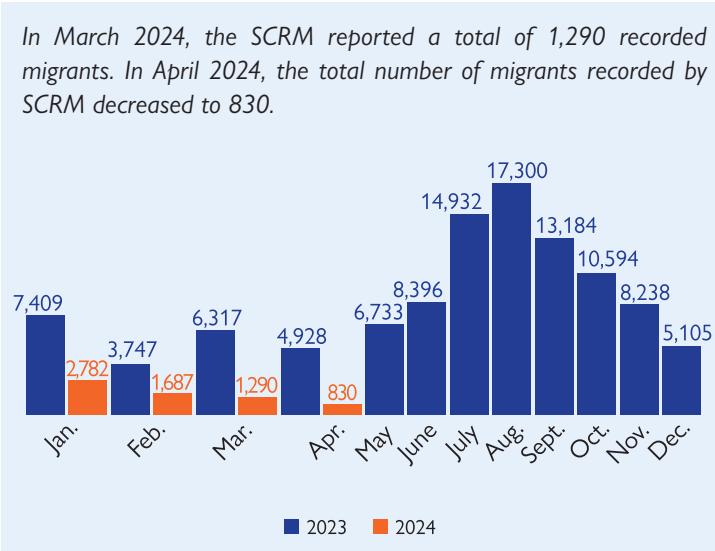


This report provides insights into the profiles, experiences and journeys of migrants transiting through the Republic of Serbia. Data was collected from 1 to 30 April 2024 together with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrants of the Republic of Serbia (SCRM). The sample consists of 147 interviewed migrants in Asylum Centres (AC) Sjenica, (AC) Tutin, (AC) Krnjaca, (AC) Obrenovac, and Reception Centres (RC) Bujanovac, (RC) Presevo, (RC) Dimitrovgrad across the country.



PROFILES

In April 2024, Syrian nationals continued to be the top nationality amounting to 34 per cent of the sample, while Afghan nationals made up 24 per cent. In April 2024, nationals of Burundi were the third top nationality, with eight per cent of the sample.

In April, 12 per cent of the respondents were women, while 88 per cent were men.



Figure 1: Top three countries of origin (n=147)

Most of the respondents reported completing primary (52%) or lower secondary (24%) education. One per cent held university level degrees.

KEY FINDINGS

- In April, the number of SCRM-recorded migrants decreased by 36 per cent, compared to March 2024.
- In April, the share of respondents who entered from Bulgaria was 56 per cent, while 29 per cent reported entering from North Macedonia.
- In this sample, 71 per cent of the respondents reported using the services of facilitators for mobility purposes or to cross borders.
- Respondents reported that the average cost of entry was 2,000 EUR from Bulgaria and 1,300 EUR from North Macedonia.

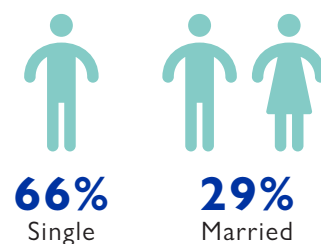


Figure 2: Marital status (n=147)

**Divorced and/or Widowed made up 5%*

JOURNEYS

Bulgaria and North Macedonia remain the main entry points into Serbia. In March, the entries from Bulgaria decreased, while entries from North Macedonia increased. In April 2024, the share of respondents who entered from Bulgaria was higher than from North Macedonia. In this sample, 56 per cent reported entering from Bulgaria, while 29 per cent entered from North Macedonia.

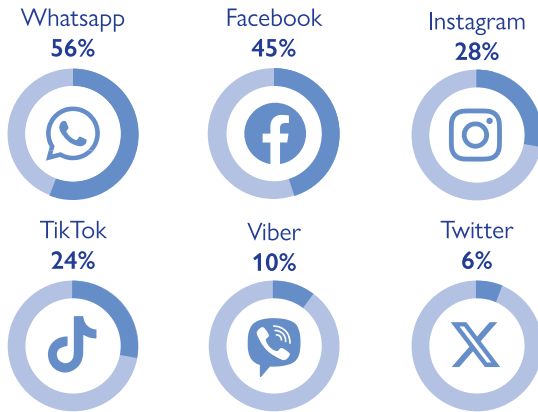


Figure 3: Most frequently cited platforms migrants use to plan their journeys (multiple answers possible) (n=147)

BORDER CROSSING TRENDS

Seventy-one per cent of respondents reported they used facilitation to cross borders during their journey so far. The majority (86%) of respondents reported travelling with a group, out of which almost half (41%) reported travelling with facilitators. Key informant interviews reveal that, due to the increased border patrols, it is becoming increasingly challenging to cross borders into Serbia. The use of border crossing facilitation is well organized and suggests that this practice could be more prevalent than the individual survey data indicates. Respondents who confirmed facilitation and stated the price, paid on average 1,700 EUR.

Twenty per cent of respondents reported that they had attempted and failed to cross a border at least once. Out of those, 12 per cent reported it was with facilitation. Of those respondents who stated that they had attempted and failed to cross a border, 79 per cent were returned by the authorities, while 19 per cent reported route closure (2% reported other). Seventeen per cent of attempted crossings, were attempts to enter Bosnia and Herzegovina, out of which 68 per cent reported being returned by the authorities.

REASONS FOR LEAVING

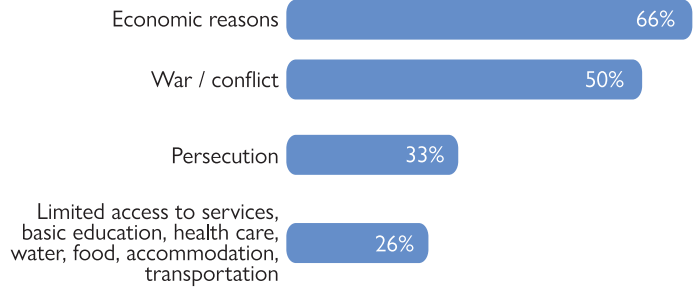


Figure 4: Reason for leaving the country of origin (n=147)
*multiple answers possible

Of those surveyed, 57 per cent reported residing in a transit country for longer than a year. Türkiye remained the most frequently cited country (84%), followed by Greece (10%). Sixty-five per cent stated they had left due to the deteriorating economic conditions while 35 per cent stated personal targeted violence as the reason.

Türkiye, alongside Greece, is consistently the main location from where migrants depart for the Western Balkans and is a country in which migrants tend to stay longer. According to IOM survey data (January through April 2024) respondents who resided in Türkiye reported remaining for 503 days on average. Nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic (41%) consistently remain the largest nationality departing Türkiye, followed by nationals of Afghanistan (29%) and Burundi (12%).

INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRIES

Figure 5 below provides a percentage breakdown of the top five intended countries of destination:

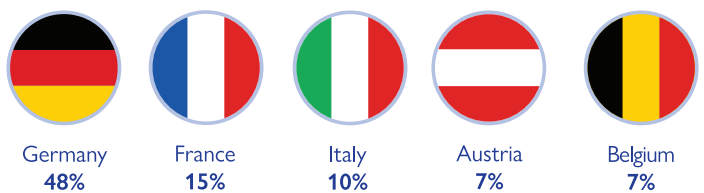


Figure 5: Top five countries of destination reported by migrants. (n=147)

Forty per cent of the respondents indicated that their choice of destination was influenced by recommendations from relatives and friends. This was followed by, appealing socio-economic conditions (30%). Germany was the most frequently selected destination (62%) due to its perceived favourable socioeconomic factors. Nationals of Syrian Arab Republic (52%), Iraq (71%), and Afghanistan (54%) favour Germany, while most nationals of Burundi (46%) intended to reach France. Moroccan nationals opted for France (38%) and Italy (38%).

SPECIAL FOCUS – UNDERREPRESENTED NATIONALITIES

To contextualize the journeys, experiences, and complex needs of migrants on the move, IOM together with SCRM 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 Serbia. In April, IOM and SCRM carried out interviews with 14 migrants from the Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, Republic of Congo, Burundi, Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone, Morocco, and Bangladesh. According to government data received weekly, they each consistently make up less than ten per cent of the total migrant populations in centres.

- Recent observations indicate an increase in the arrival of individuals from less common national backgrounds in Serbia. Unlike the predominant trend of onward migration to Western Europe, these interviewees expressed an intention to settle in Serbia. Interviews with these individuals revealed that, despite similar motivations for leaving their home countries such as extreme poverty and violence, their journeys differed from represented nationalities such as nationals of Afghanistan.
- The respondents reported travelling primarily via boat or plane and among fellow nationals, minimizing interaction with other migrant communities. Most interviewees revealed they intended to remain in Serbia, and are seeking asylum, employment, and family reunification.
- All the respondents, except for nationals of Morocco, reached Serbia by air via Türkiye or Qatar, with shorter travel duration compared to migrants who travel on foot. An interviewee from Sierra Leone explained flying from Egypt to Türkiye, before entering Greece overland. Interviewed Moroccan nationals, described paying substantial fees for ferry passage from Casablanca to Piraeus, Greece. Some Russian nationals flew directly from the Russian Federation to Serbia while others arrived via Moldova. They mentioned avoiding military conscription and persecution due to their Ukrainian heritage as reasons for leaving their country of origin.
- Most of the interviewees revealed that they arranged their journeys through travel agencies in their home countries and/or securing work permits and sponsorship. Nationals from Bangladesh revealed they obtained work permits in Romania before crossing into Serbia on foot.
- The occupations among the interviewed migrants included mechanics, factory workers, retailers, and a university-educated individual in economics and public administration from Burundi. The individual from Burundi mentioned that they were employed by a government institution in their home country. However, they expressed a desire to transition into the marketing sector in Serbia and seek employment with a marketing agency.

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 Serbia.

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 Serbia, registration information and movement modalities within the country. 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.

Some information which serves as context or explanation for particular concepts or trends are repetitive in each report, as it is important for new readers to be able to understand the information.

Data was collected from 1 to 30 April 2024 in RCs/ACs (AC Sjenica, AC Tutin, AC Krnjaca, AC Obrenovac, RC Bujanovac, RC Presevo, RC Dimitrovgrad).

Key informant interviews

Key informants can help provide information on the modus operandi of migrant mobility. The purpose of the key informant interviews is to contextualize the quantitative data gathered through the survey.

Special focus - group interviews

Group interviews are carried out with migrants inside reception centers are conducted by IOM and SCRM staff who are trained in leading qualitative focus group discussions with vulnerable populations. SCRM is always present in the centers. The information is not representative and does not intend to draw general conclusions about migration nor all migrants in Serbia.

LIMITATIONS

The data collection is conducted in the context of the following limitations:

- This data is based on a convenience sample of migrants in the survey locations during the time frame indicated and can therefore not be generalized to the broader population of migrants in Serbia, or anywhere else.
- The data collection is limited to the RCs/ACs; therefore, no data collection occurs outside of a centre setting. Entry points, bus stations, and railroads are known locations of migrant movements, however, in Serbia IOM and SCRM did not collect data at such locations.