



**289**  
Migrants interviewed  
during exercise



**99.3%**  
Had been in BiH for less  
than two weeks



**3,821**  
SFA registrations  
in July 2023

Top **5** countries of origin of respondents



**69.4%**  
Afghanistan



**14.2%**  
Morocco



**4.5%**  
Pakistan



**3.5%**  
Iran (Islamic  
Republic)



**2.4%**  
Sri Lanka



**99%**  
Traveled throughout the  
country by bus



**45%**  
Also travelled by taxis

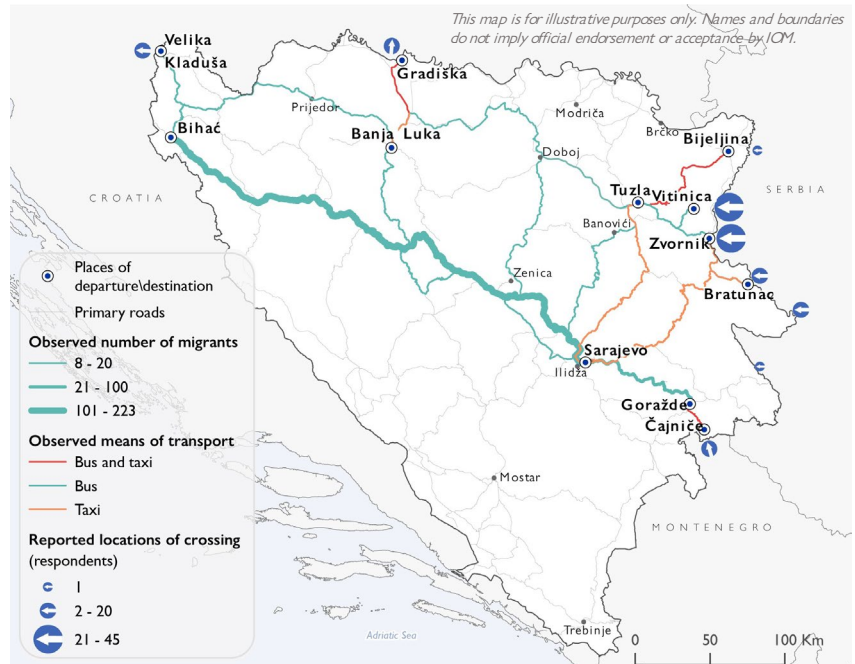


**14.2%**  
Not planning to be  
accommodated in any TRC

**15,989**

SFA registrations  
from January to July  
2023

This report provides insights into the profiles, experiences, needs, routes travelled and intentions of migrants transiting through Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).<sup>1</sup> IOM carried out a route observation exercise in the Republika Srpska, Sarajevo Canton and Una Sana Canton from 19 to 25 July to monitor trends in entries and exits as well as transit modalities within BiH. During this exercise, IOM also surveyed 289 migrants in active transit locations such as bus stops or at key entry and exit locations throughout the country.



Map 1: Most prevalent routes travelled by migrants within BiH

## ROUTE OBSERVATION

- The map above shows that migrants enter BiH through one of six areas in the eastern border with Serbia or through the border with Montenegro further southeast.
- Entry points from Serbia are Bijeljina, Zvornik, Bratunac and Višegrad as well as the area surrounding villages of Ročević and Donji Šepak.
- From the border with Serbia, migrants take buses or taxis to reach Sarajevo, where they typically rest for a day or two before continuing their journeys towards Una Sana Canton.
- Some migrants opt to travel from Tuzla to Doboј and Banja Luka in order to attempt border crossings around the Gradiška area in the north.
- However, most migrants make their way to Sarajevo and travel to Bihać by bus to attempt crossing the border into Croatia in the area of Velika Kladuša.
- From Montenegro, migrants cross into BiH from around the Metaljka border crossing. Migrants pay for taxis from Čajniće to Gorazde, and then continue to Sarajevo by bus.

1. Interviewees include migrants in an irregular situation, refugees and asylum-seekers as the reference population consists of mixed migration flows.

