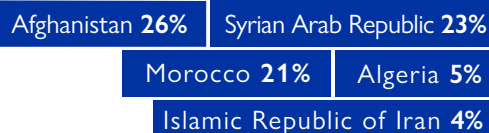




2,719

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

Top **5** countries of origin of respondents



34 days

Average length of stay in BiH



67%

Travelled by bus



21%

Travelled by taxi

*Multiple answers possible

20,927

SFA registrations from 1 January to 30 September 2024



57%

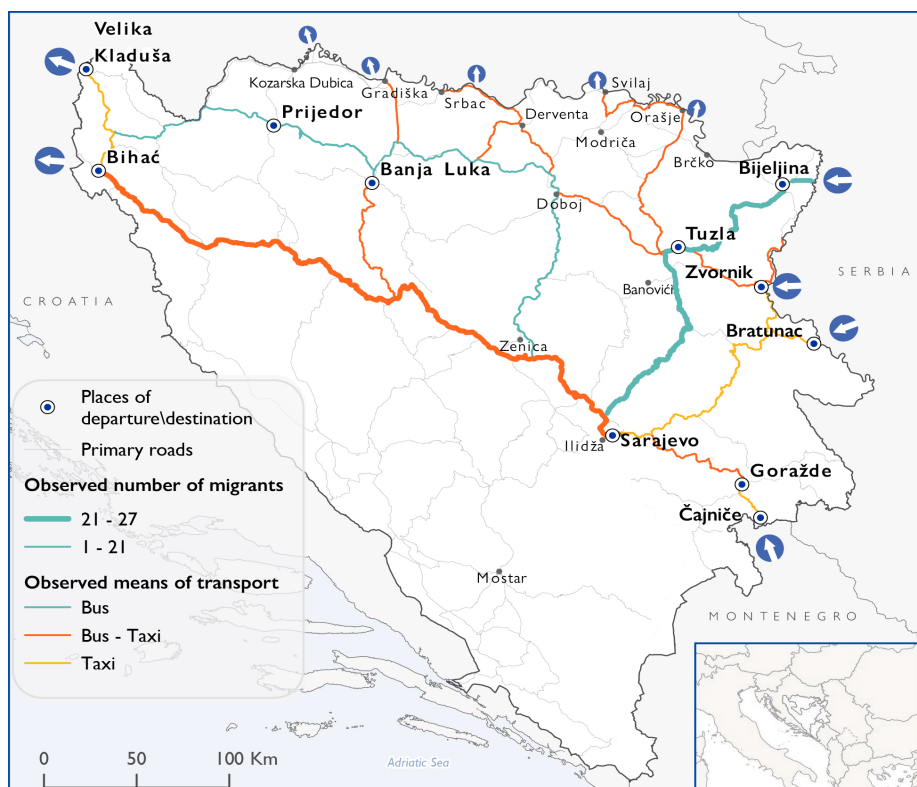
Of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once



0%

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

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 September 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 272 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

- The map above shows that most people entered through 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, around Čajniče.
- Most migrants make their way to Sarajevo and travel to Bihac to attempt to cross the border with Croatia in the area of Velika Kladuša.
- Service for foreign affairs and BiH border police have reported increased use in unofficial exit points with the northern border, mainly between Svilaj 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 September 2024, the SFA recorded 20,927 migrant registrations on arrival in the country, a decrease of 13 per cent compared to the same period in 2023.

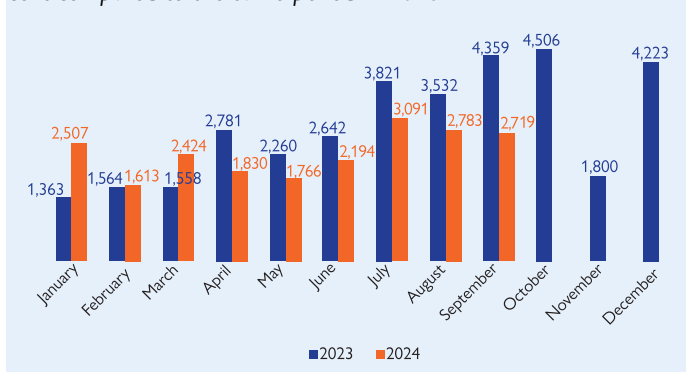


Figure 1: Migrant registrations in BiH, 2023 compared to 2024

JOURNEYS

On average, respondents had been travelling for 449 days from the time they left their country of origin until they were interviewed in BiH.

On average, migrants stayed in BiH for 34 days, with the minimum number of days being 6 and the maximum number of days being 730. Eighty-six per cent of respondents stated they had crossed into BiH from Serbia and eleven per cent from Montenegro.

When asked if they were accompanied by people who facilitated their border crossing, 22 per cent of respondents stated they were facilitated. Fifteen per cent of respondents used facilitators to cross from Montenegro to BiH, and 22 per cent used facilitators to cross from Serbia to BiH.

Respondents reported paying, on average, 450 EUR for a single crossing from Serbia into BiH and 468 EUR for a single crossing from Montenegro. Some respondents pay in bundles from their country of origin to the Western Balkans rather than paying per border crossing. For example, 7,500 EUR was the cost of a package to travel from Türkiye to Germany.

The survey asked migrants how they moved between cities and key locations in BiH. Sixty-seven per cent stated that they had taken a bus to travel between some key locations, and twenty-one per cent stated that they had taken a taxi at some point during their stay in BiH.

Fifty-seven per cent of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once. On average, respondents made three failed border crossing attempts. Nearly all of respondents (99%) stated that they failed because they were intercepted and returned by authorities. One per cent of respondents who failed to cross stated that they would not try to cross the border again.

PROTECTION RISKS AND NEEDS

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.

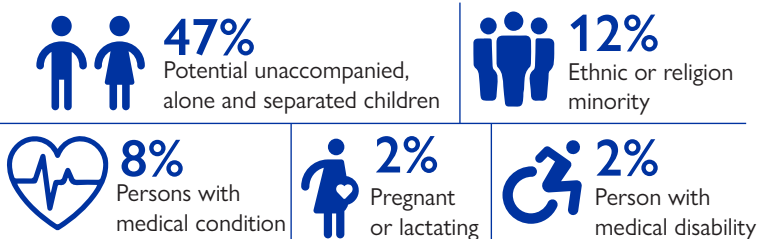


Figure 2: Five most identified potential risks and needs (n=382) (multiple answers possible)

In August 2024, the protection team conducted 1,200 screenings. Thirty-two per cent (382 individuals) of respondents were identified as having protection risks and needs. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of the five most identified potential risks and needs.

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

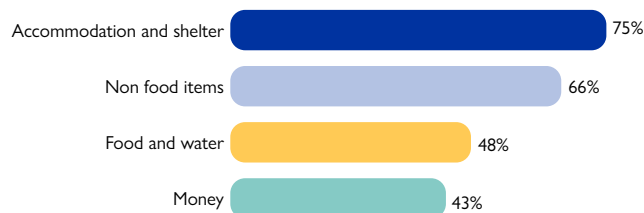


Figure 3: Most important current needs outside temporary reception centres (multiple answers possible) (n=558)

ACCOMMODATION

Of those who were interviewed outside formal reception centres at exit locations (n=193), no respondent stated they had not registered at the time of interview and did not plan to 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.

² Potential unaccompanied, alone and separated children (UASC) are thought to be below 18 years of age and travelling alone

Figure 4 shows the most frequent types of accommodation respondents slept in whilst travelling through BiH.

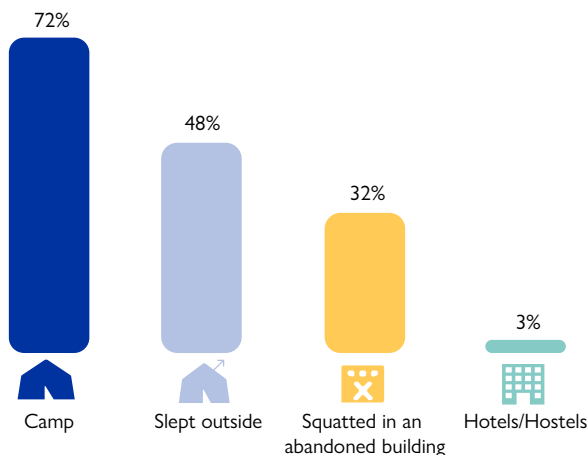


Figure 4: Accommodation in BiH (multiple answers possible) (n=558)

SPECIAL FOCUS – Raising and spending

To contextualise 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. IOM conducted interviews with five migrants from Algeria, Cameroon, Senegal and Morocco to better understand how they raised and decide to spend money while travelling.

- The cost of travelling through the Western Balkans can vary from person to person. Food, water, accommodation, facilitation, and many other expenses can accumulate for migrants. This special focus aims to give an insight into how people can make and spend money during their journey through the Western Balkans.
- Respondents were asked how they raised money for the journey. Nearly all respondents stated savings, except one respondent, who stated he borrowed money from a friend.
- All respondents flew to Türkiye, and from there, the two Moroccan respondents walked through Bulgaria, and the other three respondents took a boat to Greece.
- Respondents from Cameroon and Senegal said they paid 200 EUR and 1,000 EUR to get a boat from Türkiye to Greece. The respondent from Angola said he didn't pay anything and boarded a boat. Once in Greece, all three respondents stated they travelled through Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, and then BiH.
- Respondents from Angola, Cameroon and Morocco stated they worked in Türkiye. The two respondents from Angola and Cameroon worked in the textile industry for four to five months and were paid 1,500 lira (40 EUR) a week and 2,500 Turkish lira (66 EUR) a week. Respondents from Morocco stated that they worked in a plastic factory and made 3,800 Lira (100 EUR) a week.
- All respondents stated they feared being robbed and their savings being taken away. The respondents from Morocco said they wrap their money in plastic just in case they need to swallow it to keep it safe.
- The respondent from Cameroon stated that all his savings were stolen when the Greek border guards caught his boat. He said they took everyone's money and phones on the boat and then pushed them back to sea. He stated it was the worst experience of the trip so far.
- When asked what they spent the most on, three respondents stated food, while two stated transport. Respondents from Morocco stated that they would often find fruit trees while walking and collect fruit to save money.
- At the end of the interview, respondents were asked roughly how much they spent travelling from Türkiye to BiH. The respondent from Angola stated 200 EUR, the respondent from Senegal stated 1,800 EUR, and the two from Morocco stated 150 EUR. The respondent from Cameroon noted that he did not know how much he had spent.

INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRIES

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

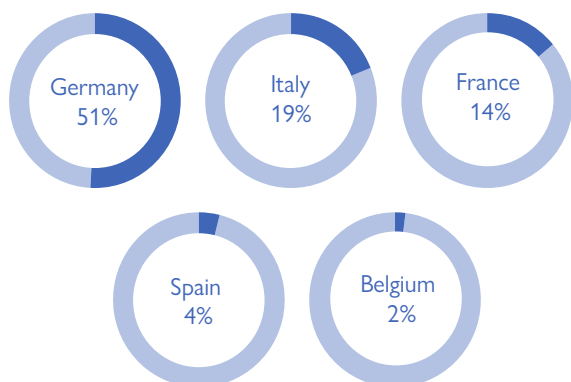


Figure 5: Top five intended destinations (n=558)

The survey found that the majority of nationals from the Syrian Arab Republic (81%), Afghanistan (61%) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (52%) identified Germany as their preferred destination. Nationals of India (100%), Pakistan (56%) and Morocco (35%) 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.

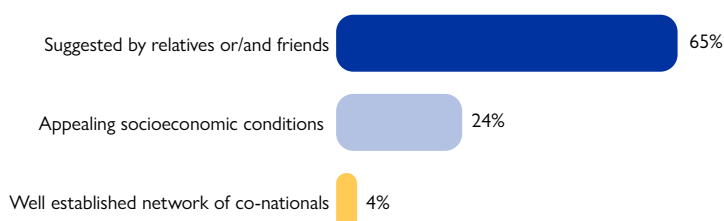


Figure 6: Top three reasons for choosing intended destination country (n=558)

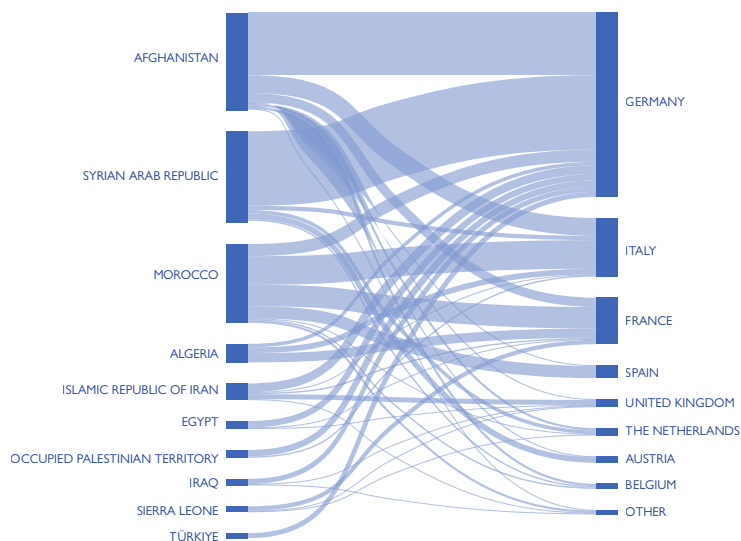


Figure 7: Intended country of destination for the top 10 nationalities in the sample (n=499)



Enumerators interviewing migrants. © IOM BiH 2024 / Amir Draganovic

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 September 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 272 migrants outside TRCs in the active transit locations mentioned above, and 316 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 23 to 27 September 2024. IOM observed 282 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.

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