

MIXED MIGRATION FLOWS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Compilation of Available
Data and Information

May 2020



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

DTM





TRC Borići, Bihać; © IOM Bosnia and Herzegovina, November 2018

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HIGHLIGHTS

A total of 3,123¹ migrants and refugees arrived in Europe through different land and sea routes in May 2020, which is 88 per cent more than the 1,658 registered in the previous month (April 2020), 2 times less than the 7,360 sea and land arrivals registered in May last year, and 4 times less than the 13,043 arrivals registered in May 2018, and almost 9 times less than the 26,585 reported in May 2017.

Arrivals registered in Europe in the first five months of 2020 were **23,422**, which is 24 per cent less than arrivals registered in the same period last year (30,924) and 31 per cent less than arrivals between January and May of 2018 (44,924).

There were 1,726 registered on the **Central Mediterranean route** (55%), arriving by sea to Italy and Malta, in May 2020. Another 1,105 arrivals registered on the **Western Mediterranean route** (35%) leading to Spain² in the same period and 292 were registered in Bulgaria and Greece through the **Eastern Mediterranean route** (only 9% of total registered arrivals in Europe). Hence, this is the second time since February 2019 that Eastern Mediterranean route is surpassed by both the Western and Central Mediterranean routes as the main route taken by migrants and refugees travelling to Europe by sea and land. In the same reporting period of the last year (May 2019), the Eastern Mediterranean route was recorded as the most active route with 4,230 arrivals (58% of the total), followed by the Western Mediterranean route with 1,972 registered arrivals (27%) and the Central Mediterranean route with 1,158 registered arrivals (16%). In May 2018, 40 per cent of all arrivals in Europe were registered on the Eastern Mediterranean route (5,143), while arrivals on the on Central Mediterranean were 3,963 (30%) and on Western Mediterranean route 3,937 (30%).

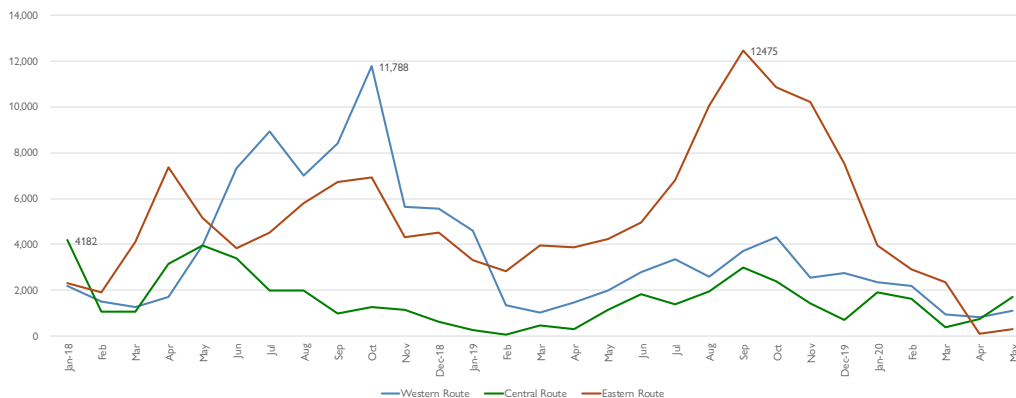
Italian authorities reported 1,654 arrivals in May 2020. Arrivals in this period have significantly increased in comparison with April 2020 (671) and were more than two times higher than the 782 arrivals registered in May 2019, but were almost three times less than the 3,963 reported arrivals to Italy in May 2018. The most frequently registered nationalities³ of migrants arriving to Italy by sea in 2020 so far were Bangladesh (19%) and Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia (13% each), followed by Sudan (8%), Algeria (7%), Morocco (6%) and other African and Southern Asian countries. According to official data, about 38 per cent of all arrivals in Italy departed from Tunisia, 36 per cent departed from Libya and the rest departed from Algeria (22%), Greece (3%) and Albania (1%). In addition, there were 72 registered arrivals in **Malta** in May 2020, which is slightly more than the 66 arrivals registered the previous month (April 2020). According to available data from national authorities, Sudan was the most frequently reported nationality at arrival in 2020 so far (32%), followed by Bangladesh (16%) and Somalia (14%). Arrivals to Malta are reported to have departed from Libya.

A total of 1,105 migrants and refugees were registered entering **Spain** in May 2020, 34 per cent more than the previous month (824 in April 2020), 43 per cent less than the 1,972 registered in May 2019 and about four times less than the 3,937 registered in the same period of 2018. Among the total arrivals to Spain in 2020, 83 per cent arrived by sea: this includes 34 per cent of total arrivals to the Canary Islands, 49 per cent to the peninsular coasts of the region of Murcia and of the Comunidad Valenciana and to the Balearic Islands and 1 per cent to the autonomous city of Ceuta. The remaining 17 per cent arrived by land to the autonomous cities of Melilla (15%) and Ceuta (2%) on the north coast of Africa. According to the available data, provided by the Spanish Ministry of Interior, the most common country of origin among the arrivals by sea in 2020 was Algeria (30%), followed by Morocco (13%), Guinea (12%), Mali (10%), Côte d'Ivoire (9%), Senegal (6%) and others.

Hellenic Authorities reported 228 new arrivals in May 2020, which represents an increase compared to previous month of April when 77 new arrivals were registered. May arrivals in Greece are about 90 per cent less than the 2,314 registered in March 2020, about 93 per cent less than the 3,153 registered in May 2019, and 21 times less than the 4,802 reported in May 2018. According to available data,⁴ the most frequently registered nationality of arrivals to Greece by sea in 2020 so far was Afghanistan (39%) followed by the Syrian Arab Republic (25%), Somalia (6%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (5%), and others. Authorities in **Bulgaria** registered 64 new arrivals in May 2020, which is more than three times the arrivals registered in April (20), and about five times less of the arrivals registered in May 2019 (318).

In addition to first-arrival countries, after a significant decrease of the apprehensions registered in the previous reporting periods (March – April 2020), authorities in countries and areas in the **Western Balkans** region reported an increase in monthly registrations of new migrants and refugees. Hence, reported apprehensions in May 2020 were 4,011 which is almost three times the 1,576 reported in April 2020, almost three times less as compared to the 9,827 reported in May last year, and about 33 per cent less than the 6,001 reported in May 2018. Serbia (6,076), North Macedonia (5,374) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (5,047) represent together 55 per cent of all 29,778 arrivals registered in the region since the beginning of 2020. Afghanistan continues to be the most frequently reported nationality among migrants and refugees intercepted transiting the Western Balkans recorded in May 2020, which has been the case each month since October 2019, and particularly in Montenegro (49%), Croatia (27%) and Serbia (24%). Nationals of Pakistan are also prominent among those recorded transiting the region, particularly in Croatia (31%) and Slovenia (24%). Morocco nationals are the third most frequently registered nationality in the Western Balkans by the end of May 2020, and the most common nationality of those registered are registered in Albania (48%) and Slovenia (30%).

Figure 1: Arrivals to Europe via the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes by month, 2018-2020



1 Data on arrivals to Cyprus in 2020 are not available at the time of closing this report. Data on land arrivals to Greece are not available for the month of May.
2 Arrivals to Spain include arrivals to the Canary Islands.
3 The information on nationality breakdown provided in this report is based on the nationality declared by migrants as reported by the national authorities.

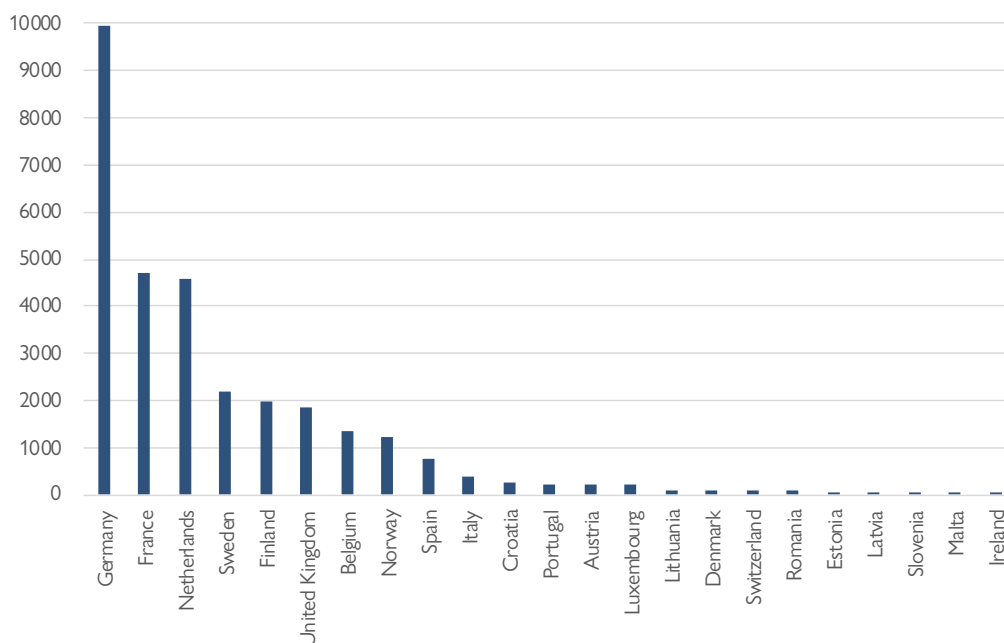
4 Data on nationalities at arrivals in Greece are not available for May 2020.

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

EU – Turkey Statement and the Eastern Mediterranean route

In response to the arrival of almost one million migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa through the Eastern Mediterranean route in the second half of 2015 and the first three months of 2016, the European Union (EU) and Turkey agreed on a plan to end irregular migration flows from Turkey to the EU on 18 March 2016. The document states that from 20 March 2016 all persons who do not have a right to international protection in Greece will be returned to Turkey, based on the Readmission Agreement from 2016 signed between the countries (the whole document is available [here](#)). At the same time, it was agreed to facilitate the resettlement of Syrian refugees from Turkey to many European countries (European Economic Area, EEA). The total number of Syrian refugees resettled so far, between April 2016 and May 2020 is 30,407. No movement took place during April and May 2020 due to mobility restrictions undertaken to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2: Number of Syrian refugees resettled from Turkey to Europe (EEA) between April 2016 and May 2020⁵



A significant decrease in arrivals in Greece was observed starting from the second quarter (April – June) of 2016 until mid-2019. From the 152,617 arrivals in Greece registered in the first quarter of 2016, a drastic drop was registered in the second quarter of 2016 with 7,498 new entries by land and by sea. Arrivals in 2017 were around 8,800 each quarter on average, with the second quarter marking a record low of 6,272 new entries that year. A more sustained trend was observed over 2018, with quarterly arrivals at around 12,500 new entries on average. Arrivals registered in the first half of 2019 (18,448) were 19 per cent lower than in the first half of 2018 (22,899), but a new increase was observed during the third quarter of the year: arrivals between July and September 2019 (26,852) are higher than the totals of the first and second quarter this year (8,162 and 10,286, respectively), and the trend was confirmed in the fourth quarter (26,086). Hence, arrivals in Greece in 2019 (71,386) were higher of arrivals registered in Spain (32,513) and Italy (11,471) for the same year, and represented a 42 per cent increase for registered arrivals in the country when compared to those in 2018 (50,215).

⁵ The figure includes the number of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic assisted by IOM Turkey through the 1:1 resettlement scheme as well as other bilateral programs.

COVID-19 Outbreak

Since it was initially reported on 31 December 2019, the illness known as Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread rapidly across the globe, leading the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare it a pandemic on 11 March 2020. As of 29 May, there were nearly 5.6 million confirmed cases and over 353,300 deaths have been reported globally since the outbreak began. Confirmed cases have been reported in more than 200 countries/territories/areas, with new cases and countries reporting daily.

