

Diaspora Voting Analysis

ELECTIONS FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

February
December **2025**





Diaspora Voting Analysis

ELECTIONS FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

February December 2025

This publication was supported by:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

Disclaimer: The views and analysis presented in this publication are entirely those of GERMIN and do not reflect the views of the donor.

GERMIN
MAY 2026

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Methodology and Data Sources.....	5
Legal Context and Reform of Voting Outside Kosovo	6
2025 Elections: Registration and Voting Outside Kosovo	7
Organization of Voting in Diplomatic Missions in the 2025 Elections	11
Participation and Voting Methods in 2025	13
Process Efficiency.....	14
Electoral Impact of the Diaspora Vote.....	15
Top 20 Most-Voted Candidates.....	17
Main Challenges in Organization, Access, and Transparency	18
Recommendations	20
Conclusions	22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2025 marked the most important phase in the transformation of Voting Outside Kosovo since this mechanism was established. For the first time, citizens living abroad were not limited to postal voting only; they were also able to vote in person at diplomatic missions and to use postal boxes outside Kosovo. However, the experience of the two electoral processes held in 2025 showed that expanding the legal options is not sufficient without early planning, clear public information, operational capacity, and unified standards.

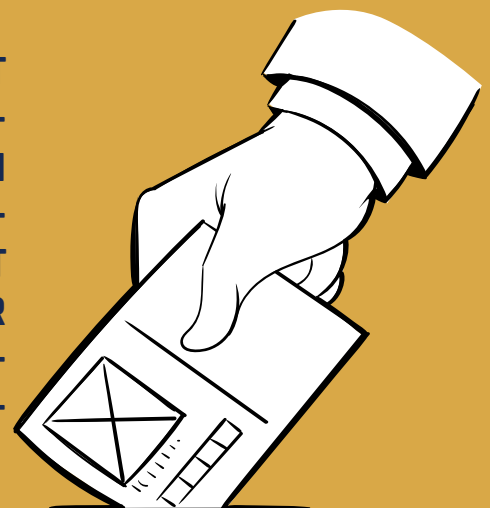
Kosovo has made significant progress in facilitating diaspora access to the electoral process, particularly after the 2023 legal amendments, which for the first time enabled in-person voting at diplomatic missions and the submission of ballots to postal boxes outside Kosovo.

This report analyses the organization, participation, and results of Voting Outside Kosovo in the two parliamentary cycles held in 2025: the regular elections in February and the extraordinary elections in December. By comparing these elections with previous electoral cycles, the report examines key developments in voter registration, voting methods, diaspora participation, results by political entities and candidates, and the procedural challenges identified during the process.

Despite the newly introduced options, postal voting remained the dominant form of diaspora participation. In February 2025, out of 79,019 votes received from the diaspora, 63,667 arrived by post and 15,352 came from diplomatic missions. In December 2025, 46,565 postal votes were considered for counting, while 16,165 voters participated in person at diplomatic missions. Of the votes counted, 62,194 were accepted as valid. This shows that in-person voting did not replace postal voting; rather, it created an important additional channel, especially in countries with more concentrated diaspora communities.

Overall, the report finds that Kosovo has made real progress in expanding diaspora participation in elections, but that the system still requires consolidation. To become more sustainable, transparent, and predictable, Voting Outside Kosovo requires better public information, clearer criteria for opening polling centres, standardized procedures, and more efficient operational planning, especially in cases of early elections.

“ THE YEAR 2025 MARKED THE LARGEST TRANSFORMATION OF VOTING OUTSIDE KOSOVO BY EXPANDING DIASPORA PARTICIPATION THROUGH POSTAL VOTING, AT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND IN POSTAL BOXES ABROAD, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR BETTER PLANNING, PROCEDURAL STANDARDIZATION AND STRONGER ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES.



INTRODUCTION

After 18 years, Kosovo held regular elections for the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo on 9 February 2025. Although the legislature's mandate is intended to last four years, political instability in the country had led to five consecutive early elections during this period. Political instability continued in 2025, when early elections for the Assembly of Kosovo were again held on 28 December, making the year an unusual case of two parliamentary electoral processes within the same calendar year.

Diaspora voting has consistently been an important part of electoral processes in Kosovo. Through the 2023 legal amendments, citizens living abroad were offered new forms of participation, including in-person voting at diplomatic missions and the submission of ballots to postal boxes outside Kosovo. These changes marked an important step toward expanding diaspora access to voting.

Important changes were also applied to the vote-counting process inside the country. Votes sent by post and votes collected from diplomatic missions were verified at the CEC building before being sent to the Counting and Results Centre (CRC) for counting and certification.

Despite the challenges identified, diaspora interest in participating in electoral processes remained high. The number of applications for diaspora voting has increased steadily over the years, rising from 5,015 applications in 2010 to a record 130,168 applications in 2021. In the elections of 9 February 2025, the CEC received 115,226 applications for voting from abroad, a lower number than in 2021, but with a higher approval rate. In the elections of 28 December, applications declined, taking into account the timing of the elections, when many members of the diaspora voted physically in Kosovo. Although a considerable share of diaspora applications continues to be rejected or annulled for various reasons, often linked to insufficient information, the process demonstrated a positive trend toward greater diaspora inclusion in Kosovo's political and democratic life.

Finally, the report offers recommendations for the responsible institutions with the aim of improving the organization, transparency, and access of the diaspora in future electoral processes.

“ THE YEAR 2025 REPRESENTED AN IMPORTANT MOMENT FOR DEMOCRACY IN KOSOVO, WITH TWO PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES WITHIN THE SAME YEAR AND WITH THE EXPANSION OF DIASPORA VOTING METHODS. IT DEMONSTRATED THE GROWING INCLUSION OF CITIZENS ABROAD, WHILE ALSO EXPOSING THE NEED FOR MORE EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION, BETTER INFORMATION AND STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL CAPACITIES.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

GERMIN has analysed diaspora voting over the years. This comparative analysis focuses primarily on the two electoral cycles of 2025, respectively the regular elections of 9 February and the early elections of 28 December. The analysis is based on official data and documents of the Central Election Commission (CEC), including preliminary data published on the official website and amendments to the relevant regulation. The analysis also reviews the relevant provisions of Law No. 08/L-228 on General Elections and the Constitution of Kosovo. The data were drawn from several sources

- official CEC data;
- processed data by voting method;
- GERMIN monitoring in diplomatic missions and at the CRC;
- GERMIN's previous reports;
- observation reports such as those of the EU EDM and KDI/DnV;
- exit polls, used only as indicative information and not as official data.

GERMIN also directly monitored the diaspora voting processes during the in-person voting phase at diplomatic missions through observers engaged in the diaspora, as well as during the counting and results announcement phase at the Counting and Results Centre (CRC). The analysis was further supplemented by a review of relevant international reports that addressed out-of-country voting.



LEGAL CONTEXT AND REFORM OF VOTING OUTSIDE KOSOVO

The right of Kosovo citizens to vote from abroad is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, specifically Article 45, which provides that every citizen who has reached the age of eighteen has the right to elect and be elected, except in cases where this right is restricted by a court decision. This right is also guaranteed through the Law on General Elections, which sets out the procedures and criteria for the registration and voting of citizens living outside Kosovo.



THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOTING OUTSIDE KOSOVO WAS REFORMED BEFORE THE 2025 ELECTIONS, EXPANDING DIASPORA PARTICIPATION, BUT IMPLEMENTATION SHOWED THE NEED FOR MORE LEGAL CLARITY, PROCEDURAL STANDARDIZATION, AND MORE EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION.

The legal framework for voting from abroad underwent significant changes with the adoption of Law No. 08/L-228 on General Elections¹ and Regulation No. 17/2024 of the Central Election Commission (CEC)², which directly affected the organization and administration of the 2025 parliamentary elections. These changes expanded the voting methods available to the diaspora and introduced new procedures for registration, administration, and counting of votes from abroad.

The most important change introduced by the new legislation was the possibility, for the first time, of in-person voting at the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Kosovo, alongside postal voting. In addition, the CEC opened postal boxes outside Kosovo in cooperation with diplomatic missions, thereby creating additional alternatives for the submission of ballots. As a result, diaspora citizens could choose between three voting methods: voting in person at embassies and consulates, sending ballots to the CEC postal box in Kosovo, or sending them to postal boxes opened abroad.

Regulation No. 17/2024 also standardized the procedures for registering voters outside Kosovo. Applications could be submitted through the CEC electronic platform or by post, while dual identity verification was applied for electronic applications for the first time. The regulation also established detailed procedures for the administration of voting at diplomatic missions, the transportation and storage of election material, and the verification and counting of votes in Kosovo. The implementation of these changes in the 2025 elections showed that, although the new legal framework expanded voting opportunities outside Kosovo, it did not fully clarify the possible locations of in-person polling centres. This became particularly visible in the December 2025 elections, when the initial decision to open additional centres outside diplomatic premises was challenged and subsequently annulled by the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP). This case demonstrates the need for the law to clearly determine whether in-person voting outside Kosovo may take place only in diplomatic premises or also in other authorized spaces.

1 Law No. 08/L-228 on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, No. 14/2023, 3 July 2023, accessed 21 April 2026, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=77074>

2 Central Election Commission, Election Regulation No. 17/2024 on Registration and Voting Outside Kosovo, adopted on 23 July 2024, accessed 21 May 2026, https://kqz-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Rregullore-Zgjedhore-Nr.-17-2024-Regjistrimi-dhe-Votimi-Jasht-Kosoves_al.pdf

2025 ELECTIONS: REGISTRATION AND VOTING OUTSIDE KOSOVO

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the President of the Republic announces elections for the Assembly of Kosovo, while regular elections for the Assembly must be held no later than thirty (30) days before the end of the mandate³. In the exercise of this competence, on 16 August 2024, President Vjosa Osmani decreed 9 February 2025 as the date for holding the regular parliamentary elections for the Assembly of Kosovo.

The elections of 9 February 2025 marked the first regular parliamentary cycle after an 18-year period characterized by early elections. This context also directly affected the organization of Voting Outside Kosovo, as the regular electoral calendar allowed for a longer period of institutional planning, public information, and diaspora voter registration. Unlike previous electoral cycles, where registration deadlines were usually limited to much shorter periods, for the 9 February elections the application period for registering voters outside Kosovo was set at 120 days, from 29 August to 26 December 2024.

During 2025, after political developments led to the announcement of extraordinary parliamentary elections, Kosovo entered a second electoral cycle within the same year. On 20 November 2025, President Osmani set 28 December 2025 as the date for holding the extraordinary parliamentary elections. Because of the early nature of these elections, the deadline for registering voters outside Kosovo was significantly shorter compared with the regular February elections. The CEC opened the registration application period from 26 November to 6 December 2025, for a total of 11 days.

Although the February 2025 elections had a longer registration period and new opportunities for Voting Outside Kosovo, the number of applications received/submitted was lower than in 2021. In 2021, 130,160 applications/requests were received, while in February 2025 this number was 115,226.

However, the request approval process improved visibly. In 2021, 102,467 applications were approved, while in February 2025, 104,942 requests were approved. This means that the number of rejected applications fell from 27,693 in 2021 to 10,284 in February 2025.

In the extraordinary elections of December 2025, the number of requests for voting from abroad fell to 84,712, of which 77,085 were approved and 7,627 were rejected. The main reasons for rejecting applications were primarily related to deficiencies in the submitted documentation and the inability to clearly verify the applicant's identity. In most cases, rejections resulted from the absence of a valid identification document of the Republic of Kosovo, a mismatch between the document and the applicant, the absence of a photograph of the applicant holding the identification document, or the submission of unreadable documents. These reasons show that a considerable share of rejections was linked to technical and procedural problems during the application process, underlining the importance of clearer instructions, better information, and easier assistance for voters outside Kosovo during registration.

The decline in requests for voting from abroad from February to December 2025 should not be read only in the

³ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 84, point 3, and Article 66, paragraph 2, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, accessed 21 April 2026, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>

context of the shorter registration deadline. The December election date coincided with the end-of-year holiday period, when many citizens living abroad return to Kosovo. According to a survey conducted by UBO Consulting for TV Dukagjini, citizens who voted on election day on 28 December and were from the diaspora accounted for around 15.5% of respondents⁴. Meanwhile, according to the Dukagjini and UBO Consulting exit poll, in the 9 February 2025 elections, 4.5% of respondents who voted on election day stated that they lived in the diaspora.⁵

To understand the trend of participation among voters outside Kosovo more clearly, it is important to compare not only the applications/requests received or submitted for review, but also those approved and rejected by the CEC.

The following table presents the development of these indicators across electoral cycles from 2010 to the regular February 2025 elections and the extraordinary December 2025 elections. This comparison helps identify changes over time, both in the level of diaspora interest in voting and in the efficiency of the verification and approval process.

Year	2010	2014	2017	2019	2021	February 2025	December 2025
Afatet e regjistrimit ndër vite							
Registration period for voting outside Kosovo	n/a	7 ditë	7 ditë	12 ditë	8 ditë e 8 orë	120 ditë	11 ditë
Numri i aplikimeve të pranuar/ refuzuara/ anuluar ndër vite							
Applications to vote	5,015	29,745	20,354	40,313	130,168	115,226	84,712
Approved applications	1,640	16,569	15,118	35,087	102,467	104,942	75,876
Rejected applications	3,375	13,176	5,236	5,226	27,693	10,284	7,836
Valid voted	n/a	10,446	9,157	24,375	56,375	77,131	62,194

Table 1. Registration deadlines and number of received, approved, rejected, and valid applications over the years

⁴ Portali Dukagjini, "Matjet e UBO-s, Feka: Diaspora ia sjellë tri mandate shtesë VV-së," 28 December 2025, accessed 11 May 2026, <https://www.dukagjini.com/matjet-e-ubo-s-feka-diaspora-ia-sjelle-tri-mandate-shtese-vv-se/>

⁵ Dukagjini and UBO Consulting, Parliamentary Elections of the Republic of Kosovo 2025: Exit Poll - Presentation of Insights, 2025, slide 14, "Do voters live in Kosovo or Diaspora?".

Prishtina recorded the highest number of approved applications for voting from abroad, followed by Prizren, Gjilan, and Ferizaj. These municipalities, which have larger populations and broad diaspora communities, show a high level of engagement by their citizens in the electoral process from abroad. On the other hand, the municipalities with the smallest number of approved voters are those with a Serb majority, led by Novobërdë, followed by North Mitrovica.

Municipality	2019	2021	Shkurt 2025	Ohjetor 2025
Prishtina	1,367	5,524	9,089	7,553
Prizren	1,017	3,735	8,217	5,588
Gjilan	838	4,059	7,214	5,588
Ferizaj	907	3,883	6,835	5,523
Peja	883	3,216	6,819	5,207
Gjakovë	821	2,851	6,383	4,490
North Mitrovica	574	2,149	5,030	4,635
Suharekë	657	2,623	5,007	2,997
Podujeva	618	2,561	4,926	3,223
Vushtrri	534	2,083	4,466	3,617

Table 2. Distribution of applications by municipality

Another important element is the geographic distribution abroad of registered voters. Data by country show that voting outside Kosovo remains highly geographically concentrated. In both electoral processes in 2025, as well as in previous elections, Germany and Switzerland accounted for approximately two thirds of all approved applications for voting from abroad. This confirms that these two countries continue to be the main centres of electoral participation among the Kosovar diaspora.

However, the comparison between February and December 2025 also reveals several important shifts. While the absolute number of applications fell in most countries because of the shorter deadline and the early nature of the elections, countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway recorded slight increases either in absolute numbers or in relative weight. This suggests that diaspora participation is shaped not only by the size of the community, but also by access to voting methods, information, and political mobilization in each country.

The following table presents the geographic distribution of diaspora participation in the 2021 elections and in the two 2025 electoral processes.

Shteti	2021	February 2025	December 2025
Germany	46.8%	44,774 (42.7%)	33,463 (43.4%)
Switzerland	30.0%	27,248 (26.0%)	19,561 (25.4%)
France	2.7%	4,629 (4.4%)	3,584 (4.6%)
Sweden	2.7%	3,958 (3.8%)	3,773 (4.9%)
Austria	5.6%	3,932 (3.7%)	1,913 (2.5%)
Italy	2.5%	3,810 (3.6%)	1,469 (1.9%)
USA	1.5%	2,509 (2.4%)	2,510 (3.4%)
Belgium	--	2,392 (2.3%)	1,833 (2.4%)
United Kingdom	1.5%	2,236 (2.1%)	2,406 (3.1%)
Finland	--	1,806 (1.7%)	1,086 (1.4%)
Slovenia	--	1,468 (1.4%)	620 (0.8%)
Norway	1.1%	1,116 (1.1%)	1,169 (1.5%)
Canada	0.8%	1,045 (1.0%)	1,035 (1.3%)
Denmark	0.8%	625 (0.6%)	525 (0.7%)
Croatia	--	490 (0.5%)	294 (0.4%)
Netherland	--	387 (0.4%)	306 (0.4%)
Turkey	--	378 (0.4%)	218 (0.3%)
Luxembourg	--	361 (0.3%)	202 (0.3%)
Montenegro	--	353 (0.3%)	274 (0.4%)
Serbia	0.003%	195 (0.2%)	67 (0.1%)
Other Countries	3.9%	1,230 (1.2%)	677 (0.9%)
Total	(100%)	104,942 (100.0%)	77,085 (100.0%)

Table 3. Geographic distribution of diaspora participation

Because of methodological differences, the 2021 data are presented only as a percentage of confirmed postal ballots by country, while for February and December 2025 the data present approved applications/registrations for voting outside Kosovo by country.⁶

⁶ Methodological note: For 2021, the percentages present the distribution of confirmed postal ballots by country, not approved applications. For 2025, the data present approved applications/registrations for voting outside Kosovo by country and voting method. Countries marked "--" were not presented separately in the 2021 report table and are included under "Other countries."

ORGANIZATION OF VOTING IN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE 2025 ELECTIONS

In the 2025 parliamentary elections, voters outside Kosovo were offered three ways to exercise their right to vote: in-person voting at diplomatic missions, postal voting through CEC postal boxes in Kosovo, and voting through postal boxes opened abroad with the support of embassies and consulates.

For the regular elections of 9 February 2025, on 29 August 2024, the CEC approved the list of polling centres outside Kosovo. According to this decision, in-person voting was planned to be organized in 35 embassies and consulates, with a total of 47 polling stations and a maximum capacity of 47,000 voters. This represented a significant change compared with previous cycles, as voters outside Kosovo were enabled to vote in person at diplomatic missions for the first time.

However, the process was also accompanied by limitations. Some countries where Kosovo citizens live, such as Finland, Luxembourg, and Slovakia, were not included in the list for in-person voting. In addition, on 28 January 2025, the CEC decided not to organize in-person voting in Ankara, Canberra, and Iowa because of the low number of registered voters at these centres. Postal voting was offered as an alternative for these voters.

In the February 2025 elections, a total of 20,324 persons registered for in-person voting at diplomatic missions. Participation varied considerably from one mission to another, depending on the size of the diaspora community and access to the polling centre. The Kosovo Consulate in Düsseldorf had the highest number of voters, where 1,560 of 2,105 registered voters voted. By contrast, the Kosovo Embassy in Skopje had lower participation, with 17 voters out of 55 registered voters.

