

## OVERVIEW

IOM Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has established key Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs)<sup>1</sup> in the municipality of Velika Kladuša, which is located in Una-Sana Canton in the north-west of the country on the border with Croatia, to collect data on migrants' presence in an effort to better understand migratory movements along the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR). According to the available data from the Ministry of Security (MoS) of BiH, between 1 January and 30 June 2022, 7,667 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have entered the country in an attempt to reach the European Union (EU). In light of a possible increase in the number of migrants, reaching pre-pandemic levels when around 10,000 migrants were registered in transit through the country in the first 6 months of 2019, this exercise is critical to better predict 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.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- A sample of 166 migrants was interviewed in two locations in the municipality of Velika Kladuša between 25 May and 8 June 2022.
- Over four-fifths (87.3%) of the respondents were newcomers, indicating a highly mobile population.
- More than half of the respondents (62.7%) traveled with a facilitator who helped them get into BiH, indicating the possibility of human trafficking or smuggling.
- The majority of the respondents (90.4%) attempted to enter the EU from BiH, and they all reported having been pushed back by the authorities. On average, respondents tried to cross 3 times.
- Nearly 100 per cent of those who had tried to cross the border into the EU stated they would try again in the near future.
- The top three countries of intended destination are Italy (63.3%), France (16.9%) and Germany (10.8%).
- The social networks most frequently used by respondents to facilitate their journey to the EU were Facebook (98.2%), Instagram (66.9%), WhatsApp (56.6%), Viber (50.6%), TikTok (46.4%), and Twitter (24.7%).

Overall, male migrants represented almost the entire sample (99.4% or 165), with only one female migrant respondent.<sup>2</sup>

Five respondents (3%) were children between 14 and 17 years old, all of them boys. The median age of respondents was 26, with the youngest migrant interviewed being 15 years old<sup>3</sup> and the oldest 48 years old.

Most migrants (41%) stated that their country of origin is Bangladesh, followed by Pakistan (26.5%) and India (13.3%), with a significantly lower percentage for other nationalities.

Over four-fifths of the migrants (87.3%) stated that they had registered with the authorities in BiH.<sup>4</sup> Of those who reported that they had registered, 93.8 per cent had done so more than 14 days before the interview, while the majority of those who reported never having registered do not intend to register in the future (66.7%). Interestingly, over four-fifths of the respondents (86.1%) reported having been registered in one of the existing temporary reception centres (TRC) in BiH, with 87.4 per cent having been registered in TRC Blazuj in Sarajevo Canton.

Furthermore, over four-fifths (87.3%) of the respondents stated that they had spent less than 3 months in the country, indicating that they were very mobile. This is in line with the findings of the recent data collection exercise conducted by IOM to estimate the number of migrants staying outside reception centers.

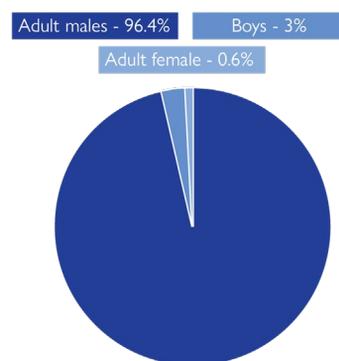


Figure 2. Sex and age disaggregated data

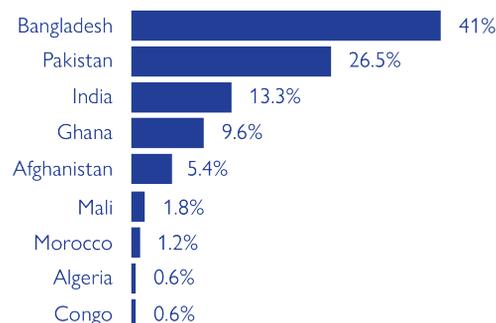


Figure 2. Main nationalities of migrants interviewed

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, custom 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. Only migrants aged 14 and above are approached and the questionnaire is proposed.

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.

Overall, the data are in line with the season and favorable weather conditions that lead migrants to move in an attempt to cross the border with the EU.

Of those who reported having been in BiH for more than 3 months, the majority (52.4%) declared this was due to a route closure or border crossing failure, followed by 33.3 per cent who said they decided to stay in the country to raise money or wait for friends and/or family to send money. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (62.7%) said they traveled with a facilitator who helped them get into BiH, clearly indicating the possibility of human trafficking or smuggling.

Migrants were also asked if they intended to move to another municipality in BiH. 89.8 per cent stated they intend to do so, 83.2 per cent of whom declared they intend to travel to Sarajevo.<sup>5</sup> The main declared reason for wanting to move to Sarajevo is related to access to basic services and the presence of acquaintances/relatives there. In addition, almost all the interviewed migrants (90.4%) said they had attempted to cross to the EU while staying in BiH. On average, respondents tried to cross 3 times, with one migrant trying to cross 15 times, representing the maximum amount among the sample. All migrants who reported having attempted to cross the border claimed to have been pushed back to BiH by the authorities.<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly, among those who reported staying in BiH for less than 3 months, 89.7 per cent said they had attempted to cross to the EU, clearly indicating that newcomers are eager to do so. Furthermore, almost 100 per cent of those who reported having tried to cross the border to the EU stated they will try again (with only one respondent having no such intention). On the other hand, of those who have not yet tried to cross the border, 93.8 per cent declared they will try to do so in the coming period.

The country that emerged as the main intended destination was Italy (63.3%), followed by France (16.9%) and Germany (10.8%). This is in line with other data gathered by the DTM in BiH ([DTM Report - Round 13](#)). Among the reasons given for the choice of these countries, the majority stated that they wanted to go there because it was suggested by relatives and/or friends, and for the appealing socio-economic conditions.

The main needs reported by the respondents included food (95.8%), accommodation/shelter (86.7%), non-food items (NFIs) (66.3%), cash assistance, including access to money transfer (24.1%), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities (14.5%), medical assistance (2.4%), legal assistance (1.8%), and psycho-social support (0.6%).

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 (98.2%), followed by Instagram (66.9%), WhatsApp (56.6%), Viber (50.6%), TikTok (46.4%), Twitter (24.7%) and others (4.2%).



Figure 3. Length of stay reported by interviewed migrants



Figure 4. Main routes taken by migrants within the WB to enter BiH (Note: The thicker the arrow, the further the route is traveled)

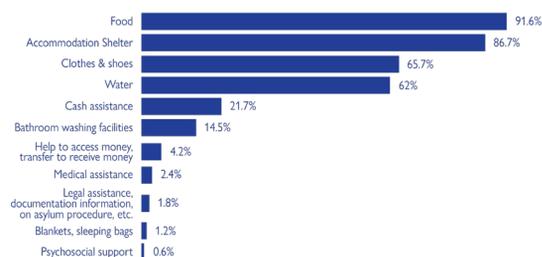


Figure 5. Main needs reported by interviewed migrants

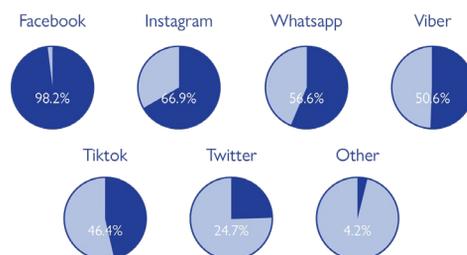


Figure 6. Main source of information used by interviewed migrants

5. This is an interesting finding considering that the place where the interview took place is in the north of BiH, on the border with the EU, while Sarajevo is more central and far from border crossing opportunities.

6. Pushbacks are expulsions of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees from a state's territory 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 4.) 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.