



301
Migrants interviewed



27 years
Average age of interviewed migrants

98%
Male



2%
Female



3,091
Registrations by the Service for Foreigners' Affairs of BiH (SFA) in July 2024

Top **5** countries of origin of respondents

Syrian Arab Republic **27%**

Afghanistan **24%**

Morocco **22%**

Türkiye **7%**

Pakistan **5%**



35 days
Average length of stay in BiH



64%
Travelled by bus



28%
Travelled by taxi

**Multiple answers possible*



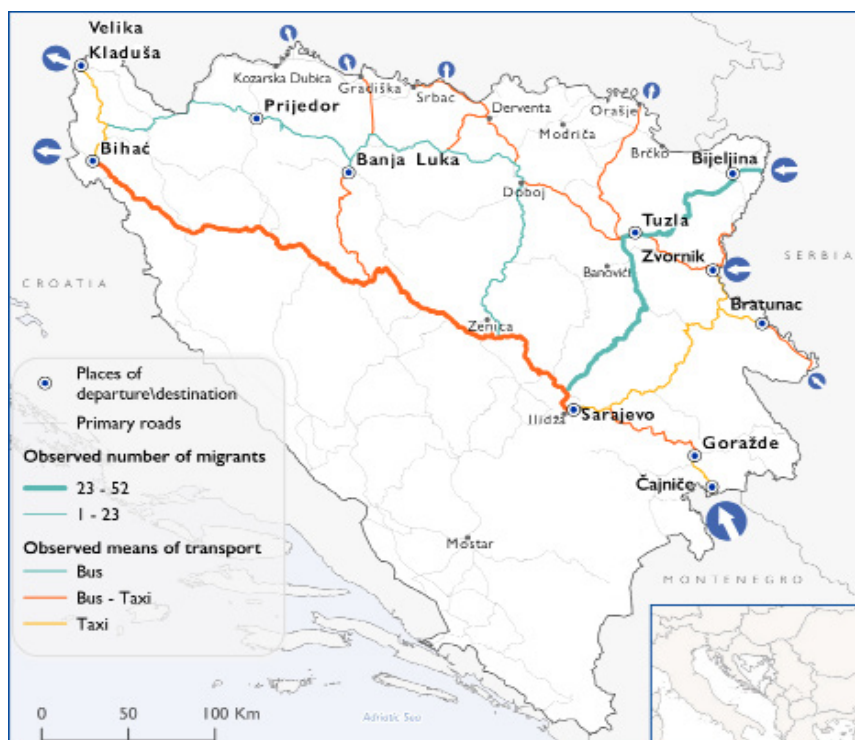
71%
Of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once



3%
Of those outside TRCs are not planning to register in any TRC

15,425
SFA registrations as of 31 July 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 July 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 32 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

- Seventy-one per cent of respondents stated that they had tried and failed to cross the border at least once in July 2024. This is consistent with June 2024, which recorded 66 per cent, and May 2024, which recorded 74 per cent.
- From Montenegro, the majority of migrants cross into BiH in the area of the Metaljka border crossing point.
- 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.
- 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 July 2024, the SFA recorded 15,425 migrant registrations on arrival in the country, a decrease of 4 per cent compared to the same period in 2023.

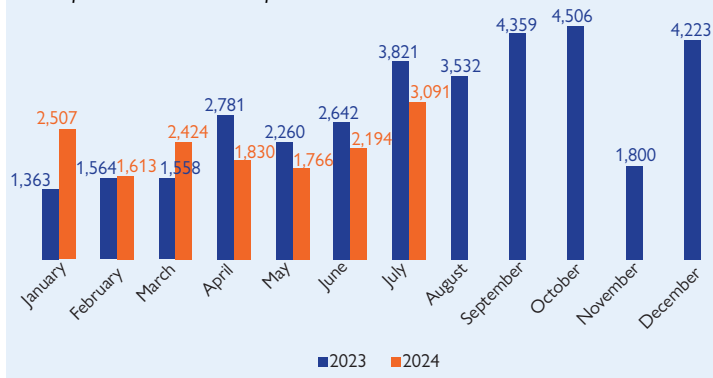


Figure 1: Migrant registrations in BiH, 2023 compared to 2024

JOURNEYS

On average, respondents had been travelling for 554 days from the time they left their country of origin until they were interviewed in BiH.

The average length of stay in BiH was 31 days, with the minimum number of days being seven and the maximum number of days being 150. Eighty per cent of respondents stated they had crossed into BiH from Serbia and twelve per cent from Montenegro.

