

OVERVIEW

In an effort to better understand migratory movements along the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR), IOM Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has established key flow monitoring points (FMPs)¹ in the Una-Sana Canton (USC) in the north of the country and on the border with Croatia in order to collect data on irregular migrants. According to the latest data available from the Ministry of Security (MoS) of BiH, 11,971 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers entered the country from 1 January to 21 August 2022 in an attempt to reach the European Union (EU). Given that the number of migrants in transit through the country has returned to pre-pandemic levels, this exercise is critical to better predicting trends and changes resulting from a combination of factors such as the existence of visa-free regimes, networks of human traffickers and/or smugglers, but also connections with friends and/or family. Furthermore, it should be noted that the number of migrants registered at arrival in the country on a weekly basis has been increasing since the beginning of the year (source: Ministry of Security of BiH). In contrast, the number of migrants registered in temporary reception centres (TRC) remains relatively stable, which indicates a high turnover rate. Therefore, it can be assumed that a significant share of migrants are transiting through the country very quickly, which is consistent with the season and favorable weather conditions.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Almost all respondents (95%) were newcomers, indicating a highly mobile population.
- More than one third of the respondents (34%) traveled with a facilitator who helped them get into BiH, indicating the possibility of human trafficking or smuggling.
- Most of the respondents (94%) attempted to enter the EU from BiH, and they all reported having been pushed back by the authorities. All those who had tried to cross the border into the EU stated that they would try again in the next period.
- The top countries of intended destination are Italy (57%), France (18%), Germany (15%) and Belgium (9.6%).
- The social networks most frequently used by respondents to facilitate their journey to the EU were Facebook (86.5%), WhatsApp (78.6%), Viber (27.8%), TikTok (15.9%), Instagram (10.3%), and Twitter (0.8%).

Between 02 and 22 August, IOM conducted interviews with 126 migrants in seven key locations (FMPs) in three municipalities (Bihać, Cazin and Velika Kladuša) in the USC at the border with the EU. Overall, adult male migrants represented the entire sample.²

Most migrants stated that their country of origin is Pakistan (41.6%), followed by Afghanistan (37.6%), with a significantly lower percentage for other nationalities (4% from Cameroon, 3.2% from Iran and 0.8% from India).⁴

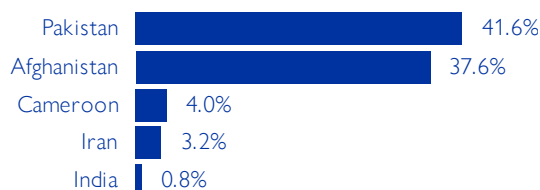


Figure 1. Main country of origin of interviewed migrants

Almost all the migrants interviewed (92%) stated they had registered with the authorities in BiH.⁵ Of those who reported that they had registered, 88 per cent had done so more than 14 days before the interview, while the majority of those who reported never having registered with the authorities (80%) intend to do so in the future. Interestingly, almost all the respondents (96%) reported having been registered in one of the existing temporary reception centres (TRC) in BiH, with 53 per cent having been registered in TRC Blazuj in the Sarajevo Canton (SC), 46



Picture 1. DTM teams interviewing migrants in FMPs in USC

per cent in TRC Lipa and less than 1 per cent in TRC Miral, the latter two being located in the USC.

Of those who reported having been in BiH for more than 3 months, the majority (67%) declared this was due to waiting for other arrangements to continue their journey, followed by 33 per cent who said they decided to stay in the country in order to raise money or wait for friends and/or family to send money.

1. DTM's global flow monitoring methodology aims to identify areas prone to internal, cross-border and regional migration. Mobility area assessments are conducted at the national level. DTM teams then collect information at the local level to identify key transit points. Enumerators collect data from key informants at the flow monitoring points: key informants may be transport staff, customs officers, boat operators or migrants themselves. Data is collected through a basic form combined with direct observations.

2. As the population surveyed is highly mobile, more vulnerable categories such as women and children are less likely to be found in the selected locations.

3. Interestingly, nationals from Bangladesh were detected during the exercise conducted in USC unlike the one conducted in Sarajevo Canton.

4. Upon entering the territory of BiH, migrants are registered by the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) within the MoS, most of them expressing their intention to seek asylum, following which request a certificate (white paper) is issued. The certificate provides for a 14-day window, during which people must formally submit their asylum application and undergo registration with the Asylum Sector (SA) of the MoS. After 14 days, if the asylum application is not presented, they become irregular.

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Of those who reported having been in BiH for less than 3 months, 94 per cent said they had attempted to cross to the EU, and the rest of them declared they would try in the future.



Figure 2. Length of stay reported by interviewed migrants

Overall, half of the respondents tried to cross the border more than two times, with one migrant trying to cross 29 times, representing the maximum amount among the sample.

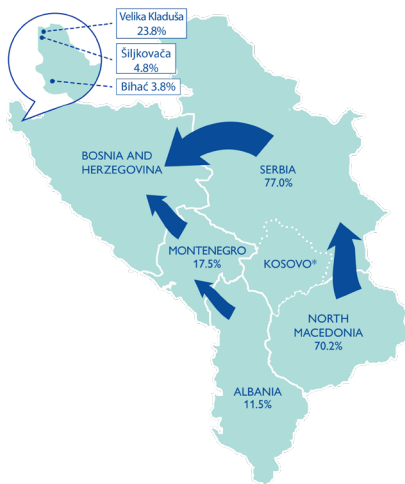


Figure 3. Main routes traveled by migrants within the WB to BiH and the municipalities where the interviews were conducted in BiH (Note: The thicker the arrow, the further the route is traveled)

Almost all migrants (99%) who reported having attempted to cross the border claimed to have been pushed back to BiH by the authorities, with one respondent stating he/she did not manage to cross due to the route closure.⁵

Interestingly, all of those who reported having tried to cross the border to the EU stated they would try again.

The migrants were also asked if they were accompanied by one or more people who facilitated their border crossing into BiH. More than a third of the respondents (34%) said they traveled with a facilitator who helped them enter the country.

Regarding movements within the country, migrants were also asked if they intended to move to another municipality while in BiH. A fifth (21%) said they wanted to, 74 per cent of whom said they wanted to go to Velika Kladuša. The main reason given for wanting to move to Velika Kladuša is linked to the extreme proximity of this municipality to the border with the EU.

The country that emerged as the main intended destination was Italy (57%), followed by France (18%), Germany (15%) and Belgium (9.6%). Among the reasons given for choosing these countries, the majority declared that they wanted to go there for the appealing socio-economic conditions (62%), because they were suggested by relatives/friends (24%), for the ease of access to asylum procedures (14%).

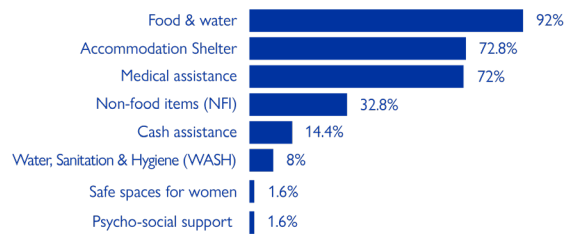


Figure 4. Main needs reported by interviewed migrants

The main needs reported by the respondents included food and water (92%), accommodation (72.8%), medical assistance (72%), NFIs (32.8%), cash assistance (14.4%), WASH (8%), safe spaces for women and psycho-social support (1.6% each).

Lastly, migrants were also asked which sources of information they used most often to facilitate their journey to the EU. The most cited social network was Facebook (86.5%), followed by WhatsApp (78.6%), Viber (27.8%), TikTok (15.9%), Instagram (10.3%), and Twitter (0.8%).

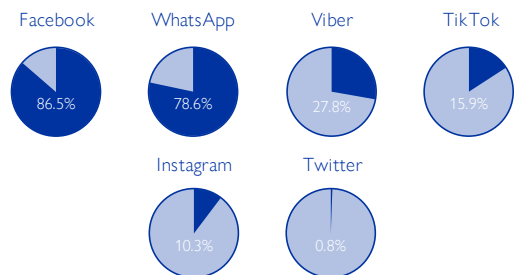


Figure 5. Main source of information used by interviewed migrants

* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

5. Pushbacks are expulsions of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees from the territory of one state to the territory of another state without regard for the individual's circumstances and right to seek asylum. Pushbacks are prohibited under international and EU law.

The map (Figure 3.) is for illustrative purposes only. Representations and the use of boundaries and geographical names on this map may include errors and do not imply any judgment on the legal status of a territory, nor official recognition or acceptance of these boundaries by IOM.

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