

— YEARLY REGIONAL REPORT

DTM Europe

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

— January – December 2023 —

<https://dtm.iom.int/europe/arrivals>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Migration routes from countries of origin in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa regions through the Mediterranean Sea and to Europe have been used actively since the early 2010s. In the wake of the large increase of mixed migration flows to Europe in 2015-2016, IOM rolled out a Flow Monitoring system to monitor Mixed Migration Flows by land and by sea to Europe, as part of its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tools.

DTM Europe gathers, validates and disseminates information on migrants and refugees travelling through the Mediterranean, Western African Atlantic, and Western Balkan routes to Europe. Key routes include:

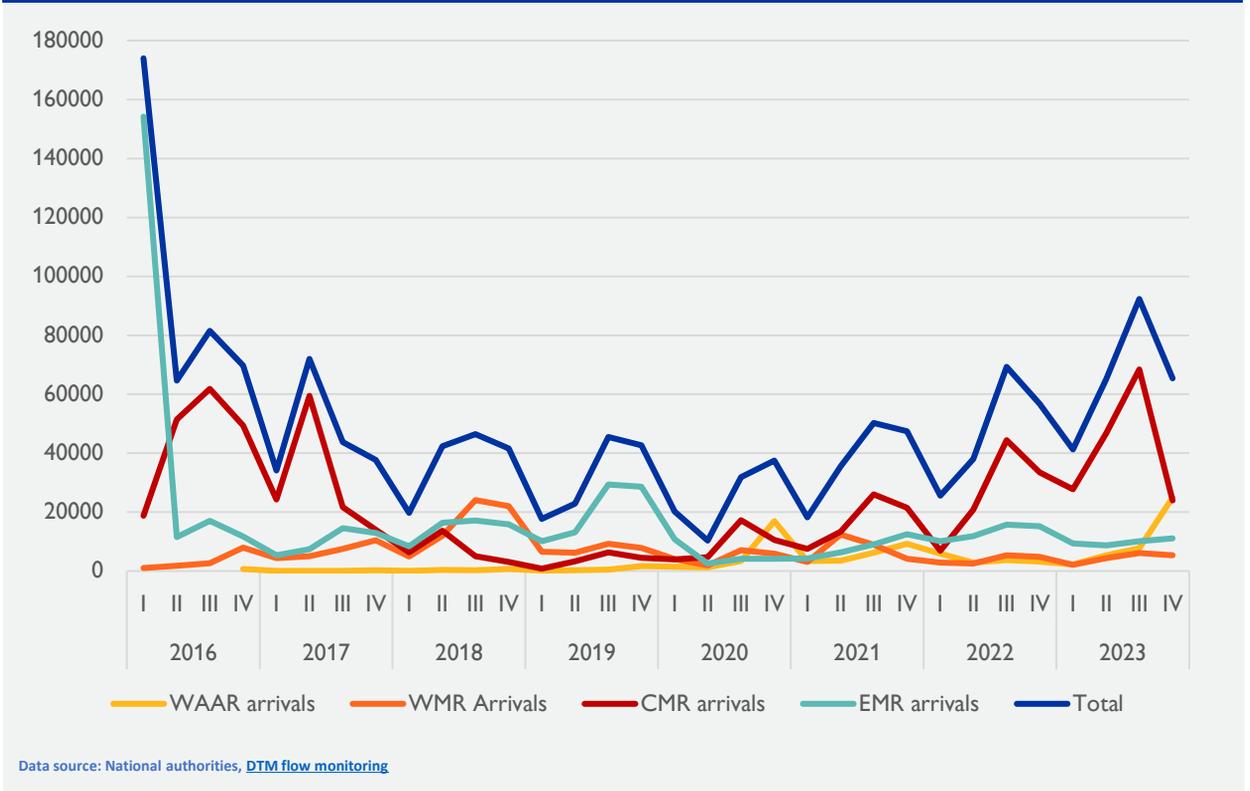
- **Eastern Mediterranean route (EMR):** Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece
- **Central Mediterranean route (CMR):** Italy and Malta

- **Western Mediterranean route (WMR):** Peninsular Coasts of Spain, Balearic Islands, Ceuta and Melilla
- **Western African Atlantic route (WAAR):** Canary Islands of Spain

DTM also monitors data on migrants in transit through the **Western Balkans (WB)** region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Romania, and Kosovo*). These are considered separately to prevent to the extent possible the double counting of the same persons that cross multiple borders to reach Europe.

This report presents the latest available data and trends, focusing on all four quarters of 2023, comparing them with the same periods in the previous year.

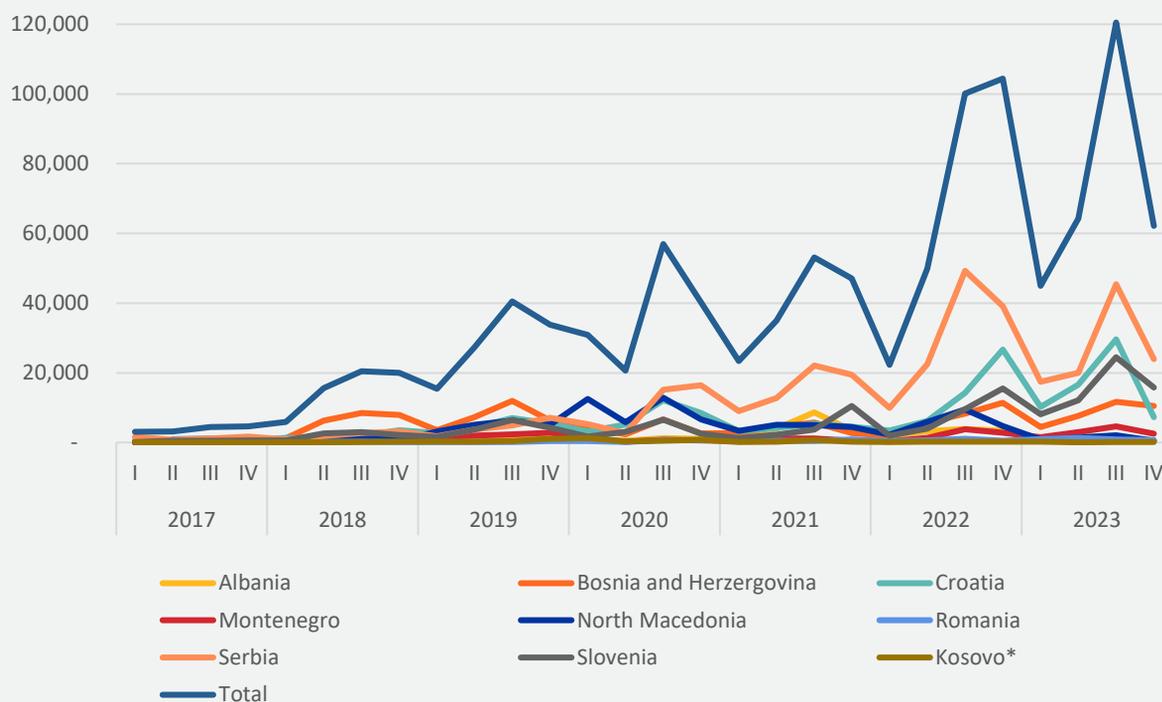
First arrivals to Europe, by route and by quarter, 2016-2023



Data source: National authorities, [DTM flow monitoring](#)

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

Registered migrants in transit countries, by country and by quarter, 2017-2023



Data source: National authorities, [DTM flow monitoring](#)

Main **developments** in both trends and policies of mixed migration movement in the region:

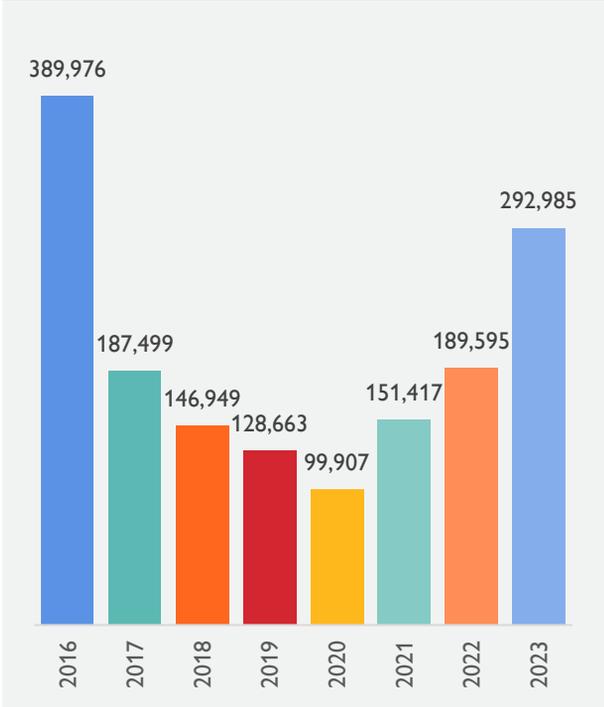
- The number of arrivals by sea and by land to Europe started to decrease in Q4 compared to Q3 of 2023, which remains the period with the biggest number of arrivals registered along all routes except WAAR. CMR is the main route per number of arrivals in the entire 2023 (158,032, 54% of the total), while the WAAR is the route with the sharpest increase (+154% compared to 2022).
- According to the [European Union Agency for Asylum](#) (EUAA), in 2023, EU+ countries lodged over 1,140,000 asylum applications, an increase of 18 per cent compared to 2022. Germany (334,000) continued to receive the most applications in absolute terms, while Cyprus (12,000) had the highest number relative to its population size. Syrians continued to lodge most applications, followed by Afghans and Turkish applicants. Despite some inconsistent data, an increase in applications by Palestinians was noted towards the end of the year.
- According to [IOM's MMP](#), 2023 marks a peak year in the number of dead and missing migrants at sea while trying to reach Europe through the Mediterranean and Western African Atlantic routes. Total dead and missing were 4,064 in 2022, which is 37 per cent higher than the 2,970 of 2023, and the biggest number since 2016.
- In November 2023, [Italy and Albania](#) announced an agreement on migration management. Albania would hold up to 3,000 migrants and refugees at any one time in two Italian-run processing centres located near the Albanian port of Shengjin for periods of about a month. It is expected that up to 36,000 people each year could be sent to Albania, after being rescued in the Mediterranean Sea by Italian authorities.
- In December 2023, the [Greek government approved](#) a regularization program to give three-year residence and work permits to about 30,000 undocumented migrants to address labour shortages.

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

2. MOBILITY OVERVIEW

MIXED MIGRATION FLOWS TO EUROPE

Arrivals in Europe through the Mediterranean and WAAR, total by year, 2016-2023



In 2023, a total of 292,985 migrants and refugees were registered arriving through the three Mediterranean routes and the WAAR route to Europe, which is 55 per cent higher than the 189,595 arrivals registered in the entire 2022, and 93 per cent higher than the 151,417 registered in 2021.

In line with trends from previous years, Q1 remains the quarter with the smallest number of arrivals (41,310). Arrivals reached a peak in Q3 (116,616) and then decreased by 33 per cent in Q4 (77,569). In 2023, all quarters register higher levels than in the same corresponding period in 2022.

In 2023 overall, 54 per cent of all registered individuals arrived in Europe via the CMR to Italy and Malta (158,032 arrivals, almost all registered

in Italy). Around 27 per cent of arrivals travelled through the EMR to Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria (78,101). The remaining 19 per cent were registered in Spain (56,852), through the WMR (6%) and WAAR (13%).

Compared to 2022, arrivals in 2023 have increased through all routes. The biggest increase is registered along the WAAR, with 39,910 arrivals which are 154 per cent more than the 15,682 of 2022. Arrivals through the CMR and the EMR have also increased between 2022 and 2023 by 50 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively.

According to available data from national authorities, Syrian Arab Republic, Guinea, Senegal, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco and Bangladesh are the main countries of origin among all registered arrivals to Europe in 2023.

Arrivals in Europe through the Mediterranean and WAAR— total by route and by year, 2020-2023



EMR: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece
 CMR: Italy, Malta
 WMR and WAAR: Spain

MIGRANT FLOWS MONITORING IN THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE

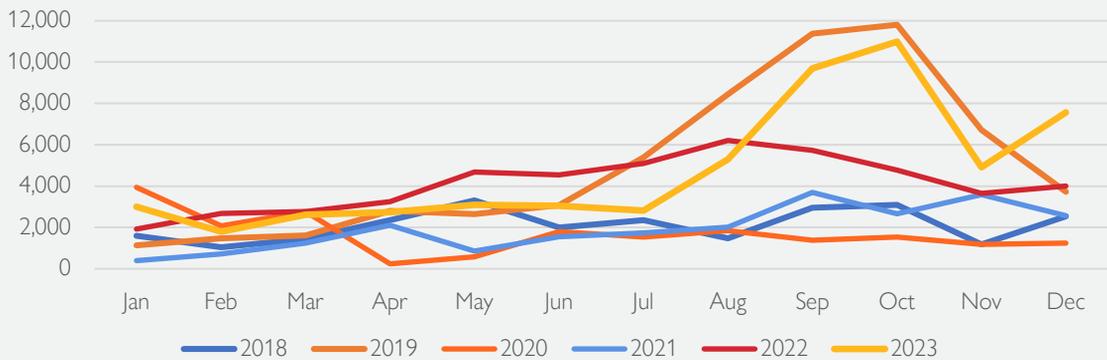
From January to December of 2023, a total of 57,562 migrants were apprehended by the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) at sea, while trying to reach the EU (mostly Greece). This is a 17 per cent increase in comparison with 2022 (49,287). Moreover, Q4 2023 represents an increase of 38 per cent in comparison with Q3 of 2023 (23,454 compared to 17,809).

The top nationalities in 2023 were Afghanistan, Palestinian Territories, Syrian Arab Republic,

Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sudan, and Egypt. According to the TCG, 20 migrants died at sea in 2023. Eight deaths were recorded in Q4 of the year.

Additionally, according to the Turkish Presidency of Migration management (PMM), 254,008 migrants in irregular situation were apprehended on various locations inside Türkiye in 2023 (-11% compared to 2022).

Apprehensions by the TCG, all maritime regions, by month, 2018–2023



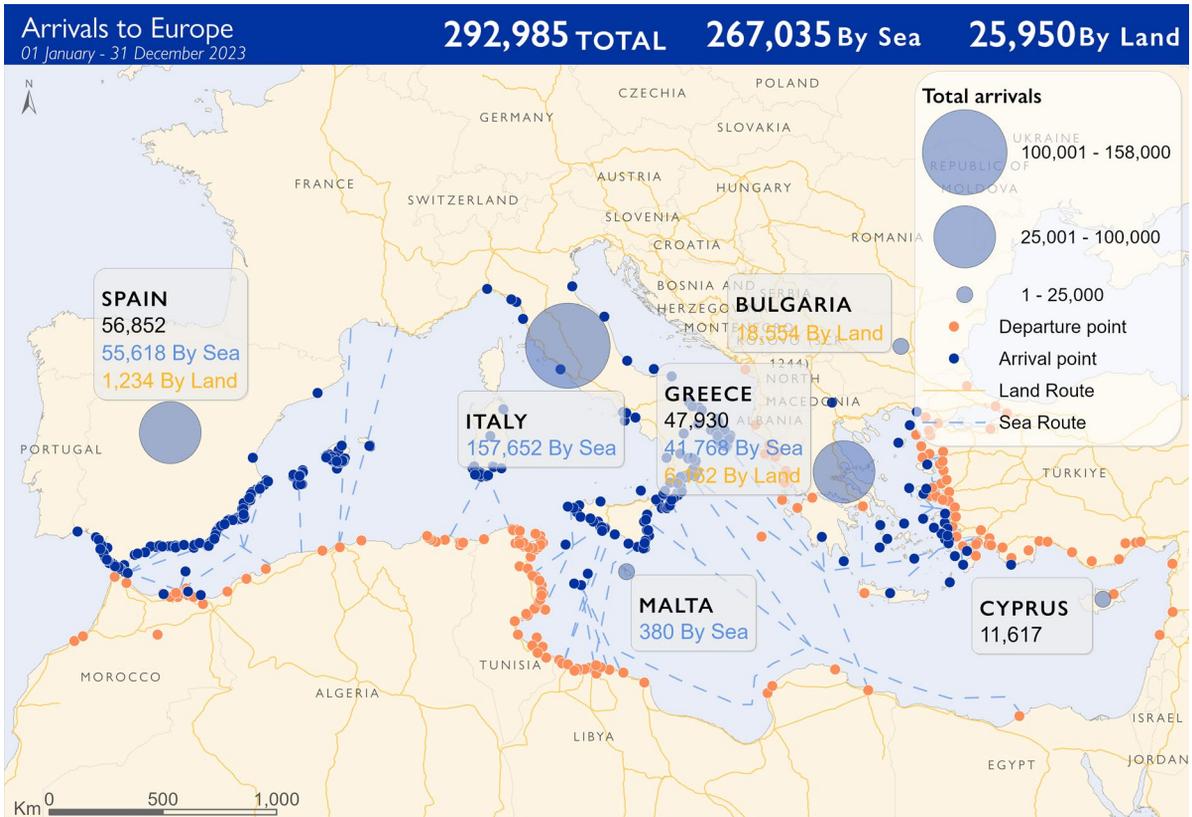
Apprehensions by the Turkish coast
01 January - 31 December 2023

57,562 TOTAL Apprehended



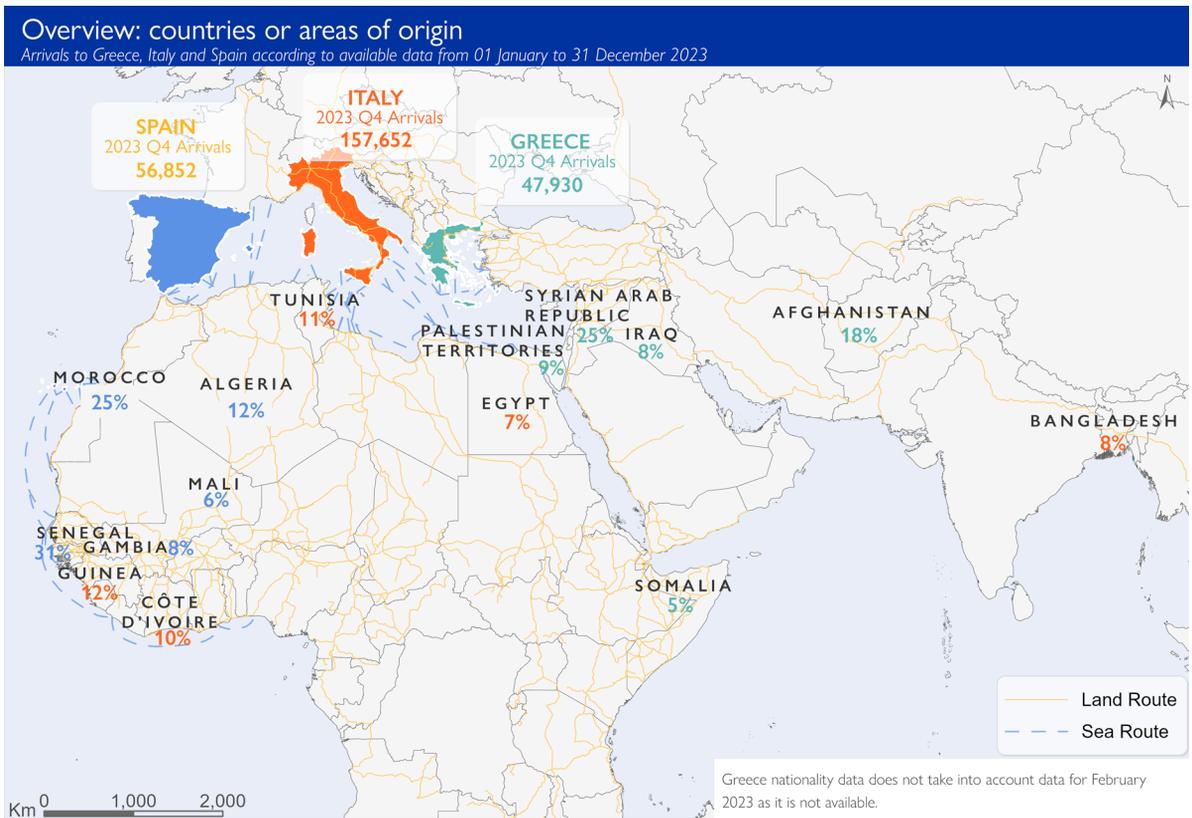
This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Source Data : IOM, National Authorities



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



Greece nationality data does not take into account data for February 2023 as it is not available.

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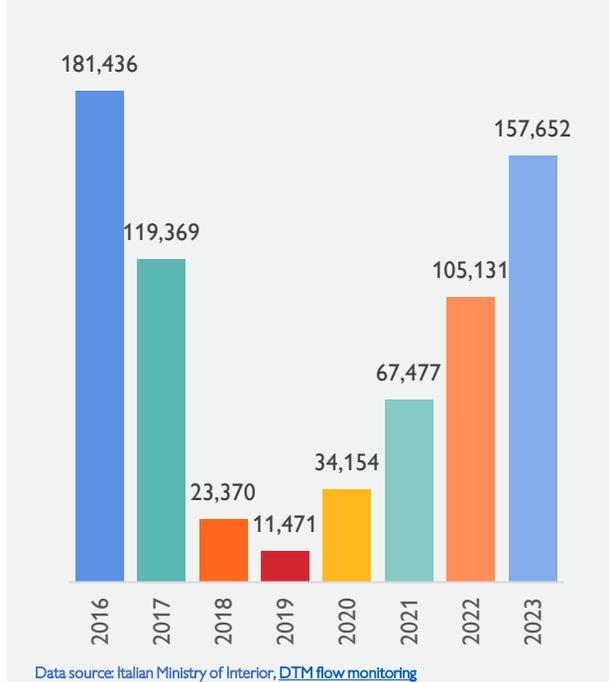
Source Data : IOM, National Authorities

3. MIXED MIGRATION FLOWS

FIRST ARRIVAL COUNTRIES

ITALY

Arrivals in Italy – total by year, 2016–2023



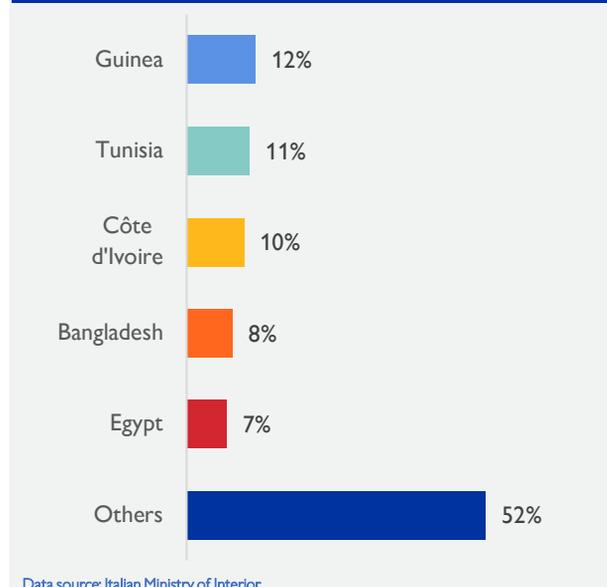
Italian authorities registered a total of 157,652 migrants and refugees arriving by sea in the country in 2023. This is 50 per cent higher than the registered arrivals in 2022 (105,131). Arrivals in Q4 of 2023 decreased by 65 per cent compared to Q3 of 2023, from 68,302 to 23,381, confirming Q3 of 2023 as the quarter with the biggest registered arrivals since 2016. Arrivals in 2023 are the third biggest since after those registered in 2015 (153,842) and 2016 (181,436).

In 2023, 62 per cent of the arrivals were reported to have departed from Tunisia, followed by departures from Libya (33%), Republic of Türkiye (5%) and Algeria, Lebanon and Cyprus (<1%).

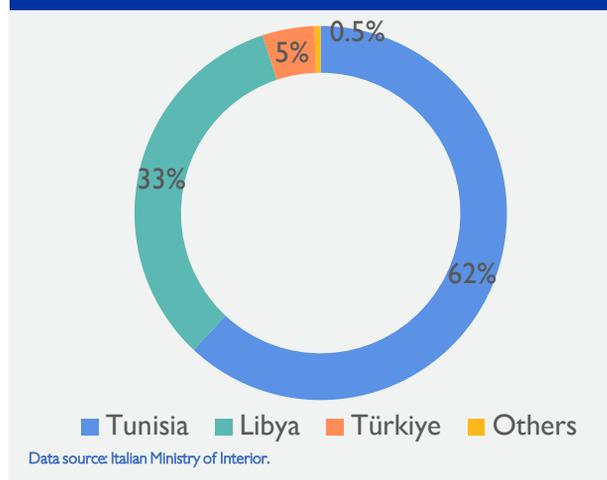
Main nationalities registered at arrival for 2023 were Guinea (12%), Tunisia (11%), and Côte d'Ivoire (10%) prevalently departed from Tunisia, followed by Bangladesh (8%) and Egypt (7%) prevalently departed from Libya.

5. IOM's Missing Migrant Project: missingmigrants.iom.int [Accessed 15 March 2024].

Arrivals in Italy – total by nationality, 2023 (%)



Arrivals in Italy – departure countries in 2023



At least 2,476 migrants perished while crossing the CMR in 2023, compared to the 1,417 in previous year.⁵ This is a 75 per cent increased between 2022 and 2023.

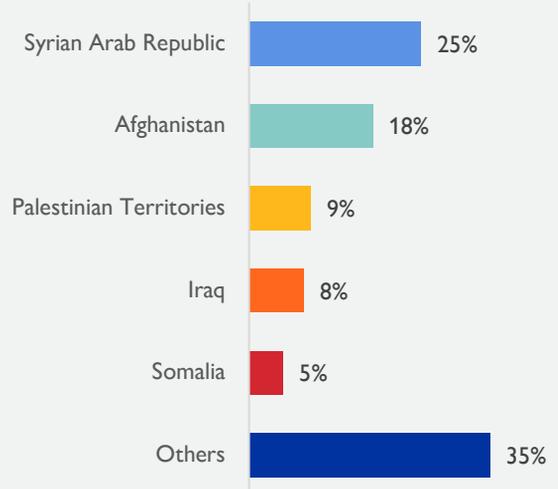
GREECE

In 2023, the Hellenic authorities registered a total of 47,930 migrants and refugees arriving by land and by sea to the country, which represents an increase of 92 per cent compared to the previous year (18,775). The biggest part of arrivals were registered in Q3 (22,270), while in Q4 the trend started to decrease with 16,958 arrivals (-24% compared to Q3). Arrivals in 2023 are the highest since 2019.

According to the Hellenic Coast Guard and Police, arrivals by sea in 2023 were 41,768 (87%) and land crossing from Türkiye in the region of Evros were 6,162 (13%). Hence, consistent during the year and with previous periods, most migrants were reported to have landed on several Greek islands (Lesbos, Samos, Rhodes, Kos among them).

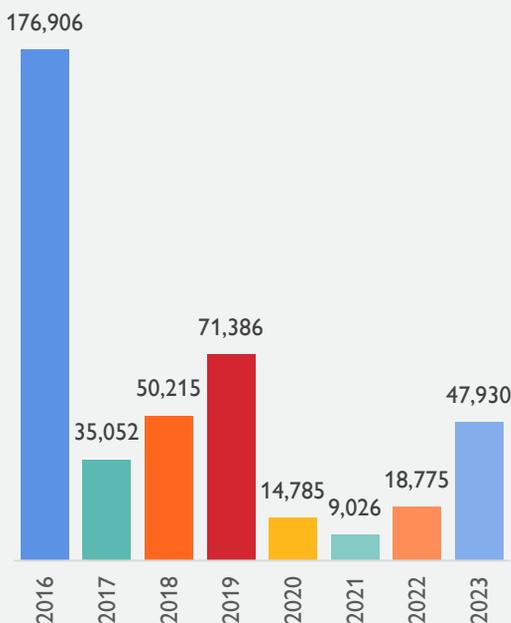
Main reported nationalities in 2023 were Syrian Arab Republic (25%), Afghanistan (18%), Palestinian Territories (9%), Iraq (8%) and Somalia (8%).

Arrivals in Greece – total by nationality, 2023 (%)



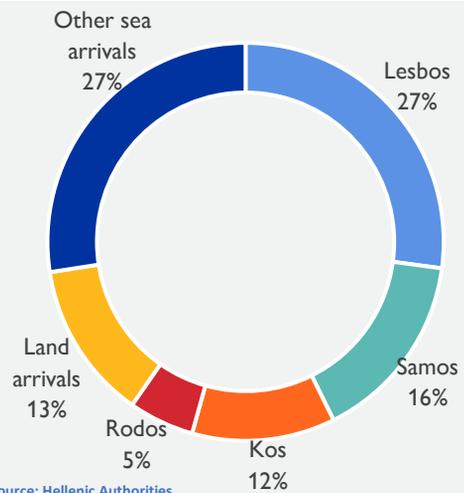
Data source: Hellenic Authorities.

Arrivals by land and by sea in Greece – total by year, 2016–2023



Data source: Hellenic Authorities, DTM flow monitoring

Arrivals to Greece – main entry points in 2023



Data source: Hellenic Authorities.

Along the EMR, at least 171 migrants disappeared or died in 2023, which represents a decrease compared to the 382 in 2022.⁶

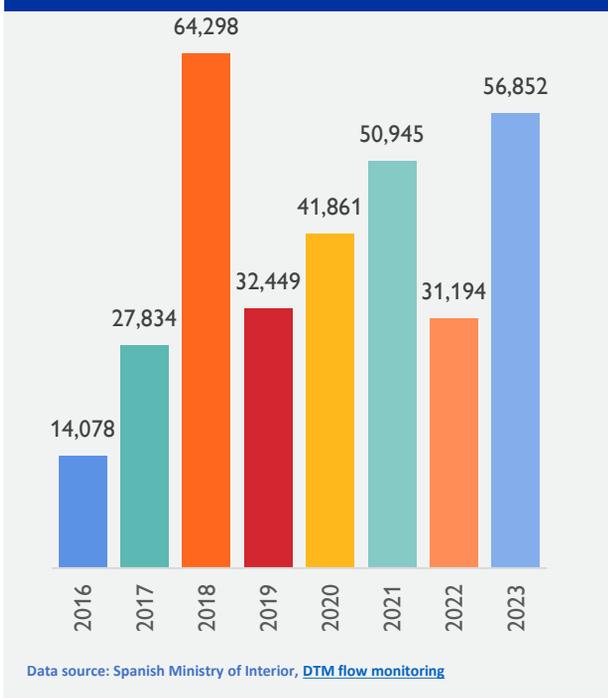
On 14 June 2023, 95 survivors were brought to Greece after the tragic capsizing of a large fishing vessel which departed from Tobruk, Libya, intending to reach Italy with between 500 and 700 individuals on board.

6. IOM’s Missing Migrant Project: missingmigrants.iom.int [Accessed 15 March 2024].

SPAIN

In Q3 of 2023, authorities in Spain registered a total of 13,836 arrivals, of which 13,488 by sea and 388 by land. This is 64 per cent more than the 8,417 registered in the previous quarter. Similarly, to other first arrival countries, Q3 2023 represents an increase compared to the previous quarter and also a considerable increase if compared to Q3 of 2022 (+52%).

Arrivals by land and by sea in Spain – total by year, 2016–2023



According to Frontex data, Senegal (31%) is the main country of origin for arrivals in Spain in 2023, which surpassed Morocco (25%), and Algeria (12%) compared to 2022.⁷ The increase of Senegalese among arrivals is due to the increase in landings in the Canary Islands, along the WAAR, reported in the second half of the year.

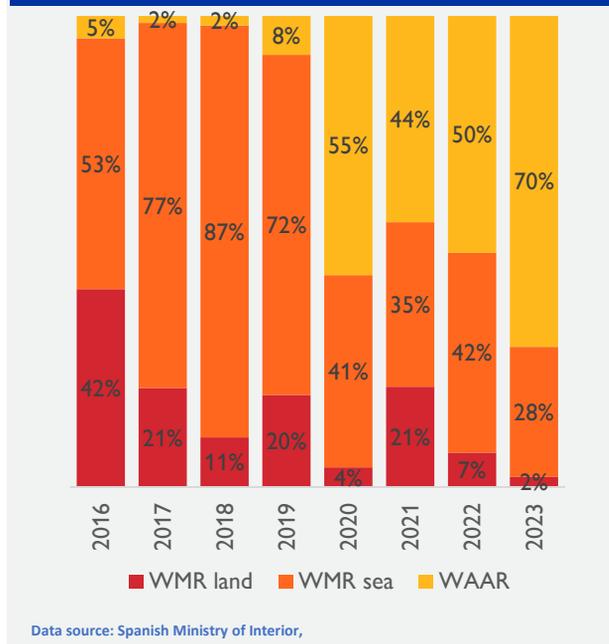
In 2023, arrivals to the Canary Islands represented 70 per cent of all arrivals in Spain, with most of the rest being represented by a variety of locations in Andalucía, the region of Murcia, the Comunidad Valenciana and the Balearic Islands (28%). Land arrivals only represented 2 per cent of total.

7. Spain data on nationalities are sourced from [Frontex](https://frontex.europa.eu/).

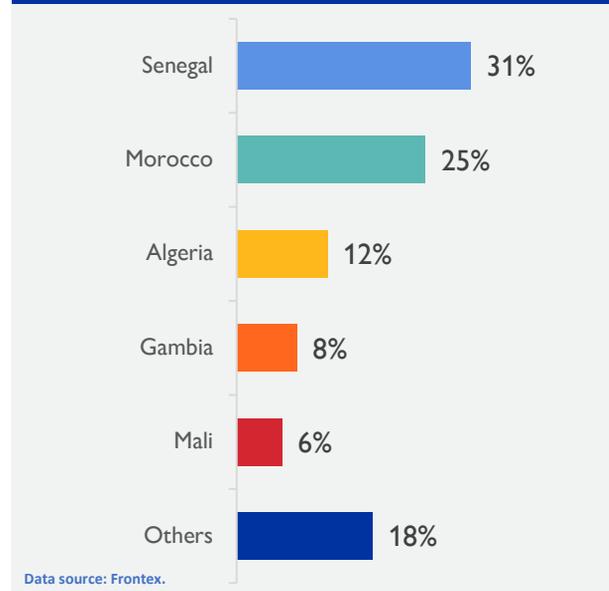
8. IOM’s Missing Migrant Project: missingmigrants.iom.int [Accessed 15 March 2024].

The total number of dead and missing migrants on their way to Spain were 458 along the WMR and 959 along the WAAR). Overall, this represents a 16 per cent increase compared to 2022.⁸

Arrivals in Spain – by route and by year, 2020–2023 (%)



Arrivals in Spain – total by nationality, 2023 (%)



OTHER COUNTRIES OF FIRST ARRIVAL

BULGARIA, CYPRUS, AND MALTA

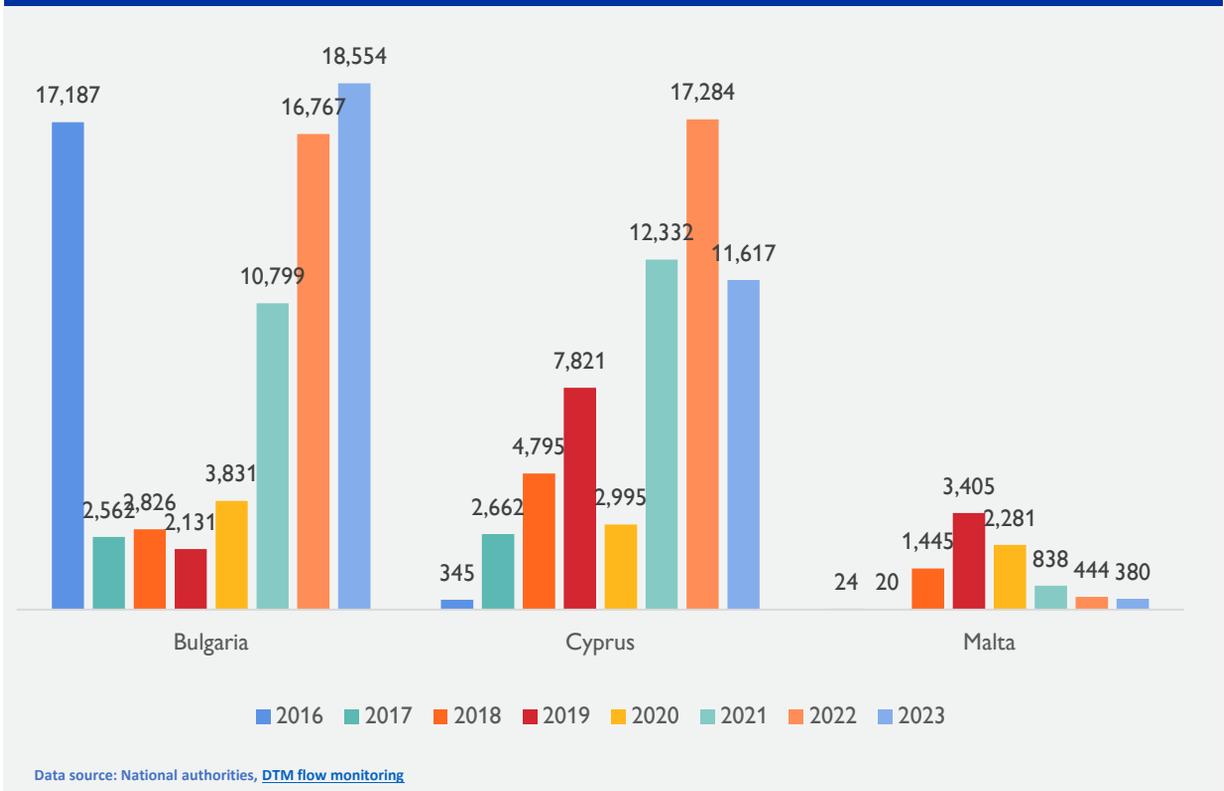
According to the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, 18,554 migrants were apprehended on entry, inside and on exit from the country in 2023, which represents a high increase of 11 per cent compared to the previous year. 2023 is the highest reported year since 2016. Main reported nationalities registered in 2023 in Bulgaria were Syrian Arab Republic (53%), Afghanistan (32%), and Morocco (12%).⁹

According to the Asylum office, new registrations of asylum applicants in Cyprus were 11,617 in 2023.¹⁰ No information is available to distinguish by sea or land crossings through the green border with the northern part of the island. Main

nationalities reported in 2023 were Syrian Arab Republic (20%), Nigeria (11%), Democratic Republic of Congo (10%), and Pakistan (8%).

In Malta, 380 migrants or refugees arrived by sea in 2023, which represent a 14 per cent decrease compared to 2022. Malta recorded highest number of arrivals in 2019 (3,405), which is 9 times more than the total number of arrivals in 2023. According to available data, the main nationality at arrival in Malta was Bangladesh (52%), followed by Syrian Arab Republic (28%) and Egypt (8%). Migrants reportedly departed from Libya.

Arrivals to Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Malta – total by year, 2016 – 2023



9. Data for Bulgaria include entries from Greece, North Macedonia, Serbia, Romania, air and maritime borders with no previous registration in another EU country.

10. Data for Cyprus are sources from the Asylum office. In previous reporting periods, data were sourced from the NGO CODECA which manages the main reception center where registrations are recorded soon upon arrivals. Comparisons with previous period shall be made with caution.

TRANSITS THROUGH THE WESTERN BALKAN REGION

Along the WB region,¹¹ **Serbia** is the country with the highest number of transits reported in 2023, with 106,886 new migrants and refugees registered in reception centres in the country.¹² This is a decrease of 12 per cent compared to 2022 (120,883). No data on nationalities of migrants registered is available for Serbia.

Croatia registered 63,787 transits in 2023, with an increase of 26 per cent compared to 2022 (50,624). Afghanistan is the most reported nationality (32%), followed by Türkiye (18%) and Morocco (9%).

Slovenia registered 60,687 migrants and refugees in 2023, registering the highest increase among WB countries (94% compared to the 31,161 of 2022). Main nationalities reported are Afghanistan (29%), Morocco (15%), and Pakistan (9%).

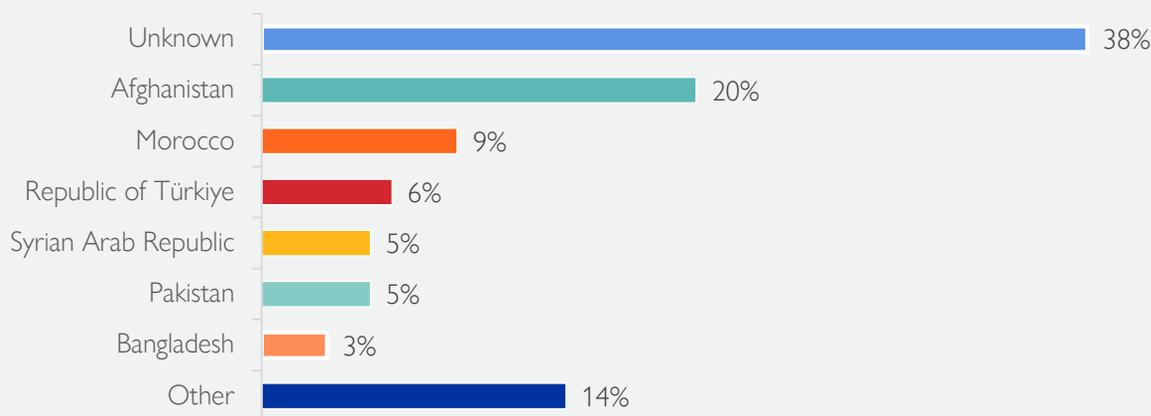
In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, authorities registered 34,409 migrants in 2023, which is 25 per cent more than the 27,429 registered in 2022. Main nationalities are Afghanistan (42%), Morocco (21%), and Syrian Arab Republic (7%).

In the other WB countries and territories (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, and

Kosovo*), a total of 26,180 migrants and refugees have been officially registered at entry or exit in 2023, representing a decrease of 44 per cent compared to the 46,640 of 2022. The main nationalities registered for these countries in 2023 are Syrian Arab Republic (24%), Afghanistan (17%), Morocco (12%) and Pakistan (11%).

During the reported period, IOM’s DTM carried out several assessments at key flow monitoring points within Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹³ Also, in 2023 about 1 thousand flow monitoring surveys (FMS) were collected in the 6 WB countries. According to the available evidence, most migrants travel through Türkiye before crossing into Greece (by land or sea) or Bulgaria. Migrants and refugees from Central and South Asia (Afghans, Bangladeshis, Iranians, Pakistanis) and the Middle East (Iraqis, Syrians) tend to travel mostly by land, walking and using several land transportation means during their journey. In contrast, most migrants and refugees from the African continent start their journeys by plane either directly to the WB region or to the Republic of Türkiye before moving by land onwards.¹⁴

Transits in the WB region – nationality breakdown, total in 2023



Data source: National authorities of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Kosovo*, DTM flow monitoring

11. Transits through the WB region shall be considered separately to prevent to the extent possible the double counting of the same persons that cross multiple borders to reach Europe.

12. This is used as a proxy indicator for the overall number of new registrations by national authorities in Serbia.

13. IOM, Dec 28 2023. DTM Bosnia & Herzegovina — [Migrant Mobility Situation Report \(November 2023\)](#). IOM, Bosnia & Herzegovina.

14. IOM, Mar 14 2024. DTM Serbia — [Flow Monitoring Surveys with Migrants Travelling through Serbia](#) (June-August 2023). IOM, Serbia.

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

4. MIGRANTS' PRESENCE IN RECEPTION

EUROPE AND THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE

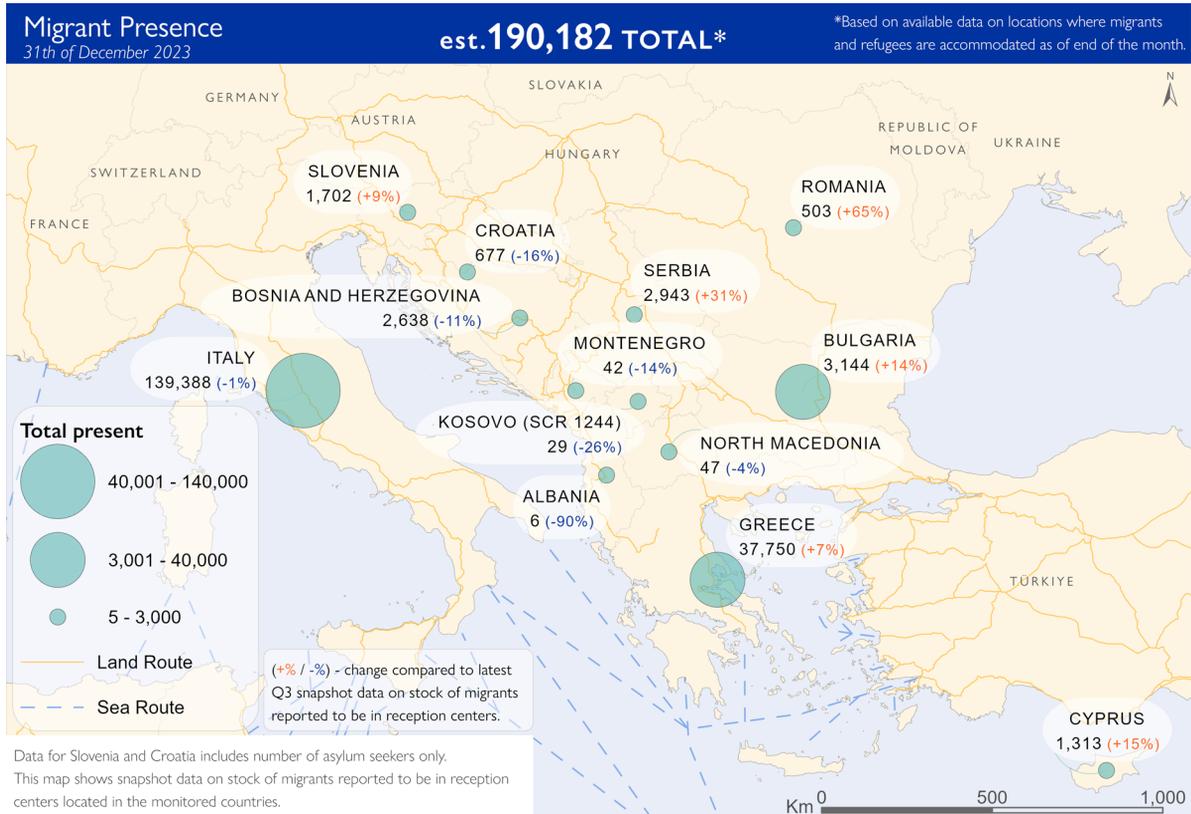
At the end of Q4 2023 an estimated 190,182 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were present in different facilities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Kosovo*. No data is available on migrants in reception in Spain and Malta. The estimated migrant presence at the end of Q4 2023 is 1 per cent higher than the 188,288 reported at the end of Q3, and also 35 per cent higher compared to the same quarter of 2022.

Italy and Greece report the largest shares of migrant presence overall (73% and 20% of the total, respectively), similarly to the previous reporting periods. The number of migrants in reception in Italy remained stable between Q3

and Q4 2023 (-1%) reaching 139,388, but the total at the end of Q4 was 30 per cent higher than at the end of Q4 2022. In Greece, the number of migrants in reception has increased during to 2023, reaching 37,750 in Q4 2023, which is 79 per cent more than the 21,126 in Q4 2022.

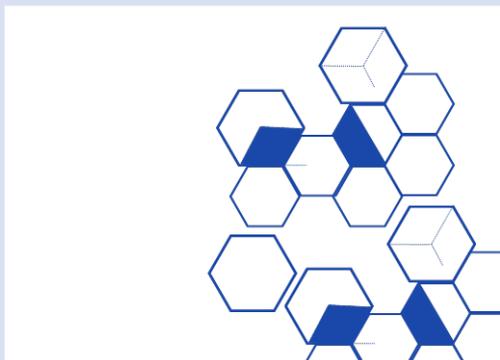
In the WB region, Serbia reported the highest number of migrants in reception at the end of Q4 2023 (2,943), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (2,638).

Additionally, according to the latest available data from the Turkish PMM, there are more than 4.6 million foreign nationals present in Türkiye as of the end of Q4 2023, 3.5 millions of whom are seeking international protection.¹⁵



* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). 15. IOM, Jan 19 2024. DTM Türkiye — [Migrant Presence Monitoring - Quarterly Migrant Presence Monitoring \(Oct-Dec 2023\)](#). IOM, Republic of Türkiye.

5. LATEST PRODUCTS AND PUBLICATIONS



Europe — Mixed Migration Flows to Europe, Yearly Overview Dataset (2023)



Türkiye — Migrant Presence Monitoring - Quarterly Migrant Presence Monitoring (Q4 Oct – Dec 2023)



Serbia — Flow Monitoring Surveys Report (Jun – Aug 2023)



Europe — Mixed Migration Flows to Europe, Quarterly Overview (Jul – Sep 2023)

For more information, please refer to the DTM Europe Mixed Migration Flows to Europe [Methodological Note](#) and the page <https://dtm.iom.int/europe/arrivals>

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