

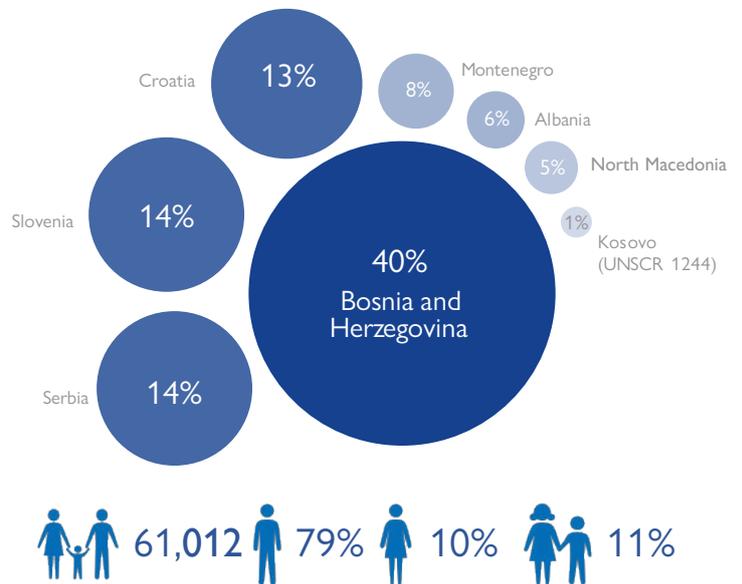


DTM Mediterranean – Western Balkans Overview

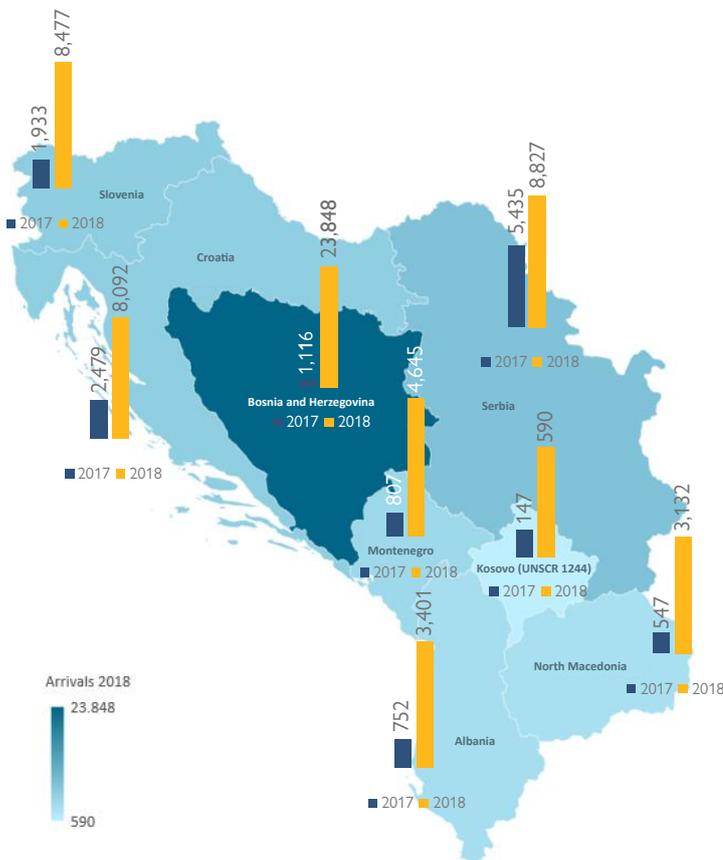
January - December 2018

Between January and December 2018, a total of 61,012¹ irregular migrants were officially registered² by the authorities in the Western Balkan countries which is five times more than the 13,216 registered in the previous year. The most significant increase was observed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where in 2018, authorities registered a total of 23,848 migrants and refugees - twenty times more than the 1,116 reported in 2017 and almost two times the 2017 yearly total reported for Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina combined (2,675). Similarly, all other countries included in this overview observed an increase in detected irregular entries in 2018 compared to 2017. In Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia authorities reported six times increase in registered arrivals compared to 2017, 807 vs. 4,645 and 547 vs. 3,132 respectively. Five times increase is calculated between the yearly totals in Albania, from 752 in 2017 to 3,401 in 2018³. Four times more migrants arrived in Slovenia this year – a total of 8,477 compared to the 1,933 registered in 2017 and similar increase is noted for Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) where in 2018, 590 new migrants were registered versus 147 reported in 2017.

Proportion of arrivals in 2018 per country



Registered irregular migrants in 2017 and 2018



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DYNAMIC IN ARRIVALS BETWEEN 2015 AND 2018

The multiple increase in arrivals registered in 2018 is still far behind the total of 194,093 arrivals registered in the Eastern Mediterranean in 2016 and even further than the 888,537 registered in 2015. Nonetheless, 95 per cent of registered arrivals in 2016 were reported in the first quarter and before the [EU-Statement](#) came into effect. In 2016, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and the Republic of North Macedonia registered a 95 per cent of migrants who transited in the region, while in 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina took the leading place among the top four countries that had registered 80 per cent of the 2018 caseload. Apart from that, noteworthy increases in Albania and Montenegro, countries that were not affected by the migratory flows in 2016, indicate a change in the transit routes taken since mid-2017 and onward trend that sustained in 2018 as well. Additionally, both in 2017 and 2018, increase in arrivals was observed in Slovenia and Croatia, the closest EU Member States on the way to Western Europe.

1 Unlike 2015 and 2016 when routes through the region were controlled and directed by the authorities through an established intra-regional humanitarian corridor, information collected from IOM field data collectors and mobile teams shows that migrants registered in 2017 and 2018 have been taking more diverse routes for traveling in the region. Hence, while it is possible that some migrants are registered in more than one country in the Western Balkans in 2018, majority of the arrivals in a particular country can be considered as original entries.

2 Registered refers to migrants apprehended or intercepted by national authorities in the Western Balkans. It is the minimum and estimated number of migrants that transited in the region. It does not represent the overall figures as the number of migrants that cross the region undetected is unknown.

3 Figure for 2018 includes apprehensions on entry to the country and 1,772 apprehensions on exit between March, when the outgoing flows started being registered, and the end of the year.

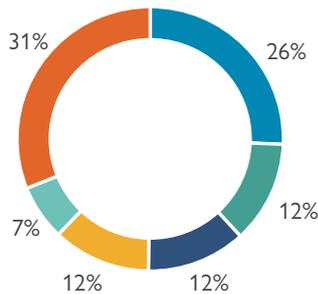
REGISTERED NATIONALITIES⁴

More than a half (62%) of all registered migrants were nationals of four countries – Pakistan (26%), Islamic Republic of Iran (12%), Afghanistan (12%) and the Syrian Arab Republic (12%). On a country level, Pakistan was most commonly reported origin country by migrants registered in Serbia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the Republic of North Macedonia, more than a half of migrants (55%) declared Iranian nationality while the first reported nationality group in Croatia was Afghanistan (20%). Distinctively, Syrian Arab Republic was the first registered origin country for migrants registered in Albania (31% of the total) and Montenegro (43%). The differences in main nationalities among the registered migrants in different Balkan countries indicate variations in the sub-routes taken by different nationalities.

When comparing the main nationalities of migrants registered in 2018 with the ones registered in 2017, two interesting changes are noted – a change in the share of migrants from Pakistan and Afghanistan and between migrants from Algeria and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Afghanistan was the main (23%) nationality in 2017 followed by Algeria (12%). Syrian Arab Republic (8%) and Pakistan (6%). An exception is increased presence of Algerian nationals (12% of the total) in 2017 that was replaced by Iranian nationals a year later. Increased presence of Iranian nationals in 2018 can be partially explained by Visa free regime between Serbia and the Islamic Republic of Iran introduced in 2018. Iranian nationals were the first nationality group in the Republic of North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the second and third quarter of the year. Upon the cancellation of the Visa free regime between the two countries in late summer of 2018, figures drastically decreased in the last two months of the year.

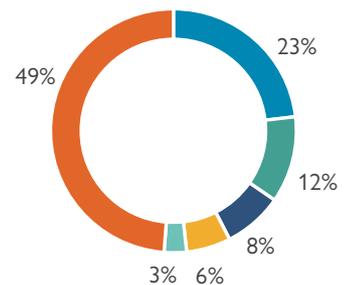
Nationality breakdown – top 5 nationalities in 2017 and 2018

Nationality breakdown for 2018



- Pakistan
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Afghanistan
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Iraq
- Other

Nationality breakdown for 2017



- Afghanistan
- Algeria
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Pakistan
- Iraq
- Other

Data source: National authorities and IOM.

INTRA-REGIONAL MOBILITY

According to available data, 2017 was marked with a higher intra-regional mobility. This was especially visible in Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia where authorities registered irregular migrants from countries in the region. A quarter of irregular migrants registered in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 16% of those registered in Slovenia, were from the region. Mainly from Kosovo (UNSCR 1244) and Albania (read more [here](#)).

⁴ While the nationality breakdown is provided by the official authorities, in many of the countries, nationalities are based on the initial self-declaration by the migrants.

Main transit routes identified in the region in 2018

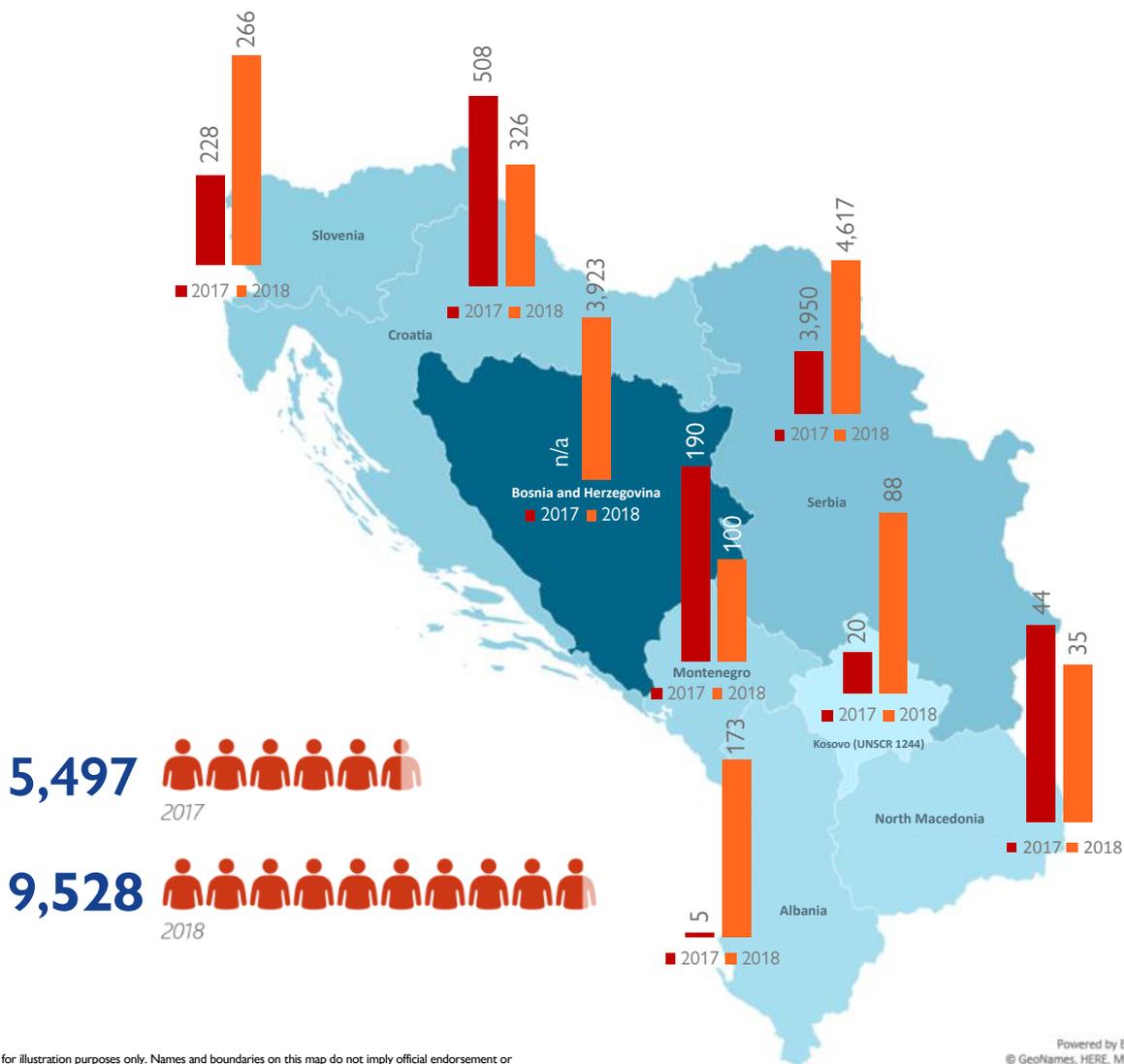


Migrants in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina. © Munever Salihović/IOM 2018

MIGRANTS PRESENCE⁵

At the end of the year, estimated 9,528 migrants and asylum seekers were residing in different reception facilities across the region. 88 per cent were accommodated in centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Based on information from field colleagues, the situation in the reception facilities changes almost on a daily basis, indicating that, irrespectively of their status in the country, migrants and refugees use existing reception system as a short term solution for planning the next leg of their journey to Western European countries.

Nevertheless, looking at the overall available figure, there were 75 per cent more migrants and asylum seekers in the region at the end of December 2018 when compared to est. 5,497 recorded at the end of 2017. According to available data, main nationalities of migrants accommodated in the reception centers are similar in both years. Population of migrants and asylum seekers is predominantly composed of those arriving from the Syrian Arab Republic, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and few nationals of North African countries (Algeria, Morocco) and countries in the region.



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⁵ Note that the data on number of accommodated migrants and asylum seekers in centers is only a snapshot as of the reporting day and does not show the total number of individuals who passed or were registered in the reception facilities throughout the month.

This overview was produced by DTM Regional team for Europe through funding support from:

