



2,194

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

Top **5** countries of origin of respondents

Syrian Arab Republic **27%**

Morocco **17%**

Afghanistan **11%**

Türkiye **9%**

Nepal **6%**



35 days
Average length of stay in BiH



73%
Travelled by bus



36%
Travelled by taxi

*Multiple answers possible



66%
Of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once

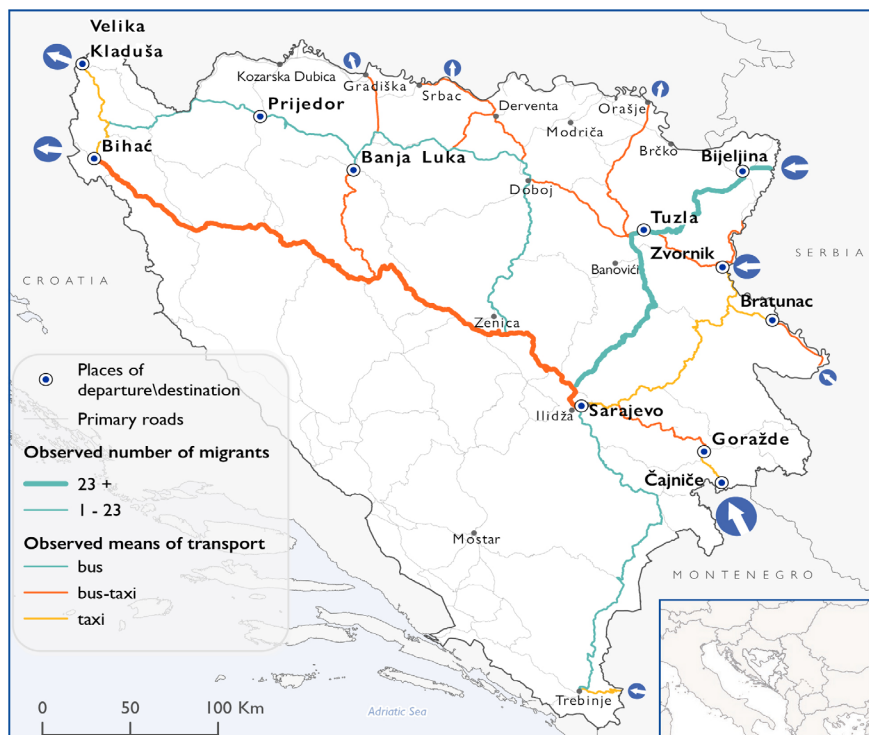


0%
Of those outside TRCs are not planning to register in any TRC

12,334

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).¹ Data was collected from 1 to 30 June 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 49 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).



Map 1: Most prevalent routes travelled by migrants within BiH. 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.

ROUTE OBSERVATION

- Failed border crossings out of BiH in June remain high at 66 per cent, with respondents stating that they had tried and failed to cross the border at least once in June 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 of Bijeljina. Other entry points from Serbia were around Zvornik and Bratunac.
- From Montenegro, the majority of migrants cross into BiH in the area of the Metaljka border crossing point. Some migrants also entered BiH through the Klobuk crossing to Trebinje, then took a bus to Sarajevo
- Most migrants make their way to Sarajevo and travel to Bihac to attempt crossing the border into Croatia in the area of Velika Kladuša. Key informants reported an increase in crossings near Bosanska Gradiška and Orašje.

¹ 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 June 2024, the SFA recorded 12,334 migrant registrations on arrival in the country, an increase of 1 per cent compared to the same period in 2023.

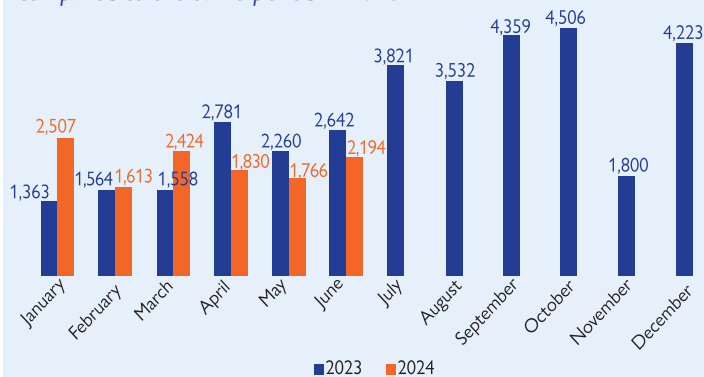


Figure 1: Migrant registrations in BiH, 2023 compared to 2024

JOURNEYS

Respondents were asked how long they had been travelling since leaving their country of origin. The average amount of time was 184 days from leaving their country of origin to being interviewed in BiH.

The average length of stay in BiH was 35 days, three days longer than recorded in May 2024. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents stated they had crossed into BiH from Serbia, and 17 per cent from Montenegro.

When asked if they were accompanied by people who facilitated their border crossing, 36 per cent of respondents stated they were facilitated. Thirty-five per cent of respondents stated using facilitators to cross from Montenegro into BiH, compared with 37 per cent of respondents who stated using facilitators to cross from Serbia into BiH.

The average cost of a single crossing from Montenegro to BiH was 236 EUR. The average cost of a single entry from Serbia into BiH was 204 EUR. Some respondents pay in bundles from their country of origin to the Western Balkans rather than paying per border crossing. For example, respondents from the Syrian Arab Republic paid, on average, 14,000 EUR to go from the Syrian Arab Republic to Germany.

The survey asked migrants how they moved between cities and key locations in BiH. Most (93%) stated they walked, while 73 per cent said that they had taken a bus to travel between some key locations. Twenty-five per cent of respondents recorded taking a taxi at some point during their stay in BiH.

Sixty-six per cent of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once. Eight per cent of these attempts were facilitated. The average number of attempts to cross the border into Croatia was 3, with the maximum number of attempts being 14. Nearly all the respondents (99%) stated that they failed because they were intercepted and returned by authorities. Two per cent of respondents stated that they would not try to cross the border again.

Respondents were also asked what social media and instant messaging services they used to organise their journeys to Western Europe.

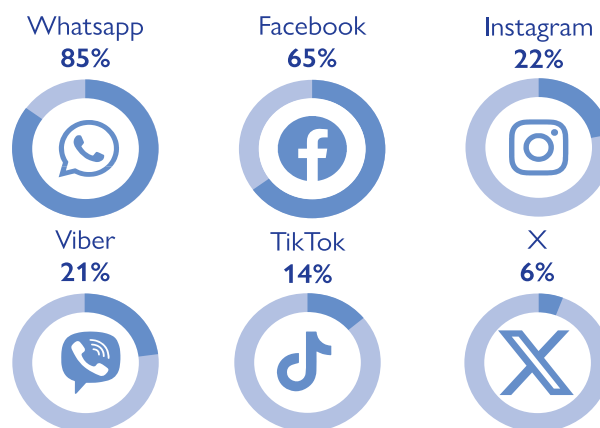


Figure 2: Most frequently cited platforms migrants use to plan their journeys (multiple answers possible) (n=486)

PROTECTION AND RISKS

IOM's protection unit systematically screens all migrants for vulnerabilities on first contact inside or outside transit reception centres (TRCs) in BiH. Through these emergency vulnerability screenings, IOM can effectively address immediate needs and ensure that migrants are referred to relevant services either by other IOM units, other humanitarian actors or state agencies.

In June, the protection team screened 1,004 migrants. Thirty-three per cent (336 individuals) of respondents were identified as having protection risks and needs.

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of the five most identified potential risks and needs.

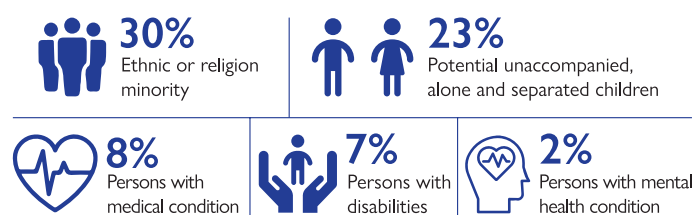


Figure 3: Five most identified potential risks and needs (n=336) (multiple answers possible)

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

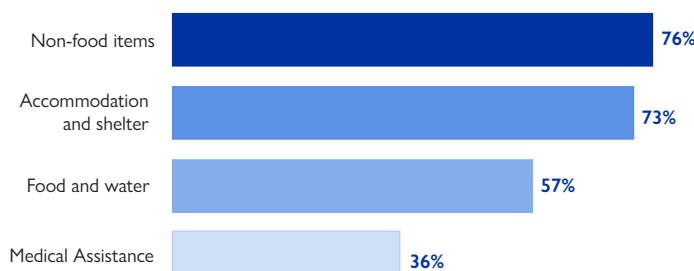


Figure 4: Most important current needs outside temporary reception centres (multiple answers possible) (n=486)

ACCOMMODATION

Of those who were interviewed outside formal reception centres at exit locations (n=112), all stated that they had either already registered in a TRC in BiH or that they intended to register in a TRC if they had not already done so. This question may provide some insight into the number of migrants who transit through the country without being registered by authorities.

Seventy-five per cent of respondents stated they had been accommodated in a TRC at one point during their stay in BiH. Forty-three per cent of respondents stated that they had slept outside, consistent with the 42 per cent recorded in May 2024. The number of respondents who reported squatting in abandoned buildings increased from 14 per cent recorded in May 2024 to 24 per cent in June 2024. The number of respondents recorded staying in hostels and hotels was two per cent, with the average cost of a stay being 20 EUR per night per person.

INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRIES

Figure 5 shows a percentage breakdown of the top five intended countries of destination.

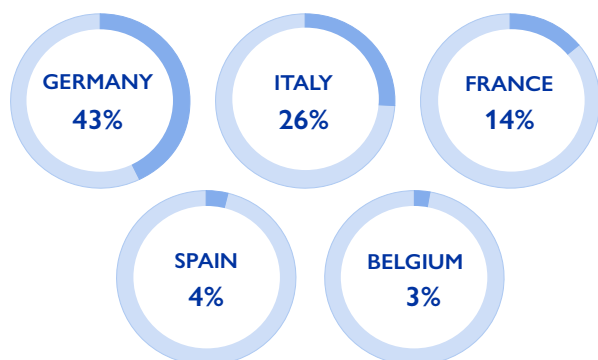


Figure 5: Top five intended destinations (n=486)

The survey found that the majority of respondents from the Syrian Arab Republic (80%) and Afghanistan (49%) identified Germany as their preferred destination. Nationals of Pakistan (71%), Morocco (40%), and Nepal (33%) indicated Italy as their intended destination. Respondents from Bangladesh (37%) and India (23%) said they intended to travel to France.

Figure 6 shows a breakdown of the three main reasons respondents selected these countries of destination.

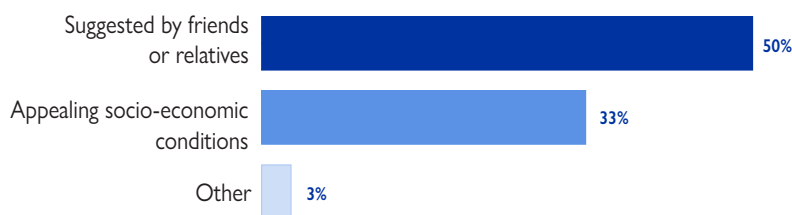


Figure 6: Top three reasons for choosing intended destination country (n=486)

SPECIAL FOCUS – NATIONALS OF EGYPT

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 June, IOM carried out interviews with seven people from Egypt in transit reception centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

- Nationals of Egypt started arriving in increasing numbers in 2024. In the first six months of 2024, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) have registered 476 Egyptian nationals in BiH compared to 108 in all of 2023.
- In 2024, based on reception centre registration data in BiH, 57 per cent of Egyptian nationals registered were unaccompanied and separated children, compared to 10 per cent of the overall population of migrants in reception centres. Ninety-nine per cent were male, compared to ninety-one per cent of migrants registered in reception centres in BiH.
- The Egyptian nationals interviewed spoke of leaving Egypt due to a lack of job prospects, poor pay and the increasingly high cost of living. They mentioned having raised money for their journeys through savings and borrowing from friends and family members.
- The individuals interviewed in groups did not know each other in Egypt, but met at various stages during their journeys to the Western Balkans.
- All of them had left Egypt around one year ago and all had travelled from Egypt to Libya. They crossed the border from Egypt to Libya irregularly in vehicles and on foot. From Libya, they travelled by boat to Greece. They paid between 2,000 and 3,000 EUR to take the boat.
- One interview participant mentioned residing in a closed camp in Greece for six months, while the others lived outside formal reception facilities for several months in Athens.
- From Greece, interviewees said they paid 500 EUR to cross the border into North Macedonia and then an additional 500 EUR to cross into Serbia with a vehicle. In Serbia, they resided in formal reception facilities before planning the last stage of their journey in the Western Balkans to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Three participants alleged that they were attacked by authorities in Serbia while one participant said he was bitten by a dog.
- When asked about their final intended destination countries, the interview participants said they wanted to travel to Italy or Spain as they felt there were good socioeconomic opportunities there. None of the participants said they had friends or family in those countries at the time they decided to start their migration journeys.

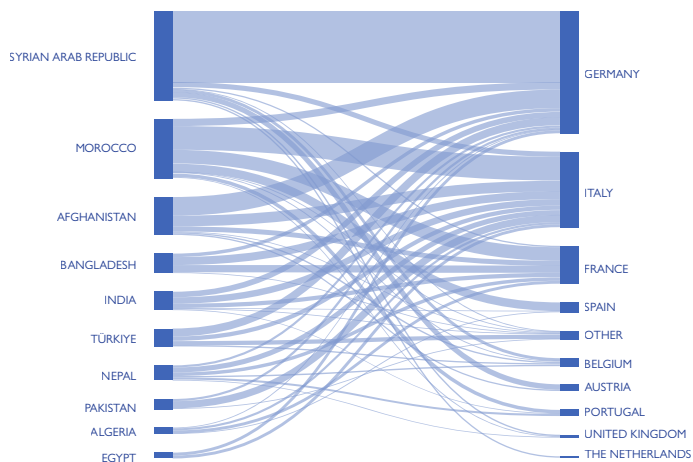


Figure 7: Intended country of destination for the top 10 nationalities in the sample (n=429)



Enumerators collecting data in TRC Lipa. © 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 answer any question and can withdraw their consent at any moment. Data was collected from 1 to 30 June 2024 by 15 enumerators (5 women and 10 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 112 migrants outside TRCs in the active transit locations mentioned above, and 329 migrants inside TRCs. The data used to provide the protection and risk indicators was collected from the emergency vulnerability screenings conducted by the IOM protection team.

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 24 June 2024 to 28 June 2024. IOM observed 168 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 contextualise 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