The unprecedented effect of COVID-19 on global mobility is presently in flux. Some governments and authorities are maintaining existing restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus, while others have begun to ease blanket mobility restrictions and conditions for entry. Globally, registered travel restrictions reached 63,381 at the end of May,⁶ which is about 17 per cent more than the 54,379 restrictions registered at the end of April. In parallel to existing travel restrictions, a total of 174 countries, territories or areas have issued 701 exceptions enabling mobility despite blanket travel restrictions.

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected global mobility in the form of various travel disruptions and restrictions. To better understand how COVID-19 affects global mobility, IOM has developed a global mobility database available at <https://migration.iom.int/> to map and gather data on the locations, status and different restrictions at Points of Entry (PoEs) and internal transit points, globally using a compilation of inputs from multiple sources, including from IOM staff in the field, DTM reports on flow monitoring and mobility tracking as well as from trusted media sources.

With regards to the European Economic Area (EEA), IOM has recorded information on 786 PoEs (i.e. land, sea and air borders) in 29 countries and areas: at the end of May, 22 per cent of the observed PoEs were reported as fully closed, 27 per cent were reported to be partially operational and 31 per cent were fully operational. The status of the remaining 20 per cent of all assessed locations was reported as other.⁷ This is a slight improvement in comparison with the end of April, when 34 per cent of the assessed location in the EEA region were reported as fully closed, 44 per cent were reported to be partially operational and 20 per cent were fully operational.⁸

Policy and Mobility Impacts of COVID-19

Since mid-March, most countries in the Mediterranean region started to implement several measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic including but not limited to border closures and intensified controls at land and sea border points. On April, Italy declared the Italian ports not a Place of Safety during the national emergency declared for 6 months on January in relation to COVID-19⁹ and Malta declared the country could not accommodate the disembarkation of new migrants to the COVID-19 health emergency.¹⁰ Since the beginning of May the Italian Ministry of Interior has mandated the Department of Civil Protection and the Italian Red Cross to manage two rented ferry boats, anchored in harbours' areas in Sicily, where arriving migrants should spend a quarantine period of 14 days before disembarking. During May, Maltese authorities have transferred all rescued migrants during the month of May on four small tourist vessels placed outside the territorial waters for health concerns and allowed the evacuation only of the most vulnerable cases (mostly women and children).¹¹

On 6 May 2020, Spanish authorities reported that its detention centers for irregular migrants (CIEs, *Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros*) were emptied due to the impossibility of organizing repatriations during the pandemic.¹² Also in Italy, the migrant population in administrative detention centres (CPR, *Centri di Permanenza per il Rimpatrio*) decreased to about 200 migrants at the end of May.¹³ On May 19, a "Relaunch" Law Decree¹⁴ has been approved by the Italian government, which includes measures for the regularization of migrants employed in the agricultural and domestic care sector to cope with the lack of seasonal workers who were expected to arrive from abroad during the harvesting season.

While trends on the Eastern Mediterranean route to Europe have substantially decreased since March, arrivals through the Western and Central Mediterranean route increased or kept a sustained level despite the newly imposed mobility restrictions by destination countries and due to other possible contextual factors more linked to improving weather conditions and new developments in countries of transit and departure. In May 2020, although travel restrictions remain generally in place, there has been a slight decrease in the number of travel restrictions, which has been accompanied by an increase in the arrivals across the three routes. Overall, arrivals in Europe as of the end of May 2020 (23,422) are still 24 per cent lower than those registered in the same period last year (30,924).

6 Please see the Impact On Points Of Entry And Other Key Locations Of Internal Mobility Weekly Analysis - 27 May 2020: <https://migration.iom.int/reports/impact-points-entry-and-other-key-locations-internal-mobility-weekly-analysis-27-may-2020?covid-page=1>

7 Please see the IOM's Points of Entry Analysis for the European Economic Area – 28 May: <https://migration.iom.int/reports/covid-19-points-entry-analysis-%E2%80%93-28-may-%E2%80%93-eea?close=true>

8 Please see the IOM's Points of Entry Analysis for the European Economic Area – 30 April: <https://migration.iom.int/reports/covid-19-points-entry-analysis-30-april-eea-region?close=true>

9 See: <https://www.avenire.it/attualita/pagine/italia-porto-non-sicuro-approdo-migranti>

10 See: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/malta-says-it-can-no-longer-rescue-accept-migrants/>

11 Please see the joint statement by IOM and UNHCR on the need to let rescue migrants disembark and receive the appropriate care and health measures: <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-unhcr-urge-european-states-disembark-rescued-migrants-and-refugees-board-captain-morgan>

12 See: <https://elpais.com/espana/2020-05-06/se-vacian-los-centros-de-internamiento-de-extranjeros-por-primera-vez-en-tres-decadas.html>

13 See: <http://www.garantenzionaleprivatiliberta.it/gnpl/resources/cms/documents/98ac859d948502b6b1413523057b4a93.pdf>

14 See: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2020/05/19/20G00052/sg>

OVERVIEW OF ARRIVALS & REGISTERED IRREGULAR APPREHENSIONS

Figure 3: Arrivals in Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta and Bulgaria, January–May, 2017–2020

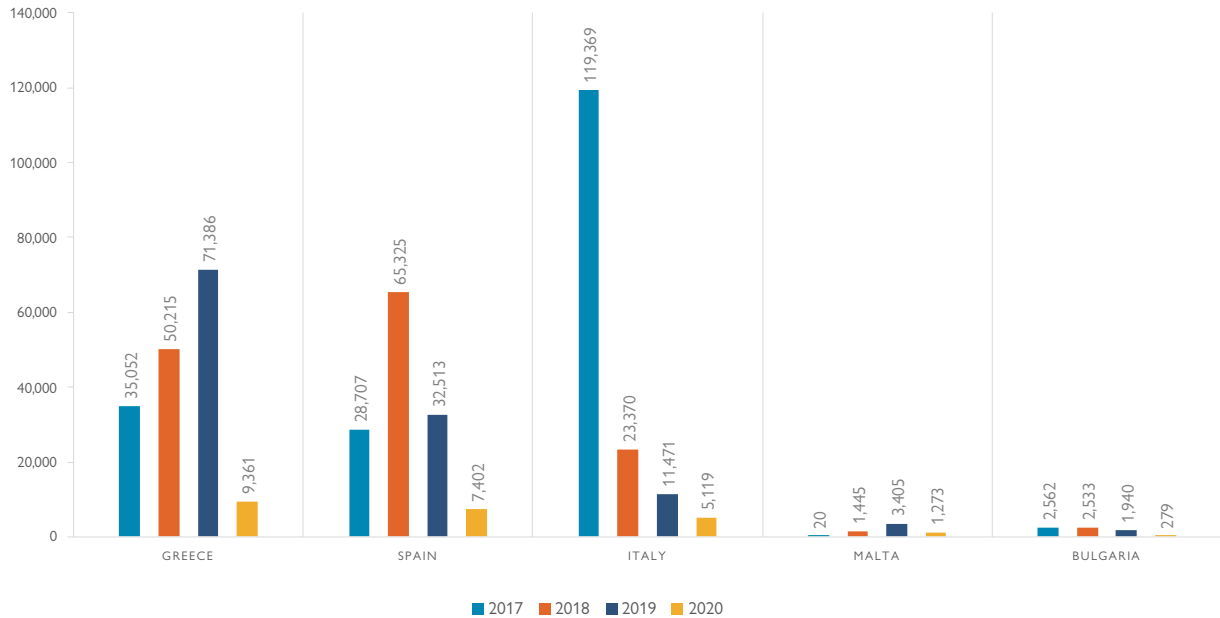
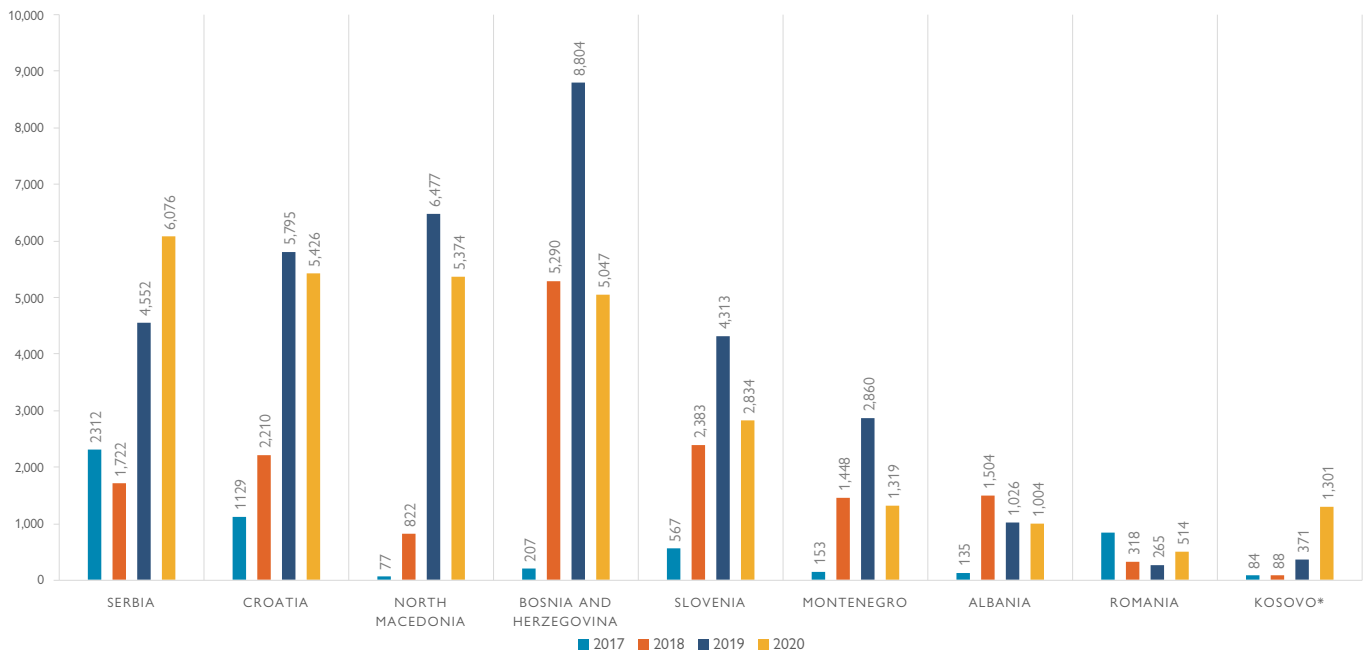


Figure 4: Registered irregular apprehensions in the Western Balkans and other transit countries/areas, January–May, 2017–2020



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

OVERVIEW MAPS

Map 1: Arrivals in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain, January–May 2020

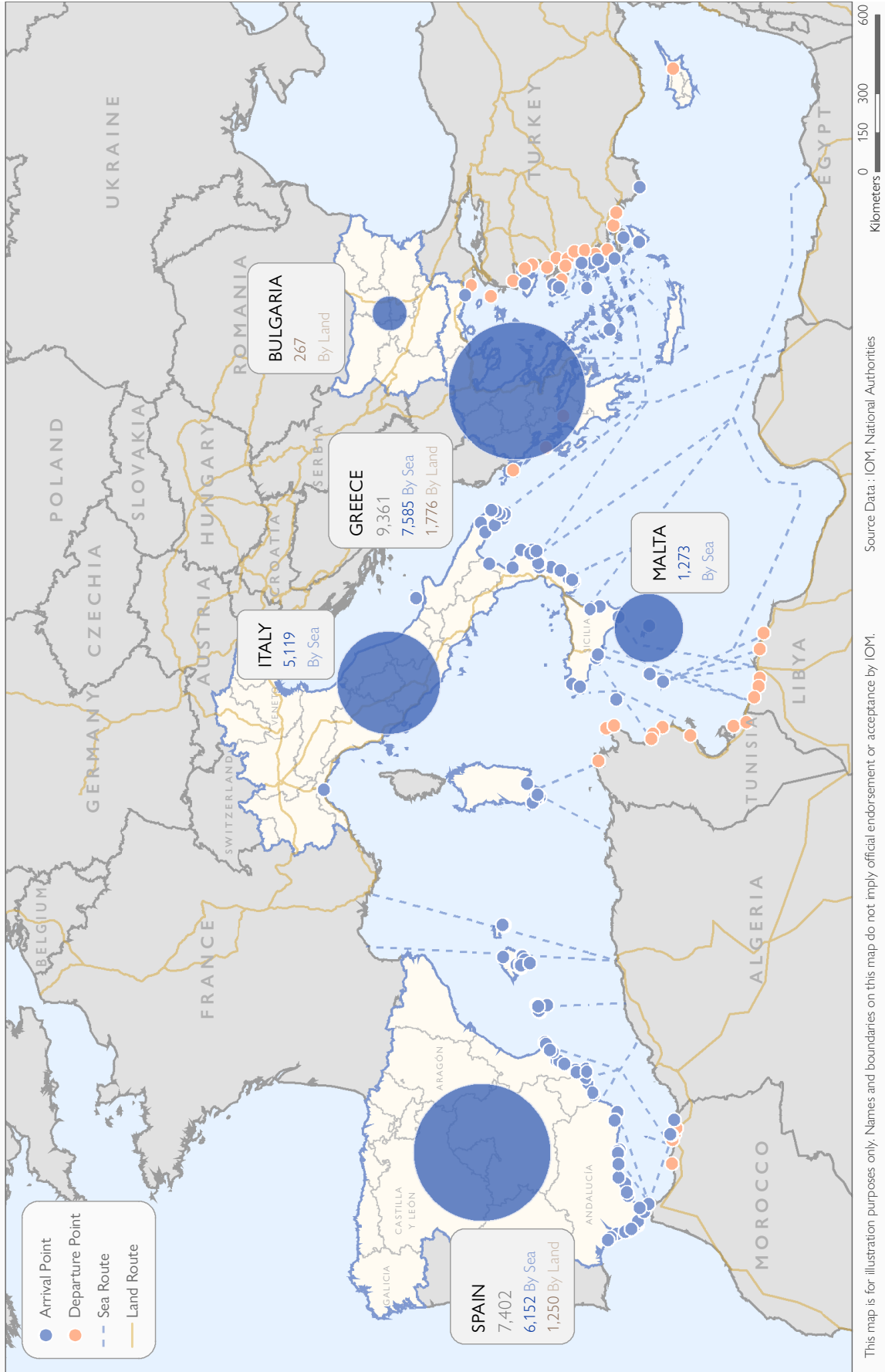
ARRIVALS TO EUROPE

1 January - 31 May 2020

23,422 TOTAL

20,129 By Sea

3,293 By Land



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

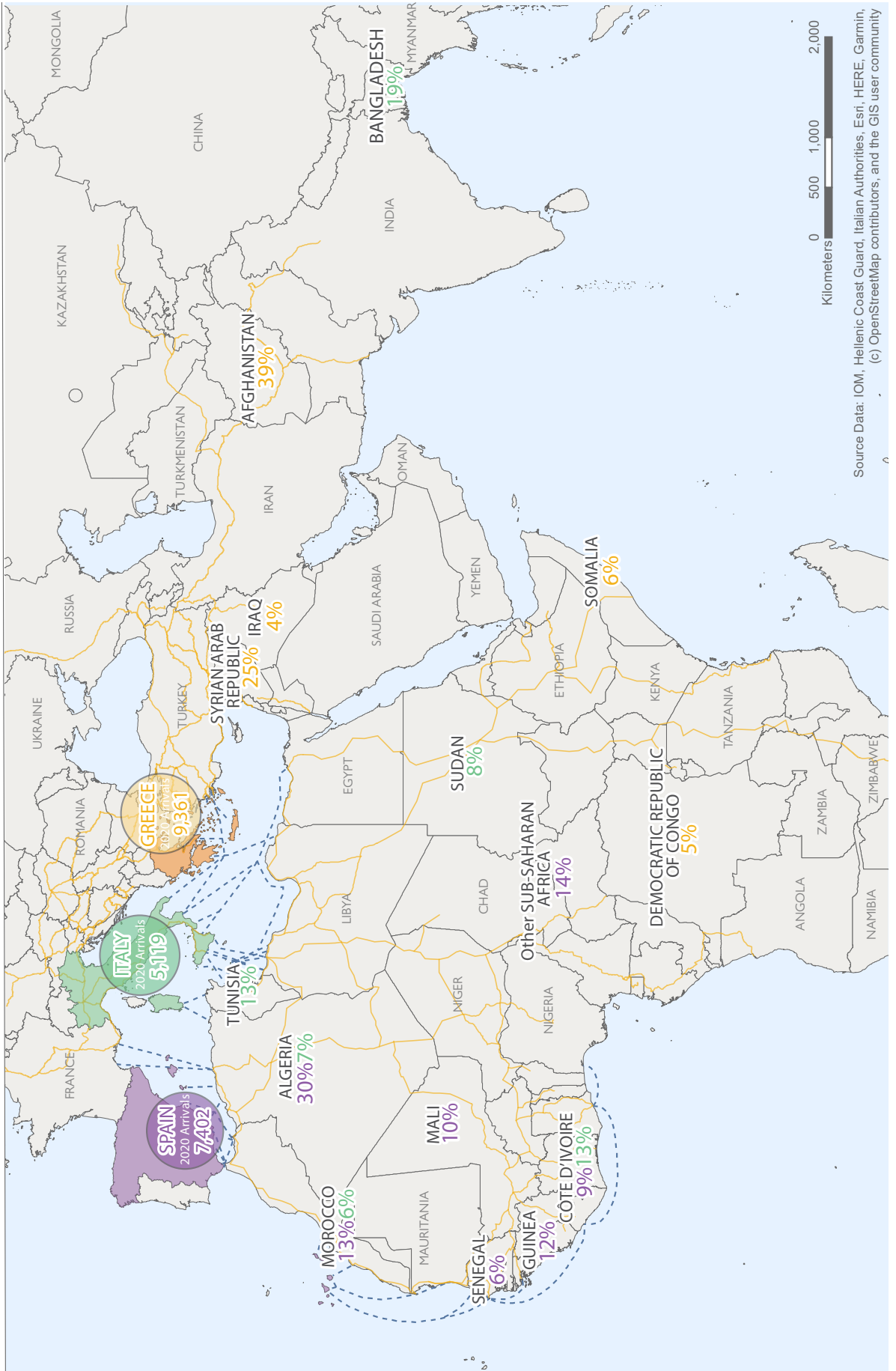
Source Data : IOM, National Authorities

0 150 300 600
Kilometers

Map 2. Main countries of origin reported at arrival in Greece, Italy and Spain, January–May 2020

OVERVIEW: COUNTRIES OR AREAS OF ORIGIN

Arrivals to Greece, Italy and Spain according to available data from 01 January to 31 May 2020