2. Data is collected in collaboration with the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA).

From January to July 2023, the SFA recorded 15,989 migrant registrations on arrival in the country, which is an increase of 55.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.

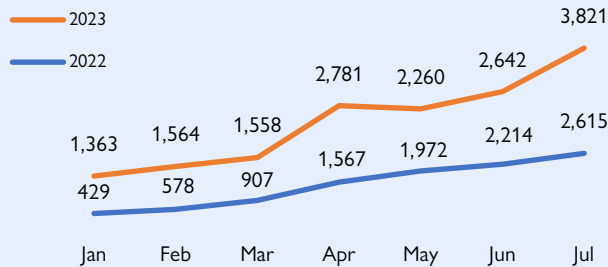


Figure 1: Migrant registrations in BiH, 2022 vs 2023

## PROFILES

This sample consists of interviews with 289 individual migrants surveyed in bus stations at known entry routes into, as well as transit locations and exit locations in BiH. Almost all (99.3%) of the survey respondents were men, with the remaining 0.7 per cent being women. The average age of the sample was 24, with the youngest respondent being 14 years of age and the oldest 54. Minors made up 9.7 per cent of the sample. Ninety-five per cent of the sample said that they were single.

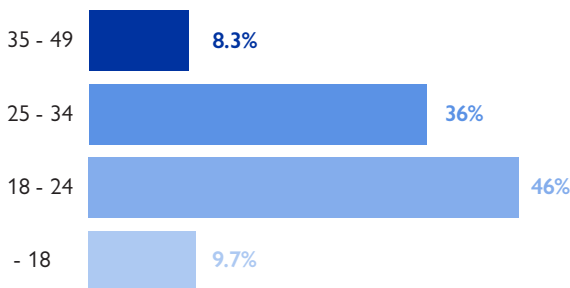


Figure 2: Age distribution of sample (N=289)

## JOURNEYS

Almost all respondents (99.3%) had been in BiH for less than two weeks at the time of the interview. Most respondents (88.2%) had entered through one of the border areas with Serbia while 11.8 per cent entered through Montenegro.

When asked if they were accompanied by people who facilitated their border crossing, 100 per cent of respondents stated that they were not accompanied. However, it is important to note that migrants tend to be reluctant to talk about facilitation to enter the country. Key informant insights reveal that the use of border facilitation is much more prevalent.

Almost half (49.5%) of the respondents had not been registered in a temporary reception centre (TRC) at the time of interview.

Fourteen per cent stated that they did not plan to register in any TRCs during their stay in BiH. This was mostly because people wanted to transit rapidly through the country to cross the border or because they had alternative accommodation arrangements. Those migrants who chose to reside outside TRCs either squatted in abandoned buildings or camped in fields. A small number of respondents resided in private accommodation. They paid on average around 10 Euros per night.

The survey also asks migrants how they move between cities and key locations in BiH. Almost all (99%) said that they had taken the bus to travel between some key locations. Apart from the bus, 45 per cent also said that they had taken a taxi. This implies that there is some overlap between people who take buses and taxis and shows the mixed transportation methods within the country.

Nine per cent of respondents had already attempted to cross the border with Croatia at least once. The most frequently cited response for not succeeding were that they were intercepted by authorities. Ninety-nine per cent of those who had attempted crossing the border into Croatia, stated that they would try again.

Migrants use social media and instant messaging to organize their journeys to western Europe. The most frequently used platforms were WhatsApp, Facebook, Viber, TikTok and Instagram.

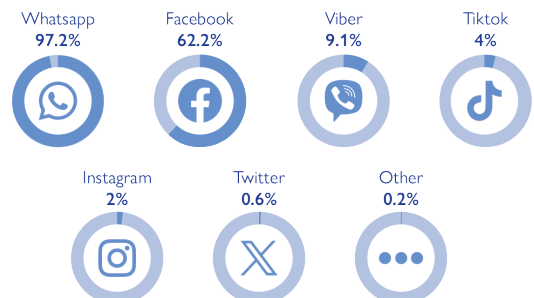


Figure 3: Most frequently cited platforms migrants use to plan their journeys (N=289)