In the extraordinary elections of 28 December 2025, Voting Outside Kosovo was organized under more limited time conditions. The voter registration period abroad lasted only 11 days, from 26 November to 6 December 2025. Initially, the CEC planned a broader distribution of in-person voting, with 60 polling centres and 109 polling stations.

However, after registration ended and based on the actual number of voters who had selected in-person voting, the list was revised. This process was also accompanied by an institutional dispute regarding the location of polling centres. According to the Democracy in Action report⁷, the CEC initially decided that voting would take place in 50 diplomatic missions, with 66 polling stations in 36 countries, while it also planned additional centres outside diplomatic premises based on recommendations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora (MFAD). This part of the decision was annulled by ECAP, which assessed that in-person voting outside Kosovo must be limited to diplomatic premises. This case highlighted the need for legal and institutional clarification regarding the roles of the CEC and MFAD in organizing voting abroad.

On 27 December 2025, in-person voting outside Kosovo took place in 29 diplomatic missions, in 18 countries, with a total of 40 polling stations. For this form of voting, 19,187 voters were registered, of whom 16,165 voted, or 84.24%⁸. In total, for the December 2025 elections, the voter list included 77,085 voters registered outside Kosovo, most of whom had selected postal voting.

The comparison between the February and December 2025 elections shows that the new model of Voting Outside Kosovo created more opportunities for diaspora participation, but its implementation remained affected by deadlines, logistical capacities, and the actual number of registered voters. The February elections offered more

⁷ Democracy in Action (DnV), Observation Report on the Elections for the Assembly of Kosovo, Prishtina, 2026, available in www.kdi-kosovo.org

⁸ In the registration data, 19,260 voters had selected in-person voting at diplomatic missions. After the operational review of the centres where in-person voting was organized, the effective voter list at diplomatic missions included 19,187 voters, of whom 16,165 voted, or 84.24%.

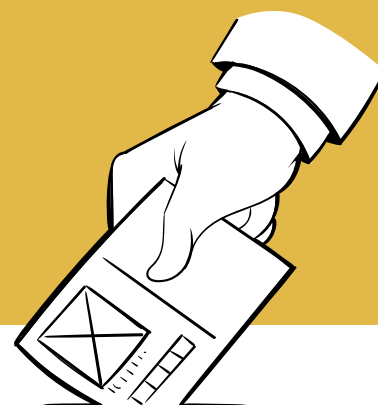
time for preparation and public information, while the December elections tested the same system under tighter and faster organizational conditions.

Diplomatic Mission	February 2025	December 2025
Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo - DÜSSELDORF	2,105	2,231
Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo - MÜNCHEN	1,972	1,631
Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo - STUTTGART	1,970	1,933
Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo - CYRIH	1,953	2,114
Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo - FRANKFURT	1,567	1,421
Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo - LONDËR	1,020	1,219
Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo - GJENEVË	981	1,051
Consulate of the Republic of Kosovo - BERNË	967	1,053
Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo - BRUKSEL	960	916
Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo - VJENË	941	532

Table 4. Voting in diplomatic missions



“THE ORGANIZATION OF VOTING IN DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS DURING THE 2025 ELECTIONS MARKED THE FIRST PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW VOTING REFORM OUTSIDE KOSOVO, EXPANDING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIASPORA PARTICIPATION THROUGH PHYSICAL VOTING AND POSTAL ALTERNATIVES, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HIGHLIGHTING LEGAL, LOGISTICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES IN ADMINISTERING THE PROCESS.



PARTICIPATION AND VOTING METHODS IN 2025

The comparison between the elections of 9 February and 28 December 2025 shows two different dynamics of Voting Outside Kosovo. In the regular February elections, the number of requests, approved applications, and votes received from abroad was higher, which is linked to the longer registration period and the greater amount of time available for public information and organization. In December, because of the early nature of the elections, the date on which they were held, and the shorter deadlines, the total number of applications and votes was lower.

Indicator	February 2025	December 2025
Requests for voting outside Kosovo	115,226	84,712
Approved applications/requests	104,942	77,085
Rejected/annulled	10,284	7,627
Approval rate	91.1%	91.0%

Table 5. Number of requests and approved applications

Nevertheless, December showed some improvements in the administrative efficiency of the process. The approval rate for requests remained almost the same as in February, at around 91%, while valid votes as a percentage of votes considered for counting increased from 97.6% to 99.1%. The invalidity rate also fell from 2.39% to 0.9%, while the number of rejected postal envelopes fell from 4,898 to 2,364.

In terms of voting method, postal voting remained the dominant form in both processes. However, in December, the relative share of in-person voting at diplomatic missions and the use of postal boxes outside Kosovo increased, while use of the postal box in Kosovo fell significantly. This suggests that the multi-channel model of Voting Outside Kosovo began to consolidate, but remains strongly affected by deadlines, information, the period in which elections are held, and voters' practical access to each voting channel.

Selected Voting Method	February 2025	% of approved votes	December 2025	% of approved votes
Postal boxes outside Kosovo	67,496	64.3%	55,099	71.5%
Postal box in Kosovo	17,104	16.3%	2,726	3.5%
In-person voting at diplomatic m.	20,342	19.4%	19,260	25.0%
Total Approved	104,942	100%	77,085	100%

Table 6. Selected voting method

PROCESS EFFICIENCY

The comparison between the elections of 9 February and 28 December 2025 shows that, despite the decline in the overall number of applications and votes from outside Kosovo in the December elections, the process improved in terms of administrative efficiency. In both processes, the approval rate for requests to vote outside Kosovo remained almost the same, at around 91%, indicating a relatively stable level of application verification.

However, the most important difference appears in the post-registration phase. In February 2025, out of 104,942 approved applications, 79,019 voters exercised their right to vote and their votes were counted, representing around 75.3% of approved voters. In December 2025, out of 77,085 approved applications, 62,730 voters exercised their right and their votes were counted, or around 81.4% of approved voters. This shows that, although absolute participation was lower in December, the percentage of approved voters who managed to vote and enter the counting process was higher.

The procedural quality of votes accepted for counting also improved. In February, 77,131 votes were accepted as valid and 2.39% were declared invalid, while in December, 62,194 votes were accepted as valid and only 0.9% were declared invalid. The number of rejected and unprocessed postal envelopes also fell from 4,898 in February to 2,364 in December. These data suggest that in the second electoral cycle of 2025, voters and the election administration had become more familiar with the new procedures, while technical errors and invalid votes declined significantly.

Treguesi	Shkurt 2025
Participation from the total number of registered voters	75.3%
Valid votes as a percentage of registered voters	73.5%
Valid votes as a percentage of counted votes	97.6%
Invalidity rate of counted votes	2.39%
Postal envelopes rejected for technical reasons (% of postal votes)	5.8%

Table 7. Participation among registered voters and validity of votes

In this sense, the December 2025 elections demonstrate an important paradox: the process had lower participation in absolute numbers, but was more efficient in relation to approved voters and the validity of accepted votes. This indicates that the new multi-channel Voting Outside Kosovo system began to produce greater procedural stability, but remains dependent on deadlines, public information, and the operational capacity of institutions to implement it equally in every electoral cycle.

ELECTORAL IMPACT OF THE DIASPORA VOTE

Compared with the 2021 elections, Lëvizja Vetëvendosje (LVV) retained its position as the most-voted political entity among the diaspora. In February 2025, LVV received almost the same number of votes as in 2021, with a very slight decrease from 44,252 to 44,224 votes. Meanwhile, LDK recorded the largest increase, moving from 4,294 votes in 2021 to 20,042 votes in February 2025. PDK also increased, from 5,032 to 7,053 votes. AAK and Nisma, which ran separately in 2021 but as a coalition in February 2025, together moved from 1,553 votes to 2,299 votes.

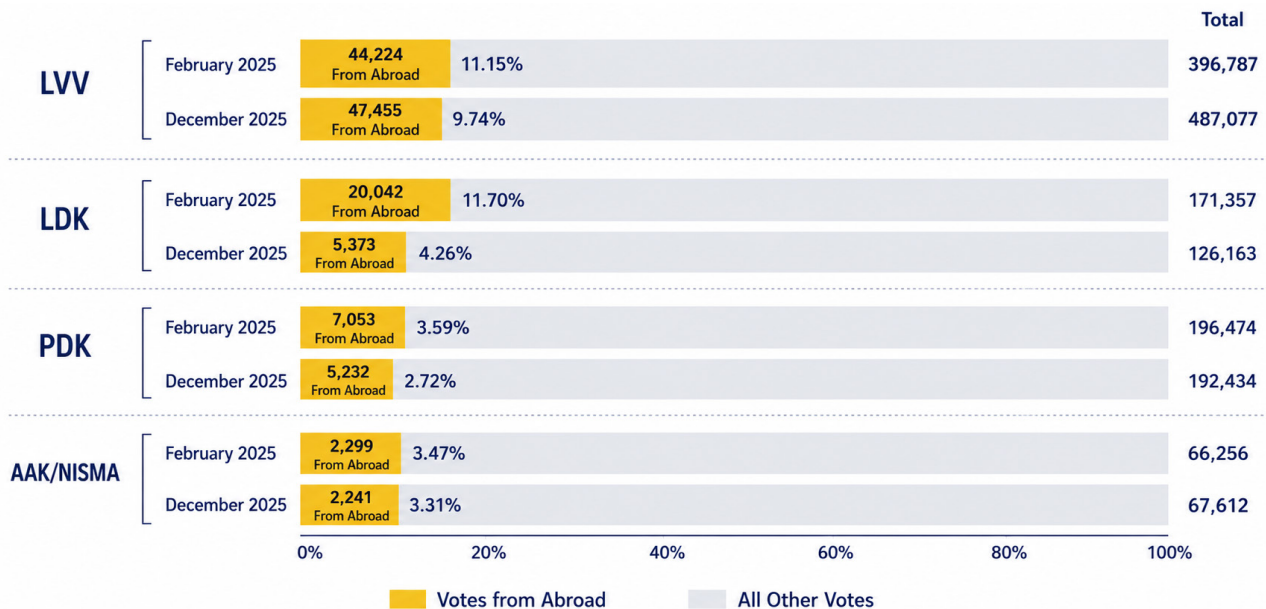


Table 8. Valid votes from abroad as a percentage of total valid votes

This election round also showed a different dynamic in the distribution of votes by political party. LVV not only maintained its dominant position, but increased its diaspora support to 47,455 votes. By contrast, LDK and PDK recorded clear declines compared with February 2025: LDK fell from 20,042 to 5,373 votes, while PDK fell from 7,053 to 5,232 votes. AAK and Nisma, which ran separately in December, jointly received 2,241 votes, a level very close to the result they achieved as a coalition in February.

Overall, the comparison between 2021, February 2025, and December 2025 shows that the diaspora vote remained concentrated primarily around LVV, while support for other political entities varied significantly depending on the electoral cycle, the form in which entities competed, and the political context.

To understand more clearly how the diaspora exercised its right to vote, it is important to distinguish between votes sent by post and those cast physically at diplomatic missions. In 2021, Voting Outside Kosovo was conducted only by post, so there are no data for voting at diplomatic missions. In the two 2025 electoral cycles, however, voters outside Kosovo could choose between postal voting and in-person voting at embassies or consulates.

The data show that, even after the opening of the option of in-person voting, postal voting remained the main form of participation. In February 2025, most of the votes for each main political entity came by post. For LVV, out of 44,224 total votes, 31,963 were postal votes and 12,261 were votes at diplomatic missions. For LDK and PDK as well, postal votes were significantly higher than votes at diplomatic missions.

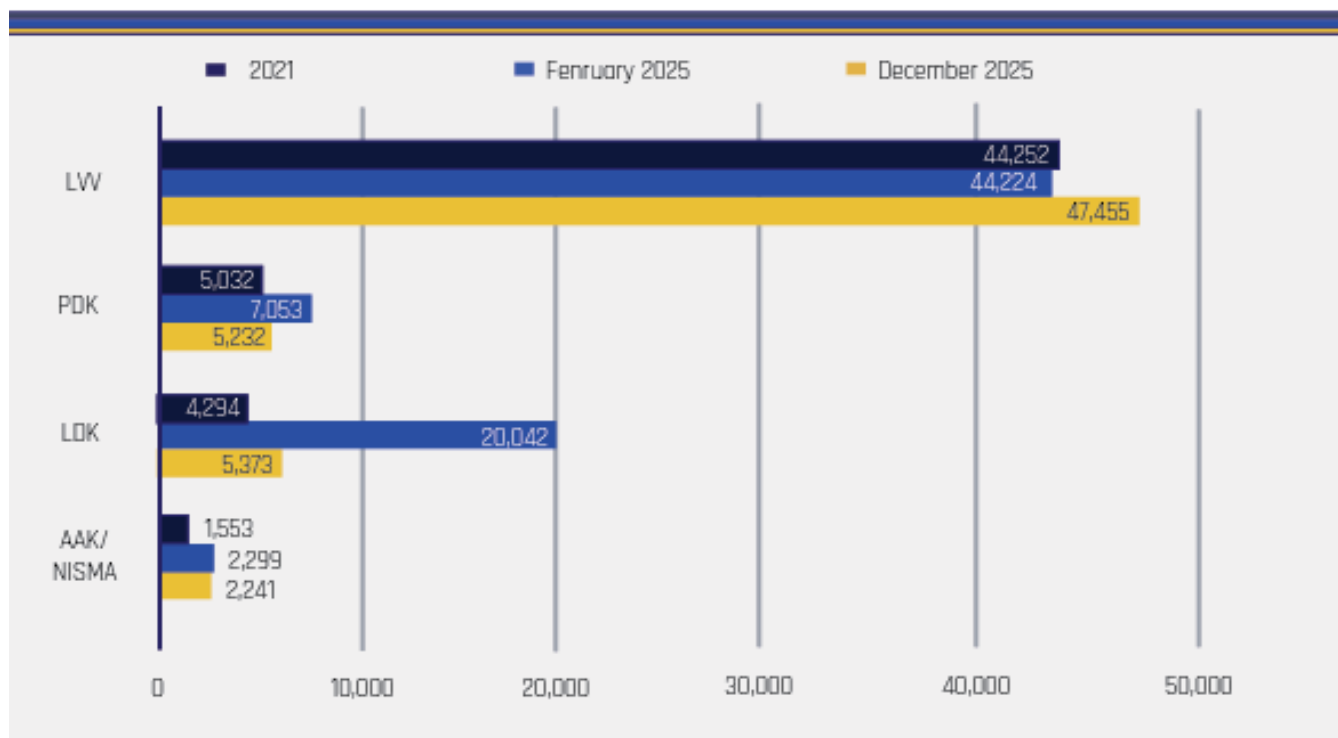


Table 9. Overall results of Voting Outside Kosovo by political entity, 2021-2025

In December 2025, this trend continued, but with several important changes. LVV increased both its postal votes and its votes at diplomatic missions, receiving 33,556 postal votes and 13,899 votes at diplomatic missions. Meanwhile, LDK and PDK declined in both forms of voting compared with February. AAK and Nisma, which in February were part of the AAK/Nisma coalition, ran separately in December; together, they maintained almost the same level of support, with AAK receiving the larger share of the votes.

This breakdown shows that in-person voting at diplomatic missions created a new and important channel of participation for the diaspora, but did not replace postal voting. On the contrary, postal voting remained the dominant form, while diplomatic missions served as an additional option, especially in countries where diaspora communities are more concentrated and have easier access to embassies or consulates.

Political Entities	2021		February 2025		December 2025	
	Postal votes	Diplomatic mission	Postal Votes	Diplomatic mission	Postal votes	Diplomatic mission
LVV	44,252	n/a	31,963	12,261	33,556	13,899
PDK	5,032	n/a	5,878	1,175	4,259	973
LDK	4,294	n/a	18,933	1,109	4,611	762
AAK/NISMA	n/a	n/a	2,000	299	n/a	n/a
AAK	1,112	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,801	255
NISMA	441	n/a	n/a	n/a	149	36

Table 10. Results of Voting Outside Kosovo by voting method: postal voting and voting at diplomatic missions, 2021-2025

TOP 20 MOST-VOTED CANDIDATES

Data on the 20 most-voted candidates show that the diaspora vote in 2025 remained largely concentrated among candidates of Lëvizja Vetëvendosje. In both electoral cycles, Albin Kurti and Glauk Konjufca led with the highest number of votes from abroad, also recording increases in the December 2025 elections. Candidates such as Albulena Haxhiu, Hekuran Murati, Donika Gërvalla-Schwarz, and Ejup Maqedonci also recorded notable increases, indicating consolidated diaspora support for a number of LVV candidates.

By contrast, candidates of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) saw a significant decline in diaspora votes, including Lumir Abdixhiku, Doarsa Kica-Xhelili, and Kujtim Shala. Declines were also recorded among some candidates from other parties, although at different levels.

Overall, the data show that the diaspora vote had a significant impact on the electoral strength of individual candidates, reflecting a high concentration of diaspora support around LVV candidates in both electoral processes and notable changes in political support between the February and December 2025 elections.

Candidate	Elections February 2021 Total Votes	Diaspora votes (% compared with total votes)	Elections February 2025 Total Votes*	Diaspora votes (% compared with total votes)	Elections December 2025 Total Votes	Diaspora votes (% compared with total votes)
Albin Kurti	n/a*	n/a	337,791	41,300 (12.23%)	403,521	44,095 (10.93%)
Glauk Konjufca	200,646	39,192 (12.31%)	264,407	36,329 (13.74%)	318,459	39,192 (12.31%)
Lumir Abdixhiku	25,267	910 (3.60%)	146,401	18,319 (12.51%)	88,207	4,101 (4.65%)
Faton Peci	25,284	2,548 (10.08%)	133,987	22,860 (17.06%)	n/a	n/a
Hekuran Murati	41,172	6,342 (15.40%)	131,323	22,983 (17.50%)	171,622	24,517 (14.29%)
Albulena Haxhiu	n/a	n/a	125,722	21,814 (17.35%)	174,456	26,993 (15.47%)
Xhelal Sveçla	10,359	1,493 (14.41%)	122,407	23,096 (18.87%)	138,423	21,140 (15.27%)
Donika Gërvalla-Schwarz	71,722	15,234 (21.24%)	113,239	20,335 (17.96%)	153,271	22,401 (14.61%)
Bedri Hamza	23,976	1,537 (6.41%)	98,415	6,429 (6.53%)	161,737	4,696 (2.90%)
Avni Dehari	51,126	6,401 (12.52%)	91,638	12,004 (13.10%)	108,083	11,463 (10.61%)
Mimoza Kusari Lila	53,618	10,906 (20.34%)	85,737	14,088 (16.43%)	99,390	13,172 (13.25%)
Arben Vitia	107,858	16,664 (15.45%)	71,074	13,329 (18.76%)	67,541	10,114 (14.98%)
Ejup Maqedonci	n/a	n/a	65,056	10,843 (16.67%)	98,093	15,177 (15.47%)
Doarsa Kica Xhelili*	10,609	737 (6.95%)	63,164	10,565 (16.73%)	44,170	2,624 (5.94%)
Kujtim Shala	32,703	2,083 (6.37%)	58,817	12,490 (21.24%)	40,983	2,600 (6.34%)
Saranda Bagujevi	26,389	3,769 (14.28%)	48,299	8,170 (16.91%)	51,268	7,407 (14.45%)
Edona Lialloshi	n/a	n/a	44,844	7,987 (17.81%)	44,395	8,238 (18.56%)
Mefail Bajajnovci	18,794	1,681 (8.94%)	42,340	7,420 (17.52%)	41,585	6,390 (15.36%)
Armend Muja	43,982	9910 (22.53%)	34,455	9,331 (27.08%)	38,538	8,567 (22.23%)
Hysen Çekaj	n/a	n/a	23,539	12,098 (51.40%)	n/a	n/a

The top 20 candidates most voted in the diaspora are based on the regular elections of February 2025.

*n/a" in the original table refers to candidates who were not part of the list of candidates for deputy in the February 2021 and December 2025 elections.

Doarsa Kica-Xhelili ran with Lëvizja Vetëvendosje in the February 2021 elections, while in the two 2025 elections she was part of the list of the Democratic League of Kosovo.

Table 11. Top 20 most-voted candidates in the diaspora

MAIN CHALLENGES IN ORGANIZATION, ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY

The diaspora voting process in the 2025 elections was generally assessed as orderly and without major violations that would have undermined the integrity of the results. However, at different stages of the process – from voter registration, determination of polling centres, in-person and postal voting, to the counting of votes – several procedural uncertainties and delays in public information were identified. These created concerns among voters outside Kosovo and among organizations monitoring the process.

Determination of polling centres at diplomatic missions. One of the main issues related to the list of polling centres was the number of polling stations and the maximum voter capacity. The CEC decision was met with dissatisfaction by part of the diaspora, especially in countries where in-person voting was not enabled. GERMIN requested clarification from the CEC and MFAD regarding the selection criteria. The CEC clarified that the assessment was made in cooperation with MFAD and on the basis of technical criteria, while MFAD did not respond to the request for public information. This raised concerns about institutional transparency in a process that directly affects the voting rights of citizens from the diaspora.

Uncertainties regarding postal boxes outside Kosovo. In the 9 February elections, concerns were also raised about the selection and administration of CEC postal boxes abroad. In Germany, diaspora organizations raised concerns because the published address for sending ballots was not a diplomatic facility or a state post office, but a private postal branch. The CEC clarified that postal boxes had been opened with the assistance of MFAD and that the legislation does not set specific criteria for the type of post office or postal box. Nevertheless, this case showed the need for clearer public communication regarding the security and administration of postal addresses.

Political and legal disputes concerning the integrity of postal voting. After the postal votes were counted in the 9 February 2025 elections, public allegations were raised regarding manipulation of postal votes in favour of LDK, linked mainly to large differences between the votes received by certain candidates through postal voting and votes received at diplomatic missions. LVV filed a complaint with ECAP, requesting the annulment of 18,933 LDK postal votes, the repetition of postal voting, and the removal of certain candidates of this entity from the list. ECAP rejected the complaint as unfounded, while the Supreme Court later rejected the appeal against ECAP's decision as ungrounded. Although these allegations were not confirmed by the competent electoral and judicial bodies, the case highlighted the importance of a more detailed audit of postal voting, particularly at the level of candidates, countries, and voting channels. Large differences between postal voting and in-person voting should not automatically be treated as evidence of manipulation, but they should be subject to post-election institutional analysis in order to strengthen public trust in the integrity of the process.

Accreditation of diaspora observers. Although the CEC enabled electronic applications for observers for the first time, the instructions on the portal were not updated and the platform did not offer a clear option to distinguish whether the observer would be deployed inside or outside Kosovo. In addition, badges were distributed very close to election day, creating practical difficulties for organizations that had observers at diplomatic missions. In the future, the platform should include a separate category for diaspora observers, while badges should be

issued earlier or replaced with electronic verification methods.

Transport and collection of election materials. Because of delays in tendering procedures for postal services, the CEC had to use alternative solutions for transporting election materials, involving its own officials and the assistance of MFAD. Although this was done to guarantee continuity and security of the process, the change in procedure was not communicated sufficiently in advance, creating public uncertainty. Regarding this issue, in the 9 February elections the CEC issued a public clarification. In future elections, especially in regular election cases, logistical service planning should be completed earlier, or longer-term contracts should be concluded for services valid for up to four years.

Non-unified instructions for commissioners. During observation of in-person voting in several diplomatic missions, GERMIN noted that instructions for commissioners were not always uniform. In certain cases, there were different interpretations regarding voting with expired documents, the possibility of postal voting after registration for in-person voting, and the reporting of security seals. This shows the need for more standardized instructions and clearer training for commissioners and heads of polling centres outside Kosovo.

Delays at the Counting and Results Centre. The process in the CRC during both elections was characterized by considerable delays, as the assessment and counting of diaspora votes took a long time. During monitoring, it was observed that staff training and the counting process were taking place in parallel, indicating insufficient preparation. Nevertheless, a positive aspect was the installation of monitoring cameras at worktables in the CRC, which increased transparency and facilitated observation of the process.

Disputes over deadlines for receiving postal votes. In the December 2025 elections, complaints were filed regarding the acceptance of certain postal ballots after 29 December. These complaints were rejected by ECAP and the Supreme Court mainly for procedural reasons and because the relevant decisions had not been challenged in a timely manner. The case shows that postal voting requires clearer public communication on deadlines, administrative decisions, and appeal remedies, so that political entities and voters have legal certainty regarding the treatment of ballots from outside Kosovo.

Overall, these cases did not undermine the integrity of the elections, but they showed that the organization of Voting Outside Kosovo requires more transparency, earlier public communication, standardized procedures, and better logistical planning. These improvements are necessary to increase the confidence of diaspora voters and to guarantee equal participation in future electoral cycles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

“1. Clarify the location of polling centres outside Kosovo.

The law should clearly determine whether in-person voting may be organized only in diplomatic missions or also in other authorized spaces. Without such clarity, every future process may produce similar disputes. If the possibility of using alternative premises is to be considered, the process should be developed by taking into account the requests and needs of the diaspora. Operational implications in host countries should also be considered.

2. Clearly divide responsibilities between the CEC and MFAD

The CEC and MFAD should have a clearer division of responsibilities in the organization of Voting Outside Kosovo. The CEC should retain full authority over the electoral, administrative, and operational aspects of the process, including procedures, voter lists, the organization of polling stations, instructions for commissioners, accreditation of observers, and administration of election materials. CEC-MFAD cooperation should be regulated through a clear operational protocol defining roles, deadlines, responsibilities, and the communication chain for every phase of Voting Outside Kosovo.

“3. Apply transparently and periodically review the quota for in-person diaspora voting

With the update to the Regulation on Registration and Voting Outside Kosovo, dated 27 April 2026 (No. 01/2026), the CEC established a minimum threshold of 50 successfully registered voters as a condition for organizing in-person voting at a polling centre outside Kosovo. This is a positive step toward clarifying the criteria for opening polling centres at diplomatic missions. However, the implementation of this quota should be transparent and communicated in a timely manner. In the future, the 50-voter threshold should be periodically assessed in relation to the geographic distribution of the diaspora, the capacities of diplomatic missions, and voters' access to polling centres.

4. Improve public information for voters outside Kosovo

The CEC, in cooperation with diplomatic missions and diaspora organizations, should develop clearer and earlier information campaigns for diaspora voters. Public information should include registration deadlines, voting methods, required documents, application criteria, and the most common reasons for rejection. This would help reduce technical errors during applications and increase citizens' trust in the process.

“5. Create a permanent Voting Outside Kosovo unit within the CEC

The CEC should establish a permanent unit for Voting Outside Kosovo, which would continuously deal with planning, coordination with diplomatic missions, voter information, standardization of procedures, and post-election analysis. One of the main tasks of this unit should be the preparation of a separate report after every electoral process, covering applications, rejections, voting methods, postal boxes, transport, rejected envelopes, invalid votes, and complaints.

6. Standardize procedures and strengthen operational planning

The CEC should standardize instructions for commissioners, observers, and staff involved in voting outside Kosovo, so that the rules are applied uniformly across all diplomatic missions and at the Counting and Results Centre. This includes clear instructions on voter documents, voting procedures, reporting of security materials, accreditation of observers, and management of the process at the CRC.

At the same time, the CEC should avoid dependence on new procurements for every election, especially for the transport and collection of election materials from the diaspora. Given that elections in Kosovo are often held earlier than the regular four-year cycle, the CEC should consider concluding multi-year framework agreements with reliable international logistics operators, such as DHL or similar operators. A four-year agreement would enable a faster response, greater transport security, and avoidance of improvisation in cases of early elections.

Security at the CRC should also be strengthened, particularly in relation to observer access, contact with staff entering data into the system, and protection of personnel from possible pressure during the counting process. These recommendations aim to improve the access, transparency, and reliability of Voting Outside Kosovo. The experience of the 2025 elections shows that, in addition to legal changes, the process requires earlier planning, clearer communication with the diaspora, and more sustainable institutional procedures, especially in cases of early elections.

“

THE REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AIM TO STRENGTHEN LEGAL CLARITY, INSTITUTIONAL TRANSPARENCY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES OF VOTING OUTSIDE KOSOVO THROUGH STANDARDIZING PROCEDURES, IMPROVING PUBLIC INFORMATION, MORE EFFICIENT OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND ESTABLISHING PERMANENT MECHANISMS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT OF DIASPORA VOTING.

CONCLUSIONS

The process of Voting Outside Kosovo in the two electoral cycles of 2025 showed that the diaspora continues to have a high level of interest in participating in elections, but that this interest is directly affected by deadlines, public information, and the ease of procedures. In the regular February 2025 elections, despite the decline in the number of received applications compared with 2021, the number of approved applications increased slightly, showing improvement in the verification process. In the extraordinary December 2025 elections, meanwhile, the number of applications and registered voters outside Kosovo was lower, which should be read in the context of much shorter deadlines and the early nature of the elections.

The legal changes that enabled in-person voting at diplomatic missions and the opening of postal boxes outside Kosovo represent an important step toward expanding diaspora access to the electoral process. However, the 2025 experience showed that new legal possibilities are not sufficient without early planning, clear information, and sustainable organizational capacities. The limited number of polling centres, the exclusion of some countries, uncertainties regarding postal boxes, and instructions that were not always uniform created difficulties for a portion of citizens from the diaspora.

One of the main challenges remained insufficient voter information. Part of the application rejections was linked to incomplete documentation, absence of the required photograph, unreadable documents, or mismatched data. This shows that many problems were not necessarily related to a lack of the right to vote, but to procedural uncertainties and the absence of simple and understandable guidance for voters.'

Observations by local organizations also confirm that, although Voting Outside Kosovo remained a technically sensitive segment, its administration did not produce major disputes that would have undermined the result. This makes it important that criticism of the process focus on systemic improvement – legal clarity, planning, information, and standardization – rather than on delegitimizing the result.

Overall, Voting Outside Kosovo in 2025 was conducted without major irregularities that would have undermined the credibility of the results. Nevertheless, the two electoral processes demonstrated that the organization of diaspora voting requires greater transparency, procedural standardization, and better institutional planning. Improvements in information, logistics, observer accreditation, transport of materials, and the functioning of polling centres are necessary to guarantee a more accessible, more reliable, and more inclusive process for Kosovo citizens in the diaspora.

GERMIN is a non-governmental organization dedicated to empowering and connecting the Albanian diaspora worldwide. Leveraging innovation, technology, and global networks, GERMIN works to strengthen the role of the diaspora in the social, economic, and democratic development of their countries of origin. Acting as a bridge between diaspora communities and local institutions, the organization fosters cooperation, promotes knowledge exchange, and supports initiatives that bring about sustainable development and long-term impact.

Advocacy and Diplomacy

This program focuses on empowering the diaspora through advocacy and policy engagement. GERMIN strengthens ties between the diaspora and local institutions, promoting its participation in decision-making processes. Key initiatives include policy development projects, the Diaspora Speaks Conference, regional youth fellowships, and election monitoring to ensure diaspora voting rights and representation.

Engagement of Diaspora Professionals

GERMIN enables the transfer of knowledge and expertise from diaspora professionals to their countries of origin. Through networking platforms, mentoring and short-term engagements, the program connects professionals with institutions and organizations in Kosovo. It includes partnerships and projects that support women in politics, entrepreneurship and capacity development in various sectors, directly contributing to socio-economic development.

Diaspora Philanthropy

This program promotes structured and impactful giving from the diaspora. In collaboration with the Global Albanians Foundation, GERMIN enables transparent and efficient fundraising for non-profit organizations. It helps to direct diaspora contributions towards social and economic development projects, reducing barriers to cross-border donations.

Youth and Education

GERMIN works to connect education with the needs of the labor market by engaging young people from Kosovo and the diaspora. OriginAL is the flagship program that offers young Albanian diaspora members a comprehensive educational, cultural and volunteer experience in their countries of origin, helping them reconnect with their roots and build long-term relationships.

Diaspora Investments

This program aims to transform diaspora remittances into strategic investments that drive long-term economic growth. GERMIN supports investment promotion, business networking and public-private partnerships. Through forums, municipal initiatives and targeted projects, it connects diaspora investors with local opportunities, fostering job creation and sustainable development.