Source Data: IOM, Hellenic Coast Guard, Italian Authorities, Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

* Note: Nationality data for Greece are available only for the period January–April 2020.

Map 3: Presence of migrants and asylum seekers in reception in the region as of the end of May 2020

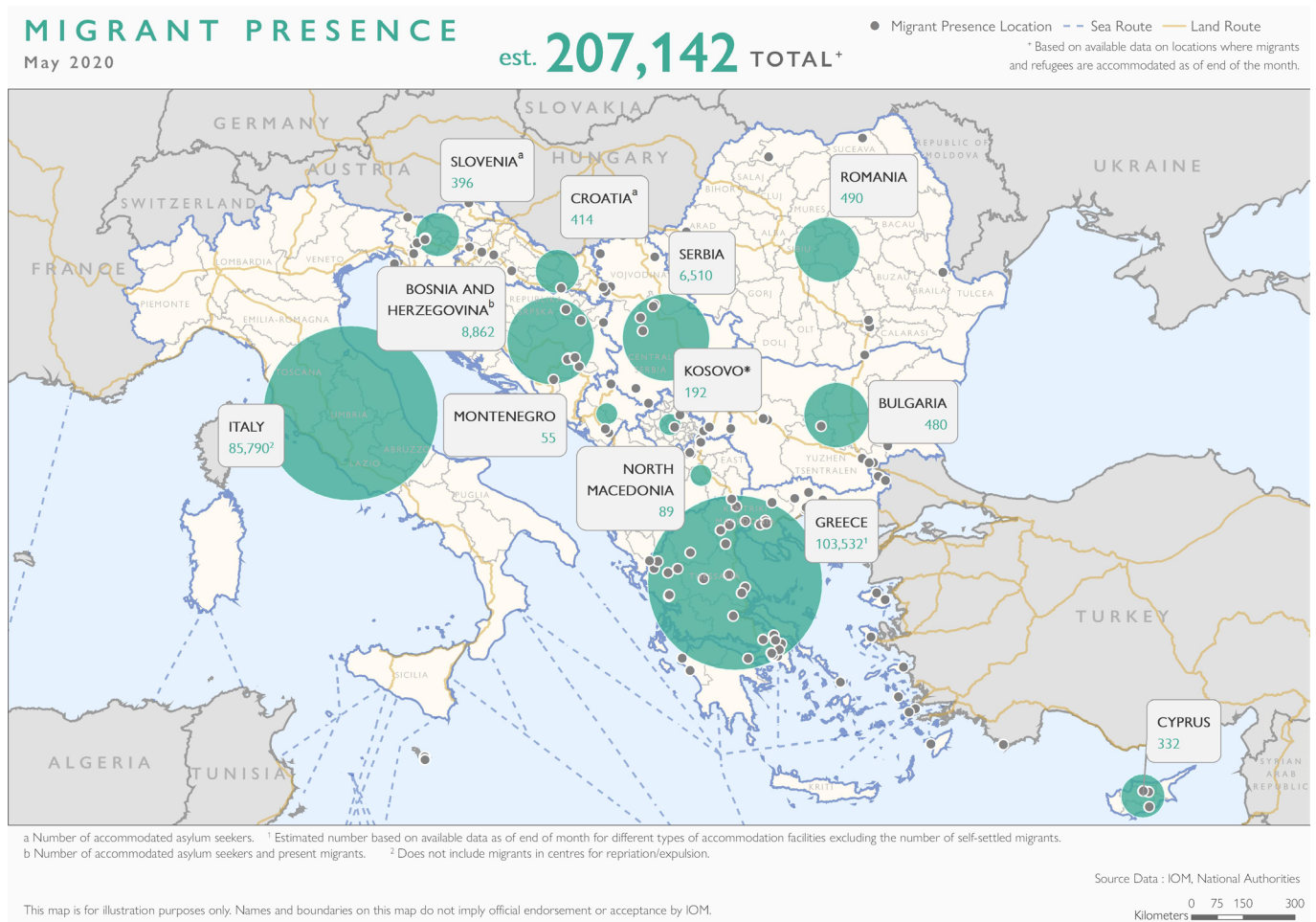


Table 1: Presence of migrants and asylum seekers in reception as of the end of May, comparison 2018–2020

