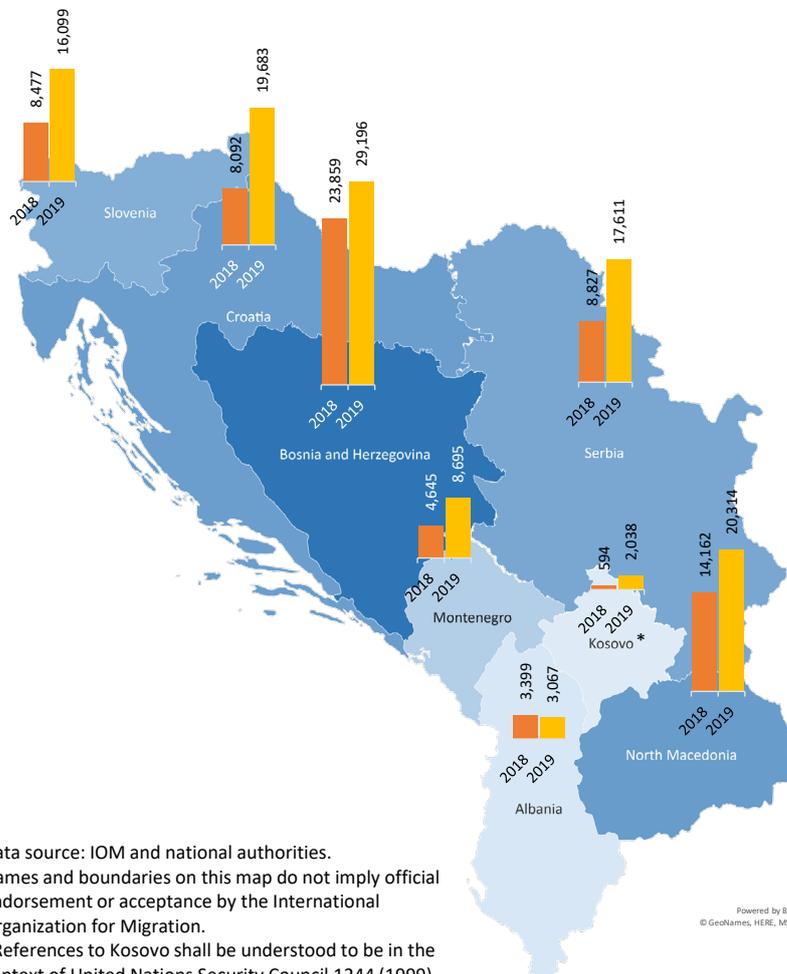
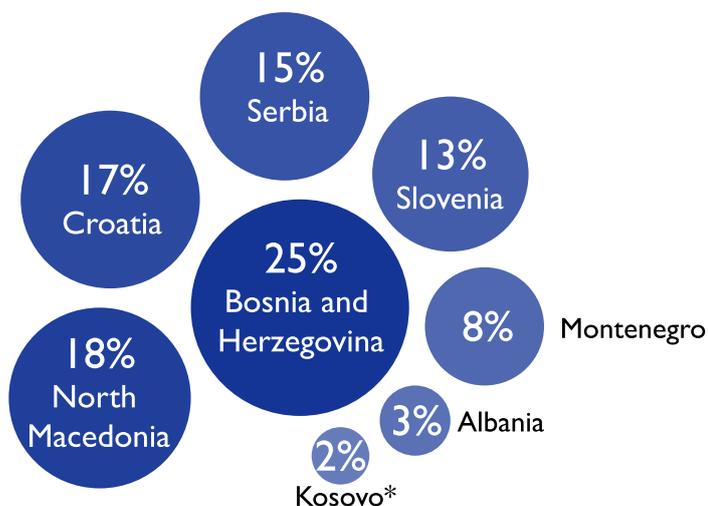


This paper provides an overview of the mixed migratory trends across the Western Balkan region in 2019 comparing them to the years before. While the total number of official registrations and interceptions of migrants by the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and Kosovo¹ has increased from 2018 to 2019 these summary figures should be read as an estimation of yearly trends only, as some migrants can be apprehended and registered in multiple countries while others can pass through the Western Balkans region undetected.

