



**553**

Migrants interviewed



**36 days**

Average length of stay in BiH



**1,830**

Registrations by the Service for Foreigners' Affairs of BiH (SFA) in April 2024

Top **5** countries of origin of respondents

Syrian Arab Republic **39%**

Afghanistan **14%**

Morocco **12%**

Türkiye **6%**

Nepal **4%**



**81%**

Travelled throughout the country by bus



**27%**

Travelled by taxi

*\*Multiple answers possible*



**76%**

of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once



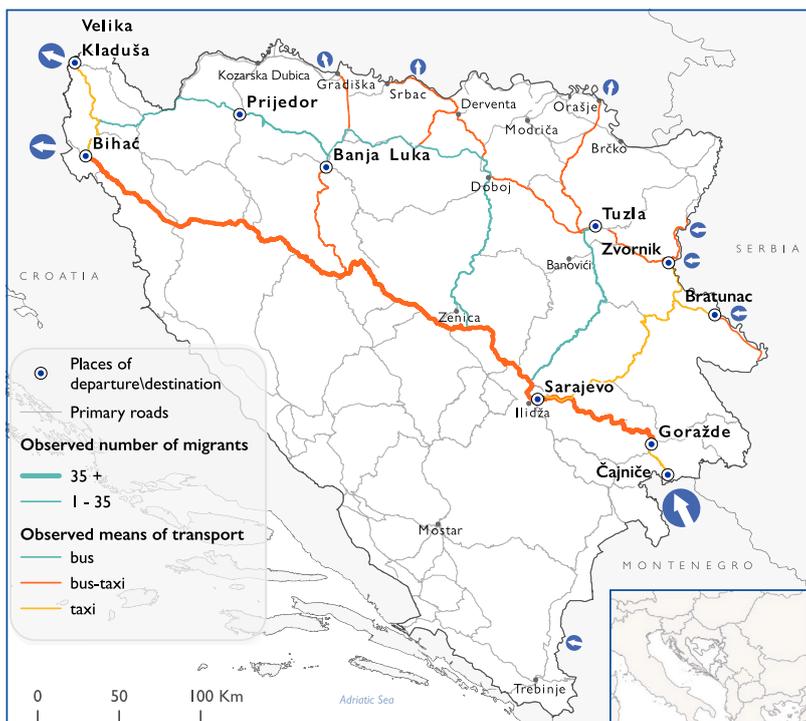
**1%**

Of those outside TRCs are not planning to register in any TRC

**8,374**

SFA registrations in 2024

This report provides insights into the profiles, experiences, needs, routes travelled and intentions of migrants transiting through Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).<sup>1</sup> Data was collected from 1 to 30 April 2024. IOM carried out a route observation exercise in the Republika Srpska, Sarajevo Canton, Posavina Canton, Tuzla Canton, Bosnian-Podrinje Canton and Una Sana Canton to monitor trends in entries and exits as well as transit modalities within BiH. IOM also surveyed 553 migrants in active transit locations such as bus stops or at key entry and exit locations throughout the country as well as in four transit reception centres (TRCs) in BiH (Lipa, Ušivak, Borići and Blažuj).



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.  
Map 1: Most prevalent routes travelled by migrants within BiH

## ROUTE OBSERVATION

- Consistent with February and March 2024, failed border crossings into Croatia remain high, with 76 per cent of respondents stating that they had tried and failed to cross the border at least once in April 2024.
- The map above shows that migrants enter BiH through the eastern border with Serbia or the border with Montenegro further south. Most people entered the area between Zvornik and the Border Crossing Šepak. Other entry points from Serbia were around Bratunac.
- From Montenegro, the majority of migrants cross into BiH from around the Metaljka border crossing point. Some migrants also entered BiH close to the area of Vračnovići/Deleuša Border Crossing.
- Most migrants make their way to Sarajevo and travel to Bihac to attempt crossing the border into Croatia in the area of Velika Kladuša. Some migrants also exit BiH near Bosanska Gradiška, Srbac, and Orašje.

<sup>1</sup> Interviewees include migrants in an irregular situation, refugees and asylum-seekers as the reference population consists of mixed migration flows.

From 1 January to 30 April 2024, the SFA recorded 8,374 migrant registrations on arrival in the country, an increase of 15 per cent compared to the same period in 2023.



Figure 1: Migrant registrations in BiH, 2023 compared to 2024

## PROFILES

This sample consists of 553 migrants surveyed in bus stations at known entry routes, transit locations and exit locations in BiH as well as in four TRCs (Blažuj, Ušivak, Lipa and Borići). The average age of interviewees was 28, with the youngest being 18 years old and the oldest 56. Most (66%) of the respondents were between 18 and 29 years old and 88 per cent were single. Men represented 88 per cent of the respondents, while women made up the remaining 12 per cent.

In April 2024, Syrian nationals were the largest nationality group in the sample (39%), followed by Afghan (14%), Moroccan (12%), Turkish (6%), and Nepali (4%) nationals.

The survey asked migrants how they moved between cities and key locations in BiH. Most (90%) stated they walked, while 81 per cent said that they had taken a bus to travel between some key locations. Apart from the bus, 27 per cent also said that they had taken a taxi. Key informant interviews revealed the average taxi price per person within BiH was around 50 EUR.

Seventy-five per cent of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once. Six per cent of these attempts were facilitated. Almost all (99%) respondents stated that they failed because they were intercepted and returned by authorities, while the remaining one per cent of respondents said it was due to route closure. Only two respondents stated that they would not try to cross the border again.

Survey respondents used social media and instant messaging to organize their journeys to Western Europe. The most frequently used platforms were WhatsApp, Facebook and Viber.

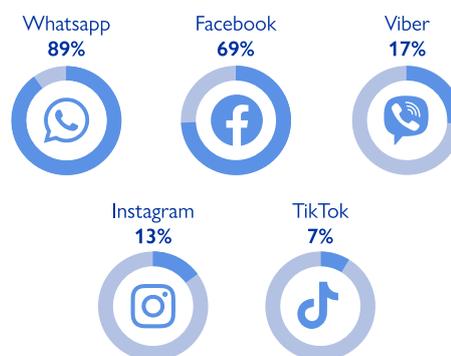


Figure 2: Most frequently cited platforms migrants used to plan their journeys (multiple answers possible) (n=553)

## JOURNEYS

The average length of stay in BiH was 36 days, 6 days longer than in March 2024 and 11 days longer than in February 2024.

Eighty-four per cent of respondents had entered through one of the border areas with Serbia, while nine per cent entered from Montenegro. Six per cent (35 people) entered by plane. Of the 35 people who arrived by plane, 27 were from Türkiye, four were from China, three were from Somalia and one respondent was unknown.

When asked if they were accompanied by people who facilitated their border crossing, 39 per cent of respondents stated that they were accompanied. By comparison, in March 2024, 45 per cent of respondents stated they were facilitated while in February 2024, it was 54 per cent.

Respondents who stated they were facilitated paid on average 175 EUR per person to enter from Serbia, a 100 EUR increase compared to February. The cost of entry from Montenegro was an average of 150 EUR per person. Some respondents pay in bundles from their country of origin to BiH, rather than paying per border crossing within the Western Balkans. For example, respondents from the Syrian Arab Republic paid on average 14,500 EUR from the Syrian Arab Republic to BiH.

Respondents' most frequently cited needs tend to relate to prolonged journeys throughout the region.

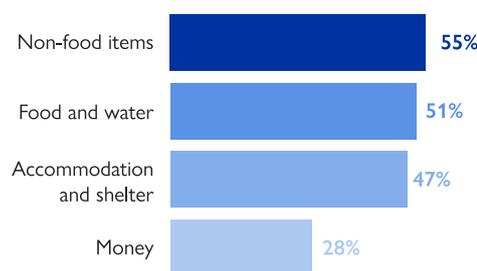


Figure 3: Most important current needs outside temporary reception centres (multiple answers possible) (n=553)

**ACCOMMODATION**

Of those who were interviewed outside formal reception centres at exit locations (n=194), one per cent stated that they had not registered in any TRC and did not intend to register. This figure may provide some insight into the number of migrants who transit through the country without being registered by authorities.

Most respondents (85%) stated that they had resided in a transit reception centre at one point during their stay in BiH. Many of those migrants who arrive in the country late at night opt to sleep near bus stations while they wait for transport options. Twenty-five per cent of respondents said they had slept outdoors at one point during their stay in BiH. Twenty-two per cent of respondents stated that they had squatted in abandoned buildings. Four per cent of respondents paid for hostels or hotels. On average, people paid 24 EUR per person per night to stay in hotels or hostels, and 12 EUR for private accommodation.

**INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRIES**

Figure 4 shows a percentage breakdown of the top five intended countries of destination.

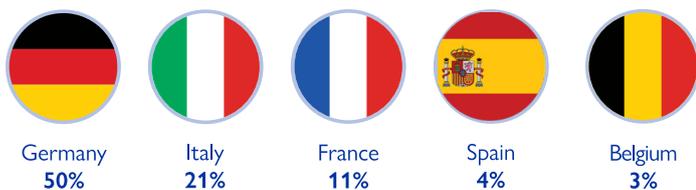


Figure 4: Top five intended destinations (n=553)

Over three-fourths of respondents from the Syrian Arab Republic (79%) and Türkiye (77%) stated that they intended to travel to Germany. Nationals of Afghanistan mostly mentioned Germany (59%), Italy (20%) and France (12%), while the top three intended destinations for nationals of Morocco were Italy (40%), France (37%) and Spain (11%). Respondents from Nepal said they aimed to travel to Germany (31%), Spain (27%) and Italy (23%).

Figure 5 shows a breakdown of the three main reasons respondents selected these countries of destination. Figure 6 is a graphic illustration of intended countries of destination by nationality by the top 10 nationalities in the sample.

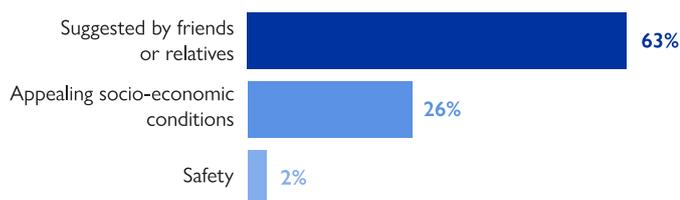


Figure 5: Top three reasons for choosing intended destination country (n=553)

**SPECIAL FOCUS - NATIONALS OF SOMALIA**

To contextualize the journeys, experiences, and complex needs of migrants on the move, IOM carries out group interviews with specific migrant groups every month. This section is not representative but aims to give context to the quantitative data, by portraying one of the many nuanced and diverse experiences of migrants transiting through the Western Balkans. In April, IOM carried out interviews with nine people from Somalia in transit reception centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

- Nationals of Somalia have been arriving in small numbers in Bosnia and Herzegovina relative to other nationalities. From 2018 to 2023, Somali nationals have made up less than half a per cent of official registrations. Since January 2024, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) has reported a minor increase in arrivals of Somali nationals, registering between 20 and 30 people every month. The average age of Somali nationals who have been registered in the transit reception centres in BiH in 2023 and 2024 was 24 years old.
- All of the interviewees said they left Somalia due to general conditions of instability in the country as well as poor economic prospects.
- Most of the interviewees stated that they left Somalia for Türkiye via air travel to Istanbul. They reported obtaining student visas to study in Türkiye. Two respondents had completed their bachelor's degrees in Turkish universities, and had left Türkiye to move toward the Western Balkans as their resident permits were expiring. One respondent stated that they received a tourist visa to Albania and flew directly to Tirana.
- The interviewees who travelled through Türkiye spoke of having paid for each border crossing. They mentioned paying around 500 EUR to cross from Türkiye into Greece. Some of the respondents crossed the land border while others took the sea route to Greece. Interviewees mentioned that they negotiated the price they paid for border crossing locations with the facilitators.
- From Greece, all of the interviewees entered Albania, where they walked through a forested area for several hours, before being picked up by a facilitator in a car and driven to Tirana. They mentioned spending a few hours in Tirana, buying supplies before being driven in a car by a facilitator to the border with Montenegro.
- Once they had crossed the border into Montenegro, they spoke of walking for several days and sleeping outside in Montenegro and BiH before being picked up in a car and taken to Sarajevo. Interviewees mentioned paying around 200 EUR to pay for border crossing coordinates from Greece all the way to BiH.
- Interviewees spoke of receiving information about the routes from friends, family and community members who had previously made the journey from Somalia to Western Europe.
- Along the route, some interviewees mentioned that they were robbed by police in the Western Balkans as well as by organized smuggling networks consisting of other migrants.

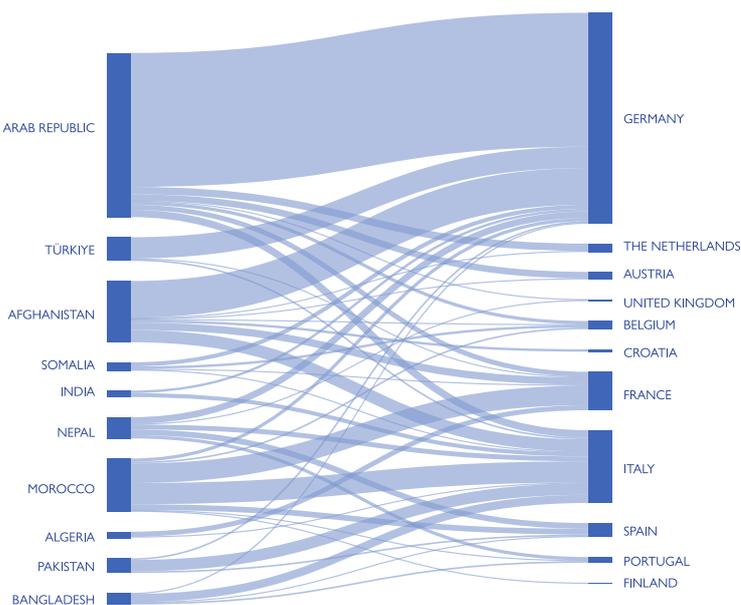


Figure 6: Intended country of destination by nationality (n=454)



IOM enumerators speaking to migrants in Glinica, near Velika Kladuša in the Una Sana Canton in April 2024. © IOM BiH 2024 / Melita Zulić

## METHODOLOGY

This report uses a multi-source and multi-method approach with the aim of providing insights into the profiles, experiences, needs, movement patterns and intentions of migrants transiting through BiH.

### Survey interviews with migrants

The questionnaire is administered via Kobo Toolbox and collects information on the age, sex and nationalities of respondents, information about their journeys to BiH, registration information and movement modalities within the country as well as their primary needs at the moment of the interview. The survey is anonymized, voluntary and respondents do not receive compensation for participation. Respondents can choose not to answer any question and can withdraw their consent at any moment. Data was collected from 1 to 30 April 2024 by seven teams of 13 enumerators (five women, and eight men) in Canton Sarajevo, Una Sana Canton, Tuzla Canton, Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Bosnian-Podrinje Canton and Zvornik. Data was also collected in four TRCs (Lipa, Ušivak, Blažuj and Borići). In total, IOM surveyed 252 migrants outside TRCs in the active transit locations mentioned above, and 301 migrants inside TRCs.

### Route observation

IOM field teams observed key entry, transit and exit locations in BiH to gauge the main routes migrants travel to enter the country, to move within and to exit the country. This route observation took place from 22 April 2024 to 26 April 2024. IOM observed 120 migrants and produced the map based on these observations.

### Key informant interviews

Key informants can help provide information on the modus operandi of migrant mobility even when IOM field teams are not present to observe it themselves. The purpose of the key informant interviews is to contextualize the quantitative data gathered through the survey. Key informant interviews are carried out through group interviews with migrants inside TRCs. They are conducted by IOM staff trained in leading qualitative focus group discussions with vulnerable populations.

## LIMITATIONS

The data collection is conducted in the context of the following limitations:

1. IOM field teams collect data in shifts within IOM working hours (07:30 – 18:30). However, many migrants enter and travel throughout the country outside of these hours, and especially late at night or early in the morning before the break of dawn.
2. This data is based on a convenience sample of migrants in the survey locations during the timeframe indicated and can therefore not be generalized to the broader population of migrants in BiH.
3. The data collection is limited to the areas where migrants are known to enter, transit in and exit BiH. IOM continually monitors these locations, with the support of other local partners. However, due to the size of the country it is not possible to carry out this data collection in all areas where migrants may be present. IOM prioritizes the most frequently used entry, transit and exit locations, based on its field presence and contacts with key informants.

## SUPPORTED BY:



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



UK Government



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy