

# NEWSLETTER CONNECT ALBANIA PROGRAM

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CONNECT  
ALBANIA

Connect Albania (CA) Office

## Note to the reader:

We are happy to announce and introduce to you the first Connect Albania Interested Development Agent. He is Arbri Merkaj, an Albania Diaspora member living in Italy. He is certified by Connect Albania Unit composed by: Ministry of Finance and Economy, IOM Albania and AICS Tirana.

As of the launch in December 2020, Connect Albania Program Office is welcoming many new applications from Albanian Diaspora members who are interested to become Development Agent and contribute to the economic development of their home country. The first certificate of Interested Development Agent is issued to Arbri Merkaj on 25 March 2021.

## Who is Arbri Merkaj?

The word "good integration" describes the best Arbri Merkaj, an Albanian member living in Italy for 16 years now, since 2006. He was only 15 years old when he and his family migrated from Fier to Gargano, in the province of Foggia. There he enrolled in the Technical State Commercial Institute for Surveyors and Accountants "Mauro Del Giudice" in Rhodes Garganico and graduated as Accounting and Commercial Expert. He takes a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Molise. The specialist degree is in Tourism Sciences, on Tourism and Cultural Heritage. Once he finished university, he joined the Center for Studies on Arbëresh "Skander" traditions in Casalvecchio di Puglia and started to work with projects aimed at the civil and cultural progress of this community. His master's thesis is in the field of Heritage Anthropology, to the Carpino Folk Festival, which is held in Puglia and is a monument of the cultural life of the region.



Mr. Merkaj aims to sponsor university projects in Albania. He highlights that "Albania, my home country, has good opportunities to become a great European touristic country. I'm so happy to get this chance to be an Interested Development Agent, through Connect Albania, to serve as a bridge and contribute to this direction by facilitating Italian investment."

Arbri has a lot of plans and dreams about the social and economic developments of Albania and being certified as Interested Development Agent is a step forward to make these plans come true.

## How Arbri became a certified Interested Development Agents?

Arbri applied through Connect Albania Platform: <https://www.adbc.al/support-page/login> and expressed his interest in becoming an Interested Development Agent. Upon his submission of the application file the Connect Albania Program Office kept continuous communication with the applicant for ensuring the admissibility of the relevant documents. His application was found to be complete pursuant to the requirements of the Connect Albania Regulation by the Connect Albania Unit, resulting on his certification as Interested Development Agent within a short timeframe.

Arbri is now certificated for mediating the entrepreneurs of Albanian of Diaspora and/or foreign potential Investors with the Albanian state and is committed to become a "Successful Development Agents".

A "Successful Development Agent" is a title approved by Connect Albania Unit based on the successful completion of an investment mediated by the relevant Interested Development Agent. Connect Albania Program will reward the Successful Development Agents with a bonus of **1000 EUR per each job they have created (hired employee) by the company** in the case that they have contributed to the establishment of a successful business in Albania based on the relevant criteria established in the published Regulation of Connect Albania mechanism.

Connect Albania mechanism is a crucial part of the program "Engage the Albanian Diaspora to the Social and Economic Development of Albania". It will contribute to increase investments in Albania, that will create new jobs and will impact on the economic growth. The program is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Albania – the UN Migration Agency, with funding from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in close coordination with the Albanian State Minister for Diaspora, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Economy as well as the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).



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KËSHILLI I MINISTRAVE  
MINISTRI I SHTETIT PËR DIASPORËN



MINISTRIA E FINANCËVE  
DHE EKONOMISE



RRJETI I PROFESIONISTËVE  
TE DIASPORËS