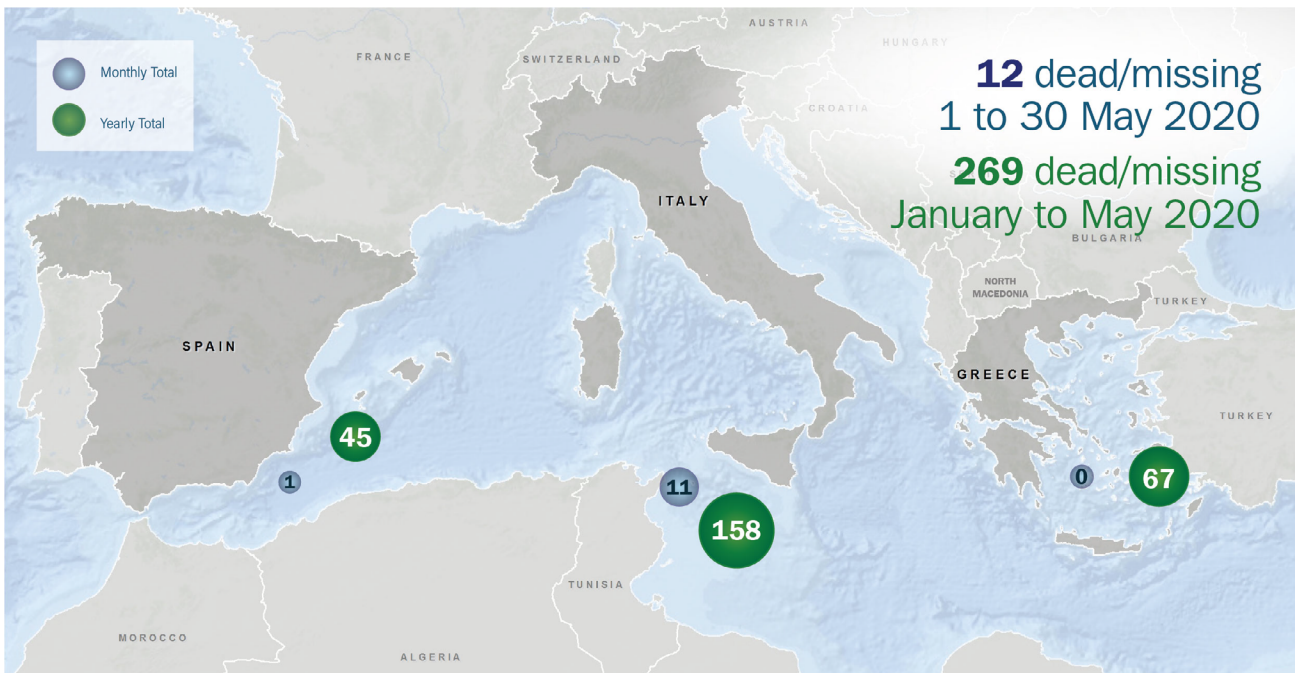
Country	May-18	May-19	May-20
Bosnia and Herzegovina	n/a	4,684	8,862
Bulgaria	883	820	480
Croatia ^[2]	340	242	414
Cyprus ^[3]	361	227	332
Greece ^[1]	59,935	68,714	103,532
Italy	167,739	112,906	85,790
Montenegro	n/a	206	172
North Macedonia	74	72	89
Romania	396	350	490
Serbia	2,703	3,562	6,510
Slovenia ^[2]	439	314	396
Kosovo*	n/a	107	192

[1] Data for Greece excludes self-settled migrants and asylum seekers. Data for Greece in 2020 refers to 30 April 2020.

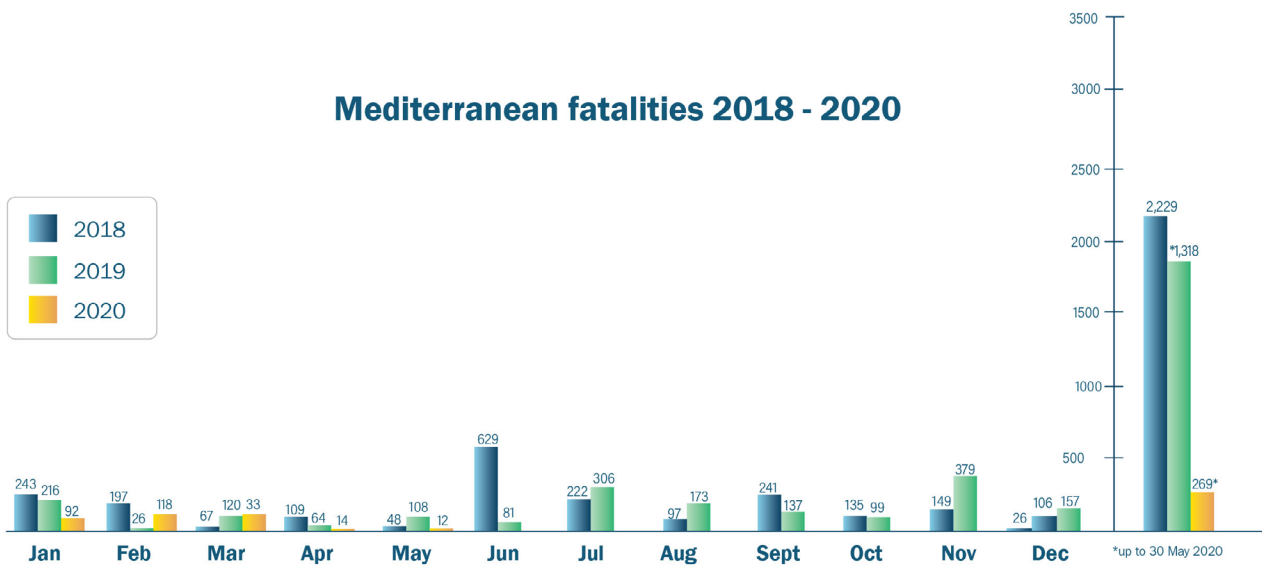
[2] Data for Slovenia and Croatia includes number of asylum seekers only.

[3] Data for Cyprus includes the number of accommodated migrants in Kofinou only.