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

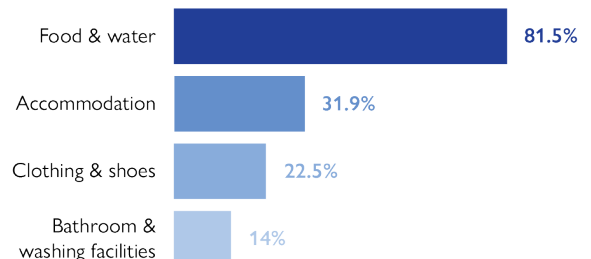


Figure 4: Most important current needs outside temporary reception centres (multiple answers possible) (N=289)

**INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRIES**

The top intended destination countries were Italy, Germany, France, Austria, and Belgium. The majority of respondents from Afghanistan (55.5%) stated that they wanted to go to Italy, while 26.8 per cent stated that they wanted to travel to Germany. Nationals of Morocco stated that they intended to travel to Italy (65.9%) and France (29.3%). See Figure 7 for a visualization of intended destination countries by nationality.

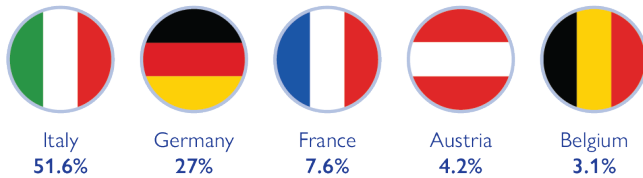


Figure 5: Top five intended destinations (N=289)

When asked why they had specifically chosen their destination countries in Europe, the two most frequently cited reasons were due to appealing socio-economic conditions (52.6%) and because it was suggested by friends or relatives (40.1%).

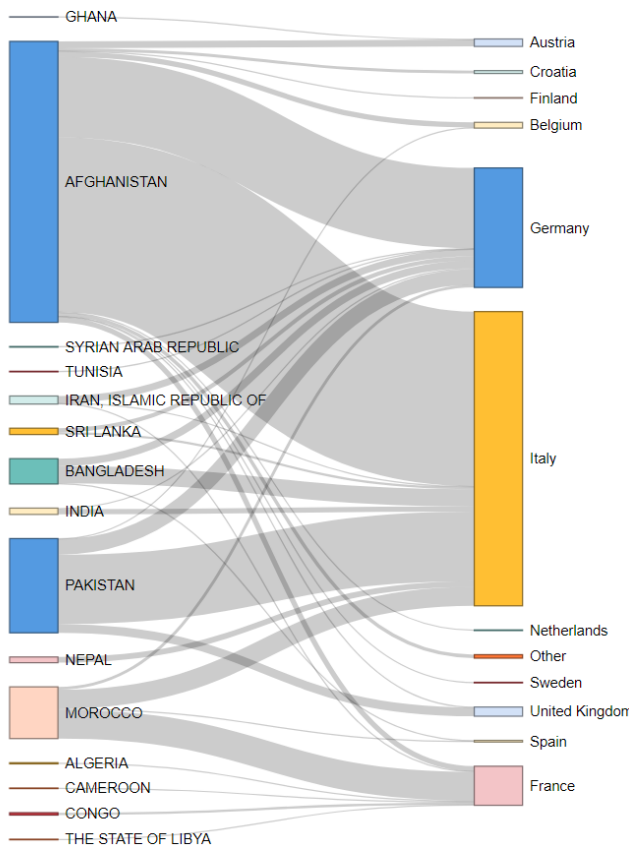


Figure 6: Intended country of destination by nationality (N=289)

**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 answer any question and can withdraw their consent at any moment. Data was collected from 19 July to 25 July 2023 by seven teams of thirteen enumerators (five women, and eight men) in Canton Sarajevo, Una Sana Canton, Tuzla Canton, Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Gorazde and Zvornik.

Route observation exercise

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 exercise took place from 19 July to 25 July. IOM observed 371 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 information provided is triangulated with third parties for verification.

**LIMITATIONS**

The data collection exercises are 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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Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy