



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

8,847 INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY TO NOVEMBER 2016 BY IOM IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, GREECE, HUNGARY AND SERBIA.

CONTENTS

- [About DTM's Flow Monitoring Surveys](#)
- [About this report](#)
- [Transit routes: Syrian nationals](#)
- [Transit routes: Afghan nationals](#)
- [Transit routes: Iraqi nationals](#)
- [Interview form](#)



Visit IOM's interactive map to view data on flows: migration.iom.int/europe

ABOUT DTM'S FLOW MONITORING SURVEYS & DATA ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

This report contains the findings of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) from surveys conducted from January to November 2016. This research started in October 2015, and is being conducted within the framework of IOM's research on populations on the move through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan Routes to Europe. The present report is a summary analysis of surveys that has been carried out by IOM field staff in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Hungary. The survey gathers information about migrants' profiles, including age, sex, areas of origin, levels of education, key transit points on their route, cost of journey, motives, and intentions.

Between January and November 2016, IOM field staff in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Hungary, conducted interviews with 8,847 migrants and refugees. The aforementioned survey was structured to capture more qualitative data pertaining to the current situation of migrants and refugees stranded in the Western Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean route. This report focuses on providing an analysis of the routes migrants took before and after the closure of the Western Balkans route and the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016.

BACKGROUND

The yearly number of total arrivals to Europe by the end of December 2016 reached [387,739](#). This represents a significant decrease from the total for 2015, when 1,046,599 were estimated to have arrived to Europe. The decrease in total arrivals and crossings – particularly through the Eastern Mediterranean route - is mainly to be associated with the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 which brought a substantial decrease in departures/arrivals from Turkey to Greece (from 857,363 in 2015 to 176,906 in 2016).

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

CONTACTS

Media

Displacement Tracking Matrix

migration.iom.int

+41.22.7179.271

✉ mediahq@iom.int

✉ dtmsupport@iom.int

🐦 [@IOM_News](https://twitter.com/IOM_News)

IOM Information Gathering activities were supported by:



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report attempts to identify the change in transit countries that migrants took to reach Western Europe before and after the closure of the Western Balkans route and implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. The analysis is based on IOM DTM Flow Monitoring Surveys. While the survey was implemented in six countries on the Eastern Mediterranean route - Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia -, for the purpose of this analysis, only surveys collected in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Hungary were included in the analysis. Surveys from Bulgaria were excluded from the analysis in order to avoid double counting of migrants that are surveyed in other countries further up the route. Slovenia and Croatia were excluded from the analysis since data collection there stopped in early March, and therefore does not allow for comparison between two time periods and due to the relatively low sample size. The analysis is based on the survey questions that record the transit countries for the migrant to reach Europe.

Closure of the Western Balkans Route and the EU - Turkey Statement

On 7 March 2016, European Heads of State and Government issued a statement on discussions with Ankara on the migrant and refugee crisis and plan for implementation of the mechanism described as “one in, one out” which would allow that for every Syrian returned to Turkey from Greece, the EU would then resettle one refugee from Turkey. In the Statement released by the Heads of State and Government of the EU, the document states that “irregular flows of migrants along the Western Balkans route have now come to an end” (read the statement [here](#)). On 18 March, the Council of the European Union has issued the EU-Turkey statement according to which, Turkey has agreed to take back any migrants irregularly crossing into Greece beyond this date. In exchange, a resettlement scheme would allow Syrian refugees in Turkey to regularly be relocated throughout Europe. The arrangement aimed at ending irregular migration to Europe from Turkey. For more details read [here](#).

A total of 3,340 surveys were collected between January and beginning of March 2016 and 5,507 between mid-March and end of November 2016. The top main nationalities surveyed were Syrians (40%), Afghans (24%), and Iraqis (15%). Since these three nationalities are the most numerous, they were selected for the analysis.

MAIN FINDINGS:

- The percentage of Syrians that use Lebanon as a transit country to reach Turkey decreased substantially after March 2016. The percentage of Syrians travelling through Turkey and Bulgaria increased after the closure of the Western Balkans route and the EU-Turkey Statement.
- The percentage of Iraqi respondents who travelled through Bulgaria increased after the closure of the Western Balkans corridor. Percentage of Iraqi nationals surveyed in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia who transited in Bulgaria increased from 8% to 12% after the closure of the Western Balkans route. The percentage of Iraqi respondents surveyed in Serbia who travelled through Bulgaria doubled after the closure of the route (12% before and 24% after).
- While none of the Afghan respondents reported travelling through Bulgaria before the closure of the Western Balkans corridor, after the closure 2% reported Bulgaria as a transit country.
- All Syrians interviewed in Hungary who provided information about their transit routes travelled through Bulgaria after the closure of the Western Balkans corridor.

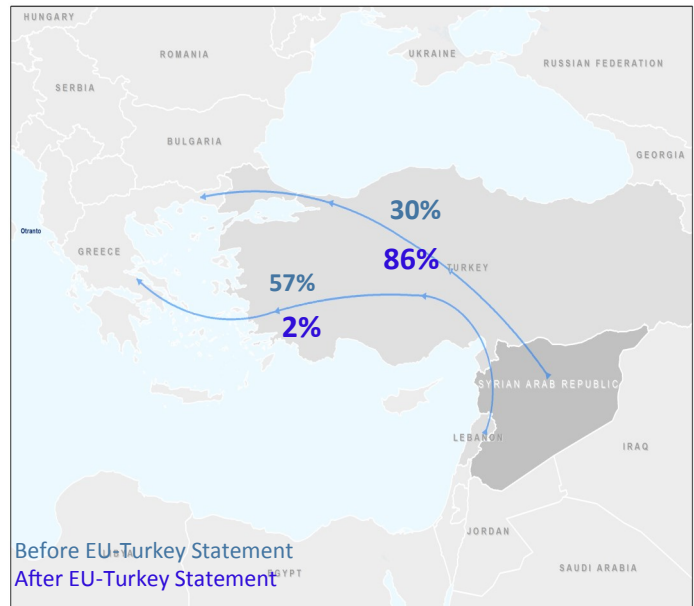
TRANSIT ROUTES: SYRIAN NATIONALS

Between January and November 2016, 3,050 Syrian nationals were surveyed in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. The predominant majority of Syrians departed from Syria (90%), while 4% departed from Turkey, 4% from Iraq, and the rest from other countries.

Greece

935 Syrians who departed from Syria were surveyed in Greece between January – November 2016. Overall, 84% of Syrians surveyed in Greece travelled through Turkey, while 4% travelled to Lebanon first and then to Turkey. The remainder did not have clear information regarding the transit routes.

Before the EU-Turkey Statement in early March 2016, the majority (57%) of Syrians travelled through Lebanon, followed by Turkey to reach Greece. In the period after the Statement, the percentage of Syrians travelling through Lebanon and Turkey decreased drastically to 2%, while the percentage of Syrians traveling through Turkey directly reached 86% (compared to 30% before the Western Balkans route closure and EU-Turkey Statement).



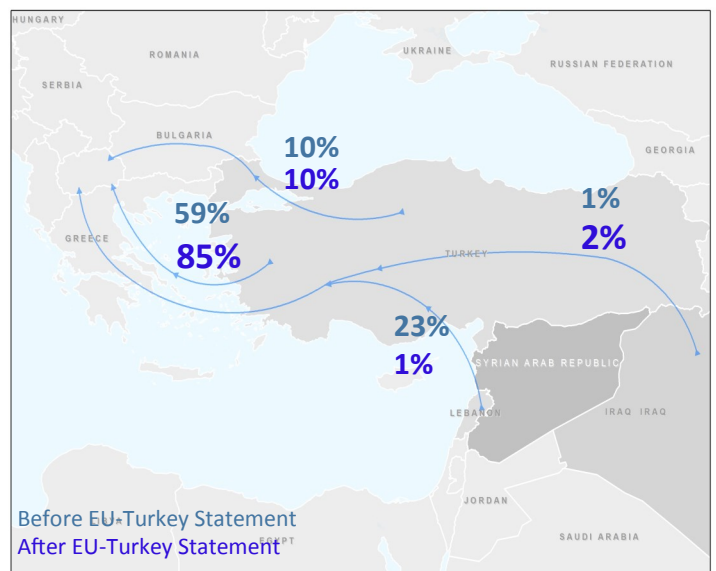
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

1,652 Syrians who departed from Syria were surveyed in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia between January – November 2016. Overall, over half of all Syrians (65%) travelled through Turkey and Greece to reach the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Before the closure of the Western Balkans route, 59% were travelling through this route, while after the closure, the percentage increased to 85%.