When asked if they were accompanied by people who facilitated their border crossing, 31 per cent of respondents stated they were facilitated. Seventeen per cent of respondents stated that they had used facilitators to cross from Montenegro into BiH, compared with 34 per cent of respondents who stated using facilitators to cross from Serbia into BiH.

The average cost of a single entry from Serbia into BiH was 186 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 Afghanistan paid, on average, 10,000 EUR to travel from Afghanistan to Germany.

The survey asked migrants how they moved between cities and key locations in BiH. Most (94%) stated they walked, while 64 per cent said that they had taken a bus to travel between some key locations. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents recorded taking a taxi at some point during their stay in BiH.

Seventy-one per cent of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once. Two per cent of these attempts were facilitated. On average, respondents made three failed border crossing attempts. One respondent reported making 20 failed border crossing attempts. Nearly all the respondents (99%) stated that they failed because they were intercepted and returned by authorities. Two per cent of respondents who failed to cross, 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.

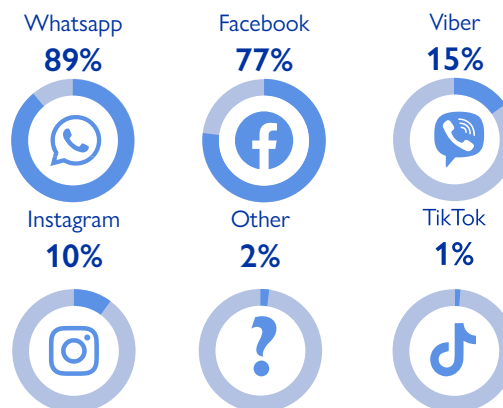


Figure 2: Most frequently cited platforms migrants use to plan their journeys (multiple answers possible) (n=301)

PROTECTION AND RISKS

IOM's protection team 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 July, the protection team screened 2,325 migrants. Forty-eight per cent (1,114 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=946) (multiple answers possible)

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

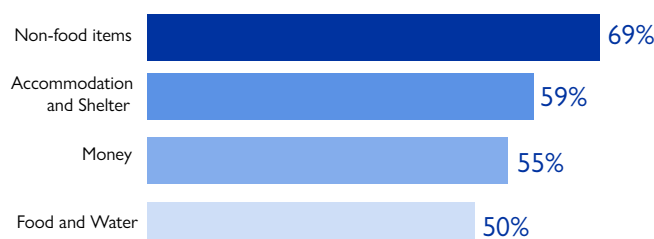


Figure 4: Most important current needs outside temporary reception centres (multiple answers possible) (n=301)

ACCOMMODATION

Of those who were interviewed outside formal reception centres at exit locations (n=94), three per cent said they would not register in any TRC. This question may provide some insight into the number of migrants who transit through the country without being registered by authorities.

Ninety-one per cent of respondents stated they had been accommodated in a TRC at one point during their stay in BiH. Fifty-eight per cent of respondents stated that they had slept outside, an increase from the forty-three per cent recorded in May 2024. The number of respondents who reported squatting in abandoned buildings decreased from 24 per cent recorded in June 2024 to 16 per cent in July 2024. The number of respondents recorded staying in hostels and hotels was three per cent, with the average cost of a stay being 26 EUR per night per person.

INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRIES

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

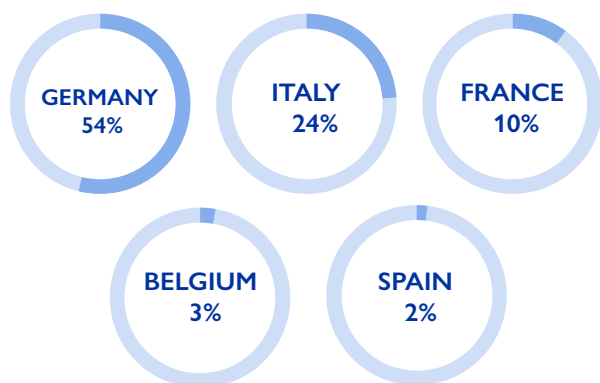


Figure 5: Top five intended destinations (n=301)

The survey found that the majority of respondents from the Syrian Arab Republic (86%), Türkiye (80%), and Afghanistan (72%) identified Germany as their preferred destination. Nationals of Pakistan (78%), Morocco (38%), and Nepal (25%) indicated Italy as their intended destination. Respondents from Algeria (50%) said they intended to travel to France.

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

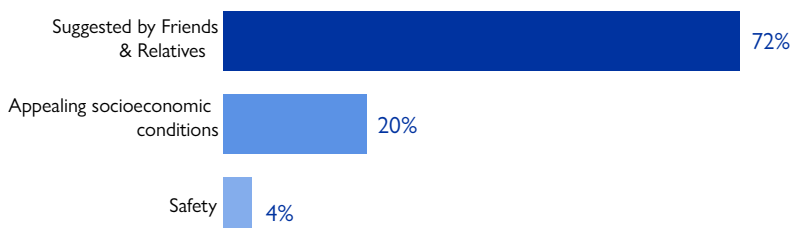


Figure 6: Top three reasons for choosing intended destination country (n=301)

SPECIAL FOCUS – FAMILIES

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 July, IOM carried out interviews with four families in transit reception centres in BiH.

- Although single males make up the majority of arrivals into BiH, 4,443 families have been recorded arriving in BiH since 1 January 2024. Families can vary in size and age, producing a unique set of logistical and emotional challenges when travelling.
- Four families made up the special focus group. Three families from the Syrian Arab Republic were travelling with children, and a couple from Nepal and Pakistan were travelling without children.
- The families said that they had left their country of origin due to economic reasons, and conflict. The families from the Syrian Arab Republic stated that they had been living in Türkiye for a number of years but left due to the increased discrimination and violence they faced. One parent mentioned that their children faced discrimination when at school.
- All the families stated that they used facilitators to cross from Greece to Albania and paid, on average, 3,000 EUR per family. Families mentioned that they paid a reduced fee for their children but could not remember the exact amount.
- Participants spent varying amounts of time in BiH, with the least amount being ten days and the maximum being nine months. All the families stated they had tried crossing the border with Croatia at least once. All the families stated that the Croatian border police had apprehended them aggressively with dogs, with parents stating that the dogs came close to their children and that it was a traumatising experience for both adults and children.
- Although all families stated they had bad experiences with the Croatian border police, they all stated that both authorities and facilitators have a bit more mercy for families travelling with children than those travelling alone.
- The families with children said they had to prepare their children psychologically before the trip, but further went on to say that they witnessed things they could not prepare or protect their children from, such as coming across a dead body. Parents also highlighted that they often ran out of food, and the additional lack of transport made the journey emotionally and physically demanding.
- The families stated that Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands were their intended destinations. They all said they would work once they arrived but wanted to prioritise learning the local language first.
- All the families remarked that the journey had a profound impact on them and that it had changed them forever, with some saying it had made them stronger.

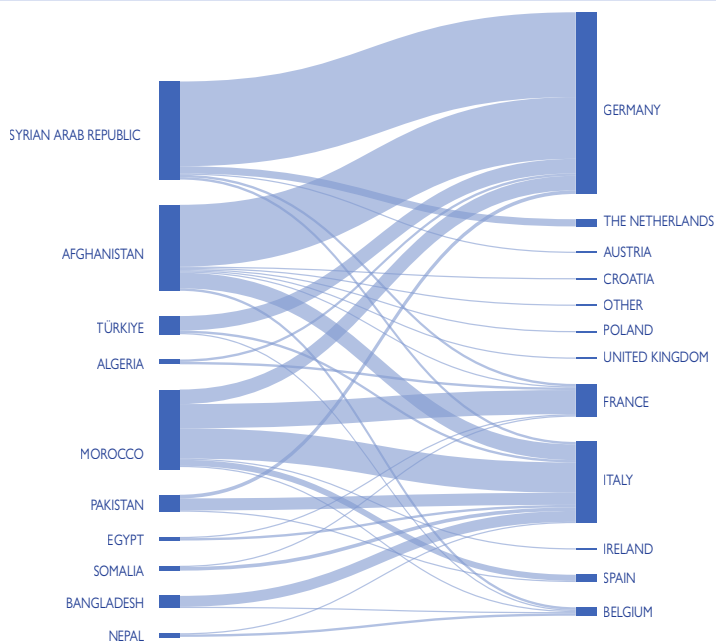


Figure 7: Intended country of destination for the top 10 nationalities in the sample (n=278)

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 July 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 111 migrants outside TRCs in the active transit locations mentioned above, and 190 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 22 to 26 July 2024. IOM observed 106 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.



Enumerators working together with the Red Cross to assist migrants. © IOM BiH 2024 / Melita Zulić

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