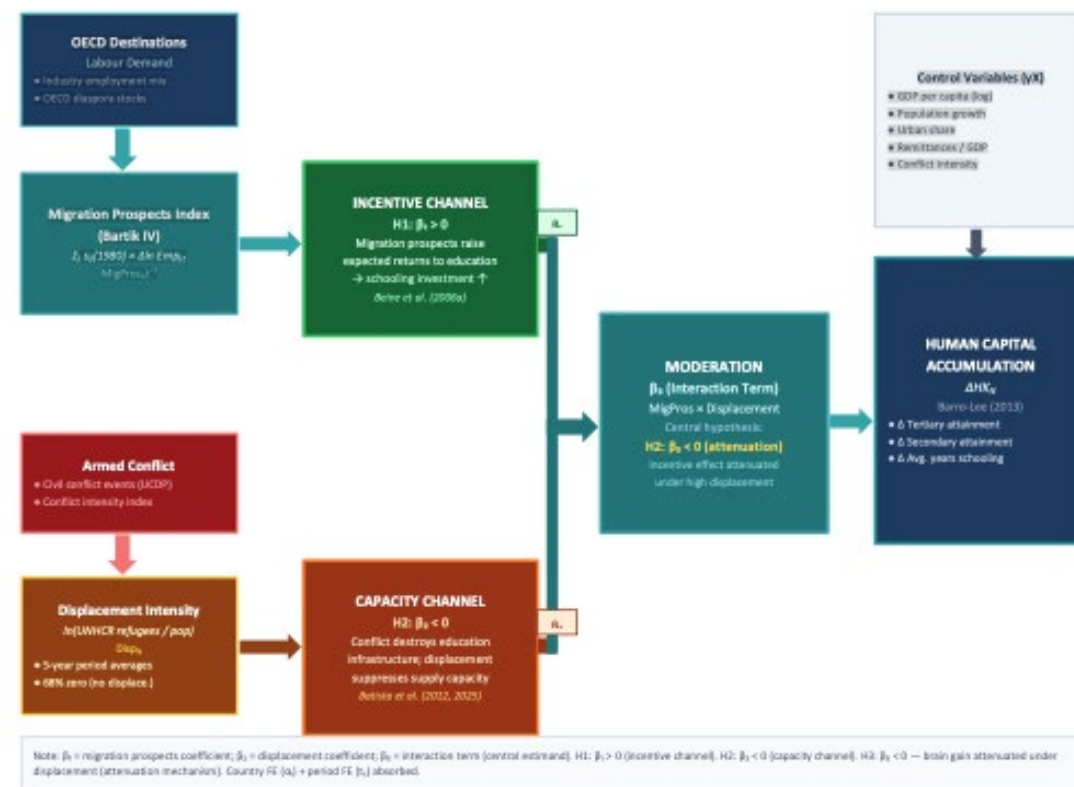
$\Delta$ Tertiary attainment share

$\Delta$ Secondary attainment share

$\Delta$ Avg. years of schooling

## Instrument: Bartik's shift-share:

$$\text{MigPros}_{it} = \sum_j s_{ij}(1980) \times \Delta \ln \text{Emp}_{jt}$$



# Methodological issues

**Alternative estimations (DiD or RDD); Alternative instruments**

**Availability of data across data sources**

Coverage of periods: Index computed for only 3 benchmark years (1980, 1990, 2000)

Coverage of countries: 111 matched countries → 99 in final sample (35 most fragile excluded)

**Heterogeneity: conflicts vs other events, conflict-induced migration vs other types**

# Findings and Recommendations

**Findings provide evidence of negative net effect of highly skilled emigration of human capital formation in conflict settings**

## **Recommendation for policies on:**

- Harmonisation and collection of global data sets
- Estimation of total costs of conflict
- Post-conflict recovery planning
- Directing development support

## **Recommendations for future research:**

- Extend coverage, both in time and by including data from most fragile states
- Add direct institutional-capacity measures
- Address heterogeneity

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## Brain Drain and Skills Mismatch in North Macedonia

Can career guidance interventions help break the vicious circle?

### AUTHORS:

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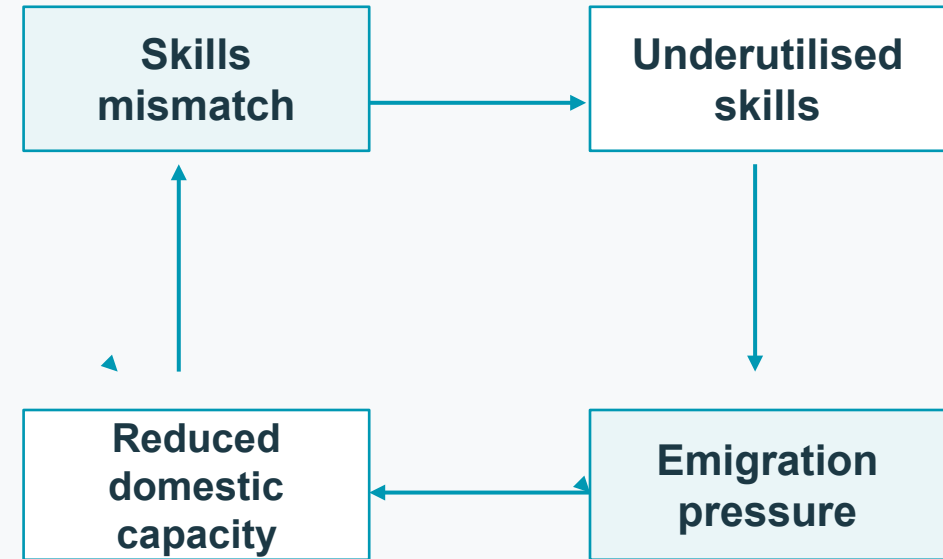