As is the case with Syrians surveyed in Greece, before the closure of the Western Balkans route a larger percentage of Syrians were travelling through Lebanon (23%), as compared to the percentage of Syrians transiting in Lebanon after the March 2016 events - 1% only.

The percentage of Syrians transiting through Turkey, followed by Bulgaria and then entering the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remained unchanged at 10% after and before the Western Balkans route closed.

Overall, 1% of Syrians transited through Iraq, Turkey, followed by Greece to reach the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The rest of the Syrian respondents did not provide clear information regarding their transit routes.

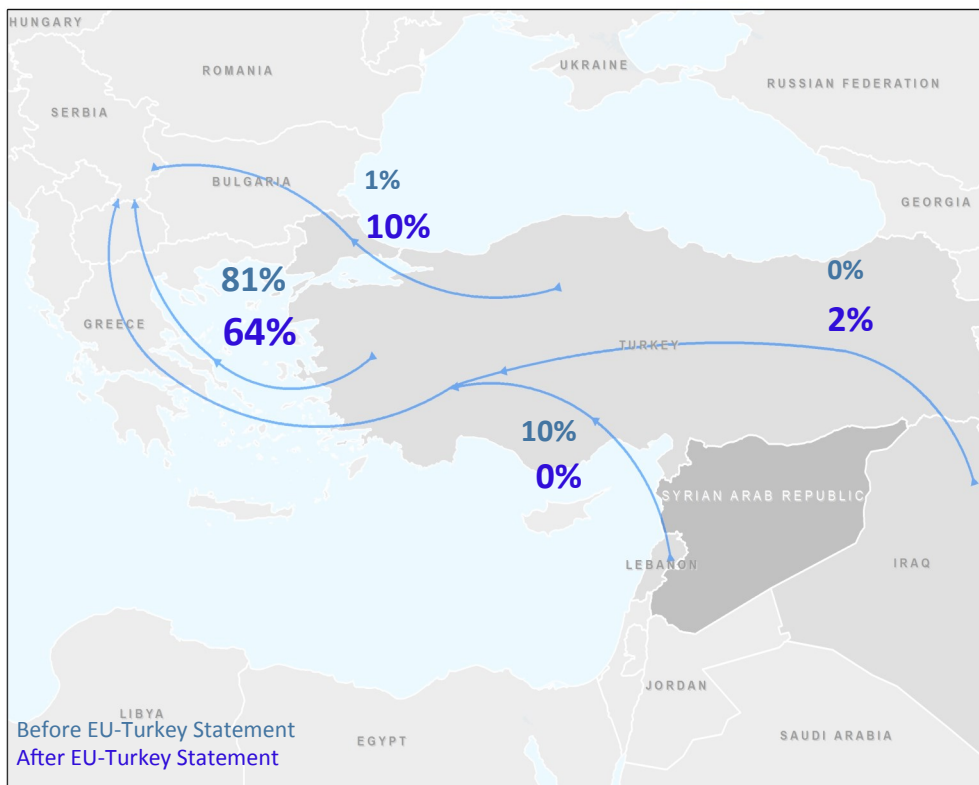


Serbia

152 Syrians who departed from Syria were surveyed in Serbia between January and November 2016. The majority of Syrians went through Turkey, Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to reach Serbia. The percentage saw a decrease of 17 percentage points after the closure of the Western Balkans Route (81% before and 64% after).

Before the closure of the Western Balkans Route and EU-Turkey Statement 10% of Syrians were travelling through Lebanon, followed by Turkey, Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, while after the these developments none of the Syrian respondents were travelling though Lebanon.

The percentage of Syrians travelling through Turkey and Bulgaria saw an increase of 9 percentage points after the Western Balkan route was closed and the EU-Turkey Statement implemented. 1% of Syrians interviewed before the March events travelled through Turkey and Bulgaria, while 10% interviewed in the period after March travelled through this route.



TRANSIT ROUTES – AFGHAN NATIONALS

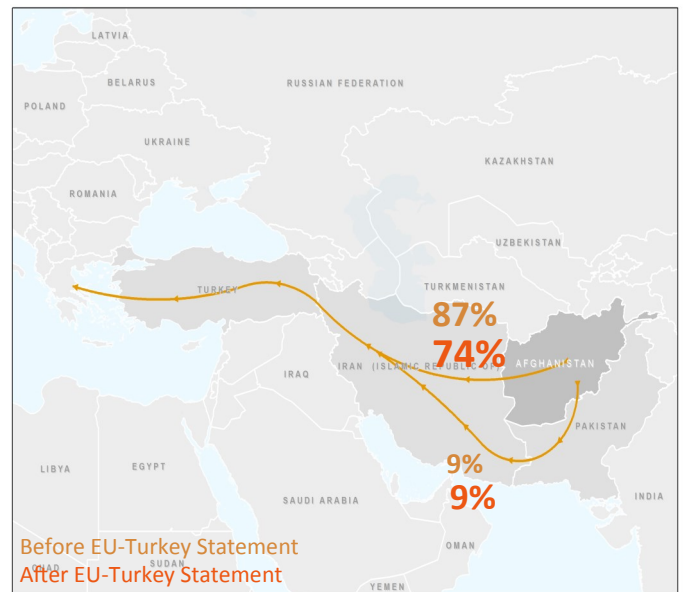
Between January and November 1,728 Afghan nationals were surveyed in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. 84% of all Afghans surveyed departed from Afghanistan, while 13% departed from Iran, and the rest from other countries.

Greece

581 Afghan nationals who departed from Afghanistan were surveyed in Greece.

The majority of Afghans transited through Iran and Turkey to reach Greece. 87% of Afghans followed this route before the EU-Turkey Statement, while the percentage dropped to 74% after the Statement.

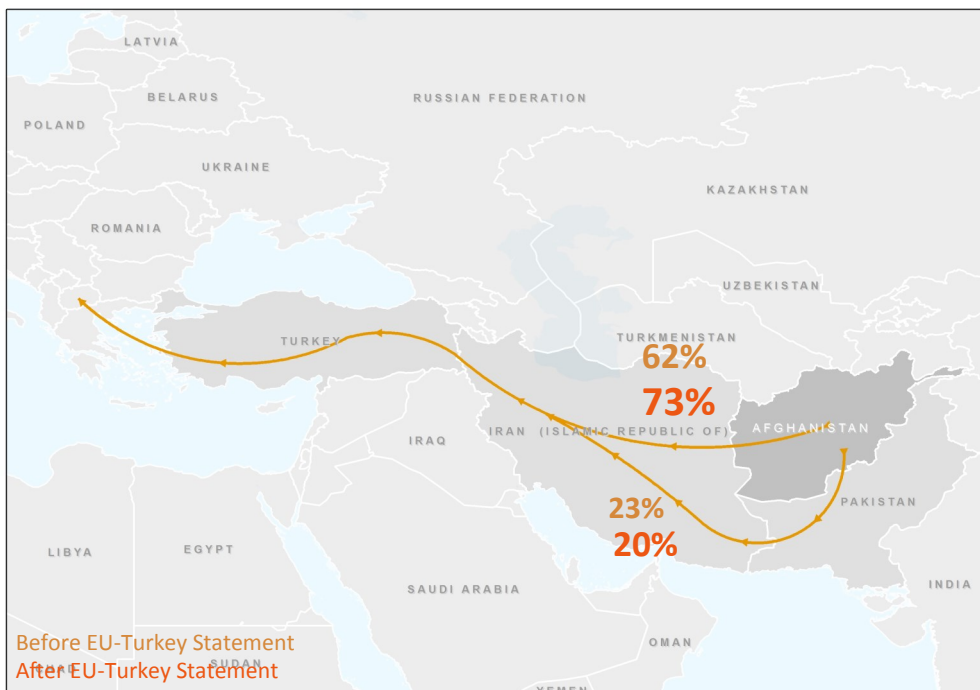
Overall, 9% of Afghans surveyed in Greece travelled to Pakistan, followed by Iran and Turkey with insignificant changes before and after the Statement. The percentage of Afghans with unclear routes increased from 3% to 18% after the Statement .



The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

788 Afghan nationals who departed from Afghanistan were surveyed in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

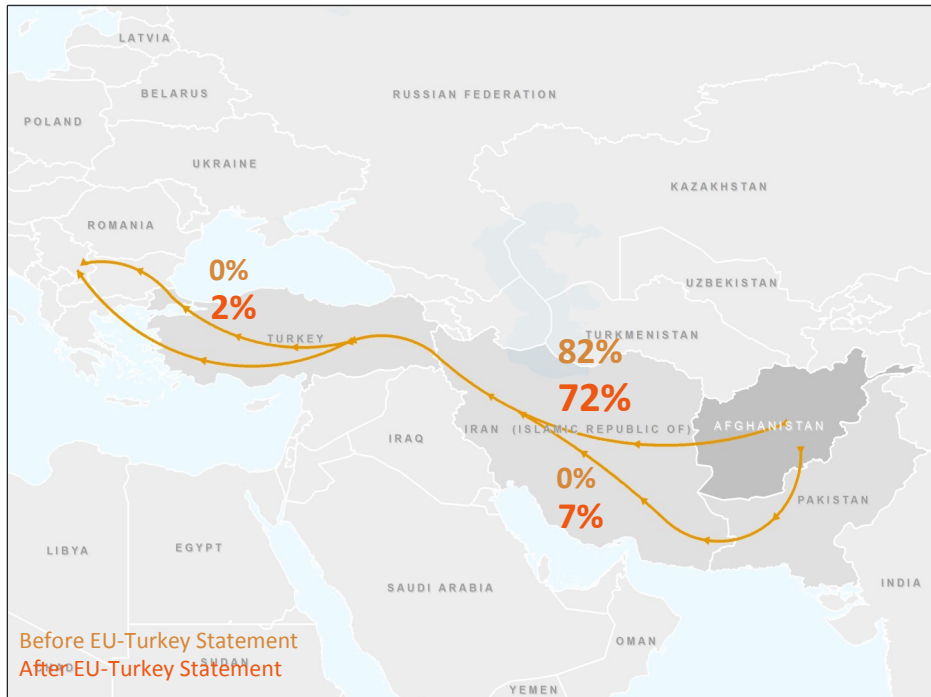
62% of Afghan respondents reported travelling through Iran, Turkey, and Greece to reach The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The percentage of Afghan migrants using this route increased by 11 percentage points after the official closure of the Western Balkans route and the EU-Turkey Statement with 73% Afghans reporting having taken this route. Overall, 22% of Afghans travelled first to Pakistan, followed by Iran, Turkey and Greece to reach The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with little change before and after the closure of the Western Balkans route.



Serbia

80 Afghan nationals who departed from Afghanistan were surveyed in Serbia. Overall, the majority of Afghan respondents travelled through Iran, Turkey, Greece, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to reach Serbia. The percentage of Afghans taking this route decreased slightly from 82% before the March 2016 events to 72% after it.

None of the respondents reported travelling through Bulgaria before the closure of the Western Balkans corridor, while after March 2016, 2% reported Bulgaria as a transit country.



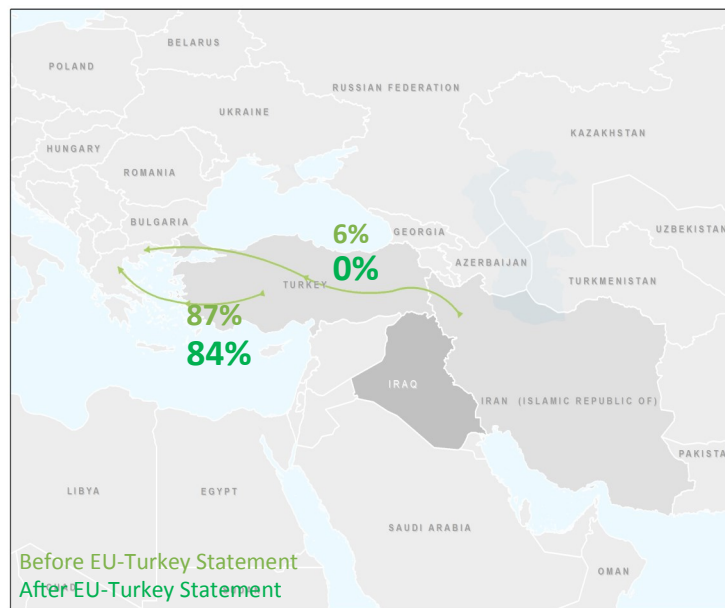
TRANSIT ROUTES – IRAQI NATIONALS

Between January and November 1,170 Iraqi nationals were surveyed in Greece, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. 85% of all Iraqi respondents departed from Iraq, while 12% departed from Syria, 2% from Turkey and the rest from other countries.

Greece

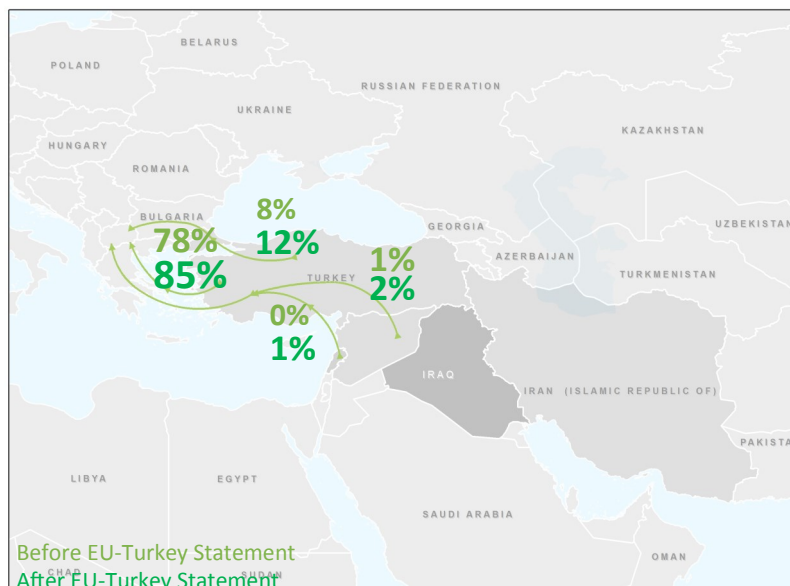
234 Iraqi nationals who departed from Iraq were surveyed in Greece. Overall, 84% of all Iraqi respondents travelled through Turkey to reach Greece.

There was little change in the routes taken by Iraqi respondents before and after EU-Turkey Statement. Before the deal, 6% of surveyed Iraqi nationals transited in Iran before going to Turkey to reach Greece, while after the Statement none of the Afghans surveyed transited in Iran.



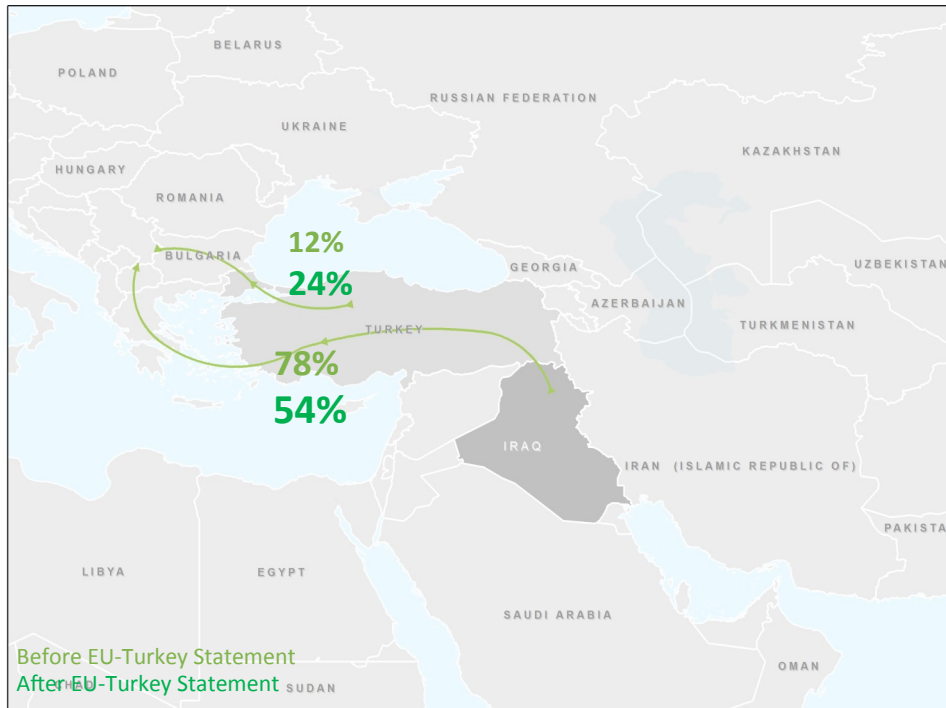
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Before the March 2016 developments, 78% of Afghan respondents travelled through Turkey and Greece to reach the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, while afterwards the percentage of Afghans taking this route reached 85%. In parallel, the percentage of Afghan respondents who transited through Turkey, followed by Bulgaria increased from 8% to 12% after the closure of the Western Balkans route.



Serbia

100 Iraqi nationals who departed from Iraq were surveyed in Serbia. Before the closure of the Western Balkans corridor 78% of Iraqis travelled through Turkey, Greece and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, while after the percentage decreased to 54%. The percentage of Iraqi respondents who travelled through Bulgaria doubled after the closure of the route (12% before and 24% after).



HUNGARY

In Hungary, Flow Monitoring Surveys were implemented after March 2016. Hence, the data does not allow for comparison of the routes before and after EU-Turkey March settlement. However, the main routes migrants took to reach Hungary could provide valuable information about the most used transit routes after the closure of the Western Balkans route and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement.

A total of 943 surveys were conducted in Hungary. Afghans comprise 41% of all nationalities surveyed, Iraqis—6%, and Syrians another 6%.

Two thirds of Syrians travelled through the same route to reach Hungary: Turkey, followed by Bulgaria and Serbia. The rest of Syrian respondents did not provide clear information about their transit countries.

Iraqis, however, mostly travelled through Turkey, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia (65%), while 35% travelled through Turkey, Bulgaria and Serbia.

Afghans follow similar travel patterns as those of Iraqis. 65% travelled through Turkey, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, followed by Serbia to reach Hungary. 35% travelled through Turkey, Bulgaria and Serbia.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted by IOM field staff in locations of entry, transit, and exit in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Italy and Hungary including locations and centers of various types (transit, accommodation, open/closed) and including reception and identification centers/ hotspots (Greece).

In all locations, data collectors approached respondents in an ad hoc manner to explain the purpose of the survey and to obtain the explicit consent to be interviewed. With those who give their consent to be interviewed, IOM data collectors proceeded with the remainder of the questions.

The survey sample compares well to the population, considering the sample selection challenges in the context of migrants' arrival by sea and the planned onwards journey towards other European countries. The sample is large enough to gather evidence about migrants with different demographic profiles, and it is broadly reflective of the population.

There are however a few limitations to the data collected. Children and women are under-sampled. Women are slightly underrepresented in the sample relative to men, as women are more likely to decline to participate in the survey. In regard to minors, only children older than 14 years old are eligible for the survey.

In all possible instances, taking into consideration the crowded nature of some of the surveyed points, migrants were interviewed in a separate/private area in order to ensure privacy. While anonymity of respondents has been always a pre-requisite for an interview to start, in some cases and under respondent's consent, the help of a family member or of a friend was key to facilitate translation. Especially at official entry points, data collection was undertaken only after the initial administrative procedures for identification and registration of arrivals was completed by the relevant authorities.

While in the sampling phase some purposive quotas by nationalities were planned to cover only the main nationalities in each of the two routes, fieldwork operations turned out to be more efficient in terms of migrants reached without excluding any nationality a priori. The sample is then composed by all those migrants above 14 years of age met by data collectors at selected flow monitoring points and who were willing to participate and answer the questionnaire.

The original survey is designed to capture data which includes: the socioeconomic background of respondents; the routes that they have taken; their reasons for leaving their last country of habitual residence; intended destination countries. Six additional questions have been added to the standard questionnaire, to generate indicators of the prevalence of human trafficking and other exploitative practices for the sample. Together with the Human Trafficking and Other Exploitative Practices Prevalence Indication Module, the survey includes 27 questions translated into Arabic, Dari, English, French, Farsi, Kurdish, Italian, Pashtu, Somali, Tigrinya and Urdu.