Registered irregular migrants in 2018 and 2019



Proportion of apprehensions and registrations in 2019 per country or area



Most countries or areas included in this overview reported an increase in detected irregular migrants in 2019 compared to 2018: Bosnia and Herzegovina (29,537 in 2019 vs. 23,848 in 2018), Montenegro (8,695 in 2019 vs. 4,645 in 2018), Serbia (17,611 in 2019 vs. 8,827 in 2018), Slovenia (16,099 in 2019 vs. 8,577 in 2018) and Kosovo¹ (2,038 in 2019 vs. 594 in 2018). There was a significant increase in detections in the region in the fourth quarter of 2019, when more registered irregular migrants were reported by authorities in Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo¹ than any other quarter since DTM activities began in these countries or areas in 2016 and 2017.

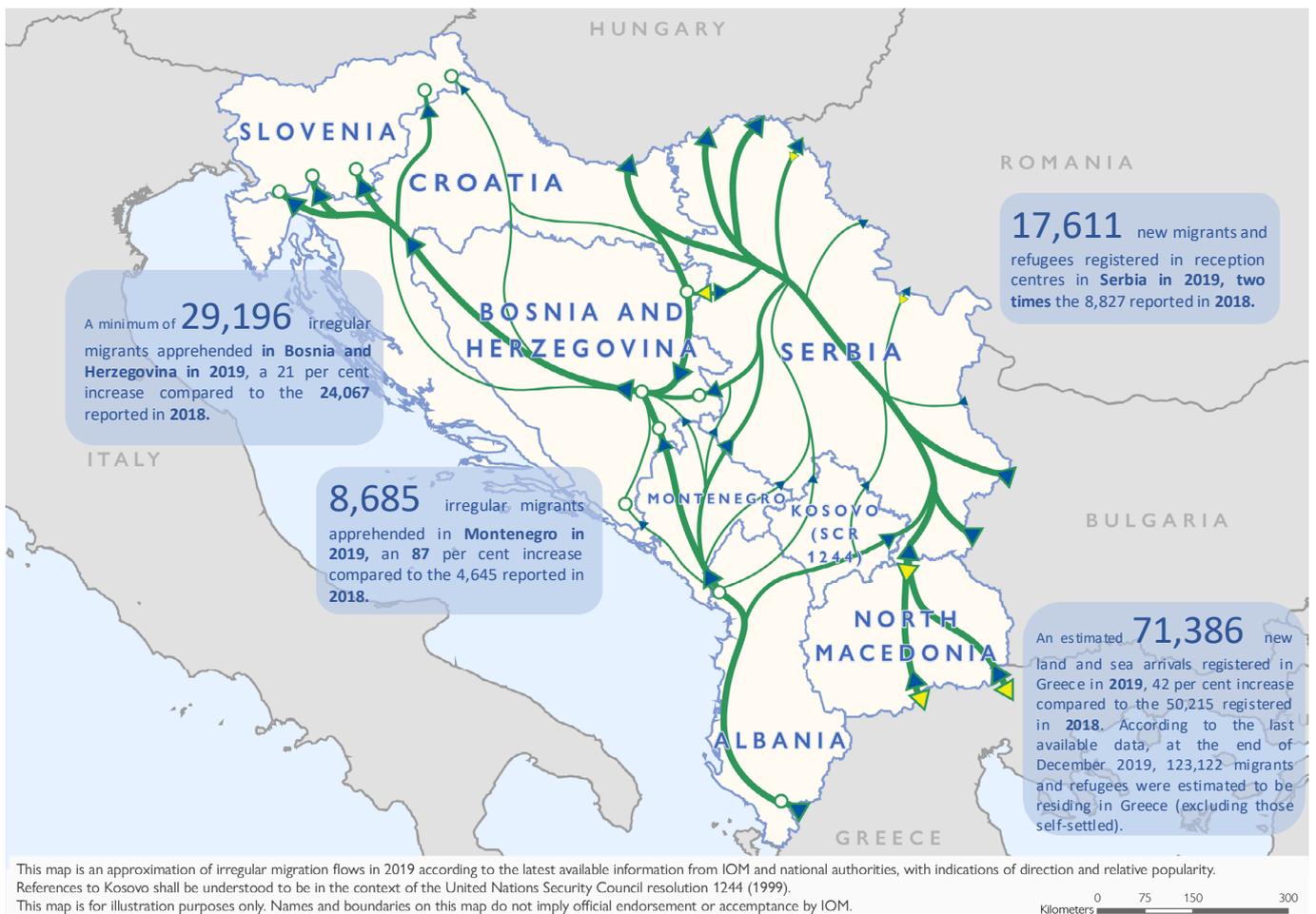
¹ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

ARRIVALS AND TRANSITS BETWEEN 2015 AND 2019

Arrivals to Europe in 2015 and during the first quarter of 2016 were much more frequent as the EU-Turkey Statement only came into effect in March 2016. In 2015 there were 1,059,044 registered arrivals to Europe, this sharply decreased to 390,456 in 2016 and has decreased each year since (188,372 in 2017, 147,683 in 2018, 128,536 in 2019). Nonetheless, the routes and the frequency of migrants and refugees registered in the Western Balkans have been changing over the years. In 2016, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and North Macedonia registered 95 per cent of migrants who transited in the region, while in 2018,

Bosnia and Herzegovina reported the most registrations. Additionally, noteworthy increases in registrations in Albania and Montenegro between mid-2017 and the end of 2019, countries that were not affected by the migratory flows in 2016, represent an indication of changes in the transit routes taken during that period. In 2019, coinciding with the rising number of registrations on the Eastern Mediterranean route to Europe via Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria, significant increases in the number of registered migrants were recorded in most of the countries or areas in the Western Balkans.

Main transit routes identified in the region in 2019





Relocation of migrants from the unofficial camp Vučjak to Canton Sarajevo (TRC Ušivak and TRC Blažuj) in mid-December 2019. IOM Bosnia and Herzegovina 2019

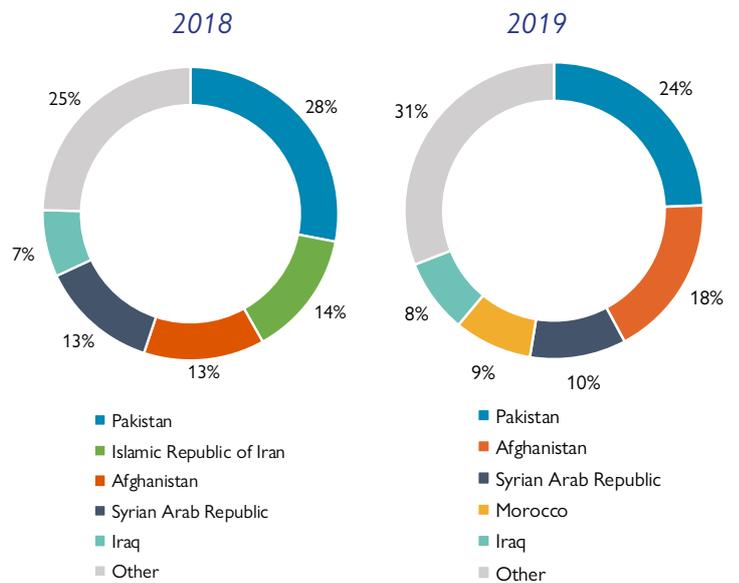


Relocation of migrants from the unofficial camp Vučjak to Canton Sarajevo (TRC Ušivak and TRC Blažuj) in mid-December 2019. IOM Bosnia and Herzegovina 2019

REGISTERED NATIONALITIES²

More than a half (53%) of all registered migrants in the Western Balkans were nationals of just three countries – Pakistan (26%), Afghanistan (16%) and the Syrian Arab Republic (11%). On a country level, Pakistan was the most frequently reported origin country by migrants registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia. Meanwhile, nationals of Afghanistan were the most frequent of those registered in North Macedonia (34%) and Serbia (35%), while nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic were the most frequent amongst those registered in Albania (30%) and Kosovo¹ (45%). In Montenegro, nationals of Morocco were the most frequent (34%) and in Slovenia, nationals of Algeria were the most frequent (14%). These differences in main nationalities among the registered migrants in different Balkan countries indicate the variety of sub-routes taken by different nationalities while heading towards Western Europe. Overall, the profile of migrants and refugees transiting these countries has shifted since 2018: The most significant differences are the increase of nationals of Afghanistan (7,369 in 2018, 16,628 in 2019) and Morocco (1,080 in 2018, 7,919 in 2019) along with the decrease of nationals of the Islamic Republic of Iran (7,700 in 2018, 3,293 in 2019). The spike in registrations of Iranian nationals in 2018 can be partially explained by the Visa free regime between Serbia and the Islamic Republic of Iran introduced at the beginning of 2018 and cancelled in late summer of the same year.

Nationality breakdown – top 5 nationalities in 2018 and 2019



Data source: National authorities and IOM.

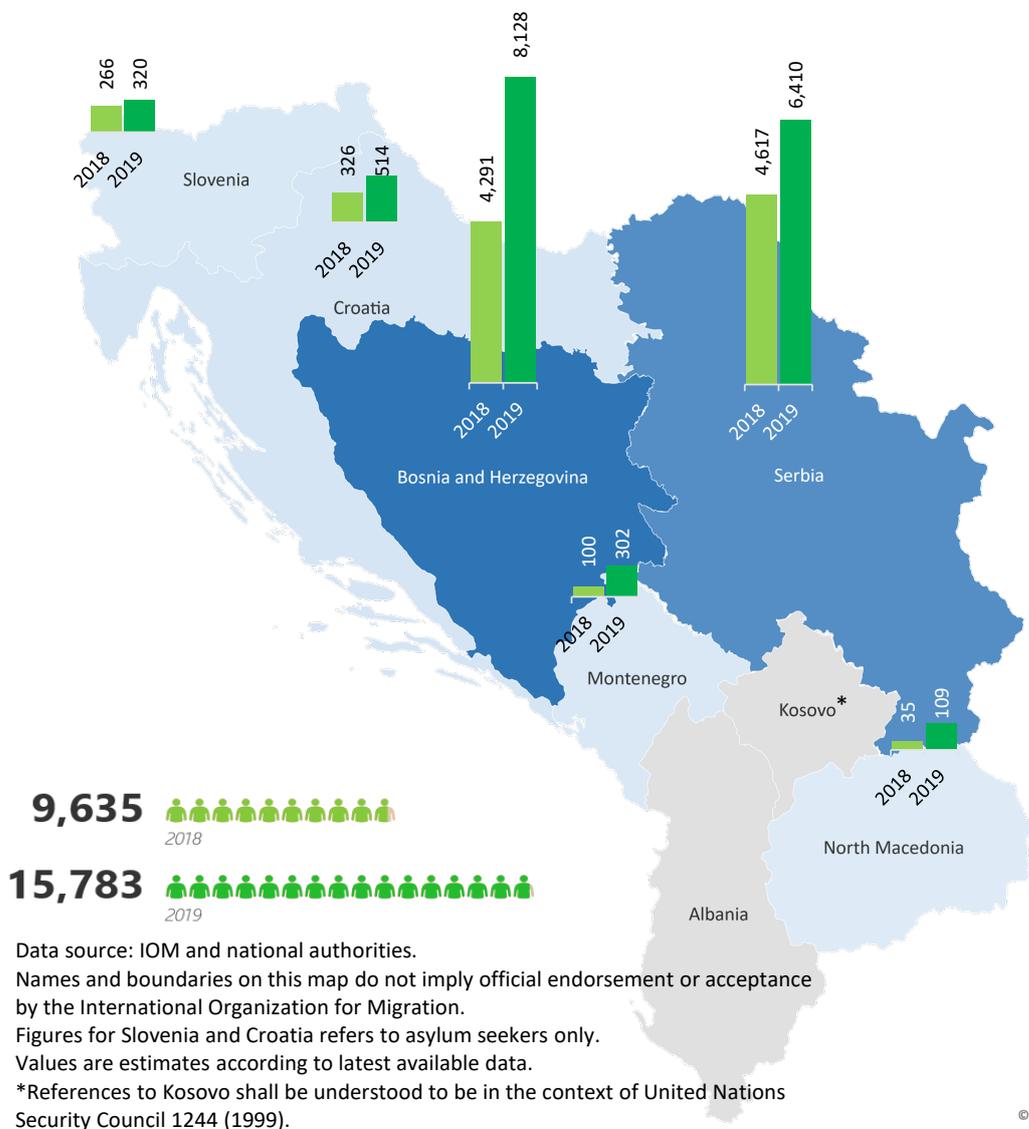
² While the nationality breakdown is provided by the official authorities, in many of the countries, nationalities are based on the initial self-declaration by the migrants.

MIGRANTS PRESENCE³

At the end of 2019, an estimated 15,783 migrants and asylum seekers were residing in different reception facilities across the region. Of these, 92 per cent were accommodated in centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina (8,128) and Serbia (6,410) combined. Based on information from IOM field staff, the situation in the reception facilities changes almost daily, indicating that, irrespectively of their status in the country, migrants and refugees use the existing reception system mostly as a short-term

stop when planning the next leg of their journey to Western European countries. Looking at the overall available figure, there were 64 per cent more migrants and asylum seekers in the region at the end of December 2019 when compared to the estimated 9,635 recorded at the end of 2018, a trend that might be partially explained by increasing flows and increased time of stay in the region.

Accommodated migrants and asylum seekers at the end of 2018 and 2019



³ Note that the data on number of accommodated migrants and asylum seekers in centres is only a snapshot as of the reporting day and does not show the total number of individuals who passed or were registered in the reception facilities throughout the month.