# Research question

**Can career guidance and VET interventions help mitigate the vicious cycle between skills mismatch and emigration?**

## Three guiding questions

- 1 What mismatch patterns are most visible?
- 2 How do they relate to migration?
- 3 Can institutional guidance mechanisms influence perceptions and decisions?



Key framing: migration and mismatch are treated as mutually reinforcing, not as separate policy problems.

# Methodological approach



## Why this matters methodologically

**The paper links structural migration/mismatch patterns with learner-level perception shifts. This makes career guidance visible as a possible institutional mechanism within skills–migration dynamics.**

# Main findings and panel message

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1

**Mismatch and migration  
reinforce each other**

Shortages in ICT, technical and green/digital sectors coexist with underutilisation and oversupply in some academic fields.

2

**Guidance can shift  
perceptions**

Participants reported stronger labour-market awareness, clearer employability pathways and some reassessment of short-term migration plans.

3

**CoVEs can act as skills  
ecosystems**

Employer engagement, ISATCOVE and structured guidance can connect learner decisions with skills intelligence and regional opportunities.

## Panel message

**Career guidance alone cannot stop migration — but integrated CoVE ecosystems may strengthen the conditions for young people to envision viable futures in their own country.**

# THANK YOU!

**We remain at disposal for further discussion**

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## TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE MIGRATION PATHWAYS: INVESTIGATING MIGRANT SKILL FORMATION, MISMATCHES AND JUSTICE IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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Faculty of Economics – Skopje, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje





## Research Questions

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The core idea is to examine factors associated with perceived skill (mis)match among migrants and return migrants in North Macedonia.

Based on survey data from 132 migrants and returned migrants, we look at how skill development, skill mismatch and workplace justice interact to determine how migration can become a viable path for people and the economy.

**RQ1**

### **Skill Development and Skill Matching**

How are migrants' willingness and opportunities for skill development associated with perceived skill match in the host labour market?

**RQ2**

### **Discrimination and Skill Matching**

How is perceived workplace discrimination associated with skill match after controlling for time in the destination country and education?

**RQ3**

### **Individual Characteristics**

To what extent do years in the destination country, gender, and education level explain variation in perceived skill match?

# MAIN FINDINGS

## SURVEY SAMPLE

$n = 132$  migrants and return migrants

## PERIOD

May - September 2025

## METHOD

Multiple linear regression (OLS)

## MAIN CONSTRUCTS

Skill match · Skill development · Discrimination



$$\beta = -0.247^{**}$$

### Training signals mismatch

Migrants seeking more skill development have lower skill matching as training is a compensatory response to underutilisation, not a sign of integration.

$$\beta = -0.269^*$$

### Education stratification persists

General upper-secondary educated migrants report significantly lower skill match than those with tertiary qualifications. Higher education provides stronger employer signals.

$$\beta = -0.166^*$$

### Discrimination blocks matching

Perceived workplace discrimination is a statistically significant barrier to achieving skill-matched employment, acting as a 'sticky' structural constraint.

$$p = 0.680$$

### Gender: null effect

Gender alone does not predict skill match once structural factors are controlled as disparities are mediated through other labour market mechanisms.

$$\beta = 0.260^{**}$$

### Time hinders the mismatch

Every additional period in the destination country improves skill utilisation through better language, networks, and credential recognition.

Note: †, \*, and \*\* denote 10%, 5% and 1% levels of significance, respectively.

Higher education was used as the reference category for education.



# MAIN FINDINGS & RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

## - Skill mismatch is a systemic outcome rather than a personal deficit

Training alone cannot fix mismatch when recognition barriers and discrimination persist.

## - Compensatory training paradox

First study to empirically demonstrate that active skill-seeking predicts lower instead of higher matching, which reframes training as a distress signal rather than an integration marker.

## - A structural friction: Discrimination

The study confirms that perceived discrimination operates as a “sticky” barrier independent of education and time, constraining even experienced migrants into mismatched job roles.

## - Education “loss”

General upper-secondary qualifications lose transferability at migration. Tertiary credentials cross borders more legibly which points to a recognition design gap, not a skills gap.

## 4 MAIN POLICY IMPLICATIONS

01

### Front-load integration

Early competency assessments + brief workplace trials to cut time to first matched job

02

### Reform credential recognition

Competency-based licensing and micro-credentialing to assess ability, not diploma origin

03

### Enforce anti-discrimination

Structured hiring, transparent task protocols, and systematic workplace monitoring

04

### Build sector partnerships

Transparent integration pathways in hospitality and manufacturing reduce informal employer bias