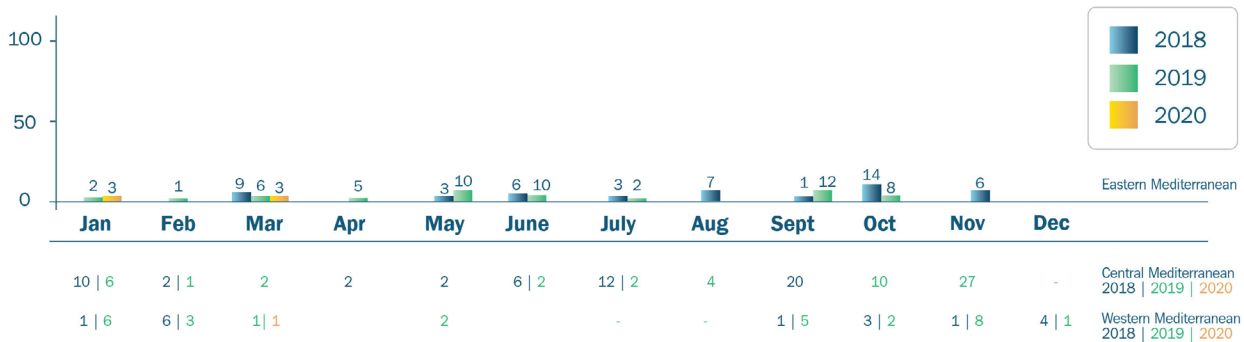
Map 4: Missing Migrants: Fatalities/Missing in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas.



Mediterranean fatalities 2018 - 2020



Child fatalities in the Mediterranean 2018 - 2020



*Data for child fatalities on the Central Mediterranean route is incomplete as most bodies are never recovered. The true number is not known. Map is for illustrative purpose. Boundaries and names used and designations shown do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

ABOUT

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

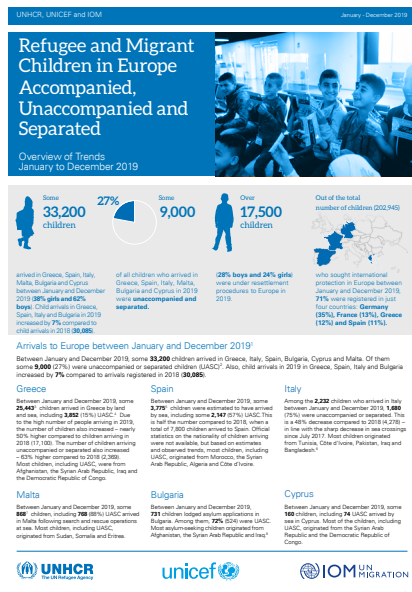
IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a suite of tools and methodologies designed to track and analyse human mobility in different displacement contexts in a continuous manner; to provide critical information to decision-makers and responders during crises, and contribute to better understanding of population flows. Firstly conceptualized in 2004 to monitor internal displacement in Iraq, it has since been adapted for implementation in over 60 countries, including in contexts of conflict, natural disaster, complex emergencies and protracted crises. More information about the Methodological Framework in DTM operations can be found on the [global displacement.iom.int](http://global.displacement.iom.int).

DTM Europe

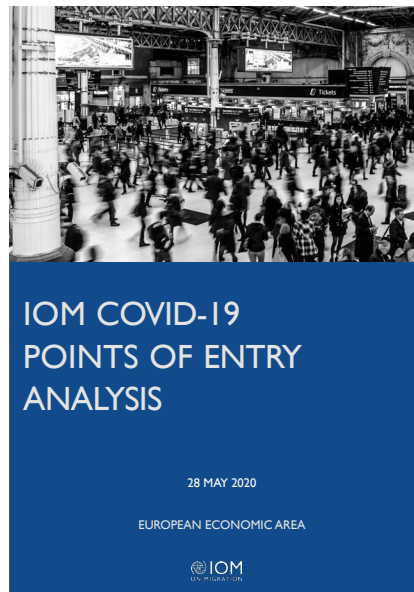
In 2015, DTM established a Flow Monitoring System to gather and disseminate information about the migrant populations moving through the Mediterranean, up the Western Balkan Route and through the Northern Route into Europe. This includes monthly flows compilation reports, quarterly regional overviews and datasets on migration flows in countries of first arrival and other countries along the route in Europe. All data is collated by IOM through consultations with ministries of interior, coast guards, police forces and other relevant national authorities, and it is displayed and regularly updated on the IOM's Flow Monitoring Europe Geoportal.

The DTM system also includes flow monitoring surveys to capture additional and more in-depth data on the people on the move, including age, sex, areas of origin, levels of education, key transit points on their route, motives and intentions. The questionnaire also has a module with a set of questions on human trafficking, exploitative practices and abuse, including two indicators on sexual and physical violence. The analyses of data collected since 2015 is also available on the Flow Monitoring Europe Geoportal.

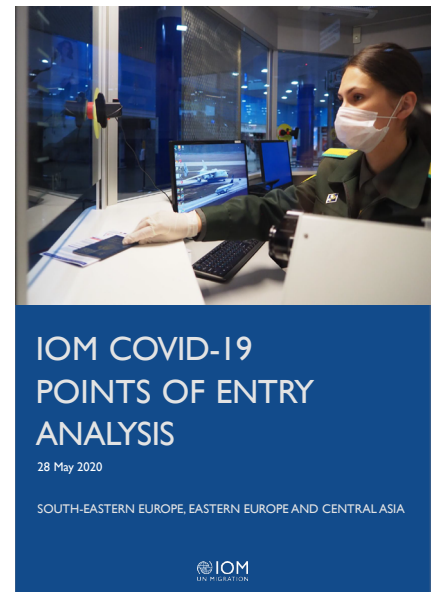
[Europe — Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe - Overview of Trends \(January — December 2019\)](#)



[COVID-19 Points of Entry Analysis – 28 May – European Economic Area](#)

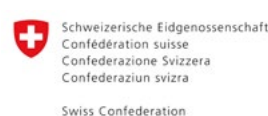


[COVID-19 Points of Entry Analysis - 28 May – South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#)



Information contained in this document has been received from a variety of sources including: national authorities, national and international organizations as well as media reports. Specific sources are not named in the report. The information collected has been triangulated through various sources in efforts to ensure accuracy of the content, and where information has not been confirmed, this has been noted in the report.

Data collection activities in Turkey supported by:



Data collection activities supported by:



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